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Mission statement

The CEFR Journal is an online, open-access, peer-to-peer journal for practitioners and researchers. Our editorial advisory board comprises stakeholders on a wide range of levels and from around the world. One aim of our journal is to create an open space for exchanging ideas on classroom practice and implementation related to the CEFR and/or other language frameworks, as well as sharing research findings and results on learning, teaching, and assessment-related topics. We are committed to a strong bottom-up approach and the free exchange of ideas. A journal by the people on the ground for the people on the ground with a strong commitment to extensive research and academic rigor. Learning and teaching languages in the 21st century, accommodating the 21st century learner and teacher. All contributions have undergone multiple double-blind peer reviews.

We encourage you to submit your texts and volunteer yourself for reviewing. Thanks a million.

Aims, goals, and purposes

Our aim is to take a fresh look at the CEFR and other language frameworks from both a practitioner's **and** a researcher's perspective. We want the journal to be a platform for all to share best practice examples and ideas, as well as research. It should be globally accessible to the wider interested public, which is why we opted for an open online journal format.

The impact of the CEFR and now the CEFR Companion Volume (CEFR/CV) has been growing to previously wholly unforeseeable levels. Especially in Asia, there are several large-scale cases of adoption and adaptation of the CEFR to the needs and requirements on the ground. Such contexts often focus majorly on English language learning and teaching. However, there are other language frameworks, such as the ACTFL and the Canadian benchmarks, and the Chinese Standard of English (CSE). On the one hand there is a growing need for best practice examples in the form of case studies, and on the other hand practitioners are increasingly wanting to exchange their experiences and know-how. Our goal is to close the gap between research and practice in foreign language education related to the CEFR, CEFR/CV, and other language frameworks. Together, we hope to help address the challenges of 21st century foreign language learning and teaching on a global stage. In Europe, many take the CEFR and its implementation for granted, and not everyone reflects on its potential uses and benefits. Others are asking for case studies showing the effectiveness of the CEFR and the reality of its usage in everyday classroom teaching. In particular, large-scale implementation studies simply do not exist. Even in Europe, there is a center and a periphery of readiness for CEFR implementation. It is difficult to bring together the huge number of ongoing projects from the Council of Europe (CoE), the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML), and the EU aiming to aid the implementation of the CEFR. This results in a perceived absence in the substance of research and direction. Outside Europe, the CEFR has been met with very different reactions and speeds of adaptation and implementation. Over the last few years, especially in Asia, the demand by teachers for reliable (case) studies has been growing.

For more than a decade, the people behind this journal—the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) CEFR & Language Portfolio special interest group (CEFR & LP SIG)—have been working on a number of collaborative research projects, yielding several books and textbooks, as well as numerous newsletters. This is a not-for-profit initiative; there are no institutional ties or restraints in place. The journal aims to cooperate internationally with other individuals and/or peer groups of practitioners/researchers with similar interests. We intend to create an encouraging environment for professional, standard-oriented practice and state-of-the-art foreign language teaching and research, adapted to a variety of contexts.

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Editorial

Maria Gabriela Schmidt

Morten Hunke

A warm welcome to issue no. 2 of the **CEFR Journal – Research and Practice**. In a time before COVID-19, we had hoped to be introducing this brand new, hot off the digital press 2nd volume of the journal at the EALTA conference in Budapest (including a CEFR Special Interest Group (SIG) meeting still to go ahead online, see contribution on **The EALTA | UKALTA 'Roadmap' conference** below). However, everything turned out more than just a little differently.

It pains us to have to start off with some incredibly sad news. This issue is dedicated to Tim Goodier—a member of our Editorial Advisory Board (EAB)—who has been taken from us, suddenly, and wholly unexpectedly in late March. But not before he reliably and amicably as ever provided a review for the forthcoming issue no. 3—due later in 2020. Please take a look at what Brian North—a CEFR Journal EAB member himself and a good friend and former colleague of Tim's at Eurocentres—has to say, immediately following this editorial: **In memory of Tim Goodier**.

While edition #1 featured invited articles exclusively, this issue began from a Call for Abstracts up until November 2019 resulting in an impressive number of responses. Most were asked to submit a draft. Due to the interest in the call for submissions and, more importantly, the quality of most of the drafts submitted in early 2020, we decided to publish two issues in 2020. There has been a lot of development; largely, good and positive. We are slowly but surely waking up to the splendidly fluid realities of running an international academic journal. We, the editorial team, are loving every minute of it. The authors, our tirelessly working EAB, journal editorial and proofreading teams, and the 'layout guy' (Malcolm Swanson) have outdone themselves to make #2 happen. A ginormous thank you to you all!

Our attempts to build a community of scholars have been a huge focus of our. We have been fortunate enough to see a lot of interest in our newly published journal. We have been able to further translate that interest into more people getting involved and contributing in one manner or another. Our common aim is to be working together and to support one another in furthering this journal. The editorial team is truly privileged to be working with so many and such excellent folk.

We are hoping to mold the journal into a platform for exchanging best practice, state-of-the-art research, news on current topics, and viewpoints on developments in the field. This is what the CEFR Journal should be all about: We aim to create a bottom up platform for all involved in the many facets of working with the CEFR, other frameworks, and portfolios. Ideally the journal is a platform enabling everybody to grow and to learn, and a platform that is as transparent as can be. Our editorial team has worked diligently with authors by helping, aiding, and guiding them through the process of using the reviewer feedback, improving, and finalizing their texts. Doing this in a supportive and constructive fashion has been our emphasis. We pride ourselves on the large amounts of positive feedback from authors in that regard.

Still, we have managed to be as academically rigorous, upholding quality standards in our screenings, as running a double-blind peer reviewed journal demands. See for yourselves, we have been able to compile a diverse array of contributions in this issue. And we are hopeful you will find them as stimulating a read as the contributions featured in #1.

We have grouped contributions to the CEFR Journal into one of these three categories: (1) Articles, (2) Reports, and (3) News.

We are kicking off the 'Articles' in #2 with a debate article:

Trolls, unicorns and the CEFR: Precision and professionalism in criticism of the CEFR, by Brian North (co-author of the CEFR and CEFR Companion Volume) is likely to attract the attention of many. Some are going to find it controversial. And that is precisely what we would like it to be: a talking point. Should you find yourself having (strong) opinions about the views being voiced in this article, feel free to get in touch with us: journal@cefrjapan.net. We are more than happy to consider publishing letters to the editors or even a rebuttal. Sparking a lively, and above all constructive, debate would be a perfect accompaniment to the official launch of the CEFR Companion Volume (CEFR/CV). We would like to keep the format of kicking off our journal with a debate article for future issues whenever appropriate and possible.

Next, Marina Perevertkina (Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia), Alexey Korenev (Lomonosov Moscow State University), and Maria Zolotareva (Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia), explore the possibilities mediation offers for raising awareness among language teacher trainees: **Developing classroom mediation awareness and skills in pre-service language teacher education**.

Then, under 'Reports' we feature work in progress reports and other texts giving insights into the current affairs of research projects, etc.

In a first progress report of a large-scale study Maria Stathopoulou (Hellenic Open University | National Technical University of Athens) examines whether descriptors for written mediation are fit for purpose in the context of assessment: **The new CEFR descriptors for the assessment of written mediation: Exploring their applicability in a local context in an effort towards multilingual testing**. Read about what this extensive study of Greek language education experts and teachers (2018-2019) reveals and what conclusions may be drawn, particularly from a language tester's perspective. The elicited data allows for further investigations into the correlations between quantitative and qualitative results. While some of the conclusions drawn are fairly bold, the matter of multilingual/plurilingual assessment is something worthy of further examination. We at the CEFR Journal would welcome articles that present relevant research in this area.

Charis-Olga Papadopoulou (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki) takes another fresh look at portfolio practice: **Promoting reflection in initial foreign language teacher education: The use of the EPOSTL revisited**. This is particularly noteworthy in the context of **The EALTA | UKALTA 'Roadmap' conference** discussed later. Repeatedly, at the conference, experts and attendants called for an involvement of teacher trainees with practice in the CEFR, the CEFR/CV, and the European Language Portfolio (ELP).

As part of the 'News' section, we offered SIGs with a focal interest in the CEFR the opportunity to advertise and present their work. In the future, news from research projects, working groups, and/or individuals are also going to be welcome here.

Carmen Peresich (ÖSD | Universität Klagenfurt) introduces the **Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) CEFR SIG**.

This is followed by Neus Figueras' (University of Barcelona) introduction of the work of the **European Association for Language Testing and Assessment (EALTA) CEFR SIG**.

Maria Gabriela Schmidt (Nihon University) and Morten Hunke (g.a.s.t. | TestDaF-Institut) round off the presentation of SIGs by introducing the **CEFR and Language Portfolio (LP) SIG** of the **Japan Association for Language Teaching**.

The last piece of news introduces the **The EALTA | UKALTA 'Roadmap' conference: The CEFR: a road map for future research and development—meeting overview**. Fergus O'Dwyer (Marino Institute of Education), Morten Hunke (g.a.s.t. | TestDaF-Institut), and Maria Gabriela Schmidt (Nihon University), in liaison with some of the conference organizers, thought it would be a good idea to supplement the official report—see link inside the text. Were you to find topical issues, important discussions omitted,

or you were to wish to add contradicting or complimentary views of the goings on, we would warmly welcome further discussion of these in future issues of the CEFR Journal. Please contact us at: journal@cafrjapan.net. We would love to hear from you and get the debate going.

Finally, we have a new Call for Abstracts out. Due to current necessities and demand, we are looking to give your experiences with **online, remote, and e-learning in conjunction with the CEFR, the CEFR/CV, or portfolio work** the spotlight it deserves. Over these past few months, many practitioners have been accruing valuable best practice experiences. We would like to offer a forum to share such valuable insights in future volumes. We are looking for abstracts until 30 November 2020 at: journal@cefrjapan.net.

—Tokyo (Japan) & Bochum (Germany), June 2020

In memory of Tim Goodier

Tim Goodier, who was one of the three authors of the CEFR Companion Volume (CEFR/CV) and one of the core team in the project from 2014 to 2018 that developed it, passed away unexpectedly on 31st March of heart failure at the age of 47. He was so young, so full of life; it's hard to believe. The editors have kindly dedicated this issue to his memory.

Tim was a very creative person, a musician and painter as well as language professional. He worked briefly in the City of London before choosing to become an English teacher, first in Spain and then for Eurocentres, the Swiss-based foundation with language schools in several countries, associated with the Council of Europe since the late 1960s and with the CEFR since 1990. At Eurocentres, Tim was a teacher, curriculum and materials developer, teacher trainer, specialist on academic English, blended learning and quality management, and finally Head of Academic Development. Through Eurocentres, Tim became very active in Eaquals, serving as a Trustee on the Eaquals Board for a number of years and representing Eaquals, as well as Eurocentres, in a number of projects. He became an independent consultant in 2018, after the Eurocentres schools changed hands and became a UK-based company. The irony is that this decision was largely made to reduce his travel, because of his heart condition, but his professional life seems to have continued at the same pace.

Tim was one of the kindest, most thoughtful people I have ever met and a person with whom working together was always a pleasure. He was a close friend as well as a colleague and he will be greatly missed by lots of people. He combined a light touch with an ability to see the broader picture and an eye for detail. That is an unusual combination, to say the least. I first met Tim in 2006, and was immediately struck by his sincerity, conscientiousness and competence. I worked with him in the contexts of Eurocentres, Eaquals and the Council of Europe and it never quite felt like work. It was always a creative, friendly and very personal process, because Tim put so much of himself into everything he did. In working groups, we all really looked forward to seeing each other—at meetings, in the evening, on the tram. Everybody liked him. Everybody loved meeting him; he always brought such a positive atmosphere; we talked about so many things. We will all miss Tim terribly. He was such a nice, modest, competent, fun and good person and the most intelligent, positive and reliable colleague imaginable.

— Brian North (formerly Eurocentres and Tim's predecessor)

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Trolls, unicorns and the CEFR: Precision and professionalism in criticism of the CEFR

Brian North

(co-author of the CEFR and the CEFR Companion Volume)

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This article starts by recalling the reasons that have been given for the CEFR's success, for example its neutrality, the way it encourages the constructive alignment of planning, teaching and assessment and helps educators to fulfil both instrumental and educational goals. It then reviews and responds to some of the main criticisms that have been made of the CEFR over the past twenty years concerning the relationship of the CEFR to linguistic theory, the compatibility of the CEFR descriptors with research in second language acquisition and corpus linguistics, the development methodology and formulation style of the descriptors, the intended scope of the CEFR itself and its relationship to socio-political power. It points out that many of these criticisms are based on misunderstandings or misrepresentations and underlines that a sustained constructive engagement with the CEFR is necessary if criticism is to inform future revisions. The article also draws attention to some of the innovations brought by the CEFR, which have tended to be overlooked, and which are reinforced and further developed in the recently published update to the CEFR, the CEFR/CV, which has just in its definitive form.

Keywords: CEFR criticism, reasons for success, descriptors, research base, theory, CEFR innovations, CEFR Companion Volume (CEFR/CV), development methodology, action-oriented approach, corpus linguistics

1 Introduction

The publication of the definitive version of the CEFR Companion Volume (Council of Europe 2020) is perhaps a moment to consider the criticisms that have been made of the CEFR over the years. This is particularly the case since, in reviewing the Companion Volume, authors seem compelled to repeat what have become standard criticisms (e.g., Bärenfanger, Harsch, Tesch and Vogt 2018; Deygers 2019; Quetz and Rossa 2019), but do not take account of answers to them (e.g., North 2008, 2014), and sometimes misrepresent the point made by a more discerning previous critic. Authors sometimes assume they know the CEFR and the criticisms of it, but misrepresent either or both when they write themselves. In fact, the CEFR seems to invite a kind of familiarity that sometimes leads to careless assumptions (e.g., "As is commonly known, the framework distinguishes five proficiencies (speaking, listening, reading, writing, and interaction) and describes six levels of these proficiencies with regard to one language" Backus et al. 2013: 191) or article titles that are, to say the least, unusual (e.g., "One framework to unite them all?[1]" Deygers et al. 2018).

The CEFR is published by the Council of Europe (CoE), whose remit is the promotion and protection of human rights and social justice. The CEFR is in fact the CoE's second most consulted document, coming on the list directly after the Declaration of Human Rights itself[2]. The CEFR was produced as part

1. This title echoes the "one ring to unite them all," the ring forged by Sauron, the personification of evil, in J.R.R. Tolkien's trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*. That title inspired the title of this current article.
2. 2018 CoE web statistics.

of a project to develop European citizenship and is part of a sustained commitment to promote quality inclusive education for all, particularly plurilingual and intercultural education. The significance of the CEFR for curriculum and assessment has been widely recognized both within and beyond Europe. It has been described in a state-of-the-art article on language curriculum as "[o]ne of the most important curriculum publications in the last decade" (Graves 2008: 148) and "[p]erhaps the most widespread example of backward design using standards [working backwards from goals defined with 'Can Do' descriptors] (Richards 2013: 26). Several surveys of the implementation of the CEFR in different countries are available (e.g., Byram and Parmenter 2012; Foley 2019; O'Dwyer et al. 2016; Piccardo, Germain-Rutherford and Clement 2011). Byram and Parmenter's edited volume documents some reasons for the success of the CEFR: the positiveness and clarity of the 'Can Do' recognition of modest achievement and related promotion of self-assessment; the extra-national, neutral non-prescriptiveness of the scheme; and the fact that it addresses both instrumental/functional and humanistic/educational aims of language learning. As Porto, one of their contributors, explains in more detail, the CEFR helps language policy makers to marry, in their local educational standards, (a) the needs of their governments to promote instrumental functional goals in English, the language of international communication and business, with (b) broader goals that she describes as: "Progressive Education, the main tenets of which are education for active citizenship, for social justice and for the protection of local languages, celebrating the students' interests and participation" (Porto 2012: 135).

Fundamentally, the CEFR offers the means to align planning, teaching and assessment and involve all stakeholders in what is effectively a quality cycle of 'plan, do, check, reflect and act' at the levels of the individual, the class, the programme, and the institution. A recent project from the ECML (European Centre for Modern Languages), CEFR QualiMatrix (www.ecml.at/CEFRqualimatrix), provides a practical online self-evaluation tool to assist in the planning or evaluation of CEFR-based innovation. It also provides some 35 examples of CEFR-based best practice in different contexts as illustrations of such innovation. In fact, of the two main aims of the CEFR, (a) to provide common reference points and a metalanguage to help language professionals situate their efforts, network, and compare, and (b) to stimulate educational innovation and more effective language learning, the second aim has always been predominant. This was confirmed again by the 47 member states at the Language Policy Forum called to take stock regarding the CEFR (CoE 2007). This aim is the reason the CEFR 2001 was set out as a thesaurus, inviting users to review and perhaps consider developing their current practice in the light of other options, with 'reflection boxes' at the end of each section to help them to do so. The CEFR is a reference work not a standard to be picked up and applied. The authors made this very clear in the foreword: "We have NOT set out to tell practitioners what to do or how to do it. We are raising questions not answering them. It is not the function of [the CEFR] to lay down the objectives that users should pursue or the methods they should employ" (CoE 2001: iv). The Companion Volume explains why the CEFR descriptors are consistently described as 'illustrative.' They are meant to be adapted to context and supplemented; North (2014) illustrates some of the ways in which this can be done.

In this article, I therefore discuss what are perhaps the six main misunderstandings concerning the CEFR and its descriptors. These are namely: (a) the relationship to theory; (b) the relationship to research on learner language; (c) the methodology through which the descriptors were developed; (d) the formulation of the descriptors; (e) the intended scope of the descriptors and indeed the CEFR itself, and finally (f) the status of the CEFR and its relationship to socio-political power.

2 The relationship to theory

There is sometimes an assumption that the CEFR has no theoretical framework. In fact, the theoretical framework was laid out in considerable detail in North (2000) and related publications (e.g., North 1997a). The CEFR move from the four skills to the four modes of communication (reception, production, interaction, mediation) was inspired by a series of criticisms of the inadequacy of the four skills model (Lado 1961) to describe actual language use (e.g., Alderson and Urquhart 1984; Breen and Candlin 1980;

Brumfit 1984; Stern 1983). It was also influenced by Halliday's (1989) precisions on the true distinction between spoken and written language; Swales' (1990) analysis that all genres derive from chat (*interaction*) and then storytelling (*production*), which created the reciprocal mode of *reception*; insights about long and short turns spoken by young people (Brown et al. 1984); and the distinction between basic interpersonal communication and more academic language (Cummins 1980). The model of communicative language competence is closely related to Bachman and Palmer (1996) and Celce-Murcía, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1995); it rejected Chomsky's competence-performance distinction and reflected the interpretation of competence in communication studies (e.g., Wieland and Backlund, 1980) and the world of work (see Richer 2017). The CEFR envisages a strategic cycle of planning, execution, evaluation and repair following Færch and Kasper (1983), with some categories for strategies that were inspired by: Tarone (1983) on interaction strategies; Barnes and Todd (1977) on cognitive and collaborative strategies in small groups; Kramsch (1986) on turn-taking, and Burton (1980) on "challenging" for clarification.

The theoretical model behind the updating of the CEFR descriptive scheme in the CEFR Companion Volume (CEFR/CV) is explained in North and Piccardo (2016) and Piccardo and North (2019). Many key aspects that were already implicit in the CEFR 2001, though not developed, are made explicit. These 'hidden aspects' of the CEFR include a Vygotskyan recognition of the social origin of learning and a focus on agency, with the learner seen as a *social agent*; an *action-oriented approach* implying collaborative, situated co-construction and learning (e.g., 2001 descriptors were provided for *goal-oriented collaboration* and *cooperating*); the introduction of the concept of *mediation*; and a detailed exposition of *plurilingualism,* which anticipated what is sometimes referred to in Anglophone literature as 'the multilingual turn' (Conteh and Meier 2014; May 2013). Many researchers and practitioners have welcomed the clarifications and further development in the Companion Volume (see, for example the report on the meeting called by EALTA[3]: Little (2018). Yet Deygers (2019: 3) considers that "since mediation must logically include at least two other communicative activities to take place, it is conceptually superfluous (Wittgenstein 1922 on Ockham's razor)". However, one could of course say the same about interaction. In fact this linear, Cartesian perspective—that the pieces make up the whole—which still held sway in 1960's structural linguistics, the context in which Lado (1961) proposed the four skills, is simply not tenable given the complex, ecological, paradigm in which we work today (see Larsen-Freeman 2011, Van Lier 2010).

3 The relationship to research on learner language

Let us now turn to the second, empirical, aspect of the relationship to research, which concerns the descriptors. At a recent colloquium in Gießen, Reimer (2019) repeated a common assumption that the progression shown in the descriptors was incompatible with SLA research, citing Hulstijn (2007) and Wisniewski (2017). In fact, Hulstijn (2007) said that there was no need to abandon the CEFR 'house' whilst secure (SLA-based) foundations were built and co-founded SLATE (eurosla.com) to provide that underpinning. In the first volume reporting SLATE results, Hulstijn, Alderson and Schoonen then wrote that "[t]he production of the scales was ... an extensive empirical exercise ... It is fair to say that the resultant scales are probably the best researched scales of foreign language in the world" (2010: 14-15). One might add that the work of the SLATE group and others has tended to confirm the progression in the CEFR scales. Findings seem to confirm CEFR suggestions that control of grammatical accuracy becomes a feature around B2 (e.g., Díez Belmar 2018; Forsberg and Bartning 2010; Martin, Mustonen, Reiman and Seilonen 2010; Thewissen 2013); Tono 2013), that vocabulary range increases steadily through the levels (Milton 2010), and that explicit markers for cohesion/coherence increase to B2 and then are substituted by more subtle means at the C-levels (Carlsen 2010).

Most of this research is actually CL research. The largest such projects are English Profile and the related Cambridge Learner Corpus (Harrison and Barker 2015) and the CEFR-J/JEFLL corpus (Tono 2013) and their reports do not display any particular contradictions with the CEFR. These studies are

3. European Association for Language Testing and Assessment: www.ealta.eu.org

supplemented by other CL projects such as the Greek Integrated Foreign Language Curriculum (IFLC) project (Dendrinos and Gotsouilia 2015) and smaller scale work by Díez Belmar (2018), concerned with defining the errors of Spanish learners of English. Both these projects supplement the rather generic CEFR descriptors with data-based locally relevant detail. Finally, there is the work of Wisniewski (2017) with regard to German, to which Reimer referred. Wisniewski found what she states to be problems with the Vocabulary Control Scale and Fluency Scale in her data—though she says: "The fluency scale generally led to more convincing results than the vocabulary scales (Wisniewski 2017: 242). However, this data was from a single test task with a corpus based on only 38 learners. In larger scale work (258 scripts in the MERLIN project) she points out possible weaknesses of the B2 descriptor on the Vocabulary Control Scale but concedes that it "captures observable, yet not exclusively typical behaviour" (Wisniewski 2017). She reminds the reader that: "The CEFR levels are not claimed to correspond to a developmental hierarchy in an SLA sense, either. All this is clearly stated in the CEFR itself and in pertaining publications (North 2000, 2014)" (Wisniewski 2017: 245).

In other words, this criticism about the lack of a basis in SLA/CL for the descriptors actually represents a caveat not a fault, and with this one possible exception, such research as exists actually supports the progression suggested. Furthermore, the range of SLA and CL research is very limited: both are concerned with linguistic features (predominantly grammar and vocabulary), often described as 'critical features' that distinguish between levels through their presence and the degree of accuracy in using them. Thus, SLA and CL research could in any case only inform refinement of the 13 scales for communicative language competences (aspects of linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence). SLA and CL research is little or no help in relation to the vast majority of the scales, which are for communicative language activities and strategies (c 40 in 2001; c 65 in 2018/2020). I have always been very open about the fact that SLA research could not provide an adequate basis for the CEFR; I doubt that it ever will. After all, I made this point in first presenting the research and descriptors (North 1997b) and, as Wisniewski says, have repeated it constantly since: for example: "What is described [in the descriptors] is teachers' perceptions of language proficiency (appropriate for a common framework of reference), not validated descriptions of SLA processes ..." (North 2007: 657). Unfortunately, misinterpretations of that 2007 statement by writers less careful than Hulstijn or Wisniewski, suggesting that the calibration is based upon teacher impressions and lacks a basis in empirical research, have unfortunately been passed on from article to article (or presentation). The CEFR descriptors, new and old, are in fact based upon a rigorous research methodology that captured and objectified collective professional wisdom, which brings us to the next point.

4 The Development Methodology

Despite the fact that the original research is described in the CEFR itself (Appendix B) and published in articles (e.g., North 1995; North and Schneider 1998) and books (North 2000; Schneider and North 2000), there are some remarkably persistent misconceptions. Firstly, as Alderson and Hulstjin (2010) pointed out, the 1993-96 work was based on the decades of experience in the profession with language proficiency scales. It was only descriptors for communicative language strategies that were written from scratch. Secondly, just because the descriptors were subjected to a rigorous validation and calibration process with the Rasch model, there is in some quarters a curious perception that the design of the scales was conceptually random, with the decision as to which of the initial pool of 2,000 descriptors should survive being made purely on the basis of statistical data. In fact, in both years of the 1993-6 Swiss National Science Research Council project that produced the 2001 descriptors, the *intuitive* development phase of just over a year was followed by a lengthy *qualitative* validation phase. This involved 32 workshops with teachers over the course of a second year in both the 1994 project for English and the 1995 follow-up for English, French and German. In this phase in both 1994 and 1995, teachers evaluated and suggested improvements to the descriptors in the initial pool. They were asked to identify which category descriptors belonged to and whether they were clear, pedagogically useful and related to real world language use. This methodology was later used by Eichelmann (2015) and Vogt

(2011) in CEFR-related projects, Eichelmann systematising it into a form in which it was then reused in the 2015-2016 data collection in the project to extend the CEFR descriptors (North and Piccardo 2016). On each occasion, 1994, 1995 and 2015-2016, qualitative data from workshops was used to whittle down a huge initial pool of potential descriptors to a set of really good descriptors that covered the intended categories across the intended levels (approx. 300 in 1994 and in 1995; 426 in 2015).

It was those—already validated—descriptors that were forwarded to the third, *quantitative* phase in what nowadays would be described as a sequential, mixed-methods research design (Creswell and Plano Clark 2018). Not only that, but in all the workshops of the qualitative phase in 1994 and 1995, the categories of the metalanguage used by teachers to discuss proficiency were studied using grounded theory (Byrant 2014). In each of the workshops, the discussions of pairs or small groups of teachers were recorded separately. That bottom-up analysis complemented the top-down analysis in the CEFR Authoring Group[4] in a process that decided the CEFR descriptive categories.

A related misunderstanding (repeated in, for example, Wisniewski 2017) is that in the development there was no relationship to actual learners and their language, the data to calibrate the descriptors coming from a task in which teachers sorted the descriptors into piles by level. Such a task is in fact a traditional method to derive scale difficulty values for descriptors, further developed by Smith and Kendall (1963) in an early example of data-based scale development. Such a sorting task was in fact only used in the final workshop in 1994 and in 1995 in order to (a) eliminate descriptors on which there was wide disagreement regarding the level of difficulty, and (b) check that descriptors were approximately the level intended so that they appeared on an appropriate data collection questionnaire. These questionnaires were to be used for classes of different school years in secondary education because one of the official aims of the project was to provide a snapshot of the range of achievement at the end of each year of the different sectors of the Swiss secondary school system. The results provided data as a basis for a proposal for national targets (Lüdi 1999). (For a graphic showing those results, see North 2000a: 319-33; Schneider and North 2000: 321).

The 50-item questionnaires used to collect the data for calibrating the descriptors were actually the precursors for the checklists of the European Language Portfolio, which the project was also charged with developing. On the questionnaires, teachers rated a structured sample from two of their classes. The same 0-4 rating scale was used to assess the extent to which each learner could do what was described in each descriptor. Three thousand five hundred learners were assessed with the descriptors by their teachers in this way (1,000 in 1995; 2,500 in 1995) and it is that—teacher assessment—data that was analysed with the Rasch measurement model to calibrate the descriptors.

A very similar approach was used on a larger scale in 2014-2017 for the development of the new scales on mediation and related areas for the CEFR/CV. The main data collection took place in 2015, following a year of preparation. This time there were 140 workshops in which approximately 1,000 informants, working in pairs, were involved in seeing whether the descriptors fit the category they were said to describe, as well as evaluating their clarity, pedagogical usefulness and relation to the real-world language use—as well as the actual formulation of each descriptor. In a second series of 189 workshops, some 1,300 informants, again in pairs, discussed the descriptors and judged their CEFR level. Finally, the definitive calibration came from an online survey conducted in English and French in which participants used the 0-4 rating scale from 1994/1995 to assess whether a person they were thinking of could do what was described in the descriptor. The process is described briefly in an appendix to the CEFR/CV and in more detail by North and Piccardo (2016). The descriptors took their more or less definitive formulation only at the end of that whole process. There then followed a process of slimming down the number of descriptors, and some final polishing during the consultation phases, which lasted up till May 2019. The last steps, in 2019, were to make the formulations 'modality-inclusive (i.e., also suitable for sign languages) and, as far as possible, gender neutral.

4. The CEFR Authoring Group consisted of John Trim, Daniel Coste, and Brian North; Joe Sheils, the project coordinator from the Council of Europe secretariat, joined the group later on by writing Chapter 7 on tasks. The revision for publication in 2001 was carried out by John Trim and Brian North.

5 Descriptor formulation

Another misunderstanding about the descriptors is that there is no systematic development in the progression up the scales and that the content found at different levels is somehow random or 'subjective,' because the same aspects are not treated systematically at every level. This criticism was addressed by North (2008) using the same subscale, *Understanding an interlocutor*, that had been criticised as an example by Alderson et al. (2006). A number of charts were also included as appendices in the manual for relating examinations to the CEFR to help readers see this systematicity and a selection of other charts are included in North (2014). Essentially there are two points behind this criticism, apart from the question of mere presentation. Firstly, there is a misunderstanding of the deliberate choice made in developing the CEFR descriptor scales—which are *not* rating scales, but rather curriculum orientation aids. Secondly, some language testers have an unrealistic expectation for detail and precision that is not appropriate in a common framework, intended to be used for different educational contexts in relation to different languages. The opportunities, challenges and limitations of what a common framework can provide for linking assessments are well explained by Harsch (2019).

To focus on the first point, the descriptors belong to a tradition in applied psychology that defines, and then calibrates mathematically to a scale, target behaviours at ascending levels of difficulty, that is to say important learning aims. This approach was pioneered with trainee nurses (Smith and Kendall 1963). Each descriptor is an independent criterion statement, which illustrates a 'salient feature' of behaviour at a particular point—or band—on the scale. This approach came into language education through language for specific purposes (e.g., ELTDU, 1976). The alternative 'systematic' approach, often used in language testing, is to describe exactly the same features at each level. The distinctions between levels are then made by juggling with qualifiers like 'some' 'a few' 'many' 'the majority of' etc. This approach is still very common in even recently published rating scales in the language field, even though it has been heavily criticised for a long time (e.g., Champney 1941; Alderson 1991). Because the prime objective of the CEFR is to provide curriculum aims, the intergovernmental Symposium that recommended the CEFR (Council of Europe, 1992) unanimously rejected the 'systematic approach,' instructing that the 'salient features approach' should be used for both CEFR and European Language Portfolio, ensuring coherence between the two.

