

# A multimedia orientation course on the CEFR Companion Volume, going back to 2001, moving forward to 2020 and beyond

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*In this contribution, we illustrate how we have designed our orientation course on the CEFR Companion volume: with what objectives (Part I) and what structure (Part II). The course is designed and realised in microlearning mode. Graphics, animation and approach to the subject matter make it enjoyable also for those who are approaching LS/L2 teaching or for self-learners who want to discover this document. Each of the 11 course units consists of a 5-10' video, equally usable from a mobile device, focusing on a particular aspect (all videos are visible on the website <http://promoplurilinguismo.unimi.it> and on youtube). All our references to the adoption and knowledge of the CEFR CV mainly concern our experience in Italy, although we have noticed many similarities with other countries both at school (at all levels) and outside school. 'Our' Italian society, just like 'our' European society, has in fact seen and continues to see the importance assumed by linguistic and cultural diversity growth of which it is necessary to become increasingly aware. The course is intended to be a tool for understanding the whole didactic idea of the CEFR CV, which envisages language levels from Pre-A1 to C2 but at the same time promotes education in plurilingualism, interculturalism, mediation and inclusiveness.*

**Keywords:** Companion Volume, CEFR, glottodidactics, second languages, foreign languages, linguistic education, plurilingualism

## 1 Introduction

The publication of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages Companion Volume (CEFR CV) 2020 marks a new milestone in the history of language education, comparable in scope to that of the first Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) publication in 2001<sup>1</sup>. From the point of view of the reception of this document-instrument, the remarkable fact is that from 2020 onwards, it will not be as new as it was in 2001. This initial reflection accompanies any discussion of the *Companion Volume* (CV) that we would like to disseminate to teachers, scholars, and language

1. The bibliography on the CEFR 2001 is very extensive. Many contributions have been written in Italian, as well as in all other languages, so we refer to the Council of Europe (COE) website, which contains many articles, books, and dedicated websites; we think in particular of Beacco et al. 2016. Studies on the CV are at an early stage. We recall here the conference organised at the University of Milan in 2019, whose proceedings are published in *Italiano LinguaDue*: Barsi-Jardin 2020 and the contributions of Piccardo 2020, North 2020, Benedetti et al. 2020. The journal *Italiano LinguaDue* continues to publish contributions on the CV in Italy; see, for example, Cattaneo 2021 and Fratter 2021.

education professionals in the Italian version<sup>2</sup>. To do this, we have asked ourselves how to present the CV drawing on the theoretical framework of the CEFR (2001) without leaving out all those parts of the CEFR 2001 that are considered to have been acquired and are no longer included in it. In constructing an orientation course on the CV we have therefore had to and wanted to seek a balance to pass on to younger audiences a legacy of which they only see the latest publication of 2020. In this contribution, we would like to illustrate how we have designed our orientation course: with what objectives (Part I) and what structure (Part II)<sup>3</sup>. Of course, all our references to the adoption and knowledge of the CEFR mainly concern our experience in Italy, although we have noticed many similarities with other countries both at school (at all levels) and outside school.

## 2 Part I: Objectives of the course

The main purpose of the *Companion Volume* orientation course is to raise awareness of this new framework, as well as to disseminate it and use it. Because if the title, CV, indicates that this work cannot exist without the previous edition of 2001, which it nevertheless replaces while maintaining the characteristics of immediacy, transparency, coherence, dynamism and non-dogmaticity, to adapt to a changed and changing world, the CV significantly expands the vision of the CEFR 2001 by adapting to the needs arising from the increase in linguistic and cultural diversity within our societies.

To be clearer and to narrow down this analysis geographically, it is certainly clear to everyone that 'our world', meaning by 'our', the so-called Western part, the cradle of the CEFR, is constantly changing. Migrations lie at the origin of this state of affairs: for study, work, or family needs, to escape death from hunger-war-disease, people are constantly moving in or arriving in the West. The authors of the CV have revised the CEFR 2001 with a very realistic view. To give a few examples: the Pre-A1 level (with its descriptors) has been extensively introduced; it is a level that is necessary to teach the increasing number of students with little or no literacy in their mother tongue or who are linguistically very distant from the language they are learning. Special scales and descriptors have been drawn up: an entire chapter has been dedicated to sign language; for young learners, two age groups have been considered: 7-10 and 11-15. The real use of language has also led the authors of the CV to carefully consider online communication: equal but different from paper communication because it is written with a unique linguistic form (it is not only written, but it is also somehow spoken), it has become a scale apart in the communication activity Interaction. Finally, there are two major innovations that, in some way, alone challenge the hitherto conceived idea of teaching a second or a foreign language. We refer to mediation as a communication activity and strategy and to plurilingualism and pluriculturalism as a communicative competence. With them, the invitation is to look at language learning in a holistic way, which includes and involves behaviours and competences that are similar to Life skills (Fratter 2021) so much in demand in the labour market.

