



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Language Policy Division
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE TOOLS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING

Common European Framework and Portfolios

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FOREWORD

The Council of Europe's *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) is now regularly mentioned when the subject of modern languages crops up. However, it is still not well known. If language teachers do not use it as a tool, repeated references to the CEFR are liable to have no effect on day-to-day teaching and assessment. Teachers and thus their pupils will be unable to derive full benefit from it. Worse still, if not properly understood, the CEFR could become a source of concern.

The CEFR makes a definite contribution to language policies in Europe, the major objectives of which are to improve the communicative competence of European citizens and produce transparency in language qualifications. This dual aim is spelled out clearly at the local, national and European policy levels and explains the swift and widespread adoption of the CEFR's scale of common reference levels. The *Framework* is becoming the essential tool in European countries for creating a European educational area in the field of modern languages. It has also been adopted by the European Union as the standard for defining language levels. The new Europass, officially launched in January 2005, incorporates the Language Passport of the *European Language Portfolio* (ELP) and refers to the CEFR levels.

The advantages of the CEFR for developing language policies are obvious. However, it is still necessary to demonstrate what it can contribute to the daily practice of language teaching. The full title, *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment*, shows that it concerns all the professional actions of language teachers and not just pupil assessment as is generally assumed.

It is first necessary to clarify the relationship between the *Common European Framework* and the *European Language Portfolio*. Pedagogically speaking, the two are inseparable, the CEFR being aimed at language teaching policymakers and the ELP being intended for learners. The difference is one of perspective and not of approach. We shall therefore talk of each according to the specific context.

The objectives of this document are

- to define the contributions of the *Framework* and the ELP to a renewal of modern language teaching;
- to demonstrate as concretely as possible how a language teacher can exploit the resources offered by these tools;
- finally, to show that these two tools do not represent a fundamental change of direction in the dynamics of language teaching over the past few years but are instead essential levers in attaining existing goals.

It will be clear from the above statement of objectives that this document does not convey the full advantages of the CEFR. We shall be selective as regards content and concentrate exclusively on what is of immediate interest to language teachers in the school and in the classroom. The choices might have been different if this document had been intended for authors of teaching materials, for example, or language examination organisers.

Extracts from textbooks will be reproduced and commented on in order to illustrate our arguments. Most of these textbooks are works published by Éditions Didier (Paris) owing to the ease of access to that firm's authors and to the sources. This does not mean, of course, that only those textbooks can be used to implement the approaches put forward in the CEFR or ELP. The same remark applies to the languages in the reproduced extracts. Only seven languages appear in those extracts, but needless to say the arguments employed also apply to all languages taught and not just to the very limited choice made in this document.

Numerous examples referred to here concern language teaching in France. Their aim is to illustrate the argument through a particular situation in which an explicit political will exists to use the CEFR in organising such teaching and in teaching practices.

Finally, the stated aim of this document shows why the term "pupils" is systematically used here to refer to language learners and ELP users. The language teachers for whom this document is mainly intended have pupils for whom they are responsible. However, it goes without saying that neither the CEFR nor the ELP is targeted exclusively at schools. The Council of Europe is for all Europeans, whether children, adolescents or adults. Similarly, for the same reasons, this document includes only some of the ideas set out in the CEFR. It cannot replace a reading of the CEFR.

For language teachers, deciding to use the CEFR and the ELP means giving themselves the means to achieve their aims: encouraging pupil involvement in language learning, providing pupils with the means of setting goals for themselves and developing their autonomy, recording their language progress, valuing success and giving a meaning to language learning. Such learning is based *inter alia* – or perhaps mainly – on the European dimension and openness to the world as a whole. The thousands of teachers who are devoting so much effort, time and energy to forging partnerships, projects with foreign schools, exchanges and stays in other countries are well aware that true language learning is impossible without this willingness to embrace European and international cultures.

The CEFR and the ELP enable teachers to intensify this process by deliberately conducting all classroom activities, teaching and assessment from a European perspective.

NB: For this new edition, certain changes have been made to the content to allow for the increased number of readers outside France (changes in some of the examples and inclusion of other languages, explanation of certain features of the French education system etc). These changes in no way affect the argument, which is identical to that in previous editions.

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND MODERN LANGUAGES



To understand the purpose of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) and the *European Language Portfolio* (ELP), we must know something about the functions of the Council of Europe. This body, whose headquarters is in Strasbourg, conducts its activities in the area of linguistic diversity and language learning under the European Cultural Convention, which was opened for signing on 1 December 1954. It currently has 46 European member States. It promotes policies designed to strengthen and deepen mutual understanding, consolidate democratic citizenship and maintain social cohesion.

From the beginning, modern languages have played an important role. Previous Council of Europe projects encouraged the acquisition of a good level of communicative competence so that all could benefit from the opportunities for interaction and mobility in Europe. Since then, fresh challenges have been posed by globalisation and internationalisation. Language skills are now equally necessary for social cohesion and integration, and for the exercise of democratic citizenship by all citizens in multilingual societies in Europe.

The importance of modern languages in the Council of Europe's overall strategy is shown in particular by the existence of the Language Policy Division of the Council in Strasbourg (www.coe.int/lang) and the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz, Austria (www.ecml.at).

Language teachers are well acquainted with certain Council of Europe contributions to their day-to-day practice, particularly the introduction of the communicative approach into language textbooks and teaching materials. This contribution is typified in particular by the publication of a series of works between 1975 and 1990 listing the linguistic means needed to communicate efficiently with speakers in another language: “niveau seuil” for French, “Kontaktschwelle” for German, “nivel umbral” for Spanish, “threshold level” for English etc. These works have made a decisive contribution to the introduction of the functional utterances relating to communicative tasks in syllabuses and in teaching materials and practices. They have made it possible to distinguish general and specific notions and language functions, which have become indispensable references.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages



The CEFR is a document prepared between 1993 and 2000 by experts brought together and directed by the Council of Europe. It was officially adopted after very broad consultation during the European Year of Languages in 2001.

The CEFR has been published in the two official languages of the Council of Europe, English (Cambridge University Press, 2001) and French (Éditions Didier, 2001), and has been translated into over 30 European languages. It is not a dogmatic or prescriptive document that imposes one way of teaching modern languages, specific teaching arrangements and specific choices for all member States, in all institutions, for all target groups and for all languages.

Its primary purpose is to serve as a descriptive tool enabling the parties concerned with language teaching in these different contexts to consider their choices or those of the educational institution where they work. Using the CEFR, they can describe and compare their teaching options, the teaching goals they are pursuing and the outcomes in terms of levels of proficiency.

The essential aim of the CEFR is to encourage transparency and comparability in language teaching arrangements and language qualifications. To this end, it proposes:

- a common methodology for analysing and describing situations and choices in language teaching and learning;
- a common terminology for all languages and educational contexts;
- a common scale of levels of language proficiency to assist with goal-setting and learning outcome assessment.

The CEFR deploys an action-oriented approach basing language teaching and learning on the performance of communicative tasks and on language communication activities.

The European Language Portfolio

Launched officially in 2001, as was the CEFR, following a pilot project in 15 European countries, the ELP represents to some extent the provision to language learners of the approach and tools proposed in the CEFR.

The ELP is the property of the learner, that is, of the pupil, apprentice or student. It accompanies learners throughout the learning path, at least until they change to an academic or training course that makes a different ELP model desirable or necessary (transition from primary to secondary school etc).

The ELP enables users to:

- record all their language skills, experiences in using their different languages, stays in other countries or regions and contacts with speakers of languages other than their mother tongue(s), so as to be able to present them to a third party;

- develop their language learning autonomy, eg by thinking about how they are doing things and by learning self-assessment;
- progress towards genuine plurilingualism.

Every ELP has three parts:

- a Language Passport in which users record information concerning their level in all the languages they know or are learning;
- a Language Biography which encourages reflection on previous learning and self-assessment;
- a Dossier containing materials and documents certifying the levels mentioned and the experiences reported.

ELPs vary according to the country and educational context. However, they have all had to be examined by a European Validation Committee, which assigns them an accreditation number. Despite their diversity, they thus retain their European nature, which is a condition of their recognition for use in another context or in another country, on the occasion of a change of residence or with a view to a course of study in another region or country etc.



In France, for example, three ELP models have been validated in 2006:

- *Mon Premier Portfolio*, for primary schools (Accreditation No 2-2000) developed by the CIEP;
- *PEL collège* (Accreditation No 44, 2003) developed by CIEP experts and by researchers from the Ecole normale supérieure (ENS) de Lettres et Sciences humaines;
- *PEL 15 ans et +* (Accreditation No 5-2000) developed by a working group from the Caen regional education authority and published by the CRDP de Basse-Normandie and Éditions Didier.

The Council of Europe provides teachers with a series of guides and practical examples, some of which are available on the ELP website (www.coe.int/portfolio). We shall mention two of them (published by Council of Europe Publishing), which are very useful for the implementation of this tool:

- *European Language Portfolio: A Guide for Teachers and Teacher Trainers* (by David Little and Radka Perclová), published in January 2001;
- *The European Language Portfolio in Use: nine examples* (edited by David Little).

PART 1

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the European Language Portfolio

**Two tools for describing and analysing teaching
materials and approaches**

INTRODUCTION

WHY DO WE NEED AN ANALYSIS GRID AND COMMON CATEGORIES

The CEFR has opened up a new era in the history of modern language teaching in Europe by constituting the **first language policy tool that truly embraces all modern languages**. While the “threshold levels” issued between 1975 and 1990 were certainly developed on the basis of a common vision of language learning and use, they were all intended for a specific language.

Publication of the CEFR in a particular language is not aimed at teachers of that language but at persons who possess it as their mother tongue. For example, the French edition of the CEFR is aimed at teachers of Arabic, Basque, Berber, Breton, Catalan, Chinese, Corsican, the Alsatian or Moselle dialects, Dutch, English, German, Hebrew, Italian, Occitan, Portuguese, Provençal, Russian, Spanish, Turkish etc working in France or at teachers of French as a foreign language. Teachers may, of course, wish to possess or consult the version of the CEFR in the language they teach. In this way they can immerse themselves in the vocabulary used in that language and obtain descriptions of activities or levels of proficiency drawn up in that regional or foreign language for use directly in their teaching. But the most natural way for language teachers or trainers to use the CEFR will be to take the version of the document in their mother tongue, in the national language or in the language used by the educational community in which they work.

The primary contribution of the CEFR is to define a methodology for describing and analysing situations in which a modern language is learnt or taught. This necessarily involves choosing a terminology.

Yet another, some will say.

Language teachers know the importance of terminology. They observe the difficulties that differences in terminology cause pupils when they try to match grammatical phenomena in a foreign language to the same phenomena in the mother tongue, and even in the different languages they learn. Yet this fact has never really led to a unification of terminologies or even to any significant harmonisation between them. Terminology is, in fact, closely linked to the analysis of each language’s system. It depends on the linguistic approach adopted in the textbooks or in the education provided. It never constitutes a set of labels that can be transferred as they stand from one language to another.

Changes in the theory and methods of teaching modern languages have always been marked by the appearance of new terms. These have never been means of giving new names to the same pedagogical activities but instead are both outward signs of advances in educational thinking and reference points in an evolving practice.

The terminology introduced into the language syllabuses of certain countries, for example the syllabuses adopted in France in 2005 for the collèges (lower secondary schools), is often similar to that of the CEFR. However, use of the selected terms is not left to chance. Together, in their coherence, they constitute a specific approach to the

learning/teaching of modern languages. All language teachers must be able to identify exactly what these terminological changes cover. They will then be able to understand the issues and take an active part in ongoing reflection in their discipline.

In proposing the CEFR to member States, the Council of Europe has furnished a major tool for achieving transparency, mutual understanding and comparability in both teaching systems and language qualifications. These ends are facilitated by the scale of common reference levels, whose potential for every language teacher will be demonstrated.

One of the CEFR's objectives is to encourage modern language teaching professionals to think about their practices. The proposed approach should help them report on experiences, materials or pedagogical techniques. In this way, teachers of different languages and cultures or from different countries can achieve mutual understanding and compare their teaching choices. This common language between language teachers from different training backgrounds and countries can promote exchange, comparison, debate and mutual enrichment. The analytical approach can and must be conducted with the greatest possible regard for the choices of all parties, for the traditions and specific nature of each language and for the particular teaching context concerned.

The advantages of this tool for the encouragement of teamwork between teachers of different languages in the same school will be obvious to all.

CHAPTER 1

KEY CONCEPTS FOR DESCRIBING A LANGUAGE COURSE

The CEFR is a comprehensive document. It seeks to cover, in a coherent fashion, a very large number of language teaching and learning situations and most of the problems encountered in such situations. This ambition means that some of its ideas are complex.

Needless to say, all language teachers and trainers who understandably want to take part in the debates in this field and judge what is at stake in the various pedagogical choices and decisions should refer to this document and be guided both by what it says and by the questions it asks in each section. However, on first tackling the CEFR a reader may well be disconcerted by the number of concepts introduced and the detailed explanations given in the various chapters. A full understanding of the CEFR will require several readings over a period of time, with certain sections being selected according to individual needs and interests.

To facilitate the first reading, we present below some of the parameters adopted by the CEFR and a small number of concepts chosen for their obvious nature from a language teacher's daily experience. To illustrate the argument, we shall introduce these different concepts and the proposed terminology (printed in bold type in the subsequent text) on the basis of a brief analysis of an extract from a textbook for French as a foreign language.

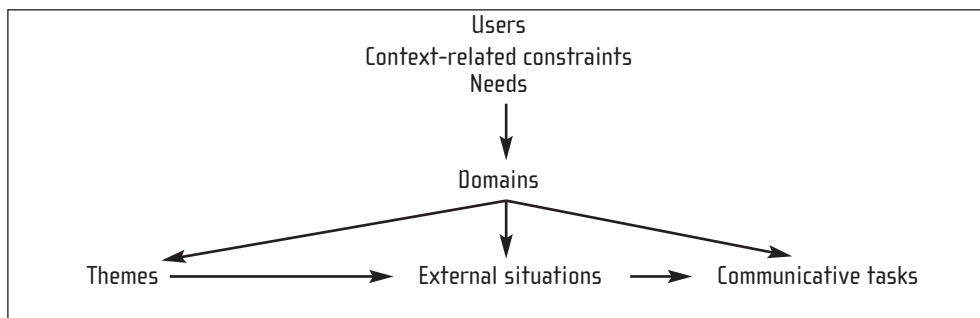
This chapter will simply set out the terms that appear essential for teaching situations. The practical consequences of these definitions will be examined in later chapters.

This double page from the textbook for French as a foreign language, chosen at random, appears at the end of the tenth teaching unit out of the 12 units in the book. The pages reproduced are preceded in the textbook by several activities and exercises on expression of the past in which the use of the imperfect is introduced.

1. Importance of the context in which teaching material is used

This context is described in the foreword to the textbook. The targeted users are older adolescents or adults who can only devote 60 hours of their time to the face-to-face learning of French (very strong time constraint). This explains why the textbook's content is limited to three sections of four units each, with complex but numerically restricted objectives (requesting and providing information; reacting, interacting; speaking of oneself and one's experience).

It will be noticed in passing that, in the CEFR's terminology, "text" is used to "cover any piece of language, whether a spoken utterance or a piece of writing, which users/learners receive, produce or exchange" (CEFR, page 93). We shall therefore speak of "text" for an oral or written document used with pupils or produced with them, including dialogues, provided the statements composing them constitute a whole.



➡ What can a language teacher learn from this?

Reflection on a teaching sequence or teaching material necessarily means addressing the issue of the constraints on the teaching given and considering the pupils' or students' needs. These parameters are too often wrongly regarded as obvious. The teaching situations we encounter in our classes are generally fundamentally different from the context in which this textbook of French as a foreign language is used. We rarely deal with adults and our pupils have more time for language learning. Their needs are not limited to the personal domains, or even to the occupational domain alone in the case of vocational training courses. The cultural content of modern language syllabuses means that it is necessary to cover themes falling within both the personal and the public domains (organisation and functioning of society, interpersonal relations in a specific social framework, important cultural reference points, debates within a country etc), with, of course, a different weighting between these domains according to the stage reached in the study path and the pupils' personal goals. Furthermore, in bilingual education courses, in systems where language learning is combined with the teaching of other subjects and in classes preparing for binational diplomas, the pupils' needs also fall within the academic domain. Language teachers will find tables in the CEFR showing examples of themes and external situations for each domain. It will be noticed that the CEFR approach does not exclude cultural content. This is fully integrated into the parameters for

analysis of a teaching situation. The place which modern language teaching accords in many countries' educational systems to cultural content in primary school and in lower and upper secondary school arises from the particular role of this subject in pupils' general training. It is also a statement that a language cannot be learnt without discovering the culture and civilisation of the countries concerned. This conviction in no way clashes with the Council of Europe approach, which since the CEFR was introduced has stressed that the social background of every speaker must be taken into account. It is clear that the description of a teaching situation or teaching material must necessarily take full account of such content.

2. What does the CEFR mean by “competences”?

The CEFR distinguishes the general competences of an individual (knowledge, know-how and existential competence) from communicative competence.

2.1. Individual general competences.

The **individual general competences** of users of this textbook of French as a foreign language are clearly assumed to be fairly high, as regards **knowledge** of the world (a presupposed knowledge of the rights and duties of tenants and owners etc), **know-how** (the textbook assumes that users know how to make a complaint etc) and **existential competence** (users are expected to carry out role playing between the tenant and owner of the house, which requires an ability to take risks and a co-operative attitude among the learners). These prerequisites must, of course, directly match the users' characteristics (context in which the textbook is used).

If the content of these pages is examined from the viewpoint of the transmission of **sociocultural knowledge** linked to the learning of French, it will be seen that the subjects tackled are the possibility of renting a house at the seaside in the summer, the prices charged, the amenities generally looked for, the difficulty of getting hold of people during August (the traditional holiday month) and perhaps, unfortunately, the common holiday rental frauds which intending tourists should be warned against. However, this latter point is offset by the idyllic picture of the hotel stay.

2.2. Communicative competence.

On this double page the development of **communicative competence** involves working on three of its components:

a) *The linguistic component*, ie

- **grammatical competence**: learning how to form the imperfect and use of this tense for communication tasks requiring its use (expressing annoyance about the continual inconveniences suffered the previous month; reporting in writing on how the stay went during the holidays just over);

Grammaire : formation de l'imparfait
 Terminaisons : -ais, -ais, -ait, -ions, -iez, -aient

Pour former l'imparfait, il faut connaître la forme utilisée avec nous au présent :

nous pouvons	→ je pouvais
nous faisons	→ je faisais
nous comprendons	→ je comprenais
nous disons	→ je disais

En dehors du verbe **être** (nous sommes → j'étais), cette règle fonctionne avec la totalité des verbes français.



– **phonological and orthographic competences:** relationship between the phonics and graphics of a sound as a final syllable;

• **Phonétique : phonie / graphie du son [ɛ] en finale**
 Écoutez et classez les mots qui se terminent par le son [ɛ] dans le tableau.

1. Je vis en paix.	et
2. Ce n'est pas vrai.	ét
3. Il fait très beau.	est
4. Tu as de la monnaie ?	es

– **lexical competence:** here, through the aids supplied for the written expression task, without, however, resulting in specific enrichment.

Avant de quitter l'hôtel Milton,
 prenez quelques minutes pour remplir
 ce petit questionnaire
 et donnez-nous votre opinion sur...

l'accueil	très amical
les chambres	confortables
le service	impeccable
les repas servis au restaurant	excellents
le petit déjeuner	copieux
le personnel	sympathique
les tarifs	corrects



b) The sociolinguistic component

The two texts (dialogue heard and dialogue produced by the users) are an opportunity for learning the politeness conventions during telephone contact with a friend or stranger. The written expression task shows the user the rules for writing a personal communication to a person very close to him or her.

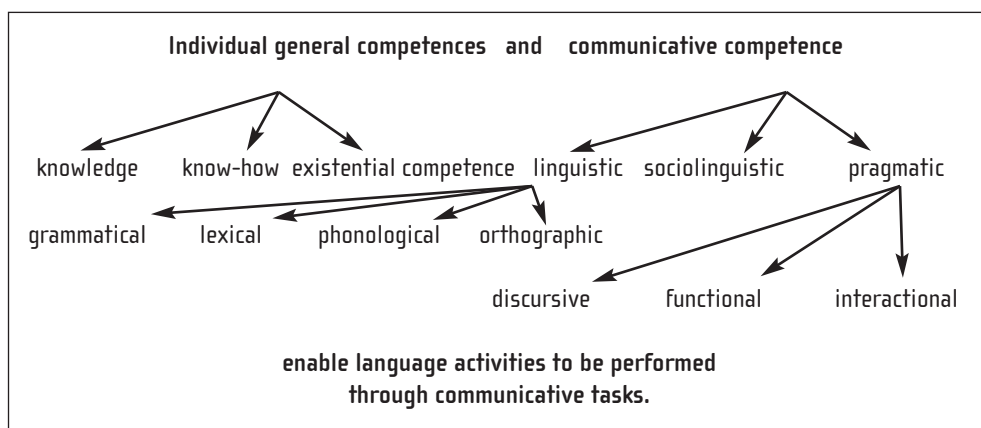
“Sociolinguistic competence is concerned with the knowledge and skills required to deal with the social dimension of language use [...]: linguistic markers of social relations; politeness conventions; expressions of folk-wisdom; register differences; and dialect and accent”. (CEFR, page 118)

c) The pragmatic component

Although not covered in detail on this double page, this component is present on at least two occasions: cohesion of a written text composed of short juxtaposed utterances; use of models of simple verbal exchanges.

“Pragmatic competences are concerned with the user/learner’s knowledge of the principles according to which messages are:

- a) organised, structured and arranged ('discourse competence');
- b) used to perform communicative functions ('functional competence');
- c) sequenced according to interactional and transactional schemata ('design competence')" (CEFR, page 123).



➡ What can a language teacher learn from this?

Contrary to widespread belief, the communicative approach developed in the CEFR is not conceived as the successive learning of language responses to identifiable and assessable needs. Success in comprehension or expression activities, through communicative tasks, is closely dependent on the development of competences, which represents the royal road to progress. The usefulness of the CEFR is that it reminds us that competences vary in nature and all contribute to pupil success. Language teachers can therefore ask themselves the following questions about their teaching practices and materials:

- What contribution is made to the development of pupils' individual general competences? For example, to what extent do the social forms of work, the tasks set and the practice of correction/assessment encourage pupils to take risks in spoken or written expression, which is an essential component of existential competence if progress is to be made in a modern language?
- Do the activities concerned really lead to an improvement in the various components of communicative competence?
- Does the development of communicative competence significantly incorporate, for example, the sociolinguistic and pragmatic components?

3. Language activities central to the analysis of a teaching approach

The essential language activities are:

- aural reception;
- visual reception;
- spoken interaction (in a dialogue situation);
- spoken production (description, presentation, narrative etc);
- written expression (report, article etc).

To these the CEFR adds:

- written interaction (e-mail etc);
- mediation by the same speaker between two languages or between two persons speaking the same language or two different languages.

In this textbook of French as a foreign language, the language is learnt through a succession of **language activities**: first, aural reception by listening to a recorded telephone conversation, and then spoken interaction during production of a dialogue on the same subject but between different persons, visual reception of an advertisement describing a flat for rent, and written production in the form of a letter concerning a holiday. Certain language activities are not the subject of training in these two pages: among other things, there is no mediation activity between languages or between several persons (transmission to a third party of a piece of information, translation, rephrasing an item of information in another language etc), nor is there any spoken production (account of events etc).

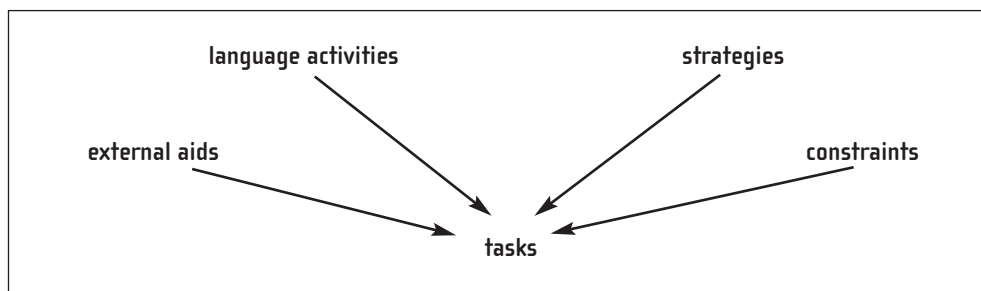
Each language activity is carried out independently. For example, the textbook does not suggest any spoken comment on the content of the telephone conversation heard, which would have created a combination of comprehension and production activities and thus interdependence between them. Training in these language reception and production activities is provided here through **specific tasks**, though the link between these tasks is obvious from the patterns of interaction (the two telephone conversations concern the same subject), the vocabulary employed and the linguistic aspects resulting from the instructions and speech situations.

The tasks are accompanied by **external aids**: the content of the first dialogue acts as a guide for production of the second dialogue, thus reducing the difficulty of the task; significant linguistic aid is provided through the information given on formation of the imperfect, through the vocabulary in the printed advertisement and through the vocabulary supplied for carrying out the written production task etc; furthermore, task predictability is very high and this is of considerable assistance.

The **constraints** that increase the difficulty of spoken interaction tasks are, however, by no means negligible (“Imagine the conversation between Jean-Louis and the owner of the house on his return from holiday”). The two roles are not equally difficult; while the role of the tenant can rely explicitly on the aids mentioned, the owner’s role receives no such aid and its success will have important implications for the unfolding of the dialogue.

Some of the tasks set encourage the use of **strategies** by the users, who mobilise knowledge, know-how and competences in order to perform these tasks. Let us take two examples of strategies:

- **preparation** for listening to the dialogue by reading the printed advertisement and execution of this task of understanding the spoken text by making use of the list of facilities mentioned in that advertisement;
- **planning** of the spoken production task, using notes taken while listening to the dialogue, and **execution** of the task by following the notes point by point. Execution of the role play can be **monitored** by reference to the content of the advertisement.



➡ What can a language teacher learn from this?

The distinction drawn in the CEFR between competences, language activities and communicative tasks should help language teachers to:

- clearly perceive the link between competences and activities; competences can be activated and assessed only through comprehension, expression or mediation activities ;
- distinguish within language expression activities, particularly in the spoken context, situations of interaction and production (in the various contents, the social forms of work, tasks and assessment criteria);
- analyse the combinations of these different activities in the tasks they require of their pupils;
- devote attention to the development of strategies necessary for carrying out non-routine tasks.

Judging by this double page, the structure of this textbook of French as a foreign language is largely dependent on linguistic progress and balanced training in the different language activities. The themes covered and the communicative tasks performed in this course seek to meet the foreseeable needs of an adult public with little time to devote to this type of learning.

To sum up

It is extremely unlikely that a reading of this description has enabled all readers to keep in mind the terminology and categories proposed by the CEFR. They will be used once again in describing extracts from other textbooks in the succeeding chapters.

It is important here to note

- that teaching content is closely tied up with the context (characteristics and needs of the recipients of the teaching, material context of the learning etc) and may be described by specifying the domains covered in the course (personal, public, occupational, educational), the external situations in which the tasks are requested, the themes dealt with and the sociocultural knowledge transmitted;
 - Context
 - Domains
 - External situations
 - Themes

- that the CEFR distinguishes individual general competences and communicative competence and that the latter is broken down into linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences;
 - Individual general competences
 - Communicative competence:
 - linguistic
 - sociolinguistic
 - pragmatic

- that language activities differ according to whether they concern reception or production and, for production activities, according to whether they take place interactively or continuously;
 - Language activities (written and spoken):
 - comprehension
 - production
 - mediation

- that the performance of communicative tasks requires strategies that must be developed in the same way as competences.
 - Communicative Tasks
 - Strategies

CHAPTER 2

ACTION-ORIENTED APPROACH IN LEARNING MODERN LANGUAGES

The CEFR asserts strongly that it is not prescriptive. It does not recommend the adoption of a particular linguistic school or a specific approach to the teaching of modern languages.

However, we are all aware that the adoption of an analysis grid or a terminology is not a neutral act. It leads naturally to a particular view of teaching and learning. The distinction introduced by the CEFR between the different language activities (comprehension and expression in the spoken and written contexts, mediation) necessarily begets the need for such a distinction in learning, training and assessment.

1. What is a communicative task?

In this chapter we shall examine one of the essential aspects of the conception of learning underlying the CEFR, as indeed all Council of Europe work in this area, namely “the action-oriented approach” to the learning and teaching of modern languages.


This “action-oriented approach” identifies the users of a language (and the learners) as “social agents”, ie members of society who have tasks [...] to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action” (CEFR, page 9).

