

As part of managing language diversity in Europe, the Council of Europe (CoE) has since 2001 initiated the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, and the European Language Portfolio. The latter is designed to enable language learners to record and reflect on their plurilingual and pluricultural experiences. In this paper, authors Peter Broeder and Rita Sorce summarise the content and the practical implementation of a Language Portfolio for Higher Education (LPHO) in The Netherlands. The LPHO follows the CoE in comprising a language passport, a language biography, and a dossier. Together, the two instruments facilitate the comparison of the language knowledge of individuals and groups across a variety of learning contexts.



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Skills and Levels in Europe - managing diversity in language education

Peter Broeder & Rita Sorce



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Peter Broeder works at Tilburg University, the Netherlands. He has published widely on issues of language acquisition and multilingualism. His research focus is on the role of self-regulation in life-long learning and its (digital) implementation in educational practice. For primary education he has developed and implemented competence-based language portfolios, accredited by the Council of Europe (Aarts & Broeder 2005). E-mail: peter@broeder.com
Maria Rita Sorce teaches at the Language Centre of Tilburg University. Since 1989 she has worked with the Common European Framework of Reference and the Language Portfolio for Higher Education (Sorce & Broeder 2005). She has also written a *Basisgrammatica Italiaans* and *Quadro italiano*. E-mail: r.sorce@uvt.nl



Skills and Levels in Europe

- managing diversity in language education



Peter Broeder & Rita Sorce

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Abstract

As part of managing language diversity in Europe, the Council of Europe (CoE) has since 2001 initiated two influential instruments in the field of language learning, language teaching, and language testing. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) consists of two parts: a Descriptive Scheme for reflecting on what is involved in language learning and teaching; and a matching Common Reference Level system, which consists of scales of 'can-do' descriptors of language proficiency levels. The CEFR distinguishes between a proficient user, an independent user, and a basic user. Each of these is further subdivided into two levels, resulting in six levels of language proficiency for reading, listening, spoken production, spoken interaction, and writing, respectively. The second instrument, the European Language Portfolio (ELP), is to enable language learners to record and reflect on their plurilingual and pluricultural experiences.

In this paper, the authors summarise the content and the practical implementation of a Language Portfolio for Higher Education (LPHO) in The Netherlands. The LPHO follows the CoE in comprising a language passport, a language biography, and a dossier. The language passport is a summary description, regularly updated, of the linguistic and intercultural experiences of the owner. The language biography facilitates the learner's involvement in planning, reflecting upon and assessing their own learning process and progress, and contains goal-setting and self-assessment checklists. The dossier offers the language user/learner the opportunity to select materials to document and illustrate achievements or experiences recorded in the language biography or passport. Together, the two instruments facilitate the comparison of the language knowledge of individuals and groups in a variety of learning contexts.

Isishwankathelo

Nje ngenxalenye yokusingatha umba wokwahlukana kweelwimi eYurophu, ikhansela yaseYurophu (CoE) ithe ukususela ngomnyaka ka 2001 yasungula ngezixhobo ezibini ezinefuthe kwicandelo lezokufunda ulwimi, lezokufundisa ulwimi kunye nelezokuvavanya ulwimi. ICommon European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) intlu mbini: Icebo elicacisayo ekuqwalaseleni okubandakanyekayo ekufundweni kolwimi nasekulifundiseni; kwakunye nenkqubo efanayo *eyiCommon Reference Level*, equlathe izikali ezingezinto ezinokwenzeka ezizichazi zamanqanaba obuchule ekuthetheni ulwimi. ICEFR ibonakalisa umahluko phakathi komntu olusebenzisa ngokuphuhlileyo, nokwaziyo ukuzisebenzisela kunye nokumgangatho wabaqalayo ekusebenziseni ulwimi. Into nganye kwezi ithi yahlulwe ibe kumanqanaba amabini, athi akhokhelele kumanqanaba amathandathu obuchule bolwimi ekulufundeni, ekuluphulaphuleni, ekuveliseni intetho, ekudaleni inkcoko nasekubhaleni, ngokushiyana kwazo. Kwisixhobo sesibini iinjongo ze-European Language Portfolio (ELP), kukwenza abafundi

bolwimi babe nako ukurekhodisha iinkcukacha ngolwimi kwaye babe nako ukuphonononga amava ngeenkukacha-ngosetyenziso ngolwimi kunye neenkukacha-ngenkubeko yabo.

