

## Chapter 6

# THE CEFR ILLUSTRATIVE DESCRIPTOR SCALES: SIGNING COMPETENCES

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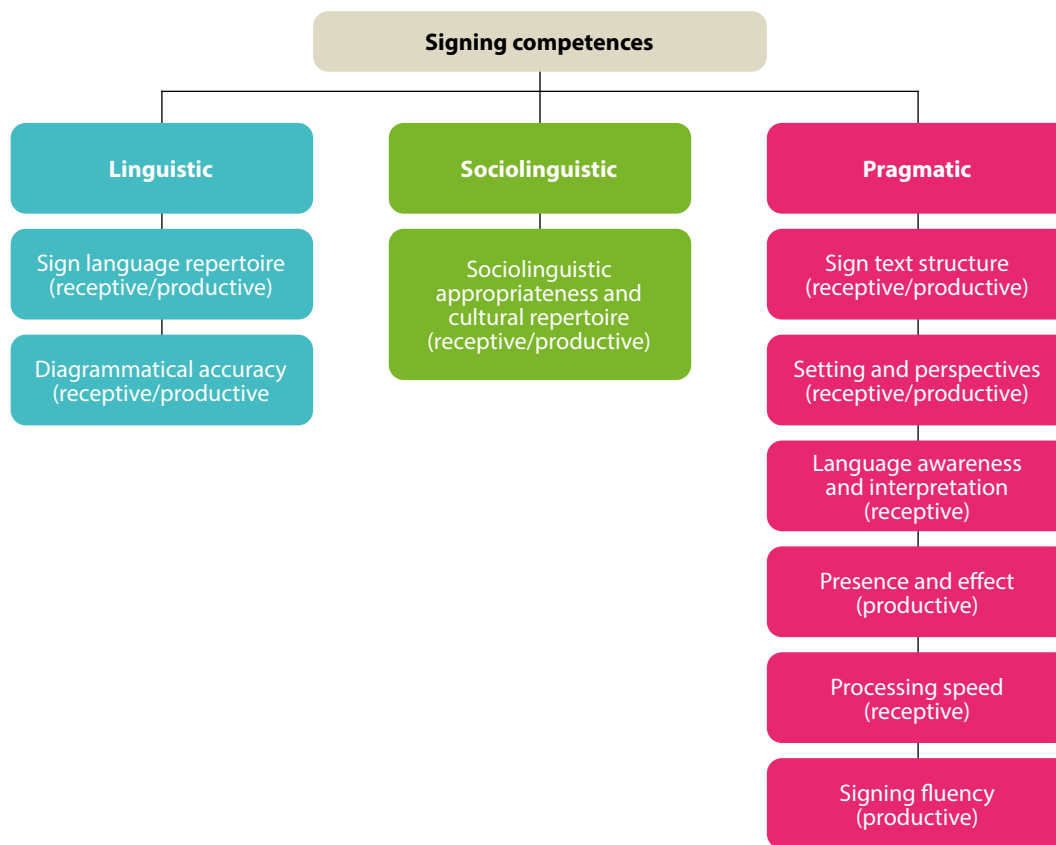
Many of the CEFR descriptors, especially those for communicative language activities, are as applicable to sign languages as they are to spoken languages, since sign languages are used to fulfil the same communicative functions. Hence these descriptors are modality-neutral, and modifications have been made to the formulation to emphasise this. However, there are obviously ways in which sign languages differ substantially from spoken languages. Fundamentally, they involve grammatical competences in the use of space, which we term “diagrammatical competence”. They also involve a broadened notion of the term “text”, namely for video-recorded signing that is not based on a written script. These competences go far beyond the paralinguistic features of communication through spoken language. The signing space is typically used to establish and later refer to relevant persons, places and objects in a form of spatial mapping. Sign languages then have syntax, semantics, morphology and phonology just like any other language. These differ of course from one sign language to another, as there are different sign languages in different countries, and sometimes more than one sign language in the same country. But there are certain common features such as the use of indexing, pronouns and classifier constructions. In addition, non-manual elements (facial expression, body orientation, head movement, etc.) and constructed action are used extensively in addition to hand and arm movements that are more traditionally considered to be the articulators of sign languages.

For communication, and reflecting contact with spoken language users, the repertoire of lexical and productive signs is supplemented by literally spelling out words or names using fingerspelling. Roughly, each letter of the spoken language script corresponds to a handshape. In due course, it may become lexicalised and phonologised. Fingerspelling, however, is a means of conveying something unfamiliar, for example a proper name, or a concept that does not have an established sign in the sign language used. Thus, fingerspelling is one of several contact phenomena that facilitate access to the written knowledge of spoken languages. Furthermore, fingerspelling is used to borrow new expressions from spoken languages, which may eventually also become lexicalised.

The categories for signing competences relate to the linguistic, pragmatic and sociolinguistic competences found in spoken languages, and therefore the descriptor scales specifically for signing competences are provided here under those three headings. Scales are provided for receptive and productive competences in seven pairs: two for linguistic competence, one for sociolinguistic competence and four for different aspects of pragmatic competence.

A few of the descriptors calibrated for signing competences are of a more global nature, similar to those included earlier. These have been kept in signing competences because they help to demonstrate the content coherence between the descriptors for signing competences and those for other areas.

**Figure 17 – Signing competences**



## 6.1. LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE

Descriptors are available for “Sign language repertoire” and for “Diagrammatical accuracy”. This distinction reflects the knowledge/control dichotomy and mirrors that between range and control/accuracy with respect to grammar and vocabulary.

### Sign language repertoire

These two scales incorporate language resources that are accessed in both sign language comprehension and production, for example in the combination of non-manual features with classifier handshapes to indicate reference and possibly hand motion and orientation to express other aspects of the intended meaning.

Sign languages draw extensively on productive sign formation. As for spoken languages, the sign language lexicon consists of two sets of entries: established lexical items and productive elements used in the formation of (new) signs or forms respectively. Established signs have a fixed citation form, which is typically cited in dictionaries of sign languages. Elements of the productive lexicon combine in productive relationships between a narrow set of handshapes that operate in signing space to generate new, dynamic descriptions of events. The three-dimensional spatial nature of many expressions allows for variable, yet precise formulations. Learners progress in the use of these competences according to the multifaceted needs of expression by acquiring combinatory restrictions as well as principles for stylistic/aesthetic purposes.

Because of the high proportion of productive elements in sign languages, reception demands a high degree of processing of the simultaneously provided morpho-phonological and morpho-syntactic sub-structures, as well as bearing in mind the given contexts for spatial reference. In short, productive sign creation combines meaning-bearing elements that, in the respective combinations, cannot be found in the sign language lexicon, and comprehension demands a re-analysis of such signs. To meet particular communication needs – which encompass more than just a global understanding of what a message is about – learners have to reapply grammatical rules for productive signing, reapply combinatory restrictions, keep track of spatial assignments, and consider the applicability of principles for stylistic-aesthetic purposes. Such sign language comprehension

processes are reported by learners to be less facilitated by lexical resources than is the case in the comprehension processes of many spoken languages.

Key concepts operationalised in the two scales include:

- ▶ knowledge of basic forms, parts of speech, and meanings of manual signs, including registers and variants;
- ▶ basic linguistic knowledge of elements in sign languages for naming and referring, and for composing signs with reference to morpho-syntactic and morphological processes and simultaneous constructions;
- ▶ manual aspects such as lexical signs, idioms and chunks, as well as the morpho-phonological elements that are used in productive signs;
- ▶ knowledge of sign roots and of non-manual elements, for example the use of the eyes, the head, the body and body motion, speed of signing, amplitude of articulation, etc., as well as associated restrictions; these forms are accessed and used to interpret signing, naming and referring;
- ▶ knowledge of manual and non-manual elements of sign combinations (frozen forms, idioms and formulaic chunks) as well as knowledge of morpho-phonological rules which are used in productive sign creation; this also includes knowledge of, e.g. the subset of handshapes of a particular sign language;
- ▶ language-specific knowledge relating to the combination of the manual and non-manual elements into possible signs, since neither manual nor non-manual elements “surface” in isolation;
- ▶ conceptual knowledge of meaning and connotations, to the extent that for example a user/learner can interpret or produce metaphors or irony;
- ▶ and overall, demonstrate competence in understanding and using the manual and the non-manual elements of signs.