Tracy (2017), however, suggests that the CEFR descriptors take precisely this 'systematic' approach: making relative distinctions between levels just with adjectives and adverbials:

> Despite the remarkable career of the CEFR, there is room for improvement. Many 'Can Do' statements contain among their descriptors quantifying ('large', 'small', 'short', 'limited', etc.) or qualifying expressions ('relatively simple', 'elementary', 'complex'). Descriptors refer to vocabulary or other features the test-taker appears to be 'more' or 'less familiar' with, is 'more' or 'less likely to encounter', or to terms and tasks which are 'more or less related to everyday experience'. There is also reference to what interlocutors can 'easily' or 'partially' understand. (Tracy 2017: 49).

In actual fact, only three of the expressions she mentions are used extensively in the 2001 CEFR descriptors, namely: 'short' (54 occurrences), 'complex' (36 occurrences) and 'limited' (10 occurrences). There are precisely zero occurrences of 'small,' 'relatively simple,' 'more familiar,' 'more likely to encounter,' 'less likely to encounter,' 'tasks more or less related to everyday experience,' 'easily understand,' or 'partially understand.' One does find 'simple' (101 occurrences) as opposed to 'straightforward' (21 occurrences) and 'complex' (36 occurrences); one also finds 'familiar/unfamiliar' (61 together) as well as one occurrence of 'less familiar.' There is one 'large' and one 'elementary.'

In other words, there are binary distinctions made, and there is a simple/straightforward/complex distinction, but this claim is exaggerated. There is also the fact that what is simple for an eight-year-old and a twenty-eight-year-old are not the same thing. Texts that are straightforward for me in my profession may not be so for you, if you specialise in a different field. In other words, the CEFR descriptors

"are themselves simply guidelines and we are encouraged to adapt them and rewrite them according to the context in which we work. ... [The CEFR] is a *framework*, not a set of stone tablets; it exists primarily to help language professionals and language learners achieve their goals more successfully, to help us to think about how and what we teach and learn" (Frost and O'Donnell 2015: 4). This fact does rather tend to get forgotten.

6 The Scope of the CEFR descriptors

This leads us to the next misunderstanding—or unrealistic expectation. The CEFR is *deliberately* open-ended. This is because it is intended to be used in a wide variety of different contexts: for different languages, for different age groups, for different types of learning goals, in different pedagogic traditions. It is a generic, common reference point. It is not a turnkey, off-the-shelf system. The array of descriptor scales (c. 50 in 2001; c. 80 now) is intended to suggest selection, needs analysis. It is unlikely that all of the descriptor categories are priorities for any one group. The CEFR/CV reminds readers how scales can be used to create needs profiles for different groups and two (fictional) examples of graphic profiles are given (CoE 2018: 37-38, 2020: 38-39).

If the CEFR provided all the details on language exponents and text types, etc., for all the languages one might want to teach, it would become prescriptive—as well as a gigantic instrument. That detail is provided separately in the reference level descriptions (RLDs)[5] for the different languages. If the CEFR provided descriptor scales for each target situation/genre of each aspect of each of the four domains of language use (public, private, vocational, educational) it would again be in danger of becoming prescriptive. Therefore, the approach taken is generic, macrofunctional (see CoE 2018: 3-31; CoE 2020: 33-34). Users are invited to adapt descriptors and elaborate new ones that will fit the needs in their context. This adaption may mean adding linguistic detail that takes account of the educational context and the learners' linguistic repertoires (Díez Belmar 2018; Dendrinos and Gotsouilia 2015). It may mean adapting the descriptors themselves to a different age group—as done with the descriptors collated in Szabo and Goodier (2018).[6] It may mean adapting and/or developing descriptors for a particular academic or professional context; North (2014, Section 4.2.3) gives tips for doing so. It may mean analysing descriptors in order to specify text types, text features and microskills for listening and reading tests in a particular context (North and Jarocz 2013), or going a step further to develop and validate local listening or reading tests like for example Shackleton (2018). Shackleton developed tests with CEFR-based specifications and then followed the procedures to link scores on the test to CEFR levels recommended by the Council of Europe. All these are examples of sensible adaptation and extension of a common reference framework to the local context. None of these researchers expected the CEFR to be targeted specifically to their context.

One of the more surprising criticisms of the CEFR, therefore, is one by McNamara, Janne Morton, Storch and Thompson (2018) who talk about "the poverty of the CEFR construct for the assessment of EAP [English for Academic Purposes] readiness and progress" (McNamara et al. 2018: 17). They report that other scholars have been critical of the conceptualization of academic writing—in the CEFR and, they add, in tests specifically developed for academic writing in English like IELTS and TOEFL—as an "autonomous set of skills that once mastered can be used across contexts. Academic writing, from an academic literacies perspective, is fundamentally situated in particular disciplinary cultures ..." (McNamara et al. 2018: 18) with at times even "variation between teachers within a discipline". In their project, they compare the construct in the three CEFR scales for written production to the perception of 13 first-year international students regarding their academic writing. They record the way that experience

5. https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/reference-level-descriptions
6. https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/bank-of-supplementary-descriptors

over the year of the demands of different disciplines and tutors led the students to move from that traditional 'set of skills view' of EAP writing to an appreciation that it is thoroughly situated. However, rather than perhaps criticising the tests created for their own discipline, which also follow that view, the authors focus on the CEFR. This is despite the fact that they concede that the process of studying the CEFR scales and undertaking this research, "ironically" helped them to reflect on their current practice and "will contribute to the ongoing fine-tuning of our Table of EAP competencies" (McNamara et al. 2018: 25). This process of reflection on current practice is actually, as they even mention themselves, precisely what the CEFR is intended to encourage.

This is not to say that CEFR descriptors are not useful in the context of teaching English at university level. Frost and O'Donnell (2015) document using them successfully to involve students in the process of tracking their progress in spoken production over the course of their three years of study, using the descriptors in adapted form for teacher, peer and self-assessment. Idris and Raof (2017) also report on learners using CEFR Table 3 (the six levels defined for range, accuracy, fluency, interaction, and coherence) for self- and peer assessment of spoken ability. Academic writing, however, with all its varying socioculturally-determined and genre-related expectations, obviously requires contextually-specific criteria for any assessment.

7 The CEFR, status and power

Criticisms like those of McNamara et al (2018) reflect misinterpretations of the aims and status of the CEFR. McNamara himself (2011) perceives the CEFR as an instrument of power: a universal language—spreading in the same way that English is spreading as an international language. In fact, as we will see below, it is in fact the combination of those two trends—the appropriation by the spreading ELT industry of the CEFR levels—that is the problem.

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the CEFR itself has two fundamental aims: The first is to provide common points of reference for national education systems in Europe. The second, most fundamental aim is to assist reflection on current practice and stimulate development and reform, including the promotion of plurilingual and intercultural education. Talk of the "reification" of the descriptors scales into a rigid system imposed on unwilling professionals has proven to be unfounded: there has never been a "strong political agenda" to standardise the language of assessment across Europe as Fulcher (2004) opined. Fulcher (2008) presents the CEFR as a vehicle for centralised planning, the removal of academic freedoms and the introduction of personal financial accountability for teachers. Fulcher proposes, on the basis of no evidence whatsoever, that the Council of Europe—or perhaps he meant European Union—intends to enforce harmonisation that will stifle teacher creativity and that makes any resistance "genuinely futile" (2010: 230).

One sees here, in a specialist form, a forerunner of the kind of misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the European project that led to Brexit. In fact, the adoption of the CEFR by European governments is done by a policy recommendation (Council of Europe and Council of Ministers 2008), not a resolution, let alone a treaty. The European harmonisation project in education is in reality the Americanisation of higher education in the Bologna process. The real linking of teacher freedoms and salaries to results on standardised tests that operationalise a standard is an Anglo-American vogue unconnected to Europe, let alone the CEFR. Indeed, the CEFR provides the basis for an alternative to standardised tests from the language testing industry. Common reference points independent of the industry leaders give at least the possibility of diversity and context-relevance in assessment. In any case, there is little doubt that ALTE and EALTA have both substantially contributed to raising language assessment literacy in Europe, at least partly thanks to the CEFR.

Any use of the CEFR *outside* Europe itself does, however, raise the question of "validity creep" (North 2014: 44): validity in relation to the CEFR "is an ongoing and, theoretically never-ending, process" (Council of Europe 2001: 22) and validation is always context-dependent. One can understand concerns from

language professionals outside Europe at what could be perceived as a reductive use of the CEFR to assist what could perhaps be regarded as neo-colonial expansion by the English language testing industry and associated ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) movement. As Savski points out, the "CEFR has mainly been interpreted as a language standard in Asian contexts, a view which is generally testing-oriented and largely excludes learners from being able to interpret the framework" (Savski 2019: 649). The motivation in these countries for the adoption of the CEFR, he reports, appears to be mainly neoliberal. He reports the juxtaposition of "CEFR" and "PISA" in documents, and even in tables of comparative levels in documents. In Malaysia, at least, this recontextualization of the CEFR extends to replacing local textbooks with ELT industry ones designed for CEFR levels.

In the current spread of the CEFR to South East Asia (see Foley 2019 for a review), others are concerned that it appears to be seen by governments as a silver bullet that will magically improve the effectiveness of language teaching, without provision of adequate opportunities for teachers to improve their level of language proficiency or pedagogic knowhow, and without adequate resources (e.g., Aziz and Uri 2017, in relation to Malaysia again). In Thailand, from a survey of 120 teachers, Franz and Teo (2018) conclude that, because of the way in which it is implemented, the perception of the CEFR "was first and foremost [as] a test" (Franz and Teo 2018: 9). As regards the meaning of the abbreviation CEFR: "'Cambridge' and 'Communication' were repeatedly cited for the letter 'C', and 'English' was more often cited for the letter 'E' than the actual European'" (Franz and Teo 2018: 11). Not that the teachers in these countries are necessarily against the type of teaching that the CEFR promotes, as all these authors (Aziz and Uri 2017; Frank and Theo 2017, Savski 2019) mention. The problem is a repetition of the naïve belief of twenty years ago in Europe that the introduction of the CEFR as a standard would automatically raise teacher efficiency and student achievement, beliefs rudely shattered for most by the results of the European Survey of Language Competence (European Commission 2012). In this respect, a study comparing use of the CEFR in Switzerland and Canada (Piccardo, North and Maldina 2019) suggests that, to achieve effective change through the CEFR, stakeholders at all levels (administrators, researchers, teachers) need to be involved in designing an on-going in-service teacher education programme spread over a considerable period of time, in which practitioners can be involved in the development of CEFR-related tools and materials and try them out in their classes.

North (2014) discusses many of the issues discussed above and then summarises with the table reproduced as Table 1 below.

Table 1. ***Claims and counter-claims concerning CEFR normative influence (North 2014: 43)***

	Claim	Counterclaim
National level	Gives authorities a ready-made instrument to apply simplistically in language policy.	Empowers institutions and associations by providing the means to develop differentiated, local standards and assessments appropriate to context, yet linked to international standards. Thus helps avoid a takeover by multi-national high-stakes testing agencies.
Test providers	Forces test providers to align tests to the CEFR and to adapt the content of tests to the CEFR scheme in order to stay in the relevant market	Empowers new, smaller providers by giving a metalanguage and methodology to enable them to validate their product and explain it to users. This helps them to enter the market on equal terms, leading to a wider choice of validated assessment services. The CEFR provides a branching system of levels and categories that makes it easy to describe the profile of any language examination.

	Claim	Counterclaim
Teachers	Removes academic freedom and offers authorities a tool for increasing accountability for results (= levels) achieved	Empowers reformers by providing the means to challenge entrenched, inappropriate practices, where a CEFR-related curriculum is claimed.
Learners	Encourages monolingual approaches that fail to take account of the learner's plurilingual profile, developmental route and differentiated needs.	Through its face to learners, the Portfolio, encourages the concept of a plurilingual profile including mother tongue, plus the concept of course content determined by needs and priorities of the learners.

Finally, in the context of migration and citizenship, Krumm (2007) voiced fears that the CEFR levels are used to set barriers, rather than the hierarchy of descriptors being used in a differentiated manner to identify a reasonable profile for a context-appropriate standard. In fact, the 1996 and 1998 consultative versions of the CEFR showed such a profile, but it was removed in the 2001 edition as it was felt to be too complicated. Examples of such profiles have now been included in the CEFR/CV as previously mentioned. Unfortunately, as a recent survey demonstrates, the vast majority of member states still insist on a blanket level for all skills including writing (Rocca, Hamnes Carlsen and Deygers 2019). The CEFR was not intended to be used in this way, as stated in the preface to the CEFR Companion Volume:

> The CEFR is intended to promote quality plurilingual education, facilitate greater social mobility and stimulate reflection and exchange between language professionals for curriculum development and in teacher education. Furthermore, the CEFR provides a metalanguage for discussing the complexity of language proficiency for all citizens in a multilingual and intercultural Europe, and for education policy makers to reflect on learning objectives and outcomes that should be coherent and transparent. *It has never been the intention that the CEFR should be used to justify a gate-keeping function of assessment instruments.* (CoE 2020: 11, my emphasis).

8 Conclusion

In this article I have reviewed what seem to me to be the most common issues on which the CEFR has been criticised over the last twenty years. Other criticisms have of course also been made, for example the obvious one that the 2001 text is not exactly an easy read. This is an issue that the CEFR/CV makes a conscious effort to address, saying: "With this new, user-friendly version, the Council of Europe responds to the many comments that the 2001 edition was a very complex document that many language professionals found difficult to access" (CoE 2020: 21). The CEFR 2001 also showed signs of having been written in different styles by different authors, with a certain lack of balance—for example, why wasn't intercultural competence better developed when there was a background study on it undertaken at the time? There were also political compromises in the 2001 text, required to be a comprehensive compendium rather than promoting a viewpoint. This obscured some of the main innovations of the CEFR to the extent that even many people who have worked extensively with it did not take them on board. Here I am thinking of the move on from the four skills, the user/learner seen and treated as a social agent, the action-oriented approach as a classroom philosophy, mediation both within and across languages, and plurilingualism/pluriculturalism—let alone the connection between those concepts, which add up to a theoretically-grounded, ecological, pedagogic model (see Piccardo and North 2019). In many respects this opaqueness was difficult to avoid at the time because those concepts were all cutting-edge notions in the mid-1990s, which had not yet themselves been fully theorised.

At the same time, as I have tried to show in this article, one of the fundamental problems in relation to the CEFR is actually the nature of a lot of the criticism of the CEFR itself. To return to the ground I covered in the article, it is simply not true that the CEFR lacks a basis in theory; even if this basis was not spelled out in what is after all a language policy document and not an academic monograph, it was there in accompanying literature for those interested. The CEFR presentation of communicative proficiency was very sophisticated for its time, avoiding the rather static, componential, list-like nature of most contemporary models (See Piccardo and North, Chapter 2). It is in fact remarkable the extent to which the basic CEFR theoretical model, summarised in a paragraph in CEFR Chapter 2, did not need to be updated twenty years later for the CEFR/CV. That model allowed for the incorporation of later insights from the sociocultural theory, complexity theory, theory of action and agency and ecological theories of 'affordances' (See Piccardo and North 2019, Chapter 3). The conceptualisation of plurilingualism has more than stood the test of time and been justified by neurolinguistics research (see Piccardo, German-Rutherford and Lawrence forthcoming, especially the chapter by Riehl).

The criticisms in relation to research on learner language (SLA and CL) are also exaggerated, as we saw. The vast majority of research that has been undertaken supports the progression in the CEFR scales. The revision of the descriptors, 20 years on, offered the opportunity to incorporate any new insights. When it came to updating the 2001 scales in the CEFR/CV project, there was plenty of good material in relation to communicative language activities. But for communicative language competences and strategies, the sources were disappointing. The sum of the contribution from accessible SLA and CL research was the suppression of one example in one descriptor in the scale for grammatical accuracy at A2, at the suggestion of Belén Díez Belmar. In fact, for revision of the descriptor scales for aspects of communicative language competences, there was only some vocabulary work from the Finnish AMMKIA scale and some description of aspects of pragmatic competence, mainly from rating scales used by Cambridge Assessment. When it came to communicative language strategies, there was nothing at all for interaction or production, only descriptors for reception strategies from the REFIC framework produced in the MIRIADI intercomprehension project (De Carlo and Garbarino, forthcoming). In order to provide CEFR-informed contextualized descriptors, and to enhance curriculum innovation inspired by the CEFR, we need solid research that produces informed, constructive criticism that comes from a sustained engagement with the CEFR, as with SLATE, EALTA, ALTE, UNIcert, as well the work of individual researchers like Díez Belmar and Wisniewski. But if it is to inform future revisions, this work needs to be reported in a manner in which it can be fed into new descriptors, or revision of existing ones.

Producing good descriptors is not a simple process because, even assuming that you know more or less what you wish to describe—which is far from being a given—there are three double binds. Firstly, as the CEFR 2001 and North (2000) explained, the descriptors need to be theoretically-based, but accessible to practitioners—and ideally learners—using categories that will be comprehensible to them. Secondly, for a common framework, descriptors need to be context-relevant, yet context-free because they must be relatable to a very wide range of contexts; a paradox. Finally, you need a lot of words to say what you would like to say in a descriptor, but experience both in 1994-1995 and in 2015-2016 showed that teachers do not accept descriptors longer than about 20 words or 250 characters. Therefore, one needs a principled development and validation methodology that mobilises large numbers of people to scrutinise the draft descriptors. It is easy to criticise the compromises and formulations in the end result, but it is not easy to produce something better—and cover all the levels people expect. It is also easy to say that certain descriptors are not relevant to one's students, or might be relevant but do not reflect the local context. But one should remember that they are not intended to necessarily apply unadapted to that context and those students; they are generic, illustrative examples that may need tweaking or replacing, or which may inspire a totally different approach.

Finally, any instrument like the CEFR needs to be used responsibly. Any educational implementation needs to be accompanied by long term teacher education programmes if it is to be successful. It is important to emphasise that the CEFR is a heuristic, not a standard. It is a reference tool for reflection,

not a panacea to be 'applied.' The CEFR descriptors are a source for curriculum design, not a collection of rating scales:

> The aim of the descriptors is to provide input for curriculum development. The descriptors are presented in levels for ease of use. Descriptors for the same level from several scales tend to be exploited in adapted form on checklists of descriptors for curriculum or module aims and for self-assessment. (CoE 2018: 40, 2020: 41).

As regards immigration and citizenship, one should remember that Governments do not actually need the CEFR to set linguistic standards for these purposes; the English-speaking world, for example, did fine with IELTS and other tests beforehand. In addition, even though the CEFR as an educational resource is not intended to be used for gatekeeping, should it be appropriated for this purpose, at least it brings transparency, the recognition of low levels of proficiency (now including Pre-A1) and the recommendation to define appropriate profiles, which, taken together could offer a possible basis for the enlightenment of and negotiation with policy makers by language professionals.

The CEFR is certainly not perfect, but it is open-ended, as shown by the recent update with the CEFR/CV. The CEFR is still not used to its full potential. It anticipated and facilitates the actional turn, the pluri/multilingual turn and the linking of language learning to democratic citizenship and social justice. The CEFR/CV builds on and extends this foundation, hoping to set a trend, as happened 20 years ago. The provision of descriptors for aspects of mediation and for plurilingual and pluricultural competence provides concrete tools for that purpose. This represents a serious attempt to broaden the scope of language education—as the CEFR 2001 helped to do with its 'Can Do' descriptors. The theoretical underpinning of the development is given by Piccardo and North (2019). The aim is the furthering of plurilingualism and interculturality in inclusive, quality education for all.

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10 Biography

Brian North is a researcher and consultant to the Council of Europe. After developing the CEFR levels and descriptors, he co-authored the CEFR itself, the prototype European Language Portfolio, the Manual for relating assessments to the CEFR, and Eaquals' core inventories for English and French. Recent projects include the coordination of the CEFR/CV plus co-investigation in a study of CEFR use in Canada and Switzerland, alignment of the Canadian Language Benchmarks to the CEFR and the ECML project CEFR QualiMatrix. Recent (co-)publications include *The CEFR in Practice* (CUP 2014), *Language Course Planning* (OUP 2018) and *The Action-oriented Approach* (Multilingual Matters 2019).

CEFR JOURNAL—RESEARCH AND PRACTICE
VOLUME 2

Developing classroom mediation awareness and skills in pre-service language teacher education

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The introduction of mediation as the fourth mode of communication into the CEFR has the potential to revolutionise language teaching. The development of teachers' competence in this area has become a challenge for teacher training. The paucity of curricula and courses aimed at developing pre-service teachers' awareness and competence in mediating communication has motivated this research, and the article is intended to serve two main purposes, namely, to identify mediation activities performed by in-service teachers and to outline strategies of training pre-service teachers. Research methodology included both qualitative analysis of 15 video-recorded lesson transcripts and quantitative analysis of a survey of 100 pre-service teachers of English in Russia. The lessons by Russian in-service teachers of English were analyzed to find evidence of classroom mediation and the survey was conducted to discover their familiarity with the CEFR and to elicit their views on the changes needed in teacher training after the appearance of the CEFR Companion Volume. The results indicate that communicating ideas and concepts lies at the core of classroom interaction, and thus special training is needed for language teachers to perform it. The practical implications of this study include a sample of piloted tasks for various proficiency levels aimed at facilitating the pre-service teachers' awareness of mediation and the ability to perform it in the classroom.

Keywords: CEFR/CV, mediation, teacher training, awareness, professional communicative competence, in-service teachers, pre-service teachers

1 Introduction

The concept of *mediation* has again attracted the attention of ELT researchers recently due to the release of the *CEFR Companion Volume with New Descriptors* (2018), henceforth referred to as the CEFR/CV. The newly introduced descriptor scheme for mediation activities and strategies shifts the focus of ELT from developing the traditional set of reception and production skills to cultivating a complex unity of four interrelated modes of communication that are required for successful socializing in the modern multicultural world, mediation being the key mode of inter- and intra-cultural communication. "Although it is not stated explicitly in the 2001 text, the CEFR descriptive scheme de facto gives mediation a key position in the action-oriented approach, similar to the role that other scholars now give it when they discuss the language learning process." (Council of Europe (CoE) 2018: 33)

Mediation is hardly a new phenomenon for language teacher education despite its recent appearance in the CEFR/CV. Although it was not conceptualised and generalised at its current level, many of its strategies have long been part of language teacher education. Interestingly, before the introduction of the CEFR/CV, mediation strategies were mainly seen as a part of teachers' pedagogical rather than professional communicative competence. The new framework for mediation allows us to overcome this artificial divide and see mediation as an integral part of both the pedagogical and professional communicative competences of a language teacher.

2 Literature review

The notion of mediation was not clearly stated in the original 2001 version of the CEFR, though its main communicative functions were evident:

> In both the receptive and productive modes, the written and/or oral activities of mediation make communication possible between persons who are unable, for whatever reason, to communicate with each other directly. Translation or interpretation, a paraphrase, summary or record, provides for a third-party a (re)formulation of a source text to which this third party does not have direct access. (CoE 2001: 14).

According to Dendrinos (2006), mediation is "a purposeful social practice, aiming at the interpretation of (social) meanings which are then to be communicated/relayed to others when they do not understand a text or a speaker fully or partially". It is also stated that mediation aims at "some sort of reconciliation or compromise between two or more participants in a social event" (Dendrinos 2006: 12).

As Coste and Cavalli (2015) have put it: "mediation can be defined as any procedure, arrangement or action designed in a given social context to reduce the distance between two (or more) poles of otherness between which there is tension". In such a situation, the role of a mediator can be described as "simply to act as an intermediary between interlocutors who are unable to understand each other directly—normally (but not exclusively) speakers of different languages" (CoE 2001: 87-88).

Pavlovskaya and Lankina (2019: 33) state that "mediation is partly a hard skill because it is firmly based on proficiency in a foreign language as well as on the relevant professional knowledge, but it also covers the top 10 soft skills that are so attractive for employers".

The variety of approaches to treating the concept of mediation is justified by the variety of scientific contexts in which it is used on a regular basis: "mediation can mean many things to many people. … It embraces a broad spectrum of dimensions and connotations and it is interpreted in so many various ways in different disciplines" (North and Piccardo 2016: 16).

The modern tendency of knowledge production prevailing over the production of goods creates a constant need for mediating knowledge. Since knowledge is a set of ideas, which cannot be transferred from one person to another without some languaging or any other form of verbal or non-verbal representation, several mediation activities and strategies have been introduced in the CEFR/CV (CoE 2018: 104) (Figure 1), and they need to be included into academic curricula. Otherwise, their development will be left to chance.

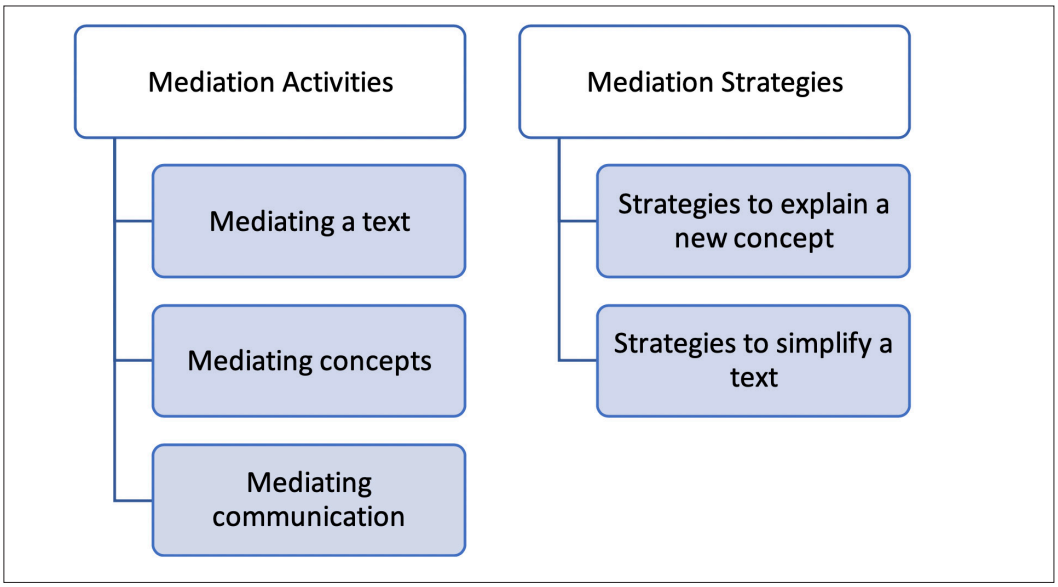

Figure 1. The overview of mediation activities and strategies.

While mediation activities and strategies are thoroughly described in the CEFR/CV and exhaustive descriptor schemes are introduced, the types of mediation need to be defined and classified according to different criteria.

North and Piccardo (2016: 13-15) introduce four types of fundamental mediation that include: linguistic, cultural, social and pedagogic. Pedagogic mediation is the most relevant in the context of this research as it encompasses the actions presented in Figure 2.

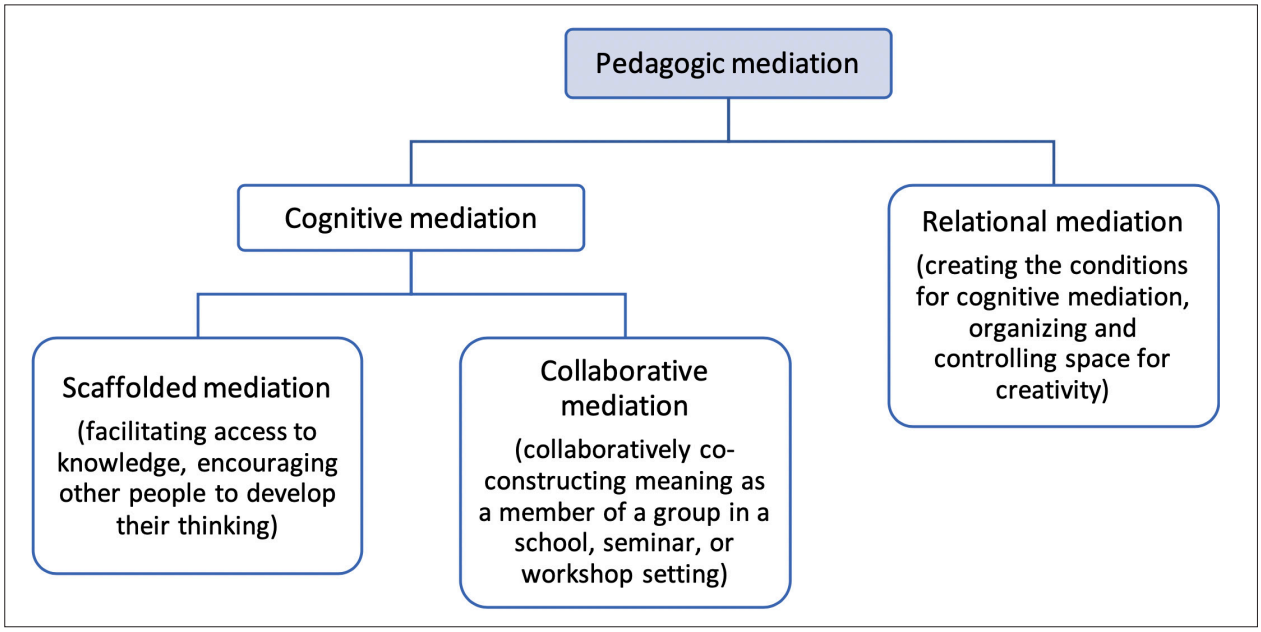

Figure 2. The overview of pedagogic mediation.

As seen above, pedagogic mediation can be either cognitive or relational: "Mediation is seen either as aiming to provide access to information and knowledge and competence building (cognitive mediation), or as contributing to interaction, the quality of exchanges and the resolution of conflicts (relational mediation)" (Coste and Cavalli 2015: 13). These two types of mediation are not mutually exclusive and are mostly used simultaneously in the classroom. Thus, teachers should have full awareness of pedagogic mediation and possess the necessary mediation skills as they are a part of teachers' overall professional pedagogic competence.

North and Piccardo (2016) state that "successful teaching is a form of mediation" and point out that there are no publications available that would include any descriptor scales related to teacher-centred mediation activities. "Since ... facilitating access to knowledge is a core aspect of the way mediation is conceived in psychology, this lack seems regrettable" (North and Piccardo 2016: 15). Thus, this article tackles the problem of evaluating and describing teachers' mediation competence in order to eliminate this deficiency.

The most evident part of mediation that has been well-described in the literature on language teaching is adapting language, which has been known under the term *language grading*. It has been traditionally defined as "the way teachers simplify their classroom language in the interests of intelligibility" (Thornbury and Watkins 2007: 207), but then expanded to include not only linguistic features such as simplification of forms but also interactional patterns and pedagogical choices of what is appropriate and how to interact effectively with students. A significant amount of research has been published on mediating text and concepts in the classroom. Generally, it can be seen as part of the *classroom interactional competence* which involves "using a range of appropriate interactional and linguistic resources in order to promote active engaged learning" (Walsh 2011: 3). It is essential to understand that no matter how decentralised and free the classroom environment is, the teacher still designs and controls it. In other words, it is the responsibility of the teacher to create a discourse that would allow for mediation.

3 Research

The purpose of this study was to determine if EFL teachers in Russia implement the CEFR descriptive scheme as a guideline in their classrooms and to identify both in-service and pre-service EFL teachers' awareness of mediation activities and their competence in using mediation strategies in class. Therefore, we addressed the following central research questions:

1. Are in-service EFL teachers in Russia engaged in mediation activities? What mediation strategies do they implement?
2. What do pre-service EFL teachers in Russia know about mediation as a mode of communication and its aspects?

