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Common European Framework of Reference for Languages:
Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR) – a synopsis

1. Introduction

The Council of Europe is the continent's oldest intergovernmental organisation, founded in 1949, with its permanent headquarters in Strasbourg, France. Today it serves 800 million people in 46 member states, with five observers (Canada, Japan, the Holy See, Mexico, and the United States).

The main aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members. It was created to protect human rights and the rule of law in all member states, to consolidate democratic stability in Europe by backing political, legal and constitutional reforms undertaken nationally, regionally and locally, to seek solutions to social problems such as intolerance, discrimination against minorities, human cloning, drugs, terrorism, corruption and organised crime; to promote and develop a European cultural identity, with special emphasis on education; to promote social cohesion and social rights.

The Council of Europe has been active in the area of languages for over forty years now. Its programmes are co-coordinated by two complementary bodies: the Language Policy Division in Strasbourg, France, and the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz, Austria. The Division in Strasbourg focuses on instruments and initiatives for the development and analysis of language education policy for the countries which have ratified the European Cultural Convention (for all languages – mother tongue/first language as well as foreign, second, regional or minority languages), and provides a forum for debate on policy development. The Centre in Graz (ECML) has as its mission the implementation of language policies, including support for the policy instruments developed in Strasbourg, and the promotion of innovative approaches. Its strategic objectives include the practice of modern language learning and teaching and the training of multipliers.

2. Language education policy aims and principles

The Council of Europe language education policies aim to promote:

- PLURILINGUALISM: all are entitled to develop a degree of communicative ability in a number of languages over their lifetime in accordance with their needs;

- LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY: Europe is multilingual and all its languages are equally valuable modes of communication and expressions of identity; the right to use and to learn one's language(s) is protected in Council of Europe Conventions;

- MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING: the opportunity to learn other languages is an essential condition for intercultural communication and acceptance of cultural differences;

- DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP: participation in democratic and social processes in multilingual societies is facilitated by the plurilingual competence of individuals;

- SOCIAL COHESION: equality of opportunity for personal development, education, employment, mobility, access to information and cultural enrichment depends on access to language learning throughout life;

The following guiding principles underlay the CoE language education policy:

- Language learning is for *all*: opportunities for developing their plurilingual repertoire is a necessity for all citizens in contemporary Europe;

- Language learning is for the *learner*: it should be based on worthwhile, realistic objectives reflecting needs, interests, motivation, abilities;

- Language learning is for *intercultural communication*: it is crucial for ensuring successful interaction across linguistic and cultural boundaries and developing openness to the plurilingual repertoire of others;

- Language learning is for *life*: it should develop learner responsibility and the independence necessary to respond to the challenges of lifelong language learning;

- Language teaching is *co-ordinated*: it should be planned as a whole, covering the specification of objectives, the use of teaching/learning materials and methods, the assessment of learner achievement, and the development of appropriate convergences between all languages that learners have in their repertoire or wish to add to it;

- Language teaching is *coherent and transparent*: policy makers, curriculum designers, textbook authors, examination bodies, teacher trainers, teachers and learners need to share the same aims, objectives and assessment criteria;

- Language learning and teaching are *dynamic* lifelong processes, responding to experience as well as changing conditions and use.

3. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR)

The CEFR was developed by a Council of Europe international working party between 1993 and 1996 with a view to promote transparency and coherence in language learning and teaching in Europe. After a pilot scheme, it was officially published in 2001, the European Year of Languages and has since been translated into 34 languages (as by May 2006).

It includes a **descriptive scheme of language use and learning** and **scales of proficiency** for the different parameters of this scheme.

The **comprehensive descriptive scheme** is a tool for reflecting on what is involved not only **in language use**, but also **in language learning and teaching**. The Framework provides a **common basis and a common language** for the **elaboration of syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, textbooks, teacher training programmes, and for relating examinations to one another**. It allows the different partners involved in planning and delivering language provision and in assessing language progress and proficiency, to co-ordinate and situate their efforts.