Sign language repertoire		
	Productive	
	Receptive	
<b>C2</b>	<p>Can understand abstract concepts, e.g. from the field of science, and assign them to the appropriate context.</p> <p>Can understand creative or newly coined descriptions of phenomena (e.g. a UFO).</p> <p>Can understand challenging texts on a range of topics and explain what they are about.</p>	<p>Can express themselves in abstract, poetic signing.</p> <p>Can formulate abstract expressions and concepts (e.g. in the academic/scientific domain).</p> <p>Can produce with one hand a productive or lexical sign (e.g. a depicting or lexical verb like "search for"), while simultaneously using the other hand as part of a constructed action (e.g. scratching their head in different places as if searching for something).<sup>46</sup></p> <p>Can present a complex action or event in a linguistically aesthetic way, e.g. by employing handshapes as a means of playful expression.</p>
<b>C1</b>	<p>Can understand the meaning of mouthings in context.</p> <p>Can understand technical texts in their own field and make use of the information, ideas or opinions in them.</p> <p>Can understand specific, precise instructions, wishes, recommendations, etc.</p>	<p>Can express actions, objects and relations between these by using suitable classifier constructions (one- and two-handed) in varying ways with ease.</p> <p>Can employ the appropriate productive sign (e.g. a classifier) in order to highlight a particular meaning.</p> <p>Can sign comprehensibly using just one hand (the dominant hand).</p> <p>Can use a sentence to specify the precisely intended meaning of a vague term (e.g. specify "murder" through use of depiction).</p> <p>Can provide very broad coverage of a topic, taking account of the different aspects involved.</p> <p>Can switch between direct and indirect speech.</p>
<b>B2</b>	<p>Can understand and correctly attribute signed names for commonly known persons and institutions.</p> <p>Can differentiate nuances of meaning that are expressed with specific handshapes.</p> <p>Can understand idioms (and signs particular to the local community).</p> <p>Can understand what is meant when the signer paraphrases without producing the sign for the concept concerned.</p> <p>Can understand a large number of signs employed in everyday situations.</p> <p>Can deduce the meaning of individual unknown signs through the context of a sentence.</p>	<p>Can sign comprehensibly and precisely on a complex subject.</p> <p>Can adapt the signing style to the content and/or object being described.</p> <p>Can present a simple productive action through depiction and constructed action.</p> <p>Can use a differentiated choice of signs that corresponds to the type of text concerned.</p> <p>Can employ constructed action (actions are imitated one-to-one).</p> <p>Can always express their own opinion, even when the positions taken and opinions expressed by others are being presented.</p> <p>Can express the same content in a different language.</p> <p>Can alternate between productive and lexical signing.</p> <p>Can communicate information using the productive lexicon only.</p> <p>Can paraphrase lexical elements by using productive elements, e.g. by using depicting signs and other classifier constructions.</p>

<sup>46</sup> This is also known as "body partitioning".

Sign language repertoire	
	<p>Can extract the relevant information from a short text provided it is presented in a simple and structured way.</p> <p>Can distinguish between signs that appear similar.</p> <p>Can deduce the nature of an object from non-manual cues and depictive signs.</p> <p>Can make indirect inferences about the features of the characters in a story from a signer's facial expressions.</p>
<b>B1</b>	<p>Can selectively extract information from a signed text, e.g., details of the time, individuals involved, places or appointments and indications as to how or why.</p> <p>Can understand productively expressed actions and processes.</p> <p>Can infer the chronological sequence of events from non-manual cues (close vs. remote events in terms of time).</p> <p>Can understand what kind of creature is meant when the signer imitates people or animals.</p>
<b>A2+</b>	<p>Can understand content that a person expresses only by means of productive signs.</p> <p>Can understand the terms for common technical devices designed for deaf people's use.</p> <p>Can understand the meaning of modal verbs (e.g., <i>can</i> = &lt;ability&gt;, <i>must</i> = &lt;command&gt;, <i>want</i> = &lt;wish&gt;).</p> <p>Can extract specific information from everyday texts (e.g., numbers, names, places, persons).</p> <p>Can understand signing when the signer provides images to visualise the content.</p>
	<p>Can fingerspell quickly and accurately.</p> <p>Can, in order to facilitate understanding, make a relevant comparison with other things or images or circumstances that the recipient already knows (e.g. "A porcupine looks like a big hedgehog").</p> <p>Can employ different productive signs (e.g. handshapes indicating handling) when describing an action or event.</p> <p>Can employ mouthings in a differentiated manner that is appropriate to context.</p> <p>Can employ different means (e.g. non-manuals including facial expression, handshape, hand orientation, movement) in order to describe the size and shape of an object.</p> <p>Can present personal characteristics just with mouthings and constructed action.</p> <p>Can describe important characteristics of a person or object with the appropriate handshapes.</p> <p>Can modify productive signing appropriately to the context.</p> <p>Can make part of their contribution by using constructed action to present individual, simple actions.</p> <p>Can express the character and qualities of a person or protagonist by using constructed action.</p> <p>Can present actions or events through productive signing.</p> <p>Can vary the scale of their signing (larger, smaller) dependent on the situation.</p> <p>Can give a comprehensive description of a person, including facial expression, skin colour, make-up, hairstyle and profession.</p> <p>Can employ appropriate productive lexicon elements for reference, e.g. to animals, instead of lexical signs.</p> <p>Can use mouthings precisely to express specific contents.</p> <p>Can use a range of signs.</p> <p>Can present different aspects of a plot or storyline (e.g. duration, as in "work through the night").</p> <p>Can employ examples in order to illustrate something.</p> <p>Can indicate clearly the difference between two things.</p> <p>Can relay information in a short and minimal, yet intelligible way.</p> <p>Can, with preparation, use the right names and terminology related to the topic concerned.</p> <p>Can describe a person in terms of their characteristic features.</p>

## Sign language repertoire

<p><b>A2</b></p>	<p>Can identify details in an extensive description of a person/object, such as body shape, hairstyle, or occupation.</p> <p>Can understand non-manual information on the proximity or distance of a place or object.</p> <p>Can recognise and correctly interpret meaning expressed non-manually.</p> <p>Can recognise and understand the codified backchannelling signs of an interlocutor.</p> <p>Can understand simple reports of what the signer did.</p> <p>Can understand simple instructions, wishes, recommendations, etc.</p>	<p>Can express their own opinion.</p> <p>Can present visually simple information like actions and relationships (e.g. in the family).</p> <p>Can sign a direct demand.</p> <p>Can express an amount/quantity through non-manual cues.</p> <p>Can express proximity and distance by using appropriate non-manual cues.</p> <p>Can describe the design, colour and texture of clothes.</p>
<p><b>A1</b></p>	<p>Can understand direct commands (e.g., "open the door").</p> <p>Can understand quantities expressed non-manually.</p> <p>Can understand descriptions of clothes (pattern, colour).</p> <p>Can understand information on proportions, quantities, and size ratios.</p> <p>Can distinguish between signs that only differ according to the shape of the mouth.</p> <p>Can understand signs even if they are modified manually.</p> <p>Can understand the contribution to meaning from the shape of the mouth, e.g., puffed up or contracted cheeks.</p> <p>Can infer the shape of objects that are described from non-manual signals.</p> <p>Can understand simple negation with &lt;no&gt;, &lt;not&gt;, or a shake of the head.</p> <p>Can understand expressions via fingerspelling if they do not understand the lexical signs.</p> <p>Can recognise and understand facial feedback from the interlocutor (agreement/rejection).</p>	<p>Can produce correct mouthings and employ them to differentiate between otherwise identical signs.</p> <p>Can spell names and technical expressions, among other things, using fingerspelling.</p> <p>Can describe physical shape (height, width, length).</p> <p>Can sign direct requests.</p> <p>Can sign conventional greetings and leave-taking expressions.</p> <p>Can describe a person through facial expressions, hair and physical characteristics or through things the person often wears.</p> <p>Can produce clear and unambiguous handshapes.</p> <p>Can produce the lexical signs for months, days of the week and times of the day.</p> <p>Can state their opinion (agree, disagree).</p>

## Diagrammatical accuracy

Diagrammatical accuracy describes the correctness, accuracy, precision and complexity of syntactic expressions. Taken together, these aspects determine the comprehensibility of the intended meanings of the signed expressions. The competences here relate to manual and non-manual elements; they encompass knowledge and observation of syntactic rules and principles, use of signing space, the bodily expression necessary, head motions and so on. Receptive competences include correctly analysing parts of speech, spatial relations of structured expressions, particular contributions of clausal and phrasal functions, non-manual markings (e.g. to indicate scope, spatial reference, topicalised phrases).

