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*LANGUAGE AND SCHOOL SUBJECTS*

LINGUISTIC DIMENSIONS OF KNOWLEDGE BUILDING IN SCHOOL CURRICULA

N° 1

*Items for a description of linguistic competence  
in the language of schooling necessary for  
learning/teaching history (end of obligatory  
education)*

An approach with reference points

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Document prepared for the Policy Forum 'The right of learners to quality and equity in education  
– The role of linguistic and intercultural competences'

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LIST OF DOCUMENTS WHICH PROPOSE ELEMENTS FOR THE DESCRIPTION OF LINGUISTIC  
COMPETENCE FOR SPECIFIC SCHOOL SUBJECTS

1. *Items for a description of linguistic competence in the language of schooling necessary for learning/teaching history (end of obligatory education)*

**An approach with reference points** - Jean-Claude Beacco

2. *Items for a description of linguistic competence in the language of schooling necessary for learning/teaching sciences (end of compulsory education)*

An approach with reference points – Helmut Vollmer

3. *Items for a description of linguistic competence in the language of schooling necessary for learning/teaching literature (end of compulsory education)*

An approach with reference points – Irene Pieper (in preparation)

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## Items for a description of linguistic competence in the language of schooling necessary for learning/teaching history(end of obligatory education)

### *An approach with reference points*

This text presents a procedure for creating a curriculum for the teaching of history which explicitly takes into account the discursive and linguistic dimensions of this school subject. It proceeds through successive stages, for which there are corresponding inventories of references, from the level of educational goals in the teaching of history to the identification of linguistic elements which should be systematised in the classroom with a view to teaching the corresponding forms of discourse as well as possible. This procedure – presented for discussion – has been devised to be independent of the specific language in question. It may ultimately be adaptable to other disciplines.

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This module of the Platform proposes an approach for specifying the competences and knowledge relevant to communication in language and the mastery of the language(s) of schooling used as a vehicle for conveying this knowledge in subject teaching. This approach specifies the knowledge and competences so that they can be taught by a systematic, targeted method, integrated with the teaching of subject-related knowledge. It is illustrated specifically with reference to the teaching of “history”, a very significant subject, whether it goes by this name or by others like it, in the European educational area<sup>1</sup>.

It presents

- an overall approach
- open-ended reference points in the form of inventories/checklists: these are to be completed by the users, according to the languages in which teaching is conducted.

The purpose of these reference points is to help users in:

- identifying the linguistic activities present in the subject under consideration;
- specifying the forms of the language of learning/teaching which are especially helpful in mastering the varieties of discursive content attaching to the subject and the forms of communication necessary for imparting and acquiring subject-related knowledge and skills.

The overall scheme of the approach is as follows:

- (1) inventory and description of the educational values targeted by history teaching practices;
- (2) inventory and description of the social situations of communication involving history in the learners’ social environment;
- (3) inventory and description of the expected historical knowledge;
- (4) inventory and description of the existing in-school communication situations for transmission of history.

The choices to be made among these possibilities lead to the definition of the purposes and objectives of education in history in compulsory schooling.

It is then possible to create:

- (5) inventories and descriptions of the linguistic, discursive and semiotic characteristics of relevance to the types of discourse involved in history teaching practices; these characteristics deserve to be taught in their own right in this subject area.

What is proposed here is a common procedure, relevant in theory whatever the language of instruction in question (whether the learners’ first language or a language acquired to a standard of proficiency of at least CEFR level B2).

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<sup>1</sup> This text draws on the proposal for the Prague Conference (8-10 November 2007) drawn up by Jean-Claude Beacco (New Sorbonne University, Paris), Martin Sachse (State Institute for School Quality and Educational Research, Munich) and Arild Thorbjørnsen (Deputy Director General, Ministry of Education and Research, Oslo). It has benefited by several readings including those of Jean-Marie Gautherot, specialist in French as a Foreign Language and Maurizio Gusso, Italian specialist in the teaching of History (member of the CLIO 92 and LANDIS/EUROCLIO networks

## 1. Values

All teaching pursues educational goals over and above the expertise and learning which are both its substance and its aspiration.

### 1.1. Educating social actors

The role of languages of education in schools is to structure and assist the training and education of social actors. The aims of this training/education are shared by the Member states of the Council of Europe as the basis for living in society in Europe.