The description is based on an **action-oriented approach** to language learning and use. It provides six ascending levels of proficiency with specific outcomes – a compendium of descriptors of language proficiency (proficiency implying not only the knowledge of a language, but also the degree of skill in using it). These descriptors were developed scientifically and take the form of a descriptor bank that can be added to, updated and edited to meet present and future needs.

It is in effect a common reference tool across languages – the Framework is non-language specific – and is widely used in developing coherence in provision across different languages. It is also used in policy making as a means of ensuring coherence and transparency through the different sectors or stages in language education. Many countries have used the opportunity of the appearance of the Framework to stimulate curriculum and examination reforms in different educational sectors.

A number of projects are currently describing the proficiency levels for national or regional languages using the CEFR approach.

The CEFR is available on www.coe.int/portfolio (click on 'Documentation'/ Supporting Documents).

II. Content

Chapter 1 defines the <u>aims, objectives and functions</u> of the proposed Framework in the light of the overall language policy of the Council of Europe and in particular the promotion of <u>plurilingualism</u> in response to European linguistic and cultural diversity. It then sets out the <u>criteria</u> which the Framework should satisfy.

Chapter 2 explains the <u>approach</u> adopted. The descriptive scheme is based on an analysis of language use in terms of the <u>strategies</u> used by learners to activate <u>general</u> and <u>communicative competences</u> in order to carry out the <u>activities</u> and <u>processes</u> involved in the <u>production</u> and <u>reception</u> of <u>texts</u> and the construction of discourse dealing with particular <u>themes</u>, which enable them to fulfill the <u>tasks</u> facing them under the given <u>conditions and constraints</u> in the <u>situations</u> which arise in the various <u>domains</u> of social existence. The words underlined designate the parameters for the description of language use and the user/learner's ability to use language.

Chapter 3 introduces the <u>common reference levels</u>. Progress in language learning with regard to the parameters of the descriptive scheme can be calibrated in terms of a <u>flexible series of levels of attainment</u> defined by appropriate descriptors. This apparatus should be rich enough to accommodate the full range of learner needs and thus the objectives pursued by different providers, or required of candidates for language qualifications.

Chapter 4 establishes in some (but not exhaustive or definitive) detail the categories (scaled where possible) needed for the description of <u>language use and the language user/learner</u> according to the parameters identified, covering in turn: the domains and situations providing the context for language use; the themes, tasks and purposes of communication; communicative activities, strategies and processes; and text; especially in relation to activities and media.

Chapter 5 categorises in detail the user/learner's general and communicative <u>competences, scaled where possible.</u>

Chapter 6 considers the <u>processes of language learning and teaching</u>, dealing with the relation between acquisition and learning and with the nature and development of plurilingual competence, as well as with methodological options of a general or more specific kind, in relation to the categories set out in Chapters 3 & 4.

Chapter 7 examines in greater detail the role of <u>tasks</u> in language learning and teaching.

Chapter 8 is concerned with the implications of <u>linguistic diversification</u> for <u>curriculum design</u> and considers such issues as: plurilingualism and pluriculturalism; differentiated learning objectives; principles of curriculum design; curricular scenarios; life-long language learning; modularity and partial competences.

Chapter 9 discusses the various purposes of <u>assessment</u> and corresponding assessment types, in the light of the need to reconcile the competing criteria of comprehensiveness, precision and operational feasibility.