“A task is defined as any purposeful action considered by an individual as necessary in order to achieve a given result in the context of a problem to be solved, an obligation to fulfil or an objective to be achieved” (CEFR, page 10).

The coherence of the ideas set out in Chapter 1 is again apparent here. The view of language teaching and learning embodied in the CEFR favours tasks involving one or more language activities for which social agents mobilise, in accordance with acquired strategies, their individual general competences (knowledge of the world and sociocultural knowledge, behaviour etc) and their communicative competence (linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic).

It is important to remember **that a task exists only if the action is motivated by a goal or a need**, whether personal or generated by the learning situation, if the pupils clearly perceive the goal pursued and **if such action leads to an identifiable outcome**. One’s mind immediately turns, of course, to project pedagogy, which is certainly the most successful form of an action-oriented approach. However, this central place assigned to the communicative task concerns all pedagogical acts.

Let us compare two extracts (reproduced below) from the same chapter of a Spanish textbook.



Écoute la description de la place. Le dessinateur a fait sept erreurs en la dessinant. Repère-les.
Réécoute la description et note les différences sur ton cahier de brouillon. Si tu sais dessiner, représente la place en respectant les indications données dans l'enregistrement.

4 *²⁴ Escucha las palabras y apunta las que tienen el sonido «ch».

In both cases, we are dealing with a spoken message reception activity. But the analogy stops there.

It will be seen straightaway that the second extract does not possess the characteristics of a communicative task. Action is indeed required of the pupils (ticking a list of words), but it is purely a question of form. No real-life situation can be discerned which could create in the pupils a need to identify the sound indicated in the phrases heard.

However, in the case of the first extract, one can indeed speak of a task because the goal is based on the meaning of the utterances heard and the instruction given is similar to a well-known activity capable of stimulating the pupils' interest. Similarly, the outcome has obviously more communicative meaning than in the second extract because it involves modifying the drawing in line with the instructions.

This will be no surprise to any modern language teacher and we already find numerous examples of successful communicative tasks in the textbooks available to teachers. We shall confine ourselves to six examples ranging from primary school to the end of secondary education.

2. Examples of tasks in modern language textbooks

3 Schreib!   - - -












Lieber Weihnachtsmann!

Ich heiße

Ich bin Ich bin sehr brav!

Ich wünsche mir,

und

Vielen, vielen Dank!

Dein(e)

Here we can unhesitatingly speak of a task because the outcome is identifiable (letter to Father Christmas) and the situation is a definite one (the recipient is known and the writer of the letter is writing on his or her own behalf). The pupils are here invited to write a genuine letter which could in fact be posted.

Even if most pupils of this age take a humorous and detached view of this task, the letter to Father Christmas is a cultural reality.

PARLER

Têtes en l'air

❶ Observez les 2 illustrations. Identifiez les objets oubliés.
 ❷ Téléphonnez à chaque personne pour lui rendre ce qui lui appartient (sac, lunettes, etc.).

Qui sont-ils ?



Jean
la copine de Jean



Pierre
la sœur de Pierre





le fils de Pierre
sa fiancée

The situation is a plausible one and the telephone conversations to be produced are motivated by the meaning. Pupils have to make sure of the identity of the person contacted, satisfy themselves that they are indeed talking to the owner of the lost object and agree on ways and means of returning it.

Even if it does not lead to a written production, the outcome is clearly identifiable.



ROLE PLAY: ARGUE YOUR CASE!

You are a senior student in an American high school. You have a social studies project in which you must generate at least 5 suggestions for reducing or avoiding violence. You discuss your ideas with a classmate who has different views on the subject. Both of you want to prevent gun violence but you do not agree on the ways to reduce it.

1. Decide on a role:


- You are pro-gun. You are an NRA supporter.
- You are anti-gun. You want more gun control.

2. Prepare your arguments.

Select a few examples to illustrate them.

3. Act out your role.

Pupils are invited to take part in a real debate on a current topic. The outcome of the exchanges is open and will depend on completion of the task by each of the pupils. When the roles come to be chosen, the pupils can defend their personal position or play a set role. In all cases, they will have to take account of the other person in order to complete the task.



JUST SAY: "NO"

If you are off on hols* to one of these places, don't even think about packing any extras.

- The import or export of heroin, opium and cannabis from Singapore is punishable by death, while smuggling ecstasy could land you 30 years in the slammer and 15 strokes of the cane. If you have any drugs on you, it's presumed you intend to traffick them.
- In Hong Kong the maximum penalty for drug trafficking is life imprisonment and a hefty fine.
- Under Mexican law drug traffickers can get between 10 and 25 years imprisonment.
- Drug laws are strictly enforced in the Caribbean. The penalty for carrying narcotics in or out of Trinidad and Tobago is up to 15 years with no possibility of parole, while in the Dominican Republic it carries a sentence of up to 20 years with forced labour and no bail.

*on hols = on holiday

1. Read the above information entitled "Just say: no!" and make a chart with the places mentioned and the sentences you risk for smuggling drugs.


2. Which place seems most risky?

The search for information in the text must lead to a definite outcome which shapes the meaning contained in the text read by focusing pupils' attention on the relevant information.

Lecture

Ça s'est passé en 1944.
Il est né en juin.
Nous sommes le 12 avril.

2 Lisez les phrases et remettez-les dans l'ordre :



1 Tout à coup, j'ai entendu un petit bruit bizarre sous ma chaise. J'ai tout de suite regardé mon sac à dos posé par terre près de moi, puis les tables autour de moi mais tout était normal.

2 Vous voulez connaître la fin de l'histoire ? Venez chez moi voir le gros chat noir qui dort sur mon canapé !

3 Voilà une petite aventure qui m'est arrivée l'année dernière : c'était en été, en juillet, le mardi 90 très exactement. Je me souviens de la date parce que c'était mon anniversaire.

4 Imaginez ! Il y avait un bébé chat qui dormait tranquillement dans mon sac ! Incroyable, n'est-ce pas ?

5 Il était 11 heures du matin, il faisait très chaud et je lisais un magazine à la terrasse d'un petit café.

6 Ensuite, j'ai voulu payer mon citron pressé mais quand j'ai mis la main dans mon sac pour prendre mon porte-monnaie, j'ai eu une grande surprise !

Ordre :

Here too, the task is targeted at an expected outcome, reconstitution of the written text in its chronology. Even though the purpose of the exercise is focused on locating the chronological markers of the narrative (pragmatic discursive competence), the pupils' attention will be directed at the meaning of the paragraphs.

Cerchiamo



Cerca le caratteristiche
del sito

www.Retepulita.it

e di www.VirgilioJunior

Prepara con i tuoi compagni
un sondaggio sull'uso del
computer.

Elaborate insieme una decina
di domande brevi.

The task required of the pupils is clearly identified. They must devise a survey on use of the computer. The two criteria are met: negotiating the meaning and reaching a predicted outcome.

3. How can a communicative task be analysed?

Quite obviously – and this is already clear when the tasks listed above are looked at closely – we are invariably dealing with a combination of several dimensions: general and communicative competences, language reception or production activities, domains and themes covered, strategies employed and tasks. Depending on the case, the importance of this or that dimension may predominate, without this affecting the requirement that there should be a task with goals and an identifiable outcome.

In the extracts below from two English textbooks for the final classes in secondary education, it is clear that decisive weight is accorded to the development of strategies for understanding the written word in the case of *Going Places* and for spoken expression in the commentary on a table in *XL*.

●○○ on your marks...

- 1- Using the two photos in the order you like, make up the girl's story.
- 2- Link the story with the titles of the extract and of the book.

Going Places, page 65

O P E N I N G



THE SALVATION ARMY

Look at the painting

- 1 a. What do you know about the Salvation Army?
b. Briefly describe the scene.
➤ See UNDERSTANDING... p. 144-145 for more information
- 2 a. Salvation Army members are called *soldiers* and *officers*. What elements suggest the military here?
b. The Salvation Army is a Christian organisation. How does this appear here?

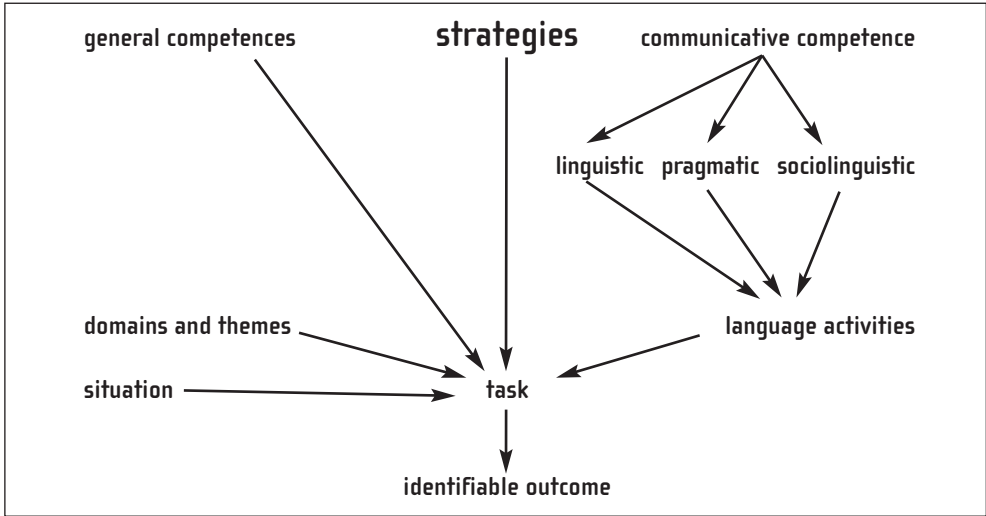
- 1 Choose one of the people in the crowd. Imagine his or her feelings and reasons for being there.
- 1 Who or what does the painter seem to be particularly interested in? (explain)
the Salvationists the crowd the interaction between them

Hypotheses must be formulated, taking the setting and the presentation of the text as the basis.

The strategy transmitted here is to take the theme as a basis for observing how the picture conveys it and afterwards to guess the painter's intention.

XL, page 134

The balance between the different dimensions present in the two extracts can be described in schematic form as follows:



The combination may work in favour of other dimensions, for example in the two extracts below in favour of linguistic competence, in very different forms and with very different goals:

On s'entraîne !

🎧 Écoutez madame Ferré expliquer comment était sa ville dans les années 70 puis racontez comment elle est maintenant :

1. AVANT

2. MAINTENANT

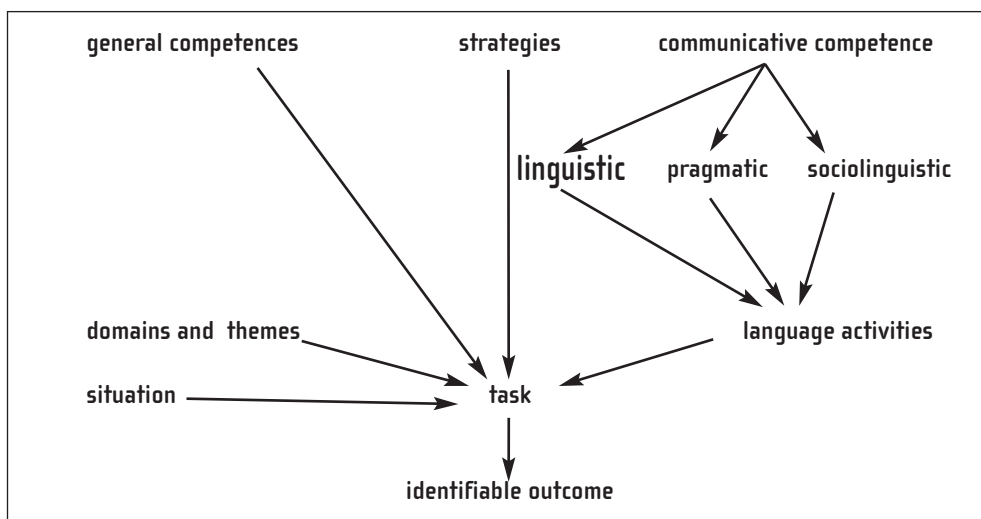
<i>nous achetons</i>	<i>nous prenons</i>
<i>j'achetais</i>	<i>je prenais</i>
<i>tu achetais</i>	<i>tu prenais</i>
<i>il/elle/on achetait</i>	<i>il/elle/on prenait</i>
<i>nous achetions</i>	<i>nous prenions</i>
<i>vous achetiez</i>	<i>vous preniez</i>
<i>ils/elles achetaient</i>	<i>ils/elles prenaient</i>

A votre tour

3 À deux. Vous faites visiter votre collège à un nouvel élève ou à un correspondant. Il vous pose des questions et vous lui présentez les salles, le matériel, etc. en vous aidant des verbes donnés et en utilisant **qui, que** et **où** :

Exemple : Voilà la classe où je travaille.
C'est madame Dunod qui s'occupe de la cantine.

Souvenez-vous...
Voilà le collège où je travaille.
Je ne connais pas la fille qui parle à Guillaume.



In the following two extracts, we can see that priority is given to pragmatic competence: functional competence for the French textbook and discursive competence in the Italian textbook.

A vos stylos

2 Complétez les dialogues avec les mots suivants :

– Avec plaisir. – Non, je suis désolé(e). – Non, je ne peux pas.
– Oui, d'accord. Je veux bien.

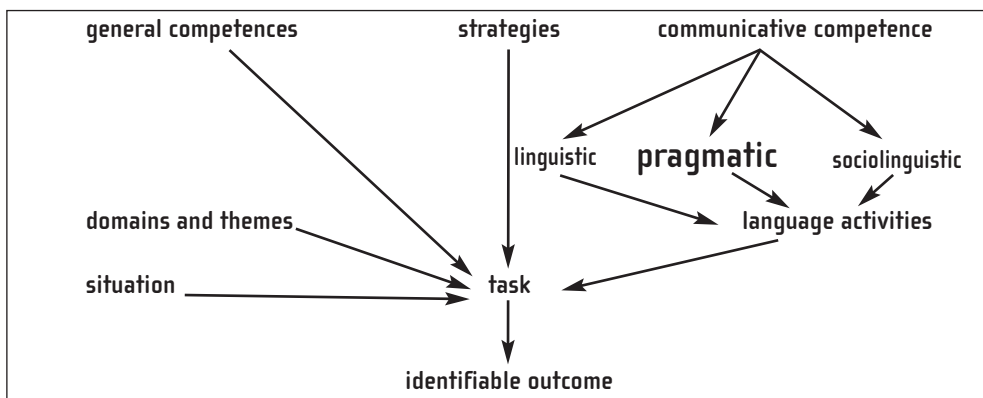
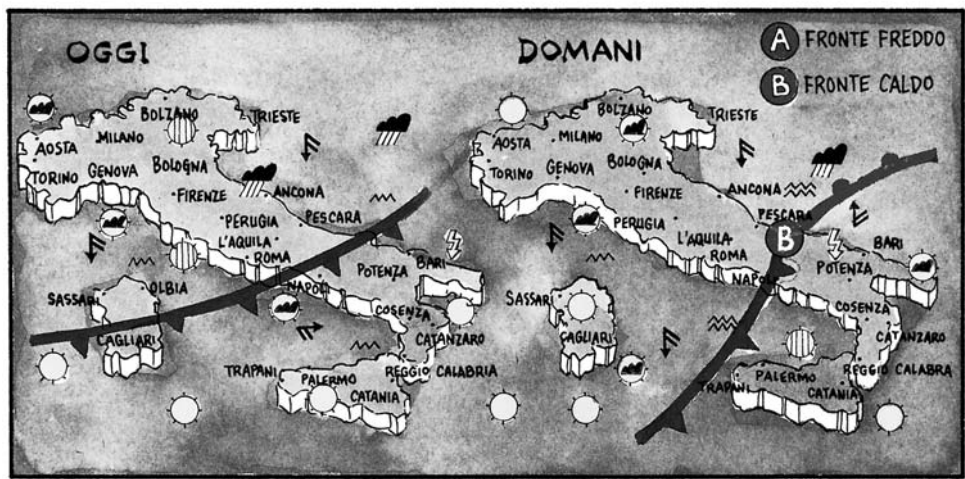
1 – Tu viens avec nous au cinéma ?
–
– Rendez-vous à 6 heures et demie chez moi.

2 – On fait du roller après les cours ?
–
– Pourquoi ?
– J'ai mal aux genoux.

3 – Vous voulez un café ?
–
– J'ai du café italien. Il est délicieux.

4 – C'est mon anniversaire samedi. Tu peux venir ?
–
– Oh ! Dommage !

Questa sera sei tu il presentatore o la presentatrice della trasmissione «Che tempo fa?»
 Spiega in dettaglio ai telespettatori che tempo farà domani in tutta l'Italia.



In the last example below, it is reasonable to think that priority is given to the theme dealt with.



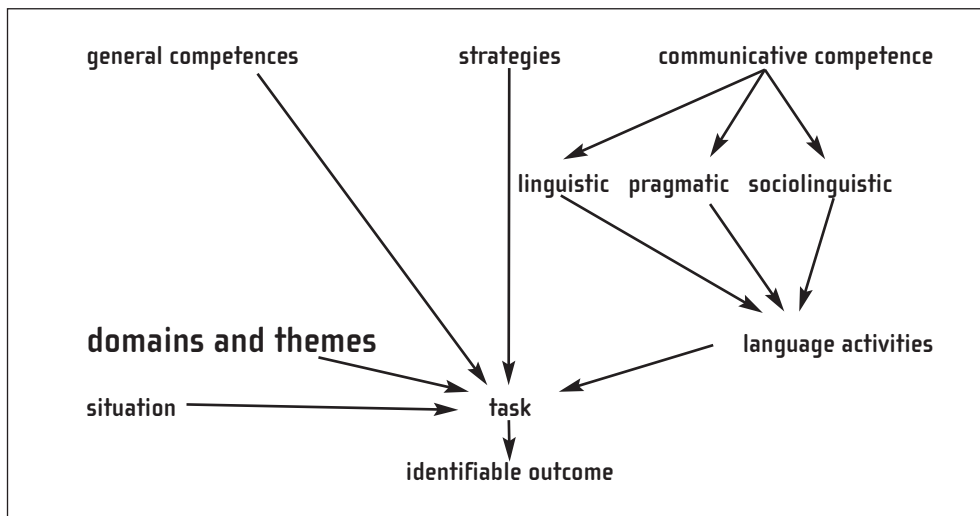
Nicola GIANFARELLI,
Il matrimonio di Renzo e Lucia, Palazzo Pitti, Firenze

Cerchiamo

Quale era la situazione politica della penisola nel 1600?



Here we have a search for information on a subject in conjunction with use of the table. The result of the search should enable pupils to develop the theme addressed here.



These different balances between several dimensions enable account to be taken of the teaching objectives and pupils' aptitudes. They meet the need to vary approaches and to diversify training. However, they do not jeopardise the existence of a task, which is the mark of a teaching approach meeting the requirements of communicational teaching. Through the task, pupils become effectively active and the work takes on meaning in their eyes. **The task promotes their personal commitment to the learning process.**

We see, however, from these few examples that the task may vary in nature according to the balance determined by the goals pursued. It may tend to be a genuinely communicative task or, on the contrary, it may be essentially a learning task.

➡ What can language teachers learn from this?

They can analyse their teaching materials and procedures by asking themselves if the work given to the pupils actually corresponds to tasks.

They can also ask themselves if these tasks cover all the dimensions mentioned above and if priority should be given to any particular one of those dimensions in order to take account of the pupils' needs.

They may then consider it desirable to augment the range of tasks performed in their classes by including other tasks of which they can find examples in textbooks relating to the language they are teaching or other languages.

We have so far looked for the presence of tasks in school textbooks. However, it is clear that teachers are also perfectly able to create tasks from materials available to them.

The extract below refers to a language activity without proposing any explicit task. What is expected of the pupils is obvious: spoken production regarding the caricature on the basis of an understanding of the caption and exchanges (spoken interaction) in order to compare viewpoints on the theme addressed. This is made clear by the aids supplied; these consist of the vocabulary needed for expression.

OPOSICIÓN

HACERER,
Muy interesante,
03/04/2002:

ESTAMOS EN EL AÑO 50 ANTES DE JESUCRISTO. TODA ESPAÑA ESTÁ OCUPADA POR LOS ROMANOS... ¿TODA? ¡NO! UNA ALDEA POBLADA POR IRREDUCTIBLES GALOS RESISTE TODAVÍA Y SIEMPRE AL INVASOR. Y LA VIDA NO ES FÁCIL PARA LAS LEGIONES DE TEUTONES EN LOS REDUCIDOS CAMPAMENTOS DE MALLORCA, MENORCA, IBIZA Y FORMENTERA...

Mallorca, Menorca, Ibiza y Formentera, son las principales islas Baleares. Los teutones son un antiguo pueblo guerrero germánico; hoy vale por alemanes.

Pistas

La dominación
Un pastiche /retención/, la insignia /plante/, hincar /invadir una invasión/ una caricatura /la jarra de cerveza/ conquistar /una actitud blesante/: una actitud injuriosa.

Tomarlo a broma /tourner l'affaire en dérision/ se sentir despojado, sentirse [te/i] despojado / une lutte dérisoire, una lucha /trivial/ /se moquer de, moñarse de / se capar, captar / ser incapaz de / una lupa sentirse [te/i] extranjero minúsculo / il n'y a pas moyen de, no hay manera de.

RECORDA

HASTA QUE = JUSQU'À CE QUE

- Avec l'indicatif, le moment attendu se produit effectivement :
No habló hasta que salimos de casa → Il n'a rien dit jusqu'au moment où nous sommes sortis.
- Avec le subjonctif, le moment attendu ne se pro-

To create a task for the pedagogical use of this caricature, it would be possible to hide the parody of the very well-known introduction to all the Asterix albums and ask the pupils to reconstitute it with the help of this text as it appears in the Spanish version of the comic strip, which is reproduced in the teacher's book.

It would then be possible to investigate the reasons why the caricaturist should want to draw such a comparison between the Romans in ancient Gaul and German tourists in Spain. The result could perhaps take the form of a collectively produced table drawing a parallel between the Romans and tourists.

Depending on the class and pupils' abilities, pupils could then be asked to make or describe a parody of another passage in this comic strip chosen by them.

Just as the presence of a work instruction does not necessarily signify a communicative task, the absence of instructions is no obstacle to the performance of tasks.

Estamos en el año 50 antes de Jesucristo. Toda la Galia está ocupada por los romanos... ¿Toda? ¡No! Una aldea poblada por irreducibles galos resiste todavía y siempre al invasor. Y la vida no es fácil para las guarniciones de legionarios romanos en los reducidos campamentos de Babaórum, Acuárium, Laudánium y Petibónum...

Teacher's book

4. The place of communicative tasks in the pedagogical sequence

Tasks cannot, of course, be separated from their surroundings in a textbook.

With this in mind, let us take a look at a first-year textbook for the teaching of German.

In this chapter of the textbook (Chapter 8 out of a total of 10) we have the following situation: the German characters are hosting their French pen friends. During a walk in the town centre, they visit a department store. They separate but arrange to meet at the exit of the store at 3.30pm. The page reproduced shows that the French and Germans lose each other; the French characters (who naturally speak French among themselves) do not know what to do. In the next page of the textbook, the focus is on the attitude and reactions of the German characters, who, in fact, are waiting at another exit of the store in another street.

2. Akt

1. «Où sont passés les Allemands ?»
Ihr seid die französischen Partner. Was antwortet ihr der Dame?

verloren haben : avoir perdu
verabredet sein : avoir rendez-vous

2. Kann die Infodame helfen?
a. Hör zu und ergänze!

b. Was hat Frau Stockinger gesagt?
Die Infodame erzählt.

Die Infodame: Ich habe mit Frau Stockinger telefoniert.
Sie hat gesagt, dass Claudia nicht zu Hause ist.
Sie hat gesagt, dass ...

weit : loin
nicht weit : pas loin

3. Wo bleibt mein Partner / meine Partnerin?
Partner A sucht Claudia, Kim, Kai oder Heiko. Partner B ist die Infodame.

Partner A: Mein Partner hat gesagt, dass er Sportschuhe braucht. Wo kann ich ihn finden?
Partner B: In der Sportabteilung.
Partner A: Und wo ist es?
Partner B: Im vierten Stock.
Partner A: Danke schön.

Merk dir das!

The types of training proposed on this page of the textbook are based on a sequence of tasks which we shall subject to the same analysis as above.

Ihr seid die französischen Partner. Was antwortet ihr der Dame?

AUSGANG STEPHANSTRASSE

Où sont passés nos correspondants ?

Heiko avait bien dit 15h30 à la sortie!

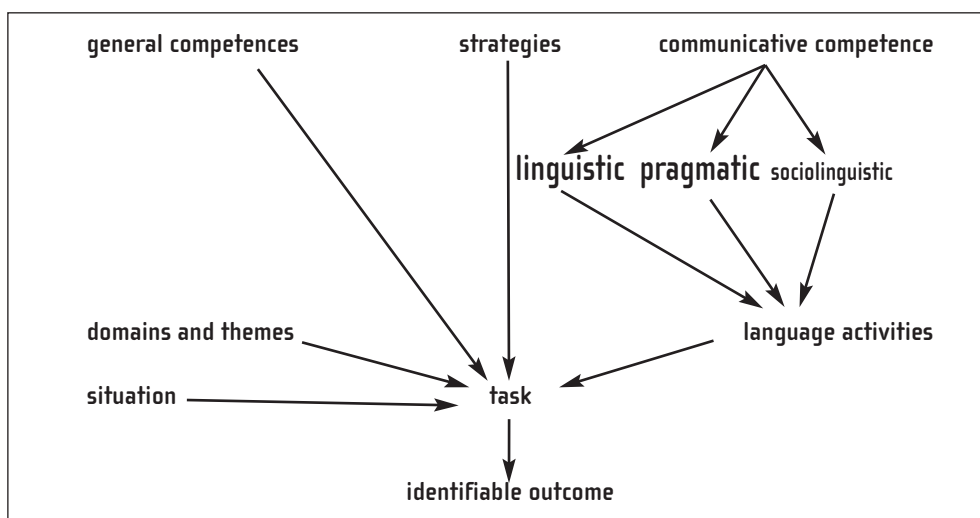
Ça fait déjà 10 minutes qu'on attend.

Habtez-vous un problème? Peut-être pouvons-nous vous aider?

Is this a task? The reply is in the affirmative for two reasons. The need to speak is motivated by the situation presented. It is necessary to explain the situation to a passer-by, who has noticed that these children are in difficulty. The expected result is an elaborate and coherent statement.

The language activity employed is spoken production.

The goal pursued is obviously the development of linguistic competence (expression of the past) and pragmatic competence (describing a complex problem to an adult by juxtaposing simple statements in a coherent sequence).



2. Kann die Infodame helfen?



a. Hör zu und ergänze!



b. Was hat Frau Stockinger gesagt?

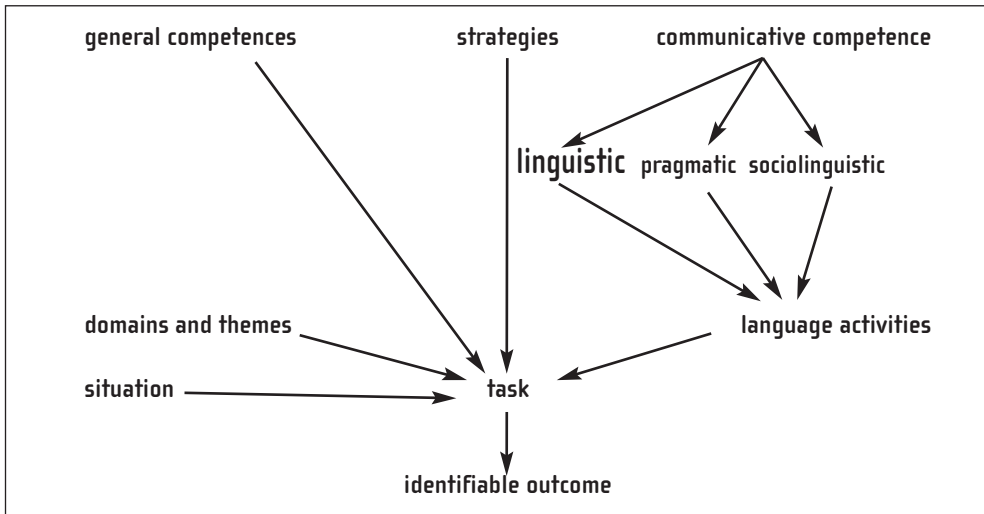
Die Infodame erzählt.

Die Infodame: Ich habe mit Frau Stockinger telefoniert.
 Sie hat gesagt, dass Claudia nicht zu Hause ist.
 Sie hat gesagt, dass ...