Kweli phepha ababhali bashwankathela umxholo ndawonye nendlela ephathekayo yokwenza okutshiwo yiLanguage Portfolio yeMfundo Ephakamileyo (LPHO) eHolandi. ILPHO ilandela iCoE ekubandakanyeni uxibelelwano-lulwimi, imbali ngolwimi kunye neenkukacha ngolwimi. Imvumelwano ngolwimi sisishwankatheli esichazayo, esihlaziywa amatyeli ngamatyeli, ukunika ingqwalasela kumava ezolwimi nenkcubeko ezingafaniyo zomnikazi wolwimi olo. Imbali ngolwimi inceda ukubandakanyeka komfundi ekucwangciseni, ukuphonononga nasekuvavanyeni inkqubo yokufunda kwakhe kwakunye nenkqubela phambili equka ukuziqulunkqela iziphumo kunye noluhlu lwezinto emazijongwe xa ubani ezivavanya ngokwakho. Inkcukacha ngolwimi (dossier) inikeza umsebenzisi/umfundi wolwimi olo ithuba lokukhetha izixhobo zokuthatha iinkcukacha kwaye zibonakalise okufumeneyo okanye okushicileleyo kwimbali yolwimi lakhe okanye ithi ibonakalise unxibelelwano-ngolwimi (passport). Ezi zixhobo zibini zithi zinceda ukuthelekisa ulwazi ngolwimi lomntu ngamnye kunye neqela kwizinto ezahlukaneyo ezimalunga nokufunda.

Opsomming

As deel van die bestuur van taaldiversiteit in Europa, het die Europaraad (Council of Europe) sedert 2001 twee invloedryke instrumente op die gebied van taalleer, taalonderrig en taalassessering geloods. Die Gemeenskaplike Europese Verwysingsraamwerk vir Tale (CEFR) bestaan uit twee dele: 'n beskrywende skema vir besinning oor wat taalleer en -onderrig behels; en 'n bykomende gemeenskaplike verwysingsvlak stelsel, wat bestaan uit skale van 'kan-doen' beskrywingsterme van taalbevoegheidsvlakke. Die CEFR onderskei tussen 'n bekwame taalgebruiker, 'n onafhanklike taalgebruiker, en 'n basiese taalgebruiker. Elk van dié kategorieë word verder verdeel in twee vlakke, wat resulteer in ses vlakke van taalbevoegdheid vir lees, luister, gesproke produksie, gesproke interaksie, en skryf, respektiewelik.

In hierdie referaat som die skrywers die inhoud en die praktiese implikasies van 'n Taalportefeulje vir Hoër Onderwys (LPHO) op, soos in Nederland verwesenlik. Die LPHO volg die Europaraad se riglyne en bestaan uit 'n taalpaspoort, 'n taalbiografie, en 'n dossier. Die taalpaspoort is 'n opsommende beskrywing, wat gereeld op datum gehou word, van die taalverwante en interkulturele ervarings van sy eienaar. Die taalbiografie fasiliteer die leerder se betrokkenheid by die beplanning, besinning oor en assessering van haar of sy eie leerproses en vooruitgang, en bevat doelstellings- en assesserings kontrolelyste. Die dossier bied aan die taalgebruiker die geleentheid om die materiaal te kies wat die vordering of ondervindinge wat in die taalbiografie of die paspoort opgeteken is, dokumenteer en illustreer. Sáám vergemaklik die twee instrumente die vergelyk van die taalkennis van individue en groepe oor in 'n verskeidenheid van leerkontekste.

1. Introduction

This contribution deals with managing language diversity in Europe. In an increasingly mobile Europe in which more than four hundred and seventy-one different languages are spoken, old language borders are disappearing and new ones are arising (Valeur 2007). Europeans often speak languages other than their mother tongue at home, on the street, or in their professional working environment. It is important, therefore, to know what levels of language skills are achieved when people learn languages in formal as well as in informal contexts.