III. Language Use/Learning and Language User/Learner – the Descriptive Scheme of the CEFR

0. Any form of language use/learning could be described as follows:

*Language use, embracing language learning, comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of **competences**, both **general** and in particular **communicative language competences**. They draw on the competences at their disposal in various contexts under various conditions and under various constraints to engage in **language activities** involving **language processes** to produce and/or receive **texts** in relation to **themes** in specific **domains**, activating those **strategies** which seem most appropriate for carrying out the **tasks** to be accomplished. The monitoring of these actions by the participants leads to the reinforcement or modifications of their competences.*

1. Language use/learning = performing situationally contexted tasks related to texts

2. Ability to use/learn language is based on the following Competences:
   - General competences of a language user/learner
     - Knowledge (savoir)
     - Skills and know-how (savoir-faire)
     - Existential competence (savoir-être)
     - Ability to learn (savoir-apprendre)

   - Communicative language competences of a language user/learner
     - Linguistic
     - Pragmatic
     - Sociolinguistic
     - Sociocultural

3. Based on these competences language user/learner applies skills and strategies suitable to perform tasks requiring to engage in the following language activities:
   - Reception
   - Production
   - Interaction
   - Mediation

4. These activities happen in certain domains, e.g.:
   - Personal

- Public
- Occupational
- Educational

5. Language use/learning may be further determined by such parameters as:
- Situational context
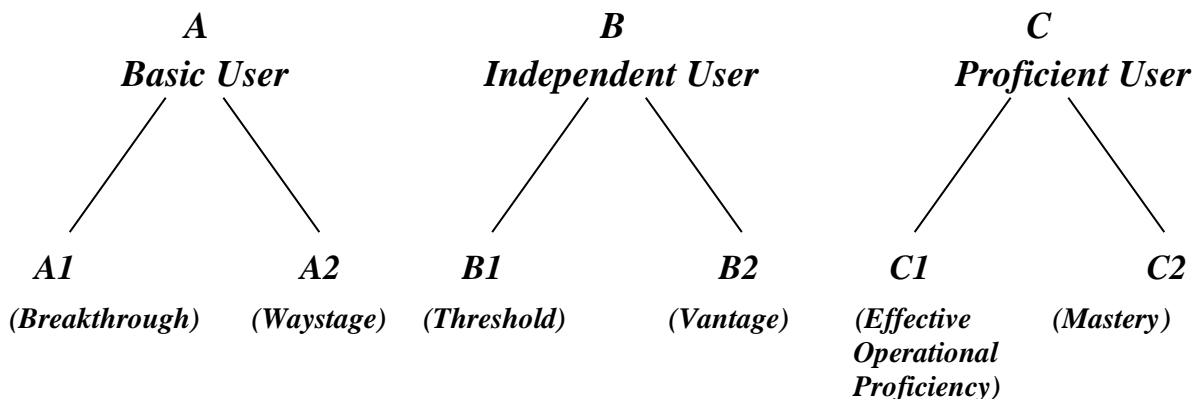- Text type and theme
- Conditions and constraints

IV. Common Reference Levels of Language Proficiency

They were drawn up on the basis of results of a Swiss National Science Research Council project which took place between 1993 and 1996. This project was undertaken for the CoE with a view to develop scales of proficiency for the different parameters of the descriptive scheme in the CEFR.

The starting point of the project was a detailed analysis of 41 scales of language proficiency available in the international public domain or obtainable through the CoE contacts in 1993. There was no particular level as a starting point.

The 'can do' descriptors were selected from the internationally available scales according to the categories of description used in the CEFR. They were then scaled through a combination of intuitive, qualitative and quantitative methods. In the intuitive phase, this material was edited, new descriptors were formulated, and the set discussed by experts. Next a variety of qualitative methods were used to check that teachers could relate to the descriptive categories selected, and that descriptors actually described the categories they were intended to describe. Finally, the best descriptors were scaled using quantitative methods (Rasch Model).

The scales are composed of six ascending proficiency levels couched in terms of outcomes. The number of levels was determined in order to be adequate to show progression in different sectors, whilst allowing for reasonably consistent distinctions to be made. However, a 'hypertext' branching approach is proposed to define finer levels and categories to suit local needs and yet still relate back to a common system.