Schooling is responsible for preparing future citizens and developing their potential by giving them the necessary tools for all aspects of life in society (personal relations, occupational activities, leisure activities, etc.) and by enabling them to understand the basic values of democratic life and make them part of their personal ethics.

The languages of Europe are therefore not only a raw material for building regional, ethnic and national cultural identities, but also a means of experiencing otherness. Plurilingual education seeks to enhance the value of individual language repertoires and to organise life-long training to ensure that they develop appropriately.

### 1.2. Values and history

The values whose transmission is the particular responsibility of history as a taught subject have been addressed by a great many Council of Europe initiatives, based on the idea of reconciliation and positive mutual influences among peoples. (Projects and programmes “*History in the new Europe*”, “*History teaching and the new initiative of the Secretary General*” and “*Learning and teaching about the history of Europe in the twentieth century*”). The teaching of history has led to very extensive recommendations on the principles, content and methods of history teaching, for example, Rec (1996) 1283 and Rec (2001)15.

On the basis of these values, the principal goals assigned to the teaching of history include:

- to play an essential role in educating and training responsible and active citizens and fostering respect for all kinds of differences on a basis of understanding of national identity and principles of tolerance;
- to be a decisive factor in reconciliation, recognition, understanding and mutual trust between peoples, especially by introducing multiperspectivity into historical research and accounts;
- to play a vital role in the promotion of fundamental values such as tolerance, mutual understanding, human rights and democracy;
- to be one of the fundamental components in the construction of a Europe based on a common historical and cultural heritage, enriched through diversity, even with its conflictual and sometimes dramatic aspects;
- to be part of an education policy that plays a direct role in young people’s development and progress, with a view to building tomorrow’s Europe with their participation, as well as the peaceful advancement of human societies in a global perspective and in a spirit of mutual understanding and trust;

- to allow the nurturing in pupils of the intellectual ability to analyse and interpret information critically and responsibly, through dialogue, through the findings of historical evidence and through open debate based on multiperspectivity, especially regarding controversial and sensitive issues;
- to enable European citizens to enhance their own individual and collective identity through knowledge of their common historical heritage in its local, regional, national, European and global dimensions;
- to be an instrument for the prevention of crimes against humanity <sup>2</sup> .
[...]

Civic and social goals of this kind can be called *extrinsic* in comparison with those related to the forms of historical discourse and the objectives which are in fact disciplinary (called *intrinsic*). It is important to maintain a balance between these two<sup>3</sup>

These specifications of values also include material for definitions of general abilities (“analyse and interpret information critically and responsibly, through dialogue, through the findings of historical evidence and through open debate based on multiperspectivity”). They offer a path to the specification of cognitive and linguistic competence.

## 2. Social situations of communication where history is present

It behoves education to prepare learners to cope effectively with situations in which history is involved. History has a presence in numerous situations of life in society, being the human and social science subject most susceptible to ideologies, social representations and stereotypes and one of the “raw materials” for identity-building.

### 2.1. Checklist of social situations involving historical communication

By way of an indication, an inventory of the situations of social communication where history is utilised is set out below. Historical knowledge is present in *inter alia*:

political agendas (parties, elected representatives, political leaders, etc.), where it is normally used for persuasive purposes (interpretation of the past), in particular to define national identity or the construction to be placed on historical events (slavery, colonialism, collaboration with totalitarian regimes, etc.);
exchanges between citizens, particularly in terms of the “general knowledge” assumed to have been acquired;
the family and neighbourhood context where personal accounts are passed on, mingled with “mainstream history”;
the construction of collective memory: celebrations of “great men”, heritage sites, statues, battlefields, national holidays, etc.;
the press and other media, in reviews of historical writings, accounts of archaeological discoveries, etc. or special features on a historical event as background to a current political event;

<sup>2</sup> Rec (2001)15.

<sup>3</sup> This point was made by Mayrizio Gusso

the specialist press, such as history magazines, both general and specialist (the Middle Ages, history of religions, etc.);
Film and theatre (fictional historical films/dramas as opposed to docu-dramas, historical epics), stories and dramas taken from history;
television programmes, including historical documentaries;
websites;
historical re-enactments and performances;
museums and exhibitions;
Sites and monuments, and artistic productions to attract visitors and tourists;
historiographic production for the general public or the “educated” public
[...]