These competences relate to the expression of textuality (see “Sign text structure”) as they are used in structuring signed texts by applying a number of strategies that may include, for example, a specific arrangement of the signing space or rhetorical questions to introduce a new point. This scale also shares commonalities with the scale “Sign language repertoire” because it is fed by lexical knowledge of manual and non-manual meaning–form relationships. “Diagrammatical accuracy” thus also relies on non-manual elements, for example the raising of eyebrows to indicate particular grammatical constructions, and to mark a range of adverbials.

Key concepts operationalised in the receptive scale include:

- ▶ the exact memorisation of discourse referents and relations located in signing space;
- ▶ the interpretation of different references (e.g. of established elements in signing space, indexing, pronouns, classifiers, congruency, etc.);
- ▶ the interpretation of situated events in time as well as temporal relationships and reference to time and duration;
- ▶ interpretation of non-manual elements (e.g. use and scope of upper body, facial expression, eye gaze);
- ▶ comprehension of sign sequences and linked clauses;
- ▶ comprehension of inflected forms, e.g. verbs or other predicates.

Key concepts operationalised in the productive scale include:

- ▶ an appropriate use of the signing space, taking account of existing conventions;
- ▶ the expression of situated events in time or of temporal relationships by establishing appropriate time references;
- ▶ consistency in and accuracy of referencing (to established elements in signing space, indexing, pronouns, classifier constructions, etc.);
- ▶ accuracy of non-manual elements (e.g. the range of use of upper body, the use of the body in the articulation of constructed action, facial expression, head movements, etc.);
- ▶ accuracy of sign sequences necessary to express certain concepts (e.g. cause and effect);
- ▶ use of particular conjunctions or serialisations;
- ▶ use of certain structures, e.g. ability to modulate verbs;
- ▶ means for structuring sign texts appropriate for the respective text type.

Diagrammatical accuracy		
	Receptive	Productive
<b>C2</b>	No descriptors available; see B2+	No descriptors available; see B2+
<b>C1</b>	No descriptors available; see B2+	No descriptors available; see B2+
	<p>Can distinguish the various temporal relationships between the actions and events (simultaneous events, previous event, subsequent event).</p> <p>Can distinguish between whether an action involves several people (objects) or many actions involve one person (subject).</p> <p>Can distinguish between direct and indirect speech in signed texts.</p> <p>Can understand statements that contain predicates that take no agent, e.g., "the water is flowing now".</p> <p>Can recognise rhetorical questions even if linguistically expressed in a very economical way, e.g., by raising the eyebrows.</p> <p>Can assign classifiers to the correct reference object (e.g., animals) through the context.</p> <p>Can understand aspectual modulations (e.g., staggering, fast, creeping or rolling movements).</p>	<p>Can situate the different contents/actions in the text sensibly in the signing space in order to structure the text.</p> <p>Can maintain full consistency in the reference using indexing, productive signs, in short texts.</p>
<b>B2</b>	<p>Can distinguish on the basis of grammatical signals between statements about real and imaginary events.</p> <p>Can keep apart the characters and their actions even in longer texts.</p> <p>Can recognise sentences as units and indicate how many sentences a short text contains.</p> <p>Can understand verbal aspect (e.g., completion, repetition, continuation, result of actions).</p>	<p>Can use the signing space in a conscious manner, e.g. using the right side for &lt;for&gt; and the left side for &lt;against&gt; reasons.</p> <p>Can use a large or a small signing space, dependent on the situation.</p> <p>Can link productive signing with indicators of time (timelines).</p> <p>Can employ appropriate timelines in order to indicate the point in time or the duration of an event (for temporal relations: simultaneously, beforehand/ afterwards, after another).</p> <p>Can express how one does something; &lt;with X&gt;; &lt;without Y&gt;.</p> <p>Can express different temporal relationships (for example, three relationships: simultaneously; before and after; one after another).</p> <p>Can employ upper body posture when indicating time reference, e.g. lean forward for future.</p> <p>Can exploit an appropriate timeline in order to place past, present and future events in the correct relationship to each other.</p> <p>Can exploit variation in the sign order of subject, verb, object in a sentence in order to highlight something (e.g. SVO, SOV, OSV).</p>



Diagrammatical accuracy	
Receptive	Productive
<p>Can infer the time, duration or sequence of an event from the timelines employed.</p> <p>Can understand modified lexical signs.</p>	<p>Can express rhetorical questions in an economical manner, e.g. using just the eyebrows.</p> <p>Can express why one does something (aim: &lt;in order to ...&gt;).</p> <p>Can link two phrases to yield the meaning relation of &lt;although&gt; and &lt;despite&gt;.</p> <p>Can indicate a rhetorical question correctly by leaving a slight pause between the question and the answer.</p> <p>Can establish relationships in the signing space and later reuse these.</p> <p>Can focus on one point on a timeline and/or use temporal adverbials in order to locate an event correctly in past, present or future time.</p> <p>Can make comparisons using adjectives, including superlative forms, e.g. through use of productive signs, changing size, or speed of hand movement.</p>
<p>Can correctly interpret events in a timeline (past, present or future).</p> <p>Can understand statements indicating intentions (aims, &lt;in order to ...&gt;).</p> <p>Can use non-manual signals to distinguish for example, wh-questions from yes/no questions, or assertions from yes/no questions.</p> <p>Can correctly interpret indexical reference to persons, provided they have been properly introduced and situated.</p> <p>Can identify various strategies for expressing the comparative and superlative of adjectives and understand their meaning (e.g., through changes in the size or speed of the sign or through the correct use of classifiers).</p>	<p>Can situate objects/people in the signing space by indexing and later referencing them with pronouns.</p> <p>Can correctly direct eye gaze in the signing space in order to refer to previously introduced objects or people.</p> <p>Can correctly use different sentence types (statements, questions, imperatives).</p> <p>Can mark questions appropriately, using non-manual markers relevant (e.g. upper body posture plus mimic, eyebrows).</p> <p>Can employ the relevant non-manual elements for the description of a shape.</p> <p>Can employ constructed action in order to convey meaning.</p> <p>Can incorporate number marking into a sign (e.g. to indicate number of persons moving, number of days).</p> <p>Can present a simple temporal sequence by using the signing space.</p> <p>Can support referencing to events in a passage of time with non-manual features (e.g. to distinguish events that are close in time as opposed to events that are distant in time).</p> <p>Can express cause and effect (reason for something).</p>