A	*B*	*C*
Basic User	*Independent User*	*Proficient User*

A1	*A2*	*B1*	*B2*	*C1*	*C2*
(Breakthrough)	*(Waystage)*	*(Threshold)*	*(Vantage)*	*(Effective Operational Proficiency)*	*(Mastery)*

1. Common Reference Levels – Global scale

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

2. Common Reference Levels – Self-assessment grid

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

3. Scales of illustrative descriptors

Developing language competence is described in the illustrative scales mainly along two broad dimensions: the **quantity** dimension (the number of tasks persons can perform successfully by language use, in what number of contexts, in relation to what number of themes, domains etc.) and a **quality** dimension (how effectively and efficiently the persons can achieve their goals through language use. To illustrate the interrelationships between the CEFR scales two branches of the hierarchy are presented below, the first referring to the quantity dimension and the second to the quality dimension.

The quantity dimension branches out from overall language proficiency into "Communicative Activities". Four main types of activities are distinguished: Reception, Production, Interaction, and Mediation. In Diagram 1 the Interaction branch is worked out in more detail. Similar branching can be derived from the CEFR for the other three types of activities. Within Interaction a spoken and a written branch are distinguished. Finally within the spoken branch several contexts of language use are presented. For each of the boxes in the diagram descriptive scales are available in the CEFR.
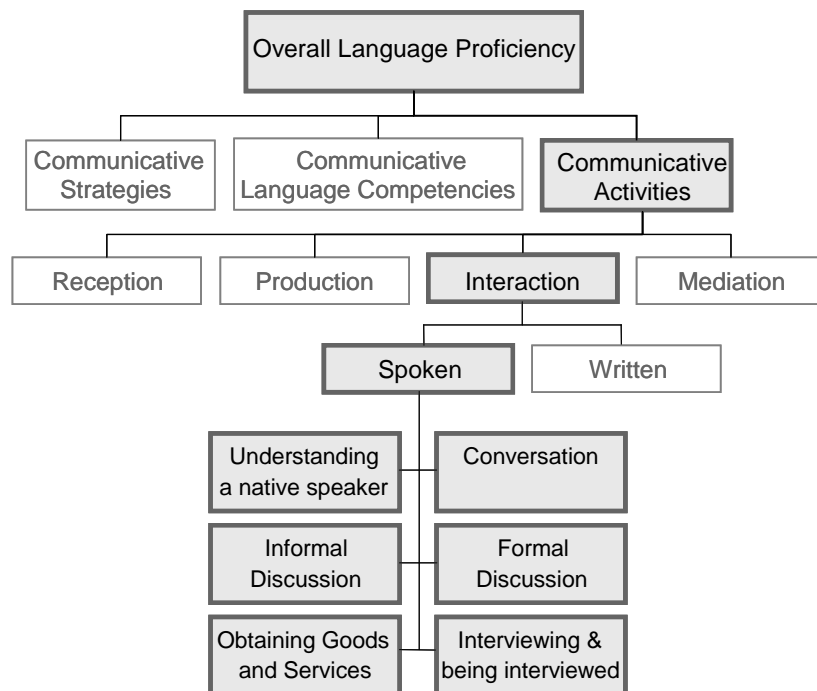
Diagram 1: The quantity dimension

Example:

OVERALL SPOKEN INTERACTION

C2	*Has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative levels of meaning. Can convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of modification devices. Can backtrack and restructure around a difficulty so smoothly the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.*
C1	*Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions. There is little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies; only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.*
B2	*Can use the language fluently, accurately and effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational or leisure topics, marking clearly the relationships between ideas. Can communicate spontaneously with good grammatical control without much sign of having to restrict what he/she wants to say, adopting a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances.*
	Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction, and sustained relationships with native speakers quite possible without imposing strain on either party. Can highlight the personal significance of events and experiences, account for and sustain views clearly by providing relevant explanations and arguments.
B1	*Can communicate with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to his/her interests and professional field. Can exchange, check and confirm information, deal with less routine situations and explain why something is a problem. Can express thoughts on more abstract, cultural topics such as films, books, music etc.*
	Can exploit a wide range of simple language to deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling. Can enter unprepared into conversation of familiar topics, express personal opinions and exchange information on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).
A2	*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.*
	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 his/her own accord.
A1	*Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition at a slower rate of speech, 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.*