Some of these situations are intrinsic to social life, to politics or to active citizenship, others pertain to media use, access to knowledge and the formation of opinions. They involve different forms of communication: oral/aural, written and audiovisual reception, oral interaction, etc. This reference list may be supplemented and used as a guide to the identification of language skills forming part of history syllabi.

These social activities involving historical knowledge can in fact be described in terms of discourse types and linguistic capacities.

## 2.2. From social situations to types of discourse

For situations of “historical communication” it is possible to develop descriptors from an analysis of the characteristics of the type of discourse employed in the situation(s).

As an example, reference may be made to the goal of *learning to understand historical documentaries (television)*, which are a discourse type in the popularisation of history and mainly involving aural reception. (CEFR : 4.4.2.3. : understanding TV programmes and films; understanding a documentary: B2)

### History-related/cognitive skills include

Ability to:
identify academic sources
identify reasoning based on data/clues
spot the devices used to give popular appeal: dramatisation, mystery, enigma, “experts”
identify new knowledge
place the occurrence under discussion in a broader context (chronological, cultural)
evaluate representational forms chosen particularly for television
identify simplifications, generalisations, lack of data, allusion to academic controversies
understand whether a particular perspective is being conveyed
[...]



## Linguistic and semiotic skills include

Ability to:
understand the voice-over commentary;
understand interviews;
read maps, diagrams, tables;
interpret editing, framing and lighting;
spot the definitions given in the voice-over;
distinguish description from comment;
distinguish objectified discourse from judgment (particularly aesthetic: beautiful, magnificent, etc.);

Once the social situations of communication have been characterised, it becomes possible to single out and focus on particular linguistic features in teaching dedicated to history.

### 3. Subject-related competences

A certain command of history as a form of knowledge is also an educational goal in itself, so a survey of the cognitive resources needed to learn/teach modes of in-school and social discourse is called for.

#### 3.1. Checklist of components of epistemological competence in history

The expertise that has to be taught has been defined as “historical literacy”<sup>4</sup>.

In order to foster open-mindedness, tolerance, empathy and other virtues, it is important to develop “cognitive skills” or “expertise” in history, such as ability to handle and analyse different forms of information and documents, arrive at balanced, responsible conclusions, and see other points of view.

Historical proficiency<sup>5</sup> can be broken down into types of competence including being able to:

formulate relevant questions about the available documents;
examine potential sources of information and distinguish between primary and secondary sources;
assess such sources in terms of perspective, bias, accuracy and reliability;
recognise one’s own perspective, bias and prejudice and take account of them when interpreting the available evidence;
use the sources available to identify relevant information to help students answer their questions;
structure this information on a particular event or situation as a sequence (what happened first and then subsequently, what was happening contemporaneously, etc.);
contextualise the information by relating it to the information already available about the period, parallel events, etc.;

<sup>4</sup>Stobart M. (1997) : “Towards a basic concept of historical literacy”, in Council of Europe: *History and its interpretations*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, p. 64 ff.

<sup>5</sup> According to Stradling, R. (2001), *Teaching 20th-century European history*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, pp. 97-98.

scrutinise the available source material for reasons and rank them in terms of their significance;
reach conclusions about what happened and why and to provide reasons for these conclusions;
acquaint oneself with historiography as a particular form of the construction of knowledge <sup>6</sup> ;
introduce multiperspectivity into historical research and narration;

In these inventories, the abilities that are actually within the learners’ grasp need to be identified. There is also a need to bring out how they connect with each other so that the planning of a realistic path for their acquisition can be attempted, above all according to the cognitive development of learners at school.

### 3.2. Checklist of components of historical knowledge

This is the knowledge which it is hoped learners will “retain” from their history lessons and apply in social situations of communication. It consists of knowledge of different orders:

<i>general categories and general knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• chronology, temporality, period, long term;</li> <li>• event, trend, evolution;</li> <li>• structure, organisation;</li> <li>• continuity, change, break, revolution “progress”;</li> <li>• civilisation, culture;</li> <li>• causation, causes, multiple causation;</li> <li>• data, description, demonstration, comparison;</li> <li>• interpretation, subjectivity, anachronism...</li> <li>• [...]</li> </ul>
<i>specific or local categories and knowledge, proximate in space and time</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge of general historical schemes and processes over the long term (for example: the expansion of agriculture in Europe (neolithisation), the birth of capitalism, the establishment of parliamentary democracy in Europe...)</li> <li>• understanding this type of process at the level of the major regions of Europe and the world, with their implications for more specific areas (nation-states, regions, towns, etc.)</li> <li>• understanding the events that have structured the active collective memory, in other words those whose consequences and interpretations are relevant to present-day life in society (knowledge of certain places, individuals and works significant for those stages in history, usually recent)</li> <li>• [...]</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> Stradling R. (2003) : *Multiperspectivity in history teaching: a guide for teachers*, Council of Europe.