B1

Diagrammatical accuracy		
	Productive	
A2	Receptive	<p>Can express the conditions under which one does certain things (&lt;if... then&gt;).</p> <p>Can mark verb agreement consistently, maintaining concordance.</p> <p>Can express a non-causal sequence (e.g. &lt;and then ...&gt;, &lt;and so ...&gt;, &lt;next ...&gt;, &lt;after that ...&gt;).</p>
	Productive	<p>Can describe the environment (e.g. landscape) with depicting signs).</p> <p>Can use canonical space effectively to place focus on important elements.</p> <p>Can produce accurate handshapes not only in isolated signs but also in sentences.</p> <p>Can use &lt;if... then&gt; sentences.</p> <p>Can express lists and sequences &lt;and ..., ... plus&gt;.</p> <p>Can employ productive signs correctly in simple sentences.</p>
	Receptive	<p>Can recognise and understand condition and consequence in <i>if-then</i> sentences.</p> <p>Can understand clause linkages that express &lt;even if&gt; / &lt;nevertheless&gt; relations.</p> <p>Can understand conditional sentences, i.e. under what conditions (&lt;if&gt;) a consequence (&lt;then&gt;) occurs.</p> <p>Can understand how sameness &lt;same-as&gt; and difference &lt;different-from&gt; are expressed.</p> <p>Can understand differences in meaning that indicate whether actions are carried out by one person or several people, e.g., a person goes v. many people go.</p> <p>Can identify different types of sentence and their meaning through the word order (statements, questions, orders).</p> <p>Can correctly interpret classifier constructions in simple sentences, provided they are clearly signed.</p> <p>Can correctly interpret verb agreement.</p> <p>Can understand the meaning of basic causal relations (e.g., "I'm late because I got stuck in the traffic").</p> <p>Can recognise and understand modified handshapes.</p> <p>Can understand indirect messages (questions, requests, wishes, rejection, etc.).</p> <p>Can distinguish between and understand different ways of expressing negation.</p>
	Productive	<p>Can use personal pronouns correctly.</p> <p>Can construct simple sentences with SVO and SOV patterns.</p> <p>Can represent the thickness of an object by using productive signs.</p> <p>Can construct a simple sentence using lexical signs.</p> <p>Can form plurals through use of repetition or by marking a number.</p>
	Receptive	<p>Can understand an utterance as a direct request, question or order and respond accordingly.</p> <p>Can understand the forms and sizes of objects (e.g., the form of a pyramid) and identify the objects.</p> <p>Can understand different plural forms with simple signs (e.g., plural by means of numbers or by repetition).</p> <p>Can understand lists and sequences (&lt;and&gt; / &lt;both-and&gt; / &lt;and then&gt; meanings).</p> <p>Can understand productively expressed time indicators (&lt;day-before-yesterday&gt;, &lt;3-years-ago&gt;, etc.), when the time references are clearly indicated.</p> <p>Can understand from descriptions of manipulated objects how a signer sets/lays them down or places them.</p>
	Productive	<p>Can use personal pronouns correctly.</p> <p>Can construct simple sentences with SVO and SOV patterns.</p> <p>Can represent the thickness of an object by using productive signs.</p> <p>Can construct a simple sentence using lexical signs.</p> <p>Can form plurals through use of repetition or by marking a number.</p>
	A1	<p>Can understand an utterance as a direct request, question or order and respond accordingly.</p> <p>Can understand the forms and sizes of objects (e.g., the form of a pyramid) and identify the objects.</p> <p>Can understand different plural forms with simple signs (e.g., plural by means of numbers or by repetition).</p> <p>Can understand lists and sequences (&lt;and&gt; / &lt;both-and&gt; / &lt;and then&gt; meanings).</p> <p>Can understand productively expressed time indicators (&lt;day-before-yesterday&gt;, &lt;3-years-ago&gt;, etc.), when the time references are clearly indicated.</p> <p>Can understand from descriptions of manipulated objects how a signer sets/lays them down or places them.</p>
	Productive	<p>Can use personal pronouns correctly.</p> <p>Can construct simple sentences with SVO and SOV patterns.</p> <p>Can represent the thickness of an object by using productive signs.</p> <p>Can construct a simple sentence using lexical signs.</p> <p>Can form plurals through use of repetition or by marking a number.</p>

## 6.2. SOCIOLINGUISTIC COMPETENCE

In this scale some elements of sociocultural knowledge have been included, since it is difficult to draw a hard and fast line between the two concepts. In the SNSF research project, a number of descriptors for specific knowledge of aspects relevant to deaf communities were calibrated. Despite being important for understanding local culture, shared knowledge and values, and the meaning of particular signs, some topics that relate to regional culture have been placed in the supplementary descriptors in Appendix 9 and should be interpreted and exemplified by regional values relevant wherever needed.

### **Sociolinguistic appropriateness and cultural repertoire**

This scale is the equivalent of the one for sociolinguistic appropriateness under communicative language competences. In addition to sociolinguistic appropriateness (register, politeness conventions, etc.) some more general elements of cultural and regional knowledge are included.

Key concepts operationalised in the receptive scale include the following:

- ▶ ability to recognise different registers and switch between them;
- ▶ ability to assess the appropriateness of greetings, introductions and leave taking;
- ▶ ability to recognise whether the signer takes into account the social status of a referent or partner;
- ▶ ability to assess the appropriateness of the use of signing space (regarding context and recipient);
- ▶ ability to apply knowledge of sociocultural norms, taboos, appropriate personal appearance, etc;
- ▶ establishment and maintenance of eye contact;
- ▶ ability to understand and apply means of gaining attention or means of giving feedback;
- ▶ ability to apply knowledge of the landmarks of the local culture(s): people, facts and major community issues;
- ▶ ability to deduce social background, regional origin, local ties from the signing of interlocutors;
- ▶ ability to take into account knowledge of the world relevant to communication (e.g. abbreviations, technical aids).

Key concepts operationalised in the productive scale include the following:

- ▶ expression of registers and ability to switch between them;
- ▶ ability to express greetings, introductions and leave taking;
- ▶ ability to sign appropriately with regard to the social status of referents and/or the interlocutors;
- ▶ adaptation of signing space to the context and recipient(s), taking account of local conditions;
- ▶ respect for sociocultural norms, taboos, etc;
- ▶ establishment and maintenance of eye contact;
- ▶ means of gaining attention; means of giving feedback;
- ▶ knowledge of the landmarks of the local culture(s); people, facts and major community issues;
- ▶ ability to provide and judge social background, regional origin, local ties from the signing of interlocutors;
- ▶ applying knowledge of the world relevant to communication (e.g. abbreviations, technical aids, etc.).

Sociolinguistic appropriateness and cultural repertoire		
	Productive	
C2	<p>Can recognise sociocultural conventions in unfamiliar texts (e.g., appropriate register, polite forms, social status, taboo subjects).</p> <p>Can recognise when the signer gives the characters in a story their own linguistic profile and can describe these profiles.</p>	<p>No descriptors available; see C1</p>
	<p>Can recognise the linguistic register chosen by the signer on the basis of the signs used.</p> <p>Can recognise when a signer switches from an informal to a formal register or vice versa.</p> <p>Can judge whether the register employed maintains a distance appropriate to the text.</p> <p>Can infer the social relationship between interlocutors (proximity, hierarchy, etc.) from their remarks.</p> <p>Can indicate a person's social status when they have seen how others address that person (by interpreting the manual signing).</p> <p>Can understand discreet references to persons present when the signer, for example, employs a smaller signing space or holds a hand in front of the index finger so that it is not apparent to whom the finger is pointing.</p>	<p>Can respect sociocultural norms in producing texts (e.g. appropriate register, forms of politeness, status, taboos).</p> <p>Can adapt their register to the audience concerned.</p> <p>Can switch between formal and informal registers without effort.</p> <p>Can express non-lexical difference of register through both manual and non-manual means.</p> <p>Can tell a joke that relates to deaf experiences.</p>
C1	<p>Can deduce from a person's linguistic register their probable background (origin, age, occupation).</p> <p>Can recognise whether the register of a text is appropriate for the target audience.</p> <p>Can recognise whether a text contains all information necessary to enable a target audience with the relevant prior knowledge to understand it.</p> <p>Can recognise a person or character's social status on the basis of manual and non-manual references in the text.</p> <p>Can understand the abbreviations commonly used in the deaf community.</p>	<p>Can gauge whether the public concerned is familiar with deafness and can explain things explicitly if necessary.</p> <p>Can produce lexicalised signs of different registers.</p> <p>Can explain facts and events that are important in deaf communities.</p>
	<p>Can attribute a text to a target audience on the basis of the size of a sign, e.g., big/formal or small/intimate setting.</p> <p>Can assign the text to a formal or informal context on the basis of manual or non-manual features in the introduction to the text.</p> <p>Can judge whether a person introduces themselves to other deaf people in a culturally appropriate way.</p> <p>Can recognise and understand cultural references in texts.</p> <p>Can draw on indirect references to important events, persons and institutions in their own country in order to understand a text.</p>	<p>Can adopt the appropriate formal register in order to maintain distance from the reported issue.</p> <p>Can indicate someone's social status through the articulation of signs in the signing space (e.g. use of a higher locus in signing space to indicate a higher status than the signer's).</p>
B2		

Sociolinguistic appropriateness and cultural repertoire		
	Productive	
	Receptive	
B1	<p>Can understand and follow explanations on the origin of culture-specific signs, such as names of well-known people, institutions or places.</p> <p>Can judge whether or not a greeting/leave-taking remark is appropriate for the type of text concerned.</p>	<p>Can, as appropriate, engage in greeting/leave-taking remark, according to the type of text and the public concerned.</p> <p>Can present themselves in a manner appropriate to the type of text and the public concerned (e.g. clothes, accessories, personal appearance).<sup>47</sup></p> <p>Can sensitise people to cultural issues.</p> <p>Can, in the course of describing travel, include cultural experiences and aspects typical of the country concerned.</p>
	<p>Can recognise on the basis of the sign-language address pronouns whether strangers are addressing them appropriately.</p> <p>Can recognise when someone wishes to be given the floor (e.g., raising a hand, tapping a person's arm).</p> <p>Can recognise differences in register that the signer expresses manually and non-manually.</p> <p>Can recognise whether the interlocutor responds appropriately to a &lt;thank you&gt; etc.</p>	<p>Can introduce themselves to deaf people appropriately.</p> <p>Can use their knowledge of the target sign language culture to explain the origin of certain culturally determined signs (e.g. the names of well-known people, institutions and place names).</p> <p>Can indicate someone's social status with non-manual means (e.g. direction of vision).</p> <p>Can use the sign-abbreviations that are conventional in relation to sign language communities.</p> <p>Can maintain eye contact with their interlocutor while signing.</p> <p>Can accept or decline a direct request or demand.</p> <p>Is familiar with the common technical aids for communication between deaf and hearing people and can name them.</p> <p>Can use an appropriate means of address when meeting an unknown deaf person.</p> <p>Can adapt the signing space used to the context and the audience.</p> <p>Can take into account aspects of the immediate environment that are important for signed communication (e.g. light, objects on the table).</p>
A2		

47. These non-linguistic elements relate to the visibility of the author of a sign language text. Learners need to anticipate in production how such factors influence the reception of their text.

