



Language Support for Migrants *A Council of Europe Toolkit*

Tool 20 - Setting objectives for language support of migrants who are beginners in the new language

Aim: To offer guidance on setting language learning objectives for migrants who are beginners or have elementary level skills in the language of the host country.

When little time is available to help people learn a language there is a risk that one will try to do too much in each language support session. But language learning takes time, so it is better to focus on one or two modest objectives that will lead to realistic progress being made. It is important to remember the following points when taking a step-by-step approach of this kind.

- **Set one or more realistic learning objectives for each session.** Learners need to understand these objectives and then decide for themselves whether they have achieved them. An example might be *'learn how to invite someone to do something with you, and to accept or decline an invitation of this kind'*.

The scenarios in the toolkit are arranged as a series of communicative events (see Tool 54 – *Introduction to using scenarios in language support for migrants*). Learning how to use the target language successfully in receptive and/or productive mode in any of these kinds of situation can serve as meaningful objectives for a language support session.

- **Objectives need to be limited in terms of vocabulary and/or grammar.** For example, if in a scenario like daily shopping the aim is to learn the names of fruit and vegetables, focus only on the fruit and vegetables that are most commonly available locally. Or, where grammar is concerned, focus only on the grammar needed for the purpose, for instance asking someone for something one wants to buy in a shop or market.
- For guidance, you can refer to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) or other resources which suggest general aims that enable you to set specific limited objectives. Key CEFR descriptors for levels A1 and A2 as well as some for Pre-A1, are provided in the Appendix. For learners with a low level of literacy it may also be useful to refer to the Council of Europe's LASLLIAM Reference guide¹. Another resource is the set of descriptors below for conversation (spoken interaction) at level A1.1² (the intermediate level between beginner and A1).

¹ Reference guide on Literacy and Second Language Learning for the Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants (LASLLIAM) - <https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/-/new-isbn-publication-6-reference-guide-literacy-and-second-language-for-the-linguistic-integration-of-adult-migrants-laslliam->

² English version adapted from Beacco J.C. et al (2006) *Les référentiels - Niveau A1.1 - Pour le français*.

At A1.1. the learner can participate in interaction involving a few successive exchanges. At this level, successful communication depends on repetition at a slow, teacher-like speed, and/or reformulation by native speakers who are supportive and are accustomed to cross-linguistic communication.

Exchanges should ideally be formulated in an accessible way and relate to familiar situations, learners' immediate needs, concrete objects, or exchanging simple information such as the learner's name, age, country/city of origin, first language, place of residence, their family, the people they meet, a given profession and/or professional skills, the place of work or study, the date of arrival or the duration of the stay, visible items for sale and so on. **If the exchanges have these characteristics, a speaker at this level can:**

- Use simple expressions for greeting people and saying goodbye
- Answer and ask certain simple questions
- Understand and accept or refuse to follow simple standard instructions
- Ask someone (or be asked) about their recent news and respond appropriately
- Ask someone else for (or give someone) simple items or services using language related to numbers, money, the time etc.

Bear in mind that language competences do not all have to be taught and acquired at the same level. For example, the priority for recently arrived migrants is to be able to manage simple conversations and to read every-day written items such as labels and signs like *entry, exit, push, pull, not permitted* etc. These are similar to competences at A1, but to start with the other language competences can be limited to those specified for A1.1.

APPENDIX**REFERENCE LEVELS FOR LANGUAGE SUPPORT FROM THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK³**

| PRE-A1 | DESCRIPTORS |
|--------------------|--|
| Oral comprehension | <p>Can understand short, very simple questions and statements, provided they are delivered slowly and clearly and accompanied by visuals or manual gestures to support understanding and repeated if necessary.</p> <p>Can recognise everyday familiar words/signs, provided they are delivered clearly and slowly in a clearly defined, familiar everyday context.</p> <p>Can recognise numbers, prices, dates and days of the week, provided they are delivered slowly and clearly in a defined, familiar everyday context</p> |
| Oral interaction | Can ask and answer questions about themselves and daily routines, using short, formulaic expressions and relying on gestures to reinforce the information. |

| A1 | DESCRIPTORS |
|--------------------|---|
| Global | Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help. |
| Oral comprehension | <p>Can follow language which is very slow and carefully articulated, with long pauses for them to assimilate meaning.</p> <p>Can recognise concrete information (e.g. places and times) on familiar topics encountered in everyday life, provided it is delivered slowly and clearly</p> |
| Oral interaction | Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition at a slower rate, rephrasing and repair. Can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics. |
| Mediation | Can use simple words/signs and non-verbal signals to show interest in an idea. Can convey simple, predictable information of immediate interest given in short, simple signs and notices, posters and programmes. |

³ Council of Europe (2020) *The Common European Framework for Languages – Companion Volume* <https://rm.coe.int/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-learning-teaching/16809ea0d4>

| A2 | DESCRIPTORS |
|--------------------|---|
| Global | Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of their background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need. |
| Oral comprehension | <p>Can understand enough to be able to meet needs of a concrete type, provided people articulate clearly and slowly.</p> <p>Can understand phrases and expressions related to areas of most immediate priority (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment), provided people articulate clearly and slowly</p> |
| Oral interaction | <p>Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary. Can manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations.</p> <p>Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with work and free time. Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of their own accord.</p> |
| Mediation | <p>Can play a supportive role in interaction, provided other participants speak/sign slowly and that one or more of the participants helps them to contribute and to express their suggestions. Can convey relevant information contained in clearly structured, short, simple, informational texts, provided the texts concern concrete, familiar subjects and are formulated in simple everyday language.</p> <p>Can use simple words/signs to ask someone to explain something. Can recognise when difficulties occur and indicate in simple language the apparent nature of a problem. Can convey the main point(s) involved in short, simple conversations or texts on everyday subjects of immediate interest, provided these are expressed clearly in simple language.</p> |

(From the *Common European Framework for Languages Companion Volume*, pages 48, 72, 92, 175)