<i>specific or local categories and knowledge, remote in space and time</i>	These categories are the product of specific areas, periods or cultures and often have currency in their original form and therefore in a foreign language (in English, for example, <i>ostracism</i> (Greece), <i>nome</i> (Egypt), <i>auto-da-fé</i> (Spain and Portugal), <i>aggiornamento</i> (Italy), <i>boyars</i> and <i>muzhik</i> (Russia)...
[...]	

The compilation of history teaching syllabi which comprise specifications in terms of knowledge can accommodate the traditional tendency to design syllabi focused on specific proximate categories (national history). The grid above is intended for scrutiny of the diverse nature of the knowledge meant to be taught. Its chief purpose is to emphasise that these various forms of historical knowledge presuppose different discursive forms in what is said by the teacher and the textbook:

- general knowledge should be dis-connected from its ordinary connotations and interpreted afresh in its historical perspective, also of a philosophical and anthropological nature;
- proximate knowledge can be debased, in which case its primary meaning must be restored;
- remote knowledge can give rise to interpretations distorted by ethnocentricity and vitiated by exoticism or by being construed anachronistically. Thus the teaching of such knowledge has to draw upon the approaches peculiar to intercultural education.

#### 4. In-school communication situations relating to history teaching

In order to switch to the actual teaching, from the social forms of communication and from the objectives defined in terms of historical knowledge, these must be linked with the forms of communication that are used in history teaching.

Linguistic interactions in class have the function of transmitting values and guiding the learners in the formation of their attitudes, transmitting knowledge and directly or indirectly preparing them to handle the situations described in section 2 above.

It is important to characterise these interactions, since the effectiveness of the teaching in question depends on how the learners accept and participate in it.

##### 4.1. Checklist of classroom situations of historical communication

History teaching practices are structured according to a finite repertoire of learning/teaching activities. Such forms of teaching methodology vary according to educational traditions and the methodological choices made in the syllabi which order the teaching.

It uses approaches such as:

presentation by the teacher (including general narration, interpretations and comments, analysis of primary sources, explanation of terms and concepts, etc.) using visual aids (maps, diagrams, data tables, reproductions of evidence, etc.) (OP, AuR and WP<sup>7</sup> note-taking for learners);

<sup>7</sup> Coding of communication activities based on the CEFR: **R** = reception; **P** = production; **I** = interaction; **O** = oral; **W** = written.

teacher-learner interaction about the presentation and/or data (OI) or “pedagogical dialogue”: the teacher’s question, the learners’ answer, assessment of the learners’ answer by the teacher;
learners read the textbook (WR);
presentations by learners (OP) based on notes, PowerPoint, etc.;
debates (adversarial/multiperspective, OI) organised by learners (on the basis of texts or notes: WP);
finding information (WR and WP; note-taking);
analysis and summary of text files (WR and WP);
reviews of books, television programmes (WP or OP);
reaction to a historical film watched as a class (OI);
reading texts by historians (WR);
activities run as projects (linking different competences, for example, making a promotional pamphlet or film for a monument): individual and/or group research;
introduction to historical methodology: for example, gathering testimonies about the recent past, collation, analysis and commentaries, analysis of the street names of a town, etc. (WP), draft text for a guide explaining a painting for tourists;
production of personal or imaginative texts (WP);
global historical simulation;
[...]

#### 4.2. From classroom situations to discursive forms

These history teaching activities can be described in terms of linguistic capacities and types of discourse. For situations of “historical” communication, it is in fact possible (as in 2.2 above) to develop descriptors from the characteristics of the discursive style used in that situation.

An example is the objective: *Giving a (prepared) presentation to the class*, in which the type of discourse relates to oral production (see CEFR 4.4.1.1.: addressing audiences). This involves:

**history-related/cognitive skills** such as the ability to:

Read and summarise relevant documentation;
Locate the different sources of information;
Adapt an existing historical discourse;
Interpret primary data;
Interpret quantitative data;
Report the opinion of professional historians;

Give and support one's own point of view, explaining its source and nature;
Highlight the gains and the problems;
[...]