In order to cope with the European language (learning) situation, the Council of Europe in Strasbourg has initiated two influential instruments:

- The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), and
- The European Language Portfolio (ELP).

The first part of this contribution is a description of the CEFR (CoE 2001) and the ELP (CoE 2000). In the second part, the focus is on higher language education for adults. Practical findings are presented from the implementation of the Language Portfolio for Higher Education (Sorce & Broeder 2005) in the practice of language teaching for adults.

2. CEFR for Languages

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is one of the most influential developments of the last decade in the field of language learning, language teaching, and, especially, language testing in Europe and elsewhere. An historical overview and some future developments of the CEFR are given by Broeder & Martyniuk (2007). The CEFR consists of two parts:

- The *Descriptive Scheme* is a tool for reflecting on what is involved not only in language use, but also in language learning and teaching. Parameters in the Descriptive Scheme include: skills, competences, strategies, activities, domains, conditions and constraints that determine language use;
- The *Common Reference Level system* consists of scales of descriptors that provide global and detailed specifications of language proficiency levels for the different parameters of the Descriptive Scheme. The core of the Common Reference Level scales is a set of ‘can-do’ descriptors of language proficiency outcomes.

Language competences

The CEFR adopts an action-orientated approach towards language use and language learning. The Descriptive Scheme focuses on the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of *general* and *communicative language competences*.

General competences of a language user/learner comprise four components:

- Declarative knowledge (‘savoir’) resulting from experience (i.e. empirical knowledge) or formal learning (i.e. academic knowledge);
- Skills and know-how (‘savoir-faire’) implying the ability to carry out tasks and to apply procedures;
- Existential competence (‘savoir être’) comprising individual characteristics, personality traits and attitudes towards oneself and others engaged in social interaction;
- Ability to learn (‘savoir apprendre’) is the ability to engage in new experiences and to integrate new knowledge into existing knowledge.

Communicative language competences of a user/learner involve knowledge, skills and know-how for each of the following three components:

- Linguistic competence deals with the formal characteristics of a language such as phonology, morphology, lexicon and syntax;
- Sociolinguistic competence concerns the socio-cultural conditions of language use such as, the rules of politeness or social group repertoires;
- Pragmatic competence covers the functional use of language, for example its use in specific scenarios such as in the restaurant or at a job interview.

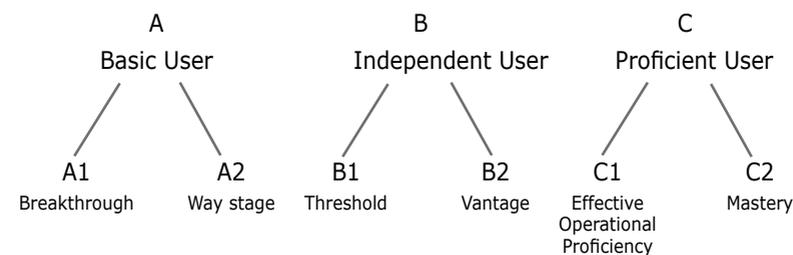
On the basis of general and communicative language competences, the language user/learner applies skills and strategies for understanding, speaking and writing the language within specific domains, which can be personal, public or occupational.

Levels of language proficiency

In the CEFR a simple and global distinction is categorised in three main user levels:

- The proficient user has hardly any or no constraints in the use of the target language – no consideration needs to be taken into account that it is not his/her native tongue;
- The independent user can handle the daily language practice, is mostly able to interact without too much effort and is generally able to follow the speed of normal speech – some consideration needs to be taken into account that it is not his/her native tongue;
- The basic user has command of the most elementary expressions, but is dependent on the willingness of the interlocutor to adapt to the basic user’s level, i.e. the interlocutor’s assistance is necessary.

Each main user level is further subdivided into two levels to give finer distinctions of competence. This subdivision suits local needs and yet still relates back to a common European system. The ascending proficiency levels are couched in terms of “can-do” statements. This is adequate to show progression in different language competences, whilst allowing for reasonably consistent distinctions to be made.