Sociolinguistic appropriateness and cultural repertoire	
Receptive	Productive
<p>Can maintain appropriate eye contact with a signer in a dialogue.</p>	<p>Can greet a deaf person appropriately.</p> <p>Can employ different strategies in order to establish the eye contact necessary for communication (e.g. waving, tapping a person on the shoulder, arm or hand, tapping on the table, turning off and on lighting).</p> <p>Can attract attention in order to acquire the turn (e.g. by raising a hand or waving to gain eye contact, by tapping the interlocutor on the shoulder).</p> <p>Can maintain direct eye contact with their interlocutor.</p> <p>Can use fingerspelling as an aid when communication problems occur.</p> <p>Can give their interlocutor visual feedback through conventionalised phrases and mouthings.</p> <p>Can give their interlocutor visual feedback (positive and negative) using facial expressions and other non-manual elements (e.g. head nod or shake).</p> <p>Can respond appropriately in conventionalised interactions, e.g. replying with a formulaic &lt;welcome&gt; / &lt;never mind&gt; / &lt;all well ...&gt; / &lt;thank you&gt;.</p>
A1	

### 6.3. PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE

Pragmatic competences cover discourse competences in different media, such as the ability to create personal meaning in the context of a face-to-face or a written discourse and to capture the intentions of language action (e.g. of indirect acts of speech), as well as functional competences such as processing and comprehension even of implicit meaning. These competences also relate to language awareness (metalinguage). Pairs of descriptor scales are available for "Sign text structure" and "Setting and perspectives". In addition there are two other receptive scales, "Language awareness and interpretation" and "Processing speed", as well as two other productive scales: "Presence and effect" and "Signing fluency".

#### Sign text structure

The focus of this pair of scales is on the ability of the user/learner not only to grasp and understand the structure of different types of text but also to shape and structure their contributions. Sign text structure relates to the scales for "Coherence" and "Thematic development" under "Communicative language competences".

The pair of scales include knowledge of schema for video-recorded texts, e.g. for reports, stories or explanations and knowledge of the ways texts are built and made coherent. They also include knowledge and employment of particular cohesive devices in interpreting a text or in shaping and structuring a video text. The notion "text" is used here without referring to conventional scripts for spoken languages. It is meant to refer to multiphrase signed expressions to convey ideas, thoughts and meanings that serve some function. The notion "sign text" highlights the fact that texts in sign languages were ephemeral before media for recording (monologues) were commonly available. Apart from jokes, particular narratives, prayers and a small number of other genres of text that were handed down in an "oral tradition" and shared in a community, texts remained dialogic in nature. They could not be conserved and were not accessible for discursive examination, educational purposes or argumentative development. This has changed with video.

However, in contrast to written texts, even videoed signed texts cannot easily be skimmed to look for specific information and headings cannot be checked for a rough overview. Nonetheless, specific knowledge of different text types can help to narrow the search space: a thematic introduction will be found at the beginning, a conclusion at the end of a video; the indication of time and place of an event can be found close to each other; summaries are placed at the beginning, conclusions follow the argumentation and so on.

Language users with text competence are able to recognise and assess well-designed as well as fragmented texts and can grasp explicit and implicit meanings. Text competence also requires the competences of all other scales introduced here, for example "Diagrammatical accuracy" and "Sign language repertoire". The text structure scales focus on coherence and the structured development of a signed message, whereas, for instance, the descriptors for "Diagrammatical accuracy" focus on the syntactically correct locations for the use of proforms (handshapes used in place of a previously used sign).

Key concepts operationalised in the receptive scale include:

- ▶ ability to detect the logical development and reconstruct the coherence of a text;
- ▶ ability to understand texts by applying knowledge of text types, schemes, genres, and associated text structures and expected contents;
- ▶ ability to react to gaps in the logical development and misfits of coherence in a text;
- ▶ ability to identify sub-structures of a text (e.g. particular information or chains of argumentation);
- ▶ ability to prioritise different pieces of information based on their emphasis;
- ▶ ability to interpret and weigh explicit and implicit references in a text;
- ▶ ability to formulate expectations on textual content and to use expectations in the employment of appropriate strategies (e.g. when searching for specific content).

Key concepts operationalised in the productive scale include the following:

- ▶ logical development and coherence of the text, with ability to present and justify arguments;
- ▶ structuring information and arguments sequentially with an introduction and conclusion, adding examples and explanations where needed;
- ▶ creating appropriate transitions; placing emphasis;
- ▶ appropriate use of cohesive devices (manual and non-manual, rhetorical, etc.) according to the respective text type;
- ▶ referring backwards and forward in the text.



Sign text structure	
	Productive
C2	<p>Can understand logical, causal, temporal or semantic relationships in order to link parts of a signed text to one another.</p> <p>Can distinguish various kinds of evaluative texts from one another (e.g., a controvert text with arguments for and against, justification of an argument, or a philosophical text).</p> <p>Can identify and understand complex hierarchical structures (e.g. in politics and organisations).</p> <p>Can identify missing parts of complex texts or unfamiliar types of texts and infer missing content.</p>
C1	<p>Can reproduce the content of a lengthy signed text with various details.</p> <p>Can, after watching a signed text, explain relationships in detail.</p> <p>Can recognise various means of structuring signed texts and correctly interpret their function in the textual context (e.g., rhetorical questions, enumeration, body turns).</p> <p>Can use their own knowledge of types of text to formulate expectations regarding the content and structure of a text and assess its quality accordingly.</p> <p>Can distinguish the separate elements of an argument (assertion, reasons, examples, conclusions) in a signed text.</p> <p>Can predict what is coming next from the order in which elements appear in an utterance, and the emphasis that they receive.</p>
B2+	<p>Can recognise the recurrent, central theme in enacted texts.</p> <p>Can recognise, on the basis of the location of an argument in the signing space, to what opinion the argument belongs.</p> <p>Can identify structural elements of texts and use their functions to understand the text as a whole.</p> <p>Can identify gaps in familiar types of text and fill these coherently by deduction or query.</p> <p>Can recognise whether or not the signer is answering the key questions in a text.</p>
	<p>Can mention in passing several other places and people, without losing their thread.</p> <p>Can systematically justify their opinions, for example logically, morally and pragmatically.</p> <p>Can effortlessly use stylistic and rhetoric means to effectively develop their contribution.</p>
	<p>Can develop a convincing, logical argument (thesis, justification, exemplification, conclusion).</p> <p>Can emphasise certain aspects of a complex topic.</p> <p>Can structure complex content in a sensible way.</p> <p>Can employ different types of argumentative texts (e.g. an explanatory text outlining arguments for and against something, or a text giving detailed background and exploring an issue in depth).</p> <p>Can treat a very wide range of topics, introducing and concluding each one appropriately.</p> <p>Can effortlessly employ manual and non-manual, lexical and productive cohesive devices to structure the text.</p> <p>Can adapt the linguistic cohesive devices employed appropriately to the internal structure of the text.</p> <p>Can construct the message of a text from general statements to specific details.</p>
	<p>Can formulate an appropriate introduction and conclusion for a text.</p> <p>Can, while concluding, establish a thematic reference back to the introduction.</p> <p>Can organise and formulate content following guiding principles.</p> <p>Can provide recipients who are not present with all the necessary information about the context, so that they can follow what is said.</p> <p>Can group different pieces of information thematically.</p> <p>Can present with images the way an event/organisation is structured.</p> <p>Can use pauses to structure a text (e.g. pausing between different arguments).</p>