**linguistic and semiotic skills** such as the ability to:

State a plan, a scheme of narration;
“Give clear, systematically developed descriptions and presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points” (Descriptor B2 in the CEFR p. 58);
Emphasise the stages of the presentation as it unfolds;
Present and organise the linguistic commentary of tabulated data, a diagram, etc.;
Make the presentation attractive: manage voice and intonation;
React with restraint to objections or criticism from class or teacher;
Answer questions afterwards;
Assess one's own performance;
[...]

It will be noticed that in the example given the same descriptors can be used as those in the CEFR, devised for foreign languages, to the extent that it describes a group of discursive forms employed in history (addressing an audience). Yet not all are relevant, even in this case, as the CEFR takes no account of learners' ages. Thus, the other descriptor B2 (CEFR p. 60): “Can depart spontaneously from a prepared text and follow up interesting points raised by members of the audience, often showing remarkable fluency and ease of expression” does not suit 15-16 year old learners, at an age when compulsory education often ends. Likewise, the level C1 and C2 descriptors can furnish material for descriptions but probably cannot be adopted as such.

*Plurilingual education presupposes linkage of the classroom modes of communication to the social ones involving history, so as to make transfers of proficiencies between them. At least some of the classroom modes of communication should enable learners to handle social situations of communication with historical content:*

- *either directly through the classroom use of these social forms*
- *or indirectly, with the same proficiencies as those inherent in the social forms being developed through the classroom forms.*

## 5. Specific linguistic and semiotic competences needed for history teaching

Working from

- social situations of history-related communication (2.1. Checklist)
- and the corresponding types of discourse (2.2.)
- the ingredients of epistemological competence in history (3.1. Checklist)
- and the components of historical knowledge (3.2. Checklist)
- in-school situations of communication with historical content (4.1. Checklist)
- and the corresponding types of discourse (4.2.),

it is possible to single out specific linguistic competences suited to history teaching aimed at imparting knowledge and expertise as well as instilling social communication skill. Quite plainly, for learners these cannot be restricted to command of specialised terminology or ability to piece together historical narrative, even where clear and “logical”, from data.

To describe these linguistic competences, we shall adopt a communication capability model arranged in four sets of components, the first three of which form what is strictly speaking linguistic communication competence:

- strategic component/competence (see 5.1.)
- discursive component/competence, mastering types of discourse) (5.2.)
- formal component/competence (5.3)
- intercultural competences, not peculiar to history teaching, will be dealt with in another module.

### 5.1. Strategic competence

General communicative ability includes a psycho-cognitive component termed *strategic* that controls observable linguistic behaviour in order to generate, produce and understand texts. “Strategies are a means the language user exploits to mobilise and balance his or her resources, to activate skills and procedures, in order to fulfil the demands of communication in context and successfully complete the task in question in the most comprehensive or most economical way feasible depending on his or her precise purpose.” (CEFR p. 57).

In the CEFR the strategies are situated at the same level as communicative activities (as oral/written interaction [OI/WI], oral/written production [OP/WP] and aural/written reception [AuR/WR]). This level of specification allows teachable actions to be defined in terms of planning, execution, evaluation and repair<sup>8</sup>, which seem independent of the languages and discourses used. We shall proceed from these specifications to describe the communication proficiencies needed to teach/learn history.

<b>Oral and written production<sup>9</sup></b>		
	General activities	Activities in the school setting of history teaching and learning
Planning	Locating resources  Preparation and/or rehearsal  Consideration of the recipient and audience  Adaptation of message	Identifying the relevant information sources  Producing successive tentative versions of the text to be produced. Verifying its length (if WP).  Taking account of the audience’s receptive capabilities, level of knowledge and status, etc.,  Transposing, paraphrasing, summarising, mentioning, quoting and commenting on source texts

<sup>8</sup> CEFR, 4.4.1.3. for OP/WP, 4.4.2.4. for OR/WR and 4.4.3.3. for OI/WI.

<sup>9</sup> According to CEFR. p. 53.