The research was organised in two parts. The first part included a qualitative analysis of 15 lesson transcripts. The videos were not specifically recorded for research purposes, but permission from the English Language Office of the US Embassy in Moscow was obtained to use the set of videos *Shaping the way we teach English in Russia* for linguistic, interactional and pedagogical analysis. This is a DVD-set of video-recorded lessons distributed among teacher trainers in Russia to be used with pre-service teachers of English. It includes video recordings of 15 lessons conducted by experienced in-service English teachers in different cities of Russia. The students' CEFR levels ranged from A1 to B2, and the age of the students from 8 to 18, so the videos included lessons at the primary, secondary and high school level, as well as one English lesson at the university level. This set is considered representative of the best practice in language teaching in Russia because it was developed for teacher training purposes and was reviewed by the leading experts on language teaching in Russia. The original videos were cut where students were performing drills or preparing to present, so the total length of the analyzed data was 358 minutes and the length of the sequences ranged from nine to 43 minutes. All videos were transcribed, establishing a mini-corpus of 117 pages of classroom discourse in Russian state schools. The aim of the qualitative study was to find patterns of interaction in the lessons that would match some of the mediation descriptors and to describe to which extent the target communicative behaviour (the use of mediation strategies) can be observed in each case. Another aim of this analysis was to find empirical material to develop mediation tasks for pre-service English language teachers. This paper contains five extracts that illustrate common interactional patterns that were also observed in other lessons and that were found to be most characteristic.

The qualitative analysis of the lesson revealed several situations where teachers managed or did not manage to demonstrate some of the mediation activities and strategies. Interestingly enough, primary school teachers were the group that demonstrated the most numerous mediation strategies when they decided to conduct the lesson solely (or mostly) in English. This can be explained by the necessity to adapt any language input to the target level and age of primary school students.

Extract 1. Primary school. Grade 3 (9-10 y. o.).

Teacher: So, this is a story about Mr. Wiggle (the teacher shows the thumb of her right hand) and Mr. Waggle (the teacher shows the thumb of her left hand and then plays with her fingers representing Mr. Wiggle and Mr. Waggle by them, the children repeat). Mr. Wiggle lives in a house over here. And Mr. Waggle lives in a house over here. So, one day Mr. Wiggle decides to visit Mr. Waggle. He opens the door, and he goes out of the house ... Then one day Mr. Wiggle and Mr. Waggle decide to visit each other!

Student: Вместе с домиками? ('With their houses?' – Russian)

Teacher: No. So, they open the door, go out of the house, close the door. And they go up the hill, down the hill ... – Hello, Mr. Wiggle! (the children laugh) – Hello, Mr. Waggle! How are you? What would he answer?

This short warm-up activity includes some evidence of both monolingual and bilingual mediation. The teacher managed to mediate the text by relaying specific information in speech (A2 according to the CEFR Illustrative Descriptor Scales) and used the strategies of simplifying the text by conveying the main information in another way and by repetition and illustrations (B1-B2). The teacher also demonstrated the ability to adjust (answering the student's spontaneous question) and decided to integrate this comment into the classroom discourse.

The next extract illustrates how the teacher manages group interaction with a class of young teenagers to lead them to the concept "food wise". (In the previous activity, students were working with cards, explaining the words written on the cards to each other.)

Extract 2. Secondary school. Grade 8 (13-14 y. o.).

Student 1: I have 'diet'!

Student 2: 'Fat'!

Student 3: 'Dairy products'!

Teacher: What are dairy products?

Student 4: Dairy products, they are made from milk and eggs.

Teacher: Good! So, what is the topic of today's lesson?

Students: Food!

Student 5: Helicopter!

Teacher: Helicopter (laughs). ... But not just food, what kind of food?

Student 6: Healthy!

Teacher: Healthy food.

It is important to note that the activity preceding the one shown in Extract 2 was also aimed at developing students' mediation skills. Our main focus, however, is the ability of the teacher to employ mediation strategies of explaining a new concept by paraphrasing it in simpler language, asking simple questions and encouraging students to make connections to previous knowledge (B1-B2). Another important interactional element here is how the teacher acknowledges the joke by Student 5 but then moves on without spending much time on it. The extract above also demonstrates an example of elicitation, a mediation activity that has long been considered an important skill for a language teacher.

The CEFR mainly considers *pluricultural* as having representatives of various national cultures inside one classroom. However, it can be claimed that to some extent people of different generations inside one cultural space may also act as representatives of different cultures (or subcultures) and, therefore, any kind of classroom interaction, especially during a foreign language lesson, should be considered pluricultural with a high level of mindfulness and mediation skills required by the teacher.

Another important observation that was made during qualitative analysis was that communication in a language classroom can often lead to disagreements and 'delicate situations', especially if the lesson is designed communicatively and stimulates interaction between students. The most evident example of this can be seen in debating activities. The extract below shows how a teacher had to manage a situation where one student started to ignore the rules of debating and turn-taking and interrupted other students. (The names of the students have been changed. The students are not referred to as 'Student 1/2' in this extract to show where the teacher used names.)

Extract 3. Secondary school. Grade 7 (12-13 y. o.).

Tom: Sugar is in the vegetarian food because the trees and plants they need sugar.
(Tim is shouting all the time.)

Teacher: The idea is that this is polite debate.

Tim: There are a lot of tablets, vitamin tablets you could buy it in magazine.
Teacher: Shop.
Tom: In shop, yeah. The tablets with vitamins, phosphor.
Teacher: Pills.
Tom: Yes. So, you could not eat meat or fish but ...
Teacher: ... You can buy pills.
Tim: Pills are not healthy.
Teacher: We have finished.

In this case, the teacher had to manage a situation that was spiralling out of control, while his other points of focus at that moment obviously were control of language and providing facilitation and prompting to the other student (Tom). The teacher demonstrated the ability to mediate communication in a delicate situation and mediate concepts in group work simultaneously by both using simple phrases to seek compromise and agreement (A2) and intervening in the group work to encourage more even participation (B2). Overall, mediating communication seemed the most challenging task to most of the teachers whose lessons were video-recorded, and the target level of this particular mediation activity in teacher education should probably be set at C1-C2 because of the complexity of the classroom environment.

Unfortunately, there have been a lot of situations where the communication in the classroom did not seem natural or the teacher did not incorporate student responses into the overall lesson discourse. This was observed in four of the 15 lessons, and three other lesson scripts contained single episodes where the teacher used some information obtained from the student. Sometimes it seemed that the teacher was too focused on the planned development of the lesson and therefore ignored some of the students' responses.

Extract 4. Primary school. Grade 4 (10-11 y. o.).
Teacher: Yes, right. And have you read this story, this book, have you read this book? Have you read?
Student 1: Yes, I have read this book.
Teacher: How many? ...
Student 1: I think it's book is very interesting ...
Teacher: How many? ...
Student 1: ... and funny.
Teacher: Yes. How many stories have you read?

In Extract 4 the teacher was focused on eliciting the target response and did not pay attention to the student who wanted to share emotions after reading the book. The teacher was engaged in the mediation of concepts and constructing meaning by providing simple questions (A2), but did not demonstrate any relational mediation skills. It should be noted in the discussion of the extract above that some of the lessons (or parts of the lessons) we observed seemed to have been rehearsed and staged. The teachers in those lessons demonstrated fewer mediation strategies probably because their students had already known the answers to the questions they were asked. Such rehearsed lessons posed a particular challenge to the identification of whether a teacher was able to adapt their behaviour or to interpret the emotional state of their students based on the information obtained while listening. An important conclusion can be drawn from these two observations. Although the lesson plan should allow for various forms of interaction in the classroom, the teacher's mediation skills are often demonstrated in more spontaneous classroom interactions and are connected with the ability of the teacher to focus on both the plan and the classroom discourse development at the same time.

Another observation that was made was that the teacher's use of mediation strategies may be closely connected with their listening skills. The classroom presents the teachers with a number of specific listening situations and tasks that they need to deal with in order to perform mediation strategies afterwards. These may include understanding students' answers and remembering and summarizing information. The last element was one of the least frequently observed in the lesson and might, therefore, be the most challenging mediation activity in the classroom.

Extract 5. Secondary school. Grade 5 (11-12 y. o.).

Student 1: We can collect pictures.

Teacher: Pictures. Very nice. ...

Student 2: We can collect badges.

Teacher: Badges ... So, let's check. So, we can collect coins, stamps, badges, books, pictures.

In Extract 5 the teacher had to listen to the students' responses and sometimes echoed them, and then summarised all the answers that were received during this activity. In this case, when collaborating to construct the meaning of the concept, the teacher summarised the points of view in a group discussion (B2), but sometimes the summary was more conceptual in its nature:

Teacher: ... Well, we have some guitar players, some piano players. We can have a band, OK?

All of the empirical evidence obtained in the classrooms showed that an English language classroom in Russia is a very dynamic and often bilingual environment that requires a wide use of mediation strategies by the teacher. The more effective and natural communication in the classroom was, the more opportunities for mediation were presented. Unfortunately, the method of this study did not allow us to evaluate thoroughly to what extent the teachers were capable of mediating texts. Nonetheless, the analysis of video-recorded lessons revealed several activities and strategies of mediating concepts and mediating communication that may be important for effective classroom interaction.

The tasks presented later in this article will be based on some real-life situations that were captured in the lesson videos and will prepare trainee teachers for the situations that they might encounter in their classrooms. Overall, there are two main stages when the language teachers should demonstrate their awareness of mediation and use their mediation strategies and skills:

- when they are planning the lessons and interaction inside the classroom (the design stage);
- when they are functioning as teachers, facilitators, communicative partners, and "communication mediators" in the language classroom (the interactive stage).

In the second part of our research, we designed and conducted a survey to analyze the familiarity of pre-service EFL teachers with the CEFR and to discover what curricular improvements are necessary for training them to implement mediation strategies in language teaching (see Appendix). The survey contained three sets of questions aimed at (1) indicating the familiarity of respondents with the CEFR/CV and mediation, (2) revealing the ability of respondents to define mediation activities in a language classroom context, (3) encouraging the respondents to do a self-assessment of their mediation abilities. One hundred pre-service EFL teachers aged 20-22 participated in the survey.

The first set of questions was aimed at checking the respondents' general knowledge of the CEFR, their familiarity with the CEFR/CV, and their understanding of mediation as a concept (see Appendix, questions 1-4). We asked the respondents to evaluate their familiarity with the CEFR and found out that 45% of the respondents considered themselves to be experienced users of the CEFR and its descriptor scale, but were not familiar with the CEFR/CV and the updated CEFR illustrative descriptors.

At the same time, 52% of pre-service teachers had only basic knowledge of the CEFR as an international standard for describing language proficiency, with three pre-service teachers stating that the CEFR was a completely new topic for them. This self-evaluation question was followed by three concept questions which checked whether the respondents, specifically those who described themselves as experienced users of the CEFR, were familiar with the four modes of communication described in the CEFR/CV and could demonstrate the understanding of mediation as a concept (see Appendix, questions 2-4). We found out that only 5% of the respondents were aware of the change in terminology from the 'four skills' to 'four modes of activity', namely reception, interaction, production, and mediation, and 83% of them misunderstood the concept of mediation, considering it to be synonymous with 'interpretation' and 'translation'. The answers to these three concept questions that we received demonstrated that our respondents overestimated their knowledge of the CEFR and experienced some difficulties in the use of terminology, though the majority of pre-service teachers who participated in the survey (78%) demonstrated a general understanding of the context for mediation and the awareness of its nature.

In the second part of our survey, pre-service teachers faced six situations, some of which required the teacher to engage in mediation activities (see Appendix, question 5). The respondents were asked to indicate which of the described teacher-centred activities were considered to be mediation, and 17% of pre-service teachers successfully defined the cases when the teacher facilitated students' collaborative interaction to construct meaning, explained data and presented new information by organising it in a table, and paraphrased a definition of a new concept to simplify it. However, most of the respondents did not manage to recognise the mediation activities that may be encountered in foreign language teaching (61% identified two mediation activities, and 22% identified only one mediation activity). This observation correlates with the results we arrived at when analyzing lesson scripts. One possible reason behind in-service teachers' avoidance of stimulating mediation activities and using mediation strategies in their classes may be the paucity of curricula and courses aimed at developing pre-service teachers' awareness and competence in mediating communication.

Thus, the third section of the survey focused on the self-assessment of pre-service teachers' mediation abilities, and we asked for their opinion about the necessity to provide teacher training sessions on the general use of the CEFR and its application in practice (see Appendix, questions 6-8). The respondents assessed their abilities to use mediation strategies in the classroom, and we applied the CEFR descriptor scale to identify their level of proficiency in using both strategies to explain a new concept and strategies to simplify a text (progressing up the scale from B1 to C2). To answer, pre-service teachers used the 1–4 rating scale corresponding to the descriptors for each of the mediation strategies: linking to previous knowledge, adapting language, breaking down complicated information, amplifying a dense text, and streamlining a text. Most respondents in our survey considered their skills to be developed at B levels (Figure 3).

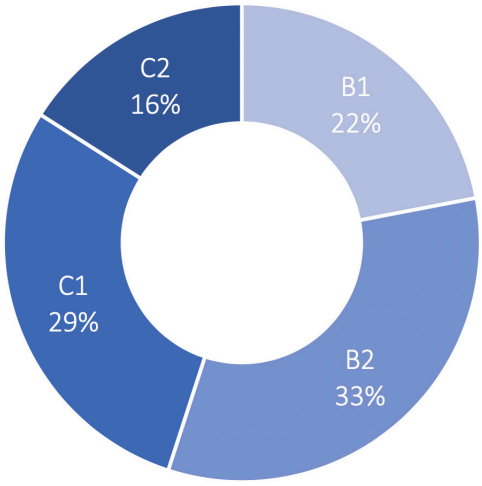

Figure 3. Self-assessment of pre-service teachers' mediation skills

We predicted that the participants' self-assessment of their abilities to use mediation strategies would shape their attitude toward training sessions for pre-service teachers about implementing the CEFR. We used a 5-point Likert scale to measure the attitudes and opinions of our respondents and, as we anticipated, 97% of the participants recognised the necessity to receive professional training in applying the CEFR in teaching context and 99% of the respondents named several courses in pre-service language teacher training that would benefit from including the development of mediation skills in their curricula.

Finally, the results were statistically analyzed in IBM SPSS Statistics and descriptive statistics. The standard error of the mean, scale statistics, and the high value of Cronbach's alpha showed internal consistency and indicated the reliability of the survey.

Table 1. ***Descriptive statistics***

	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation	Variance
Item1	2	0	2	1.42	.055	.554	.307
Item2	3	1	4	2.80	.057	.569	.323
Item3	3	0	3	1.59	.081	.805	.648
Item4	1	0	1	.78	.042	.416	.173
Item5	2	1	3	1.95	.063	.626	.391
Item6	3	1	4	2.312	.0908	.9085	.825
Item7	1	0	1	.97	.017	.171	.029
Item8	1	0	1	.99	.010	.100	.010

Table 2. ***Scale statistics***

№ of Items	Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
8	12.812	12.993	3.6046	.905

4 Discussion and tasks for pre-service teachers

Based on the findings of the two parts of our research we have concluded that there is a need to train pre-service teachers to use mediation activities and strategies in various classroom environments. The tasks below focus on developing trainee teachers' skills in mediating concepts. They seemed to be at the same time the most frequently exhibited and the least successfully used set of mediation activities demonstrated by in-service teachers. They begin with a contextualised presentation of mediation activities followed by the clarification of their meaning and the assessment of their level of difficulty. Then, at the stage of controlled practice, trainee teachers are given several tasks aimed at the development of their mediation skills. Finally, an opportunity to apply mediation skills in a simulated language classroom context is provided through free production activities, such as roleplaying.

The first task is aimed at developing the ability to recognise mediation activities related to collaborative work in a group. Trainee teachers are given three descriptions of situations (A-C) and three extracts from the lesson scripts. They are asked to match the descriptions of mediation activities to the abstracts. This task can be followed up by a discussion of how efficient the teacher's choice of pedagogical and linguistic tools was in each of the situations and what other tools trainees could use in a similar situation.

A. The teacher acts as rapporteur in a group discussion, noting ideas, discussing these with the group and later giving a summary of the group's view(s).
B. The teacher refocuses a discussion by suggesting what to consider next, and how to proceed.
C. The teacher presents his/her ideas in a group and poses questions that invite reactions from other group members' perspectives.

Situation 1.

Student 1: We can collect pictures.

Teacher: Pictures. Very nice.

Student 2: We can collect books.

Teacher: Right! It is very nice hobby, by the way.

Student 3: We can collect coins and stamps.

Teacher: Yes, you are quite right. So, we can collect coins, stamps, books, and pictures.

Situation 2.

Student 1: Ideally, I'd like to carry on with further studies.

Student 2: And I'd like to do another degree because I did English and I'd like to do one in History. History is more interesting to me at the moment.

Teacher: And how would you feel about studying abroad?

Situation 3.

Teacher: In general, Zero Waste is a lifestyle which intends to decrease the amount of rubbish to zero. In other words, you will live a life without creating unnecessary non-biodegradable wastes such as plastics. Personally, I can't see myself adopting a zero-waste lifestyle because plastic packaging and containers in modern life are nearly inescapable. Would you challenge yourself to minimise your waste? Is it possible to be completely zero-waste?

The second task involves reflection, and trainee teachers are asked to range various interaction activities that are connected with classroom management (intervening, redirecting talk, monitoring individual and group work, working non-intrusively, setting the group back on track, etc.) according to their level of difficulty (CEFR/CV, levels A2-B2). After that, pre-service teachers should fill in the table (Table 3) with the linguistic means that can be used to perform these activities.

Table 3. ***Interaction activities connected with classroom management***

Interaction activities	CEFR level	Linguistic means necessary to perform interaction activities
The teacher intervenes diplomatically in order to redirect talk, prevent one person from dominating or confront disruptive behaviour.		
The teacher monitors individual and group work non-intrusively, intervening to set a group back on task or to ensure even participation.		
The teacher allocates turns in a discussion, inviting a participant to say something.		

The next task is aimed at developing trainee teachers' concept-building skills and encouraging conceptual talk. Trainee teachers are given a part of a transcript, which serves as the beginning of a conversation between the teacher and the students, and are asked to create scaffolding and concept-checking questions and then use them to help students develop a better understanding of a target concept.

Student 1: My hobby is ikebana.

Student 2: What is ikebana?

Student 1: Can I say it in Russian?

Teacher: Let's try to explain it in English. Ask Student 1 three questions that could help Student 2 understand what ikebana is. Introduce a new concept of 'flower arranging' and define it as an activity of creating attractive displays with cut flowers. Then ask your students appropriate concept-checking questions to check their understanding of the concept of 'flower arranging'.

The following activity deals with the ability of future teachers to grade their language and explain complex ideas in simpler words. Trainees are given vocabulary entries and they have to give explanations of various concepts using simpler language. In a similar activity, trainees are asked to perform the same task, but every second sentence that they plan must be a question directed to the student to further focus on the interaction and to further bind explanation, elicitation, and concept-checking. Trainee teachers are asked to use the following plan:

4. Think of the previously acquired concepts that the target concept can be linked with. Write them out.
5. Read the dictionary entry below and analyze the difficulty of the language in the entry.
6. Find simpler equivalents to all of the words that are above level B1.
7. Simplify the grammar of the entry to make it easier to digest.
8. Think of three examples to illustrate the target concept.
9. Formulate two CCQs to assess the understanding of the target concept.

Irony—the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect.

One of the final integrated tasks is aimed at the development of the ability to organise the discussion in a group by reporting what others have said, summarizing, elaborating, and weighing up different points of view (mediating concepts: collaborating in a group). The first part of the task requires trainee teachers to listen to a recording where different students suggest their ideas, answering a question (e.g., What is a healthy diet?). The name of the student is given before every utterance. Every trainee is requested to summarise what the students have said and relate ideas to the people who have suggested them (e.g.: Mike and Tim mentioned fruit and vegetables, Irina added fish, Andrew spoke about the fact that eating fast food can be unhealthy). The second part of the task is a role-play where one trainee teacher has to elicit opinions on a certain topic from the other trainees in the classroom who are acting as students of a certain age and language level. The task of the trainee teacher is to elicit as many responses as possible from all of the students and summarise them.

One more roleplaying activity is aimed at the development of the ability to organise group work and manage potential conflict in the language classroom. Trainee teachers perform this activity in groups of three, where two of them act as students who perform their roles in a situation that is becoming increasingly confrontational. The students are given a description of their position and sample vocabulary, dialogue of what they should say (e.g.: You are dissatisfied with the fact that Student 1 has a lower language level than you and you must work in a pair with him/her. Complain about this to the teacher and use the words: I don't want to work with him/her; slow; useless; can I have a different partner). The nature of this task is both pedagogical and communicational, and it not only gives an opportunity to develop pre-service language teachers' group work organizational skills, but also helps them discuss how they can use difficult communicative situations in the classroom as opportunities to develop their students' mediation skills.

5 Conclusion

The two-part research of in-service and pre-service teachers' awareness of the CEFR/CV, of mediation activities and strategies, and of their ability to employ them has demonstrated certain limitations of professional competence in the area of mediation. The courses aimed at the development of mediation skills are not yet a part of teacher training curricula, and this might be one of the reasons why pre-service language teachers demonstrate a rather vague understanding of mediation strategies and activities even though the analysis of lesson scripts clearly indicates that a language classroom is an environment that requires mediation.

Our findings reflect the importance of mediation as an essential constituent of teacher-learner relationships and thus trainee language teachers should develop both the theoretical awareness of mediation and the practical skills of implementing mediation strategies that will allow them to perform effective cognitive and relational mediation in their classrooms. The case of concept mediation that was examined in this article shows that the right mediation strategies would help the teachers develop both as effective classroom communicators and as teaching professionals.

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7 Biographies

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Appendix

Question 1. Select the choice best describing your familiarity with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Please mark ONE choice

- It's a completely new topic for me.
- I know it is an international standard for describing language proficiency on a six-point scale (levels A1 up to C2), but not much more than that.
- I have read about it and how it can be used to guide teaching and learning, but need to understand more about its relevance.
- I am an experienced user of the CEFR and its descriptor scale, but want to know more about the new CEFR Companion Volume.
- I am familiar both with the CEFR Companion Volume and the updated CEFR illustrative descriptors.

Question 2. According to the CEFR Companion Volume, there are four modes of communication. What are they? Please mark FOUR choices

- Listening
- Reading
- Reception
- Mediation
- Speaking
- Writing
- Production
- Interaction
- Grammar
- Vocabulary

Question 3. Regarding mediation in the CEFR, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please mark ONE choice in each row

- Agree
- Undecided
- Disagree

- The term 'mediation' is synonymous with 'interpretation' and 'translation.
- In mediating activities, the language user is concerned with expressing his/her own meanings and not simply with acting as an intermediary between interlocutors who are unable to understand each other directly.
- The context for mediation can be social, pedagogic, cultural, linguistic or professional.

Question 4. Please continue the following statement by marking ONE choice

In mediation, the user helps to construct or convey meaning ...

- within the same language
- from one language to another
- sometimes within the same language, sometimes from one language to another

Question 5. Please indicate in which of the following situations the teacher is engaged in mediation activities. Drag and drop each of the following case descriptions into ONE of the columns

- The teacher shows an interview with a celebrity and asks the class to decide if the sentences in the following task are true or false.
- The teacher asks the students to repeat the words 'sheep' and 'ship'.
- The teacher gives the class some extra irregular verbs to learn for homework and says it is due tomorrow.
- The teacher asks the students to work with a partner and write down the names of as many animals as they can; then the teacher introduces the words 'domestic' and 'wild' using the students' examples.
- The teacher organises all new information about conditional sentences in a table.
- The teacher explains the word 'border' as a line separating one state from another. The students don't understand this explanation and the teacher paraphrases it and says a border is a line between two countries.

Question 6. Thinking of your own mediation abilities, to what extent are you capable of using mediation strategies in the classroom? Please mark ONE choice for each of the strategies listed below

- Linking to previous knowledge
- I can introduce complex concepts (e.g., scientific notions) by providing extended definitions and explanations which draw upon students' assumed previous knowledge.
- I can spontaneously pose a series of questions to encourage students to think about their prior knowledge and to help them establish a link to what is going to be explained.
- I can formulate questions and give feedback to encourage students to make connections to previous knowledge and explain a new concept by comparing and contrasting it to one that students are already familiar with.
- I can explain how something works by providing examples which draw upon students' everyday experiences and can show how new information is related to what students are familiar with by asking them simple questions.
- Adapting language
- I can adapt the language of a very wide range of texts in order to present the main content in a register and degree of sophistication and detail appropriate to students.
- I can adapt my language in order to make a complex specialist topic accessible to students who are not familiar with it. I can paraphrase and interpret technical texts, using suitably non-technical language.
- I can explain technical topics within my field using suitably non-technical language and can make a specific, complex piece of information in my field clearer for students by paraphrasing it in simpler language.
- I can paraphrase more simply the main points made in short, straightforward spoken or written texts on familiar subjects to make the content accessible for students.
- Breaking down complicated information
- I can facilitate understanding of a complex issue by explaining the relationship of parts to the whole and encourage different ways of approaching it.

- I can facilitate understanding of a complex issue by highlighting and categorising the main points, presenting them in a logically connected pattern and reinforcing the message by repeating the key aspects in different ways.
- I can make a complicated issue easier to understand by presenting the components separately and breaking the process down into a series of smaller steps.
- I can make a short instructional or informational text easier to understand by presenting it as a list of separate points. I can make a set of instructions easier to understand by saying them slowly, a few words at a time, employing verbal and non-verbal emphasis to facilitate understanding.
- Amplifying a dense text
- I can explain the information given in texts on complex academic or professional topics by elaborating and exemplifying.
- I can make complex, challenging content more accessible by explaining difficult aspects more explicitly, adding helpful detail and modifying style and register.
- I can make the content of a text on a subject in my field of interest more accessible to students by adding examples, reasoning and explanatory comments and repeating the main points.
- I can make an aspect of an everyday topic clearer and more explicit by conveying the main information in another way or by providing simple examples.
- Streamlining a text
- I can redraft a complex source text, improving coherence, cohesion and the flow of an argument, whilst removing sections unnecessary for its purpose.
- I can reorganise a complex source text in order to focus on the points of most relevance to students.
- I can simplify a source text by excluding non-relevant or repetitive information and deleting the parts that do not add new information that is relevant for students.
- I can identify and mark (e.g., underline, highlight etc.) the essential information in a straightforward, informational text in order to pass this information on to students.

Question 7. Do you think your university should provide training sessions for pre-service teachers to understand the use of the CEFR better? Please mark ONE choice

- Definitely
- Probably
- Possibly
- Probably not
- Definitely not

Question 8. Please name ONE or SEVERAL university courses that should instruct pre-service teachers in the general usage of the CEFR and train them to apply the CEFR in practice (e. g. to use mediation strategies that are appropriate in relation to foreign language teaching)

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire.

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The new CEFR descriptors for the assessment of written mediation: Exploring their applicability in a local context in an effort towards multilingual testing

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Focusing on the process of written mediation, this paper deals with the newly developed descriptor scales presented in the *CEFR Companion Volume with New Descriptors* (CEFR/CV) (Council of Europe (CoE) 2018). It investigates the views of both language education experts and teachers in Greece regarding these new descriptors in an effort to explore the extent to which they can be exploited in a local context. The questions this study addresses are: Which descriptors can be useful in the Greek educational context, and to what extent? The research project was organised into two phases. In Phase 1, 18 language experts (mainly from the two major state universities in Athens and Thessaloniki) completed online questionnaires containing the 90 new CEFR written mediation descriptors and they judged the clarity of these descriptors in terms of language, their usefulness for assessment purposes, and their relevance for the Greek context. Phase 2 involved 94 language teachers in Greece who were invited to judge the degree to which the same 90 CEFR descriptors correspond to the proficiency level for which they had initially been designed. Based on empirical evidence, the present paper stresses the urgent need for language testers to consider (cross-lingual) written mediation as a fundamental ability which needs to be both taught as well as tested, and discusses the possibility of transforming the monoglossic paradigm in assessment.

Keywords: written mediation, CEFR/CV, descriptors, multilingual, plurilingual, cross-lingual, (trans)languaging, pluricultural, assessment/testing

1 Introduction and background to the study

In today's multilingual societies, language users are frequently called upon to act as "translanguagers" (Stathopoulou 2018) or mediators, moving and conveying information from one language to another (Stathopoulou 2015; Dendrinos 2006). They should be prepared to handle communication mobilising their linguistic resources "to (re)construct different relations and meanings within a specific social context and possess the creative qualities of language mixing and hybridisation" (Li Wei and Hua, 2013: 519 as cited in Stathopoulou 2015: 39). The importance of being able to convey information from one language to another was recognised in 2001 by the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Teaching, Learning and Assessment* (CEFR) (CoE 2001), which legitimised (written and oral) mediation. However, no validated and calibrated descriptors were provided therein for this significant concept, which has assumed great importance due to the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity of our societies. Because of this 'void' in the CEFR specifications—and its importance probably further minimised by the monolingual paradigm prevalent in mainstream foreign language teaching and testing—mediation did not receive the attention it deserved. 18 years later, however, the updated CEFR

(CoE 2018) expanded the notion of mediation, which in 2001 seemed to be related only to the process of translation. In 2018, the CEFR/CV with a large set of descriptors for mediation was published.

Focusing on written mediation, this paper explores the views of language education experts and teachers in Greece in relation to the new CEFR mediation descriptors in an effort to investigate to what extent these can be used effectively in a local context for assessment purposes.[1] The recent introduction of written mediation descriptors in the CEFR/CV and the results of the present research suggest that the construct of writing for assessment purposes needs to be extended to include the interplay and mixing of languages, and be placed within the framework of multilingual testing. Based on empirical evidence, the present paper stresses the urgent need for language testing bodies to consider written mediation as a fundamental ability that needs not only to be *taught* but also to be *tested*, and points to the role of testing in the effort to support multilingualism (cf. Stathopoulou 2018).

As a matter of fact, the need for the assessment of cross-lingual mediation emerges from the real-life language use demands which are related to the current societal linguistic diversity. Given that "tests should match actual language practices and multilinguals use resources from their whole linguistic repertoire", and if we consider that "teaching is going in the direction of a multilingual focus, assessment should also follow the same path" (Gorter and Cenoz 2017: 43). In test construction, however, priority is usually given to monolingual standard language varieties (Shohamy 2011). "The absence of multilingual approaches in assessment and evaluation measures is striking", as Schissel et al. (2018: 2) characteristically state, while Gorter and Cenoz (2017) maintain that to make the change to multilingualism in the field of assessment is more challenging than it is to realise it in teaching.

2 Cross-lingual mediation in testing and assessment

2.1 What cross-lingual mediation entails

A fusion of languages characterise how people communicate today, so being able to mediate cross-linguistically seems to be one of the basic abilities that language users need to develop. Cross-lingual mediation, which involves moving back and forth with ease and comfort between and among different languages, can be described as a highly dynamic and creative process, which is triggered by a need to explain, clarify, interpret meanings or provide the gist or a summary of a text to an interested party (cf. Dendrinos 2014), and leads to the generation of new meanings. Mediation, which always occurs in a social context, is considered to be a purposeful activity or social practice in which language users may become involved when there is a communication gap (Stathopoulou 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2015, 2019).