The quality dimension also branches out from overall language proficiency (Diagram 2), but into "Communicative language competences". Three main constituents of Communicative language competences are distinguished: Linguistic, Sociolinguistic and Pragmatic. The linguistic competences are important in achieving efficiency and effectiveness in language use. For linguistic competence two factors are distinguished: range and control and within each of these two factors several aspects are distinguished. For each box in the diagram descriptive scales are offered in the CEFR.
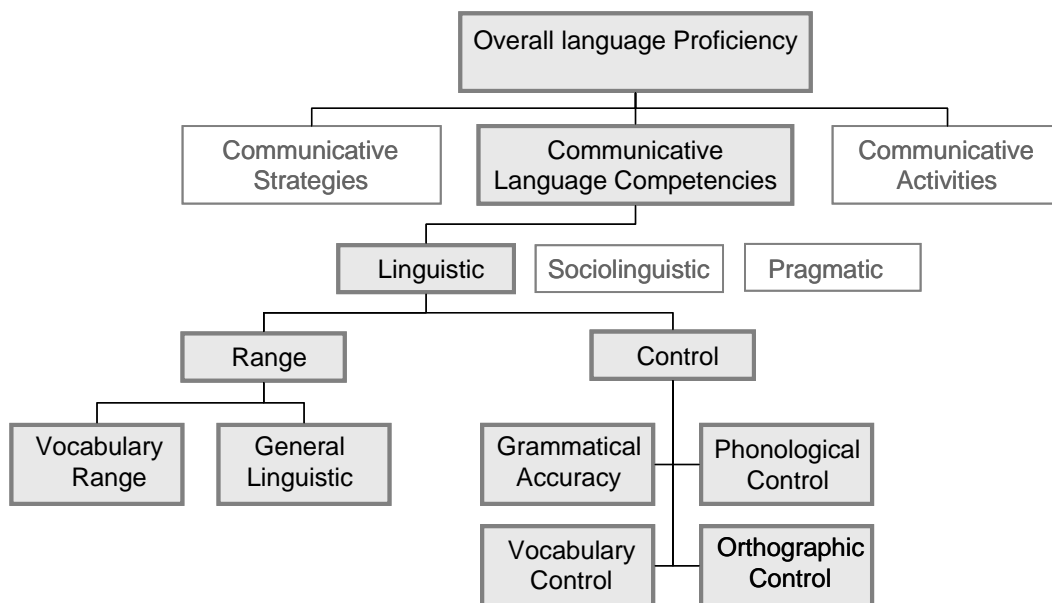
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                        ┌──────────────────────────┐
                        │ Overall language Proficiency │
                        └──────────────────────────┘
         ┌────────────────────┬──────────────────────┬─────────────────────┐
┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
│  Communicative   │  │    Communicative     │  │  Communicative   │
│   Strategies     │  │ Language Competencies│  │    Activities    │
└──────────────────┘  └──────────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘
              ┌──────────────┬──────────────────┐
       ┌────────────┐  ┌────────────────┐  ┌────────────┐
       │ Linguistic │  │ Sociolinguistic│  │  Pragmatic │
       └────────────┘  └────────────────┘  └────────────┘
       ┌────────────────────────────┐
 ┌──────────┐              ┌──────────┐
 │  Range   │              │ Control  │
 └──────────┘              └──────────┘
  ┌──────────┐  ┌──────────┐   ┌────────────┐  ┌────────────┐
  │Vocabulary│  │ General  │   │Grammatical │  │Phonological│
  │  Range   │  │Linguistic│   │  Accuracy  │  │  Control   │
  └──────────┘  └──────────┘   └────────────┘  └────────────┘
                               ┌────────────┐  ┌────────────┐
                               │ Vocabulary │  │Orthographic│
                               │  Control   │  │  Control   │
                               └────────────┘  └────────────┘
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Diagram 2: The quality dimension