Sign text structure	
	Productive
B2	<p>Can understand well the content of a clearly structured, lengthy signed text.</p> <p>Can grasp the recurrent, central theme in a text and follow it without difficulty.</p> <p>Can recognise in a signed text the transitions between the introduction, the main text and the conclusions.</p> <p>Can assess whether the introduction and the conclusion of a text fit together.</p> <p>Can recognise a change of topics in a signed text.</p>
B1+	<p>Can structure content into categories/topics, situate these in the signing space, and then refer to them through indexing.</p> <p>Can structure the text logically, maintaining a clear development.</p> <p>Can deliver all of the contents and components that are expected for the type of text concerned.</p> <p>Can employ a metalanguage, e.g. to orientate the reader by explaining explicitly in the text the order in which they are doing things.</p> <p>Can create appropriate transitions and links between the different sections of the text.</p> <p>Can highlight the most important aspects of a topic.</p> <p>Can employ principles that govern moving from general ideas to presenting details.</p> <p>Can employ rules that concern going from the general to details.</p> <p>Can indicate temporal relationships between different things related in a report.</p> <p>Can briefly explain a term in the course of a text, when and if this is necessary.</p>
	<p>Can structure text content into an introduction, main section and conclusion.</p> <p>Can present content in a sensible order.</p> <p>Can structure a text into a number of thematic sections.</p> <p>Can present clearly the relationships between things by making explicit reference to them.</p> <p>Can point out relevant and interesting details briefly and concisely.</p> <p>Can refer explicitly to what has been said earlier.</p> <p>Can compare the opinions of others and take a position in relation to them.</p> <p>Can relate their own experience to something in the text.</p>
	<p>Can recognise the importance of a statement that is at the centre of the signing space.</p> <p>Can understand references to previously provided information.</p> <p>Can identify connections and relationships between content if these are explicitly referred to in the signed text.</p> <p>Can understand the development of a highly structured signed text.</p> <p>Can recognise means of spatial structuring and use them for understanding a signed text.</p> <p>Can deduce the content of a short text from the context even if local cohesive devices are lacking.</p>

Sign text structure	
	Productive
	<p>Can formulate the aim and objective of a text in the introduction.</p> <p>Can sequence the successive elements of a text in logical order.</p> <p>Can introduce a topic appropriately, then provide the relevant content.</p> <p>Can indicate the most important aspects of a topic in the hierarchical order of their importance.</p> <p>Can employ simple strategies to structure information (e.g. adding comments on the topic).</p> <p>Can use the sign &lt; palm-up &gt; to mark the end of a particular discourse contribution.</p> <p>Can summarise in a text the most important statements in reply to "when", "where", "who", "what", "how" and "why" questions.</p> <p>Can give reasons for their opinions.</p> <p>Can conclude their contribution correctly (hands together).</p>
B1	<p>Can recognise simple ways of structuring in a signed text (e.g., a subject and comments on it).</p>
	<p>Can introduce a topic adequately.</p> <p>Can differentiate the different points in a list.</p> <p>Can formulate simple for-and-against arguments in the form of questions.</p> <p>Can produce a summary on simple topics.</p>
A2	<p>Can find the main points in short everyday texts.</p> <p>Can identify and understand simple hierarchical structures (e.g., families, work) by using buoys in signing space.</p> <p>Can understand simple time sequences expressed through the signing space.</p> <p>Can infer the intention/objective of a signed text from the introduction.</p>
A1	<p>Can grasp the individual points in an enumeration.</p> <p>Can recognise the end of a signed contribution by e.g., the clasped hands.</p>
	No descriptors available

## Setting and perspectives

A key aspect of sign languages is the use of spatial reference. This requires clearly establishing contexts for interpretation by creating a setting. To do so, the three-dimensional signing space is systematically divided. Discourse referents and particular relations must be placed unambiguously within the signing space. Establishing references serves two main functions: it is a means to establish reference relations within sentences (clauses) and it provides a context of interpretation for a text. Sign languages typically clearly introduce the context and setting of a text at the beginning of the interaction or production in order to establish reference points within the three-dimensional signing space. Once established, these reference points remain in place until a new setting is introduced, or an animate referent moves through space. Consistency of spatial relations is therefore essential in order to produce a coherent, unambiguous contribution.

During a contribution, for example in constructed dialogue (reported speech), it may be necessary for the signer to adopt the perspective of a particular referent. Signers can shift between perspectives by leveraging the potential for moving between referential loci (via a body shift or a shoulder shift), or in more reduced forms (e.g. with eye gaze shifts to mark a change in point of view). In all instances, the canonical viewpoint is typically that of the signer. Thus, sign languages and spoken languages use the same privileged viewpoint: namely that of the signer or speaker.

Key concepts operationalised in the receptive scale include the following:

- ▶ ability to envisage signing space and to memorise the relations for the subsequent text;
- ▶ ability to recognise a new setting, change of scene, topic, etc.;
- ▶ comprehension of an action, event or issue that is presented from the perspective of different people or different points of view;
- ▶ ability to follow constructed action (role shifts, shifts of perspectives), constructed dialogue (reported speech), and to recognise the different techniques in doing so, e.g. by body posture, line of vision or other non-manuals;
- ▶ interpretation of manual and non-manual signals and comprehension of setting-related references.

Key concepts operationalised in the productive scale include the following:

- ▶ ability to envisage and plan use of signing space;
- ▶ ability to construct a new setting or indicate a change of scene, topic, etc.;
- ▶ ability to present an action, event or issue from the perspective of different people or different points of view;
- ▶ ability to adopt or change a role (e.g. through body posture, line of vision, depiction);
- ▶ use of non-manual means such as facial expression, posture or eye gaze to indicate different people.

Setting and perspectives	
	Productive
Receptive	
<b>C2</b>	<p>Can present a complex action or event by playing different roles and adopting different perspectives.</p> <p>Can switch between different perspectives.</p> <p>Can create a complex 3-D image including objects in motion.</p>
<b>C1</b>	<p>Can follow a constructed dialogue between several characters without difficulty even if the marking of role changes is reduced e.g., to the direction of vision.</p> <p>Can follow changes of scene, locations or persons during an action.</p> <p>Can easily follow several changes of perspective and role.</p> <p>Can memorise spatial settings established in signing space (e.g., landscape, family, situation) and follow references within the settings without difficulty.</p> <p>Can fully grasp a setting established in the signing space (e.g., landscape, family relations, situation), even if it is only indicated by depicting verbs.</p> <p>Can recognise when the signer is establishing a new scene for reference (a setting) in signing space.</p> <p>Can distinguish between various perspectives (observer/narrator), provided they are clearly marked.</p> <p>Can recognise what the signer says from their own perspective and what they say from another person's perspective.</p> <p>Can, in their interpretation of the text, take account of the perspective of a participant in the action (e.g., that the character does not see everything).</p> <p>Can understand a narrative with several characters when the changes of roles are clearly and slowly marked (e.g., by the position of the upper body and eye gaze).</p>
<b>B2</b>	<p>Can use the signing space correctly while presenting an interaction between more than two people (e.g. family dinner).</p> <p>Can correctly introduce and effect a role shift.</p> <p>Can present a simple action or event from the perspective of a participant.</p> <p>Can present a simple action or event from the perspective of an observer/narrator.</p> <p>Can linguistically correctly construct a new setting when the text requires a new topic or situation to be addressed.</p> <p>Can introduce a setting using just constructed action and depiction.</p> <p>Can present a change of scene, place or person comprehensibly.</p> <p>Can depict the role of a character, e.g. to demonstrate feelings.</p> <p>Can depict a change of character perspective with body posture and/or the direction of vision.</p>