2.2 CEFR and mediation: from 2001 to 2018

The CEFR pioneered the introduction of mediation to indicate communicative language activities other than reception, production, and interaction. Mediation is defined in the CEFR as a process where "the language user is not concerned to express his/her own meanings, but simply to act as an intermediary between interlocutors who are unable to understand each other directly –normally (but not exclusively) speakers of different languages" (2001: 87-88). Bearing in mind the contexts of linguistic and cultural diversity of today, the CoE commissioned and coordinated a new project from 2014 to 2017, the aim of which was to develop new descriptors for mediation which were actually missing from the previous publication. The outcome was CEFR/CV (CoE 2018). The CEFR/CV is useful in bridging the linguistic gaps by proposing new descriptors related to the parallel use of languages, the willingness of language users to act as interlingual mediators, and their capacity to purposefully blend, embed and alternate codes. In fact, the CEFR/CV provides scales for different aspects of mediating a text (including literature),

1. Note that although the CEFR sees mediation both as an intralingual (within the same language) and interlingual process (across languages), this paper focuses on the latter. The descriptors chosen to be analysed (see Section 4) refer to the relaying of messages from one language to another.

mediating concepts, and mediating communication, as well as aspects of plurilingual and pluricultural competence.

The descriptors were developed in a large-scale 3-year CoE project involving over 1200 informants from over 50 countries in cyclical phases of development, empirical validation and consultation (Piccardo and North 2020). Specifically, the creation of new descriptors and the production of the CEFR/CV involved three different phases. Phase 1 concerned the update of existing scales and the intuitive development of new descriptors drawing upon experts' knowledge, readings and experience. Phase 2 was the qualitative phase. Workshops with teachers evaluating and judging descriptors were organised around Europe at different institutions in order to pilot the new descriptors. Phase 3 was mainly quantitative and involved the calibration of the best descriptors on the basis of a Rasch model scaling analysis. The aim was to assess the degree to which the descriptors are appropriate for the proficiency level for which they had been developed (cf. North and Piccardo 2016).

Mediation is more clearly defined in the CEFR/CV if compared to the definition given in 2001. The development of the mediation descriptors actually draws upon Coste and Cavali (2015), who see mediation as a process of reducing the distance between two poles. Similarly, North and Docherty (2016: 24) note that the practice of mediation seems to involve "a self-effacing bridging effort to get something across and facilitate the (mutual) understanding of other people". Another definition which is reflected in the new descriptors is that of North and Piccardo (2016: 9), who state that "mediation concerns the facilitation of the communication itself and/or the (re)formulation of a text, the (re)construction of the meaning of a message." They move on to argue that in mediation language is not just a means of expression: "it is a vehicle to access the 'other', the new, the unknown or to help people to do so" (North et al. 2019: 21).

2.3 Multilingual testing and the assessment of cross-lingual mediation

Cross-lingual mediation captures the idea of not separating languages, but rather using them interchangeably, blending and mixing them, and is a term that realises the link not only between language *teaching* and multilingualism, but also between language *testing* and multilingualism. However, in official school settings or (international) examination batteries, languages seem to be assessed separately, i.e., "language competence assessment and testing practices remain monolingual" (Dendrinos 2019: 2), and language proficiency is usually compared to that of a monolingual native speaker without taking into account the learners' knowledge of other languages (Gorter and Cenoz 2017). International examinations are administered only in the target language, while the world view and ideology reflected in them does not seem to consider the relevant characteristics of the local communities in/for which they are administered. As stated by Dendrinos (2019: 2-3) "multilingual assessment and testing is marginalised, and the ostracism is largely due to the authority of the major testing and assessment paradigm which has been hegemonised by the international conglomerates for English language testing." Chalhoub-Deville (2019) considers the field of language testing as a monolingual construct which has to be expanded to consider integrated multilingual testing constructs while Schissel et al. (2017) also maintain that current assessment systems are problematic because they fail to support plurilinguistic practices.

Multilingual tests could have beneficial effects for the learners, and as Menken and Shohamy (2015: 421) admit, it could contribute to "higher scores on academic tasks" and could more accurately reflect the knowledge of multilingual test takers.[2] In fact, Otheguy et al. (2015) call into question the validity of assessment scores that see languages as isolated entities. The study conducted by Schissel et al. (2018) also shows that the participants' performance is higher on tasks accompanied by multilingual reading material than on English-only tasks, and that "integrating multilingual resources within assessment design can allow test-takers to demonstrate more complex or high-order thinking in writing in the language they are learning" (Schissel et al. 2018: 168).

2. See also empirical research by Shohamy (2011).

According to Schissel et al. (2019: 373), there have been multiple calls for the field of language assessment "to embrace multilingual approaches not only to reflect the full (linguistic) humanity of multilingual peoples but also to contest decades to centuries of marginalization and discrimination against multilingual practices outside monolingual standards." Gorter (2017) also points out the necessity of adopting multilingual approaches to language assessment since they are more valid, resembling the way in which languages are used in multilingual contexts. In Stathopoulou (2018), there is an extensive discussion on how the assessment of translingual literacy can be realised and language alternation can be assessed. In fact, the CEFR itself, which actually provides a basis for the assessment of languages, approves such a multilingual perspective, as shown in the extract below:

It is no longer seen as simply to achieve 'mastery' of one or two, or even three languages, each taken in isolation, with the 'ideal native speaker' as the ultimate model. Instead, the aim is to develop a linguistic repertory, in which all linguistic abilities have a place. (CoE 2001: 5).

However, much remains to be done in the field of foreign language assessment, and especially in the direction of assessing competences linked to the simultaneous use of languages, such as that in cross-language mediation (Stathopoulou 2015: 224). As Shohamy (2011: 419) mentions, the assessment field continues "to view language as a monolingual, homogenous, and often still native-like construct", a view that seems to ignore the complex communicative practices of multilinguals and their simultaneous uses of multiple languages (Shohamy 2013). It thus becomes difficult for language assessment models to align with the paradigm shift and disregard the monolingual norm which especially nowadays seems inappropriate. The first questions to be answered in this direction are: What is 'multilingual testing'? and How can it be realised? Different approaches are possible, depending on what we test, when, where and why. Shohamy and Menken (2015) argue that multilingual assessment—and particularly an approach to multilingual testing which combines different languages—should drive future research and practices in language testing (see also Menken 2017: 393). The first step is a paradigm shift –from a monolingual/monoglossic view to a multilingual/multiglossic view (Shohamy 2013; Lopez et al. 2017).

A localised example of the assessment of mediation is that of the National Foreign Language Exams (*Kratiko Pistopiitiko Glossomathias* (KPG)) in Greece. Mediation is a basic component of the KPG exams, which include the assessment of candidates' oral and written mediation performance across proficiency levels. Candidates are provided with a written text in Greek and are given a task which provides the communicative purpose on the basis of which they have to produce their own text in the target language. This 'mingling-of-languages idea' (among other aspects) (Stathopoulou 2015) makes this system "glocal" (Karavas and Mitsikopoulou 2018), thereby differentiating it from the majority of international examination systems, which are administered in only one language.

Given that this study attempts to bring to the fore the issue of multilingual testing through incorporating mediation in tests for writing, the main questions to be answered are: What may a mingling-of-languages approach to the assessment of writing involve? And how can it be practically realised? Among other things, including cross-lingual mediation in a language test assessing writing ability can be considered as an example of multilingual testing, in which case test tasks may involve:

- Communication of written or oral information from one language to another in writing.
- Summary or selection of information read or heard in one language; its presentation in writing in another language, including changing the discourse and/or genre of the original text for a given communicative purpose (cf. Stathopoulou 2015).
- Using information from different sources in different languages in order to produce a written text. The language output may be bilingual or trilingual. In fact, combining languages in a test may also involve students' answers in different languages.

3 Aim of the study

This paper focuses on the newly developed illustrative descriptor scales which are included in the CEFR/CV and are related to the process of written mediation *across languages*. It actually addresses the following question: Which of these new descriptors can be useful in practice in the Greek educational context, and to what extent? It is important to note that the CEFR itself stresses the importance of validation of the descriptors for specific contexts, and invites suggestions for changes which would make the descriptors useful in specific contexts (cf. Zou and Zhang 2017) and different language and cultural backgrounds:

> Neither the categories nor the examples claim to be exhaustive. If you want to describe a specialised area, you may well need to sub-categorise further than the present classification goes. The examples are suggestive only. You may well wish to keep some, reject others and add some of your own. You should feel quite free to do so, since it must be for you to decide on your objectives and your product. (CoE 2001: xiii).

In addition, the co-authors of the CEFR/CV encourage the use and adaptation of descriptors in specific contexts:

> We believe that the provision of the new illustrative descriptors will be a stimulus to users of the CEFR to consider forms in which mediation through language takes place in their context, the categories of mediation that appear relevant and the place of plurilingual and pluricultural competence in their curriculum. (North and Piccardo 2017: 30).

Focusing on written mediation, this paper ultimately attempts to approach the issue of the link between language assessment and multilingualism for the purpose of identifying and discussing aspects which might potentially assist the development of policies incorporating multilingual approaches to the assessment of writing. The paper concludes by arguing that the construct of written mediation needs to be further explored.

4 Study design and data collection

The research project, which took place from April 2018 to January 2019, was organised into two research phases involving different participants, and each phase was based on a different research instrument.

4.1 Phase 1

The very first step of Phase 1 involved a critical reading of the new CEFR mediation descriptors on the part of the researcher with a view to selecting *only* those descriptors that referred to written mediation. Given that the focus was on the writing ability and particularly on mediating texts (i.e., linguistic mediation), descriptors for 'mediating communication' or 'mediating concepts' (CoE 2018), were not chosen for the purposes of this project. The seven (7) scales under the category of 'mediating a text' involve passing on to someone the content of a text to which they do not have direct access, because of linguistic barriers:

Scale 1: Relaying specific information in writing
Scale 2: Explaining data in writing (e.g., in graphs, diagrams, charts etc.)
Scale 3: Processing text in writing
Scale 4: Translating a written text in writing
Scale 5: Note-taking (lectures, seminars, meetings etc.)
Scale 6: Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature)
Scale 7: Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature)

Specifically, through an introductory note , it became clear to the participants who judged the scales that all scales involve two languages thus making them appropriate for use in the assessment of cross-

lingual mediation and ultimately for the construction of multilingual tests. Particularly for the descriptors of Scales 1-5, they make specific reference to Language A and Language B (see Appendix 1).[3] There was no further selection within each of the scales, which meant that all descriptors for each scale which referred to written mediation were included in the forms. Ultimately, given the scope of this project as explained above, ninety (90) new CEFR descriptors were selected (see Appendix 1).

Also, in Phase 1, specially designed online (Google) forms were distributed to eighteen (18) language experts, who were asked to evaluate these ninety (90) new descriptors (see Appendix 2a for the form and its online version). The evaluation was carried out on the basis of the following criteria:

a) *Clarity of language* (i.e., the degree to which the language used is clear and straightforward, and meaning is conveyed successfully).

b) *Usefulness for assessment purposes* (i.e., the extent to which the descriptor is useful *only* for assessment/testing purposes).

c) *Relevance to the Greek context* (i.e., the experts evaluated the descriptor's applicability: has the descriptor any relevance for the Greek educational context? Is it relevant to the educational context, the needs and interests of Greek students, etc?).

The participants were given detailed instructions as to how to fill in the form and what each criterion entails. In the introductory note accompanying the questionnaire, apart from the criteria, the participants were informed about the aim of the research and how it is related to the Greek context (see extract below):

The question thus that this study attempts to address is: Which descriptors (and to what extent) can be useful in the Greek context, where cross-lingual written mediation ability is *taught* on the basis of the Integrated Foreign Languages Curriculum (IFLC 2011)[4] at schools and *tested* through the examinations leading to the State Certificate in Language Proficiency, a multilingual suite nationally and internationally known as the KPG exams.

In this phase, the participants are assessment experts, mainly from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. A number of them had been appointed in 2002 by the Greek Ministry of Education as members of the first Central Examination Board (CEB) of the examinations leading to the State Certificate in Language Proficiency, known as the KPG. University scholars, researchers and language experts actively involved in the KPG system—which assesses language proficiency in six languages (English, French, German, Spanish, Italian and Turkish) according to the CoE six-level scale as specified in the CEFR also participated during this phase. A call for participation was sent to them and they voluntarily responded to the survey. Half of the experts each have more than 20 years' experience in the field of language education, while the experience of the other half ranges from 11-20 years. The vast majority of the experts (n=14/18) hold a PhD in applied linguistics and foreign language education, while the remaining four (4) hold an MA in the same fields, and have been extensively involved in research and test task design. Many have worked with English (n=7) and French (n=6), while the rest of the KPG languages (Italian, German, and Spanish) have also been represented.

In summary, in Phase 1, the descriptors were evaluated by experts having knowledge of a variety of languages, and provided their views about the extent to which the new CEFR written mediation descriptors are clear, useful for assessment purposes, and are appropriate for use in the Greek context. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part included personal questions about their gender, age, studies, affiliation, and working experience. The second part of the questionnaire included the ninety (90) descriptors. For each one of them, experts were asked to provide their opinion on the basis of the aforementioned criteria (e.g., Is the descriptor clear, useful for assessment purposes and

3. Note that it is not only the 'Translation' scale that involves the parallel use of languages. In fact, as the CEFR/CV suggests, translation may be only one form of cross-lingual mediation.

4. https://rcel2.enl.uoa.gr/xenesglossesedu2/?p=87

relevant to the Greek context?) using a three-point scale (Yes, To some extent, No) (see Appendix 2a). No further open questions were included. The answers, which had been provided in the online form, were then extracted into excel files. Using the SPSS statistical package, the experts' responses were quantitatively analysed in order to determine whether the 90 descriptors initially chosen were suitable for the Greek context, and ultimately to suggest what amendments could be made in order to meet the needs of the Greek curriculum and learners.

4.2 Phase 2

Phase 2 involved evaluation of descriptors by practitioners/teachers. In fact, language teachers were invited to assess the degree to which the same 90 CEFR descriptors corresponded to the proficiency level for which they had initially been designed. The questionnaire was divided into two parts with the first part containing personal questions about gender, age, studies, affiliation, working experience and also about the degree to which the participants were familiar with the CEFR and the new CEFR/CV descriptors. In the second part of the questionnaire, the teachers were asked to choose from a drop-down list of proficiency levels (Pre-A1 to C2) the level which best applied to each descriptor (see Appendix 2b). Evidently, the questions were all closed. The SPSS tool was used for the analysis of the responses at this phase too. Although this study is quantitative, the researcher attempts to interpret the numerical data by also looking at the qualitative aspects of the descriptors. This is mainly done in Section 5 of this paper.

The vast majority of the participants during this phase were teachers of English as a Foreign Language (with a few exceptions being teachers of German, French and Greek as foreign languages), while more than half hold an MA degree in applied linguistics and foreign language didactics. The majority of them (n=69/94) are young, between 25 and 45 years of age. All educational contexts are represented among the professional settings where the respondents work, from primary education to tertiary education, and from state schools, universities and colleges, to private institutions and publishers of foreign language teaching materials. The participating teachers evaluated themselves as being generally aware of the CEFR and its proficiency levels, and as being familiar with the notion of mediation and what it entails. Note that they voluntarily participated in the research after the relevant call which was sent electronically.

5 Presentation of findings

5.1 Judging written mediation scales and descriptors: the experts' perspective

This section focuses on the findings of Phase 1: What the experts believe about the scales and the descriptors for written mediation on the basis of the three criteria that had initially been posed, i.e., clarity, usefulness for assessment, and relevance to the Greek context. The tables that follow indicate the scores for the three criteria for each descriptor, which is depicted by the letter Q (i.e., with Q1 meaning Descriptor 1 in Appendix 1).

5.1.1 The scales with the highest and lowest scores: an overview of findings

Seven (7) new CEFR scales were evaluated and, according to the experts' opinions, it is clear that some of the scales received higher scores than others in terms of their applicability. In order to define the scores, the experts' responses were counted (see Appendix 3a) and then multiplied with a different score for each of the criteria. The possible responses were three (3), that is, 'Yes' which counted for 3, 'To some extent' which counted for 2 and 'No' which counted for 1. If all participants, who were eighteen (18), chose 'Yes' in a question, then the *total* score would be fifty-four (54). Therefore, the maximum score is 54 (18 multiplied with 3), while the minimum 18 (as the number of the participants).

An interesting finding which arose from the data in Table 1 is that 'Relaying specific information in writing' (Scale 1) seems to include the majority of clear, useful for assessment and relevant descriptors,

as seven (7) out of fifteen (15) descriptors, (i.e., 46% of the total number of descriptors for this scale) had a score of more than 50 (with 54 being the maximum score, and 18 the minimum) for all three criteria. 'Processing text in writing' (Scale 3) also includes many successful descriptors according to the experts. Specifically, seven (7) out of seventeen (17) (i.e., 41% of the descriptors of the particular scale) had the highest scores for all three criteria (i.e., above 50).

Scale 6, entitled 'Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature)', seems to also receive a relatively high score, with 7 out of 19 descriptors (or 36% of the total number of the descriptors in this scale) being rated at more than 50 for all three criteria.

In contrast, there are clearly two scales which received low ratings. The first one is 'Translating a written text in writing' (Scale 4), with generally low scores, especially for the criteria of usefulness for assessment and relevance to the Greek context, as becomes evident through descriptors 38, 39, 41, and 45 (see Appendix 1), which were scored at less than 40. The second scale with low scores is 'Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature)' (Scale 7), as shown through the scores of descriptors 77-81, 83, and 85-86. A detailed discussion of the experts' views for each scale is presented in Section 5.1.2 below.

5.1.2 Scales 1-7: main results

Scale 1: Relaying specific information in writing

As mentioned above, there is a consistency in the experts' opinions as far as the descriptors of this particular scale are concerned: The vast majority believe that Scale 1 includes descriptors which are clear, useful for assessment, and relevant for the Greek context. This is an expected result when we consider that this scale refers to an activity with which the experts are familiar, as this is what is required in the KPG exams in an activity where piece(s) of information are extracted from a text and relayed to another text in the target language (CoE 2018).

Scale 2: Explaining data in writing (e.g., in graphs, diagrams, charts etc.)

Explaining data refers to the transformation of information presented in diagrams, charts, figures, and other images into a text. Although all the experts believe that the descriptors are clear, the scores for usefulness for assessment purposes and relevance for the Greek context are lower (see Scale 2, Table 1). For instance, only a minority of the experts (7 out of 18) believes that the following descriptor (no 19) can be valuable for assessment purposes in Greece (being rated at 37 for the criterion of usefulness) (Appendix 3a):

> 19. Can interpret and present in writing (in Language B) the overall trends shown in simple diagrams (e.g., graphs, bar charts) (with text in Language A), explaining the important points in more detail, given the help of a dictionary or other reference materials.

From all the descriptors, only the following descriptor (no 20) seems to get the highest score for relevance, as 15 out of 18 participants say that it is relevant for the Greek situation.

> 20. Can describe in simple sentences (in Language B) the main facts shown in visuals on familiar topics (e.g., a weather map. a basic flowchart) (with text in Language A).

Scale 3: Processing text in writing

One of the scales on which the experts agree regarding the content of the descriptors and their applicability (see Scale 3, Table 1) is 'Processing text in writing', which involves understanding the information included in a source text and then transferring relevant information to another text (probably in another language), usually in a more condensed form, in a way that is appropriate to the context of situation. Processing actually refers to the reformulation of the original text focusing on the main source points and ideas. Specifically, for descriptors 35-37 (see Appendix 1), the experts do not seem to find them useful for assessment (see Appendix 3a), probably because they refer to 'copying' and the use of dictionaries when processing information from one text to another.

Table 1. ***Experts' views on scales 1-7: Total scores***

Descriptors	Score	min	18
		max	54
	clear	**useful**	**relevant**
Scale 1			
Q.1	46.00	43.00	45.00
Q.2	48.00	47.00	50.00
Q.3	53.00	51.00	53.00
Q.4	50.00	51.00	47.00
Q.5	51.00	52.00	51.00
Q.8	53.00	53.00	51.00
Q.9	50.00	53.00	52.00
Q.10	53.00	52.00	50.00
Q.11	53.00	54.00	52.00
Q.12	53.00	51.00	49.00
Q.13	51.00	51.00	49.00
Q.14	53.00	50.00	49.00
Q.15	53.00	53.00	52.00
Scale 2			
Q.16	50.00	47.00	47.00
Q.17	51.00	44.00	42.00
Q.18	51.00	47.00	46.00
Q.19	49.00	37.00	41.00
Q.20	52.00	49.00	50.00
Scale 3			
Q.21	47.00	46.00	48.00
Q.22	50.00	50.00	50.00
Q.23	49.00	47.00	50.00
Q.24	50.00	46.00	48.00
Q.25	51.00	52.00	51.00
Q.26	52.00	52.00	52.00
Q.27	46.00	48.00	46.00
Q.28	53.00	51.00	52.00
Q.29	52.00	52.00	52.00
Q.30	51.00	51.00	50.00
Q.31	49.00	47.00	51.00
Q.32	54.00	51.00	53.00
Q.33	46.00	48.00	48.00
Q.34	48.00	52.00	51.00
Q.35	50.00	35.00	37.00
Q.36	50.00	37.00	42.00
Q.37	51.00	35.00	42.00

Descriptors	Score	min	18
		max	54
	clear	**useful**	**relevant**
Scale 4			
Q.38	48.00	32.00	34.00
Q.39	44.00	38.00	35.00
Q.40	45.00	40.00	42.00
Q.41	39.00	35.00	39.00
Q.42	45.00	39.00	42.00
Q.43	47.00	40.00	42.00
Q.44	47.00	40.00	43.00
Q.45	48.00	33.00	38.00
Scale 5			
Q.46	50.00	39.00	44.00
Q.47	43.00	36.00	40.00
Q.48	47.00	40.00	43.00
Q.49	49.00	38.00	45.00
Q.50	44.00	37.00	42.00
Q.51	48.00	40.00	44.00
Q.52	44.00	37.00	41.00
Q.53	50.00	43.00	46.00
Q.54	51.00	44.00	47.00
Q.55	52.00	47.00	48.00
Q.56	49.00	42.00	48.00
Q.57	52.00	44.00	48.00
Scale 6			
Q.58	47.00	46.00	49.00
Q.59	49.00	44.00	46.00
Q.60	52.00	47.00	49.00
Q.61	50.00	47.00	50.00
Q.62	50.00	46.00	47.00
Q.63	51.00	46.00	47.00
Q.64	52.00	48.00	51.00
Q.65	54.00	50.00	53.00
Q.66	54.00	51.00	53.00
Q.67	52.00	48.00	52.00
Q.68	49.00	46.00	50.00
Q.69	53.00	48.00	51.00
Q.70	53.00	52.00	52.00
Q.71	54.00	52.00	53.00
Q.72	53.00	50.00	52.00
Q.73	53.00	52.00	52.00
Q.74	54.00	53.00	53.00
Q.75	52.00	47.00	49.00
Q.76	54.00	49.00	53.00

Scale 4: Translating a written text in writing

The notion of mediation has been extensively used in translation studies to stress the role of the translator as the bridge between two languages and cultures and this is the main reason why translation is seen as a form of mediation in the CEFR/CV. The vast majority of the descriptors under this scale have been positively evaluated as far as clarity of language is concerned (see Scale 4, Table 1). However, the experts who participated in this research do not seem to agree or to be convinced that written translation and interpretation can be very useful for assessment purposes. Descriptors 38, 41 and 45 (see Appendix 1) get the lowest score as far as usefulness is concerned as is shown in Table 2 below. If we closely look at descriptor 41, which refers to the production of exact translations into the target language following the structure of the original text, the participants' evaluation regarding usefulness for assessment purposes is negative (see Table 2 below with 7 out of 18 saying that it is totally useless).

> 41. Can produce translations into (Language B, which closely follow the sentence and paragraph structure of the original text in (Language A), conveying the main points of the source text accurately, though the translation may read awkwardly

The fact that the majority of the experts work or have worked for an examination suite which includes mediation as a basic component in its tests but which does not see it as synonymous with translation involving reproduction of the original text into the target language (Stathopoulou 2015; Dendrinos 2006) may account for this finding.

Table 2. ***Experts views (out of 18) on Scale 4***

Clear	Yes	To some extent	No	Useful	Yes	To some extent	No	Relevant	Yes	To some extent	No
	Count	Count	Count		Count	Count	Count		Count	Count	Count
Q.38a	13	4	1	Q.38b	4	6	8	Q.38c	6	4	8
Q.39a	10	6	2	Q.39b	7	6	5	Q.39c	6	5	7
Q.40a	13	1	4	Q.40b	8	6	4	Q.40c	9	6	3
Q.41a	9	3	6	Q.41b	6	5	7	Q.41c	8	5	5
Q.42a	12	3	3	Q.42b	9	3	6	Q.42c	10	4	4
Q.43a	13	3	2	Q.43b	9	4	5	Q.43c	10	4	4
Q.44a	13	3	2	Q.44b	9	4	5	Q.44c	10	5	3
Q.45a	14	2	2	Q.45b	6	3	9	Q.45c	8	4	6

Regarding the criterion of relevance for the Greek context, while many experts claim that descriptors 42-44 are generally relevant, this is not the case for descriptors 38 and 39 (Table 2).

Scale 5: Note-taking (lectures, seminars, meetings, etc.)

This scale concerns the ability to write coherent notes, which is a valuable skill both in academic and professional life. The majority of the descriptors under this scale have been positively evaluated as far as clarity of language is concerned (see Table 1 and Appendix 3a).

Regarding the degree to which they are useful for assessment purposes, descriptors 47, 50 and 52 receive the lowest scores. Generally, the experts are not convinced about the usefulness (see Scale 5, Table 1), especially if we take a closer look at descriptors 46-47, 49-50 and 52 (Appendix 1 for the descriptors). Interestingly enough, these descriptors include the word 'lecture' (no 49-52), or the expressions 'actual words' (no 47), or 'reliable notes' (no 46). The experts do not seem to agree that the production of exact notes should be tested, or they may not consider these activities as mediating

activities. On the contrary, descriptors 48 and 51 seem to be more closely related to the experts' view of mediation since they concern paraphrasing (no 48) and selective relaying (no 51). Regarding the criterion of relevance for the Greek context, the scores are not strikingly high for all descriptors (46-57) but especially for descriptor 47 the participants do not seem to consider it as being relevant for the Greek context (see Appendix 3a, Scale 5).

> 47. Is aware of the implications and allusions of what is said and can make notes on them as well as on the actual words used by the speaker

Scale 6: Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature)

The particular scale focuses on expression of how a work of literature affects the user/learner as an individual, while the key activities related to this scale are: explaining what he/she liked, what interested him/her about the work, describing characters, saying which he/she identified with, relating aspects of the work to his/her own experience, and relating feelings and emotions (CoE 2018). The experts agree that this scale includes not only clear and straightforward descriptors in terms of language but also useful for assessment purposes and relevant for the Greek context (see Scale 6, Table 1 and Appendix 3a). Literature and the cultural features related to it are rather neglected areas of language learning in Greece, and this may account for the experts' positive evaluation of this scale in terms of the three criteria set as shown in Table 1.

Scale 7: Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature)

While expressing a response to literature is claimed to be a useful scale, the one that refers to the analysis and criticism of literary texts does not seem to trigger positive evaluations as shown in Table 1 and Appendix 3a (Scale 7). The particular scale includes descriptors that refer to the activities of comparing different works, giving a reasoned opinion of a work, and critically evaluating features of the work, including the effectiveness of techniques used (CoE 2018). It seems that only descriptor 89 had a score of more than 50 (out of 54) for all three criteria.

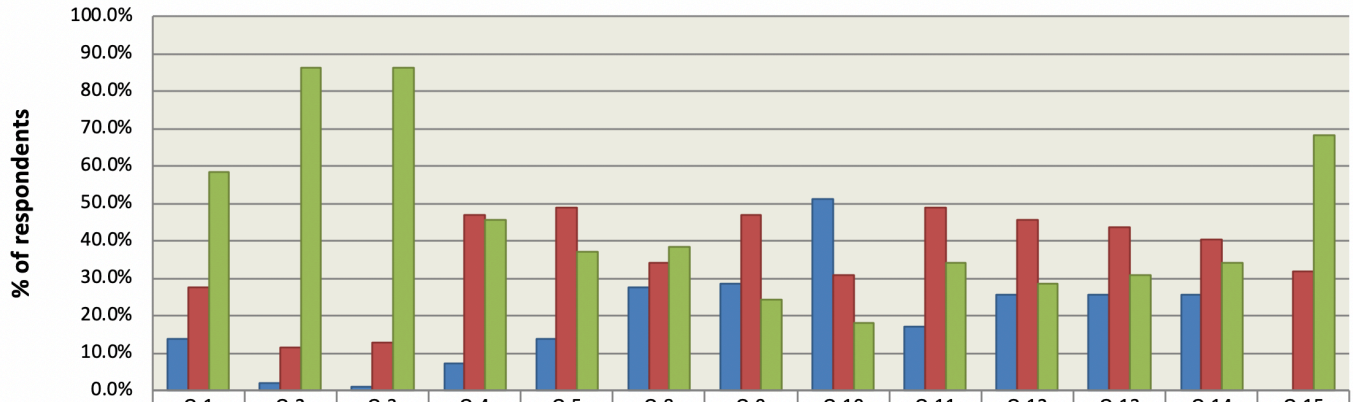
> 89. Can describe the key themes and characters in short narratives involving familiar situations that are written in high frequency everyday language.

5.2 Judging proficiency level: the practitioners' perspective

Phase 2 of the research involved the analysis of responses of ninety-four (94) practitioners/teachers in relation to how they rated the proficiency level (from Pre-A1 to C2) of each descriptor. This section of the paper discusses the instances of teacher-rated descriptors diverging the most from the respective CEFR level, along with those descriptors found by the teachers to have the highest degree of agreement between their views and the CEFR as far as the respective proficiency levels are concerned. At certain points, the researcher attempts to provide certain interpretations regarding the possible reasons for these differences by looking at the qualitative aspects of the descriptors (content and/or phrasing).

Scale 1: Relaying specific information in writing

In Scale 1, more than 50% of the teachers claimed that four (4) out of thirteen (13) descriptors are at a higher level than the one assigned by the CEFR.



	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Q.5	Q.8	Q.9	Q.10	Q.11	Q.12	Q.13	Q.14	Q.15
lower level	13.8%	2.1%	1.1%	7.4%	13.8%	27.7%	28.7%	51.1%	17.0%	25.5%	25.5%	25.5%	0.0%
correct level	27.7%	11.7%	12.8%	46.8%	48.9%	34.0%	46.8%	30.9%	48.9%	45.7%	43.6%	40.4%	31.9%
higher level	58.5%	86.2%	86.2%	45.7%	37.2%	38.3%	24.5%	18.1%	34.0%	28.7%	30.9%	34.0%	68.1%

Figure 1. Scale 1: Respondents' views on the proficiency level of the descriptors

Specifically, the following three B2 level descriptors (Table 3) are judged as being appropriate for C1 or even C2.