Example:

GENERAL LINGUISTIC RANGE

C2	*Can exploit a comprehensive and reliable mastery of a very wide range of language to formulate thoughts precisely, give emphasis, differentiate and eliminate ambiguity. No signs of having to restrict what he/she wants to say.*
C1	*Can select an appropriate formulation from a broad range of language to express him/herself clearly, without having to restrict what he/she wants to say.*
B2	*Can express him/herself clearly and without much sign of having to restrict what he/she wants to say.*
	Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so.
	Has a sufficient range of language to describe unpredictable situations, explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision and express thoughts on abstract or cultural topics such as music and films.
B1	*Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times.*
A2	*Has a repertoire of basic language, which enables him/her to deal with everyday situations with predictable content, though he/she will generally have to compromise the message and search for words.*
	Can produce brief everyday expressions in order to satisfy simple needs of a concrete type: personal details, daily routines, wants and needs, requests for information. Can use basic sentence patterns and communicate with memorised phrases, groups of a few words and formulae about themselves and other people, what they do, places, possessions etc.. *Has a limited repertoire of short memorised phrases covering predictable survival situations; frequent breakdowns and misunderstandings occur in non-routine situations.*
A1	*Has a very basic range of simple expressions about personal details and needs of a concrete type.*

V. Relating examinations to the CEFR levels

The growing acceptance of the standards offered by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages has created a situation in which public bodies, examination institutes, language schools and university departments concerned with the teaching and testing of languages are increasingly interested in relating their curricula and examinations to the Common Reference Levels. A problem that arises in this regard is the question of assuring a consistent interpretation of the levels in different contexts. A CoE Manual, published for

piloting in September 2003, envisages the process of linking an examination to the CEFR in three stages:

- Specification: define the coverage of the examination in categories of the CEFR;
- Standardisation: ensure a consistent interpretation of the Common Reference Levels, using illustrative test items and samples of performances already calibrated to the CEFR elsewhere;
- Empirical Validation: check that the results produced by the examination relate to the levels of the CEFR in the way foreseen.

The general aims of the Manual project are to improve the quality of language education and to achieve transparency and comparability in language assessment. The specific objective is to provide reference material, tools and procedures for relating language examinations to the CEFR and thus to each other.

The expected results (outputs) are:

- sets of reference material for different languages (CEFR benchmarked test items and performance samples);
- case study reports from the piloting phase, with examples of good practice;
- a manual for relating language examinations to the CEFR;
- a reference supplement to the Manual.

In 2002, an authoring group of experts in the field of language assessment has been nominated to draft, revise, and deliver the pilot version of the Manual. An initial set of reference material already calibrated to the CEFR has been made available (CD-ROM + DVD) for the piloting. Several international benchmarking events are under way to produce further CEFR calibrated reference material for a variety of languages. A range of language examining bodies and institutions from different CoE member countries and diversified educational contexts have been approached to participate in the pilot phase. They are asked to provide feedback from the piloting and to prepare full scale case study reports for selection of examples of good practice.

As by now (May 2006), 40 institutions from 20 countries registered for the pilot phase of the Manual. Their work is supported by a Reference Supplement containing quantitative and qualitative considerations in relating certificates and diplomas to the CEFR and presenting different approaches to standard setting (its first draft is already available on the web pages of the Language Policy Division) – as well as by a growing set of multilingual reference materials accompanying the preliminary draft of the Manual: CD-ROMs with calibrated illustrative test items for Listening and Reading and calibrated samples of written performances, and DVDs/videos with calibrated illustrative samples of spoken performances. The final version of the Manual is planned to be published as a CoE document in 2008.

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