2. The Italian version is online in open access at *Italiano LinguaDue*: Council of Europe 2020b. The Italian translation is by Monica Barsi, Edoardo Lugarini and Anna Cardinaletti. The Italian version of the CEFR 2001 is referenced as Council of Europe 2002.
3. In the first investigation, we looked at online videos on various aspects of teaching with the CEFR. In particular, we looked at the sites <https://www.lincdireproject.org/>, especially the section on tutorials for the teacher (<https://www.lincdireproject.org/lincdire-tutorial-videos/>) and scenarios divided into different levels (<https://lite.lincdireproject.org/it/all-scenarios-2/>), and <https://transformingfsl.ca> for all available videos. We also relied on Piccardo et al. 2011, North 2014, North 2015, North et al. 2018, Mariani 2016, Piccardo 2014 and Piccardo 2019. The quality matrix was particularly useful in understanding how to build online materials on CEFR: 'A quality assurance matrix for CEFR use' (QualiMatrix CEFR), European Center for Modern Languages (ECML) <https://www.ecml.at/ECML-Programme/Programme2016-2019/QualityassuranceandimplementationoftheCEFR/tabid/1870/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>

Taking all these new features into account, one can identify the objectives that can be achieved through the dissemination of the use of the CV. These can be divided into linguistic, socioeconomic, sociocultural and professional objectives.

The linguistic objectives aim to convey all the new features and updates contained in the CV. In addition, we felt it was essential to convey the way in which the CV replaces the traditional distinction that applied linguistics has made between the Chomskyan concepts of competence (hidden) and performance (visible) with proficiency, defined as the visible dimension of a person's competence resulting from a specific performance. Can Do statements indicate that practising the language is the best way to give evidence of being in the process of learning, to reach the mature stage of acquisition then.

The socioeconomic objectives aim to raise awareness of mediation and the related plurilingualism, both advocated by the CEFR as early as 2001 about plurilingual European citizens speaking more than two languages. The development of the areas of mediation and plurilingualism has actually had the effect of breaking down language barriers and creating more dynamic border regions, as well as international exchanges even between non-neighbouring countries<sup>4</sup>. The use of the CEFR 2001 applied to a single second or foreign language has made us forget the plurilingual purpose, which can be rediscovered through the potential of interlingual mediation. This type of mediation adds to the possibilities of communication beyond translation and interpreting<sup>5</sup>. In particular, we are keen to disseminate the idea of plurilingualism as a guarantee of the possibility for all speakers of different community languages to cooperate, for example, to carry out transnational professional training.

The sociocultural objectives aim to disseminate the CV to improve the communication and integration of all citizens within their own everyday environment, but above all beyond their national borders, with a view to European and non-European mobility. From a linguistic-legal perspective, the plurilingualism and consequent pluriculturalism promoted by the CV are also configured as vehicles for democratisation and the construction of a feeling of identification and belonging to Europe. Progression in linguistic level in each of the languages that a person knows begins with a reality of a few words ('I') and moves towards the complexity of the world that the 'I' includes and in which the 'I' is able to interact as a subject with rights and, therefore, to exercise active citizenship.

The professional objectives consist, in the Italian context, of disseminating the CV among the actors involved in the teaching of Italian as L2, that is, second and foreign language teachers and language facilitators in compulsory education as well as second and foreign language teachers in local authorities, companies, organisations linked to the labour market, associations and public schools; teachers at CPIAs (provincial centres for adult education); providers and certifiers of the Italian test for long-term resident immigrants; Italian teachers abroad, language assistants at schools, at Italian cultural institutes and foreign universities, and diplomatic representations, embassies and consular offices. As for foreign languages, the actors involved are the teachers of all languages as a second language in compulsory education, in private institutions, in universities and all students of any grade and any institution. The historical context seems favourable at this juncture: COVID-19 has forced almost all teachers to revise their way of teaching, a necessity that has led to an extraordinary intellectual opening of which we must absolutely take advantage.