Setting and perspectives	
Receptive	Productive
<p>Can correctly identify objects and persons that have already been introduced on the basis of the direction of the signer's gaze.</p> <p>Can use location markings established at the beginning of the text and understand subsequent references to it, provided these are clearly indicated.</p> <p>Can identify and remember relative positions of persons/objects and their spatial relationships with one another.</p> <p>Can, in spatial descriptions, understand where and how objects are located.</p>	<p>Can construct a setting in the signing space for a text (e.g. landscape, family, situation) in a linguistically correct manner.</p> <p>Can describe correctly the relative positions of entities with respect to each other.</p> <p>Can demonstrate a change of character perspective through an alteration in upper body posture.</p>
<p>Can imagine the surroundings, such as the landscape or room furnishings, from descriptions of shapes.</p> <p>Can, by means of subsequent indexical references, once again identify objects and persons previously situated in the signing space.</p>	<p>Can represent the relative proportions and inter-relationships of e.g. a landscape in signing space.</p> <p>Can envisage and describe ideas spatially.</p> <p>Can develop a statement that maps ideas from near to far, and from small to big.</p> <p>Can create a clear image in the signing space.</p> <p>Can employ facial expressions appropriate to a character in a narrative.</p> <p>Can refer to characters in a narrative by using depiction.</p>
<p><i>No descriptors available</i></p>	<p>Can use body posture to indicate different opinions in relation to an issue (e.g. by contrasting arguments for and against by a posture oriented to the right and to the left respectively).</p> <p>Can adopt a facial expression appropriate to the character, person or object being described.</p> <p>Can describe a person by using constructed action.</p>
<p>Can understand simple constructed action where the signer takes another person's role.</p>	<p>Can consistently maintain the relative sizes and proportions of objects (e.g. when peeling a banana).</p>
<p><i>No descriptors available</i></p>	<p><i>No descriptors available</i></p>

B1

A2

A1

## Language awareness and interpretation

This scale includes descriptors for competences that enable a correct interpretation of perceived acts of communication as well as of their functions. These competences allow the identification of the respective functions of texts (convincing, amusing, persuading, affecting, etc.) to establish expectations of a text, to understand and evaluate the presence of the signer, and to distinguish different levels of communication. The competences also include the comprehension and assessment of stylistic means, connotative meanings and conscious prosodic signals.

Metalinguistic competences allow for evaluative attributions of specific signs and expressions perceived, for example as an aesthetic contribution or a rhetorical reply. They are applied in the interpretation of a signer's productions as, for example, in a text making an appeal or request, or in a formal text, and they are applied in reflections on signing.

Over and above accessing lexical and productive repertoires, these competences encompass the ability to understand different types of signed statements, such as variation in tempo and style that are not part of the lexicon. Also, in contrast to authors of written text, the author of a signed text usually remains visible: videoed sign texts are not alienated from authors, and the conveyed meanings are not detached from the authors unless they use technological techniques (e.g. an avatar). Therefore, the appearance of the signer may be substantially important for the interpretation of a signed text. Indeed, this is a feature that videoed texts share with face-to-face interactions.

Key concepts operationalised in the scale include the following:

- ▶ correct interpretation of conscious prosodic signals as well as non-linguistic (non-verbal) signals conveyed by the signer;
- ▶ identification of the intended communicative act as a whole and assessment of the signer's conformity to appearance;
- ▶ ability to distinguish between intended and unintended, communicative and non-communicative behaviour of the signer, its correct interpretations and reflection;
- ▶ correct interpretation of new classifiers, pauses, handshapes, ready-made signs, etc.;
- ▶ correct interpretation of non-manual means, e.g. facial expression, eye gaze, mouthing including mouth gestures (or not), as elements of constructed action and constructed dialogue;
- ▶ distinction of connotative meaning even if conveyed in a non-explicit way;
- ▶ correct interpretation of the rhetorical or structural function of pauses, metaphors, irony, etc.

Language awareness and interpretation	
<b>C2</b>	<p>Can work out the main points of emphasis in sophisticated texts.</p> <p>Can understand aesthetic signing in the context of use, even if they are not familiar with it.</p> <p>Can interpret abstract poetic signs.</p> <p>Can recognise rhetorical and stylistic devices in a signed text and understand their functions (e.g., repetition, rhyme, metaphor, irony).</p> <p>Can understand signing in which the signer combines different stylistic devices simultaneously (e.g., non-dominant hand indicates a context, whereas dominant hand indicates an action from a different perspective, either being combined with non-manual expressions).<sup>48</sup></p> <p>Can recognise a variation in the word order and describe its rhetorical effect (e.g., emphasis).</p> <p>Can recognise when a signer employs the sustained hold of a sign as a prosodic or rhetorical device.</p>
<b>C1</b>	<p>Can extract key information on an unfamiliar subject from a lengthy signed text.</p> <p>Can decide whether or not a statement made about a text takes account of an implied meaning.</p> <p>Can correctly interpret metalinguistic references within a signed text.</p> <p>Can grasp unknown concepts by exploiting analogies explained in a text</p> <p>Can distinguish between the use of body posture as a means of structuring the text (e.g., to separate arguments for and against) or as a grammatical device (e.g., for relative clauses).</p> <p>Can understand complicated emotional states that the signer expresses non-manually and by constructed action.</p> <p>Can identify and outline content which is expressed in creative images.</p> <p>Can explain creative language games in which the signer uses, e.g. the handshape, as an aesthetic element.</p>

<sup>48</sup>. This is an instance of "body partitioning".

Language awareness and interpretation	
B2	<p>Can understand conveyed information that is implied, but not explicitly stated in a text (e.g., he went skiing, and I'll visit him in hospital).</p> <p>Can follow the main points of a text even when the signer also makes digressions.</p> <p>Can recognise whether a signer is delivering a complex text in a relaxed or a tense way.</p> <p>Can recognise whether the signer produces a text in a specific rhythm and describe the effect of various rhythms.</p> <p>Can give reasons why the signer inserts pauses in a text, e.g., because they make sense as a structural element or because the signer has to reflect.</p> <p>Can understand who has what opinion and how these opinions relate to each other.</p> <p>Can recognise when a signer's personal experiences influence the argumentation and when they do not.</p>
	<p>Can determine whether the signing style used is in keeping with the content.</p> <p>Can decide on the basis of the interlocutor's signs and non-manual cues how certain the signer is about what they are saying (e.g., &lt;undecided&gt; / &lt;uncertain&gt; / &lt;probable&gt;).</p> <p>Can distinguish productive signs with classifier constructions from imitative, iconic signs.</p> <p>Can follow the signs made by an interlocutor even when less use is made of non-manual means.</p> <p>Can describe the effect that the sign speed of a text has on them.</p> <p>Can judge whether a person presents themselves in a way that is in keeping with the context and the type of text concerned (clothing, aura, well-groomed appearance).</p> <p>Can deduce the meaning of unfamiliar signs using comparisons and analogies.</p>
B1	<p>Can understand the sequence of events from the sequence of statements made.</p> <p>Can understand simple "for" and "against" arguments on a particular issue.</p> <p>Can understand what advantages and disadvantages a text mentions on a subject.</p> <p>Can understand the key aspects of conclusions.</p> <p>Can recognise and correctly interpret important elements on the basis of non-manual components used for emphasis (e.g., facial expression, size of movement).</p> <p>Can infer from the classifiers used what general term is being talked about (e.g., "murder" from the handling of a murder weapon).</p> <p>Can distinguish between important and unimportant content in a text.</p>
	<p>Can infer the temporal aspect from the movements of the upper body.</p> <p>Can understand a text so well that they are emotionally affected.</p> <p>Can recognise the non-manual elements employed by a signer to produce tension in the text.</p> <p>Can correctly interpret the &lt;palm-up&gt; sign (e.g., to indicate a pause).</p> <p>Can recognise and understand non-manual markers.</p> <p>Can understand explanations so that they can implement instructions.</p>
A2	<p>Can understand an introduction to a subject and reproduce it in their own words.</p> <p>Can grasp the signer's opinion on a subject.</p> <p>Can relate explanations and examples to one another.</p> <p>Can interpret emotions when the signer communicates these by means of facial expressions.</p>
	<p>Can recognise whether or not they are addressed as the recipient.</p> <p>Can understand the main points of signed texts on everyday topics</p> <p>Can grasp and indicate the differences between things.</p> <p>Can identify identical references even if these are expressed in different linguistic ways, e.g., by a lexical sign or by constructed action.</p> <p>Can recognise unfamiliar signs in the continuous flow and ask what they mean.</p>
A1	<p>Can distinguish between positive and negative attitudes on the basis of non-manual cues (e.g., eyebrows together v. high eyebrows).</p> <p>Can understand the direct acceptance or rejection of requests/demands.</p>



## Presence and effect

The extent of the effect on addressees of one's signing (perlocutionary effects of convincing, amusing, persuading, affecting, etc.) and the specific signs at the user/learner's disposal are the main focus of this scale. There is a focus on the vocabulary and range of structures, including both manual and non-manual elements, and the way the user can exploit them stylistically in order to produce a catchy text. Whether the user wants to demonstrate sophistication, boast or explain, the signer must be aware of their presence.