Is this an exercise or a task? The question may well be asked. Priority is clearly given here to linguistic competence: the production of statements involving dependent propositions introduced by the conjunction “dass” (sie sagt, dass = she says that...), requiring the conjugated element of the verb to be placed at the end, a very important point in German syntax. This content may well suggest an exercise. However, there is a plausible communication situation and the linguistic form imposed is well suited to the utterance situation. The expected outcome is also iden-

tifiable: a sequence of statements constituting a coherent whole with respect to this situation. The necessary criteria for a task are definitely present.

The language activities are aural reception, spoken production and, to a lesser extent, mediation.



Partner A: Mein Partner hat gesagt, dass er Sportschuhe braucht. Wo kann ich ihn finden?
Partner B: In der Sportabteilung.
Partner A: Und wo ist es?
Partner B: Im vierten Stock.
Partner A: Danke schön.

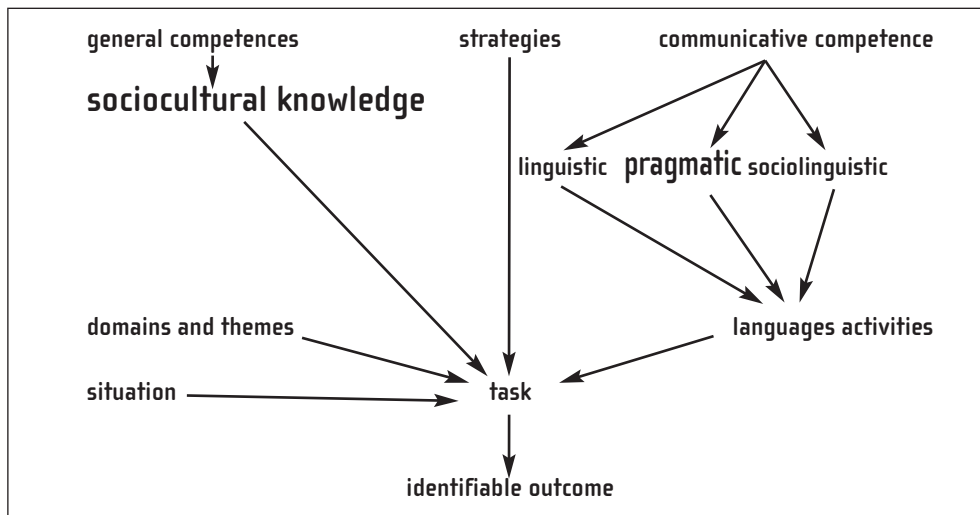


The task is motivated here by a need arising from the situation: to agree on a strategy for finding the German hosts in the store, particularly through the information available concerning their buying intentions.

The outcome is also clearly identified: ascertaining the place where they may be.

Linguistic competence is present in the form of learning of location, but priority is given here to pragmatic competence (learning a recurring conversational model) and to sociocultural knowledge (organisation and name of the chief divisions of a department store, using the illustration in the textbook).

The language activities concerned are visual reception and spoken interaction.



This page of the textbook is therefore based on different tasks, using a variety of combinations of competences and activities. To prevent fragmentation of the unity of the action, the language activities (reception and production) are carried out in credible tasks whose sequence is determined by a broader task, namely to deal with a situation that could become part of pupils' future experience. The actual training exercises in comprehension and production activities are not devised by the writers of the textbook, nor perceived by the pupils, as ends in themselves but constitute an effort to solve a problem that might well arise in pupils' real-life experience. One could almost talk of a single task carried out through a series of micro-tasks.

The conduct of the class proposed on this page comes under the heading of what might be called 'guidance by task'.

However, this does not occur at the expense of the development of **communicative competences** (linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic) because, as we have seen, these are deployed for carrying out the tasks and because this textbook is also extremely scrupulous as regards grammatical progression through the chapters.

To give an idea of how far we have come, this page will be compared with a page in another German textbook intended for the same class level which dates from 1981 and is put together, one suspects, very differently.

6b. Beim Konditor



(Die Großmutter und Tante Eva in einer Konditorei).

Tante Eva :
Gudrun? Bist du sicher, daß die Sahne hier frisch ist ?

Die Großmutter:
Natürlich! Die Sahne ist hier frisch.

Tante Eva :
Gudrun? Glaubst du, daß das Eis hier gut ist?

Die Großmutter:
Ja! Das Eis ist hier gut.



Tante Eva :
Gudrun? Du sagst doch immer, daß die Torte hier so gut ist.

Die Großmutter:
Eva! Hier schmeckt alles gut.

Tante Eva :
Aber meine Figur... Oder findest du, daß ich schlank bin?

Die Großmutter:
Aber sicher! Du bist schlank.



Tante Eva :
Präulein! Zwei Stück Torte, bitte! Und auch eine Portion Schlagsahne!



Hier schmeckt alles gut...



Grammaire

Le noyau verbal dans la phrase autonome

Le noyau verbal d'une phrase autonome n'est pas placé à la fin du groupe verbal :



Dans une phrase autonome qui exprime une affirmation, le noyau verbal est placé en deuxième position, après le sujet par exemple. Mais le déterminant du noyau verbal (ici « frisch ») reste à sa place et conserve l'accent du groupe verbal.

Übung

Modell: Die Großmutter weiß, daß die Sahne frisch ist.
Die Sahne ist frisch.

Die Großmutter weiß, daß die Sahne frisch ist. Die Großmutter weiß, daß das Eis gut ist. - Onkel Volker weiß, daß die Jungen durstig sind. - Udo weiß, daß Ramses hungrig ist. - Karin weiß, daß die Bonbons billig sind. - Udo weiß, daß Jeans praktisch sind. - Brigitte weiß, daß die Pralinen teuer sind.

The reproduced extract presents two characters in a lively and humorous dialogue written by the authors to introduce and permit the use by pupils of the topic covered by the grammatical explanations on the second page (the place of the conjugated element of the verbal group). It also conveys sociocultural knowledge (tearooms in Germany).

A reading of these two pages after the preceding German textbook reveals the total absence of work instructions concerning the dialogue. These instructions would in any case have been superfluous, because the “normal” conduct of the class consists of fixed stages, namely listening to the dialogue and reproducing its content under the supervision of the teacher, who then encourages the pupils to comment on the behaviour of the characters. The particular success of this dialogue must have led to rich and amusing exchanges between the pupils about the attitude of “Tante Eva”, who pretends to be worried about her figure and the quality of the ices served in this tearoom and who, once politely reassured by her interlocutor, orders both a cake and an ice cream. Use of the language event concerned takes place naturally. This double page conforms perfectly to the methodology used at that time.

Can we speak here of a communicative task?

This textbook can effectively meet this requirement for the use of communication subject to two conditions being met: that the teacher manages to create real communication in the group concerning this document and that he or she anticipates an outcome, for example in the form here of a record on the blackboard. However, even in this case, the task will remain highly artificial because the visible

outcome (a record on the blackboard) will not really be the reason for execution of the task but at the very most will serve to support the exchanges.

However, it quickly becomes clear that the two extracts exhibit many differences. We have already stressed that the tasks are conceived in a radically different fashion: the staging of utterance situations simulating use of the language in the foreign country with different interlocutors and varied speech intentions in *Aufwind*; and a “pedagogical task” in the second case with limitation of linguistic and sociolinguistic competence to a single utterance situation.

Another important difference concerns the **language activities** carried out:

- specific training in different language activities in *Aufwind*;
- mixing of aural reception, visual reception and spoken interaction in *Hallo Freunde*.

Here we have what undoubtedly constitutes an essential contribution by the CEFR to language teaching: **it lays stress on the combination between task execution and one or more language activities; it emphasises the importance of the authenticity of situations in relation to pupils’ communication needs.**

CHAPTER 3

SCALE OF COMMON REFERENCE LEVELS

1. Adoption of the scale of common reference levels in official texts

The rapid success of the CEFR in both Europe and France is due essentially to its proposal for a scale of language competence levels common to all languages, institutions and European countries.

The goal of the CEFR is, as we have seen, to encourage transparency in Europe in the field of modern languages. It is therefore no surprise that the scale of levels is usually perceived as the cornerstone in the edifice.

The scale is composed of three sections:

- basic: level A
- independent: level B
- proficient: level C

and each section is itself divided into two levels, level 1 and level 2.

We can therefore speak of a 6-level scale.

Basic User		Independent user		Proficient user	
A1 Breakthrough	A2 Waystage	B1 Threshold	B2 Vantage	C1 Effective Operational Proficiency	C2 Mastery

PROFICIENT USER	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
INDEPENDENT USER	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear and detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, and leisure etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
BASIC USER	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Common Reference Levels: global scale (CEFR, page 24)

The importance of this scale for any language teacher becomes clear upon examination of the official texts referring to it in the various countries and in Europe. To take the example of France, these references are found everywhere, as shown below in the goals of language teaching and language knowledge requirements.

a) Since 2002, modern language teaching syllabuses have set language teaching goals as follows with reference to the CEFR scale:

	Listening	Reading	Spoken interaction	Spoken production	Writing
<i>École élémentaire:</i>					
End of stage 3	A1	A1	A1	A1	A1
<i>Collège</i>					
End of Level 1 ML1	A2	A2	A2	A2	A2
End of Level 2 ML1	B1	B1	B1	B1	B1
End of <i>collège</i> ML2	A2	A2	A2	A2	A2
Third technology class (agricultural education)	A2	A2	A2	A2	A1
<i>Lycée professionnel:</i>					
CAP	B1	B1	B1	B1	A2
<i>LEGT: end of upper</i>					
secondary stage					
ML1	B2	B2	B1/B2	B2	B2
ML2	B1/B2	B1/B2	B1	B1/B2	B1/B2
ML3	A2/B1	A2/B1	A2	A2/B1	A2/B1

The information in this table is confirmed by the Decree of 22 August 2005 on the organisation of modern language teaching in schools. Article 1 makes the reference to the CEFR official:

“The levels of proficiency in modern foreign languages expected of pupils in schools, *collèges* and *lycées* coming under the public or private education systems are fixed, in accordance with the system of reference for proficiency levels in the annex to this decree, as follows:

At the end of elementary school, Level A1 in the modern language studied;

At the end of compulsory schooling, Level B1 for the first modern language studied and Level A2 for the second modern language studied;

At the end of secondary studies, Level B2 for the first modern language studied and Level B1 for the second modern language studied.

The syllabuses and methods for the teaching of modern foreign languages are defined in accordance with these objectives.” (*Journal Officiel* No 197 of 25 August 2005)

b) The preliminary draft performance indicators for “School education” under the Organic Law on Finance Laws – which specify the objectives assigned to the national education system by the National Assembly and the Senate – include:

- Indicator No 11, Objective 1, Programme 2: proportion of pupils who have attained in foreign languages Level B1 of the European Framework of Reference at the end of *collège*;
- c) Texts stating the level of proficiency required of non-linguist teachers for teaching a modern language in primary school also refer to the CEFR:

Qualifications of staff responsible for teaching modern languages in primary school:

“The level expected of candidates for provisional qualification is Level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages of the Council of Europe for spoken understanding and Level B1 for spoken expression.” (Circular of 29 October 2001)

Oral modern foreign language test in external competitions to recruit teachers for schools:

“The whole of the test is at Level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference, which corresponds to Independent User.” (Annex 1 to the Order of 10 May 2005).

To discharge the responsibilities assigned to them, it is therefore essential for all language teachers to know exactly what these levels signify.

Three essential aspects of the scale should be stressed.

2. Reference levels and language reception and production activities

For teaching and assessment, it is vital to understand that the division into six levels proposed in the CEFR scale is insufficient. An overall level (A2 or B1, for example) makes little sense.

A pupil’s level of competence can only be observed through language activities, whence the importance of describing these six reference levels separately for each type of language activity.

All language teachers know from experience that pupils are not all equally successful in comprehension or expression, whether written or oral. We all know pupils who can understand the essential elements of a simple written or spoken text in a foreign language without necessarily being able to reproduce it orally or express themselves on that subject.

That is why the CEFR breaks down the scale of levels according to different language activities: listening – reading – writing – spoken interaction – spoken production. We thus have a self-assessment grid, which is reproduced on page 41. For each of the boxes in this grid, the CEFR proposes a definition distinguished from the content of the other boxes along a vertical axis by the type of language activity employed and along a horizontal axis by the level of competences attained.

		Level A2	
		I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	
Spoken interaction	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help the four-minute what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with the 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).
		I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	

A pupil's level of competence can therefore be defined separately according to his or her abilities in each language activity.

The same person may, for example, quite legitimately and naturally be at Level A2 in visual reception and at Level A1 in written expression in the same language. In particular situations linked to the nature of a language or to specific requirements regarding use of that language, he or she may even be only partially competent in a language. In the case of neighbouring languages (for example, Romance or Teutonic languages) it may happen, for example, that pupils who have learnt a language belonging to one linguistic family supplement their competences by simply learning visual reception in another language of the same family. To satisfy the needs of certain types of study, personal activities or jobs, pupils or students may decide to concentrate on one language activity rather than another and thus exhibit a considerable imbalance between the levels reached in reception or expression, whether spoken or written.

The imbalance between competence levels in the different language activities must be recognised as natural. Far from being an obstacle, this asymmetry may be a force for learning. The teaching consequences are extremely numerous, particularly as regards the distinction in linguistic proficiency between what is necessary for understanding and what is necessary for expression.

Thanks to this self-assessment grid in the five different communication activities, language teachers now possess the means to record such reality exactly. **A finding of imbalance in the results obtained by one and the same pupil, sometimes wrongly interpreted as a failure, is becoming less a matter of intuition. It can now be expressed reliably and positively.**

Table 2. Common Reference Levels: self-assessment grid

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Listening	I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	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.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
Reading	I can understand familiar texts and very basic sentences, for example notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.
Spoken Interaction	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slow rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask very simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can only understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	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 hobbies, work, travel and current events.	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate and relate my opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can find the words and I can do so smoothly rather than other people are hardly aware of it.
Spoken Production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present a clear, smoothly flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate need. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select style appropriate to the reader in mind.	I can write clear, smoothly flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.

3. Reference levels and communicative tasks

In line with the central place occupied by communicative tasks in the CEFR conception of language teaching and learning, all definitions of reference levels proposed in this grid are expressed, for the most part, in terms of the way a pupil can carry out certain communicative tasks as a result of the competences acquired in a language.

To give readers a better grasp of the logic behind the construction of this grid, the definitions of the competence levels for understanding of the written word are presented below in no particular order and in “exploded” form. They will have no difficulty in identifying, possibly without consulting the table on page 41, the gradation between the proposed descriptions and in linking them to the six different reference levels A1 to C2.

1	Read job-related texts written in everyday language.
2	Read articles and reports on contemporary issues and understand the particular attitude of the authors or a certain viewpoint.
3	Read personal letters and understand descriptions of events, expression of feelings and wishes.
4	Read advertisements, posters or catalogues and understand familiar names, words and very simple phrases.
5	Read without effort all types of text, even texts of an abstract or complex substance or form, for example a textbook, specialised article or literary work.
6	Read long and complex factual or literary texts and appreciate style differences.
7	Read everyday documents such as small advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and find specific predictable information.
8	Read a contemporary prose literary text.
9	Read specialised articles and longer technical instructions even when they do not relate to my field.
10	Read very short, simple texts and short and simple personal letters.

[Solution: A1=4; A2=7 and 10; B1=1 and 3; B2=2 and 8; C1=6 and 9; C2=5]

It must be said, however, that compliance with the content of this grid is necessary mainly for situating pupils within the continuum covered by the different reference levels. Use of the grid does not mean that language teachers are not allowed to set tasks not strictly based on it in the exercises they set. For example, press articles and literary texts are mentioned in the grid only as from Level B2 under understanding of the written word. However, it would be absurd to refrain for that reason from using such texts in language teaching. It may be perfectly legitimate to do so

in the case of activities not designed specifically to measure the competence level but rather to help the pupils make progress and enable them to acquire knowledge and skills. Nevertheless, the tasks set must still lie within their reach and be rooted in a communicative situation.

We shall now examine the part of the grid relating to another language activity: listening.

A1	I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly
A2	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
B1	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interests when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.
B2	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.
C1	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.
C2	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether alive or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.

Self-assessment grid (*CEFR*, pages 26 and 27)

This grid describes the progress in pupils' competences as observed through tasks that make use, in this case, of the language activity of understanding the spoken word. We have seen that it is relatively easy to situate the definitions in relation to one another in an order of ascending difficulty.

We shall see in the succeeding chapters how language teachers can use this grid to consider the progress they wish to make with a group of pupils or to assess their competence levels.

Such use requires, however, an understanding of how this grid is constructed, together with the information it gives us on exactly what each of its sections covers.

If we look carefully at the section of the grid on understanding the spoken word, we can distinguish two types of information:

- the type of texts and themes dealt with;
- the performance required in task completion.

The definition of a competence level in a language activity is therefore based on the relationship between those two items of information.

	Type of texts and topics dealt with	Performance required in task completion
A1	Listening to slow and distinct utterances concerning the identity of the interlocutors, family or immediate concrete surroundings.	Understanding familiar words and very common expressions.
A2	Listening to utterances or exchanges on very familiar subjects (identity, family, shopping, local area, employment etc).	Understanding phrases and very common vocabulary relating to those topics.
A2	Listening to announcements and simple clear messages	Understanding the main point of these messages.
B1	Listening to exchanges or explanations in clear standard language on familiar topics (employment, leisure, school etc).	Understanding the main points.
B2	Listening to radio or television programmes on current events or familiar subjects.	Understanding the main point of the information imparted.
B2	Listening to presentations or speeches with a complex line of argument on a reasonably familiar topic.	Understanding the information received.
C1	Listening to an extended unstructured speech when relationships are only implied.	Understanding the development of the line of argument.
C1	Listening to any type of television programme or films.	Understanding without too much effort.
C2	Listening to any type of message and speech, even under conditions made difficult by the authenticity of their situation, speed of delivery, a particular accent.	Understanding without difficulty.

Going further, we see that this table reveals a **threefold progression**:

- in the **difficulty of the texts** listened to:
 - simple utterances or exchanges
 - announcements and messages
 - explanations
 - radio or television broadcasts
 - presentations or speeches with a complex argument
 - unstructured discourse with implicit links
 - all types of messages and discourse
- in the **subjects dealt with**
 - identity, family and immediate concrete surroundings
 - familiar subjects
 - current events
 - films or television programme
- in **ease of understanding the content**
 - spotting known words or expressions
 - understanding the main points of the information heard
 - understanding the whole of the texts and following the course of a presentation
 - understanding with some effort.

It therefore establishes a fairly complex link in the reference levels (from A1 to C2) between the difficulty of the documents supplied to pupils to enable them to assess their level and the success expected in the activity of understanding.

For example, understanding familiar words or frequently encountered expressions in a long presentation means nothing when the aim is to measure the development of a pupil's communicative competence. The type of text in fact comes under Level B2 (or higher), while observed performance comes under Level A1.

Type of texts and topics covered		Performance required in task completion	
A1	Listening to slowly and distinctly pronounced utterances concerning the identity of the interlocutors, the family or the immediate concrete surroundings.	A1	Understanding familiar words and recognising very common expressions.
A2	Listening to utterances or exchanges on very familiar subjects (identity, family, shopping, local area, employment).	A2	Understanding very frequently used expressions and vocabulary concerning these subjects.
B1	Listening to exchanges or explanations in clear standard language on familiar subjects (employment, leisure, school etc).	B1	Understanding the main points.
B2	Listening to presentations or speeches with a complex line of argument on a relatively familiar subject.	B2	Understanding the information given.

An example to the contrary: understanding without effort the whole of simple clear messages on very familiar subjects supplies only very little information on the real degree of competence in aural reception. In this case, performance comes under Level B2 or higher, but the type of utterances heard and the topics they cover come under Level A2.

In the succeeding chapters we shall be analysing the grid in the same way for all language activities in order to draw implications from them for teaching.

Here we shall therefore simply take a close look at one other activity, this time relating to production: spoken production.

A1	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.
A2	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.
B1	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans, I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.
B2	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
C1	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.
C2	I can present a clear, smoothly flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.

Self-assessment grid (*CEFR*, pages 26 and 27)

This table can be set out differently:

	Purpose of speech	Performance required in task completion
A1	Describe where I live and people I know.	Perform the task using simple sentences.
A2	Describe my family and other people, living conditions and my present or most recent job.	Perform the task in simple terms, using a series of phrases and sentences.
B1	Describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions.	Perform the task using simple connectors to link utterances.
B1	Give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.	Perform the task using simple connectors to link utterances.
B1	Narrate a story or the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	Perform the task using <i>inter alia</i> simple chronological connectors to link simple utterances and distinguishing the narrative and reactions to the content of the narrative.
B2	Express myself on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest.	Perform the task in a clear and detailed fashion.
B2	Set out a viewpoint on a topical issue, giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	Perform the task by presenting a clear line of argument.
C1	Present descriptions of complex subjects.	Perform the task in a clear and detailed fashion incorporating sub-themes, detailing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.
C2	Present a description or argument on any subject.	Perform the task in a clear and fluent manner, using an appropriate style and a logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.

This brief analysis reveals a distinction between levels of competence based this time on a combination of:

- the themes covered in a spoken statement (oneself or one’s immediate surroundings; experiences, feelings or personal opinions; stories, events or the plot of a novel or film; topical issues; complex subjects),
- and the formal construction of the statement (juxtaposition of simple sentences; use of simple connectors; bringing out an argument; structure satisfying the formal requirements of a spoken communication before an audience).

4. An exclusively positive definition of levels of competence

It is very important to note, for example, that the right-hand column in the preceding table – concerning spoken production – refers only to mastery of the combinations of utterances and to the structure of the discourse. It is silent about the quality of syntax and morphology.

This latter remark also underlines a fundamental characteristic of the CEFR scale of levels, namely that the scale is based on a resolutely positive approach to the definition of levels of competence.

The proposed scale of levels marks a break with the tradition that still underlies most assessment practice whereby pupils’ level of competence in a language is assessed against the native speaker ideal. This might be relevant if the comparison related to communicative tasks that can or cannot be carried out using language. Unfortunately, such assessment often tends mainly to penalise, both literally and figuratively, mistakes in mastery of the linguistic code. The traditional sort of assessment carried out in modern languages tends to be a negative one in which a number of points corresponding to the number or “seriousness” of the mistakes made is deducted from a potential mark.

However, the Council of Europe scale of levels will be searched in vain for a single negative reference for defining these levels. The sole criterion applied consists in defining pupils’ degrees of success in tasks that can be performed with the language learned. The most that will be found in any particular definition is a reservation regarding the ease with which a task is performed (“must be helped by the other person”, “must ask for the remark to be repeated” etc).

5. The *European Language Portfolio* checklists

Tasks and language activities are found throughout the definitions of the reference levels. They are also present on a daily basis in the teaching relationship between teacher and pupils. They are central to all language learning.

It thus appears that the definitions provided in the self-assessment grid for each communication activity certainly enable one level to be distinguished from another but are insufficient for the regular needs of the pupils if they wish to take stock of their progress and set learning objectives for themselves. They are obviously not sufficiently developed or exact.

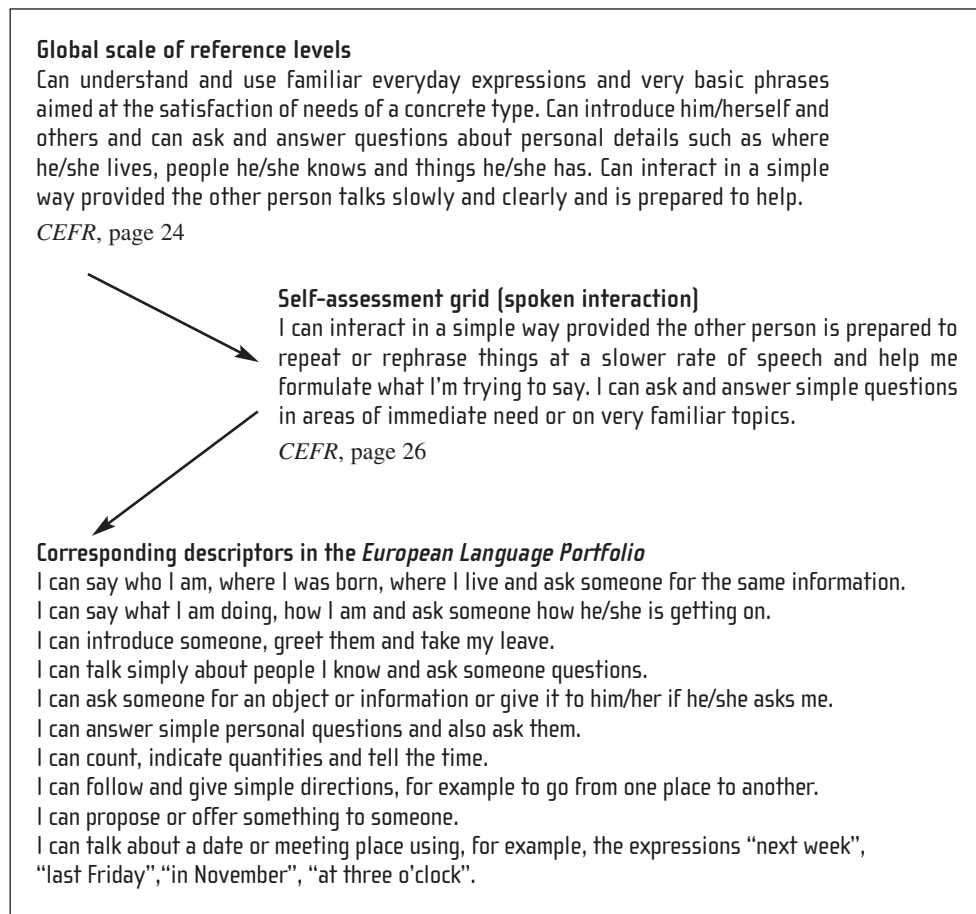
Furthermore, as we saw in Chapter 2, the pedagogical challenge is to match these reference levels to suitable communicative tasks.

This is where the checklists which form an essential component of the European Language Portfolio come in.

These lists supply more detailed descriptors for each reference level in five language activities. Using these descriptors, users can see whether they actually satisfy the requirements given in the common reference levels.

The close relationship between the global scale of reference levels, the self-assessment grid and the checklists in the *European Language Portfolio* becomes clear as soon as they are looked at together.

We shall take as an example Level A1 seen from the viewpoint of spoken interaction (speaking to someone).



A comparison shows their respective roles:

- the ELP descriptors list a **(non-exhaustive) series of concrete tasks** which a pupil at Level A1 in spoken interaction is capable of carrying out in the language studied. This list of descriptors matches the content of the self-assessment grid (“ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on familiar topics”);

- the self-assessment grid also mentions the constraints or external aids with which these tasks are performed (here, for example, with the co-operation of the other person, who is “prepared to repeat or rephrase things”, who speaks “at a slower rate of speech” and who will “help” the pupil if necessary to “formulate what I’m trying to say”). Furthermore, it makes suggestions about **how the pupil should perform these tasks**, in this case by means of simple phrases.

Thus, to carry out the task “say who I am”, the utterance produced by a pupil in an interaction context, namely “I’m Claude”, “Ich heiße Pierre”, “Me llamo Antoine” or “Mi chiamo Robert” will be sufficient to satisfy the formal condition required at this level of competence. A statement by another pupil such as “Let me introduce myself. My name is Malika” or “Darf ich mich vorstellen? Ich heiße Malika” obviously does not refer to this Level A1. To assess Malika’s language level it will be necessary to choose another task, which will have to be taken from among the descriptors for the other reference levels. The fact that Malika is able to introduce herself in the language concerned is no longer relevant for the level of competence reached in the language. The level she is at in spoken interaction can be found by giving her a task coming under Level B2 or C1.

To grasp the scope of this self-assessment grid it should also be realised that it constitutes a continuum. In the definition of a particular level it is assumed that the lower level in the scale has been reached. Being at Level B2 in aural reception in a language implies that one can carry out what is defined in the corresponding section of the grid but also in the sections corresponding to Levels A1 to B1 for the same language activity.

The self-assessment grid and the ELP descriptors are complementary in enabling pupils and teachers to assess whether a particular level of competence has actually been reached.

Communicative tasks, which are central to the CEFR's view of learning and teaching, have long been the hallmark of the communicative approach. The stress on an action-oriented approach found throughout the Council of Europe document does not in itself mean any drastic change of perspective for language teaching in France.

However, the categories associated with tasks in general are proving fertile ground for pedagogical innovation. Here the chief contribution by the CEFR is its critical look at the language activities involved in a task, the skills required and the conditions for performing each task. Its formalisation of these various factors in order to develop effective communicative tasks enables the progress made in modern language teaching in Europe to be measured and is an extremely valuable tool for language teachers.