Table 3. *Scale 1 descriptors 1-3*

	CEFR
1. Can relay in writing (in Language B) which presentations at a conference (given in Language A) were relevant, pointing out which would be worth detailed consideration.	B2
2. Can relay in writing (in Language B) the relevant point(s) contained in propositionally complex but well-structured texts (written Language A) within his/her fields of professional, academic and personal interest.	B2
3. Can relay in writing (in Language B) the relevant point(s) contained in an article (written in Language A) from an academic or professional journal.	B2

It seems that the way these descriptors have been articulated accounts for these rather logical results: The less familiar discourse environments (e.g., presentations at a conference in descriptor 1, or an academic or professional journal in descriptor 3) which usually appear at higher levels (see Stathopoulou 2013a, 2013b), or text complexity ("complex but well-structured texts" in descriptor 2) seem to have strongly affected the practitioners' judgement. An additional analysis of the discrepancies between the CEFR and the teachers' views (see Appendix 4) shows that for descriptors 1 and 3, 35.1% and 47.9% of the teachers, respectively, considered them as being appropriate for more than one level higher (i.e., C2 instead of B2).

In addition, as for descriptor 15, 43 out of 94 of practitioners (46%) believe that it is an A1 level descriptor, and 13 out of 94 claim that it is an A2 level descriptor, rather than the assigned CEFR level of Pre-A1. This result has to be examined against the relevant results for descriptor 14 which is similar to 15 in terms of content, but according to the CEFR, the former is an A1 descriptor. In fact, the two descriptors share the same criterion (i.e., listing items in very simple language), but only a few teachers believed that the introduction of illustrations (descriptor 15) is a sufficient justification for lowering the level of the descriptor (see Appendix 3b).

Table 4. ***Scale 1 descriptors 14-15***

	CEFR
14. Can list (in Language B) names, numbers, prices and very simple information of immediate interest (given in Language A), provided that the speaker articulates very slowly and clearly, with repetition.	A1
15. Can list (in Language B) names, numbers, prices and very simple information from texts (written Language A) that are of immediate interest, that are written in very simple language and contain illustrations	Pre-A1

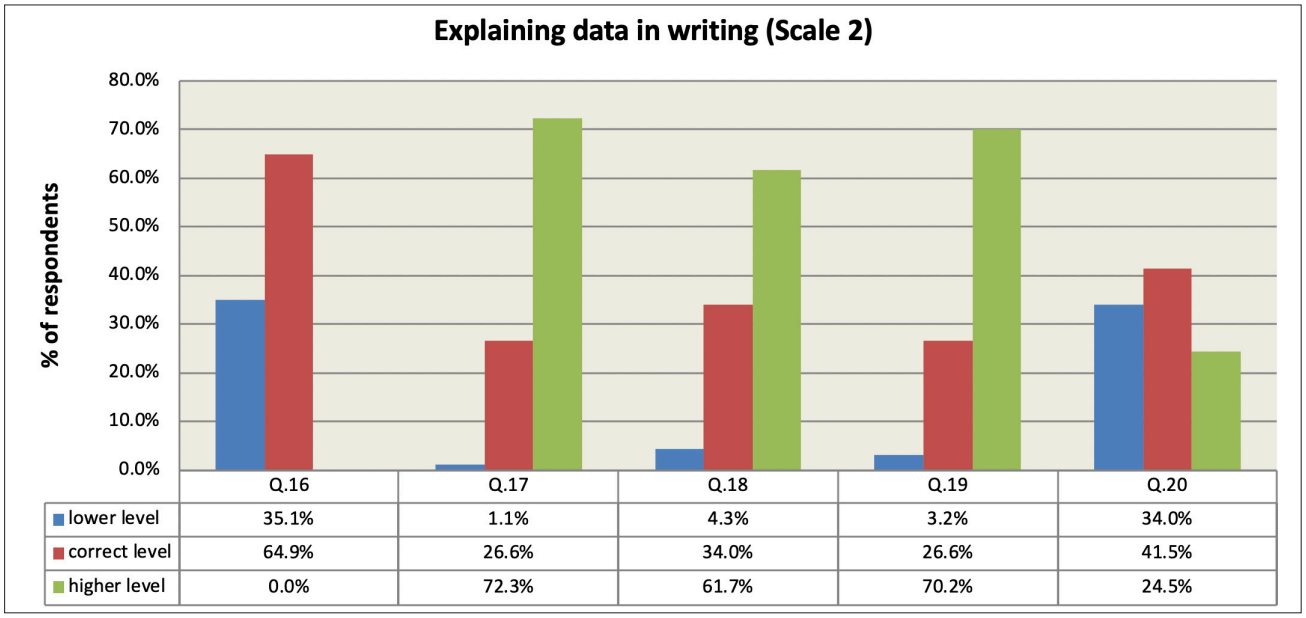
As Figure 1 above indicates, under Scale 1 'Relaying information in writing', one descriptor (see descriptor 10 below) has been judged by a great percentage of practitioners (51.1%) as being at one or two levels below the CEFR level of A2. If we consider the phrasing of this descriptor and focus on the way the delivery of the message is defined as being slow and clear, and then compare it against descriptor 14 above which uses the same expression ("provided that the speaker articulates very slowly and clearly"), it seems that the research participants have been consistent in their opinion, and their decisions have been guided by this part of the descriptor, claiming that both are at A1 level. Presumably their opinion has been formed on the basis of the 'how' rather than on the 'what' of the descriptor, i.e., the process involved (relaying or listing). Another explanation could be that it is the 'straightforward' nature of the message or the familiarity of the topics which led participants to suggest that it was an A1 descriptor.

Table 5. ***Scale 1 descriptor 10***

	CEFR
10. Can relay in writing (in Language B) specific information given in a straightforward recorded message (left in Language A), provided that the topics concerned are familiar and the delivery is slow and clear.	A2

Scale 2: Explaining data in writing (e.g., in graphs, diagrams, charts, etc.)

In Scale 2, as is evident from the data in Figure 2, three (3) out of five (5) descriptors have been judged (by more than half of the practitioners) as being at a higher level than the one suggested by the CEFR.



	Q.16	Q.17	Q.18	Q.19	Q.20
lower level	35.1%	1.1%	4.3%	3.2%	34.0%
correct level	64.9%	26.6%	34.0%	26.6%	41.5%
higher level	0.0%	72.3%	61.7%	70.2%	24.5%

Figure 2. Scale 2: Respondents' views on the proficiency level of the descriptors

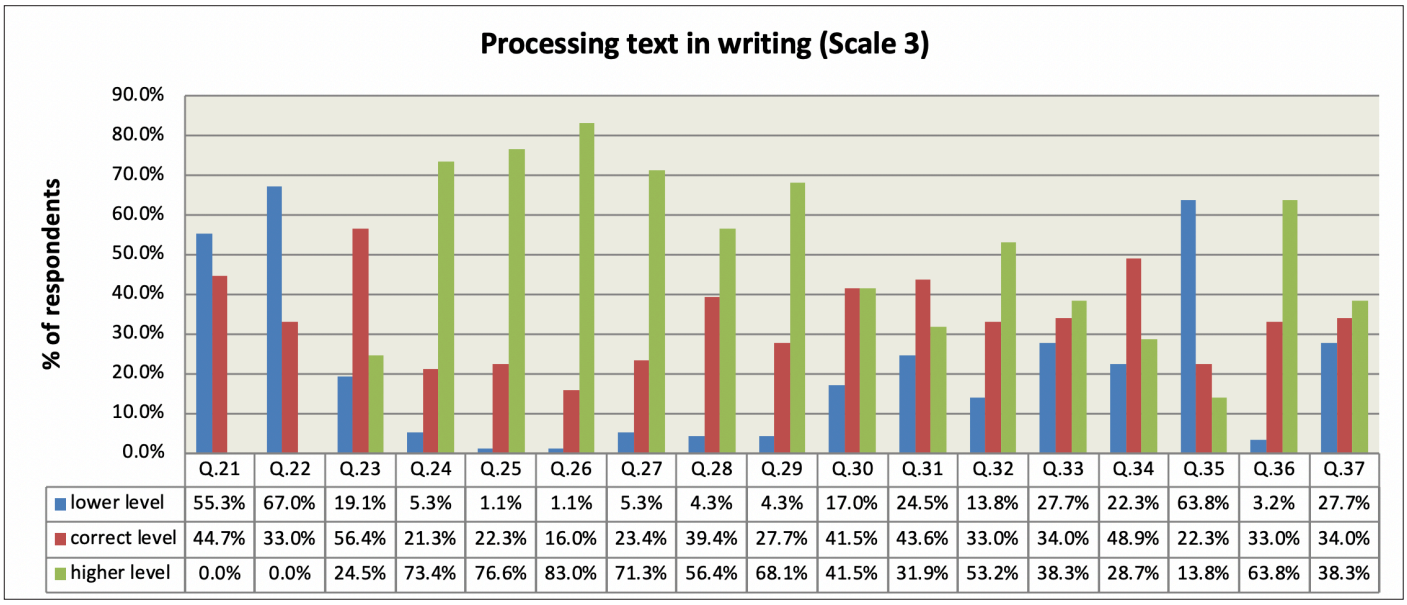
Specifically, descriptor 17 (see Table 6) is claimed to be a C2 level descriptor by the majority of teachers as shown in Appendix 3b, although the CEFR level is C1. The complexity of texts, the process of interpretation, the unfamiliar types of texts along with the topics (i.e., "complex academic or professional topics" which require the use of elevated vocabulary) seem to be aspects that have influenced the respondents' decision. As for descriptors 18 and 19, they also include the aspect of 'interpretation', thus sharing features of the previous descriptor, which is of a higher level. The practitioners did not seem to agree with the CEFR (see Appendix 3b) as far as interpretation is involved of how challenging it can be. Although descriptor 19 is a B1 level descriptor, the majority of the respondents (i.e., 39/94 and 22/94, respectively) believe that it should be either at B2 or even at C1 level.

Table 6. ***Scale 2 descriptors 17-19***

	CEFR
17. Can interpret and present clearly and reliably in writing (in Language B) the salient, relevant points contained in complex diagrams and other visually organised data (with text in Language A) on complex academic or professional topics.	C1
18. Can interpret and present reliably in writing (in Language B) detailed information from diagrams and visually organised data in his fields of interest (with text in Language A).	B2
19. Can interpret and present in writing (in Language B) the overall trends shown in simple diagrams (e.g., graphs, bar charts) (with text in Language A), explaining the important points in more detail. given the help of a dictionary or other reference materials.	B1

Scale 3: Processing text in writing

Regarding the third scale under examination i.e., 'Processing text in writing' the majority of the practitioners do not seem to agree with the assigned CEFR levels, as is clearly indicated in Figure 3.



	Q.21	Q.22	Q.23	Q.24	Q.25	Q.26	Q.27	Q.28	Q.29	Q.30	Q.31	Q.32	Q.33	Q.34	Q.35	Q.36	Q.37
lower level	55.3%	67.0%	19.1%	5.3%	1.1%	1.1%	5.3%	4.3%	4.3%	17.0%	24.5%	13.8%	27.7%	22.3%	63.8%	3.2%	27.7%
correct level	44.7%	33.0%	56.4%	21.3%	22.3%	16.0%	23.4%	39.4%	27.7%	41.5%	43.6%	33.0%	34.0%	48.9%	22.3%	33.0%	34.0%
higher level	0.0%	0.0%	24.5%	73.4%	76.6%	83.0%	71.3%	56.4%	68.1%	41.5%	31.9%	53.2%	38.3%	28.7%	13.8%	63.8%	38.3%

Figure 3. Scale 3: Respondents' views on the proficiency level of the descriptors

A closer examination of the qualitative aspects of the descriptors shows that as regards the B2 descriptors 25 and 27-28 (see Table 7 below), the complexity of the source text (see my emphasis below in italics) is what seems to affect the respondents' opinion. Similarly, in descriptor 26, the practitioners' responses indicate that the processes of comparing, contrasting and synthesizing

information found in "academic and professional publications" are associated with higher levels, rather than B2 (see Appendix 3b).

Table 7. ***Scale 3 descriptors 24-29***

	CEFR
24. Can summarise in writing a long and *complex* text (in Language A) (e.g., academic or political analysis article, novel extract, editorial, literary review, report, or extract from a scientific book) for a specific audience, respecting the style and register of the original.	C1
25. Can summarise in writing (in Language B) the main content of well-structured but propositionally *complex* spoken and written texts (in Language A) on subjects within his/her fields of professional, academic and personal interest.	B2
26. Can compare, contrast and synthesise in writing (in Language B) the information and viewpoints contained in academic and professional publications (in Language A) in his/her fields of special interest.	B2
27. Can explain in writing (in Language B) the viewpoint articulated in a *complex* text (in Language A), supporting inferences he/she makes with reference to specific information in the original.	B2
28. Can summarise in writing (in Language B) the main content of *complex* spoken and written texts (in Language A) on subjects related to his/her fields of interest and specialisation.	B2
29. Can summarise in writing (in Language B) the information and arguments contained in texts (in Language A) on subjects of general or personal interest.	B1

In descriptor 24 (which is C1 level) (see Table 7 above), the complex text combined with a discourse environment with which learners are not familiar accounts for teachers' view that the particular descriptor should be used at a higher level. Regarding descriptor 29, 68.1% of the respondents believe that it should be at a higher level. In fact, as shown in Appendix 3b, 45/94 teachers believe that it is a B2 level descriptor, probably because of the content of the source text which, according to the phrasing of the descriptor, may include 'arguments', an aspect which makes it more challenging for a B1 user of the target language. The additional analysis of the discrepancies between the CEFR and the practitioners' views (see Appendix 4) shows that for descriptors 27 (Table 7) and 35 (Table 8), more than one level is considered appropriate by 33% and 38.9% of the teachers, respectively.

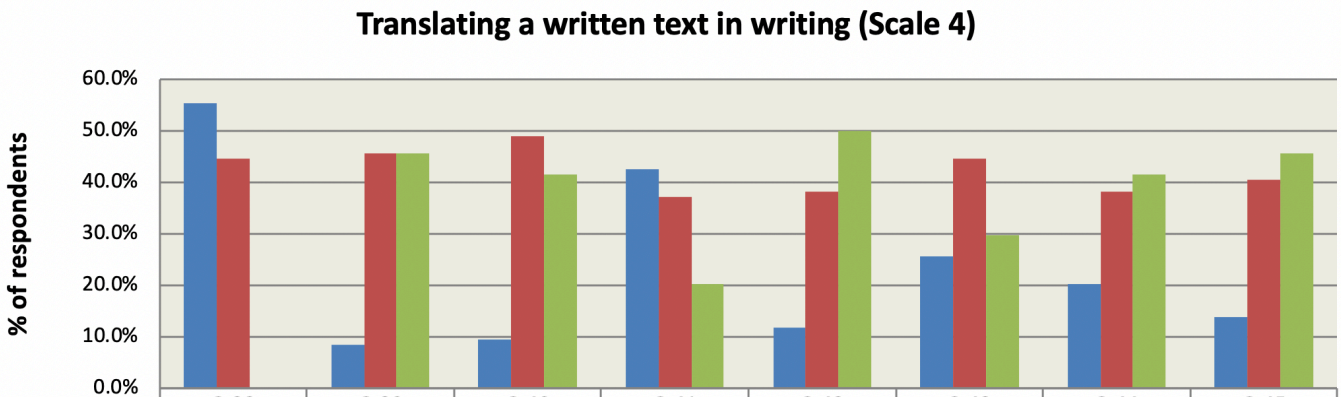
Table 8. ***Scale 3 descriptors 35-37***

	CEFR
35. Can copy out short texts in printed or clearly hand-written format.	A2
36. Can, with the help of a dictionary, render in (Language B) simple phrases written in (Language A), but may not always select the appropriate meaning.	A1
37. Can copy out single words and short texts presented in standard printed format.	A1

While the CEFR level for descriptor 35 is A2, the majority of the research participants seem to disagree as only 21/94 believe that this is the correct level. As shown in Appendix 2, 60/94 respondents believe that it is an A1 or Pre-A1 level descriptor, probably because of the process of 'copying' which is involved in the particular descriptor. The practitioners judged descriptor 37, which refers to copying from a text, in a similar fashion, as many of them (26/94) believe that it is a Pre-A1 level descriptor. Finally, 63.8% of the respondents believe that descriptor 36 should be considered as a higher level than A1.

Scale 4: Translating a written text in writing

The discrepancies between the CEFR level and the practitioners' views relating to Scale 4 mainly concern descriptors 38 and 39 as shown in Figure 4.



	Q.38	Q.39	Q.40	Q.41	Q.42	Q.43	Q.44	Q.45
lower level	55.3%	8.5%	9.6%	42.6%	11.7%	25.5%	20.2%	13.8%
correct level	44.7%	45.7%	48.9%	37.2%	38.3%	44.7%	38.3%	40.4%
higher level	0.0%	45.7%	41.5%	20.2%	50.0%	29.8%	41.5%	45.7%

Figure 4. Scale 4: Respondents' views on the proficiency level of the descriptors

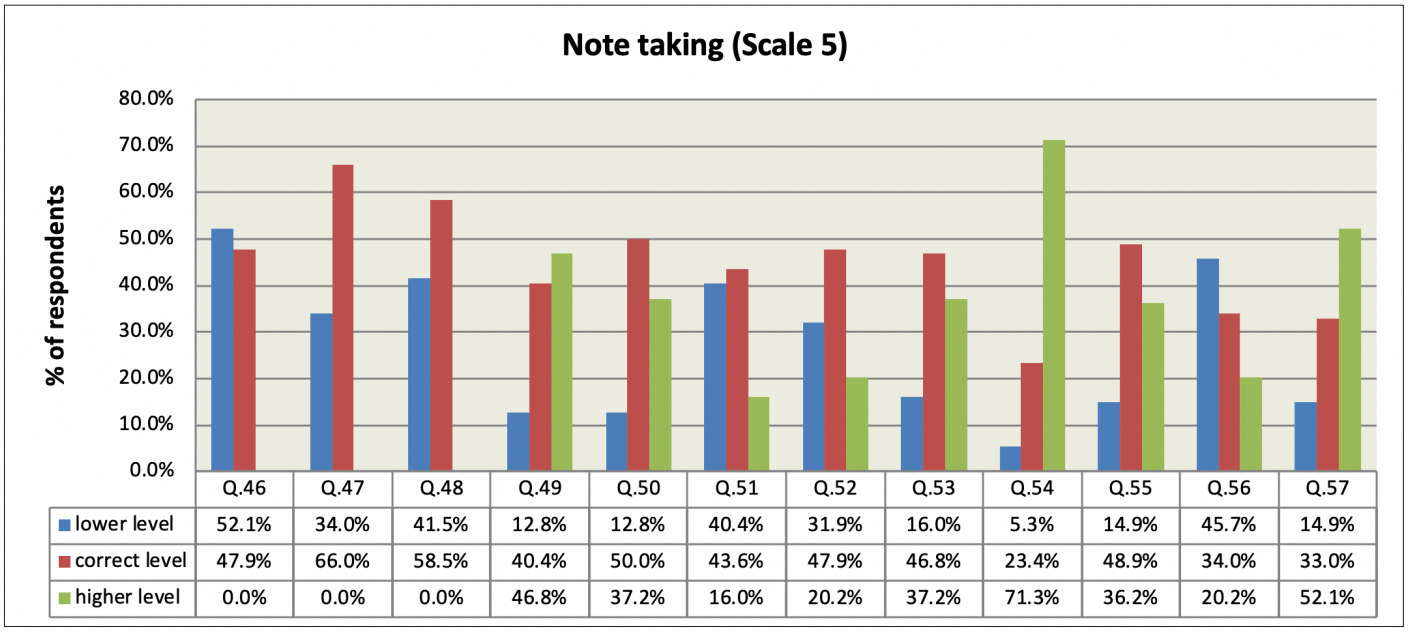
An interesting finding is related to descriptor 38, as 55.3% of the practitioners judge it as being of a lower level, mainly C1 rather than C2 (see also Appendix 3b). It seems that the additional explanation in the second part of the descriptor "provided subject matter accuracy is checked by a specialist in the field concerned" (see Table 9) influenced the respondents' opinion. Regarding descriptor 39, as many participants thought the descriptor should be at a higher level as agreed with the CEFR level.

Table 9. ***Scale 4 descriptors 38-39***

	CEFR
38. Can translate into (Language B) technical material outside his/her field of specialisation written in (Language A), provided subject matter accuracy is checked by a specialist in the field concerned	C2
39. Can translate into (Language B) abstract texts on social, academic and professional subjects in his/her field written in (Language A), successfully conveying evaluative aspects and arguments, including many of the implications associated with them, though some expression may be over-influenced by the original	C1

Scale 5: Note-taking (lectures. seminars. meetings etc.)

As can be seen in Figure 5, 52.1% of the teachers do not believe that the CEFR level of descriptor 46 is appropriate. The same is also true for descriptor 57.



	Q.46	Q.47	Q.48	Q.49	Q.50	Q.51	Q.52	Q.53	Q.54	Q.55	Q.56	Q.57
lower level	52.1%	34.0%	41.5%	12.8%	12.8%	40.4%	31.9%	16.0%	5.3%	14.9%	45.7%	14.9%
correct level	47.9%	66.0%	58.5%	40.4%	50.0%	43.6%	47.9%	46.8%	23.4%	48.9%	34.0%	33.0%
higher level	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	46.8%	37.2%	16.0%	20.2%	37.2%	71.3%	36.2%	20.2%	52.1%

Figure 5. Scale 5: Respondents' views on the proficiency level of the descriptors

While the teachers felt that descriptor 46 should be used at lower levels (mainly at C1), they also believed (52.1%) that descriptor 57 is more appropriate for higher levels, i.e., at B1 or even B2. In addition to these, regarding descriptor 54, 71.3% of the teachers believe that it is more appropriate for higher levels. (See Appendix 3b for the number of respondents for each case).

Table 10. ***Scale 5 descriptors 46 and 57***

	CEFR
46. Can, whilst continuing to participate in a meeting or seminar, create reliable notes (or minutes) for people who are not present, even when the subject matter is complex and/or unfamiliar.	C2
54. Can take notes during a lecture, which are precise enough for his/her own use at a later date provided the topic is within his/her field of interest and the talk is clear and well structured.	B1
57. Can make simple notes at a presentation/demonstration where the subject matter is familiar and predictable and the presenter allows for clarification and note-taking.	A2

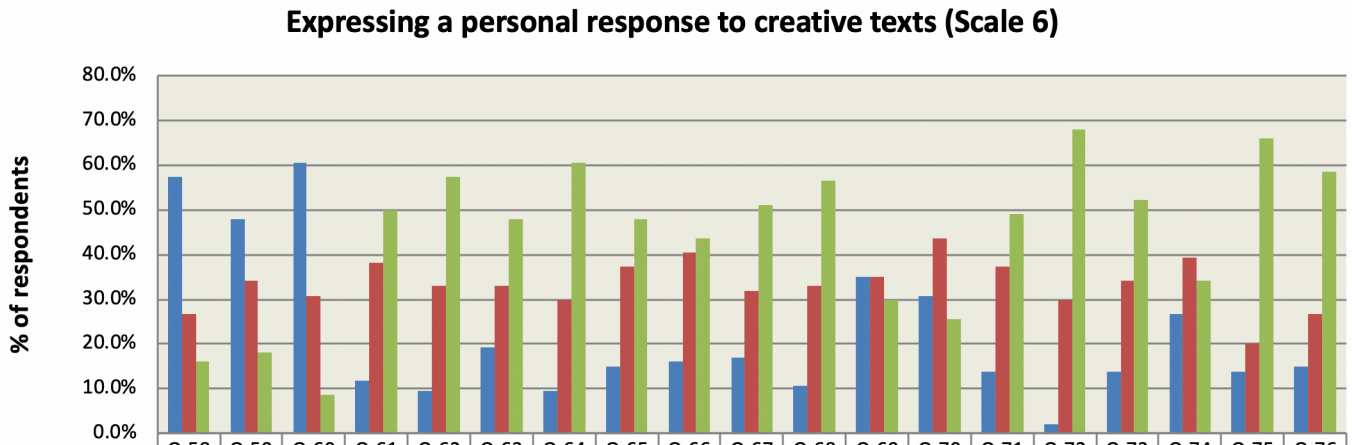
It appears that for descriptors 47, 48 and 50 (Table 11), more than half of the teachers agree with the CEFR on the level assigned (see Figure 5 above). This is an interesting finding if we also consider the additional analysis conducted on the discrepancies between the CEFR and the teachers' views (see Appendix 4). That is, for descriptors 47, 48 and 50 more than one level is considered appropriate only by 8.5%, 11.7% and 1.1% of teachers, respectively. These three descriptors are clearly articulated, including concepts and processes with which many research participants seem to be familiar as far as their proficiency level is concerned.

Table 11. *Scale 5 descriptors 47, 48 and 50*

	CEFR
47. Is aware of the implications and allusions of what is said and can make notes on them as well as on the actual words used by the speaker.	C2
48. Can make notes selectively, paraphrasing and abbreviating successfully to capture abstract concepts and relationships between ideas.	C2
50. Can make decisions about what to note down and what to omit as the lecture or seminar proceeds, even on unfamiliar matters.	C1

Scale 6: Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature)

Figure 6 shows that, regarding the C level descriptors of this scale (Table 12 below), descriptors 58, 59 and 60 are more appropriate for a lower level, as believed by 57.4%, 47.9% and 60.6% of teachers, respectively.



	Q.58	Q.59	Q.60	Q.61	Q.62	Q.63	Q.64	Q.65	Q.66	Q.67	Q.68	Q.69	Q.70	Q.71	Q.72	Q.73	Q.74	Q.75	Q.76
lower level	57.4%	47.9%	60.6%	11.7%	9.6%	19.1%	9.6%	14.9%	16.0%	17.0%	10.6%	35.1%	30.9%	13.8%	2.1%	13.8%	26.6%	13.8%	14.9%
correct level	26.6%	34.0%	30.9%	38.3%	33.0%	33.0%	29.8%	37.2%	40.4%	31.9%	33.0%	35.1%	43.6%	37.2%	29.8%	34.0%	39.4%	20.2%	26.6%
higher level	16.0%	18.1%	8.5%	50.0%	57.4%	47.9%	60.6%	47.9%	43.6%	51.1%	56.4%	29.8%	25.5%	48.9%	68.1%	52.1%	34.0%	66.0%	58.5%

Figure 6. Scale 6: Respondents' views on the proficiency level of the descriptors

In addition to this, for the same descriptors more than one level lower is considered appropriate by 25.5%, 11.7% and 22.3% of teachers, respectively, as Appendix 4 shows.

Table 12. *Scale 6 descriptors 58-60*

	CEFR
58. Can describe in detail his/her personal interpretation of a work, outlining his/her reactions to certain features and explaining their significance.	C1
59. Can outline his/her interpretation of a character in a work: their psychological/emotional state, the motives for their actions and the consequences of these actions.	C1
60. Can give his/her personal interpretation of the development of a plot, the characters and the themes in a story, novel, film or play.	C1

What is also observed by looking at the results concerning Scale 6 in Figure 6 is that the teachers relate the use of argumentative or emotive language (e.g., expressing feelings about/reactions to literary

work, etc.) to higher levels than B and A (see my emphasis in italics in the descriptors of Table 13 below). For instance, for B2 level descriptors 61 and 62, the majority of respondents feel that they are more appropriate for C level (see also Appendix 3b).

Table 13. ***Scale 6 descriptors 61-62***

	CEFR
61. Can give a clear presentation of his/her reactions to a work, developing his/her ideas and supporting them with examples and *arguments*.	B2
62. Can describe his/her *emotional response* to a work and elaborate on the way in which it has evoked this response.	B2

The same is true for descriptors 64, 67 and 68, and for 72, 73 and 75 (see Table 14). In the first group, while the CEFR level is B1, a large number of practitioners did not agree, since they consider those descriptors as being one or, in some cases, two levels higher (i.e., B2 or C1). Similarly, as regards the second group of descriptors, while the assigned CEFR level is A2, a large percentage of respondents felt that those descriptors were appropriate for B1 or even, in some cases, B2. (See Appendix 3b for the exact numbers.)

Table 14. ***Scale 6 descriptors 64, 67, 68, 72, 73, 75***

	CEFR
64. Can explain *why* certain parts or aspects of a work especially interested him/her.	B1
67. Can relate the *emotions* experienced by a character in a work to emotions he/she has experienced.	B1
68. Can describe the *emotions* he/she experienced at a certain point in a story. e.g., the point(s) in a story when he/she became anxious for a character, and explain why.	B1
72. Can describe a character's *feelings* and *explain the reasons* for them.	A2
73. Can say in simple language which aspects of a work especially interested him/her.	A2
75. Can select simple passages he/she particularly likes from work of literature to use as quotes.	A2

Scale 7: Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature)

It is evident from Figure 7 that regarding C2 level descriptors (77-80) (see Appendix 1), more than half of the practitioners agree with the CEFR on the level. The particular C2 descriptors refer to critical thinking skills (as evidenced by the expressions 'critical appraisal' or 'critical appreciation', 'subtle distinctions of style', 'implicit meaning', 'critically evaluate'), which lead to the respondents' decision.

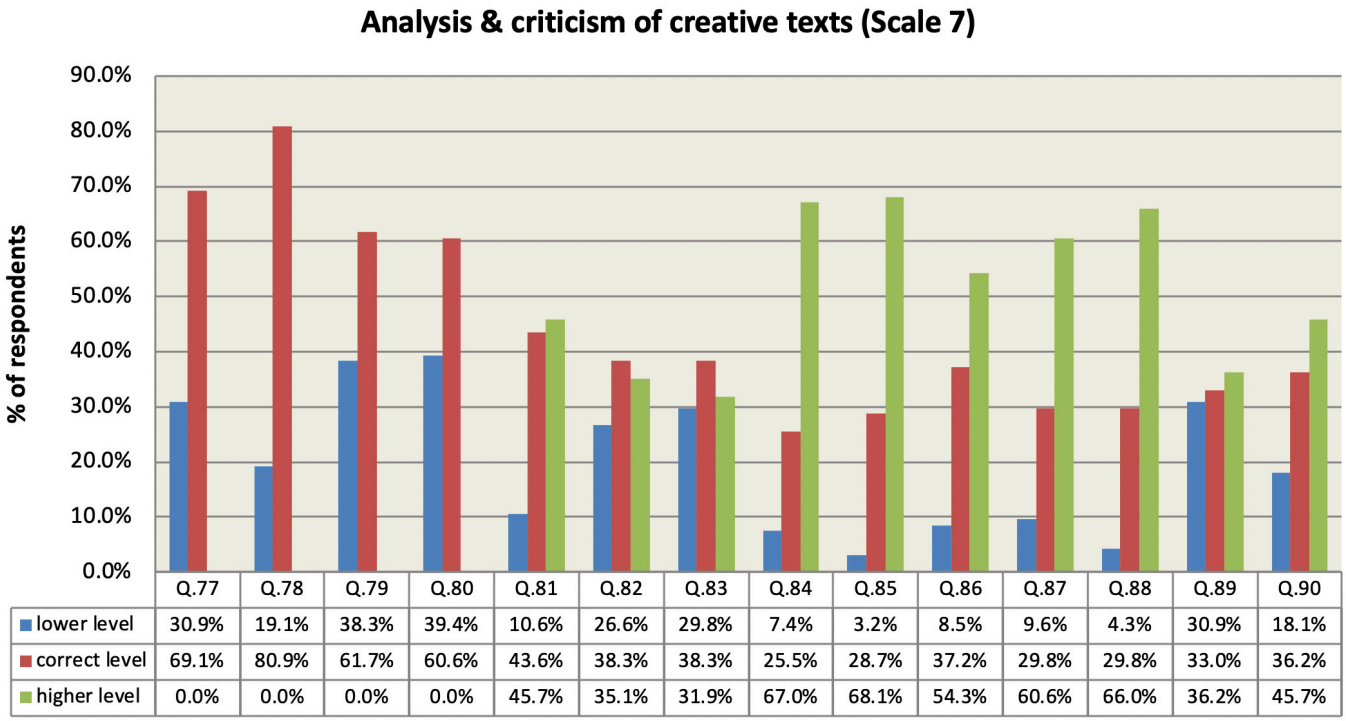


Figure 7. Scale 7: Respondents' views on the proficiency level of the descriptors

Figure 7 also clearly shows the responders' views that descriptors 84-87 belong at a higher level than B2 (mainly at C1). The same applies to descriptor 88, which is a B1 level descriptor, and is considered to be either a B2 (39/94 respondents) or a C1 level descriptor (20/94 respondents) (see Appendix 3b). Some descriptors in Table 15 a) seem to require multiple processes and skills on the part of the learners (as for instance descriptor 84, which requires comparison and explanation of connections, descriptor 85, which involves providing reasoned opinion and referring to arguments, and 88, which asks for identifying the important events and explaining their significance), b) another (descriptor 86) calls for the evaluation of a work, a rather challenging task for Greek students, while c) the final one in the group (descriptor 87) requires the comparison of works, another demanding area for Greek students. In fact, these qualitative aspects of the descriptors seem to account for the teachers' tendency to 'lower' the level of these particular descriptors.