This includes different ways of presenting a signed statement, such as variation in tempo and style. In contrast to a written text, the author remains visible in sign texts: videoed texts in a sign language are not typically detached from their authors, and neither are the conveyed meanings. Producing a formal sign text, for example, requires an appropriate formal appearance on the part of the signer. Therefore, there is an additional competence in producing signed texts, namely the "competence of appearance" that must be learnt and that includes various aspects of how to successfully produce an appropriate sign text for specific purposes.

Key concepts operationalised in the scale include the following:

- ▶ sophistication and semantic precision in the overall message (up to aesthetic use at C2);
- ▶ conscious use of rhetorical means, register options, pause structure and discourse control;
- ▶ anticipation of the needs of the addressees in discursive productions;
- ▶ use of productive and established lexicon, including ready-made signs, use of depiction where appropriate and effective;
- ▶ expression of specific functions and vocabulary (A levels);
- ▶ behaviour and appearance of the signer (taking account of the visible environment, accessories, etc.).

	Presence and effect
<b>C2</b>	<p>Can be creative, without losing their train of thought.</p> <p>Can use a wide range of different ways to build up suspense and excitement (e.g. constructed action, rhetorical questions, varying rhythm).</p> <p>Can effortlessly and playfully employ handshapes as an aesthetic element, so that creative forms of language emerge.</p> <p>Can present thoughts and feelings in an artistic way by using a selection of signs and depiction, as appropriate.</p>
<b>C1</b>	<p>Can prepare well, so that while signing they do not need to think about content.</p> <p>Appears calm and relaxed when signing, even when a high degree of concentration is required.</p> <p>Can give the characters in a story their own individual linguistic profile (style, tone, register, etc.).</p> <p>Can use language to develop a narrative in such a way that the recipient can become immersed in what is happening in the story.</p> <p>Can alter the pace of signing (from slow to fast) in order to build up suspense.</p> <p>Can cause the recipients to be carried away by enthusiasm.</p> <p>Can employ exaggeration appropriately and effectively.</p>
<b>B2</b>	<p>Can contribute unconventional and original reflections on the topic concerned in a linguistically skilful manner.</p> <p>Can express their imagination and concepts creatively.</p> <p>Can choose from a broad variety of non-manual means to build up suspense and excitement.</p> <p>Can cause an audience to experience strong emotions (e.g. laughing, crying).</p>
<b>B1+</b>	<p>Can describe an event in an exciting way.</p> <p>Can express complicated emotional states through constructed action and gesture.</p> <p>Can make relevant comparisons that help the recipient better grasp the information concerned.</p> <p>Can stimulate/awaken curiosity on the part of the recipient with regard to the ending to a text.</p>
<b>B1+</b>	<p>Can convey a new point of view in a way that makes the recipients think.</p> <p>Can express the feelings of a person who is close to them.</p> <p>Can use body language and facial expression to convey meaning.</p> <p>Can emphasise what is important by using non-manual means and the extent of movements.</p>



	Presence and effect
<b>B1</b>	<p>Can hold the attention of the recipients by employing various means (e.g. rhetorical questions).</p> <p>Can tell a story in a credible way.</p> <p>Can express personal traits of a character.</p>
<b>A2</b>	<p>Can present themselves in a polite and appropriate way.</p> <p>Can state facts in a neutral manner, excluding emotional affectedness.</p> <p>Can convey and stimulate feelings (e.g. joy, sadness).</p>
<b>A1</b>	<p>Can position themselves so that the signing is easily visible to the recipients.</p> <p>Can express emotional states through depiction only (without the need for lexical signs).</p>

## Processing speed

This scale includes competences that describe the ease or effort in comprehending a sign language. The processing speed may depend on familiar versus unfamiliar signs, on the degree of grammatical complexity or on the familiarity with fingerspelling, to give examples. The scale therefore captures how different competences of other scales can be used, how automatised competences already are and how many resources must be allocated in interpretation or are available for further processing of messages. The individual's experience of challenging communication, depending on the language used, relates to this. Processing speed indicates the level of training of a recipient and how well they can grasp and understand conveyed information.

Key concepts operationalised in the scale include the following:

- ▶ strain of comprehending texts and expressions of differing length, explicitness and complexity;
- ▶ ability to assess the signing speed, regularity and rhythm of others and to monitor oneself;
- ▶ ability to capture actions that are produced with different articulators simultaneously;
- ▶ ability to follow actions with several characters and complex settings;
- ▶ ability to follow messages or texts even if the transitions between the different parts of the text are smoothly signed;
- ▶ ability to understand fluently produced fingerspelling;
- ▶ ability to follow the content despite assimilations, interruptions, gaps, pauses, production errors or unclear signing.

	Processing speed
<b>C2</b>	<p>Can follow texts that are enacted in parallel (e.g., with two signers).</p> <p>Can keep track of who is to take the next turn when several signers are involved, for example, in a panel discussion, by monitoring requests for a turn.</p> <p>Can list the various aspects mentioned in a text even if the signer mentions them quickly one after the other.</p> <p>Can easily understand fluently fingerspelled signs, even if they do not see every letter but perhaps only ergonomic word shapes.</p>
<b>C1</b>	<p>Can follow a long fluidly signed text.</p> <p>Can follow complicated reports without difficulty.</p> <p>Can easily understand complex actions and relationships between objects/persons/places that are described using various classifier constructions.</p> <p>Can follow how people react to one another's communication behaviour even when several signers are involved, for example in a panel discussion.</p> <p>Can understand a signed text even if the signer uses only one hand.</p> <p>Can follow a text even when it contains several unknown signs.</p> <p>Can understand a text even when certain signs or sentences are incomplete or not visible.</p> <p>Can spot signing errors and correct them for themselves without query.</p>

	Processing speed
B2	Can follow unexpected news or video messages without preparation.
	Can easily understand descriptions of actions even if the signer uses different classifier constructions (e.g., manipulators, substitutors).
	Can follow even unexpected twists in a text.
	Can understand rhythmically presented movement sequences and actions, and recognise their aesthetic quality.
B1	Can follow a long and slowly signed text, provided it is shown several times.
	Can follow the narration of a well-known story without difficulty.
	Can recognise and imitate various handshapes, even when the signer uses them in rapid succession.
	Can spot signing errors and ask for more precision or clarification.
A2	Can follow a longer, fluidly signed text, provided it is repeated.
	Can understand a relatively long text in one go, provided it is signed slowly.
	Can understand designations (name, fingerspelled items, functions) for persons in a text and subsequent reference to them.
	Can follow the interlocutor's signs, provided they are clearly visible.
A2	Can understand fluent fingerspelling of letters, provided the producer repeats it, if necessary.
A1	Can understand short, slowly and clearly signed texts in one go.

## Signing fluency

This scale is a direct equivalent of the scale for fluency under communicative language competences. Key concepts operationalised in the scale include the following:

- ▶ the pace, regularity and rhythm of signing;
- ▶ ability to pause where appropriate;
- ▶ ability to articulate simultaneous constructions with different articulators;
- ▶ ability to articulate signs one after another with smooth transitions and without distortion;
- ▶ ability to fingerspell in a fluid sequence to express words for unknown signs (A levels) or context-dependent emphasis (B level and beyond), or as a means of bilingual contact signing (all levels).

	Signing fluency
C2	<i>No descriptors available; see C1</i>
C1	Can sign rapidly in a steady rhythm.
	Can sign a longer text fluently and rhythmically.
	Can employ an extended hold of a sign (hold) as a rhetorical or prosodic feature.
B2	Can sign at a fluent pace, even though some pauses for planning are still necessary.
	Can relate fluently in a sign language a story that they know.
	Can hold a sign with one hand in order to demonstrate something static (hold), while simultaneously using the other hand to continue signing. <sup>49</sup>
	Can sign at a comfortable pace, without needing to think about the individual signs.
B2	Can use pauses for effect at appropriate points.
	Can rhythmically represent the stages of a movement or activity (e.g. leaves falling down, hail).
	Can fingerspell fluently, connecting or blending elements smoothly.

<sup>49</sup>. These constructions are also known as "fragment buoys".

	<b>Signing fluency</b>
<b>B1</b>	Can sign a fluent transition between related points.
	Can sign a short text rhythmically. Can employ sequences of handshapes and/or the handshapes for fingerspelling fluently.
<b>A2</b>	Can sign a simple sentence rhythmically.
	Can indicate the end of a sentence clearly by leaving a pause.
<b>A1</b>	<i>No descriptors available</i>