The coherence of all these parameters and categories does not mean that a teaching system worthy of the name has to comply with some tacitly agreed model, as has happened with previous systems. The approach underlying the development of the CEFR implies adaptation to particular contexts and may justify focusing on specific aspects of pupils' skills. However, irrespective of their choices or constraints, all language teachers should learn to analyse these situations and procedures, using the CEFR categories, in order to take stock of their practices, make what adjustments seem desirable and possible to them and have exchanges with other teachers. This is undoubtedly one of the CEFR's most fruitful contributions to modern language teaching practices.

In this first section we have undertaken a "journey" within the CEFR with the aim of highlighting some of its essential elements. These can be found in a more comprehensive form in the following chapters of the CEFR:

- Chapter 2, pages 9 to 20: approach adopted (definition of the action-oriented approach, general competences of the individual, communicative competence, language activities and domains);
- Chapter 3, pages 21 to 42: common reference levels;
- Chapter 4, pages 43 to 100: use of language and the learner/user (context in which the language is used, communication themes, communicative tasks, language communication operations and texts);
- Chapter 7, pages 157 to 167: tasks and their role in language teaching.

PART 2

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the European Language Portfolio

**Two tools for teaching a modern language
and developing pupil autonomy**

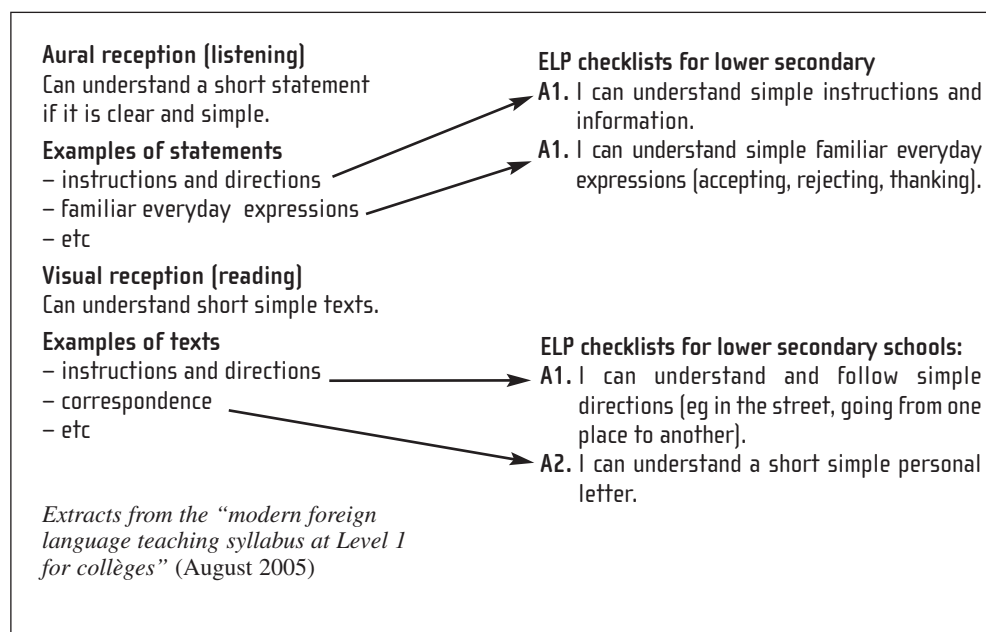
INTRODUCTION

THE CEFR AND MODERN LANGUAGE SYLLABUSES

The task of teachers is greatly facilitated when syllabuses are defined by reference to the CEFR, as in the case of modern language syllabuses in France. These syllabuses do not simply set required levels of language proficiency in relation to the reference levels proposed by the CEFR but also dictate the content of the education to be provided. An examination of this content shows a high degree of conformity with the indications provided in the CEFR and detailed in the ELP.

Let us look at how the CEFR is taken into account at the different stages in the educational pathway.

Syllabuses for primary schools and lower secondary schools (*collèges*) lay great emphasis on a goal-oriented approach. They list language functions (saying one's name, making a proposal, wishing someone a happy birthday etc) which a pupil must learn to perform using suitable utterances and which may represent simple tasks (such as introducing oneself, asking the way and so on). In the majority of cases, a close relationship is found between these lists and the descriptors for Levels A1 and A2 of the ELP for lower secondary schools.



The common points are not limited to these lists of functions but also concern other components of the syllabuses.

Strategy development plays a role in learning from primary school onwards. It is easy to find echoes of the recommendations made in syllabuses among the ELP descriptors. We shall take the example of spoken interaction.

The correspondence between syllabus content and the CEFR or ELP obviously covers communicative competence as well. The distinction between spoken production and spoken interaction has also been reflected in syllabuses.

<p>Strategies</p>	<p>ELP checklists for lower secondary schools:</p>
<p>The pupil has become accustomed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using simple procedures for starting, continuing and ending a short conversation; - using onomatopoeia (maintaining contact/ reactions/marks of hesitation/surprise/disgust) and set expressions for reacting to or renewing a conversation; - indicating that one has understood or has not understood; - asking for something to be repeated or rephrased; - using different types of questions; - adapting intonation to the types of utterance; - requesting the other person's advice; - expressing an opinion, agreement and disagreement; - using appropriate gestures (cultural codes) etc 	<p>A1. Speaking to someone: my tricks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can say I do not understand and ask for something to be repeated more slowly and rephrased. ➤ When I do not know a word, I can ask how it is said and repeat it. ➤ I can ask someone to spell a word which I do not understand or which I do not know.
<p><i>Extracts from the " modern language teaching syllabus for Level 1 for collèges" (August 2005)</i></p>	<p>ELP checklists for lower secondary schools:</p> <p>A2. Speaking to someone: my tricks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ If I use a word of whose meaning I am not sure, I can make gestures to make clear what I mean; ➤ When I do not know how to say the name of what I want, I can still obtain it by pointing and saying, "I would like that, please."; ➤ I can indicate that I do not understand what is said to me and ask for a word to be repeated or explained.

“In the *collège* it is necessary to distinguish and develop spoken expression in both its dimensions (spoken production and spoken interaction), each of them involving utterance situations and capacities which should be valued and assessed for their own sake...”

Extracts from the “syllabus for modern foreign language teaching at Level 1 for *collèges*” (August 2005)

All this would be incomplete and unsatisfactory if the said correspondence did not also cover grammatical and lexical competences. By definition, the CEFR, a tool common to all languages, cannot specify the linguistic contents necessary for performing language activities at the different levels of competence.

A supplementary activity must accordingly be included in use of the CEFR, namely the specification, language by language, of the linguistic contents corresponding to the levels of competence. These contents have already been published for French as a foreign language (*Référentiel pour le FLE*, Éditions Didier, 2004) and for German (*Profile deutsch, Langenscheidt*, 2005) and are in preparation for other European languages.

Specifications are being prepared by experts from the countries concerned by the different languages: the French Community of Belgium, Quebec, France and French-speaking Switzerland for French as a foreign language, and Austria, Germany and German-speaking Switzerland for German.

As German is currently the only modern foreign language in France possessing these specifications for Levels A1 to C2, we can compare, for example, the grammatical contents chosen by the authors of *Profile deutsch* for Level A2 with the requirements of the syllabus for lower secondary school Level 1 (A2) and we note a very strong correspondence.

The consistency with which reference is made to the CEFR in lower secondary school syllabuses has compelled the authors to make choices. It is expected that these will be confirmed for each language as the specific specifications are published.

As a result of the impetus created by the CEFR process, we can speak of the **gradual establishment of a European area of shared common references, for example through the specification of contents language by language, and of mutual confidence in levels of competence certified by diplomas and examinations in each country**, whence the importance of also developing expertise in assessing the pupils' levels by reference to the CEFR.

An attentive reader will have noticed from these remarks that no mention has been made of upper secondary school (*lycée*) syllabuses. The reason is that these contain only a small amount of linguistic content for teaching. However, they unambiguously fix the levels of competence to be reached at the end of the "terminale" stage in relation to the CEFR. Teachers are therefore responsible under the syllabuses for consolidating pupils' attainments and helping them to attain those levels. By implication this also means referring to the corresponding guidelines in the CEFR.

On the other hand, the CEFR clearly does not specify the cultural contents to be transmitted or the components of intercultural competence to be acquired. We saw in Chapter 1 that the CEFR approach includes, but does not elaborate on, this aspect. The CEFR will therefore not be sufficient for implementing syllabuses in their entirety.

The purpose of these opening remarks is to show that the CEFR and ELP are not an alternative to modern language syllabuses. The two tools are valuable aids in putting into practice the language dimension of syllabuses in their letter and spirit and in their contribution to the exercise of shared responsibility in Europe with respect to modern language teaching and the assessment of pupils' levels of competence.

In the three chapters of this second part, we shall often use expressions such as "it is advisable to...", "the teacher must...", "it is necessary to..." and other restrictive wordings. They should be seen as part of the process of reflection on what constitutes a teaching approach that uses the CEFR and the ELP. We obviously ask the reader to add mentally after each of these expressions "if the teacher wishes to apply these Council of Europe tools consistently".

CHAPTER 1

USING THE CEFR AND ELP IN CONDUCTING A CLASS

Using the CEFR in the conduct of language classes and along the path followed with a group of pupils means, first and foremost, making communicative tasks central to the work done with them. We saw in Chapter 2 of Part 1 what the CEFR understands exactly by “tasks”, how teachers can analyse a teaching unit in their textbook so as to identify the tasks proposed, and how they can even adapt or supplement this teaching material with tasks better suited to the particular needs of their class.

In general, it is desirable to observe progressiveness in learning processes, the guiding thread of which can to a great extent be supplied by the self-assessment grid and the ELP checklists. The teacher will be able to decide the main lines along which language competences should be developed on the basis of a single or progressive assessment of the competences of pupils and of the tasks they are capable of performing with the language concerned. Depending on the pedagogical choices made by the teaching team or the teacher, it will even be possible to devise a programme focusing the group’s attention for a certain period on a pair of language activities (for example, aural reception and spoken expression). This will give increased visibility to the objectives of the teaching approach and to the progress made, especially through the ELP. The ideal conditions for such work are, of course, groups of pupils possessing overall the same competence profile. However, the purpose of the pages that follow is to show that the use by a teacher of the resources of the CEFR and ELP offers advantages regardless of the teaching and learning conditions.

This chapter will therefore propose a number of avenues to be followed for the progressive incorporation of the CEFR and ELP into teaching practices.

1. Defining priorities in constructing communicative tasks

With the aid of numerous examples, we stressed in the second chapter that the tasks proposed in textbooks can meet a wide range of priorities: priority can be given to the development of strategies, linguistic or pragmatic competence, socio-cultural knowledge and so on.

Depending on the specific nature of the language taught and the needs of the class, teachers may concentrate on tasks displaying a particular weighting between the different components of a communicative task. It will be to their advantage, however, to try not to neglect any aspect. The CEFR stresses that all these components are complementary for the successful learning of a modern language by pupils.

As a guide to these choices, the CEFR proposes grids covering several of these components, identifying a progression on which all language teachers can base

themselves, for example for the development of strategies. These grids appear in Chapter 4 of the CEFR, pages 58 to 88. As an example, we reproduce two of them, taken from the 38 grids in the Council of Europe document

GOAL-ORIENTED CO-OPERATION (e.g. Repairing a car, discussing a document, organising an event)	
C2	As B2
C1	As B2
B2	Can understand detailed instructions reliably. Can help along the progress of the work by inviting others to join in, say what they think, etc. Can outline an issue or a problem clearly, speculating about causes or consequences, and weighing advantages and disadvantages of different approaches.
B1	Can follow what is said, though he/she may occasionally have to ask for repetition or clarification if the other people's talk is rapid or extended. Can explain why something is a problem, discuss what to do next, compare and contrast alternatives. Can give brief comments on the views of others. Can generally follow what is said and, when necessary, can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding. Can make his/her opinions and reactions understood as regards possible solutions or the question of what to do next, giving brief reasons and explanations. Can invite others to give their views on how to proceed.
A2	Can understand enough to manage simple, routine tasks without undue effort, asking very simply for repetition when he/she does not understand. Can discuss what to do next, making and responding to suggestions, asking for and giving directions. Can indicate when he/she is following and can be made to understand what is necessary, if the speaker takes the trouble. Can communicate in simple and routine tasks using simple phrases to ask for and provide things, to get simple information and to discuss what to do next.
A1	Can understand questions and instructions addressed carefully and slowly to him/her and follow short, simple directions. Can ask people for things, and give people things.

CEFR, page 79

PLANNING	
C2	As B2
C1	As B2
B2	Can plan what is to be said and the means to say it, considering the effect on the recipient/s. Can rehearse and try out new combinations and expressions, inviting feedback.
B1	Can work out how to communicate the main point(s) he/she wants to get across, exploiting any resources available and limiting the message to what he/she can recall or find the means to express.
A2	Can recall and rehearse an appropriate set of phrases from his/her repertoire.
A1	No descriptor available

CEFR, page 64

The above grid proposes a progression in the “planning” of a spoken-production task (presentation or description, reporting, statement etc). Any teacher will easily see that use of the references provided can help them to deal easily with a task in their textbook or create a new task. They only have to give tips to the pupils on how to prepare their contribution and to make clear what they expect of them in their performance of the task, on the explicit basis of the content of this grid.

1.1. Ensuring continuity between classes and teaching stages

Continuity in learning is a fundamental necessity for pupils to make progress. Making it easier to progress in the use of the language learnt means first of all enabling all pupils to deploy their existing attainments for the new tasks required of them.

Here again, the idea of task comes to the fore. The focusing of attention on a single one of the components of communicative competence, grammatical or lexical competence for example, makes it more difficult for a pupil to realise that the learning process is continuous. We shall illustrate this sensitive issue with extracts from a French textbook for the teaching of English in primary school and the first year of secondary education (*sixième*).

As a better indication of the possibilities of continuity between the upper primary school and *sixième*, we can look at what is learned in an English textbook used at the end of primary schooling (Domino & Co., 2005) and identify the tasks or situations with reference to the ELP descriptors.

A1 Speaking to someone

- I can say who I am, where I was born, where I live and request the same type of information from someone.
 - I can say my name.
 - I can spell my name.
 - I can ask someone his/her name.
- I can say what I do, how I am and ask someone about himself/herself.
 - I can say how I am and ask someone how he/she is.
- I can introduce someone, greet them and take my leave.
 - I can introduce someone, saying his/her first name.
 - I can introduce someone, stating his/her connection with me (relation, friend)
 - I can ask someone else's name.
- I can use simple familiar everyday expressions.
 - I can express my thanks.
 - I can wish a friend a happy birthday.
 - I can wish someone a Merry Christmas.
- I can talk simply of people I know and put questions to someone.
 - I can indicate a quality or characteristic of someone.
 - I can describe someone.
 - I can state the colour of something.
- I can answer simple personal questions and put similar questions.
 - I can say if something is true or false.
 - I can describe the weather.
 - I can say what I am able to do.
 - I can say what I like doing and not doing.
 - I can ask someone what he/she likes doing.
- I can count, indicate quantities and tell the time.
 - I can count up to 12.
 - I can add, subtract and do simple division.
 - I can give a telephone number.

I can say my age and ask someone to tell me his/her age.

- I can propose or offer something to someone.

I can ask someone for something.

- I can speak of a date or rendezvous, using for example “next week”, “last Friday”, “in November”, “at three o’clock”.

I can say what day it is, what day it was yesterday, what day it will be tomorrow.

A1 Listening and understanding

- I can understand simple instructions and information.

I can understand work instructions in class.

I can understand familiar expressions (greetings, thanks, good wishes etc).

A1 Spoken production

- I can construct sentences using “and”, “but”, “then”.

I can describe my family.

I can say what animals I own.

I can construct sentences linked by “and”.

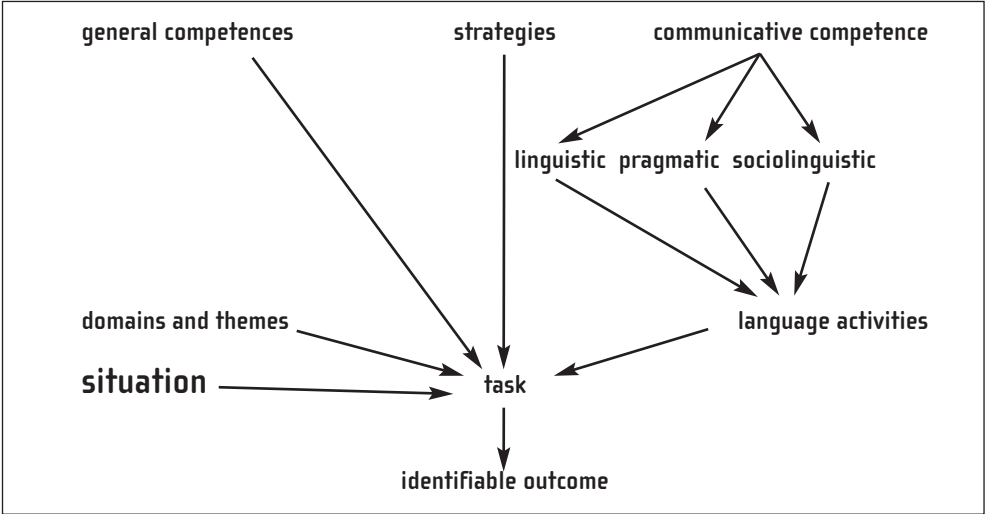
A1 Writing

- I can copy words, expressions, short sentences, simple instructions without making mistakes.

- I can complete a form with my name, nationality, age and address.

This list clearly offers several ways of ensuring visible continuity of the work done in *sixième* by giving the pupils the opportunity to employ the knowledge linked to these situations and tasks and enrich the means of expression and understanding at their disposal. However, we must take a further look at these two aspects.

First of all, continuity in the tasks performed. Chapter 2 of Part 1 showed us that in the parameters defining a task the external situation always plays a role, which is particularly important in the early stages of learning a language. To enable true continuity of teaching between primary school and *sixième* it will therefore be essential to devote attention to the continuity of the situations in which the tasks have to be performed by the pupils.



As an example let us take a communicative task which is the subject of a learning exercise in primary school and which is included in the first-year secondary textbooks, “accepting or rejecting a proposal”, and see how it is presented in a primary school textbook.



Pupils working with this textbook in primary school have therefore learnt to understand proposals made in a simple form and to respond by answering “yes” or

“no”. What will they find the following year in the German textbook for first-year secondary?

1. Wer macht mit?



Florian fragt Kai, Heiko, Claudia, Kim und Madita.
Hör zu und kreuze die richtige Antwort an!



ERSTE HILFE

JA	NEIN
Ja, (gern).	(Nein,) das geht nicht.
Ja, (klar).	Da habe ich schon ... Ich habe keine Lust.

Script de l'enregistrement :

Florian: Am Montag ist Handball. Wer macht mit? Du Kai?

Kai: Ja, gern.

Florian: Kim, machst du mit?

Kim: Das geht nicht: Da habe ich schon Computerkurs.

Florian: Und du Claudia, machst du auch mit?

Claudia: Klar!

Florian: Und du Madita, hast du Lust?

Madita: Nein, ich habe keine Lust.

Florian: Und du Heiko? Machst du mit?

Heiko: Nein, ich habe schon so viel.

Teacher's book

The task relates to the same language function but assumes a very different form. Here pupils have to understand proposals made not to them in isolated utterances but to third parties in a dialogue containing several exchanges and have to determine whether those parties accept or reject the proposals. Furthermore, the simple form “willst du...?” is not used. The utterances contain more complex linguistic forms (such as “machst du mit?/gern/klar/das geht nicht/...”).

In the interests of continuity, German teachers who have pupils in their class who have worked with the primary school textbook mentioned above will therefore have to introduce the activity proposed by this textbook, even in a simple way, by including the form “willst du...?”, addressing the pupils directly, before enriching the pupils' utterances with the other linguistic forms provided for in their textbook. It is, of course, quite possible that this first-year secondary class contains pupils from other primary schools who have not worked with this textbook. In this case,

teachers may decide to address their questions mainly to pupils who they believe can handle these utterances. This approach is obviously facilitated if material describing these various parameters has been supplied in order to bridge the gap between primary and secondary school.

We shall now choose at random a task appearing in a primary school English textbook and compare it with one proposed in the first-year secondary textbook for the same language.

8 Sunny days!

C What's the weather like?

Date: _____

4 Listen and join!

Cardiff Edinburgh Belfast Brighton

5 Read and complete

*Hi David!
I'm in London.
It's _____.
See you soon.
Mary*

*Hi David!
I'm in London.
It's _____.
See you soon.
Mary*

*Hi David!
I'm in London.
It's _____.
See you soon.
Mary*

*Hi David!
I'm in London.
It's _____.
See you soon.
Mary*

I remember!

35



1 Look at the map and at the symbols then listen to the "European weather report". Check on the map.

2 Describe the weather in one of the countries. The class guesses.
You: It's cold in the south, very cold in the north and it's snowing everywhere.
Class: That's Poland!

3 Write a short weather report for one of the countries.

STORMY
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The task is identical. It involves saying what the weather is like. The external situation is very similar: listening to a weather report, using a map illustrating the information concerned; writing a short weather report for a number of towns or countries. The differences concern the lexical elements (four in the stage 3 primary school textbook, 11 in the first-year secondary textbook) and the areas covered by the weather map (the United Kingdom in the first case and Europe in the second). The two textbooks therefore ensure continuity, even though it seems clear that first-year secondary teachers should refresh pupils' knowledge beforehand by giving them a very short task which can easily be introduced in class.

The following conclusions may be drawn from these comparisons. It would be misleading to simply think of continuity in terms of language functions (in this case, accepting and rejecting a proposal or saying what the weather is like) or even on the basis of the title of the ELP descriptors. Teachers must closely examine the situations constituting the proposed tasks and, where necessary, adapt them to make the continuity in those situations visible to the pupils. They must try, on the one hand, to enable the pupils to deploy their primary school attainments and, on the other, to enrich the linguistic resources available to them to perform this task.

1.2. Enriching the available linguistic resources

The two examples of continuity between primary school and first-year secondary school have revealed another important concern. Within the same task (accepting or rejecting a proposal; saying what the weather is like), the two first-year textbooks enrich the linguistic resources available to the pupils.

Certainly, as we saw in Chapter 3 of Part 1, a task is linked in the self-assessment grid to a level of competence and this link must be respected in the assessment. However, it is of course essential to continue developing the competences and knowledge useful for performing these tasks, even when pupils have acquired the minimal linguistic resources necessary. Thus, where introducing oneself is concerned, pupils may be considered to be at Level A1 if, in order to perform this task, they are able to produce simple utterances such as “My name is...” or “Ich heie...” or “Me llamo...”, but an attempt must still be made to enable them to acquire other linguistic resources or utterances, even if “introducing oneself” is no longer listed as a task coming under levels of competence above A1.

Let us take a look at an illustration of this argument in an English textbook in the third year of secondary school. The first part of the task reproduced below consists in saying how one is; but the linguistic resources employed are much more elaborate than those required for Level A1, a level for which the competence descriptor “I can say what I am doing, how I am and ask someone how he/she is getting on” is proposed (ELP for the *collge*).

2. Practise speaking

Pair-work. Play cool hunting.

a. Pupil B: You are a teenager. A cool hunter is visiting you at home. Go to page 117.

Pupil A: You're a cool hunter. You are very friendly and very polite. Use the information below.

Pupil A: You look ...! / You sound ...!

Pupil B: Yeah, well, I've been ...

Pupil A: Really! Do you mind if I ...? / May I ...? / Can I ask you what ...?

- look dead tired

- have a look at your CDs

- sound excited

- have a turn

- sound exhausted

- your favourite brand of sports shoes

b. Change roles.

Pupil B: You're a cool hunter. Go to page 117.

Pupil A: You are a teenager. A cool hunter is visiting you at home. Use the information below.

- use a new shampoo

- shop all day

- go out a lot lately

It would be a serious misinterpretation to think that “guidance by task” in accordance with the progression proposed by the CEFR and the ELP checklists will automatically identify a close relationship between tasks and the linguistic resources to be acquired. We have seen that such a direct relationship does indeed exist in the strategy for assessment of the competence level attained by pupils. However, for teaching and learning, this does not mean – on the contrary – that the manner of executing tasks of all kinds cannot be improved in direct ratio to the increase in communicative competence.


2. Identifying the language activities employed through tasks



Language textbooks usually identify in various forms the language activities employed.



The list of language activities in which training is provided in the extract below from an English textbook for upper secondary schools (*lycées*) is given at the beginning of the teaching unit. There we read that five distinct activities are identified (aural reception, visual reception, spoken interaction, spoken production and written expression) during use of one of the texts in the textbook.


COMMUNICATION COMPETENCES					
	Listening	Reading	Taking part in a conversation /debating	Spoken production	Writing
• Summarising, reporting > RECAP, p. 53, 58	✓	✓		✓	
• Expressing a viewpoint > REACT, p. 50, 53, 58			✓	✓	
• Essay > WRITING, p. 53, 58					✓
• Argument, debate > DISCUSSION, p. 65	✓		✓	✓	
• Drafting a texte from photorapgs > WRITING, p. 65					✓
• Presentation of a document to the class > SHOW & TELL, p. 65				✓	

The Spanish textbook reproduced below also distinguishes different language activities in the part devoted to commentary on a document: the following extract contains examples of spoken interaction (work in small groups), spoken production and written expression.

 **Expresarse**

 ** | **préparation 5'** |  ----- > B2
Préparez-vous à dire ce qui vous a plu dans ce texte, en insistant sur deux ou trois points (cf. Recuerda).


 *** | **préparation 10'** |  ----- > B2
À partir de la photo et du texte, fais le portrait de cette adolescente telle que tu l'imagines (cf. Recuerda).

 ** | ----- > B2
Se ve que Millás siente como admiración por la chica de la foto. ¿Qué es lo que admira? (cf. Recuerda).


Here we note the general introduction of the distinction between “taking part in a conversation” and “spoken production”.

This leads us to mention another way, as yet little used, of linking the various language activities as the book progresses, namely focusing on the development of pupils’ competence in one or two language activities.


Einheit 1 Schüler mit Verantwortung? *Quelles responsabilités peuvent prendre les élèves dans un lycée allemand? Comment participer à la vie de l'établissement?*

 **Zoom sur Écouter** S'entraîner à la compréhension de l'oral en découvrant des témoignages de lycéens allemands et de leurs professeurs qui expriment leur point de vue et exposent leurs arguments.


Einheit 2 Zur Debatte! *S'exprimer, échanger, débattre, défendre des positions : comment s'organise le débat dans la cité? Pourquoi et comment s'engager lorsque l'on souhaite avoir son mot à dire?*

 **Zoom sur Parler (dialogue)** Se positionner et faire part de ses opinions. Apprendre à discuter, à argumenter et à confronter des points de vue.

Einheit 3 (N)Ostalgie *La chute du Mur de Berlin appartient déjà à l'Histoire. Quels sentiments unissent ou divisent les Allemands d'aujourd'hui à ce sujet?*

 **Zoom sur Lire** L'unification des deux Allemagnes a fait couler beaucoup d'encre. Des textes diversifiés pour différents niveaux de lecture - du court extrait à la nouvelle.

Einheit 4 Spiegelbilder *Comment les médias reflètent-ils notre quotidien? Sommes-nous informés ou manipulés? Comment écrire un texte pour qu'il ait un impact?*

 **Zoom sur Écrire** Donner une information, exprimer un point de vue, écrire sur l'actualité, raconter une histoire... Chaque type d'écrit a ses règles. On s'y entraîne.


Extract of the Contents

Needless to say, the zoom-in on a language activity in this German textbook does not mean that the other activities on the same pages are neglected. The aim here is simply to give priority in objectives, competence building and assessment to the language activity concerned. The feeling of coherence of the work as a whole will obviously be strengthened thereby in the eyes of the pupils.

3. Proposing a coherent path through communicative tasks

We have already mentioned in Chapter 2 of Part 1 the danger of teaching activities being fragmented around successive tasks, leading to a loss of unity and overall meaning in a teaching sequence. We shall see in the pages below that one of the roles of the ELP checklists is to make the overall coherence of the teaching approach even clearer. This concern is present throughout the textbooks. “Guidance by task” is fully compatible with a concern for coherence and with the gradual building of competences.

To illustrate this statement, we shall take three very different examples.



Comprender y presentar

Una foto simbólica 1^{er} párrafo (L. 1-24)
La première page, la portada · una imagen · selon, según · la incompatibilidad · l'allégresse, el júbilo · l'autorité, la autoridad · el uniforme · el orden establecido · prendre parti pour, tomar partido por · un(a) idiota · etc.

Inconsciente, pero dichosa (*heureuse*) 2^o párrafo (L. 25-45)
Courir un danger, correr peligro · se rendre compte de, percatarse de · insouciant(e), despreocupado(a) · la juventud · c'est précisément pour cela que, por eso mismo · feliz · c'est un plaisir de, da gusto Ø · sombre, sombrío(a) · fragile · una luz · una esperanza · etc.