Table 15. ***Scale 7 descriptors 84-88***

	CEFR
84. Can compare two works, considering themes, characters and scenes, exploring similarities and contrasts and explaining the relevance of the connections between them.	B2
85. Can give a reasoned opinion about a work, showing awareness of the thematic, structural and formal features and referring to the opinions and arguments of others.	B2
86. Can evaluate the way the work encourages identification with characters, giving examples.	B2
87. Can describe the way in which different works differ in their treatment of the same theme.	B2
88. Can point out the most important episodes and events in a clearly structured narrative in everyday language and explain the significance of events and the connection between them.	B1

6 Discussion

6.1 Phase 1 and Phase 2 findings: a synopsis

The present study, and particularly Phase 2, involved judgement by practitioners/teachers on the proficiency level of a set of CEFR descriptors related to written mediation across languages. The results add to our understanding not only of the differences across levels in terms of the content of the descriptors, but also of what the research participants believe about them, specifically as to how, to what extent, and why their opinions differ from the level assigned by the CEFR.

A general conclusion is related to learners' familiarity with the discourse environments included in the source text from which information is mediated, along with its degree of complexity. In other words, descriptors which refer to the complexity of the source text (e.g., Scale 3) or source data (Scale 2) are mainly judged by the practitioners to be at C levels, while in the CEFR/CV, as the present research has shown, this is not always the case. In addition, the teachers' responses to the questionnaire which asked them to judge the level of each descriptor indicate their tendency to believe that less familiar text types and discourse environments (e.g., presentations at a conference or in a professional journal) should usually appear in descriptors of C level (see for instance the findings for Scale 1). Thus, the responders do not always agree with the CEFR, which may link these discourse environments to lower levels, such as the B levels. In fact, this finding is consistent with previous research which analysed written mediation tasks across proficiency levels in order to explore what aspects differentiate them (Stathopoulou 2013a, 2013b). The systematic analysis and description of KPG written mediation tasks in terms of their linguistic features in order to find what types of texts were likely to be produced by candidates of different proficiency levels on the basis of specific mediation task types has shown that:

> the higher the level, the greater the genre variability. This means that candidates at lower levels are likely to produce a limited range of text types when mediating, while C1 level candidates are expected to be able to produce a wide variety of text types. Discourse environment variability is also what differentiates tasks. (Stathopoulou 2013a: 97)

When mediation involves transferring information from numbers to text and vice versa (Scale 2), it seems that the respondents found this process challenging for the lower levels, thereby disagreeing with the CEFR levels. Disagreement between the practitioners and the CEFR in terms of the level is also evident in the processing-of-text scale (Scale 3), where the vast majority of descriptors have been evaluated by the responders as being of a higher level. According to the justification provided by the updated CEFR, the higher the level is: a) the more cognitively and linguistically demanding is the process described by the descriptor, b) the greater the variety of text types, c) the higher the degree of complexity of the texts and the abstractness of the topics, and d) the more sophisticated the vocabulary. The distinction across levels is not always clearly indicated in the descriptors, and the practitioners do not always agree with the complexity of source texts (for instance at B2), or with the synthesising in writing (again at B2). However, according to the experts—whose opinions were analysed in Phase 1 on the basis of a questionnaire which asked them to judge the same descriptors for clarity, usefulness for assessment purposes and relevance for the Greek context—Scale 3 seems to be a clear, relevant and useful one, so any adjustment of it for localisation purposes should also take this perspective into account.

There does not seem to be any great discrepancies between teachers' views and the CEFR level regarding the descriptors linked to the process of translation (Scale 4) as the analysis of teachers' views in Phase 2 has indicated (see Appendix 3b and 4). The fact that here the learners are "asked to *reproduce* the substantive message of the source text, rather than necessarily interpret the style and tone of the original into an appropriate style and tone" (CoE 2018: 113, my emphasis in italics) may account for the high degree of agreement. The process of reproducing seems to be straightforward and even measurable if we consider assessment. In other words, aspects that may cause disagreement, such as selective relaying, interpretation, etc., are not included in this scale. Progression up to the scale has also been clearly articulated:

At the lower levels, translating involves approximate translations of short texts containing information that is straightforward and familiar, whereas at the higher levels, the source texts become increasingly complex and the translation is increasingly more accurate and reflective of the original (CoE 2018: 113).

However, there is a good deal of disagreement among the experts of Phase 1, especially if we focus on their responses regarding the criterion of usefulness and of relevance (see Table 1, Table 4 and Appendix 3a). What may account for this disagreement is the fact that translation is actually not taught at Greek schools, and consequently not assessed. This reality may account for this disagreement.

Although the experts of Phase 1 are not convinced that the scale of note-taking (Scale 5) can be used for assessment purposes (see Table 1 of Section 5.1 and Appendix 3a), the particular scale does not trigger a remarkable degree of disagreement in terms of the proficiency level assigned by the CEFR and what the teachers of Phase 2 believe (see Appendix 3b and 4). According to the scale, the higher the level is: a) the more complex the source text, b) the slower and clearer the speech, and c) the higher the degree of abstractness of key concepts. It seems that the operationalisation of key aspects here is such that it did not elicit different views on the part of the practitioners.

As the analysis of Phase 2 results has indicated (see Section 5.2), regarding Scale 6 (Expressing a personal response to creative texts), teachers seem to link the use of argumentative or emotive language with higher levels than with B or A, as opposed to the CEFR. Note that the experts who participated in the first phase of the project find this scale clear, useful for assessment purposes and relevant to the Greek context. On the contrary, in Scale 7 (Analysis and criticism of creative texts), the teachers did not seem to disagree with the CEFR to a great extent (see Appendix 3b and 4 and the presentation of the results in Section 5.2), probably because "until B2, the focus is on description rather than evaluation" (CoE 2018: 117), a justification which is successfully realised through the content of the relevant descriptors, and therefore not confusing. The experts, however, do not seem to find it relevant for the Greek context.

6.2 'Localisation' as a means to multilingual testing

What is implied by the analysis of the results is test localisation, which entails that any adaptations or changes to the initial CEFR descriptors should also take into account both the experts' and the practitioners' perspectives and thus the language users' linguistic and cultural experiences, literacies, areas of life world knowledge and needs. It is critical to translate these research findings into viable educational options, and in particular, they should be taken into consideration as concerns certain amendments by syllabus/materials developers, or teachers, if there is an intention to incorporate written mediation in tests and other assessment tools in Greece. CEFR descriptors could undergo significant shifts in their assigned levels, which shifts could be approved by experienced teachers who actually consider certain writing activities more challenging than others, as the analysis has clearly indicated.

By investigating which CEFR mediation descriptors could be appropriate in the Greek context, this paper thus suggests 'localisation' as a means towards multilingual assessment. Localisation for the design of multilingual assessment tools may involve the following processes: a) *adapting* the CEFR descriptors according to the cultural, linguistic or other needs of the local context –with what the present research was concerned- and b) *designing* mediation tasks which will involve different languages. In fact, deciding on the languages to be used in a possible assessment tool is of crucial importance. For instance, in the writing test of the KPG exams in English, candidates are asked to selectively relay information from Greek texts (Language A, home language) in order to produce another text in English (Language B) which is the language to be tested (see Appendix 5 for a C2 written mediation test task). In this context, cross-lingual mediation involves interpreting meanings articulated in source texts and making of new meanings in the target language expressed appropriately for the context of situation. In other words, Language A may be used in reception (through reading and listening) and Language B in production (through speaking or writing). The assessment thus of cross-lingual mediation performance can be a unique characteristic of a multilingual examination battery (cf. Stathopoulou 2016a, 2016b) which relocates attention from

the *language* itself as an abstract system of rules to the *users* as meaning makers with certain needs and specific linguistic repertoires (cf. Karavas and Mitsikopoulou 2019).

7 Final remarks

The findings of this study bring to light the potential of incorporating cross-lingual written mediation into traditional mainstream monolingual language assessments while stressing the importance of adapting CEFR descriptors in order for them to be meaningful in a new context, like Greece. The results may in fact prove useful for the design of mediation test tasks across proficiency levels, thus favouring the fluid and dynamic use of resources in local contexts (Schissel et al. 2018).

Cross-lingual mediation and generally the parallel use of languages in assessment have received little attention in language studies. As asserted by Dendrinos (2019: 3), "language teachers and testers do not know how to assess language skills or content knowledge using languages in combination". In much the same vein, Dunlea and Erickson (2018) claim that although we want to encourage the development of plurilingual competence, "measuring it is a challenge that has not been resolved". Similarly, Garcia and Wei (2014) notice some reluctance among test developers to engage in multilingual assessment. In fact, linking heteroglossic perspectives about language with testing and assessment and integrating cross-linguistic mediation in writing assessments is not an easy task if we consider the traditional views of "languages as bounded and separate entities" (Schissel et al. 2018: 169).

The goal of this research was not only to discuss to what extent the new CEFR written mediation descriptors can be used in the Greek context, but also

to bring to the fore the issue of adopting multilingual approaches to language assessment by applying the mingling-of-languages idea as discussed in Section 2.3 and 6.2, i.e., through the use of interlinguistic mediation tasks on the basis of adapted CEFR descriptors and

to reflect on the possibility of avoiding the "compartmentalization of languages" (Dendrinos 2019; Shohamy 2011), thereby transforming the monolingual language ideologies of the past, along with the monoglossic paradigm in assessment.

Although it is not within the scope of this paper to provide an answer to the question: "why to test mediation?" it is important to refer to the role of 'washback effect' of assessment on teaching and learning (Tsagari 2009, 2011). The new CEFR/CV has introduced a fundamental change in the field of plurilingual education by proposing a number of new descriptors regarding the parallel use of languages. Given that "changes in language teaching require changes in language testing and assessment practices as well" (Dendrinos 2019: 4) and if we consider the impact of tests on teaching, we could easily reverse the question: 'why *not* to test mediation?' As there are few policies favouring multilingual assessment practices and a serious insufficiency of research in favour of the positive backwash effect multilingual testing may have on multilingual education (Dendrinos 2019), there is a need for further studies which focus on the investigation of a multilingual approach to the assessment of writing, a construct which needs to be extended in order to include written mediation as well.

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9 Biography

Dr Maria Stathopoulou is an Adjunct Lecturer at the Hellenic Open University and at the National Technical University of Athens. From 2007 she has been an RCeL Research Fellow at the Faculty of English Language and Literature, University of Athens while from 2014-2017, she was a member of the authoring group of experts of the Council of Europe concerning the update of the CEFR. Recently (2019), her project: 'Mediation in Teaching, Learning and Assessment' (ME.T.L.A.) was selected to be funded by the European Centre of Modern Languages of the Council of Europe (2020-2023) (ECML Project Coordinator). Her book Cross-Language Mediation in Foreign Language Teaching and Testing (2015) has been published by Multilingual Matters. Her second book (2016) concerns the teaching of ESP in academic contexts.

Appendix 1

CEFR Companion (CoE 2018) descriptors for written mediation

SCALE 1: RELAYING SPECIFIC INFORMATION IN WRITING	
1.	Can relay in writing (in Language B) which presentations at a conference (given in Language A) were relevant, pointing out which would be worth detailed consideration.
2.	Can relay in writing (in Language B) the relevant point(s) contained in propositionally complex but well-structured texts (written Language A) within his/her fields of professional, academic and personal interest.
3.	Can relay in writing (in Language B) the relevant point(s) contained in an article (written in Language A) from an academic or professional journal.
4.	Can relay in a written report (in Language B) relevant decisions that were taken in a meeting (in Lang A).
5.	Can relay in writing the significant point(s) contained in formal correspondence (in Language A).
6.	Can relay in a written report (in Language B) relevant decisions that were taken in a meeting (in Lang A).
7.	Can relay in writing the significant point(s) contained in formal correspondence (in Language A).
8.	Can relay in writing (in Language B) specific information points contained in texts (spoken in Language A) on familiar subjects (e.g., telephone calls. announcements. and instructions).
9.	Can relay in writing (in Language B) specific, relevant information contained in straightforward informational texts (written in Language A) on familiar subjects.
10.	Can relay in writing (in Language B) specific information given in a straightforward recorded message (left in Language A), provided that the topics concerned are familiar and the delivery is slow and clear.
11.	Can relay in writing (in Language B) specific information contained in short simple informational texts (written in Language A), provided the texts concern concrete, familiar subjects and are written in simple everyday language
12.	Can list (in Language B) the main points of short, clear, simple messages and announcements (given in Language A) provided that speech is clearly and slowly articulated.

13. Can list (in Language B) specific information contained in simple texts (written in Language A) on everyday subjects of immediate interest or need.
14. Can list (in Language B) names, numbers, prices and very simple information of immediate interest (given in Language A), provided that the speaker articulates very slowly and clearly, with repetition.
15. Can list (in Language B) names, numbers, prices and very simple information from texts (written Language A) that are of immediate interest, that are written in very simple language and contain illustrations.
SCALE 2: EXPLAINING DATA IN WRITING (E.g., IN GRAPHS. DIAGRAMS. CHARTS ETC.)
16. Can interpret and present in writing (in Language B) various forms of empirical data (with text in Language A) from conceptually complex research concerning academic or professional topics.
17. Can interpret and present clearly and reliably in writing (in Language B) the salient, relevant points contained in complex diagrams and other visually organised data (with text in Language A) on complex academic or professional topics.
18. Can interpret and present reliably in writing (in Language B) detailed information from diagrams and visually organised data in his fields of interest (with text in Language A).
19. Can interpret and present in writing (in Language B) the overall trends shown in simple diagrams (e.g., graphs, bar charts) (with text in Language A), explaining the important points in more detail. given the help of a dictionary or other reference materials
20. Can describe in simple sentences (in Language B) the main facts shown in visuals on familiar topics (e.g., a weather map. a basic flow chart) (with text in Language A).
SCALE 3: PROCESSING TEXT IN WRITING
21. Can explain in writing (in Language B) the way facts and arguments are presented in a text (in Language A), particularly when someone else's position is being reported, drawing attention to the writer's use of understatement, veiled criticism, irony, and sarcasm.
22. Can summarise information from different sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation of the overall result.
23. Can summarise in writing (in Language B) long, complex texts (written in Lang A), interpreting the content appropriately, provided that he/she can occasionally check the precise meaning of unusual, technical terms.
24. Can summarise in writing a long and complex text (in Language A) (e.g., academic or political analysis article, novel extract, editorial, literary review, report, or extract from a scientific book) for a specific audience, respecting the style and register of the original.
25. Can summarise in writing (in Language B) the main content of well-structured but propositionally complex spoken and written texts (in Language A) on subjects within his/her fields of professional, academic and personal interest.
26. Can compare, contrast and synthesise in writing (in Language B) the information and viewpoints contained in academic and professional publications (in Language A) in his/her fields of special interest.
27. Can explain in writing (in Language B) the viewpoint articulated in a complex text (in Language A), supporting inferences he/she makes with reference to specific information in the original.
28. Can summarise in writing (in Language B) the main content of complex spoken and written texts (in Language A) on subjects related to his/her fields of interest and specialisation.
29. Can summarise in writing (in Language B) the information and arguments contained in texts (in Language A) on subjects of general or personal interest.
30. Can summarise in writing (in Language B) the main points made in straightforward informational spoken and written texts (in Language A) on subjects that are of personal or current interest, provided spoken texts are delivered in clearly articulated standard speech.
31. Can paraphrase short written passages in a simple fashion, using the original text wording and ordering.
32. Can list as a series of bullet points (in Language B) the relevant information contained in short simple texts (in Language A), provided that the texts concern concrete, familiar subjects and are written in simple everyday language.
33. Can pick out and reproduce key words and phrases or short sentences from a short text within the learner's limited competence and experience.

34. Can use simple language to render in (Lang B) very short texts written in (Lang A) on familiar and everyday themes that contain the highest frequency vocabulary; despite errors, the text remains comprehensible.
35. Can copy out short texts in printed or clearly hand-written format.
36. Can, with the help of a dictionary, render in (Language B) simple phrases written in (Language A), but may not always select the appropriate meaning.
37. Can copy out single words and short texts presented in standard printed format.
SCALE 4: TRANSLATING A WRITTEN TEXT IN WRITING
38. Can translate into (Language B) technical material outside his/her field of specialisation written in (Language A), provided subject matter accuracy is checked by a specialist in the field concerned.
39. Can translate into (Language B) abstract texts on social, academic and professional subjects in his/her field written in (Language A), successfully conveying evaluative aspects and arguments, including many of the implications associated with them, though some expression may be over-influenced by the original.
40. Can produce clearly organised translations from (Language A) into (Language B) that reflect normal language usage but may be over-influenced by the order, paragraphing, punctuation and particular formulations of the original.
41. Can produce translations into (Language B, which closely follow the sentence and paragraph structure of the original text in (Language A), conveying the main points of the source text accurately, though the translation may read awkwardly.
42. Can produce approximate translations from (Language A) into (Language B) of straightforward, factual texts that are written in uncomplicated, standard language, closely following the structure of the original; although linguistic errors may occur, the translation remains comprehensible.
43. Can produce approximate translations from (Language A) into (Language B) of information contained in short, factual texts written in uncomplicated, standard language; despite errors, the translation remains comprehensible.
44. Can use simple language to provide an approximate translation from (Language A) into (Language B) of very short texts on familiar and everyday themes that contain the highest frequency vocabulary; despite errors, the translation remains comprehensible.
45. Can, with the help of a dictionary, translate simple words and phrases from (Language A) into (Language B), but may not always select the appropriate meaning.
SCALE 5: NOTE-TAKING (LECTURES, SEMINARS, MEETINGS ETC.)
46. Can, whilst continuing to participate in a meeting or seminar, create reliable notes (or minutes) for people who are not present, even when the subject matter is complex and/or unfamiliar.
47. Is aware of the implications and allusions of what is said and can make notes on them as well as on the actual words used by the speaker.
48. Can make notes selectively, paraphrasing and abbreviating successfully to capture abstract concepts and relationships between ideas.
49. Can take detailed notes during a lecture on topics in his/her field of interest, recording the information so accurately and so close to the original that the notes could also be used by other people.
50. Can make decisions about what to note down and what to omit as the lecture or seminar proceeds, even on unfamiliar matters.
51. Can select relevant, detailed information and arguments on complex, abstract topics from multiple spoken sources (e.g., lectures, podcasts, formal discussions and debates, interviews etc.), provided that standard language is delivered at normal speed in one of the range of accents familiar to the listener.
52. Can understand a clearly structured lecture on a familiar subject, and can take notes on points which strike him/her as important, even though he/she tends to concentrate on the words themselves and therefore to miss some information.
53. Can make accurate notes in meetings and seminars on most matters likely to arise within his/her field of interest.
54. Can take notes during a lecture, which are precise enough for his/her own use at a later date. provided the topic is within his/her field of interest and the talk is clear and well structured.

55. Can take notes as a list of key points during a straightforward lecture, provided the topic is familiar, and the talk is both formulated in simple language and delivered in clearly articulated standard speech.
56. Can note down routine instructions in a meeting on a familiar subject, provided they are formulated in simple language and he/she is given sufficient time to do so.
57. Can make simple notes at a presentation/demonstration where the subject matter is familiar and predictable and the presenter allows for clarification and note-taking.
SCALE 6: EXPRESSING A PERSONAL RESPONSE TO CREATIVE TEXTS (INCLUDING LITERATURE)
58. Can describe in detail his/her personal interpretation of a work, outlining his/her reactions to certain features and explaining their significance.
59. Can outline his/her interpretation of a character in a work: their psychological/emotional state, the motives for their actions and the consequences of these actions.
60. Can give his/her personal interpretation of the development of a plot, the characters and the themes in a story, novel, film or play.
61. Can give a clear presentation of his/her reactions to a work, developing his/her ideas and supporting them with examples and arguments.
62. Can describe his/her emotional response to a work and elaborate on the way in which it has evoked this response.
63. Can express in some detail his/her reactions to the form of expression, style and content of a work, explaining what he/she appreciated and why.
64. Can explain why certain parts or aspects of a work especially interested him/her.
65. Can explain in some detail which character he/she most identified with and why.
66. Can relate events in a story, film or play to similar events he/she has experienced or heard about.
67. Can relate the emotions experienced by a character in a work to emotions he/she has experienced.
68. Can describe the emotions he/she experienced at a certain point in a story, e.g., the point(s) in a story when he/she became anxious for a character, and explain why.
69. Can explain briefly the feelings and opinions that a work provoked in him/her.
70. Can describe the personality of a character.
71. Can express his/her reactions to a work, reporting his/her feelings and ideas in simple language.
72. Can describe a character's feelings and explain the reasons for them.
73. Can say in simple language which aspects of a work especially interested him/her.
74. Can say whether he/she liked a work or not and explain why in simple language.
75. Can select simple passages he/she particularly likes from work of literature to use as quotes.
76. Can use simple words and phrases to say how a work made him/her feel.
SCALE 7: ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM OF CREATIVE TEXTS (INCLUDING LITERATURE)
77. Can give a critical appraisal of work of different periods and genres (novels, poems, and plays), appreciating subtle distinctions of style and implicit as well as explicit meaning.
78. Can recognise the finer subtleties of nuanced language, rhetorical effect, and stylistic language use (e.g., metaphors, abnormal syntax, ambiguity), interpreting and 'unpacking' meanings and connotations.
79. Can critically evaluate the way in which structure, language and rhetorical devices are exploited in a work for a particular purpose and give a reasoned argument on their appropriateness and effectiveness.
80. Can give a critical appreciation of the deliberate breach of linguistic conventions in a piece of writing.
81. Can critically appraise a wide variety of texts including literary works of different periods and genres.
82. Can evaluate the extent to which a work meets the conventions of its genre.
83. Can describe and comment on ways in which the work engages the audience (e.g., by building up and subverting expectations).
84. Can compare two works, considering themes, characters and scenes, exploring similarities and contrasts and explaining the relevance of the connections between them.

85. Can give a reasoned opinion about a work, showing awareness of the thematic, structural and formal features and referring to the opinions and arguments of others.
86. Can evaluate the way the work encourages identification with characters, giving examples.
87. Can describe the way in which different works differ in their treatment of the same theme.
88. Can point out the most important episodes and events in a clearly structured narrative in everyday language and explain the significance of events and the connection between them.
89. Can describe the key themes and characters in short narratives involving familiar situations that are written in high frequency everyday language.
90. Can identify and briefly describe, in basic formulaic language, the key themes and characters in short, simple narratives involving familiar situations that are written in high frequency everyday language.

Appendix 2

Forms completed by participants

I Phase 1 form: written and online versions (some extracts)

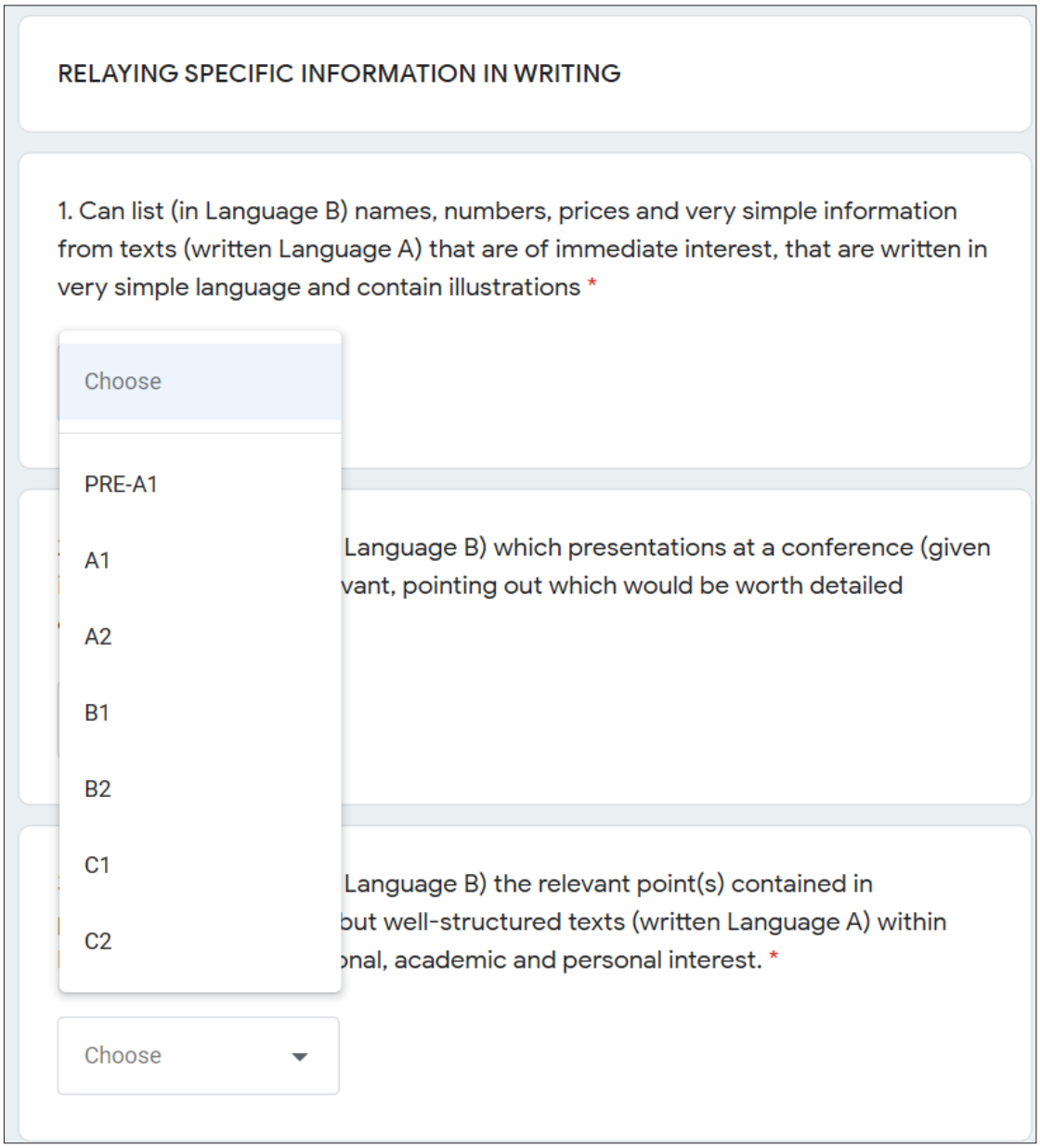
DESCRIPTORS ****as included in the new CEFR companion published in 2018*	CRITERIA								
	Clear (in terms of language)			Useful for assessment purposes			Relevant to the Greek context		
	YES	TO SOME EXTENT	NO	YES	TO SOME EXTENT	NO	YES	TO SOME EXTENT	NO
RELAYING SPECIFIC INFORMATION IN WRITING (p. 108)									
1. Can relay in writing (in Language B) which presentations at a conference (given in Language A) were relevant, pointing out which would be worth detailed consideration.									
2. Can relay in writing (in Language B) the relevant point(s) contained in propositionally complex but well-structured texts (written Language A) within his/her fields of professional, academic and personal interest.									
3. Can relay in writing (in Language B) the relevant point(s) contained in an article (written in Language A) from an academic or professional journal.									
4. Can relay in a written report (in Language B) relevant decisions that were taken in a meeting (in Lang A).									
5. Can relay in writing the significant point(s) contained in formal correspondence (in Language A).									
6. Can relay in a written report (in Language B) relevant decisions that were taken in a meeting (in Lang A).									
7. Can relay in writing the significant point(s) contained in formal correspondence (in Language A).									