Branching of the 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.

Common Reference Levels: global scale

Self-assessment of language proficiency

The (self-) monitoring of the process of language use and language learning results in the reinforcement or modification of the general and communicative language competences (Broeder & Sorce 2007). Therefore the six Common Reference Levels of language proficiency are elaborated further through specific ‘can-do’ descriptors for each of the following language activities:

- Reading
- Listening
- Spoken production
- Spoken interaction
- Writing

Cross-tabulating these language activities with the proficiency levels on the global scale results in a self-assessment grid with general descriptors of outcomes (see Appendix). For example, the general descriptor for listening comprehension at *Breakthrough Level* (or level A1) is formulated as follows:

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

Below is an example of the general descriptor used for reading comprehension at *Mastery Level* (or level C2):

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.

With the aid of general descriptors such as these, anyone – the teacher, the curriculum developer, but also the employer, the personnel officer, or the policy maker – can easily attain information on an individual’s language proficiency. In terms of European and international affairs, this assessment of language proficiency levels may have great relevance.

The Common Reference Levels on the global scale are elaborated further by means of specific descriptors that provide detailed information and insight (see CoE 2001). Some examples of specific descriptors for listening comprehension skill of the *Basic Breakthrough* language user/learner (or level A1) are the following:

I can understand simple directions for how to get from X to Y, on foot or by public transport.

I can understand numbers, prices, and times.

Since 2001, the CEFR with its Descriptive Scheme and the Common Reference Levels has been translated into more than twenty-five languages.

3. European Language Portfolio

The most successful implementation of the action-orientated approach proposed in the CEFR is the European Language Portfolio (CoE 2000). Individual language users/learners develop their linguistic and cultural ability in a range of languages and cultures. Their individual 'language profiles' reflect diversified levels of proficiency for the different language activities (reading, spoken interaction, etc.). The European Language Portfolio is a document in which those who are learning or have learned a language – whether at school or outside school – can record and reflect on their plurilingual and pluricultural experiences.

The European Language Portfolio was launched on a pan-European level in 2001 during the European Year of Languages (Schärer 2004). In the Netherlands, language portfolio projects are carried out under the auspices of the National Bureau of Modern Foreign Languages in collaboration with the European Platform for Dutch Education. The objectives of these projects are to stimulate public support for the language portfolio within the framework of the Dutch education system and to investigate the effect of the use of the language portfolio on teachers and students. The language portfolio projects in the Netherlands focus on different target groups. Primary and secondary education, adult education as well as vocational training are taken into consideration when the use of a language portfolio is being examined (see Aarts & Broeder 2004). In this contribution, the content and the practical implementation of a Language Portfolio for Higher Education (LPHO), developed by Sorce & Broeder (2005), will be summarised. In line with the recommendation of the Council of Europe (2000), three parts can be identified in the Language Portfolio for Higher Education:

- the language passport
- the language biography
- the dossier

Language passport

The language passport is a regularly updated summary description of the linguistic and intercultural experiences of the owner. This overview of the individual's proficiency in different languages at a given point in time is defined in terms of skills and levels in the CEFR (CoE 2004: 5). In order to facilitate pan-European recognition and mobility, a standard presentation of a language passport for adults is promoted, that records the following information:

- a profile of language skills through self-assessment, teacher assessment and assessment by educational institutions and examination boards
- a summary of language learning and intercultural experiences (education, courses, regular use in the workplace, regular contact with speakers, etc.)
- an overview of formal qualifications (certificates and diplomas)



European Language Portfolio: Language Passport Part 1

Taalkennis						
Language knowledge						
Connaissance de langue						
Fill in language and date						
Language:						
	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
	date	date	date	date	date	date
Listening						
Reading						
Spoken production						
Spoken interaction						
Writing						

Overview Language Knowledge (Language Portfolio Higher Education, Sorce & Broeder 2005: 11)

Language biography

The second part of the European Language Portfolio facilitates the learner's involvement in planning, reflecting upon and assessing their own learning process and progress (CoE 2004: 7). It contains goal-setting and self-assessment checklists expanding on the 'can-do' descriptors in the CEFR.