Execution	Building on prior knowledge Trial (experimentation)	Reliance on existing texts of the same kind as the one contemplated Making successive provisional versions of the text to be produced.
Evaluation	Checking of results	Testing through listeners' reactions (if OP) the intelligibility to an outsider not directly addressed (if WP)
Repair	self-correction	Improving self-correction through an external evaluation

<b>Aural and written reception<sup>10</sup></b>		
	General activities	Activities in the school setting of history teaching and learning
Planning	Framing (selecting mental set, activating schemata, setting up expectations)	Identifying type of discourse and its potential contents
Execution	Identifying cues and making inferences	Working out the meaning of technical terms or historical deductions from language knowledge and historical knowledge
Evaluation	Hypothesis testing: matching cues to schemata	Matching up the interpretative hypotheses and developing critical sense
Repair	Revising hypotheses if required	Reconsidering one's position about a theory, explanation, validity of data and their interpretation

It is plain that the specifications of the CEFR relate more to reading as comprehension than as interpretation or critical response. For languages of instruction, the comprehension strategies need to be re-interpreted as a function of the knowledge in the discipline (in this case, critical comprehension).

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<sup>10</sup> According to CEFR. p. 65.

<b>Spoken and written interaction<sup>11</sup></b>		
	General activities	Activities in the school setting of history teaching and learning
Planning	Framing the issue (establishing a line of approach) Judging what can be presupposed Planning moves	No relevant descriptors in the CEFR, since the interactions between teacher and learner or among learners occur in the language of schooling. But it is necessary to understand what is expected of the classroom interactions whose aim is to provide insight into the knowledge presented and which are not ordinary social interactions. It is thus important to know their implications for imparting knowledge.
Execution	Taking the floor Co-operating (interpersonal) Dealing with the unexpected Asking for help	These specifications are altogether relevant in the context of debates, discussions and arguments staged in class about historical questions
Evaluation	Monitoring (schema, praxeogram) Monitoring (effect, success)	No particular specificity to the history-related verbal styles in or out of class
Repair	Asking for clarification Giving clarification Communication repair	Relevant as regards terminology, foreign borrowings, knowledge and patterns of historical reasoning and explanation...

These descriptors of strategies, as may be seen, need specifying if possible, where types of communication with “historical” content are concerned. This reference grid should be considered provisional. From a pedagogical standpoint, the descriptors of planning, which relate to the learners’ preparation of the statements (oral or written) should no doubt be more developed than those concerning monitoring or correction (save in the case of OP or WP).

These strategic abilities are valid for all subjects taught, so a comparison with the terms in which they are specified for, say, the natural sciences is called for.

## 5.2. Discursive competence

The concept *type of discourse* (or *discursive form*) has been used to denote the forms taken by communication as practiced in a given social situation and communication community. The types of discourse are specific discursive forms identified as such by a standard name and certain characteristics (physical location, type of participants, medium, etc.) of the situations where they occur: lecture, news item, anecdote, dispute, myth or prayer, etc.

<sup>11</sup> According to CEFR. p. 73.



The texts that pertain to a given type tend to follow the conventions typifying these discourses; the conventions concern not only contents but also structure and/or verbal productions. A text is more or less consistent with the discursive form whose specific outcome it is. The types of discourse themselves are more or less strained and formalised (sermon vs casual conversation).

The concept of discourse type is less abstract than that of textual type (narrative, descriptive, imperative, expository, persuasive, etc.). Typologies of this kind have never really been adequate for describing classes of texts since it is readily acknowledged that most actual texts correspond simultaneously to several types. This typology may nevertheless be used to denote the style (or discursive regime) adopted by certain segments of texts: for example, in the “film/book/record/review” discourse type in written media, there is often a segment at the beginning which has a descriptive or narrative tone (film); the texts then continue with a segment with an evaluative purpose. Insofar as the production of complete texts in a specific genre is expected from learners at the end of secondary education, this categorisation by text types (often called *discursive, cognitive operations...*) may help in identifying some limited language activities to be conducted at an earlier stage<sup>12</sup>.

*One aim of plurilingual and intercultural education, hence of languages of learning/teaching, is to broaden learners' discourse repertoires (in some/all of the languages of their language repertoires) in relation to their initial experience/proficiency in types of discourse and to give them the opportunity for new experiences (through texts and documents) of the diversity of cultures and of otherness..*

History syllabi may also be specified according to discourse type:

- types seen as already entering into the learners' repertoires (textbook, documentary, historical film, tourist leaflets, etc.)
- types present in the learners' social environment (periodicals: general-interest press, history monthlies; websites, political speeches, etc.)
- types to which a certain form of exposure is sought by history teaching.