RELAYING SPECIFIC INFORMATION IN WRITING

1. Can relay in writing (in Language B) which presentations at a conference (given in Language A) were relevant, pointing out which would be worth detailed consideration *

	Yes	To some extent	No
Clear (in terms of language)	○	○	○
Useful for assessment purposes	○	○	○
Relevant to the Greek context	○	○	○

II Phase 2 online form (an extract)



Appendix 3a: Phase 1: Number of teachers' responses for each descriptor and criterion

	clear				useful				relevant		
scale 1	Yes	To some extent	No		Yes	To some extent	No		Yes	To some extent	No
	Count	Count	Count		Count	Count	Count		Count	Count	Count
Q.1a	12	4	2	Q.1b	9	7	2	Q.1c	11	5	2
Q.2a	12	6	0	Q.2b	11	7	0	Q.2c	14	4	0
Q.3a	17	1	0	Q.3b	15	3	0	Q.3c	17	1	0
Q.4a	15	2	1	Q.4b	16	1	1	Q.4c	13	3	2
Q.5a	16	1	1	Q.5b	16	2	0	Q.5c	15	3	0
Q.6a	15	2	1	Q.6b	12	5	1	Q.6c	12	4	2
Q.7a	16	1	1	Q.7b	16	2	0	Q.7c	14	4	0
Q.8a	17	1	0	Q.8b	17	1	0	Q.8c	15	3	0

Q.9a	14	4	0	Q.9b	17	1	0	Q.9c	16	2	0
Q.10a	17	1	0	Q.10b	16	2	0	Q.10c	14	4	0
Q.11a	17	1	0	Q.11b	18	0	0	Q.11c	16	2	0
Q.12a	17	1	0	Q.12b	16	1	1	Q.12c	13	5	0
Q.13a	15	3	0	Q.13b	15	3	0	Q.13c	13	5	0
Q.14a	17	1	0	Q.14b	15	2	1	Q.14c	14	3	1
Q.15a	17	1	0	Q.15b	17	1	0	Q.15c	16	2	0
scale 2	Yes	To some extent	No		Yes	To some extent	No		Yes	To some extent	No
	Count	Count	Count		Count	Count	Count		Count	Count	Count
Q.16a	14	4	0	Q.16b	13	3	2	Q.16c	13	3	2
Q.17a	15	3	0	Q.17b	11	4	3	Q.17c	10	4	4
Q.18a	15	3	0	Q.18b	12	5	1	Q.18c	11	6	1
Q.19a	13	5	0	Q.19b	7	5	6	Q.19c	10	3	5
Q.20a	16	2	0	Q.20b	14	3	1	Q.20c	15	2	1
scale 3	Yes	To some extent	No		Yes	To some extent	No		Yes	To some extent	No
	Count	Count	Count		Count	Count	Count		Count	Count	Count
Q.21a	14	1	3	Q.21b	12	4	2	Q.21c	12	6	0
Q.22a	14	4	0	Q.22b	14	4	0	Q.22c	14	4	0
Q.23a	14	3	1	Q.23b	12	5	1	Q.23c	15	2	1
Q.24a	14	4	0	Q.24b	12	4	2	Q.24c	13	4	1
Q.25a	15	3	0	Q.25b	16	2	0	Q.25c	16	1	1
Q.26a	16	2	0	Q.26b	16	2	0	Q.26c	16	2	0
Q.27a	11	6	1	Q.27b	13	4	1	Q.27c	13	2	3
Q.28a	17	1	0	Q.28b	15	3	0	Q.28c	16	2	0
Q.29a	16	2	0	Q.29b	16	2	0	Q.29c	17	0	1
Q.30a	15	3	0	Q.30b	15	3	0	Q.30c	15	2	1
Q.31a	14	3	1	Q.31b	13	3	2	Q.31c	15	3	0
Q.32a	18	0	0	Q.32b	16	1	1	Q.32c	17	1	0
Q.33a	12	4	2	Q.33b	14	2	2	Q.33c	14	2	2
Q.34a	13	4	1	Q.34b	16	2	0	Q.34c	15	3	0
Q.35a	15	2	1	Q.35b	7	3	8	Q.35c	7	5	6
Q.36a	14	4	0	Q.36b	6	7	5	Q.36c	9	6	3
Q.37a	16	1	1	Q.37b	6	5	7	Q.37c	9	6	3
scale 4	Yes	To some extent	No		Yes	To some extent	No		Yes	To some extent	No
	Count	Count	Count		Count	Count	Count		Count	Count	Count
Q.38a	13	4	1	Q.38b	4	6	8	Q.38c	6	4	8
Q.39a	10	6	2	Q.39b	7	6	5	Q.39c	6	5	7
Q.40a	13	1	4	Q.40b	8	6	4	Q.40c	9	6	3
Q.41a	9	3	6	Q.41b	6	5	7	Q.41c	8	5	5
Q.42a	12	3	3	Q.42b	9	3	6	Q.42c	10	4	4
Q.43a	13	3	2	Q.43b	9	4	5	Q.43c	10	4	4
Q.44a	13	3	2	Q.44b	9	4	5	Q.44c	10	5	3
Q.45a	14	2	2	Q.45b	6	3	9	Q.45c	8	4	6
scale 5	Yes	To some extent	No		Yes	To some extent	No		Yes	To some extent	No
	Count	Count	Count		Count	Count	Count		Count	Count	Count
Q.46a	14	4	0	Q.46b	6	9	3	Q.46c	10	6	2

Q.47a	11	3	4	Q.47b	5	8	5	Q.47c	8	6	4
Q.48a	14	1	3	Q.48b	8	6	4	Q.48c	9	7	2
Q.49a	14	3	1	Q.49b	6	8	4	Q.49c	10	7	1
Q.50a	11	4	3	Q.50b	6	7	5	Q.50c	9	6	3
Q.51a	14	2	2	Q.51b	8	6	4	Q.51c	10	6	2
Q.52a	11	4	3	Q.52b	5	9	4	Q.52c	7	9	2
Q.53a	15	2	1	Q.53b	9	7	2	Q.53c	11	6	1
Q.54a	15	3	0	Q.54b	9	8	1	Q.54c	11	7	0
Q.55a	16	2	0	Q.55b	12	5	1	Q.55c	12	6	0
Q.56a	14	3	1	Q.56b	7	10	1	Q.56c	12	6	0
Q.57a	16	2	0	Q.57b	9	8	1	Q.57c	12	6	0
scale 6	Yes	To some extent	No		Yes	To some extent	No		Yes	To some extent	No
	Count	Count	Count		Count	Count	Count		Count	Count	Count
Q.58a	12	5	1	Q.58b	11	6	1	Q.58c	13	5	0
Q.59a	14	3	1	Q.59b	11	4	3	Q.59c	11	6	1
Q.60a	16	2	0	Q.60b	13	3	2	Q.60c	14	3	1
Q.61a	15	2	1	Q.61b	13	3	2	Q.61c	14	4	0
Q.62a	14	4	0	Q.62b	12	4	2	Q.62c	12	5	1
Q.63a	15	3	0	Q.63b	12	4	2	Q.63c	12	5	1
Q.64a	16	2	0	Q.64b	13	4	1	Q.64c	15	3	0
Q.65a	18	0	0	Q.65b	15	2	1	Q.65c	17	1	0
Q.66a	18	0	0	Q.66b	16	1	1	Q.66c	17	1	0
Q.67a	16	2	0	Q.67b	13	4	1	Q.67c	16	2	0
Q.68a	14	3	1	Q.68b	12	4	2	Q.68c	15	2	1
Q.69a	17	1	0	Q.69b	13	4	1	Q.69c	15	3	0
Q.70a	17	1	0	Q.70b	16	2	0	Q.70c	16	2	0
Q.71a	18	0	0	Q.71b	16	2	0	Q.71c	17	1	0
Q.72a	17	1	0	Q.72b	15	2	1	Q.72c	16	2	0
Q.73a	17	1	0	Q.73b	16	2	0	Q.73c	16	2	0
Q.74a	18	0	0	Q.74b	17	1	0	Q.74c	17	1	0
Q.75a	16	2	0	Q.75b	14	1	3	Q.75c	14	3	1
Q.76a	18	0	0	Q.76b	14	3	1	Q.76c	17	1	0
scale 7	Yes	To some extent	No		Yes	To some extent	No		Yes	To some extent	No
	Count	Count	Count		Count	Count	Count		Count	Count	Count
Q.77a	9	7	2	Q.77b	7	7	4	Q.77b	7	7	4
Q.78a	10	6	2	Q.78b	8	4	6	Q.78b	8	4	6
Q.79a	11	5	2	Q.79b	7	6	5	Q.79b	7	6	5
Q.80a	10	5	3	Q.80b	8	5	5	Q.80b	8	5	5
Q.81a	11	5	2	Q.81b	5	8	5	Q.81b	5	8	5
Q.82a	14	2	2	Q.82b	9	5	4	Q.82b	9	5	4
Q.83a	10	5	3	Q.83b	7	6	5	Q.83b	7	6	5
Q.84a	13	4	1	Q.84b	7	9	2	Q.84b	7	9	2
Q.85a	12	3	3	Q.85b	6	7	5	Q.85b	6	7	5
Q.86a	12	3	3	Q.86b	6	7	5	Q.86b	6	7	5
Q.87a	14	3	1	Q.87b	8	7	3	Q.87b	8	7	3
Q.88a	16	2	0	Q.88b	13	5	0	Q.88b	13	5	0
Q.89a	17	1	0	Q.89b	14	4	0	Q.89b	14	4	0
Q.90a	15	3	0	Q.90b	11	7	0	Q.90b	11	7	0

Appendix 3b

Phase 2 Number of respondents for each descriptor

Total number of respondents 94

SCALE 1: RELAYING SPECIFIC INFORMATION IN WRITING (CEFR: 108)								
CEFR LEVEL		Pre-A1	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
B2	Q.1	0	1	2	10	26	25	30
B2	Q.2	0	0	0	2	11	57	24
B2	Q.3	0	0	0	1	12	36	45
B2	Q.4	0	0	0	7	44	31	12
B2	Q.5	0	0	2	11	46	25	10
B1	Q.8	0	3	23	32	28	5	3
B1	Q.9	0	6	21	44	17	1	5
B1	Q.10	1	15	32	29	11	2	4
A2	Q.11	5	11	46	25	1	0	6
A2	Q.12	3	21	43	18	3	1	5
A2	Q.13	2	22	41	21	2	1	5
A1	Q.14	24	38	21	5	0	2	4
Pre-A1	Q.15	30	43	13	1	1	1	5

SCALE 2: EXPLAINING DATA IN WRITING (E.g., IN GRAPHS, DIAGRAMS, CHARTS ETC.) (CEFR: 110)								
		Pre-A1	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
C2	Q.16	0	0	0	0	3	30	61
C1	Q.17	0	0	0	1	0	25	68
B2	Q.18	0	0	0	4	32	43	15
B1	Q.19	0	0	3	25	39	22	5
B1	Q.20	0	2	30	39	15	3	5

SCALE 3: PROCESSING TEXT IN WRITING (CEFR: 112)								
		Pre-A1	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
C2	Q.21	0	0	0	5	9	38	42
C2	Q.22	0	0	1	5	28	29	31
C1	Q.23	0	0	0	2	16	53	23
C1	Q.24	0	0	0	0	5	20	69
B2	Q.25	0	0	0	1	21	53	19
B2	Q.26	0	0	0	1	15	41	37
B2	Q.27	0	0	1	4	22	37	30
B2	Q.28	0	0	1	3	37	38	15
B1	Q.29	0	0	4	26	45	17	2
B1	Q.30	0	3	13	39	27	9	3
B1	Q.31	1	3	19	41	21	5	4
A2	Q.32	0	13	31	32	10	4	4
A2	Q.33	8	18	32	22	6	4	4
A2	Q.34	2	19	46	17	4	2	4

A2	Q.35	27	33	21	4	1	4	4
A1	Q.36	3	31	36	15	3	3	3
A1	Q.37	26	32	22	4	2	4	4

SCALE 4: TRANSLATING A WRITTEN TEXT IN WRITING (CEFR: 114)

		Pre-A1	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
C2	Q.38	0	0	0	2	14	36	42
C1	Q.39	0	0	0	0	8	43	43
B2	Q.40	0	0	1	8	46	33	6
B2	Q.41	0	1	7	32	35	15	4
B1	Q.42	0	1	10	36	34	9	4
B1	Q.43	0	2	22	42	20	4	4
A2	Q.44	1	18	36	27	5	2	5
A1	Q.45	13	38	21	12	4	2	4

SCALE 5: NOTE-TAKING (LECTURES, SEMINARS, MEETINGS ETC.) (CEFR: 115)

		Pre-A1	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
C2	Q.46	0	0	1	2	11	35	45
C2	Q.47	0	0	0	3	5	24	62
C2	Q.48	0	0	0	3	8	28	55
C1	Q.49	0	0	1	1	10	38	44
C1	Q.50	0	0	0	1	11	47	35
C1	Q.51	0	0	0	3	35	41	15
B2	Q.52	0	0	0	30	45	16	3
B2	Q.53	0	0	2	13	44	31	4
B1	Q.54	0	0	5	22	47	17	3
B1	Q.55	0	1	13	46	24	9	1
B1	Q.56	0	10	33	32	12	3	4
A2	Q.57	5	9	31	30	12	4	3

SCALE 6: EXPRESSING A PERSONAL RESPONSE TO CREATIVE TEXTS (INCLUDING LITERATURE) (CEFR: 116)

		Pre-A1	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
C1	Q.58	0	0	6	18	30	25	15
C1	Q.59	0	1	4	6	34	32	17
C1	Q.60	0	0	7	14	36	29	8
B2	Q.61	0	0	1	10	36	37	10
B2	Q.62	0	0	5	4	31	41	13
B2	Q.63	0	0	3	15	31	33	12
B1	Q.64	1	1	7	28	39	15	3
B1	Q.65	0	1	13	35	33	9	3
B1	Q.66	0	4	11	38	28	11	2
B1	Q.67	0	3	13	30	33	12	3
B1	Q.68	0	1	9	31	32	18	3

B1	Q.69	0	3	30	33	17	8	3
B1	Q.70	0	9	20	41	14	7	3
A2	Q.71	1	12	35	32	9	2	3
A2	Q.72	1	1	28	31	24	5	4
A2	Q.73	0	13	32	31	12	4	2
A2	Q.74	3	22	37	20	7	2	3
A2	Q.75	6	7	19	28	21	7	6
A1	Q.76	14	25	34	11	4	1	5

SCALE 7: ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM OF CREATIVE TEXTS (INCLUDING LITERATURE) (CEFR: 117)								
		Pre-A1	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
C2	Q.77	0	0	0	2	6	21	65
C2	Q.78	0	0	0	0	6	12	76
C2	Q.79	0	0	0	0	8	28	58
C2	Q.80	0	0	1	1	5	30	57
C1	Q.81	0	0	1	1	8	41	43
C1	Q.82	0	0	0	6	19	36	33
C1	Q.83	0	0	0	6	22	36	30
B2	Q.84	0	0	1	6	24	45	18
B2	Q.85	0	0	0	3	27	45	19
B2	Q.86	0	0	1	7	35	42	9
B2	Q.87	0	1	2	6	28	39	18
B1	Q.88	0	0	4	28	39	20	3
B1	Q.89	0	4	25	31	23	8	3
A2	Q.90	3	14	34	30	0	10	3

Appendix 4

Discrepancies between the CEFR and the participants' views

Scale 1			Scale 2		
	up to 1 level	more than 1 level		up to 1 level	more than 1 level
	Row N %	Row N %		Row N %	Row N %
Q.1	64.9%	35.1%	Q.16	96.8%	3.2%
Q.2	74.5%	25.5%	Q.17	98.9%	1.1%
Q.3	52.1%	47.9%	Q.18	84.0%	16.0%
Q.4	87.2%	12.8%	Q.19	71.3%	28.7%
Q.5	87.2%	12.8%	Q.20	89.4%	10.6%
Q.8	88.3%	11.7%			
Q.9	87.2%	12.8%			
Q.10	76.6%	23.4%			
Q.11	87.2%	12.8%			
Q.12	87.2%	12.8%			
Q.13	89.4%	10.6%			
Q.14	88.3%	11.7%			
Q.15	77.7%	22.3%			

Scale 3			Scale 4		
	up to 1 level	more than 1 level		up to 1 level	more than 1 level
	Row N %	Row N %		Row N %	Row N %
Q.21	85.1%	14.9%	Q.38	83.0%	17.0%
Q.22	63.8%	36.2%	Q.39	100.0%	0.0%
Q.23	97.9%	2.1%	Q.40	92.6%	7.4%
Q.24	100.0%	0.0%	Q.41	87.2%	12.8%
Q.25	79.8%	20.2%	Q.42	85.1%	14.9%
Q.26	60.6%	39.4%	Q.43	89.4%	10.6%
Q.27	67.0%	33.0%	Q.44	86.2%	13.8%
Q.28	83.0%	17.0%	Q.45	76.6%	23.4%
Q.29	79.8%	20.2%			
Q.30	84.0%	16.0%			
Q.31	86.2%	13.8%			
Q.32	80.9%	19.1%			
Q.33	76.6%	23.4%			
Q.34	87.2%	12.8%			
Q.35	61.7%	38.3%			
Q.36	74.5%	25.5%			
Q.37	85.1%	14.9%			

Scale 5			Scale 6			Scale 7		
	up to 1 level	more than 1 level	Q.58	74.50%	25.50%	Q.77	91.50%	8.50%
	Row N %	Row N %	Q.59	88.30%	11.70%	Q.78	93.60%	6.40%
Q.46	85.10%	14.90%	Q.60	77.70%	22.30%	Q.79	91.50%	8.50%
Q.47	91.50%	8.50%	Q.61	88.30%	11.70%	Q.80	92.60%	7.40%
Q.48	88.30%	11.70%	Q.62	80.90%	19.10%	Q.81	97.90%	2.10%
Q.49	97.90%	2.10%	Q.63	84.00%	16.00%	Q.82	93.60%	6.40%
Q.50	98.90%	1.10%	Q.64	78.70%	21.30%	Q.83	93.60%	6.40%
Q.51	96.80%	3.20%	Q.65	86.20%	13.80%	Q.84	79.80%	20.20%
Q.52	96.80%	3.20%	Q.66	81.90%	18.10%	Q.85	79.80%	20.20%
Q.53	93.60%	6.40%	Q.67	80.90%	19.10%	Q.86	89.40%	10.60%
Q.54	78.70%	21.30%	Q.68	76.60%	23.40%	Q.87	77.70%	22.30%
Q.55	88.30%	11.70%	Q.69	85.10%	14.90%	Q.88	75.50%	24.50%
Q.56	81.90%	18.10%	Q.70	79.80%	20.20%	Q.89	84.00%	16.00%
Q.57	74.50%	25.50%	Q.71	84.00%	16.00%	Q.90	83.00%	17.00%
			Q.72	63.80%	36.20%			
			Q.73	80.90%	19.10%			
			Q.74	84.00%	16.00%			
			Q.75	57.40%	42.60%			
			Q.76	77.70%	22.30%			

Appendix 5

An example from the C2 writing test of the KPG multilingual exam suite

(https://rcel2.enl.uoa.gr/kpg/gr_C_Level.htm)

Using information from the text, write an **article** (300 words) for the "Education.eu" contest. The title of your article is "**Education for the future**":

- **Support the position** that new forms of education are needed for young people to live in a global world
- **Express your opinion** about which global competences are the most important and **explain** why.

ΣΗΜΕΡΑ

Ποιοι είμαστε > YSJ YourStory

Το άρθρο αυτό σας το προσφέρει ο συνδρομητής Αρελίνα Μεράκου.
Γίνετε συνδρομητής για να μπορείτε να τα μοιραστείτε και εσείς.

Γίνε συνδρομητής > Είσοδος >

ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

Τι είδους εκπαίδευση χρειάζονται οι νέοι σήμερα;

Ξεχάστε τα μαθήματα του σχολείου όπως τα ξέρατε. Οι νέοι του 21ου αιώνα θα κληθούν να αλλάξουν επιά επαγγέλματα στη διάρκεια της ζωής τους και τα πέντε από αυτά δεν υπάρχουν ακόμα. Θα πρέπει να διαθέτουν ένα οπλοστάσιο από δεξιότητες που δεν τους παρέχει η κλασική εκπαίδευση. Από φέτος μάλιστα, οι λεγόμενες «παγκόσμιες ικανότητες» (global competences) θα εξετάζονται και στο πλαίσιο του Προγράμματος PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) του ΟΟΣΑ (ή OECD).

Ο προβληματισμός που έχει οδηγήσει στην προσπάθεια για την καλλιέργεια και αξιολόγηση πιο σύγχρονων ικανοτήτων είναι γνωστός σε όλους μας. Ζούμε στην εποχή της παγκοσμιοποίησης και της κλιματικής αλλαγής. Πόλεμοι συνεχίζουν να υπάρχουν, αν και με διαφορετικό πρόσωπο και σε διαφορετική κλίμακα από πριν. Οι συγκρούσεις έχουν προκαλέσει μεγάλο κύμα μετανάστευσης, με αποτέλεσμα οι κοινωνίες να γίνονται όλο και περισσότερο πολυπολιτισμικές.

Τα Προγράμματα Σπουδών, που λίγο ως πολύ είχαν διαμορφωθεί για τις ανάγκες του 20ού αιώνα, δεν είναι πλέον κατάλληλα, όχι μόνο γιατί περιλαμβάνουν παραδοσιακά γνωστικά αντικείμενα και πεπαλαιωμένες μεθόδους διδασκαλίας και αξιολόγησης, αλλά κυρίως διότι είναι σχεδιασμένα για κοινωνίες που είναι κλειστές σε εθνικά σύνορα και ιδεώδη, γεγονός που αποτελεί εμπόδιο στην πολιτική των ανοιχτών συνόρων στο πεδίο της μάθησης. Οι μαθητές τού σήμερα πρέπει να αποκτήσουν ικανότητες για να επιβιώσουν στον παγκοσμιοποιημένο κόσμο. Δηλαδή, να μπορούν να αναλύουν διεθνή ζητήματα με διαπολιτισμική, κριτική ματιά, από διαφορετικές οπτικές γωνίες· να κατανοούν πόσο οι διαφορές επηρεάζουν την κρίση, το τρόπο με τον οποίον αντιλαμβανόμαστε τον εαυτό μας και τον άλλον, να λειτουργούν δημιουργικά με άτομα από άλλους πολιτισμούς, με σεβασμό απέναντι στη διαφορετικότητα. Τα άτομα που θα αποκτήσουν αυτές τις ικανότητες θα είναι καλύτερα εφοδιασμένα ώστε να δημιουργήσουν κοινότητες δίκαιες, ειρηνικές, ανθεκτικές, χωρίς αποκλεισμούς. Και, φυσικά, η εκπαίδευση για την ανάπτυξη των ικανοτήτων αυτών δεν τελειώνει με την ολοκλήρωση του σχολείου. Πρόκειται για μια διαδικασία δια βίου μάθησης.

Οι ικανότητες του 21ου αιώνα

Θεμελιώδεις Γνώσεις	Ικανότητες	Ιδιότητες του χαρακτήρα
1. Γνώσεις ανάγνωσης-γραφής (στη μητρική και άλλες γλώσσες)	7. Κριτική σκέψη	11. Ερευνητικό πνεύμα
2. Γνώση μαθηματικών	8. Δημιουργικότητα	12. Πρωτοβουλία
3. Παιδεία φυσικών επιστημών	9. Επικοινωνία (πολυγλωσσική)	13. Επιμονή / Θάρρος
4. Παιδεία ΤΠΕ	10. Συνεργασία	14. Προσαρμοστικότητα
5. Γνώση οικονομικών		15. Ηγετική ικανότητα
6. Πολιτιστική & πολιτική παιδεία		16. Κοινωνική & πολιτική συνείδηση

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Promoting reflection in initial foreign language teacher education: The use of the EPOSTL revisited.

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The present text presents a longitudinal study on the promotion of reflection in foreign language teacher education. The report comprises work in progress. The research design was iterative in that each of the cycles shaped the following one. The research context was an undergraduate seminar course taught in the years 2014, 2017 and 2019 with the objective to promote students' reflection in their practicum semester (in total 61 students). The European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL) was used and activities had been planned for its integration in the course. At the same time, research was undertaken in order to investigate the optimal ways to serve the purpose of reflection. Based on the identified shortcomings, changes to the course were made and conclusions were drawn concerning the improvements undertaken. The present paper outlines the rationale and research methodology of the project and discusses the interim results of the first two cycles. These, although far from final, indicate ways in which teacher education for reflection can be improved. Some thoughts on the expected final results of the project and the way forward conclude the paper.

Keywords: EPOSTL, initial teacher education, foreign language teachers, reflection

1 Using the EPOSTL for reflection

For almost 15 years prior to the beginning of this project students' reflection had been one of the main objectives in my foreign language teaching methodology courses. The overall impression I had gained was that student teachers struggled with reflection and their thinking was vague and mainly descriptive most of the time. This impression led me in 2014 to the decision to conduct a longitudinal iterative research project in order to explore how the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL) can be integrated in a course and used in order to promote student teachers' reflection. It was my intention to create an alternative space within the teacher education program of my university (Russell and Martin 2017: 42).

The EPOSTL was chosen for several reasons. First, because it is known that one of its main aims is the encouragement of student teachers' reflection along with the development and exploration of their didactic competences and knowledge (Newby et al. 2011: 7-8). Second, because of its European validity and its strong ties to European language education policies, since the EPOSTL "builds on existing documents already developed by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe— Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and the European Language Portfolio (ELP) as well as the European Commission-financed project European Profile for Language Teacher Education—A Frame of Reference (European Profile)" (Newby 2011: 2). Finally, my previous positive experience with using learning portfolios in higher education (Papadopoulou 2015) further strengthened my decision to use the EPOSTL in my course.

The research context for this study was an undergraduate seminar course for student teachers of German as a foreign language in their practicum semester. In total 61 student teachers participated

in it. The course was taught in three iterations (cycles), in the years 2014, 2017 and 2019, and its main objective was, as mentioned above, to support student teachers' reflection. Aims of teacher education linked to reflection, were to be operationalized and achieved by means of the EPOSTL as well as a series of accompanying activities designed by me for this course. The course was planned so that students would familiarize themselves with the concept, nature and practice of reflection.

First, there would be plenary discussions and brief theoretical introductions to the concept and merits of reflection, which would help students become aware of the fact that their thinking about their teaching ought to be systematically stimulated, documented, and analyzed as well as that it should inform, improve and interact with their practice.

In order to operationalize the course's aims student teachers would be introduced to and start practicing the triangle of self-observation—self-assessment—reflection, since knowing how to observe and assess themselves over a longer period was crucial and a necessary condition for their reflection.

Student teachers in this course were, to a great extent, familiar with classroom observation and analyzing teaching processes (including their own teaching), since they had practiced both in other courses of the program. Hence, during their practicum they would be asked to use a series of protocols in order to observe teaching and analyze it. This material would, on the one hand, be part of their portfolio's Dossier and, on the other, form a basis for their reflection in their written assignments.

Unlike the observation processes, during which they would focus on both other teachers (fellow students and mentors) and on themselves, student teachers' use of the EPOSTL would aim solely at their self-assessment. Following a slightly modified sequence of the aims of the EPOSTL (Newby et al. 2007) student teachers would be encouraged to: reflect on the competences that they strive to attain and on the underlying knowledge which feed these competences; chart their progress; and develop awareness of their strengths and weaknesses related to teaching. They would be asked to assess themselves twice with the help of the EPOSTL, at the beginning and at end of the semester.

In parallel with lesson observation and self-assessment students would keep a reflective diary throughout their practicum semester. In it they would single out and comment upon the most striking aspects of the lesson observed or taught and discuss them in detail focusing on the(ir) teaching and the(ir) learners.

At the end of the semester, students would write an assignment, in which, based on their self-observation, self-assessment and reflection they would explore their teaching and its progress in relation to both their teaching profiles and the relevant teaching methodology literature. Their focus would be on their change as well as on frequent and dominant themes in their data.

2 Exploring the use of the EPOSTL

In the present project it was intended to explore the support of student teachers' reflection in a course using the EPOSTL. Hence, of research interest were, on the one hand, the ways of improving teacher education for reflection and, on the other, students' reflection itself, concerning its stimuli, foci, contents and forms as well as instances of success or failure. The following research questions were formulated:

1. Is student teachers' reflection promoted in the course using the EPOSTL?
    a. Do students assess their teaching and chart their progress in order to reflect and self-improve?
    b. Do the working methods, activities and the progression of the course support students' reflection, and if so, in what ways?
2. How should the course using the EPOSTL be improved?

After the initial plan for the course had been completed (see Section 1), research was carried out in a cyclical manner and in three steps: a) identifying strengths or shortcomings of the course as well as difficulties in students' reflection, b) deciding upon the changes to the course's pedagogical strategies for the next cycle, and c) trying out these changes and examining their effect on the students' reflection.

The cyclical nature of the research as well as the fact that it was longitudinal were expected to contribute to its validity and trustworthiness.

There were two sources of data in the present study. First, my research journal, which included lesson plans, material and activities as well as field notes about the conduct of each lesson and the overall progress of the project. There was a constant interplay between data gathering and analysis by means of my research journal throughout the course, which fed into my teaching and addressed research questions 1a and 1b. In addition, data resulting from the research journal were analyzed at the end of each cycle of the project in order to address research question 2. In relation to the second research question data were also analyzed from the students' work for the course, i.e., their observation schedules, diary entries, portfolios and assignments. The analysis of such data was conducted at the end of each cycle of the project and its aim was not to assess the students but to provide an answer to the study's research questions in combination with the findings from the journal's data and the relevant literature on reflective teacher education. Overall it can be concluded that interim analysis served two aims: first, to assess the pedagogical strategies used in the course and their effect on students' reflection, and second, to guide the improvements of the course and the refinement of the project's research questions and methodology.

Data were numerical and non-numerical and so both quantitative and qualitative analytical processes took place. Statistical as well as content analysis were undertaken to produce results, which varied from frequencies, scores or duration to feelings, perceptions, justifications, interpretations and intentions. Data were analyzed separately depending on their source but also comparatively so that common themes and patterns could emerge when separate sets of data were triangulated. In addition, it was considered important to examine data for each student separately but also across them to synthesize an overall picture of students' reflection in the course. There were interesting conclusions drawn at the end of each cycle of the project, which will now be discussed.

3 Interim findings and improvements

3.1 First cycle of the project

Analysis confirmed that students were able to observe their teaching and to chart their progress by using the EPOSTL. Consequently, they succeeded in focusing on their competences, observing and assessing them. Reflection, on the other hand, was not unproblematic for the student teachers, it did not occur automatically, spontaneously or easily. Interim results indicated that successful reflection instances were not as dominant as expected in a course focusing on reflection. The main problems identified were the following: organizational unclarities, need for better scaffolding of the students' work, students' lack of in-depth and focused reflection on their teaching and absence of reflection for self-improvement. Based on the identified difficulties the following changes to the course were decided upon.

All categories and descriptors of the EPOSTL were numbered in order to ease their analysis and discussion. At the same time, students were given more detailed guidelines on how to use the EPOSTL descriptors for their self-assessment. In this way, they could be led to gradually discover, understand and try out working with them. For similar reasons, PowerPoint presentations were planned to precede the student teachers' assignments. By presenting their work before writing about it, students' reflective voice could be heard and collective reflection before their written, individual reflection could take place.

The concept of critical incidents (see Brandenburg 2008) was introduced. The descriptors in the EPOSTL still provided the general framework of our work, but students were asked to specifically focus on descriptors because of their individually perceived importance or because they referred to recurring and dominant themes in their self-assessment. Their self-assessment was to be analyzed in terms of whether their two entries, (at the beginning and at the end of the semester) when compared, expressed progress, stillstand, deterioration, or irrelevance to their practicum and teaching.

It was, also, decided to introduce two time points: At time point 1 (t1) students were asked to either identify an issue that they perceived as problematic or to choose a way of teaching that was new to them and they wished to try out. Students were then asked to work on an action plan. This plan would focus either on an alternative teaching route in order to address the problem or on the preparation of the new way of teaching they wanted to try out. At time point 2 (t2) students were asked to research either whether the problem was solved or how their teaching went. In both cases they would investigate their change.

3.2 Second cycle of the project

Analysis at the end of the second cycle of the project shed light to a series of strengths of the improved course. The PowerPoint presentations undertaken by the students did in fact provide them the opportunity to voice their reflection. In addition, the discussions which followed these presentations were experienced by the students as good opportunities for collective reflection. A second encouraging finding was that the introduced sharper focus (critical incidents) and the more detailed analysis (t1/t2) led to deeper and more meaningful reflection and, perhaps even more importantly, to the students' personal satisfaction and sense of achievement. A third very interesting finding that emerged related to the twofold importance of the students' feelings concerning both how frequently they expressed them and the importance they themselves attributed to them. Their thinking in relation to teaching and their practicum experience were to a great extent shaped by their feelings, whether feelings of anxiety or feelings of joy and fulfillment.

On the other hand, difficulties and shortcomings in the course were identified which needed to be addressed. Analysis indicated that the types and the progression of the activities needed to be improved in order to support students' reflection. Students' diary entries were often descriptive rather than reflective. In addition, many of them had problems linking information from their lesson plans and observation protocols (part of the Dossier) to aspects of their teaching to be assessed and reflected upon. Finally, students did not have enough opportunities and time for actual reflection in the course and not enough opportunities to express their expectations, experiences and needs in the course, i.e., provide meaningful feedback.

In order to address these shortcomings and difficulties, a series of new activities were planned for the course including: a) preparatory activities for the students' entries in the reflective diary (concerning frequency, form, objectives) to break down the process of how to recall and reflect upon teaching in small, consecutive steps; b) practice activities with detailed guidelines in the form of questions to help students write entries in their reflective diaries; c) activities that were up to that point dealt with by the students at home were planned as class activities to prevent confusion and lack of motivation, for example focusing on the Dossier and its links to self-assessment; d) activities for guided reflective group discussions in class. Time and work allocated to oral reflection activities were increased using the EPOSTL as a helpful stimulus for such discussions. Time was planned to allow for narratives to develop, first orally in the group and then in written form both in class and as part of the students' assignments; and, finally, e) activities focusing on students' feelings. Because of this shift in focus, a new seating arrangement was planned to promote eye contact and group communication.