In the Language Portfolio for Higher Education (Sorice & Broeder 2005), these checklists are specifically aimed at the adult language user/learner. Concrete language tasks have been formulated for each of the language activities and proficiency levels in the CEFR. Some examples of the checklist for the listening-A1-level from the Language Portfolio for Higher Education are:

Language ... Date ...		I can do that			I want that
	Listening A1	Not at all	A little bit	Very well	Target
I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
To describe	I can understand a friend when he describes a girl to me that he just met.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
To give instructions	I can understand someone who explains to me the way to the theatre in the centre of the city.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
To tell	I can understand my colleague who tells me how he spends his free time and which sport he practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
To make an appointment	I can understand someone understand who asks me to move the date of an earlier made appointment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Examples of checklist descriptors for listening-A1-Level in the Language Portfolio Higher Education (Sorice & Broeder 2005: 16)

In the language biography, the user/learner can register the state of language knowledge. In addition the use/learner can report what they would like to learn and how they would like to learn it. In this way, the user/learner can plan the further development of their language knowledge, and monitor its progress.

Dossier

The dossier part of the European Language Portfolio offers the language user/learner the opportunity to select materials to document and illustrate achievements or experiences recorded in the language biography or passport (CoE, 2004: 8). The dossier is a combination of personal documents consisting of, for example, certified documents showing the results the language user/learner has achieved in the course of their studies, the studies made during a student exchange programme, if attended, and documents that contain samples of language use originating from projects and presentations the user/learner has participated in.

4. Diversity in language education for adults

The development of the Language Portfolio for Higher Education started in 2004. Several versions were constructed and evaluated by adult language learners. The first version was used in the school year 2004/2005 by a group of thirty-nine adults learning Italian as a second language: ten adults participated in a one-year evening course at an Adult Education Centre (Volksuniversiteit) and twenty-nine students participated in intensive thirteen-week courses at Tilburg University. This version of the Language Portfolio for Higher Education was completely written in Italian. The self-assessment using descriptors of language skills in the language biography section was also done in Italian. On the basis of this first implementation, improvements were made. In the second year the Language Portfolio for Higher Education (Sorace & Broeder 2005) was completely translated into Dutch, so that it could also be used in classes for languages other than Italian. In the school year 2005/2006, this general Language Portfolio for Higher Education was used and evaluated by fifty-one students from three intensive thirteen-week courses at Tilburg University.

The Language Portfolio for Higher Education by Sorace & Broeder (2005) can be useful throughout the various stages of the language learning trajectory. For example, if a student changes schools, the language portfolio contains important information on the kinds of language courses a student has had and what level of proficiency they have attained, which is essential information for the new school.

An interesting aspect of the Language Portfolio for Higher Education is that it not only gives information about what a person has learned at school, but also documents the kinds of language activities a person has engaged in outside school and what he has learned there. The language portfolio can be used as a separate document along with official certificates. It is also possible to submit a language portfolio when applying for an (international) job.

The Language Portfolio for Higher Education has two basic functions (CoE 2004):

- a pedagogic function
- a reporting function

Pedagogic function

The *pedagogic function* is to guide and support the user in the process of language learning. The implementation results of the overall student population in the school years 2004/2005 and 2005/2006 are summarised in Box X.

How do you like the language portfolio? (1= no; 3 = yes)	
General	
Working with LP is nice	2.06
Working with LP is easy	2.07
LP is nice to have	2.20
LP is important for me	2.11
Language knowledge	
LP shows what I can do in a language	2.36
Through LP I think more about my languages	1.87
Directing own learning	
Through LP I know better what to learn	1.90
Through LP I know better how to learn	1.43
LP is a good addition to the language course	1.98
Behavioural intention	
I would like to bring LP to my next course	2.25
LP dossier makes me collect more documentation	1.87

Students' self-assessment of their working with the Language Portfolio Higher Education (N=90 students)

In general, the use of the language portfolio was positively evaluated by the adult learners. They liked working with the Higher Education portfolio (2.06) and considered it easy to use (2.07). They also said they found it important (2.11) and confirmed that the portfolio demonstrated their language ability (2.36). However, a more negative pattern emerged when the use of the portfolio was related to the process of language learning. A minority indicated that the portfolio gave them a better insight into what, and how, to learn (1.90, 1.43). Nevertheless, the portfolio was generally considered to be an asset to the language course (1.98) and, surprisingly, most students said that they would like to bring the portfolio to their next language course (2.25).