Gastado (*Usé*), pero querido 3^{er} y 4^o párrafos (L. 46-72)
Porter, llevar · remarquer (quelque chose), fijarse (en algo) · se mettre dans la peau de, compenetrarse con · les reproches, las recriminaciones · deshacerse de · être attaché(e) à, tener(le) apego a · sentirse [ie/i] a gusto · être propre à, ser propio de · etc.

Inconsciente, pero encantadora (*adorable*)
Carpe diem · profiter de (la vie), disfrutar de (la vida) · la vitalidad · séduire · émouvoir, conmover [ue] · etc.

RECUERDA


POUR EXPRIMER UN SENTIMENT

Étonner, admirar, extrañer · séduire, seducir · réjouir, alegrar · rendre triste, entristecer · adorer, chiflar · plaire beaucoup, cantar · fatiguer, barber, fastidier · émouvoir, conmover [ue] · faire plaisir, dar gusto · faire de la peine, dar pena · etc.


On construit ces verbes sur le modèle de gustar Gr. § 13-7.
A Millás le seduce la vitalidad de la joven.


Construis les phrases :
La chica – fastidier – recriminations de su madre.
Yo – chanter – esta foto.

suite p. 199



Expresarse

******* préparation 5'  -----> B2
*Préparez-vous à dire ce qui vous a plu dans ce texte, en insistant sur deux ou trois points (cf. **Recuerda**).*

******* préparation 10'  -----> B2
*À partir de la photo et du texte, fais le portrait de cette adolescente telle que tu l'imagines (cf. **Recuerda**).*

******* -----> B2
*Se ve que Millás siente como admiración por la chica de la foto. ¿Qué es lo que admira? (cf. **Recuerda**).*

This half-page constitutes the teaching device supplied for the use of a press article written in reaction to a photograph taken at a demonstration and published in the *El País* newspaper in 2004. In this textbook, we see that the overall coherence of the class activities involving use of the document is ensured by closely guided conduct of the class: reporting on the content of the medium (*Comprender y presentar*) and then talking about it (*Expresarse*). In the first part of the work on the text, pupils are guided both by an implicit instruction to read a specific passage in the text while respecting its linearity and by the aids supplied to them (useful speech vocabulary). The whole is made coherent through the gradual development of a collective commentary on the document.

OUTLINE

SIDNEY POITIER (1927-) : grew up in the small village of Cat Island, Bahamas. His father, a poor tomato farmer, moved the family to the capital, Nassau, when Poitier was eleven. It was there that he first encountered film. At the age of fifteen Poitier moved to Miami then New York where he found a job as a dishwasher. Soon after, he began working for the American Negro Theater as a janitor¹ in exchange for acting lessons. Poitier performed in plays until 1950, when he made his film debut in *No Way Out*. The film, a violent tale of racial hatred, made him a hero back home in the Bahamas.

1. **janitor** /dʒænətɔː/ (n.): *concierge, homme à tout faire*

Read the short biography above and lines 1 to 11

- How old was Sidney Poitier at the time?
 - What did he associate the name *Hollywood* with? Why?
 - Drawing on what you have learned about Poitier's childhood, explain his misunderstanding.
- Find one or more reasons in the passage to explain why he found a cowboy's job so appealing.



READ & REPLY

Read the text down to line 18

- Pick out information about Poitier's sister:
 - her name and her age at the time,
 - the way she reacted when he told her about the job he wanted to do.

What image do we get of Poitier's sister?

RECAP what you learned about Poitier's childhood.

Read the text down to the end

- Pick out the following details (paragraph 4):

people	place	date	event

Use them to sum up the situation.

- Which of the following feelings did Poitier's parents experience at the beginning of the film? Justify by quoting from the text.

horror – fascination – indifference – pride – amazement
- What happens towards the end of the film? How does Sidney Poitier underline the violence of the scene?

- Pick out expressions showing how shocked his mother was. Why did she react that way?

- What is your interpretation of the last sentence of the text ("That was my mother.")?

RECAP what happened that day at the movie theater in Nassau.

REACT : Think about the two episodes in the text. What do they tell us about Sidney Poitier's family?

TRANSLATION

Translate the text from line 25 "The movie played..." down to the end.

WRITING

Unlike Sidney Poitier, you had already seen lots of films by the age of 12 and have certainly seen many more since. Yet, can you think of a film which has been of special importance to you? If so, why? (150-200 words)

The English textbook shown above operates quite differently. The teaching device reproduced concerns the use of a text extracted from the autobiography of the actor Sidney Poitier. The textbook organises the conduct of the class in three main stages:

- preparation for discovering and using the text by means of another document, a short biography of Sydney Poitier correlated with the beginning of the text

(lines 1 to 11) and enabling certain important information about this actor to be identified;

- a series of work instructions for each of the two parts of the text (lines 12 to 18 first and then line 19 to the end of the text): these work instructions alternate the tasks of comprehension and expression, collective expression by the group and more individual spoken production (*recap* heading);
- continuation of the work of comprehension, explanation and commentary on the content of the text by translation and written expression activities.

Unlike the Spanish textbook mentioned above, there is no longer any unity in the teaching approach here: a document other than the working text is being used and the type of activities asked of the pupils varies greatly. However, the overall coherence is made obvious by two essential factors. Everything contributes clearly to the use of the same text. The succession of language activities performed follows an approach perceptible to all pupils: a search for information and exchanges concerning it, an intermediate assessment and then a personal reaction, and finally a distancing from the text by switching over to another language and individualisation of expression concerning the situation described in the text.

The extract from the German textbook reproduced below shows that the idea of pathway can assume very different forms from those in the previous two books.

Wer kann und will „für andere sprechen“?

Einstieg

a Klassensprecher werden? Mit wem können Sie sich identifizieren?

DAS macht mir zu viel Arbeit.
Claudia, 17

Ich habe wirklich Lust, meinen Mitschülern zu helfen.
Silke, 17

Klassensprecher? Ich? Ich habe keine Ahnung was Verantwortung ist.
Karl, 17

Ja! Ich organisiere ja mit!
Cam, 16

b Welche Eigenschaften sollte Ihrer Meinung nach ein Klassensprecher haben? Schreiben Sie Ihre Ideen auf. Gemeinsam können Sie in der Klasse eine Rangliste aufstellen.

Wörterbuch Seite 23

c Ein Flugblatt
Hier sehen Sie eine Liste von Eigenschaften, die in einer deutschen Schule bei der Ausbildung von Klassensprechern benutzt wurde. Vergleichen Sie mit Ihren Vorschlägen!

Liebe Mitschüler,

was muss ein Klassensprecher können und wie soll er sein... das habt ihr euch vielleicht auch schon gefragt. Um die Wahl eurer Klassensprecher vorzubereiten, haben wir für euch folgende Kriterien aufgestellt, die auch bei der Stimmlage für den und die Richtigen helfen können.

1. Fähigkeiten des Klassensprechers / der Klassensprecherin

- a) frei sprechen und gut argumentieren können
- b) gut verständlich können
- c) Probleme erkennen und formulieren können
- d) Rechte und Pflichten der Schüler(mögen) kennen
- e) selbstständig arbeiten können
- f) Eigeninitiative entwickeln können
- g) Anträge und Protokolle verfassen können

2. Verhaltensweisen des Klassensprechers

- a) sicheres Auftreten
- b) Mut zeigen
- c) Kompromisse eingehen
- d) nicht nach persönlichen Vorteilen suchen
- e) unparteiisch sein
- f) Vorbild sein

Wenn ihr weitere Fragen habt, könnt ihr euch an uns wenden.
Eure Schülerversorger

Sprache

Pour s'exprimer
Les verbes de modalité sont et müssen : du conseil à la contrainte
Les verbes ---- et ---- permettent d'exprimer la manière dont un fait est envisagé :

..... s'emploie pour indiquer qu'un fait est casualité, recommandé :
.....
.....

La formulation avec le subjonctif II permet d'atténuer le conseil :
.....
.....

..... s'emploie pour indiquer qu'un fait est incontournable et le présente comme une contrainte :
.....
.....

Wörterbuch

sicheres Auftreten: preuve d'assurance

Using the CEFR and ELP in conducting a class 69

1 Hören und sprechen

Klassensprecher werden oder nicht?

- In den folgenden Interviews stellen sich zwei Schüler vor und äußern sich zum Thema Schülersprecher.
- Anneke und Benjamin besuchen die Kooperative Gesamtschule (KGS) Schinde.

a. Sammeln Sie Informationen zu den beiden Interviews.
 b. Mit wem sind Sie eher einverstanden? Mit Anneke oder mit Benjamin?
 c. Erklären Sie Ihren Standpunkt.

2 Lesen und sprechen

Zwei Schülersprecher stellen sich vor

Das Gymnasium Kalkuhl hat zwei neue Schülersprecher, Maren Burgsmüller und Michael Althoff.

a) Im ersten Teil (Zeile 5 bis 19) stellen sie sich vor. Welche Eigenschaften glauben sie zu haben, um ihre Mitschüler gut zu vertreten?
 b) Lesen Sie nun den zweiten Teil. Welche Projekte haben Maren und Michael? Machen Sie sich Notizen.

Liebe Schülerinnen und Schüler, als neue Schülersprecher unserer Schule möchten wir uns euch kurz vorstellen und auch von unseren Plänen für das kommende Schuljahr berichten. Wir heißen Maren Burgsmüller und Michael Althoff, sind beide 18 Jahre alt und besuchen die Stufe 12. Wir haben beide Deutsch als Leistungsfach.

5 Was uns sonst noch charakterisiert: Wir haben Organisationstalent, sind keine Sportkanonen, aber fahren Fahrrad oder Inliner. Wir haben Geschwister, jüngere und ältere, zwei besuchen auch unsere Schule. Kommunikation und zwischenmenschliche Beziehungen gehören zu unseren Stärken. Wir werden alles tun, um unsere Aufgaben zu erfüllen.

Unsere Ideen sehen folgendermaßen aus:

10 - Unser wichtigstes Anliegen für dieses Schuljahr wird das Mitspracherecht der Schüler in der Schülervertretung sein. Dazu möchten wir eine allgemeine und öffentliche Wahl, ähnlich wie in Amerika, durchsetzen. Bis jetzt werden die Schülersprecher ja ausschließlich von der SV gewählt. Das sieht dann so aus: Die Kandidaten sollen Wahlplakate mit ihren Ideen aushängen und sich später vor der gesamten Schule präsentieren. Dann wird jeder Schüler seine Stimme abgeben!

15 - Wir haben vor, die Schüler besser über das Schulleben zu informieren.
 - Für die Klassen- bzw. Stufensprecher wird es einen SV-Tag geben, an dem die Themen Organisation, SV-Management, Schülerzeitung und Schulklima im Vordergrund stehen. Anschließend soll in Workshops gearbeitet werden, um eventuell schon erste Ergebnisse / Ideen vorstellen zu können.
 - Für dieses Jahr ist ein Umwelt-Projekt geplant (Gensauerer dazu wird momentan in der SV besprochen).

20 - Wie bereits in den letzten Jahren möchten wir eine Party für die Unter- und Mittelstufe auf die Beine stellen. Auch ein Abball soll organisiert werden.
 - Und schließlich planen wir ein Sportturnier zwischen verschiedenen Klassen und Schulen. Ihr könnt uns jederzeit ansprechen oder Fragen stellen!

Eure Schülersprecher Maren Burgsmüller und Michael Althoff

Wörterverzeichnis:
 1 der Leistungskurs: cours de spécialité
 2 unser wichtigstes Anliegen: ce qui nous importe le plus
 3 öffentlich: public
 4 etwas durchsetzen: imposer auch
 5 SV: Schülervertretung
 6 seine Stimme abgeben: voter

Schülerzeitung Seite 21
 Welche Ideen aus Maren's und Michael's Programm finden Sie besonders interessant? Welche könnte man auch in Ihrer Schule vorschlagen?
Wörterbuch Seite 21

Schreiben
 „Unsere Ideen sehen folgendermaßen aus.“
 Was würden Sie für Ihre Schule vorschlagen?

As in the two English and Spanish textbooks, these pages offer the pupils a pathway. But they will not receive guidance in the use of a document. The pathway takes them through a range of tasks linked to different documents. The communicative tasks requested all arise out of a problem stated at the beginning of the chapter, namely what are the conditions for being a good elected pupil representative? As in the textbook mentioned in Chapter 2 of Part 1, coherence between all these tasks is ensured by their contribution to the collective search prompted by the initial question. We have here a sort of scenario in which different types of documents and different language activities are associated with a view to performance of the overall task represented by this search.

Other major differences between this type of pathway and the one proposed in the other two textbooks can be pointed out:

– the situations created for these tasks are rooted in pupils’ everyday reality (defining the role and ideal profile of an elected pupil representative), and the pupils are required to perform these tasks personally or as members of the school community;

– each language understanding activity is employed with the aid of a specific document (aural reception through interviews with German pupils, visual reception for reading a poster and a leaflet distributed by candidates for the office of pupil representative).

3.1. Enabling pupils to perceive the relevance of the tasks to their progress

The search for coherence present in all these examples is significantly assisted by use of the ELP.

The development of pupil autonomy involves two main routes: the learning of self-assessment and active participation by learners in decisions concerning their learning pathway, whilst respecting the roles of both teacher and pupils.

These are well-known teaching goals which are now partly reflected in teaching practices and in textbooks. The CEFR does not constitute a change of direction in this regard either, but supplies teachers with extremely useful tools designed to strengthen their action to this end.

One of the CEFR’s contributions is to enable pupils to see the growth in their competences in concrete terms through the learning work done and monitoring of their progress by the teacher.

For this purpose, teachers must take care to perform with the pupils an assessment of the work achieved, using the ELP checklists. The descriptors in the checklists constitute markers in the construction of a competence level, provided the teacher respects the progression suggested by the CEFR. The purpose of these markers is to encourage pupils to assess what they have achieved in the various activities through the tasks set.

The most suitable teaching approach for making the most of this tool is to provide for assessments at regular intervals after the teaching unit or units and to try to identify the descriptors concerned by the tasks performed. This can make the meaning and purpose of these activities clear to the pupils.

Furthermore, regular use of these checklists has the advantage of **bringing out the overall coherence of the conduct of the class**, which can sometimes suffer from an apparent deficit in this respect. One of the most usual criticisms levelled against “guidance by task” is, as we saw earlier, the risk of the teaching unit being fragmented into a succession of activities without any obvious connection between them. We have also seen that there are means of limiting this risk. A very effective one is for the teacher and pupils to consult the ELP checklists regularly: this brings home to the pupils that the tasks are not the outcome of chance or of a random choice by the teacher or authors of the textbook but are building blocks in the construction of a specific level of competences.

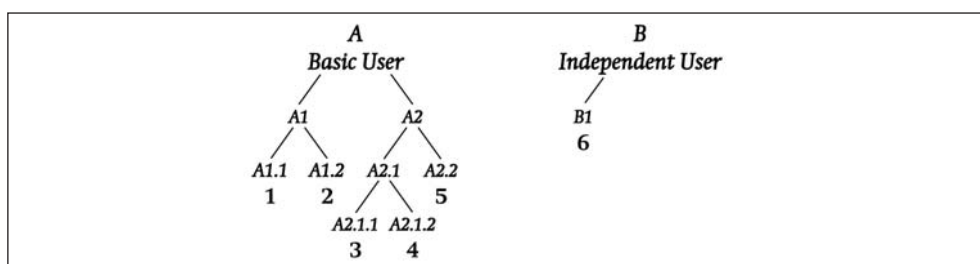
Of course, the need for efficiency presupposes that work with the checklists is adapted to the age of the pupils and is sufficiently frequent to stick in pupils’ minds

and be taken seriously, but is not so frequent as to prevent real progress from being observed in the tasks performed.

The latter aspect is of crucial importance and indicates one of the difficulties of modern language teaching: the time needed to lead pupils from one level of competence to the level immediately above is sometimes very long given the pedagogical necessity to emphasise actual progress in order to keep pupils motivated.

The CEFR (page 17), moreover, warns against interpreting sets of levels and scales of language proficiency such as A1 to C2 as if they were a linear measurement scale like a ruler. Experience shows that much more language exposure time and many more acquisitions are needed to go from Levels B1 to B2 than from Levels A2 to B1, just as the transition from A2 to B1 is necessarily slower than from A1 to A2. The transition from one level to the next involves a “necessary broadening of the range of activities, skills and language”.

This is why the CEFR suggests that the scale of levels be amended by creating intermediate levels and supplies several examples. In the one reproduced below, the authors consider the case of primary school and the first stage of secondary school, in which the level of the pupils necessitates differentiation of the A2 category.



CEFR, page 32

This possibility of refining the description of a competence level has been adopted, for example, in the French ELP for the lycée. For the competence levels actually relating to the greatest number of pupils, ie Levels A2 to B1, it proposes three intermediate stages for each language activity, as shown by the example of aural reception:

Level A2 is defined as follows in the CEFR self-assessment grid: 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.

This same level

A2-1 When the speaker deliberately uses almost exclusively words and expressions which I should know...

➤ I can understand...

A2-2 when the speaker uses simple sentences to talk about everyday subjects because he/she knows he/she is speaking to someone who is learning the language...

➤ I can understand...

A2-3 When the speaker is addressing a wider audience on subjects that are familiar to me, using however fairly short and simple sentences...

➤ I can understand...

Level B1 B1 is defined as follows in the self-assessment grid: I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.

This Level B1 is broken down as follows in the ELP for 15-year-olds and over:

B1-1 When the speaker expresses him/herself clearly in standard language and does not speak too long (about two or three minutes)...

➤ I can understand...

B1-2 When the speaker expresses him/herself at fairly great length on subjects related to the syllabus or daily life...

➤ I can understand...

B1-3 When I listen to the radio or TV on subjects related to the syllabus or daily life...

➤ I can understand...

For each of these six intermediate levels, this ELP proposes specific descriptors:

B1-1 When the speaker expresses him/herself clearly in standard language and does not speak too long (about two or three minutes)...

➤ I can understand the main points of what is said on familiar and regularly encountered subjects, including short accounts.

For example, enough to summarise very briefly a presentation on an item in the syllabus or an aspect of daily life given by a pen friend or the assistant or with the aid of a recording.

➤ I can understand the main point of radio news bulletins and simple recorded documents.

For example, understand the main points of the main items of information (issues, reported events, importance of information...).

➤ I can broadly understand the position adopted by someone in a discussion on a topic which I know well.

For example, recognise whether two interviewees share the same viewpoint on the topic put forward by the presenter.

➤ I can understand factual information and recognise general messages and points of detail.

For example, if the speaker states an important fact or illustrates it by means of details.

It is easier in this way to express pupils' progress in concrete form. The same thing could be done by analogy with certain sports, using bear cubs, snowflakes, stars etc as in skiing, or yellow, green, blue belts as in judo etc.

3.2. Creating an immediate link between classroom situations and ELP descriptors

This breakdown of competence levels into intermediate stages has not been adopted in the ELPs for primary schools and lower secondary schools (*collèges*). However, the approach concerned can also be applied to these levels by any team of teachers.

Another approach which is highly complementary to the above and which can be employed in teamwork or, for example, in in-service training is possible. It does not involve identifying a progression between the various descriptors but supplementing them with a list of situations in which pupils are guided by very concrete means to perform the tasks mentioned in the descriptors. For the pupils, these situation lists create an immediate and obvious link between the ELP checklists and the teaching they receive.

By way of an example we shall mention the work done by modern language teaching advisers of the Bas-Rhin Inspectorate in close co-operation with their Haut-Rhin counterparts and teachers in Alsace schools to facilitate work with the ELP in primary schools. For each Level A1 descriptor, the authors have listed the concrete situations experienced by the pupils. The boxes following the situation descriptions correspond to different possible languages, including the regional language spoken in the pupils' environment.

From a teaching viewpoint, this approach is extremely promising, provided excessive proximity to heard or produced utterances is avoided in order not to encourage mental translation. It can promote collective reflection by a team of teachers, or by an individual teacher, concerning the situations created in language classes, based on the textbooks used, the specific projects put in place and the particular features of the teaching environment. For each competence level, teachers can thus link these situations to the descriptors in the checklists. These remarks could apply, for example, to vocational education and to proposed exchanges, training periods and stays abroad as well as to non-linguistic education provided in a regional or foreign language, ie in France, in bilingual schemes, European or Oriental-language sections and international sections.

A1 - Listening and understanding

Descriptor: I can understand simple instructions.

Situations:

I understand when I am asked to take my exercise book or textbook at page...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand when I am asked to come to the blackboard.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand when I am asked to repeat.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand when I am asked to speak louder or more slowly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand when I am asked to copy a word or sentence again.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand when I am asked to read a passage.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand when I am asked to cut out a picture.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand when I am asked to paste a document.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand when I am asked to complete a sentence, a sum etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand when I am asked to put my things away.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand when I am asked to pay attention.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Working document, Bas-Rhin Academic Inspectorate

It would be very useful for co-operation between language teachers and teachers of non-language disciplines, as well as for the pupils themselves, to reflect on the language use situations which pupils experience and in which they perform tasks that can be linked to language competence levels.

In the approach proposed here, the link between the CEFR and modern language learning therefore assumes the following form:

Global scale

A1: understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type [...]

CEFR, page 24

Self-assessment grid

A1 - Listening: I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.

CEFR, page 26

ELP descriptor

I can understand simple instructions and information.

Situations:

I understand when I am asked to go to page...
of my exercise book or textbook.

I understand when I am asked to come to the blackboard.

I understand when I am asked to repeat.

I understand when I am asked to speak louder
or more slowly.

I understand when I am asked to copy a word
or sentence again.

I understand when I am asked to read a passage.

I understand when I am asked to cut out a picture.

I understand when I am asked to paste a document.

I understand when I am asked to complete a sentence,
a sum etc.

I understand when I am asked to put my things away.

I understand when I am asked to pay attention.

This linkage may appear complex, but this is only an impression.

It encourages teachers to take stock of the tasks they require of the pupils and of the consistency of those tasks with the CEFR levels. It allows them to reconcile use of the CEFR with that of the textbook. It avoids the over-frequent impression among pupils that in-class activities are ineffective or pointless and gives those activities a meaning in relation to the checklists and the competence levels of the self-assessment grid.

3.3. Helping pupils to identify their success in communicative tasks

One of the problems with assessments made using the ELP descriptors concerns the essential distinction between the tasks required of a group and pupils' individual success in those tasks. The assessment made after a learning period should enable pupils to take stock, on the one hand, of the collective progress made through language training and, on the other hand, on an individual basis, of their partial or complete, occasional or regular successes in performing communicative tasks. They can use this information to set their own learning goals.

Here support by the teacher is crucial. Only the teacher can, for example, get a pupil to take account of the balance between the production task set and the utterances developed. Only the teacher can get a pupil not to confuse a one-off success in a task with an ability to perform that task in different situations. The ELP for lower secondary schools encourages reflection on this subject, proposing a choice between several *smileys* for each descriptor:

On each sheet, assess whether you are able to do what the descriptor says [for example, "I can say who I am, where I was born etc"] and tick one of these boxes:



- If you tick 😞, that means you feel unable to do what is described.
- 😐 means that you can manage it but not always.
- If you tick 😊+, this means that you can do what is described fairly often.
- 😊++ means that you can usually do it.
- 😊+++ means that you always do it without any problem.

We shall return to these points in the next chapter (on assessment) but, as can already be seen, pupil autonomy presupposes a learning process that incorporates the self-assessment aspect. The ELP does not mean that the teacher does not have to provide guidance in the area of self-assessment as well. The ELP constitutes a particularly useful opportunity for expressing this pedagogical work in concrete form and giving it meaning.

4. Helping pupils to set themselves language learning goals

One might wrongly believe that the only purpose of the ELP checklists is to summarise the language work done and link that work to the CEFR scale. However, they also have the role of teaching pupils to set themselves language learning goals. This approach is an essential factor in the development of learning autonomy.

The advantage of regular assessments, performed using competence descriptors and/or lists of situations referring to those descriptors, is also that they encourage pupils to identify, with the help of their teacher, the tasks or situations to which they must devote special attention in the coming classes or weeks.

This seems particularly important for work with groups of pupils formed on the basis of their level of competence in the language or for a way of conducting the class in which attention is focused for a certain period on a particular language activity (or particular activities).

Assessments are already provided for in many textbooks. They encourage reflection on the progress made and create favourable ground for use of the CEFR.

Train teams of four pupils

- With your team choose four characters and six objects.
- With your team:
 - write the scenario (modelled on Lesson 4)
 - act out the scene.
- And why not film this scene as in the cinema?

My assessment 😊 😞 😡

In the German textbook below, we find at the end of the chapter a list of the tasks for which training has been provided, with precise references to the different parts of the teaching unit.



Je fais le point

Je suis capable de comprendre et m'exprimer dans les situations suivantes :

ÉCOUTER

Je peux...

- comprendre ce que j'ai ou ce que quelqu'un a le droit de faire, Akt 1, 1 (p. 46)
Akt 2, 2b (p. 51)
Akt 3, 3b (p. 53)
- comprendre le contenu d'un dialogue simple portant sur un sujet connu.

PARLER

Je peux...

- poser des questions pour identifier des personnes et savoir ce qu'elles font, Akt 1, 1 (p. 46)
- dire à quel endroit je vais ou veux aller, Akt 1, 3 (p. 48)
- demander ce que j'ai le droit de faire, Akt 2, 1 (p. 50)
- parler des loisirs, Akt 2, 1 (p. 50)
- demander à quelqu'un ce qu'il aime faire, Akt 2, 3 (p. 51)
- interdire quelque chose à quelqu'un, Akt 3, 5 (p. 55)
- donner un conseil à quelqu'un, Akt 3, 3c (p. 54)

LIRE

Je peux...

- lire un résumé de roman écrit simplement, Akt 3, 4 (p. 55)
- lire des indications simples pour caractériser un roman, Akt 3, 3c (p. 54)
- lire des indications d'itinéraires et d'horaires sur le site du chemin de fer allemand, Akt 1, 4b (p. 49)

ÉCRIRE

Je peux...

- écrire une fiche de lecture, Einblicke (p. 62-63)

Other textbooks incorporate explicit references to the ELP descriptors as they go along and in the assessment proposed at the end of the teaching unit.

Lernziel Sprechen / Objectif Parler (en continu)

B1.1. Erhaltene Informationen oder Auskünfte an eine Gruppe weitergeben.

Ein Reisevorhaben beschreiben, indem man die Ziele und die Organisationsformen beschreibt.

Seine Meinung begründen; dabei verfügt man über ausreichend Argumente, um verstanden zu werden.

B1.2. Ohne Notizen einfache Informationen weitergeben und klar darstellen, welcher Punkt als wichtig betrachtet wird.

Seine Meinungen, Absichten oder Taten kurz rechtfertigen oder erklären.

Ohne Schwierigkeiten eine Geschichte erzählen oder eine Beschreibung machen, indem die verschiedenen Punkte aufgezählt werden.

B1.3. Eine Geschichte spannend genug erzählen, sodass die Zuhörer ihr aufmerksam folgen.

Einen geschriebenen Text in einfacher Form nacherzählen.

Ein Referat über ein bekanntes Thema halten und dabei die wichtigsten Punkte betonen.

B1.1. Rendre compte à un groupe d'informations ou de renseignements obtenus.

Décrire un projet de voyage en indiquant les buts et les modalités d'organisation.

Expliquer son opinion en avançant suffisamment d'arguments pour être compris.

B1.2. Transmettre, sans note, des informations simples et rendre évident le point qui semble le plus important.

Justifier ou expliquer brièvement ses opinions, plans ou actes.

Raconter sans difficulté une histoire ou effectuer une description, en énumérant les différents points.

B1.3. Raconter une histoire avec un rythme suffisant pour maintenir l'attention de ses auditeurs.

Rapporter oralement et de façon simple de courts passages d'un texte écrit.

Faire un exposé sur un sujet familier en mettant en relief les points essentiels.

This textbook announces at the beginning of the unit (here unit 5) the objectives of training in the language activity which will receive preferential attention during the unit, and which is indicated by a special logo (spoken production). It will be noticed once again that this focus on a different activity for each teaching unit does not mean that other language activities are excluded. The objectives are formulated with reference to the descriptors in the French ELP for 15-year-olds and over. They adopt the breakdown of competence levels explained on pages 72 and 73.

In the assessment at the end of this unit, pupils are invited to take stock of their success in the tasks corresponding to these ELP descriptors. For this purpose, the textbook tells the pupils what documents and what parts of the unit have given rise to uses of the language allowing such an assessment. A partial assessment during the unit will obviously also enable pupils to identify the points on which they must concentrate in order to reach the expected level of competence.