In order to obtain detailed feedback from the students two questionnaires were developed and administered at the beginning and the end of the semester. The first questionnaire explored student teachers' expectations of the practicum and the course as well as their personal aims for the semester, their previous competences in relation to observation, reflective writing and the use of any portfolio as well as their concepts of reflection and self-assessment. The second questionnaire had, in order to draw comparisons, many questions in common with the first one, for example as far as students' concepts were concerned. Also, a series of questions elicited the students' comments on the expectations and aims they had expressed at the beginning of the semester as well as on their progress in general. A last important aim of the second questionnaire was to assess the use of the portfolio and all the other course activities.

4 The way forward

The present study is not yet completed, the detailed and systematic interim analysis of data has, however, proven to be enlightening. It seems that data to a large extent provide a valid and trustworthy picture concerning what works best in a course for reflection and the process of reflection per se. The interim results of the present project indicate ways in which teacher education for reflection could develop and improve. The necessity of scaffolding and gradual progression and the role feelings play stand out. Also, creating and ensuring space for the students' thinking, voice and feed-back appear to be central. However, the results gained so far, and discussed here, are far from final.

The third cycle of the project finished a few months ago and data analysis and interpretation are now in progress. In a similar manner to the first two cycles of the project the first analytical goal will be to assess the effect the course's improvements had on students' reflection. It will, secondly, be aimed to explore the aspects of reflection that emerged in the last cycle of the project. Finally, it will be attempted to bring together the data, the interim findings and the undertaken changes of all cycles of the study. By means of the comparison and synthesis of data, their analysis and interpretation of my research on the alternative space I had hoped to create will be concluded. For such an objective to be satisfactorily met it is necessary to move to the next level, that of theorizing. For this, establishing links with the relevant literature and research in the field is necessary. One example would be to analyze all data against categories provided by the literature like content/process/premise reflection (Kreber and Granton 2000). Such data interpretation and theory development would reflect the very essence of the project.

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6 Biography

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Introducing the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) CEFR SIG

Carmen Peresich, ÖSD | Universität Klagenfurt

The ALTE CEFR SIG investigates and critically discusses real-world CEFR use and misuse. The group stays updated on current CEFR developments and its members conduct their own research into the use, misuse and usability of the CEFR in specific contexts. The CEFR SIG presents itself as a forum for test developers as well as researchers, who are invited to share their ideas, research results and practices concerning the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages in the regular group meetings (as a rule, twice to three times per year), and to discuss their ideas, findings and approaches with peers.

Being a SIG with a rather long tradition, a considerable amount of research projects and publications has originated from the members' work. In the recent past, the SIGs focus of interest was to investigate the use of the CEFR in language tests that grant access to higher education (e.g., universities) and to the labor market—for more details see e.g., several articles by Cecilie Hamnes Carlsen, Bart Deygers, Koen Van Grop, Nick Saville, Beate Zeidler, Dina Vilcu. The ALTE CEFR SIG took part in the development of two different grids for the analysis of sample performances and tasks. In addition to working on CEFR-related research questions, the SIG is also interested in collaborating with others. A recent example for this is the Council of Europe Survey on policy and practice relating to the linguistic integration of migrants in the member states conducted 2018/2019 in cooperation with the ALTE LAMI SIG. The findings of this study were presented in October 2019 in Strasbourg at a conference organized by the Council of Europe.

Until November 2019, the ALTE CEFR SIG was chaired by Bart Deygers (KU Leuven) and Cecilie Hamnes Carlsen (Western Norway University of Applied Sciences). They have been followed by Carmen Peresich (ÖSD – Österreichisches Sprachdiplom Deutsch | Universität Klagenfurt). Concomitant with this change comes a new focus to the CEFR SIG: In the near future, the group will concentrate on the Companion Volume to the CEFR (2018) and its impact on language testing as well as on test development—e.g.: How can and will the consistently enlarged plus-levels affect language testing and assessment? Does the newly introduced pre-A1-level influence the A1-level? Does the new scale for Phonologic Control eliminate the criticism toward the former scale? Moreover, the ALTE CEFR SIG as well as EALTA will collaborate in the revision of the Manual for Relating Exams to the CEFR when this is undertaken. Another project, in which the ALTE CEFR SIG will participate, which has just been started by the Council of Europe, is a database/online-tool of CEFR/CV descriptors. Despite its focus, the CEFR SIG remains open to any new impetus, ideas and research questions. Anybody interested in further information is hereby invited to contact carmen.peresich@osd.at, and to visit the ALTE website: www.alte.org.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages CEFR SIG

Neus Figueras, University of Barcelona

Given the prominent role of the CEFR in all aspects of language education, and in a large number of countries and contexts, the establishment of a Special Interest Group within EALTA to address issues related to the use and further development of the CEFR was approved by the EALTA executive committee in 2014. The first EALTA CEFR SIG met prior to the Copenhagen EALTA Conference in 2015, moderated by Neus Figueras and Sauli Takala. Neus Figueras is now the sole moderator of the SIG, following the sad passing away of Sauli Takala, in February 2017.

All EALTA members can become members of the SIG. For free membership, please see: http://www.ealta.eu.org/join.htm. The SIG's provides a forum for exchange for people engaged in local, national, regional, European and broader international contexts, in the development, implementation, use or assessment/evaluation of:

1. language policies and language education policies
2. education, curricula, syllabi and courses program
3. basic and in-service education of teachers
4. teaching and learning materials
5. testing and assessment covering the whole range of activities from classroom and self-assessment to external and international assessments
6. linking/aligning policies, program, materials and tests/examinations/assessment to the CEFR
7. further developments to the CEFR

Further activities may include international and reciprocal co-operation in producing and validating benchmarks; as well as international and reciprocal co-operation in validating standard setting projects; facilitating exchange visits of researchers or co-operative development and research projects amongst group members to enhance the exchange of expertise across Europe and beyond and among all EALTA members.

Professionals from different contexts have been invited to take part in SIG meetings, which take place regularly prior to the annual EALTA conference. The EALTA CEFR SIG has also held special meetings, either by invitation (as was the case at the University of Bilkent, Turkey in 2016 or in London at Kaplan International in 2017) or on its own initiative, as was the case with the meeting held at Trinity College Dublin in January 2018 on the occasion of the publication of the CEFR Companion Volume with new descriptors by the Council of Europe (report available at: http://www.ealta.eu.org/members/resources.php).

The EALTA CEFR SIG strives to be a catalyst for CEFR-related innovations within the field of assessment and testing. The SIG contributes to discussions and debates that not only help disseminate best practices in the use of the CEFR, but also propose actions and initiatives which can further the use of the CEFR. An example of this is the February 2020 co-organization of an event with UKALTA. The event explored ways of developing research methodologies and projects that help extend and develop the CEFR and its implementation. The official report may be accessed at: http://www.ealta.eu.org/documents/EALTA_UKALTA_CEFR_report_final.pdf.

CEFR and Language Portfolio

JALT CEFR & LP SIG

Maria Gabriela Schmidt, Nihon University
Morten Hunke, g.a.s.t. | TestDaF-Institut

The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) CEFR & Language Portfolio SIG (CEFR & LP SIG) formed in 2008 to spread the ideas and concepts of the CEFR, conducting action research and sharing experiences. Our activities include meetings, conferences, a regular newsletter, maintaining a homepage. The first visible result was a language portfolio for Japanese universities, and an edited volume with a collection of case studies: *'Can do statements in language education in Japan and beyond'* published in 2010 (Schmidt, Naganuma, O'Dwyer, Imig, and Sakai 2010). Bringing together people from a wide range of interests, the SIG secured the first Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) Grant-in-Aid research project in 2012, resulting in the *'CEFR-informed EAP Textbook Series B1(A2+)'* (Naganuma, Nagai and O'Dwyer 2015). The next research project soon followed: *'Critical, constructive assessment of CEFR-informed foreign language teaching in Japan and beyond'* (O'Dwyer, Hunke, Imig, Nagai, Naganuma and Schmidt 2017), with major action research studies examining how to implement the CEFR in university curriculums and other areas. It was not intended in the beginning, but the research projects, related conferences and publications became the core of the SIG activities. The third project aimed at developing a tool kit (https://cefrjapan.net/toolkit) to support teachers navigating through the huge amount of CEFR-related information, with a new homepage *cefrjapan.net* and a book publication *'CEFR-informed Learning, Teaching, Assessment: A practical guide for practitioners'* (Nagai, Birch, Bower and Schmidt (2020). Two more JSPS-funded research projects are under way: one on academic writing, especially text composition for university students on the level B1 - B2. The other project focuses on aligning the CEFR to current practices for identifying needs of learners and teachers in the classroom by using an action research cycle. We are currently looking for case studies in relation to the CEFR using action research predominantly in Japan (but not exclusively) Please, do get in touch if interested. For contacting us, please use the contact form on the SIG homepage (see below).

Other activities have included launching the *CEFR Journal – Research and Practice* (you are currently reading), to have a peer-to-peer based platform to exchange research and best practice internationally. Most of the CEFR-related resources and publications come from Europe but the CEFR have now spread to many regions. Practitioners want to learn from each another and they want to share their experiences. The first volume of *CEFR Journal* received good feedback. You are reading volume 2, and here we are, looking forward to volume 3.

We are a small SIG with around 70 members within the non-profit organization JALT. But we have a handful of very active core members, looking for opportunities to contribute to language teaching

featuring the CEFR and CEFR/CV. And even the current situation does not stop us. We are planning two more working groups, one on CEFR and CLIL (see conference link below*), and the other on adapting the descriptors to the recent (forced) increase in online teaching. We constantly try to reach out to other peers and other groups. If we do not help each other and work together, who else will support us?

Links

- CERF & LP SIG: https://cefrjapan.net
- CEFR Journal: https://cefrjapan.net/journal
- JALT: https://jalt.org/
- Language Portfolio for Japanese University, bilingual (English/Japanese): https://sites.google.com/site/flpsig/flp-sig-home/language-portfolio-for-japanese-university
- *Conference: Aligning CEFR to current practices – Identifying needs of learners and teachers in the classroom: https://sites.google.com/site/flpsig/home/even

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CEFR JOURNAL—RESEARCH AND PRACTICE
VOLUME 2

The EALTA UKALTA 'Roadmap' conference—The CEFR: a road map for future research and development—meeting overview

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Maria Gabriela Schmidt, Nihon University

The "Roadmap" meeting (https://uk.live.solas.britishcouncil.digital/exam/aptis/research/ealta-ukalta-conference) was held in central London on 7-8 February, and jointly hosted by EALTA and UKALTA. The central organizing committee was comprised of **Barry O'Sullivan** and **Jamie Dunlea** (British Council), **Neus Figueras** (University of Barcelona), **Vincent Foiny** (France Education International), **David Little** (Trinity College Dublin), with contributions from international experts like Brian North, John de Jong, Meg Malone, Masashi Negishi, Constant Leung, Peter Lenz et al. The first day featured two sessions by Brian North and David Little respectively that opened up the topics of the meeting. The second day was comprised of three symposia that expanded on some of these topics, ending with a final session that attempted to draw threads together and sketch out future plans.

This article introduces the meeting and the roadmap generally, and discusses possible future CEFR-related initiatives. A more comprehensive, official report is available at: http://www.ealta.eu.org/documents/EALTA_UKALTA_CEFR_report_final.pdf.

The purpose of this overview is to raise awareness of the meeting in general (for those who could not attend): as mentioned a more comprehensive report is available at the link above. The text offers an introduction and attempts to feed forward to the EALTA CEFR SIG workshop on 11 June, 2020 at 03:00 pm BST. You can register at: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMvd-iurDspHt1WG8ru_yrw6NIAGDl0YaQ1. Please be aware, to register, you need to be an EALTA member—it is free—and you will have to join the EALTA CEFR SIG to keep abreast of developments and to attend the CEFR SIG online workshop.

Please note, for the sake of brevity, the text may omit describing certain discussions that took place in detail. This text does not aim to be a comprehensive representation of the entire conference. Also, this text reflects the impressions of members of the CEFR Journal editorial team present at the conference. Were you to find topical issues or important discussion points omitted in this text, or were you to wish to add contradicting or complementary views of how to progress the roadmap, for example, we warmly welcome such contributions to the CEFR Journal. Please, contact us at: journal@cafrjapan.net. We would love to hear from you and get the debate going.

The brief for the conference was as follows: In the two decades since its publication, the CEFR has established itself as an indispensable reference point for all aspects of second and foreign language education—a position that was reinforced by the publication of the Companion Volume (CV) in 2018. Used worldwide by individuals, institutions and policy makers in different contexts, with different aims and with varying degrees of rigor, the CEFR has become de facto an open source apparatus that is a great deal more than a collection of documents. EALTA (European Association for Language Testing and

Assessment) and UKALTA (United Kingdom Association for Language Testing and Assessment), both open associations of professionals in language testing and assessment, recognize the need to explore ways of developing research methodologies and projects of various kinds that can help to extend and further develop the CEFR and its implementation. Accordingly, they have decided to organize a meeting that will consider the possibility of creating a road map for future engagement with the CEFR, taking account of what has been learnt so far and of new developments in applied linguistics and related disciplines. The meeting will comprise a series of symposia and discussion panels in which invited professionals from different contexts will report on and discuss existing policies and research and express their views on future development.

For the full program, please see the appendix. Starting with the end in mind, a roadmap was presented by David Little:

Text of slide 1 by David Little:

Steps towards a road map of future research development	

Assessment
• Language testing and assessment professionals and associations are already fully involved
 	
Alignment of curriculum, teaching/ learning and assessment
• Identify examples of established and evolving practice
  • Universities
  • The semi-state and private sectors
  • Deaf Studies / sign language teachers
 	
Action-oriented and plurilingual approaches
• Identify varieties of implementation
• Research classroom practice
	Engaging the profession
	• Establish a network of associations and agencies to
	  • share experience
	  • encourage CEFR-related activities
	  • organize events
	  • coordinate publications
	  • launch research projects, e.g., to update the manual
	• Promote awareness of the CEFR and its ethos
	  • Founded on Council of Europe values
	  • Learning before teaching before assessment
	• Draw on CEFR-related and other research to clarify and amplify the theoretical underpinning and practical implementation of key concepts

Day 1

I Opening session The CEFR: Learning, teaching, assessment in Europe and beyond

Brian North The CEFR Companion Volume Project: what has been achieved

The opening session *The CEFR: Learning, teaching, assessment in Europe and beyond* began with a talk by **Brian North** *The CEFR Companion Volume Project: what has been achieved*. Brian discussed some important concepts of the Companion Volume (CV), such as how it outlines the action-oriented approach (also see Picardo & North 2019), how it importantly conceptualizes mediation. This makes the mediation elements of the 2001 publication more explicit and adding scales for mediating texts across and within languages. It aimed to make a more complete descriptor scheme, that is also readable for purposes like teacher education (a central theme that emerged throughout the meeting). It was emphasized that the

mediation scales were designed to be used as a reference scale for curriculum development, but not necessarily as scales for classroom task-, and test item-assessment. Many of the descriptors from the original 2001 document were made modality-inclusive and gender neutral. One point that emerged in a later discussion is that it is important to look at scales transversally when choosing the correct scale for assessment (see Constant Leung presentation on Saturday). This is one area of future work which stakeholders would benefit from accessible resources.

The replacement of the phonology scales in the CV was mentioned (the development of a new *Phonological Control* scale, and the process of removing the "native-speaker ghost" in revising descriptors of the 2001 document, with intelligibility and proficient users of the language now the focus (e.g., "sustained relationships with native speakers" has been replaced with "sustained relationships with speakers of the target language" in the Overall Spoken Interaction B2 descriptor).

The plenary was followed by a panel discussion, chaired by **Jamie Dunlea** (British Council), which focused on how the 2001 publication was meant to be an international document that could be localized, to reflect situations on the ground.

Meg Malone of the American Association discussed collaboration and building of relationships between ACTFL and the CEFR community, with **Masashi Negishi** (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies) outlining the development of the CEFR-J emphasizing the bilateral impact of the CEFR-J (i.e., not only the impact of CEFR in Japan, but the impact of the CEFR-J research on the development of the CEFR). Some points raised by Negishi included the importance of proper attention of stakeholders toward the action-oriented approach (AoA), and the proper procedure to align tests to the CEFR.

Barry O'Sullivan (British Council) discussed how the CEFR is used everywhere but differently in and across contexts, with various levels of understanding. Many exams claim alignment with the CEFR, the reality may be questionable. He asked broad questions like what impact has the CEFR has on assessment? And is the original 2001 publication fit for purpose? This ended in a suggestion to combine the 2001 publication with the CV in an accessible way for use in teacher training. O'Sullivan introduced an underlying theme: the equal and constructive alignment of curriculum, assessment and teaching.

II The CEFR: challenges and critical perspective—David Little

The first day continued with *The CEFR: challenges and critical perspective* talk which generally discussed the impact of the CEFR, with a heavy impact on assessment, and impact on curriculum patchy (the school sector, in particular, needs to be developed further). In terms of teaching and learning Little expressed disappointment that the European Language Portfolio (ELP) is not used on a large scale, and seems to have "sunk without a trace". It is not necessary to be too pessimistic as the ELP is/was a tool to integrate the AoA into curricula. This has happened, and is continuing to progress: we just need to clearly outline and harness the positive progressions, while addressing the situations and contexts that would benefit from the greater integration of the AoA and other underlying principles of the CEFR.

Little outlined 3 challenges: the AoA, Plurilingual approach to language education and use descriptors, described in the text from his slide reproduced below:

Slide 2 by David Little

Three areas of challenge	
The action-oriented approach • Learners are individual and social agents • Language learning via language use • Learner involvement **The plurilingual approach to language education** • Integrated linguistic repertoires => pedagogical implications • All languages in the learner's repertoire implicated in his/her (language) education **Descriptors** • A means of integrating curriculum, teaching/learning and assessment => constructive alignment as necessary support for pedagogical implementation of action-oriented and plurilingual approaches	• For most teachers (and learners) this is still a novel view of the language learning process and the role of the learner • How widely has it been understood, adopted and successfully implemented? • Entails a profound modification of the aim of language education (CEFR 1.3, p. 9) • But what exactly does it mean for curriculum, classroom practice and assessment? • In how many different ways can it be implemented? The widespread practice of claiming **general** and **undocumented** alignment with the CEFR: • How many examples of **thoroughgoing** constructive alignment can we identify?

In terms of descriptors, David emphasized that the CEFR ideally is a system of constructive alignment, with the role of Can Do statements as a tool for constructive alignment often mis- or under-used. He also outlined steps in CEFR/CV-based curriculum design (see text in slide 3 below), emphasizing the need to define content in terms of learner needs (e.g., page 37 of the Companion Volume). Importantly he emphasized the need to engage the profession, and classroom practice (e.g., Kirwan Scoil Bhríde Cailíní example below) of the AoA and plurilingual approach, and update for aligning materials to CEFR.

Little gave a good definition of levels, with the first levels focusing on survival (A1), leading to interaction and transaction (A2-B1), followed by academic, professional, vocational engagement (B2+). The levels can be viewed as concentric circles that widen in their scope from level A1 to C2.

Slide 3 by David Little

Steps in CEFR/CV-based curriculum design

- Define the program in terms of content the knowledge that learners are required to engage with and master the skills they are required to develop while doing so
- Use the levels and scales of the CV to determine what the language activities learners should be able to perform by the end of the program (reception, production, interaction, mediation)
- Use the levels and scales of communicative language competence to describe the linguistic resources learners need to acquire
- Develop a program of teaching and learning, bearing in mind
  - the status of the learner as an individual and a social agent
  - the action-oriented approach (AoA) and its pedagogical implications
  - the descriptive scheme in Chapters 4 and 5
  - the discussion of learning and teaching in Chapter 6
  - the discussion of tasks in Chapter 7
- Provide learners with a version of the ELP to help them manage their own learning documentation, reflection, self-assessment ("I can" descriptors derived from a curriculum establish continuity with teacher and institutional/external assessment)

The day ended with a discussion of the roadmap, as mentioned above.

Day 2

Change of paradigm?

III The second day opened with a symposium on the topic of The action-oriented approach in the CEFR and the CV: a change of paradigm(s)?.

Constant Leung (King's College London) came from the perspective of English as a Lingua Franca (Global Englishes) and mediation, in particular mediating communication in flexible multilingualism.

One point that emerged later in the discussion is that it is important to look at scales transversally (i.e., look across the available scales) when choosing correct scale for assessment (Brian North noted he could use the "Acting as an intermediary in informal situation with friends and colleagues" scales when viewing communication amongst multilinguals). He focused on agency, fluidity, contingency and context-shift in multilingually-mediated communication.

Mark Levy (British Council, Spain) discussed how it was decided that mediation must be included in language curriculum and tasks, as part of royal decree. It seemed to be imposed on teachers, without enough time to prepare. (In reality, the government minister was a member of the 2014 CV working group). There is a hint here for measured and collaborative implementation of top-down initiatives.

John de Jong (Language Testing Services) offered perspectives from a testing/assessment perspective, noting that the CV offers a necessary elaboration of notions that were clearly signalled in the CEFR original document. Considerations of principles like measuring mastery of a level and modelling mediation where also outlined.

The following discussion, chaired by Barry O'Sullivan, highlighted some important questions, such as:

- What are you going to do to help teachers teach in an AoA-informed way? Important to understand plurilingual citizens. It is possible to turn the question around: What can be done to further help learners/plurilingual citizens learn in an AoA-informed way? It is very important to map out current situations, and gaps to address, possibly identifying where the biggest difference can be made.
- When mediating with government officials, an effective approach may be to present a 1-pager with a graphic, and 3 bullet points.
- It is a mistake to standardize everything in the CEFR/CV but should be thinking how to assess classroom-based activities. As an aside, a way of viewing a standardized test is that it is an objective measure of things that can be objectively measured.

There were many discussions around these presentations, with 100+ language professionals in attendance. One such individual was Glyn Jones, who is looking for help with a PhD study, see https://cefrreplication.jimdo.com.

Symposium 2: Plurilingualism

IV The second symposium Plurilingualism, plurilingual education and mediation featured four speakers.

Bessie Dendrinos (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece) outlined a project which aimed to make the CEFR levels explicit in terms of linguistic data. This involved the development of a curriculum, suite of exams, curriculum language database, and language learner profile, all which were linked to the Kratiko Pistopiitiko Glossomathias (KPG) learner corpora (see www.rcel.enl.uoa.gr).

Déirdre Kirwan, former principal of Scoil Bhríde Cailíní, Blanchardstown, Dublin, gave an exciting report on a whole school language policy for a primary school with 50 home languages, and learners bringing their own languages to school as a resource. The CEFR was used to facilitate a common metalanguage across languages (see Kirwan & Little 2019 for details). The school was unprepared for the rapid change in its student body, and had to develop its policy as time went on. An important take out however was that every school should not have to do this, if an easy to follow guidelines for the implementation of the whole school approach to language where made available.

Overall Kirwan suggested it would be greatly beneficial to create a guide to a whole school approach, where language learning is conducted incidentally by doing what they want to do (a great example given was an 8-year-old of Filipino heritage writing a diary about her dog in the Irish language). The examples and learnings outlined by Kirwan is a great example of learner-centred AoA, and a learner interpretation of AoA.

Peter Lenz (Institute of Multilingualism, University of Fribourg) discussed the Occupational English Test (https://www.occupationalenglishtest.org/), which examined five clinical communications criteria.

The follow-on discussions featured the need to constructively align teachers and learners. In order to understand learning, there is often a difference between how learners assess and teachers assess. Exploding descriptors is one solution, and other practices to develop learner agency.

Symposium 3: Descriptors in curriculum, classroom and assessment, include many important perspectives which are found in the report linked above.

Elif Kantarcıoğlu (Bilkent University, Ankara), for example, discussed matters such as the renewal of content analysis grids to integrate CV components like mediation, and the need for speaking samples. The other presenters were Armin Berger and Elaine Boyd.

Meeting recommendations

The meeting ended with an open discussion, focusing on recommendations for future actions: we list these in note form.

Neus Figueras emphasized less is more for proposals: Need accessible compilation of all CEFR-related documents, to improve usage by professionals.

Mike Byram: need to educate plurilingual democratic citizens, whole school approaches etc. Need bigger picture, and synergies between CEFR CV, and OECD scales etc.

Gudrun Erickson: There is a need from relevant organizations to hold collaborative events, alongside less traditional, descriptive reports on websites of organizations etc.

Joe Siegel, Joe Sheils (formerly Council of Europe director of the Language Policy Division): need to realize where Roadmap fits in with democratic ethos of CoE, and organizations with participatory status (UKALTA, ALTE, EAQUALS).

There was a final address by presidents of EALTA and UKALTA, who agreed to bring the recommendations of the meeting forward.

What follows are some views on possible progressions on foot of the meeting

How well is the CEFR used and understood by learners? To what extent is the CEFR used alongside/facilitates learning-oriented assessment and assessment for learning? How can we help teachers teach in an action-oriented approach (AoA)?[1] It is important to understand plurilingual citizens: it is necessary to ask what can be done to further help learners/plurilingual citizens learn in an AoA? In our opinion, it is important to map out the current situation, and gaps to address, possibly identifying where the biggest difference can be made. This should tie in with the Languages Connect initiatives in secondary and tertiary education in Ireland (https://languagesconnect.ie/), for example, and initiatives like the Higher Education Language Educator Competences project (https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/project/a-profile-of-skills-for-teachers-of-language-in-higher-education/).

In fact, it would be desirable for a panel of relevant organizations—ALTE, EALTA, UKALTA, EAQUALS, etc.—to spearhead efforts to produce both a real roadmap for further actions as well as an overview of successes, gaps and to-dos. In fact, an up-do-date resource providing an overview of all such projects past and present would be ideal. However, this resource would only be useful if it is well-maintained and created with the prospective users in mind. The CEFR Journal could also play an important role in this respect as well. It could provide a bottom up platform for facilitation of results like a roadmap agenda, providing insights into running and finalized projects.

What is important here is the equal and constructive alignment of curriculum, assessment and teaching/learning (while understanding that this triangle is embedded in a wider system). An emerging research interest is the need to constructively align teachers and learners. The CEFR is ideally a system of constructive alignment facilitated by use of the illustrative scales and 'Can do statements. It is a mistake to standardize everything in the CEFR/CV, but should be thinking how to assess classroom-based activities. The development of accessible resources for educators viewing scales transversally when developing assessment criteria for classroom-based activities could be one particular focus.

1. The AoA was clearly described in the CEFR in relation to language use and language learning (2001: 9), whereas Piccardo and North 2019 focus on the AoA as a way of teaching.

- In terms of teaching and learning Little expressed disappointment (that the ELP) is not used on a large scale. As mentioned above, the ELP was a tool to integrate the AoA into curricula which has happened, and is continuing to progress, to a certain extent. See for example the increased use of assessment for learning and learning-oriented assessment in language classrooms since the official publication of the CEFR in 2001. Future developments could aim to clearly outline and harness the positive progressions, while addressing the situations and contexts that would benefit from the greater integration of the AoA and other underlying principles of the CEFR. In particular, a point of interest is learners' perception of the CEFR in terms of the AoA and learning-oriented assessment etc. Readers may want to follow up such matters in Piccardo & North (2019).
- Engaging the profession and classroom practice. It is important to follow though to develop easy to follow guidelines for the implementation of the whole school approach to multilingual education: Kirwan & Little (2019) is an excellent starting point for those wishing to examine this more. Flipped learning will have a large role to play for learners of teenage years and older, particularly in post-COVID-19 times.
- Combining the original 2001 CEFR publication with the Companion Volume in an accessible way for use in teacher training, and to be accessed by a wider audience. It was mentioned that when engaging with new educational ministers, for example, you must present a one-page document with a graphic and 3 bullet points! One possible function of the roadmap panel could be to commission producing such resources.
- One view is that a steering group should devise an overarching plan, based on the roadmap of Little with addition of contributions from the Roadmap conference and follow-on consultation process. (This plan may be achieved over the course of 20+ years!) Less is often more, in this case what is required is a structured suite of collaborative projects which incrementally and iteratively achieve the aims of the roadmap. Ideally these projects would be funded (e.g., European Centre for Modern Languages medium-term programme; European Commission Marie Curie Innovative Training Network), interdisciplinary, multi-organizational and transnational.

There is capacity, opportunity, and desire for change!

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Appendix

Friday 7th February

I The CEFR: Learning, teaching, assessment in Europe and beyond

Brian North: The CEFR Companion Volume Project: what has been achieved

Panel discussion: Barry O'Sullivan (British Council), Masashi Negishi (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies), Meg Malone (ACTFL). Chair: Jamie Dunlea (British Council)

Saturday 8th February

III Symposium 1: The action-oriented approach in the CEFR and the CV: a change of paradigm(s)?

Panel: Constant Leung (King's college London), Mark Levy (British Council, Spain), John de Jong (Language Testing Services). Chair: Barry O'Sullivan (British Council)

IV Symposium 2: Plurilingualism, plurilingual education and mediation

Panel: Bessie Dendrinos (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece), Déirdre Kirwan (Formerly principal of Scoil Bhríde Cailíní, Blanchardstown, Dublin), Peter Lenz (Institute of Multilingualism, University of Friburg). Chair: Vincent Folny (France Education International)

V Symposium 3: Descriptors in curriculum, classroom and assessment

Panel: Elaine Boyd (University College London), Armin Berger – (University of Vienna), Elif Kantarcıoğlu (Bilkent University, Ankara). Chair: Nick Savile (ALTE)

Followed by final discussion, with final addresses by invited Lynda Taylor (UKALTA president) and Peter Lenz (EALTA president).

CEFR JOURNAL—RESEARCH AND PRACTICE
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Submission (Call for Abstracts)

This journal attempts to fall somewhere in between an inaccessible academic journal (long waiting times, fairly strict guidelines/criteria) and a newsletter (practical in nature but lacking in theoretical support/foundation), linking research of a practical nature with relevant research related to foreign language education, the CEFR, other language frameworks, and the European Language Portfolio. While the CEFR was introduced by the Council of Europe and intended for use, first and foremost, within Europe, the influence of the CEFR now has to be attested in many places beyond European borders. It has become a global framework, impacting a variety of aspects of language learning, teaching, and assessment across countries and continents beyond the context for which it was originally created. As such, there is a pressing need to create a quality forum for sharing research, experiences, and lessons learned from applying the CEFR in different contexts. This journal provides such a forum where people involved or interested in processes of applying the CEFR can share and learn from one another.

We are continuously seeking contributions related to foreign language education, the CEFR, other language frameworks, and the European Language Portfolio. We are particularly interested in specific contextual adaptations.

Currently, we have a new Call for Abstracts out. Due to current necessities and demand, we are looking to give your experiences with **online, remote, and e-learning in conjunction with the CEFR, the CEFR/CV, or portfolio work** the spotlight it deserves. In these months many practitioners are accruing valuable best and potentially also worst practice experience. We would like to offer a forum to share such valuable insights in future volumes. Until 30 November 2020 we are looking for abstracts at:

journal@cefrjapan.net

Guidelines

Submission:	30 November 2020
Contributions:	Articles (research), reports (best practice), news (work in progress), research notes, book reviews
Language(s):	English (British, American, international) preferred, but not mandatory. Other languages by request, with an extended abstract in English.
Review type:	Peer review, double blind

Peer review guidelines:

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