There were only two remarkable differences between the subpopulation that worked with the Italian version and the subpopulation that worked with

the Dutch version. In the Dutch version, the users thought more about their languages (1.64 for the Italian version; 2.07 for the Dutch version), and they were more inclined to collect documentation for the dossier (1.54 for the Italian version; 2.20 for the Dutch version).

Reporting function

The *reporting function* of the Language Portfolio for Higher Education is to record proficiency in languages. The self-assessment of language knowledge for the adult learner population in the Language Portfolio for Higher Education was compared to the general assessment by the teacher. The self-assessment was based on the checklist of descriptors in the language biography. The correlations between teacher assessment and self-assessment for each of the five language skills in Italian are as follows.

Self-assessment of Italian proficiency	Teacher assessment (formal test)
Listening A1	.560**
Reading A1	.438*
Spoken interaction A1	.522**
Spoken production A1	.579**
Writing A1	.623**

Comparison student' self-assessment of language skills versus formal assessment by the teacher (n=27 Dutch students) (Pearson cor., **<.01, *<.05, 2-tailed)

There are significant positive correlations between the general teacher assessment on the one hand, and the adults' self-assessment on the other of each of the five language skills. The adult learners also appear to be able to give an accurate self-assessment of their own language skills.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

More than eight-hundred million Europeans constitute a large variety of different ethnic, cultural and language backgrounds. Through the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and the European Language Portfolio (ELP) it is possible to compare the language knowledge of individuals and groups in a variety of learning contexts. The focus is on development of learner autonomy in the process of life-long learning, on raising intercultural awareness, and on encouraging reflective learning.

Levels for skills

The CEFR and the ELP encourage learners, teachers, examiners, administrators, policy makers and educational institutions to concentrate their efforts within a common European framework.

In order to facilitate co-operation between (educational) institutions in Europe and to provide a basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications, the CEFR can be used for developing curriculum guidelines and textbooks or in the setting of examinations and the specification of assessment criteria.

Skills for levels

The CEFR also indicates how a language is acquired, taught and learned as well as how it can be assessed. Important objectives are also to promote consciousness of, and reflection on, the use of languages.

The information contained within the European Language Portfolio (ELP), based on the CEFR, enables all language learners to use Common Reference Levels for (self)-assessment, planning and reporting. The scale of language descriptors in the CEFR and in the ELP can be used to support self-directed language learning.

This contribution presents some empirical observations for the role and the effect of self-evaluation in the dynamic diversity of the classroom. The focus was on a group of adult second language learners. These learners all carried out a self-assessment of their language skills by means of descriptors of language us-

age and goals available in the Language Portfolio for Higher Education (Sorce & Broeder 2005). Working with a language portfolio raises self-awareness of individual language skills and initiates strategic steps to be taken by the learner. In Broeder & Sorce (2007), we investigate the role of self-evaluation of language knowledge in children and adults, and anticipate the following:

- Young learners (from age 9 onwards) as well as adult learners are able to give an accurate evaluation of their own language skills
- Young learners are more process-orientated in the language learning task. They want to know **how** to learn and ask for a choice of learning activities and tasks (*Teacher, what do you want me to do?*)
- Adult learners are more goal-orientated in the language learning task. They want to know **what** to learn and focus on proficiency levels (*Teacher, how much time is needed to achieve level X?*).

The pitfall to be avoided with the CEFR and the ELP is that an (objective) framework with illustrative 'can-do' descriptors of language proficiency is considered as a prescriptive end goal in itself. It is important to bear in mind that the intrinsic dynamic diversity of specific learning contexts and learning processes are meaningful and should be appropriate to the European individuals in their everyday (professional) language use.

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Appendix: Common Reference Levels: self-assessment grid

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

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