For the purpose of choosing the types of discourse with which learners are to be familiarised, attention needs to be paid first to the academic status of history narratives. They are very diverse in nature because of the role assigned to them in diverse texts in the public domain which have some connection with history. For example, with respect simply to written narratives, it may be deemed important for learners to be brought into contact with:

- academic discourse types written by specialists for specialists (articles, communications, monographs, theses and the like);
- types produced by specialists, presenting new knowledge meant for and made accessible to the (“educated”) general public;
- types used in popularisation in book form by professional historians, knowledgeable amateurs and authors specialised in historical dissemination;
- journalistic discourse types of the press specialising in history;
- journalistic discourse types of the ordinary daily press relating to history (reviews of published books, accounts of “discoveries” and exhibitions, interviews with historians, etc.);

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<sup>12</sup> In this respect, see Beacco, J-C., Coste, D., van de Ven, P-H., Vollmer, H. (2010): “*Language and school subjects - Linguistic dimensions of knowledge building in school curricula*”, Council of Europe, Strasbourg

- educational discourse in the form of history textbooks, summaries for school students;
- the encyclopaedic discourses of dictionaries, encyclopaedias, treatises, etc.;
- the direct testimonies recorded for example in as memoirs, autobiographies, recollections and personal diaries;
- fictional or “literary” works of a historical nature: novels, stage plays, films, TV series, serials, comics, etc.;

The choice of the discourse types which it is considered learners should experience depends on the general choices already described (values, social situations of communication, historical knowledge, etc.) but may be fine-tuned in the light of descriptors relating to:

- the nature of the instructional activities which are to draw upon these texts (WR, OL...)
- the expected degree of proficiency for each (see sections 3 and 4)
- the proximity or familiarity of the types compared to those already experienced by the learners
- the interest (or motivation) which these discourse types may arouse

Characteristics peculiar to the types may also be used as a basis:

- length of the texts pertaining to them
- their predictability (as to layout, form of paragraphs and phraseology)
- presence of explicit headings and subheadings, summaries, etc.
- presence of graphics, illustrations, maps, diagrams, etc.

These inventories are apt to guide choices in compiling teaching syllabi which differ but are based on similar categorisations of discursive forms.

### 5.3. Formal competence

Lexical/terminological competence has already been partly covered in section 3.2. The attention paid to proficiency in spelling, morphology and syntax, although it may take up a lot of room in the teaching activities, should not mean that the activities relating to discursive competence are minimised.

#### 5.3.1. Pragmatic and cognitive categories

The conventions of form recurring in types of discourse (ie the linguistic and structural deliveries of the texts) may be described by means of categories unconnected with the syntax of the sentence.

These may be categories like some speech acts known as *cognitive operations*. This analytical category (see 5.2) applied to texts (also or alternatively called *cognitive process*) is to be understood as the discursive representation (in the sense of enactment) of the cognitive processes brought into play for the development/exposition of knowledge.

These include cognitive operations such as:

<i>analyse</i>	<i>illustrate/exemplify</i>
<i>argue</i>	<i>infer</i>
<i>calculate</i>	<i>interpret</i>
<i>quote</i>	<i>judge/evaluate/assess</i>
<i>classify</i>	<i>correlate/contrast/match</i>

<i>compare</i>	<i>name</i>
<i>describe/represent</i>	<i>specify</i>
<i>deduce</i>	<i>prove</i>
<i>define</i>	<i>recount</i>
<i>discriminate</i>	<i>report a discourse</i>
<i>enumerate</i>	<i>summarise</i>
<i>explain</i>	[...]

To describe academic discourse in history, pride of place may be given to cognitive/discursive operations/processes such as:

- *describe/recount*
- *represent* (textual or factual data)
- *interpret* (data)
- in particular by *matching* (data and interpretations) and *contrasting* (data and interpretations)
- *deduce* (interpretations/conclusions from data)
- *justify* (the deductions)
- *classify*
- *define*
- [...]

For each of these operations it is possible to identify the linguistic resources needed for their enactment, with likely variation between discourse types. It may be assumed that the “words” needed to express these cognitive operations have equivalents in all languages and that an attempt could be made to compile transposable inventories (for different languages and different subjects).