Bilanz ziehen / Sprechen

B1.1. • Je peux parler de manière compréhensible avec quelques hésitations, hésitations ou pauses
 • Je peux raconter une expérience ou un événement avec suffisamment de précisions pour que les auditeurs comprennent.
 ② www weimar.de (page 115)
 • Je peux décrire un but, un rêve, ou un espoir
 ④ Nach Weimar, aber wie? (page 118)
 ⑤ Die goldenen Zwanziger (page 130)
 • Je peux expliquer un choix, mon opinion en avançant suffisamment d'arguments pour que mes auditeurs comprennent ma position.
 ⑥ Novemberrevolution (page 122)

B1.2. • Je peux transmettre, sans note, une information simple et rendre évident le point qui me semble le plus important.
 ④ Nach Weimar, aber wie? (page 118)
 • Je peux justifier ou expliquer brièvement mes opinions, plans ou actes.
 ⑤ Trauma Inflation: Ein Handkoffer voll Papiergeld (page 129)
 ⑪ Wem gehört die Zukunft? (page 132)
 • Je peux raconter sans difficulté une histoire en respectant la trame.
 ⑤ Ruf nach Weimar! (page 120)

B1.3. • Je peux parler de manière compréhensible et sans trop d'hésitations mais je fais des pauses pour planifier ce que je dis, particulièrement lorsque je parle longuement ou librement.
 • Je peux raconter une histoire avec un rythme suffisant pour maintenir l'attention de mes auditeurs.
 ⑤ Ruf nach Weimar! (page 120)
 • Je peux rapporter oralement et de façon simple de courts passages d'un texte.
 ⑦ Der Republik zum Geburtstag (page 124)
 ⑬ Das Ende der Republik (page 136)
 • Je peux faire un exposé où en mettant en relief les points qui me semblent essentiels.
 Projektarbeit: Zum Beispiel Thüringen (page 138)

Here we find a concrete illustration of the use of the CEFR competence levels broken down into intermediate levels, an approach in which the work done is focused on the development of competences in a language activity, and an explicit link between the tasks proposed in the textbook, the competence levels and use of the ELP, together with the possibility of getting the pupils to set themselves goals for their continued work.

Finally, this assessment and self-assessment phase is the opportunity for a valuable teaching dialogue that can encourage each pupil to think about the most effective individual ways of managing his or her learning process. The CD-ROM accompanying the *Alternative* textbook proposes individual reflection on one of the language activities both before and after every training exercise.

5. Limiting use of the national language

The language used in the ELP constitutes a difficulty. An ELP is in no case intended for the learning of a particular language but must take account of all the competences of pupils in all languages which they learn or know. The rule laid down by the Council of Europe requires the use in every ELP of at least one of its two official languages, English or French, as well as the language in which the users are educated. This explains why French ELPs are entirely drafted in a single language. In addition to the paradox represented by monolingual ELPs in an education system that advocates linguistic diversity, this represents a potential problem for using them: the risk of excessive intrusion of a reflection process in French into modern language courses where the time for exposure to the language taught is already very limited.

To obviate this drawback, teachers can be advised, on the one hand, to use the ELP at regular intervals throughout the year and, on the other, to make use of checklists in the regional or foreign language for their assessments, as is already the case for the last extract from the textbook on the previous page.

If it is to remain an effective tool for promoting plurilingualism, the ELP has to be drafted in the pupils' mother tongue or language of schooling. The presence of one or two other modern languages in addition to French would have been possible but would have constituted a breach of the principle of language diversification in the French educational system.

For work in a particular language, this in no way means that teachers are not allowed to prefer the assessment and reflection approach using descriptors or situations which they develop themselves or which they take from the ELP used in the country or countries whose language they teach.

Examples of descriptors taken from European ELPs

Level A2 - Spoken interaction

Conversar : Soy capaz de mantener breves diálogos con los compañeros y con el profesor ; también soy capaz de realizar juegos de rol sencillos, sobre temas conocidos. (*Ministro de Educación, Cultura y Deporte – Madrid 2003.*)

Interacção oral : Em situações do dia-a-dia e em que se trata de assuntos e actividades habituais, sou capaz de comunicar mensagens de carácter social, tais como formular e responder a convites, sugestões, pedidos de desculpa e de autorização, atender e fazer telefonemas... (*Ministério da Educação – Educação Básica – Portugal 2001.*)

Miteinander sprechen : Ich kann nicht nur etwas mitteilen und erfragen, sondern auch zeigen, ob ich damit einverstanden bin oder einen anderen Vorschlag oder eine andere Meinung habe. (*Landesinstitut für Schule und Weiterbildung, Soest, 2003.*)

Spoken interaction : I can ask someone about his/her plans for the week, weekend or holidays. (*Modern Languages in Primary Schools Initiative – Rep. of Ireland.*)

Interazione orale : Riesco a stabilire e mantenere contatti sociali per :
a. prendere accordi e proporre iniziative per incontri

b. chiedere e dare informazioni sulla salute

c. ... (Ministerio dell'istruzione, dell'università e della ricerca – Ufficio Scolastico Regionale per la Puglia – Direzione Generale – Bari, 2004.)

Gesprekken voeren : Ik kan met anderen bespreken wat we gaan doen, waar we heen gaan en afspraken maken waar we elkaar ontmoeten. (Europees Platform voor het Nederlandse Onderwijs et National Bureau Moderne Vreemde Talen, ...)

Subject to pupils possessing minimum language abilities, it would be quite feasible to perform an assessment and hold a brief discussion on the objectives to be pursued, making simple use of the target language. A list of descriptors or situations limited to the language activity and competence level or levels concerned would be used for this purpose. The teacher could then refer pupils to their ELP and asked them to tick the corresponding boxes, possibly at home.


6. Developing a programme on the basis of tasks correlated with the CEFR levels



At the end of this chapter we shall look at a more demanding and ambitious form of inclusion of the CEFR and ELP. Language teachers may not wish to apply it immediately in all its aspects, but they can gradually draw lessons from it and adopt it as an approach.



This involves developing, with reference to the CEFR, a teaching pathway adapted to pupils' abilities and to the goals that may be pursued with a class.


The first step in the approach is to **identify the CEFR competence levels to which the tasks proposed** in a teaching unit within the teaching materials correspond.

This relationship is sometimes indicated in textbooks.

 **Expresarse**

 *** | préparation 5'  -----> B2
Dans ce poème on trouve les noms de plusieurs animaux. Expliquez simplement pourquoi, ou comment, à votre avis, ils apparaissent dans le récit poétique.


 *** | préparation 10'  -----> B2
Explique maintenant la présence ou le rôle des deux vieilles, des anges et du juge dans cette scène de rixe. Fais ensuite quelques remarques personnelles sur l'attitude ou l'aspect particuliers de ces personnages du poème.

 ** | -----> B1-3
En una carta a un amigo, aficionado a la poesía, hablas de este poema que acabas de estudiar en clase y le dices lo que te ha gustado o impresionado (cf. Recuerda).
Las imágenes · el ambiente · un peuple, un pueblo · la tragedia · un mito · los símbolos · etc.

But most of the time it is not explicit. How are we to proceed?

We saw in Chapter 2 of Part 1 how to identify and analyse communicative tasks. Chapter 3 was then devoted to a study of the different CEFR competence levels. In the examples below we shall try to summarise the content of those two chapters.

In order to clarify the proposed approach, we shall take the example of a task proposed in a Spanish textbook.

	<p>CD > PLAGE > 22</p> <p>Hogares, <i>foyers</i> – la pareja, <i>le couple</i> – jornadas, <i>journées de travail</i> – listos para tomar, <i>prêts à consommer</i> – empresas, <i>entreprises</i> – valora, <i>juge</i> – maduro, <i>mûr</i> – por encima de otros, <i>plus que d'autres</i>.</p>	<p><i>Tu vas entendre six professionnels de la vente en grande surface évoquer, très succinctement, un aspect particulier du consommateur espagnol. À partir de ces six points de vue essaie de dresser un portrait global du consommateur que tu exposeras à la classe.</i></p> <p><i>Tu pourras utiliser ces mots :</i></p> <p><i>D'abord, primero - por otra parte - de plus, además - une particularité, una peculiaridad - un autre trait, otro rasgo.</i></p>
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This task calls successively on two language activities, aural reception and spoken production. We must therefore proceed in two stages.

To gauge the difficulty with regard to aural reception, we shall examine the self-assessment grid (see page 26), confining ourselves, however, to the levels from A1 to B2.

A1	I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.
A2	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.
B1	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.
B2	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.

We are obviously confronted here with a Level B1 task. The pupils have to understand the main points of the interviews. This is certainly common to Levels A2, B1 and B2, but the nature and theme of the texts heard no longer really belong to Level A2: we are not dealing with simple messages but with explanations. However, these texts do not fall under Level B2 either: we are not dealing with a complex argument.

If we refer to the list of Level B1 descriptors of the ELP for upper secondary schools (*lycées*), we find the following: “I can understand the main points of a presentation on familiar, regularly encountered subjects, including short accounts.

For example, enough to be able to make a very brief summary of a presentation on an item in the syllabus or an aspect of daily life given by a pen friend or the assistant or with the use of a recording” (level B1-1).

Let us now consider the task from the viewpoint of the activity of spoken production. The level of difficulty can be identified with the use of the part of the self-assessment grid devoted to this activity and of our comments on the grid on pages 47 and 48 (Chapter 3).

A1	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.
A2	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.
B1	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.
B2	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

Because this task requires connected speech (different documents have to be summarised), we are no longer at Level A1 or A2, for which spoken production may be effected by juxtaposing sentences or utterances. The instruction does not require pupils to develop a viewpoint or present an argument either, as would be required by Level B2.

We can consider that the task in fact corresponds to Level B1: pupils must report in a structured fashion on a content which does not concern them directly but of which they are aware. It could be related to the following ELP descriptor: “I can make a simple statement which I have prepared on a familiar topic in which the important points are developed with precision.” (Level B2-2).

This use of the self-assessment grid to identify the level of difficulty of communicative tasks can easily be applied to the other language activities as part of the training proposed in the textbooks.

Ascertaining the level of difficulty of a task in a textbook may cause the teacher to enrich it, adapt it or even create something completely different. But this leads to a question: **can all texts give rise to tasks adapted to all competence levels?**

To answer this question, we must once again use the information we have about the nature of texts as suggested by the self-assessment grid.

	Aural reception	Visual reception
A1	Slow and clear utterances concerning the identity of the speakers, family or immediate concrete surroundings	Very simple words or sentences in advertisements, posters or catalogues
A2	Utterances or exchanges on very familiar subjects (identity, family, shopping, local area, employment)	Short, very simple texts; everyday documents such as advertising, prospectuses, menus and timetables; short, simple personal letters
B1	Simple, clear announcements and messages; exchanges or explanations in clear, standard language, on familiar subjects (employment, leisure, school etc)	Texts drafted mainly in everyday language or language relating to my work; descriptions of events, expression of the wishes in personal letters
B2	Extended speech on a familiar topic; radio or TV broadcasts on current affairs or familiar topics	Articles and reports on contemporary questions in which the authors adopt a particular attitude or viewpoint; contemporary literary text in prose
C1	Long and even unstructured speech; TV broadcasts and films	Long and complex factual or literary texts; specialised articles and long technical instructions even unrelated to my field
C2	Every type of message and speech, even under conditions made difficult by the authenticity of the situation, speed of delivery, a particular accent	Every type of text, even if abstract or complex in substance and form, for example a textbook, specialised article or literary work

Using this table, we shall look at four documents in different language textbooks and of different class levels.

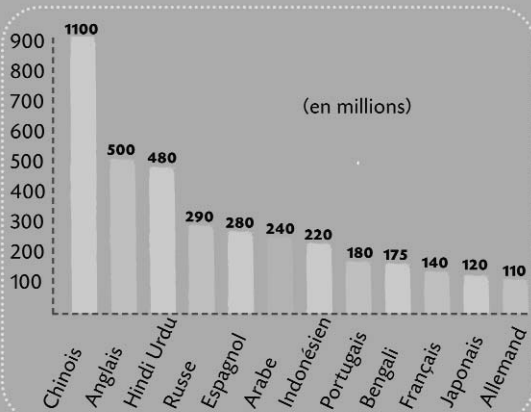


The texts proposed here for visual reception obviously come under Level A1: we have simple sentences and not an everyday document as mentioned in the definition of Level A2.

In the extract from the same textbook reproduced on page 87, we find texts coming under Level A2 (short texts composed of simple sentences which therefore do not correspond to the requirements of the Level B1 definition).

Generally speaking therefore, we find consistency in the textbooks between the choice of medium and the degree of difficulty of the tasks required.

Needless to say, things are not always as clear-cut as this. Let us compare this last page in the French textbook with the text in a Spanish textbook reproduced at the bottom of page 87 (Carta a Roberto) and, like it, intended for beginners. At first sight, the length of the texts and the connections between the utterances composing them make it difficult to place them in the same category. While the French text obviously comes under Level A2, the Spanish text could give rise to Level B1 tasks. However, the linearity of the speech and the vocabulary in this text, together with the subjects addressed, make it qualify equally for Level A2 tasks (short, simple personal letters).



Aujourd'hui...

on parle plus de 3000 langues dans le monde mais beaucoup disparaissent parce qu'elles ne sont plus utilisées. Les langues les plus parlées sont le chinois et l'anglais. Le français arrive en 10^e position après l'espagnol, l'arabe et le portugais. Ces langues sont parlées dans beaucoup de pays (anglais : 45 pays ; français : 33 ; arabe : 21 ; espagnol : 20). Les alphabets et écritures sont très variés selon les langues.

ฉันทักเธอ ดอ

25

Carta a Roberto

Barcelona, julio de 1975

Querido Roberto:

Fue una gran sorpresa recibir tu carta al cabo de tanto tiempo [...].

Es posible que no lo creas, pero desde esta ciudad
 5 que según parece es la avanzada cultural de España,
 yo echo muchísimo de menos Galicia¹, Lobeira y
 hasta Vigo, por lo menos Vigo como era hace diez
 años, cuando todavía los tranvías² blancos y rojos
 subían jadeando³ las cuestas (el mes pasado, cuando
 10 fui al entierro de mi madre descubrí que ya no hay
 tranvías), cuando nos bañábamos en el mar, enfrente
 del balneario⁴ en lo que hoy son las sucias aguas del
 puerto deportivo, enfrente de la mole⁵ sin gracia de
 un hotel que oculta el mar, cuando el Bao era una jun-
 15 quera⁷ y no un campo de fútbol, cuando en Samil
 había dunas. Tengo un buen trabajo aquí, pero creo
 que si me ofreciesen uno en Vigo, aun ganando
 menos⁸, lo aceptaría. [...]

Gracias por escribir, [...] y recuérdame como era entonces.

Ernesto.

Marilar ALEXANDRE, *Midiendo por Lobeira,*
 en *Lobos en las islas*, 2000.

1/ echo de menos Galicia: la *Galice me manque* - 2/ los tranvías: *les tramways* - 3/ jadeando: *en haletant* - 4/ el balneario: *les thermes* - 5/ el puerto deportivo: *le port de plaisance* - 6/ la mole: *la masse* - 7/ una junquera: *lieu où poussent des joncs* - 8/ aun ganando menos: *même en gagnant moins*

The potential level of a text is therefore not automatically indicated by the class level for which a textbook is intended. Classification of this Spanish text under Level A2 will become more obvious when we compare it with another proposed document in a lower sixth form textbook for which, this time, we may hesitate between Level B1 and Level B2.

“In Thai, you die!”



After a few idyllic months in Thailand, Sandra Gregory, a British tourist, found herself ill, penniless and desperate to return home.

It was time to leave but I had one major problem – my ticket had run out months ago and I didn't have any money to buy a new one. I thought about ringing my parents but pride got the better of me. As weeks passed, things went from bad to worse. I became infected with dengue fever (a virus transmitted by mosquitoes) and suffered intense fevers, splitting headaches and terrible cramps.

Then one day I bumped into an English bloke I'd met before. He knew I was desperate to get home and had a proposition for me – he'd give me £1,000 if I took a package to Tokyo for him. I asked him what was in the package. He replied matter of factly that it was heroin, his personal supply that he needed to see him through his holiday. The thought of smuggling heroin was ludicrous but the £1,000 was more than enough for a ticket home. I told him I'd think about it. I was ill, skint and desperate. This offer seemed like a simple solution so I gave him a call.

15 "I'll do it," I said.

On my way to the airport, my head was spinning. When the English bloke, his girlfriend and I arrived at the check in desk, three men were waiting for us. They led us into a room and started searching through the English bloke's bags. I looked around and saw a sign on the wall: Customs Seizures. My stomach lurched. We were taken behind a screen and X rayed. Then the customs men started shouting in Thai.

25 "We know you are trying to leave my country with heroin," one of them yelled at me. Laughing, he put two fingers to his temple and said: "Boom, in Thai, you die!"

I was ordered to remove the packages of heroin. My head was spinning with fear and shame. I couldn't stop thinking: "What will my family say?"

30 We were driven handcuffed to a police station. I was put in a filthy, stinking cell. Five days later a woman from the British embassy came to visit. She told me the minimum sentence I could get was 25 years and the maximum the death penalty.

For the first time in my life I couldn't imagine a future.

Forget you had a daughter. Sandra Gregory (2002)

After seven and a half years behind bars – both in Thailand and Great Britain – the King of Thailand granted Sandra a full pardon and she was eventually released.



In line with the definition of Level B2, we definitely have here a literary text in prose on a contemporary issue. However, its composition certainly shows very few characteristics specific to this type of text. Moreover, its content gives pride of place to the narration of events and the expression of desires and feelings, which are characteristic of Level B1 texts. We may conclude from this very brief analysis that this text can give rise to tasks falling between Levels B1 and B2.

On the basis of such an analysis, it is possible in most cases to look to the descriptors in the ELP checklists in order to supplement, if necessary, the instructions proposed in the textbook with tasks suitable for the programme decided on with a group of pupils.

Let us take a look at the last extract reproduced, which we said

came under Levels B1 and B2, and see what types of visual reception tasks the textbook proposes concerning it.

●○○ on your marks...

- 1- Using the two photos in the order you like, make up the girl's story.
- 2- Link the story with the titles of the extract and of the book.

○●○ get set...

- 3- Read the first paragraph and explain Sandra's problems. Suggest some possible solutions.

○○● go...

- 4- Read paragraph 2. Using the following hints, sum up what happened:
offer – first reaction – reply – reasons.
- 5- Read the whole text. Which sentence can be seen as the turning point? Give titles for the two parts.
- 6- Focusing on the second part, name the people involved and explain their roles and actions.
- 7- Say if these adjectives can apply to any of the characters:
petrified – sadistic – indifferent – shameful – panicky – threatening.
Justify by quoting.

We find reading instructions that refer effectively to Level B1: identification of the events described, the feelings and behaviour of the characters. These instructions could easily be compared with the ELP descriptors:

- I can understand a factual text on an item in the syllabus or on one of my main interests sufficiently to be able to recognise the principal information it contains.
- I can understand descriptions of a feeling and the expression of desires formulated in standard language.

Looking more closely at the tasks required in the continuation – not reproduced here – of this page of the textbook, particularly as regards written expression (“Imagine what Sandra wrote in her diary when she was weighing up the pros and cons before accepting the offer”), we see however that this task can only be performed if the pupils have been able to understand from the text the reasons driving the characters to act, which is, word for word, one of the descriptors of the B2 level of the ELP.

Contrary to their practice in an assessment situation, teachers will not refrain from mingling tasks of adjacent but different levels (here, for example, B1 and B2) if this is required by the dynamics of the teaching unit. However, it is recommended that pupils should regularly be offered communicative tasks relevant to their own progress. It would have been inconsistent, for example, to propose only Level B2 tasks for the study of this text.

Even though, overall, these recommendations may appear complex and restrictive, it is important to repeat that we are not proposing a complete break with teaching practices and that the “action-oriented approach” suggested by the CEFR is compatible with the available teaching aids.

The purpose of the details given in this chapter is to show how language teachers can gradually adopt these tools so as to better attain the goals they set themselves with their pupils. It is unnecessary to try to apply everything described. Teachers must assess the value of these recommendations for their practice and for the needs of their pupils.

The introduction of the reference to these tools in order to organise groups of pupils and devise the programme followed with those pupils – which is sometimes announced at national level, as in France – will certainly produce great changes in the context of such teaching. If language teachers are enthusiastic about using the CEFR and ELP to enrich their professional skills, they will become even more effective. That is what this chapter has tried to show.

CHAPTER 2

HOW ARE LANGUAGE COMPETENCES TO BE ASSESSED?

We shall return later in this chapter to the question of self-assessment and how it is related to assessment proper. We shall deal first with the consequences of using the CEFR for pupil assessment in the normal teaching framework, as the question of national examinations does not fall within the scope of this book.

The assumption underlying everything said below is that it is necessary to conduct a separate assessment of pupils' competence level in the different language activities. This pedagogical requirement is restated in the documents accompanying most language syllabuses. It is generally respected in all assessments organised by schools, even though certain examinations do not allow for an assessment of all language activities. In France, for example, it was recently the subject of successful trials in the final classes of secondary general education and is being adopted for the examination papers in a new baccalauréat series (STG). This is a well-established practice in French upper secondary agricultural schools, where training assessment is required to include a separate assessment of language activities for all types of training coming under the ministry concerned.

1. Constructing an assessment test based on the CEFR

The teacher's task is relatively simple as regards **assessing pupils' level of competence in production activities**. The self-assessment grid and the ELP checklists supply us with adequate guides. An assessment of ability in written or spoken production must be performed through communicative tasks corresponding to the competence level whose mastery by the pupils one wishes to check.

Prenons l'exemple de l'expression orale en continu.

-
- | | |
|----|--|
| A1 | I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know. |
| A2 | I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job. |
| B1 | I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions. |
| B2 | I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options. |
-

C1 I can present clear detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.

C2 I can present a clear, smoothly flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.

Self-assessment grid, CEFR, pages 26 and 27

Let us assume that the pupils have worked as part of an exercise in spoken production under the guidance of the German teacher with the following teaching unit.

3 Das Programm für die Projektarbeit

Du hast das Wort!

Morgen haben die drei Gruppen ein volles Programm. Der Lehrer gibt Informationen. Du bist der Lehrer.

Du: Die Gruppe 1 geht zuerst in den Kaufhof und ... Dann ...

Gruppe 1

in den Kaufhof gehen / einen Film kaufen → die U-Bahn nehmen / in die Stadt fahren → ins Heinrich-Hoffmann-Museum gehen → an die Kasse gehen / eine Gruppenkarte kaufen → Informationen über Heinrich Hoffmann lesen / eine kleine Reportage machen

Gruppe 2 und Gruppe 3

Gruppe 2: in die Halle 5 gehen / das Diskussionspodium suchen → einen Buchautor treffen

Gruppe 3: an den Stand von DTV (Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag) gehen → einen Verleger treffen

4 Michael hat einen anderen Plan

Du hast das Wort!

Michael will nicht mitmachen. Was macht Michael?

Du: Michael fährt in die Stadt. Aber er geht nicht in ..., er geht ...

(e) Haltestelle (f) Supermarkt (g) Internetcafé (h) Telefontaube

5 Du hast das Wort!

Michael besucht auch die Homepage www.bahn.de. Wohin will er fahren? Was meinst du?

Du: Er will bestimmt nicht nach Paris fahren! Vielleicht will er nach Freiburg fahren.

Paris, Stuttgart, Rom, London, Dresden, München, Köln, Berlin

5 Und die Lehrer?

Schau und erzähle!

Die Lehrer haben auch ein Programm. Du: Die Lehrer sind müde. Sie gehen in die Jugendherberge.

hüde sein

(e) Cafeteria (f) Eis

On this double page they have learnt about the link between simple utterances, using chronological (“then”) and logical (“but”) connectors and have learnt to put their utterances in modal form (“certainly not”, “perhaps”). To assess their spoken production ability, they can therefore be asked to give an account of the chronology of events communicated in the form of illustrations or planned in class and whose content causes them no difficulty of vocabulary.

With this task we are at Level A1: I can construct sentences using “and”, “but”, “then”.

It will be noticed that this descriptor appears in certain ELPs (such as the ELP for lower secondary schools (*collèges*) under the Writing heading. It may be considered that at this level, and even perhaps at higher levels, training in spoken production is the best form of learning written expression.

After a teaching unit comprising, inter alia, the documents reproduced below, assessment can consist in asking pupils to compare two documents connected with the school environment in their country and in Spain or a Latin American country (eg two timetables, school dress, school schedules etc) and state their preferences.

This expression task corresponds to the descriptors for ELP Level A2:

- I can describe and compare objects briefly.
- I can explain why I like or dislike something.

el mapa de España: la carte d'Espagne
una vacilón: une baguette
estar de pie: être debout
dar la espalda a...: tourner le dos à...
formar un círculo: former un cercle
la bata: la blouse

Barcelona, 1929.

Madrid, hoy en día.

la pizarra blanca: le tableau blanc
el retroproyector: le rétroprojecteur
la pantalla: l'écran
la mochila: le sac à dos
la carpeta: le classeur
la percha: le porte-manteau
la pared: le mur

Imparfait irrégulier:
Ver Ir
veía iba
veías ibas
veía iba
veíamos íbamos
veíais ibais
veían iban

Le gustaba mucho el olor de los lápices. ■ E3
Más... que
Menos... que
Tan... como
Tanto (s'accorde) + nom + como ■ E7

2. ¿Qué representan estas dos fotos?
3. Compara las utilizando los comparativos y las expresiones «en cambio», «mientras que...» (descripción de los personajes, del aula, etc.)
4. ¿En cuál de estas dos clases se puede estudiar mejor? ¿Por qué?

Haciendo los deberes

Estaba inclinada sobre su ancha carpeta de anillas, inclinada y absorta, indiferente al televisor con el volumen demasiado alto que veían su padre y sus hermanos más pequeños, haciendo los deberes, igual que todas las tardes, en la mesa del comedor, de la que había retirado cuidadosamente el adorno floral del centro¹, para despejar² el espacio que necesitaba, sus cuadernos de dos rayas, sus libros forrados por ella misma con plástico adhesivo, el estuche de cremallera³ donde guardaba los lápices, el sacapuntas, la goma, cada cosa en su sitio [...]. Le gustaba mucho el olor⁴ de los lápices y el de los cuadernos, la modesta voluptuosidad del olor de la goma, de la madera, de la tinta ácida de los rotuladores, se embebía escribiendo⁵ con el lápiz bien afilado sin salirse de las dos rayas azules del cuaderno o coloreando un dibujo recién terminado [...].

Antonio MUÑOZ MOLINA, *Plemiturión*, 1997.

1/ el adorno floral del centro: le centre de table fleuri - 2/ despejar: dégager - 3/ la cremallera: la fermeture éclair - 4/ el olor: l'odeur - 5/ se embebía escribiendo: elle se plongea dans l'écriture

1. ¿Dónde y cuándo estaba haciendo los deberes la niña?
2. ¿Cuál era su material escolar?
3. ¿Qué le gustaba?
4. ¿Cómo se nota que era una alumna estudiosa?


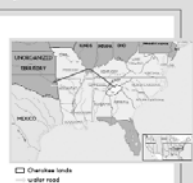
Finally, let us imagine the case of a class which has worked, in English, on the interviews proposed in the *Going Places* textbook (Première, page 140), in which five persons give their views about the tendency of certain United States courts to replace prison sentences with the obligation to parade in public with a placard showing the crime committed.

The assessment of the level reached by pupils in spoken production could be based on the photograph below. The pupils assessed could be asked to explain the content of the document and to give their opinion on it, stating their reasons.



Depending on the abilities of the pupils and their individual performances, this work instruction will fall either under Level B1-2: I can talk simply without preparation on varied topics connected with my areas of interest or an item in the syllabus, or under Level B2: I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

CREATIVE WRITING

THE TRAIL OF TEARS

Originally, the Cherokee Indians lived in Georgia. In 1835 the treaty of New Echota was signed and ratified by the United States Senate. President Andrew Jackson was given the right to remove the Cherokees from Georgia. On May 17th, 1838 General Winfield arrived at New Echota with 7,000 men. In the summer the Cherokee nation was invaded: men, women and children had to leave their homes and walk a thousand miles to Oklahoma. They had little food. 4,000 Cherokee died. The route became known as the Trail of Tears.* * fake part!

- Read the story of "The Trail of Tears". Imagine you are:
 1. a Cherokee who survived the removal,
 2. a historian writing a book to denounce the massacre of the Indians.
- Re-write the text, expressing the point of view you have chosen.