**To compile such inventories of forms required to express the discursive/cognitive operations occurring in given types of discourse, one ought to use the *Descriptions of language-specific reference levels in the CEFR*<sup>13</sup>**

[The following examples are translated from French]

**For example, for *define* there would be descriptors such as:**

In one or more specified types, the learner is capable of:

- recognising (W or O) (minimum level)
- and/or producing (W or O) (intermediate level)
- improvising/creating/proposing (OI/WI) (advanced level)

**a definition** appropriate to the types in question by using some of the following linguistic resources:

- through a series of examples
- through one or more comparisons

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<sup>13</sup> Available, or being produced, for English, German, Spanish, French, Greek, Portuguese...

- through contrast
- by paraphrasing
- through hypernyms/hyponyms
- by giving a translation
- through etymology
- through internal characteristics
- by relating the term to concepts or a theory...
- [...]

Such inventories make it possible to move from specification by strategic/discursive competence to definition of the requisite linguistic forms.

### 5.3.2. Linguistic categories

Discourse types can be described by using speech acts and/or discursive/cognitive operations since a specific discursive form is a verbal object albeit distinct from utterance, text, speech act, type of text, etc. Their verbal conventions may be apprehended

- as relatively stable types of utterances, in the case of highly restrictive types or set phrases, ...
- as the relatively stable or predictable general scheme or elements of their structure, which may be broken down into stabilised successions of speech acts or discursive/cognitive operations (for example, the sequence: represent, interpret, match...)
- as the preferential forms, in a given type, with which to deliver them. This conformity determines the appropriateness of the utterances (and not their accuracy or grammatical correctness), that is their compliance with common “rules” on the acceptable makeup of discourse types.

These conventions may be described on the basis of various general linguistic categories (= independent of individual languages), such as:

- forms of actualisation of the speaker (for example, in English: *I/me, we, one*, impersonal, passive, reflexive, etc.);
- forms of actualisation of the person addressed;
- presence/distribution and expected forms (in a given type) of assertive, appreciative, ethical and other formulations;
- presence/absence/distribution and forms of meta-discursive indications (statement of text plan, etc.);
- standard form of certain paragraphs;
- discursive tone (serious, humorous, personal touches, etc.).
- [...]

All descriptive categories used when analysing a discourse may serve as the starting-point for descriptors of formal mastery, especially with respect to reception or production. It nonetheless has to be taken into account that:

- texts of the same discourse type comply **to varying degrees** with the (often unstated) model underlying it;
- discourse types themselves may be conventional to varying degrees either as a whole or in some of their constituent parts (for example, the beginnings of scientific articles may be quite conventional/predictable while those of newspaper articles are fairly unpredictable).

This specification of forms should be underpinned by the expected language skills in other subjects taught and in language as a subject.

**For example, to *state a plan* (in OP) there would be descriptors such as:**

In one or more given types, the learner is able to

- recognise (W or O) (minimum level)
- produce (W or O) (intermediate level)
- improvise/create/propose (OI/WI) (advanced level)

**a statement of plan** appropriate to the types under consideration (here, presentation to the class), by activating some of the following linguistic resources:

[Highlight the structure of the forthcoming discourse]

[statement of the general schema]

- I am about to speak of/examine/deal with the question/the issue...
- I shall talk about...

[each point introduced by means of cohesive devices, but without using a predictable sequence (such as *firstly, secondly, thirdly*)... which is readily considered “clumsy” in English]

- first of all, first, to begin with, etc.
- next, then, as the second point
- the following point
- ...
- to conclude, the final aspect, etc.
- 

[announcement of the end]

- lastly, to conclude, to finish, in conclusion

Inventories of this type may be common to different languages and to different disciplines in some respects, but they necessarily comprise language-specific elements owing to their morphological and syntactic diversity and the diversity of discursive forms.

## 6. Thresholds

Users are invited to determine from the categories set out above which thresholds of knowledge/language skills as regards history-related discourse types the students should possess, according to:

- expected proficiencies (OI, OP...)
- types of discourse to be mastered (for reception or production)
- discursive/cognitive operations which they must be able to recognise or deliver
- forms for delivering the above, which they must know how to handle correctly and suitably.

Empirical analyses of correct applications of these forms in productions (examination papers, for example) by learners who have taken courses of this kind or in other types of discourse to which they are exposed (textbook) should make it possible to estimate whether the results are actually achieved, hence to judge realistically whether they are within the learners’ grasp.

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