Here are some tips to help you write an interesting and moving text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write your text as a first person narrative: <i>My name is ... I was ...</i> - Give as many details as you can about yourself: name, age, family ... - Use verbs like "remember", "forget" ... and adjectives to describe your feelings. - Say what you were doing; how you, or others around you, reacted: when the soldiers arrived, during the removal, at your arrival in Oklahoma. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write your text as a third person narrative: <i>President Jackson ... the authorities ... the soldiers ...</i> - Give facts to inform and explain: names, dates, numbers. - Use adjectives and adverbs to make your reader sympathise.
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- Work with a friend to improve on your first writing: look up words in a dictionary, avoid repetitions, check the tenses (use the past) and the forms (active or passive?), think of the punctuation and capital letters.

When the level of the pupils composing the group is not homogeneous and the context allows, it is quite conceivable, and even recommended, to introduce tasks of different levels in an assessment concerning production activities.

Thus, in the course of the unit taken from the English textbook below concerning the treatment of American Indians by the new Americans, the pupils have been trained in written expression, as shown by the extract reproduced on the previous page.

A test to assess ability in this activity could be based in such a case on the following photograph:



Native American children in a boarding school during detribalization.

Pupils could be asked to perform the following two tasks of different levels:

- narrate the experience of one of these children in a letter written in the first person (Level A2: I can narrate what has happened to me in the near or distant past);
- describe one's state of mind and adopt a position (Level B1: I can report my experiences and describe my feelings and reactions in a personal letter.

The construction of a test is a more sensitive matter when the aim is to **assess aural or visual reception**. The choice of a medium and of a communicative task must then be combined, using, as we have seen in Chapter 1 of Part 2, the information contained in the self-assessment grid.

Ideally, a task linked to a specific document will be developed for each competence level.

However, it is also possible to arrange for a succession of tasks coming under a different competence level, using the same medium if this is suitable.

Fäuste in der Tasche

Mit jungen Hilfssheriffs gegen Vandalismus

Sebastian und seine Mitschüler werden ausgebildet¹, um künftig in Bussen und Straßenbahnen in Bochum mit Gewalttätigen und Vandalen fertig werden² zu können. Mehr als 150 speziell trainierte Schüler im Alter von 14 bis 19 Jahren arbeiten dort als ehrenamtliche Fahrzeugbegleiter³.

Vandalismus-Schäden⁴ in Bussen und Bahnen sind seit 1998 um rund 40 Prozent zurückgegangen und die Schulwege sind sicherer geworden.

Auf die Idee kam Ernst Nieland von der Straßenbahnen AG Bochum, gemeinsam mit Lehrern und Schülern im Frühjahr 1998. Allein im Jahr 1997 wurden Schäden in Höhe von 600 000 Mark registriert, davon ein Großteil in Schulbussen und -bahnen. Auch

die Schüler beschwerten⁵ sich: Jüngere wurden von Älteren in Bussen attackiert, Ausländer angegriffen, Eingänge blockiert, so dass viele zu spät zum Unterricht kamen.

Wer Fahrzeugbegleiter werden will, bekommt eine Ausbildung



von drei Doppelstunden Verhaltenstraining im Bus mit einem Polizeispezialisten, inklusive

Übungen in Körpersprache und Kommunikationstechnik. Zum Schluss gibt es Ausweise mit dem Titel „Fahrzeugbegleiter“.

Die Trainer raten den Schülern, nicht um jeden Preis alles regeln zu wollen; sie sollen sich nicht in Gefahr bringen. Eva Müller-Schröder, Vertrauenslehrerin, weiß freilich, dass es unter den künftigen Fahrzeugbegleitern einige gibt, die selbst zur Gewalt neigen oder zur rechten Szene gehören. „Gerade problematische Schüler“, hofft sie jedoch, „werden auf andere Gedanken kommen, wenn wir ihnen Verantwortung übertragen“.

Doch nicht jeder darf beim Projekt mitmachen. „Wer es nach der Ausbildung nicht schafft, trotz Provokationen die Fäuste⁶ in der Tasche zu behalten, fliegt raus“, erklärt ein Polizist.

(aus: Der Spiegel Nr. 10/2001)

Although the above document is not intended for this use in the teaching unit, we shall take it as a medium for assessing visual reception with a group of pupils who are in the process of reaching Level B1 in this activity.

To make things easier for readers who do not possess an adequate command of German, we shall put the items in this assessment in English.

It is obvious that this text effectively comes under Level B1 of the self-assessment grid. However, it is perhaps desirable to allow pupils who are less confident about their abilities in this activity to demonstrate their ability at Level A2. For this purpose, we can propose to this group an assessment starting with two instructions referring back to Level A2 descriptors:

➤ I can recognise what a letter or a text is about when it concerns a subject which is familiar to me.

An example of an instruction with a view to assessment: pupils can be asked to give a brief account of the topic covered in this article (training of young volunteers against vandalism).

➤ I can follow the construction of a short narrative or a brief description of facts concerning familiar topics.

For example, I can recognise the order in which the events took place and identify the nature of the link between them (causes, consequences etc).

An example of an instruction with a view to assessment:

Say what the theme of each of the five paragraphs in the text is.

Put in the boxes the letter corresponding to the topic dealt with (a, b, c, d, e).

Topics covered:

- initial situation =a*
- solutions adopted =b*
- action methods =c*
- restrictions mentioned =d*
- some tips =e*

Paragraph 1 (lines 1 to 16)

Paragraph 2 (lines 17 to 32)

Paragraph 3 (lines 33 to 41)

Paragraph 4 (lines 42 to 55)

Paragraph 5 (lines 56 to the end)

The bulk of this assessment must, however, be at Level B1. The descriptors that can serve as a basis for the instructions under this level are the following:

- B1-1: I can understand a factual text on an item in the syllabus or on one of my main interests sufficiently to be able to recognise the principal information it contains.

In the assessment, it will therefore be possible to check that the pupils have understood how volunteers are selected and trained as well as the conclusion drawn by the journalist.

An example of an instruction with a view to assessment:

Tick the statement corresponding to the text and justify the chosen reply by means of a short quotation.

- a) The operation was rather a failure.*
- b) The effects of this operation are not yet known.*
- c) The operation has produced definite results.*
- d) The results varied greatly according to the place.*
- e) The results are interpreted very differently by the police and organisers.*

Quotation

- B1-2: I can recognise the significant points of a well-structured newspaper article on a familiar topic.

To check that this descriptor has been mastered, assessment could cover a non-event-related aspect of the article that is nonetheless essential for its content: the recommendations made for the attention of the volunteers for this operation (never place oneself in danger, maintain self-control in all situations).

- B1-3: I can identify the principal conclusions of a well-structured text advancing an argument.

This latter point could be assessed by asking pupils to explain what Mrs Eva Müller-Schröder means by saying, in lines 51 to 55: “Gerade problematische Schüler werden auf andere Gedanken kommen, wenn wir ihnen Verantwortung übertragen” (giving responsibilities to problem pupils can make them change their attitude).

2. Assessing pupil performance in a test

Here too, we must draw a distinction between comprehension and expression.

In a test to assess comprehension, it is easy to see whether a pupil has succeeded in the task set. In the case of a test composed of different competence levels, it is for the teacher to decide on the weighting for each of these tasks in the overall mark. Taking the example of the tasks proposed above in connection with the “Fäuste in der Tasche” text, it would be possible to choose, for instance, the following weighting, depending on whether the test is aimed at pupils of modern language 1 or modern language 2. Marks are calculated in accordance with the French marking system of 0 to 20 (the latter mark is the highest).

Level of tasks	ML1	ML2
A2	5 marks	10 marks
B1	15 marks	10 marks
	20 marks	20 marks

It will be noticed that in the case of a test proposing differentiated tasks on the basis of specific media or the same text, marks can no longer be apportioned taking account exclusively of the information contained in the text(s) (for example, 2 marks per item of information understood or reproduced) but by respecting the relative weight of the tasks of different levels within the class’s objectives.

The question of **assessment of the quality of a pupil’s written or spoken production** leads us to a closer examination of the fundamental concept of positive assessment dealt with on page 48. Pupils’ competences must be assessed on the basis of **what they are capable of achieving with the language**, not in a negative fashion based on the ideal of total command of the language or, even less, on exclusively formal criteria independent of the task to be performed. This also applies, of course, to visual and aural reception, but the scope is much wider for the assessment of oral and written production in a regional or foreign language.

To illustrate this key concept, we shall make a detour through a language activity not directly linked to our argument: assessment of the translation of a text. There are two co-existing and competing ways of assessing the translation of a text in a foreign (or regional) language into the national language. The first and best-known way consists in counting all the errors according to an absolutist typology (meaningless word or phrase, mistranslation, bad phrasing, barbarism etc) and

subtracting the number of marks corresponding to the total of these errors from the maximum mark. The second way is to divide the text into a sequence of meaningful segments and judge the quality of the translation in the individual segments, awarding an increasing number of marks depending on whether the translation of the segment conveys the bulk of the information, respects the whole meaning, commits no stylistic infelicities in turning the passage concerned into the target language or offers a particularly successful translation.

It is clear that these two ways of assessing the same translation are very likely to produce highly dissimilar results. Despite the difference in purpose, they illustrate the fundamental contradiction between an assessment of production focusing on the errors and stylistic infelicities committed and a positive assessment that endeavours to value even partial success in the tasks requested.

Of course, even a positive assessment of expression must be based on quality criteria. In Chapter 5 (pages 110-129) the CEFR supplies 13 qualitative criteria for written or spoken production, with a grid for each one showing the success level from A1 to C2 for some of them and from A2 to C2 for the majority.

These qualitative criteria are as follows:

- general linguistic range
- vocabulary range
- vocabulary control
- grammatical accuracy
- phonological control
- orthographic control
- sociolinguistic appropriateness
- flexibility
- turntaking
- thematic development
- coherence and cohesion
- spoken fluency
- propositional precision.

We shall take the sensitive example of grammatical accuracy, deliberately confining ourselves to Level B2 +, to see how an assessment can adopt a positive approach even on this point.

Grammatical accuracy

B2 + Good grammatical control; occasional 'slips' or non-systematic errors and minor flaws in sentence structure may still occur, but they are rare and can often be corrected in retrospect.

B2 Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding.

B1 +	Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contacts; generally good control though with noticeable mother tongue influence. Errors occur but it is clear what he/she is trying to express.
B1	Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used 'routines' and patterns associated with more predictable situations.
A2	Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes - for example tends to mix up tenses and forget to mark agreement; nevertheless, it is usually clear what he/she is trying to say.
A1	Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a learnt repertoire.

CEFR, page 114

As in the translation example, using this grid means deciding on the degree of language proficiency in the performance of a communicative task rather than accumulating negative marks on the basis of the number of syntactical or morphological errors committed.

This does not mean that teachers should not be interested in a pupil's mistakes and infelicities. On the contrary their task is specifically to enable pupils to remove these obstacles to more effective communication and to get them to make progress. They must therefore spot these errors and take them into account in their subsequent teaching activities. However, this should not be confused with assessing pupils' ability to perform communicative tasks with language.

If teachers wish to monitor pupils' mastery of points of syntax or morphology, they are, of course, fully entitled to do so and in some circumstances this can be a useful lever for encouraging pupils to learn. However, this optional part of a lesson must not be confused with the assessment of written or spoken production as such, and the respective outcomes must be clearly perceived by the pupils.

Let us therefore return to this assessment of production quality and to the criteria supplied by the *CEFR*. These are too numerous to be taken into account in one assessment: 9 can apply to written production, 11 to spoken interaction and 10 to spoken production.

It is the responsibility of teachers to select some of them, probably not more than four, corresponding to their teaching choices and a particular context, trying at the same time to mingle criteria concerned more with task performance (thematic development, cohesion, spoken fluency, turntaking etc) and other criteria relating to language system aspects (grammatical accuracy, phonological control, orthographic control etc).

Once this choice has been made, teachers can award a number of marks for each criterion and distribute them according to the level reached for each criterion, taking account, of course, of legitimate expectations regarding the class level and the objectives pursued.

Let us take the example of pupils in a class whose objective as laid down in the syllabus is Level B1, for example the fourth year (*troisième*) in France. The marking scale for an assessment of spoken interaction might look as follows:

Criteria adopted	Level A1	Level A2	Level B1
Phonological control	1 marks	3 marks	5 marks
Sociolinguistic appropriateness	1 marks	3 marks	5 marks
Flexibility	2 marks	4 marks	5 marks
Grammatical accuracy	2 marks	4 marks	5 marks

According to this example, an assessment of a pupil's ability to take part in a conversation or debate during which the teacher has assessed performance as corresponding to Level A2 for the first three criteria adopted here and to Level B1 for the fourth criterion (grammatical accuracy) would produce a mark of 15 out of 20.

3. Self-assessment and teacher assessment

We appear to be a long way from the self-assessment referred to in the previous chapter. Pupils were invited to assess their success in the tasks proposed during teaching or in their personal use of language. For this purpose they had the ELP checklists.

The tools used for the teacher's assessment of production quality are the qualitative criteria listed above. The gap between the teacher's assessment and self-assessment certainly represents a major challenge to the introduction of the CEFR and ELP into teaching practices.

We would point out, however, that this gap tends to narrow when both have recourse to the CEFR common reference levels and the scale of competence levels. Moreover, **if the assessment criteria are known to the pupils and their production is assessed and analysed along these lines, assessment by the teacher undoubtedly constitutes an important stage in the learning of self-assessment.**

4. Marking and levels of competence

Both these activities have quite different objectives.

Marks given by the teacher play a part in collective decisions taken by the teaching team with pupils and their family regarding their career plans and specialisation. It reflects the contribution of each discipline to the pupil's general education. Even if each discipline is subject to specific constraints such as the necessity in modern languages to report separately on pupils' competences in the different language activities, marking must comply with common characteristics, in France, for example, the use of a 0 to 20 marking scale.

Furthermore, as in all disciplines, marking in foreign languages situates pupils' competences in relation to the objectives of a class level or training period.

It is thus reasonable to think that a fourth-year pupil who shows he or she possesses B1 competence in a language and has accordingly fully reached the objective of proficiency in the language at that class level deserves the maximum mark, ie 20 out of 20.

According to the same reasoning, this maximum mark of 20 out of 20 would be awarded to any pupil reaching Level A1 at the end of primary school, Level A2 at the end of stage 1 of lower secondary school (*collège*) and Level B2 at the end of general education in upper secondary (*lycée*).

Why does this happen so rarely? Why do so many language teachers refuse to give this mark for performance corresponding to this competence level?

The reply is obvious: because the mark traditionally awarded in modern languages is supposed both to recognise a pupil's success in relation to the teacher's expectations and to show that the pupil can and must make further progress.

Giving pupils such a mark when they do not yet have total command of the language raises the fear that they wrongly consider they have reached the maximum proficiency.

However, it is the very role of the CEFR to identify a pupil's place in the continuum of communicative competence and his or her level of proficiency in relation to the different possible levels.

If, through use of the CEFR scale and the ELP, teachers are able to show pupils where in this continuum the objective pursued is situated at a particular point in the training process, they will not be afraid to mark pupils consistently in relation to that objective. No fourth-year pupils who have scored 20 out of 20 in a language will then imagine they have reached Level C2 and feel able to rest on their laurels.

When used in a complementary fashion, marking and reference to the CEFR scale can fully play their respective roles.

What is the meaning of a mark of 14 out of 20 for a written production task performed by a second-year secondary pupil, for example, in the language studied since primary school? It should indicate that the pupil has not yet attained complete mastery in this language activity of all the aspects set out in the Level A2 definition but that his or her production meets at least Level A1 requirements.

There is a clear advantage in making explicit use of these two reference scales for language teaching:

- the class's specific objective, in order to mark pupils' performance;
- the CEFR scale, in order to free the teacher from uncertainty about the meaning of the mark awarded.

This explains in particular why it is important for the ELP to give pupils a general idea of the levels as from primary school, even beyond what they can hope to attain for the moment, and for the content of these competence levels not to be adapted to pupils' momentary abilities but to remain the same for users of all ages.

However, let us again briefly return to the meaning of that mark of 14 out of 20, which was given as an example. As we have already seen, it is the product of the

weighting adopted by the teacher between different assessment criteria. It may also incorporate other elements.

Sociocultural knowledge must also be assessed and may be the subject of specific marks in an assessment. Furthermore, an exercise may also sometimes include components other than communicative tasks, eg for beginners, a check on the learning of vocabulary or grammar.

The mark of 14 out of 20 may therefore be a very imperfect reflection of a pupil's real competences. From it we draw two conclusions:

- the reaffirmed importance of self-assessment thanks to the ELP, which complements the teacher's assessment and relates only to the level of competence;
- the necessity to indicate clearly to pupils what refers in an exercise or a mark to the assessment of competence and what refers to behaviour, memorisation, learning etc.

5. When can a pupil be considered to have reached a level of competence?

To reply to this frequently asked question we must distinguish between three different cases.

The first means of verifying a competence level is represented by a certificate or examination correlated with the CEFR levels. Examples coming to mind are the certificates awarded by the foreign cultural centres composing ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe). The correlation of these certificates is the subject of extreme care and common approaches at European level under Council of Europe auspices. For the sake of the value of the CEFR scale it is essential for any attested B1 Level to represent the same skills, regardless of the country where the certificate is issued and irrespective of the language assessed. As a result of such correlation and of the duration of tests and the range of situations utilised to verify the general applicability of the abilities demonstrated during the tests, these certificates are a model for the verification of an individual's language competence level.

The second means of verification is represented by the tests organised by teachers for their pupils during the school year. We have seen that the reliability and validity of tests can be improved by taking account of a number of CEFR recommendations. However, these tests can only hint at the real level of competence. They have their limitations: they cannot test the whole range of activities necessary to ensure that success in a test is not a one-off event. The difficulty in drawing generally applicable conclusions from individual success is increased by the fact that these assessments are necessarily teaching-based and to some extent at least are as much an assessment of knowledge as an assessment of competences.

The last means consists in teaching pupils how to use the ELP. A pupil is generally considered to have attained a level of competence in a language activity when he or she has been able to tick the boxes certifying success in a proportion of seven or eight descriptors out of 10.

We saw above that this use of the ELP requires guidance by the teacher and that self-assessment is a sensitive learning process that requires competence to be assessed by the teacher, particularly as regards the qualitative aspects of production. With this in mind it is important to convince pupils that a descriptor cannot be regarded as attained unless the pupil has been repeatedly successful in the task described and in a wide range of situations. One-off success during training or assessment in a descriptor-linked task is important but is not sufficient to show whether the pupil is capable of successfully completing the same task in all situations. An ELP descriptor indicates a skill that is generally applicable to several situations.

As we have seen above, certain ELPs include frequency in the boxes relating to the descriptors. Whether at primary school or lower or upper secondary school, pupils must learn to manage this dimension in their self-assessment. This is one of the roles of the Dossier section of any ELP. Pupils can record these occasional successes in the Dossier before considering the component of the competence level denoted by a descriptor to be fully attained.

This leads us to make certain remarks about the desirable frequency of class work with the ELP. The direct, immediate and consequently frequent relationship between the work of the language course and the ELP descriptors can be shown when the textbook or teaching material used makes explicit reference to them or when the teacher uses the lists of situations illustrating the descriptors. The teacher can likewise encourage pupils to include documents showing their skills in their Dossier. Utilising the ELP Language Biography section in class to record progress and encouraging pupils to reflect on what they have learnt should remain an exception. Frequencies of about twice a term are often mentioned.

The Language Passport should not be completed until the end of the school year or when there is a change of key stage, specialisation or educational institution.

CHAPTER 3

USING THE ELP TO ENCOURAGE PLURILINGUALISM IN PUPILS

We have so far spoken about using the CEFR and ELP to teach a modern language and assess the competences of pupils in a particular language. In many countries, among them France, all language teachers teach only one modern language in which they specialise. The main benefit they will derive from these tools concerns the conduct of the class with a view to learning that language.

However, it would be a mistake to think that this is the only function of the CEFR and ELP. On the contrary, the CEFR is based on a view of language learning that can only be grasped by reference to plurilingualism.

1. How does the CEFR define plurilingualism?

The CEFR definition is quite clear:

“**Plurilingual and pluricultural competence** refers to the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or the juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex and even composite competence on which the user may draw.” (CEFR, page 168)

This definition is extremely innovative and rich in implications for teaching. The plurilingual competence of every individual is defined therein as a single competence, with components in different languages, available to individuals to meet their different communication needs. To be effective, the development of this plurilingual repertoire cannot therefore be viewed as a simple juxtaposition of knowledge and know-how in different languages but as a search for complementarity and synergy between linguistic knowledge and learning.

The CEFR definition describes plurilingual competence as necessarily uneven and changing. The competence levels in the different languages composing plurilingual competence cannot be identical in all languages for all language activities. This explains why a pupil may possess only limited competence in a particular language if this skill supplements other abilities in other languages. With this definition it is even feasible that, for particular personal or professional needs, competences need to be developed in a language only for a specific language activity (“partial competence”). What is important is to be able to draw on one’s linguistic repertoire to address the multiple situations in which a need for communication may arise. In addition to recognition of this unevenness between competences in different languages, educational action must provide every pupil

with the means necessary to meet fresh needs later on in other languages, for other language activities, at higher levels of competence.

If taken on board, this definition of plurilingualism is a rich source for language teachers. It supplies a more solid pedagogical basis for justification and attainment of the European objective of competence in at least two modern languages other than the mother tongue for all our pupils. It opens up new prospects of establishing modern languages as a discipline that transcends specialisation in a particular language.

2. Taking account of other language learning activities

All or nearly all our pupils study at least two modern languages. Teachers of a particular language are certainly only acquainted with their pupils during the time allotted to the language they teach. However, pupils receive more or less simultaneously the teaching of two different languages. Usually unconsciously, they find themselves gradually building the plurilingual competence mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. It is a pity, to say the least, that with certain exceptions they have to manage this process alone, on the basis of hypotheses and experiences of varying degrees of benefit and without the aid of their teachers.

Teaching is important. The learning of a modern language should no longer be viewed as an autonomous construct that has to be preserved from all contact with other learning activities but as a contribution to the development of overall communicative competence. Quite obviously, there is no question of denying the specific nature of each language or of giving the impression that all languages can be mingled during the learning process without negative consequences. The real questions are: for teaching a language, how can advantage be taken of the previous or parallel learning of other languages? How can we help pupils to achieve effective complementarity between their different language learning activities?

It is reasonable to think that language textbooks will sooner or later recognise all the implications of the foregoing and make allowance for the different combinations of simultaneous learning.

However, we can already start out along this route using the current textbooks.

To give a concrete illustration of this idea, we have decided to examine possible action by teachers of different languages, in this case German and English, with French pupils who have been learning these two languages from the start of secondary education in 'bilingual' classes. These classes admittedly do not represent the most common situations, but the suggestions made below are not confined to such cases and concern all other combinations of languages and class levels. Apart from the results, which naturally depend on the two languages concerned, the most important thing here is the approach, which is of all-round application.

The proposed approach consists in performing a detailed examination of these pupils' textbooks in order to identify possible footholds for properly thought out complementarity between the two subjects. For reasons of space and in order not to try the patience of readers with no interest in these two languages, we shall confine

this study to the first two chapters in the two English (*New Live*) and German (*Aufwind*) textbooks respectively.

In accordance with the “action-oriented approach” suggested by the CEFR and the procedure described in Chapter 1 of this part, we shall begin with an investigation of the tasks proposed in the two textbooks in conjunction with the ELP checklists for lower secondary schools. In the first two chapters of these textbooks we find the following descriptors involved:

A1 Speaking to someone (spoken interaction)

- I can say who I am, where I was born, where I live and request the same type of information from someone.
- I can say what I am doing, how I am and ask someone how he or she is.
- I can introduce someone, greet him/her and take my leave.
- I can talk in a simple way of people I know and put questions to someone.
- I can reply to simple personal questions and put similar questions.
- I can count, state quantities and tell the time.
- I can propose or offer something to someone.
- I can talk about a date or appointment using, for example, “next week”, “last Friday”, “in November”, “at three o’clock”.

A2 Speaking to someone (expression orale en interaction)

- I can express agreement or disagreement in simple terms.

A1 Listening and understanding (aural reception)

- I can understand simple instructions and information.

A1 Continuous expression or Writing (spoken production or written expression)

- I can construct simple phrases using “and”, “but”, “then”.

This list is sufficient to show that there are numerous common points, something that was predictable because the syllabus is common to all languages on this point.

However, to draw the implications for teaching, we must go further and see how the textbooks deal with these skills. That compels us to break down these descriptors into tasks or situations, as we did on page? We shall then gain a better idea of the common points and differences of approach between the two textbooks.

A1 Speaking to someone

I can say who I am, where I was born, where I live and request the same type of information from someone.

	<i>New Live</i>	<i>Aufwind</i>
I can say my name	Chap. 1	Chap. 1
I can spell my name		Chap. 1
I can ask someone for his/her name	Chap. 1	Chap. 1
I can say what town and/or country I live in		Chap. 1
I can say where I come from and ask someone for the same information	Chap. 2	Chap. 1

I can say what I am doing, how I am and ask someone how he/she is.

	<i>New Live</i>	<i>Aufwind</i>
I can say how I am and ask someone how he/she is		Chap. 2

I can introduce someone, greet him/her and take my leave

	<i>New Live</i>	<i>Aufwind</i>
I can introduce someone and say his/her first name	Chap. 1	Chap. 1
I can introduce someone, stating his/her connection with me (relation, friend etc)	Chap. 1	
I can ask someone else's name	Chap. 1	Chap. 1
I can greet a friend	Chap. 1	Chap. 1 and 2
I can greet an adult	Chap. 1	
I can answer the telephone		Chap. 2
I can say sorry when I speak to someone	Chap. 2	

I can talk in a simple way about people I know and put questions to someone

	<i>New Live</i>	<i>Aufwind</i>
I can indicate a quality or characteristic of someone	Chap. 1	
I can state the colour of something	Chap. 2	

I can answer simple personal questions and put similar questions.

	<i>New Live</i>	<i>Aufwind</i>
I can say what I am allowed to do	Chap. 2	
I can say what I am able to do	Chap. 2	
I can ask if I am allowed to do something	Chap. 2	
I can say what I like and don't like doing		Chap. 1
I can ask someone what he/she likes doing		Chap. 1
I can say that I don't know	Chap. 1	

I can count, state quantities and tell the time.

	<i>New Live</i>	<i>Aufwind</i>
I can count up to 10	Chap. 1	Chap 1
I can count above 10	chap. 2	Chap. 2
I can add up		Chap. 1 and 2
I can say how old I am and ask someone how old he/she is	Chap. 2	Chap. 2
I can tell the time		Chap. 1

I can propose or offer something to someone.

	<i>New Live</i>	<i>Aufwind</i>
I can present something to someone	Chap. 1	
I can draw attention to something	Chap 1	
I can invite someone to do something		Chap 2

I can talk about a date or appointment, using, for example, "next week", "last Friday", "in November", "at three o'clock".

	<i>New Live</i>	<i>Aufwind</i>
I can ask when something is taking place		Chap. 2
I can indicate the day and time of an event or appointment		Chap. 2

A2 Speaking to someone

I can express agreement or disagreement in simple terms.

	<i>New Live</i>	<i>Aufwind</i>
I can say that I agree or disagree	Chap. 1 and 2	Chap. 1 and 2
I can accept or refuse an invitation		Chap. 2
I can say why I refuse an invitation		Chap. 2
I can show that I am surprised		Chap. 1

A1 Listening and understanding

I can understand simple instructions and information

	<i>New Live</i>	<i>Aufwind</i>
I can understand work instructions in class	Chap. 1	
I can understand simple instructions at home	Chap. 2	
I can understand simple information	Chap. 1	

A1 Spoken production or Writing

I can construct phrases using “and”, “but”, then”.

	<i>New Live</i>	<i>Aufwind</i>
I can construct phrases linked by “and”	Chap. 1 and 2	Chap. 1
I can express a problem linking two phrases by “but”	Chap. 1 and 2	

If pupils are required to assess what they have learned to do during the work with their textbooks, using similar checklists they will notice the large number of points which the two learning activities have in common and will become more readily aware of the language tools available to them for communication with foreign speakers.

They will also notice the differences, which are of interest for three reasons.

First, awareness of these differences may be a strong incentive for pupils to recall and deploy what they learned in primary school in order to perform these tasks. It will also be in the interest of teachers, as we have seen, to take this need into account in carrying out the tasks proposed in the textbook by adapting or adding to the situations or, when relevant, by inserting new tasks in order to reactivate pupils' prior knowledge.

Second, and perhaps most important, awareness of these differences may prove a very effective lever in encouraging pupils to set themselves language objectives. The knowledge that they cannot yet say in German what they can do even though they have learnt how to say it in English can create a need to learn.

In this connection, it is worth pointing out that several of the items which appear for only one of the two textbooks in the above tables will receive special attention as from Chapter 3 of the textbook for the other language:

- greeting an adult
- saying what one can do
- presenting something to someone
- saying what town and/or country one lives in
- telling the time

Others will be dealt with in Chapters 4 and 5:

- apologising when speaking to somebody
- saying one doesn't know
- introducing someone, stating the connection with oneself (relation, friend etc)
- stating a problem, linking two phrases with the word "but"
- saying what one likes and dislikes doing
- asking someone what he/she likes doing
- inviting someone to do something
- indicating the day and time of an event or appointment
- accepting and refusing an invitation to do something

Some, however, will not be introduced until Chapter 6:

- saying what one is allowed to do
- asking whether one is allowed to do something
- asking when something will take place.

Finally, the third advantage of this item-by-item comparison, the absence of one of the items from the textbook as a whole may make teachers wonder if it is relevant for the language they teach to supplement the list of tasks proposed by learning these skills: spelling one's name, asking someone how he/she is, doing sums, answering the telephone.

A German teacher will be unable to ignore the opportunity to make it a regular practice, for example in parallel with the work of his or her English colleague, to use simple instructions in the foreign language for managing class work and group activity.

We shall now examine these two textbooks, confining ourselves once again to the first two chapters, from the viewpoint of the development of linguistic competence (lexical and grammatical).

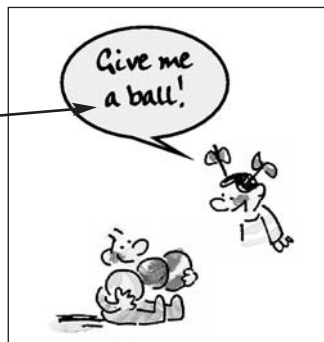
As regards vocabulary, the workload is different in the two textbooks. Ignoring the content of the recordings, the script for which does not appear in the textbook, and the work instructions in the foreign language, we find 77 words which may have to be memorised in English and 48 words in German.

1 Get ready

a) Listen and give the numbers of the pictures.

Teacher: Be quiet!

Class: Number 1.



- the two textbooks introduce an identical form, “s”, which has very different uses in the two languages: “Who’s this man?” (elision of “is”)/“Ich bin’s” (elision of “es”);

1 Get ready

a) Look at the pictures and answer.

Teacher: Look at “a”. Who’s this man?

Class: It’s ...

Teacher: Look at “b”. Who are these men?

Class: I don’t know!

Teacher: They’re ...

Partner A : Neun, fünf, sieben, vier...

Partner B : Claudia Stockinger.

Partner A : Guten Tag, Claudia. Wie geht’s?

Partner B : Danke, gut. Und dir?

- the position of the verb in German sentences is a well-known difficulty; it is the subject of grammatical explanation in Chapter 2. A careful examination of the first two chapters shows, however, that the construction of the English sentence shows certain similarities in the utterances encountered by the pupils. Examples of this are “Where are you from?” (*New Live*, page 38) and “Was machst du gern?” (*Aufwind*, page 20), or the global question “Can I...?” (*New Live*, page 34) and “Machst du auch mit?” (*Aufwind*, page 22).

Quite obviously, these different points are not all of major interest, nor do they all cause special difficulties for the learning of one or other of the two languages. However, one may wonder what the pupils, individually and often without explanation, make of these similarities and differences. Is it not desirable to prevent possible incorrect transfers painlessly by a brief remark made at the right moment on the basis of the teacher’s knowledge of what the pupils have already learnt in the other language? Is it not a pity to fail to exploit the convergences between the two languages at the teaching level so that the respective learning activities can strengthen each other?

These two questions here concern the two languages as a system. They also apply to other components of communicative competence, to the pragmatic, sociolinguistic and lexical dimensions and also – we have seen an example of this – to strategies.

A final example will illustrate the value of highlighting the convergence between the two languages over and above the lexical or grammatical similarities alone. In Chapter 2 of *Aufwind* and Chapter 5 of *New Live*, pupils learn to say what they like doing (or not doing) and what they particularly appreciate or do not appreciate at all. However, the two languages have in common the fact that, at the lexical level, they draw a clear distinction between expressing liking (*gern, mögen/to like*) and expressing affection (*lieben/to love*). Teachers of the two languages know that this raises a difficulty because of the use of the same verb “*aimer*” in French. Would it not be beneficial to pupils to initiate a very brief process of reflection on the basis of a comparison between utterances in German, English and French, in order to make the use of these concepts clearer?

We stressed on page 105 that this approach was of benefit in all situations and at all class levels in which pupils learn several modern languages. We find examples of it in textbooks other than those analysed above. For example, the textbook below intended for pupils starting German at ML2 systematically includes among other things a heading *Sprachbrücken* (crossing over from one language to another) in all units.

Objectifs

Dans ce chapitre, tu vas apprendre

- **à comprendre et à t'exprimer**
 - décrire l'apparence physique de quelqu'un
 - indiquer le lieu où l'on se rend
 - exprimer l'autorisation et l'interdiction
- **à observer comment fonctionne la langue**
 - le présent des verbes forts en *-e* et *-a*
 - la relation directive
 - le verbe *dürfen*
 - les pronoms personnels à l'accusatif
 - le pluriel des noms
- en la comparant à d'autres langues**
 - les verbes à préverbe séparable en allemand et les verbes à particule en anglais
 - la forme de politesse en allemand, en anglais et en français
 - les prépositions *für* en allemand et *for* en anglais
- **à connaître les pays germanophones**
 - la Foire internationale du livre de Francfort
 - la littérature de jeunesse : *Der Struwwelpeter, Emil und die Detektive*

When and in what form can such a comparison arranged between the teachers of the two languages take place?

This synergy between the two subjects is obviously enhanced when the teachers in charge of classes possess competences in the other language and/or find the time to get together to explain their approach, compare the linguistic contents of their respective teaching sequences and together develop lists of situations that will allow self-assessment by the pupils.

It is greatly facilitated when pupils are invited to complete their ELP or the lists of situations illustrating the descriptors in that document. This activity is likely to awaken particular interest in the relationships between the languages learned.

However, these favourable conditions are not prerequisites for all consideration of pupils' learning activities.

Furthermore, this convergence can be the subject of special attention thanks to the section devoted to it in the French ELP for lower secondary schools.

**To enable me to use
the other languages I know**

Learning a new language is not "starting from scratch".

1 The language or languages of the family, the language of schooling and foreign languages already learnt are also useful for better and more rapid discovery of a new language.

2 I wonder whether the new language I am learning is somewhat similar to one I already know (through the sounds, melody or rhythm). Or again, whether the forms, words and constructions make me think, in speaking or writing, of other discoveries in other languages.

3 I do not hesitate to note resemblances and differences in order to improve my knowledge of a particular language.

4 If two languages are somewhat similar in their pronunciation, vocabulary and construction, I may sometimes "mix" them without realising it while speaking or writing. I know this is normal, that it may be useful and that it is a passing phenomenon.

2 3 Here we have the possibility of the pupils identifying similarities and differences between the two languages after a few weeks of learning. It is possible to have these paragraphs read by the pupils, to ask them to quote examples which come to mind and which can be commented on collectively and then to ask them to find other examples individually which could be discussed later. In the early stages of learning, this individual research can be facilitated by means of a table with gaps prepared by the teachers, which contains certain elements of one of the two languages and has to be completed by the corresponding elements in the other language. Ideally, the two teachers could either carry out this work together or on an alternating basis between the classes devoted to each of the languages.

4 Work on this item with the pupils may be started as soon as the teacher or teachers note this type of "confusion" between the two languages, for example during correction of a piece of written work or at the end of a spoken production phase. Here the pupils must be made to realise that it is natural for the teachers to expect them in a learning situation to endeavour to use the language coherently and avoid hopping from one language to another. However, they must also bring home to them that such confusion is not serious and is explicable and temporary. Furthermore, we are well aware that this use of terms from different languages corresponds to a natural and often appropriate use of every individual's plurilingual competence. This presupposes, however, that the teachers agree on the attitude to be adopted when such confusion arises. Would it, for example, be consistent with the content of this paragraph of the ELP to penalise pupils who here and there have confused terms in the two languages in an exercise or expression task just as heavily as if they had left a blank or had put nothing, had used their mother tongue or had produced something incomprehensible?

5 I remember the tricks and methods that worked for learning other languages before and wonder whether I could not use them again.

6 If I learn several languages simultaneously, with different exercises or resources, I wonder whether the methods used for one might not also be useful for the other or others. I wonder whether what I have learnt about certain aspects of the one could not also enable me to achieve a better understanding, by comparison, of similar or different aspects of the other.

5 Work on this item of the ELP could, for example, involve transferring the identification of obvious English words to the content of the first two chapters of the German textbook, as proposed above.

6 This advice has important implications for the development of pupil autonomy in learning. Occasionally taking stock of this aspect with the pupils in order to look critically at the conclusions they draw from it is an important contribution to this educational objective.

The examples taken above from the German and English textbooks point to a fact of which little use has hitherto been made in language classes, namely the closeness between languages belonging to the same family. Significant work has been carried out showing its potential in learning the Romance and Germanic languages.

After examining the very numerous possibilities for synergy between pupils' different language learning activities, we can now have a look at the question of assessment.

There is no question of denying the necessity for independent assessment of pupils' progress in each of the languages they learn. We have also noted the advantages of consultation between the teachers concerned on how such assessment could be based on the ELP checklists (see Chapter 2, Part 2).

On the other hand, one may wonder why the teaching objective of awareness of the development of plurilingual competence through different language learning activities should not itself be subject to specific assessment.

Various forms could be envisaged which would even be accessible to first-year pupils who had worked with the two textbooks studied above and which would be based on what they had learnt from those units. Let us look at a few examples:

- pupils would listen to a list of mixed English and German words and be asked to underline or indicate the stressed syllable in each word (both textbooks offer exercises of this kind in their respective languages);
- pupils would listen to a list of mixed English and German words or utterances, both known and unknown, and be asked to indicate (for example, by ticking a box in a table) whether the words or utterances come from this or that language, in order to verify their mastery of the phonic, stress and prosodic characteristics of the two languages; the Spanish primary school textbook reproduced below also proposes an exercise along these lines;
- test pupils' comprehension of brief conversations between French, German and English children on subjects familiar to the pupils, in which each pupil would

speak his/her own language, using forms of words familiar to them. This would demonstrate in concrete form to the pupils the extent of their competences and familiarise them with a speech situation emphasising respect for linguistic diversity and with a practice often found in natural situations bringing together speakers of different languages.

¡Oye!

A Mélodie de la langue - Écoute attentivement le CD.
 Tu vas entendre la même phrase en six langues différentes.
 Chaque langue est annoncée par un chiffre.
 Écris ce chiffre à côté de la langue que tu as reconnue.
 Colorie ensuite, comme sur le planisphère, la case de chaque langue.

Map of Europe with numbered regions (1-6) and a legend below:

Francis: Italienos: Allemán: Español: Inglés: Ruso: Árabe:

3. Valuing plurilingualism in pupils

'Assessment' also means taking a look at pupils and their competences.

The process described in the paragraphs above may result in a pupil's language competences no longer being considered in juxtaposed fashion, as in the following fictitious example:

English

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Reading						
Listening						
Taking part in a conversation						
Spoken production						
Writing						

Spanish

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Reading						
Listening						
Taking part in a conversation						
Spoken production						
Writing						

but as follows:

Reading

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
English						
Spanish						

Listening

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
English						
Spanish						

Taking part in a conversation

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
English						
Spanish						

etc.

The purpose of this method of recording pupils' competences is to display the concept of plurilingual competence in visual form. The pupil concerned possesses a wide range of resources in different languages for understanding a written text, for example. Even if this representation of language competences may appear unrealistic because it is so far from everyday practice, it could prove to be the most effective means of approaching the desired end. In any case, it is consistent and very easy to apply through assessment and/or self-assessment with the ELP. There is no reason why it should not be possible to obtain such a picture of a pupil's abilities on the occasion of a staff meeting or a report on his or her language competences, with the object of measuring the extent to which the objective of plurilingualism and complementarity between knowledge of different languages has been reached compared with the way the school, the teachers and pupils themselves perceive their skills.

A lay-out of this kind, which encompasses a range of different competences, has another advantage. It includes competences in all languages spoken and learnt by the pupils, including any language(s) of origin, the different mother tongue languages which they may speak or hear in their family or group of friends, and languages they may have encountered and learnt, even very partially, outside school, during stays, training periods, holidays or on the occasion of regular contacts with speakers of those languages.

On consulting the ELP, we notice the deliberate choice made there to include more languages than those studied at school.

The Language Passport allows for a profile in six different languages.

Profil linguistique
Profile of Language Skills

Langue(s) maternelle(s)
Mother-tongue(s): _____

Autres langues
Other languages: _____

Auto-évaluation
Self-assessment

Écouter / Listening Prendre part à une conversation / Spoken interaction Écrire / Writing
Lire / Reading S'exprimer oralement en continu / Spoken production

Langue / Language: langue française

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Écouter / Listening						
Prendre part à une conversation / Spoken interaction						
Écrire / Writing						
Lire / Reading						
S'exprimer oralement en continu / Spoken production						

Exemple / Example

Langue / Language: _____

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Écouter / Listening						
Prendre part à une conversation / Spoken interaction						
Écrire / Writing						
Lire / Reading						
S'exprimer oralement en continu / Spoken production						

Langue / Language: _____

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Écouter / Listening						
Prendre part à une conversation / Spoken interaction						
Écrire / Writing						
Lire / Reading						
S'exprimer oralement en continu / Spoken production						

Langue / Language: _____

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Écouter / Listening						
Prendre part à une conversation / Spoken interaction						
Écrire / Writing						
Lire / Reading						
S'exprimer oralement en continu / Spoken production						

Num
Name: _____

Auto-évaluation
Self-assessment

Écouter / Listening Prendre part à une conversation / Spoken interaction Écrire / Writing
Lire / Reading S'exprimer oralement en continu / Spoken production

Langue / Language: _____

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Écouter / Listening						
Prendre part à une conversation / Spoken interaction						
Écrire / Writing						
Lire / Reading						
S'exprimer oralement en continu / Spoken production						

Langue / Language: _____

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Écouter / Listening						
Prendre part à une conversation / Spoken interaction						
Écrire / Writing						
Lire / Reading						
S'exprimer oralement en continu / Spoken production						

Langue / Language: _____

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Écouter / Listening						
Prendre part à une conversation / Spoken interaction						
Écrire / Writing						
Lire / Reading						
S'exprimer oralement en continu / Spoken production						

Langue / Language: _____

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Écouter / Listening						
Prendre part à une conversation / Spoken interaction						
Écrire / Writing						
Lire / Reading						
S'exprimer oralement en continu / Spoken production						

Language Passport, pages 2 and 3

Opposite each descriptor in the checklists for the different French ELPs, the pupil will find, depending on the model, between four and six boxes, each corresponding to a different language.

○ ○ Understanding the subject of a short story or dialogue. ○ ○

○ ○ Understanding questions about the place where I live, what I do, and about the people I know. ○ ○

○ ○ Understanding simple instructions. ○ ○

When I listen, I can...

My first Portfolio

A1 speaking to someone

	L1	L2	L3	L4
I can say who I am, where I was born, where I live and request the same type of information from someone.	☹ ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹	☹ ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹	☹ ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹	☹ ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹
I can say how I am, what I am doing and ask someone how he/she is.				
I can introduce someone, greet him/her and take my leave.				

PEL collègue, page 17

- I can introduce myself and introduce someone. □ □ □ □

- I can greet someone and take my leave. □ □ □ □

- I can ask someone how he/she is. □ □ □ □

PEL pour jeunes et adultes, page 20

Under no circumstances must language teachers be expected to teach a language other than the one for which they are trained. They should simply be encouraged, when assessing their pupils, not to deprive them of any of their linguistic competences. Encouraging pupils to complete their ELPs by self-assessing their competences in languages other than those that have actually been taught to them in class or school shows them that these competences also form part of their linguistic profile and plurilingual competence which they must preserve and consolidate. **Every teacher of a particular language must also behave as a language teacher and feel him – or herself partly responsible for educating the pupils in respect for diversity and plurilingualism.**

The task of language teaching is to bring pupils to the highest possible level of competence in at least two modern languages other than the mother tongue. Language learning must, however, be resolutely viewed as part of a lifelong process. No one can predict what languages pupils will need in their personal and professional future, nor what types of language activity at what level of proficiency they will require. Responsibility for language teaching therefore also consists in providing every pupil with the necessary general individual competences and with the methodological and emotional skills that will make them want and be able to enrich, develop and diversify their language knowledge and competences.

In addition to the methodological learning set out in the language textbooks, the French ELP for lower secondary schools contains several pages entitled “My ways of learning”, which offer pupils routes to the development of their autonomy in such a way as to embrace all the languages they are learning.

What I am doing or what I could try to do...

<p>To improve the way I speak</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Repeat and learn by heart small recorded texts ◆ Record words or sentences and compare them with the original model ◆ Often listen to the radio or television programmes in the language learnt and imitate the melody and rhythm of the voices heard ◆ With a friend; train each other to say without hesitating or making mistakes a short text learnt by heart 	<p style="font-size: small; transform: rotate(-45deg);">I am already doing it</p> <p style="font-size: small; transform: rotate(-45deg);">I could try to do it</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%; height: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="font-size: x-small;">yes</th> <th style="font-size: x-small;">no</th> <th style="font-size: x-small;">yes</th> <th style="font-size: x-small;">no</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	yes	no	yes	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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<p>To understand and verify what I am reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Tell myself my purpose in reading the text: looking for particular information? Understanding everything in detail? Seeing what it means “in general”...? For fun? And, from that point on, wondering what words and sentences I am going to try to understand alone, what other words and sentences I am looking for in a dictionary or grammar, what others I ignore. ◆ Take notes... ◆ Write words and expressions that I wish to learn 	<p style="font-size: small; transform: rotate(-45deg);">I am already doing it</p> <p style="font-size: small; transform: rotate(-45deg);">I could try to do it</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%; height: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="font-size: x-small;">yes</th> <th style="font-size: x-small;">no</th> <th style="font-size: x-small;">yes</th> <th style="font-size: x-small;">no</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	yes	no	yes	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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All ELPs also attach value to initiatives that may be taken by pupils in the use of languages, under the guidance of their teachers or on an individual basis.

EVERYTHING I HAVE ALREADY DONE		in the languages I am learning					
		LANGUAGES					
		Often x x x		Sometimes x x		Seldom x	
I have already listened to or looked at							
songs							
radio broadcasts							
conversations in the street and public transport							
TV programmes							
video cassettes or videodisks							
audio cassettes for learning purposes							
commercials and clips							
I have already:							

Mes expériences à l'étranger
 Il s'inscrit dans le tableau vos séjours à l'étranger.

Pays / Région	Année	Durée du séjour	Langues utilisées	Organisme (École, association, voyage)

Mes langues, aujourd'hui et demain, à l'École ou ailleurs...

Ce qui me plaît quand j'entends ou quand je parle d'autres langues :

- entendre les sonorités, la mélodie d'une autre langue
- imiter un accent
- passer d'une langue à une autre
- comparer les mots, les expressions
- découvrir d'autres façons de vivre
- comprendre un texte, un film, une chanson
- participer à des discussions, à des débats
- écrire dans une autre langue
- comprendre et aider des personnes qui ne parlent pas ma langue maternelle
-

Les projets que j'ai déjà réalisés ou que je souhaite rapidement mettre en œuvre :

- préparer et faire des voyages
- entretenir une correspondance (courrier électronique, Tandem...)
- participer à des activités internationales (rencontre, jumelage électronique...)
- organiser des événements en utilisant une langue étrangère (exposition, débat)
-

Les langues dans ma vie

Here we might venture an analogy with the teaching of music or physical and sports education. The goal of these two disciplines is to equip pupils with knowledge and skills. The goal is also to give pupils a taste for practising music or an individual or collective sport. The same remark applies to a language teacher: the success of language teaching can also be measured by the desire it gives to pupils to use the language outside class. The ELP enables pupils, among other things, to mention the activities performed in a modern language, the initiatives they may have taken, their contacts with speakers of the languages concerned and their periods of residence in foreign countries. The ELP places on the same level - from the viewpoint of the development of plurilingual and pluricultural competence - the skills acquired in and out of class, the use of the languages learnt both in school and on an individual basis, contacts and visits undertaken on the initiative of the school, the pupils themselves or their families. Consequently, the ELP gives language teachers a complementary role which extends beyond their teaching of the language as such. They are therefore in a situation where they can advise pupils on their learning path and attach a strong value to these initiatives in their examination of the various types of information mentioned in the ELP.

Finally, plurilingual education must take account of the diversity of plurilingual situations. We shall refer briefly to two of them, mediation between languages and the use of several different languages in verbal exchanges.

Obviously, in considering the possible routes to plurilingual education, we have touched on areas where there is, as yet, little pedagogical experimentation. In the remainder of this chapter we shall envisage some forms of action which are little used at present but would no doubt warrant further exploration.

When we mentioned the different language activities identified by the CEFR, we encountered mediation activity, to which little reference has been made since. Mediation between languages is, however, very common. We shall take one example. Pupils who receive a foreign pen friend at their home will naturally engage in mediation when they have to rephrase for the sake of the pen friend things that are said by their parents, who do not speak the language or, conversely, when they have to explain to their family or friends in their mother tongue what the pen friend wants. There is usually an imbalance between proficiency in the two languages and there is no question here of translation.

During work on the ELP, reflection such as that initiated in the example below is quite conceivable:

Situations in which I have had to act as an intermediary between two (or more) languages

Where? In what context?

With whom? For whom?

Languages used

Remarks (successes – difficulties – how I can prepare myself better or be more successful in such a situation):

.....

Another frequently occurring situation is one in which an individual has to switch from one language to the other during verbal exchanges, either to fill in gaps in vocabulary in one of his or her languages or when the topic of conversation changes, or when one language begins gradually to dominate the discussion as a result of the wishes or needs of one of the speakers.

Here again, encouraging reflection may prove valuable. This can take on very different forms.

I have already communicated using several languages:					
translated texts in one language into another					
acted as interpreter					
summarised in one language a text from another language					
worked with files which contained texts in different languages					
given talks in which I change language, in which I summarise in another language					
participate in conversations in which different languages were spoken and people understood one another					
given talks in one language using notes which I had taken in another language					
listened to television programmes in which I could change language while doing so and trying not to lose the thread					
said to the teacher of a language what I was doing or had done when I was learning another language					

Reflection could be initiated on this point and include, for example, the Dossier.

In what situations have I had to speak several languages?

Where? With whom

Language used	When? What subject?	Why this language?

Remarks

.....

.....

We shall end this chapter on plurilingual education with one of its essential aspects: education in appreciation and respect for linguistic and cultural diversity.

We shall simply refer to the booklet contained in the ELP for lower secondary schools, “Languages and their diversity”, which offers material for thought and activities designed to make pupils aware of the reality and importance of diversity.

Les langues dans ta classe

- ❏ Toi et tes camarades de classe, faites l’inventaire des différentes langues parlées et/ou lues dans la classe et/ou dans votre environnement. Qui parle ces langues ? Avec qui ? Dans quelles situations ? Pour faire quoi ? Qui peut lire ces langues ?
- ❏ Demandez à tous vos camarades qui parlent une autre langue (ou à leurs parents) d’écrire une phrase dans cette autre langue, et, si possible d’apporter un livre écrit dans cette langue.
- ❏ Peux-tu faire quelques remarques sur les différentes langues écrites ? S’agit-il des mêmes systèmes d’écriture ? Qu’est-ce qui est pareil, ou qu’est-ce qui est différent ?
- ❏ Imagine que tu veux apprendre certaines de ces langues. À partir de tes remarques précédentes, peux-tu réfléchir pour décider ce que tu devrais pouvoir faire d’abord dans ces langues pour que ton apprentissage soit le plus efficace ? Par exemple, y a-t-il des langues qu’il faut pouvoir lire le plus rapidement possible, d’autres qu’il est plus important de savoir parler d’abord, pourquoi ?

Remarques / collecte d’informations :

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Following the same line, language teachers may include an additional activity in their work with the ELP, as below.

Experiences with encountering languages I do not know

1) Languages I have heard

Language heard	How did I recognise it?	What did I understand and how?

2) Languages I have read

Language encountered in writing	How did I recognise it?	I understood the following sentences and words

We have already stressed that all these avenues have still to be discovered and enriched through personal experience. The path that readers have followed through the six chapters of this book has given them an insight into the wealth represented by textbooks in other languages and other stages of education. This approach is an initial contribution by each reader to the collective creation of a form of language teaching that should gradually become education for plurilingualism as well.

CONCLUSION

Since it became a discipline in its own right, modern language teaching has always striven for greater effectiveness. This process is receiving a fresh impetus at a time when language skills and the ability to communicate with speakers steeped in other cultures are becoming an individual and collective requirement for all Europeans.

Three main challenges currently underlie developments in this area.

The first is the improvement of **effectiveness** for all pupils. This requires, among other things, the setting of precise objectives supplying useful benchmarks for progress, the assessment of progress and a pedagogy of success based on pupils' real competences.

The second is the **European and international dimension**, which is gradually becoming the driving force behind modern language teaching and learning. It is central to the discipline's legitimacy and the individual motivation and personal commitment essential for language learning are conditioned by it.

The third is language learning as a **lifelong activity**, something that is becoming increasingly necessary. The education system must equip pupils with skills in several languages. Equally it must equip them with the behaviour, skills and general competences that they can use to enrich and develop their language skills outside school.

The CEFR and ELP offer valuable tools and new perspectives in response to these three challenges facing language teaching in France. The purpose of this book is to see to what extent these tools can contribute to the renewal of modern language teaching and help language teachers gradually to achieve their specific goals.

We should not imagine, of course, that teachers can harness all the potential of these tools without observing certain stages that may be of primary importance for (self-) training. It is fairly easy to describe the first steps needed:

- analyse a textbook to identify the proposed tasks and the levels of difficulty of the activities or documents;
- organise the performance of a language activity within the framework of a communicative task;
- develop an assessment based on the CEFR levels;
- teach pupils self-assessment;
- familiarise oneself with the analysis of textbooks for other modern languages, including French as a foreign language.

One of the consequences of the rapid success of these tools at European level is the emergence of new needs on which the Council of Europe has already begun work: a methodology for correlating language examinations and certificates with

the CEFR levels and developing tools suitable for mother tongues, second languages and languages of schooling.

The most striking developments in modern language teaching have usually coincided with the appearance of new tools and theories. Other synergy effects are currently proving beneficial to modern languages. The urgent need to equip all pupils in Europe with adequate skills in a range of languages and assess the real standards of young Europeans in modern languages is being forcefully asserted by all political and educational decision-makers. It is reflected, *inter alia*, in the European Union's "Education and Training 2010" programme, whose aim is to bring about communication proficiency in at least two modern languages besides the mother tongue. Collective awareness of this need comes at the very moment when the Council of Europe is providing European States with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the European Language Portfolio, through which it should be possible to convert this policy objective into concrete, credible actions.

The concept of competence is undoubtedly the key to matching these needs with appropriate responses. It is being found that where competences are central, new prospects open up for European mobility and the European dimension. This is already the case, for example, with vocational training, which, as for modern languages, can be based on the specification of expected competences. The challenge for language teaching is to build a link between knowledge and know-how, not to confuse "competence" as defined in the CEFR with an ability to react appropriately to a limited number of situations, in short, to **root communicative competence in the development of pupils' overall culture.**

When we observe the speed at which this concept of competence is assuming an increasingly important place in the definition of all training objectives at both national and European level, we may reasonably think that what is now possible for modern languages will also become possible for other disciplines. Seen thus, the belief that language teachers can be promoters of the European dimension in schools is perhaps taking on a new meaning now with the *Common European Framework of Reference* and the *European Language Portfolio*.

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For many years,

Francis Goullier has actively promoted awareness of the Council of Europe's work, which he has followed

since 1997. He was instrumental in the incorporation of the Common European Framework of Reference into the programmes and official texts of the French National Education system.

The Council of Europe has been contributing to the establishment of a European area in the field of languages since the 1960s.

Language policies today aim to improve European citizens' communication skills, facilitate assessment of their proficiency in languages and promote plurilingualism, with the support of practical tools.

The Council of Europe's tools – the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the European Language Portfolios – form a tandem; the former is designed for use by teachers and other professionals and the second is principally intended for pupils and other learners, regardless of their age or learning context.

How do these tools, through their description and analysis of pedagogical materials, approaches and objectives, contribute to the renewal of language teaching? What official texts have they led to? In what way are the "Framework" and the "Portfolios" inter-related? How can they be put to practical use in the classroom and help pupils become more autonomous in their learning?

This book answers these and many other questions by explaining what the "Framework" has to offer and giving numerous examples, most of which, for practical reasons, are taken from the most recent catalogues of the publishers of this volume.

This book will be of interest to language teachers throughout Europe, who will easily find in its pages examples relevant to their country's education system.