There are many objectives that can be achieved by disseminating the use of the CV. However, there is a fundamental aim behind the course we designed: to disseminate the idea that the CV can be consulted in a targeted manner without having to be read in its entirety: like a recipe book, you can find useful information in it for planning a course or organising individual lessons. This aim lies at the origin of the structure of our course.

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4. We recall here that, in addition to school education, mobility in vocational training has been a declared objective of the European Union since the early 2000s, as evidenced by the Kok Report, for instance (European Commission 2004).
  5. On plurilingualism and mediation see Piccardo 2018, Piccardo-North-Goodier 2019, Piccardo-North 2020 and Crestani 2020. On mediation see also Coste-Cavalli 2019.

### 3 Part II: The structure of the course

The online orientation course on the *Companion Volume* was designed and delivered in microlearning mode on a Moodle platform<sup>6</sup>. Its graphics, animation and approach to the subject make the course enjoyable even for those who do not know the CEFR, or who are approaching second language teaching for the first time, or for autonomous learners who want to discover this document. Each of the 11 units of the course consists of a 5-10 minute video, which can be accessed from a mobile device: each video focuses on a particular aspect and is followed by a test of three self-assessment questions. At the end of the course, which lasts approximately three hours and can be carried out over an indefinite period, users will answer a final set of questions. The successful completion of this final test, in the context of Lifelong Learning courses, will provide users with a training certificate.

The table of contents gives an overview of the course we have designed:

1. The CV as a user-friendly tool
  - 1.1. The guiding colours
  - 1.2. Common Reference Level descriptors
2. The CEFR descriptive scheme
  - 2.1. An indispensable overview
  - 2.2. Communication as a rainbow
3. Changes in 2020
  - 3.1. General presentation
  - 3.2. Presentation of appendices
4. The Inclusive Model of the CV

As shown above, the first two stages concern the system of descriptors for all scales of communicative competencies, activities, and strategies, as it appeared in 2020. By contrast, the final two stages deal with innovations and changes in the CV compared to the CEFR 2001.

### 4 The first stage

In the first stage, entitled *The Companion Volume as a user-friendly tool*, we focused on the structure and graphics of the CV, showing how the colours are a guide to orientate the reader. In the online course, we have therefore maintained, where possible, this colourful and very intuitive distinction between the parts to make the user familiar with them. The theoretical framework of the CEFR remains unchanged, and we refer to the description of the common framework in 2001<sup>7</sup>. We have also provided an explanatory description of the table of contents of the CV, which is formulated as follows:

- The introduction presents the CV and the changes that have taken place since 2001.
6. Concept by Monica Barsi and Teresa Bettarello and multimedia realisation by Angelisa Leonesio (InterARTactivity). The course on Moodle is available at the University of Milan and ANILS and is accessible only to registered students. The videos have been made available in open access on <http://promoplurilinguismo.unimi.it> and YouTube. The course has been awarded the 2020 European Language Label.
  7. We have quoted this passage as a summary: “Language use, embracing language learning, comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of competencies, both **general** and in particular **communicative language** competencies. They draw on the competencies at their disposal in various **contexts** under various **conditions** and under various **constraints** to engage in **language activities** involving **language processes** to produce and/or receive **texts** in relation to **themes** in specific **domains**, activating those **strategies** which seem most appropriate for carrying out the **tasks** to be accomplished. Monitoring these actions by the participants leads to the reinforcement or modification of their competencies” (CEFR 2001: 9).

- The four chapters that follow are devoted to communicative language activities and their strategies: reception, production, interaction, and mediation with the relative scales.
- Another chapter is dedicated to plurilingual and pluricultural competence.
- A penultimate chapter is dedicated to linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competence and another chapter on linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competence in sign language.
- Lastly, there are extensive appendices with expansions on some topics and where the updated self-assessment grid is located.

To help the reader refer to the CV in a targeted way, from its general structure, we have then focused on the cornerstone of its internal structure, which is the scales and descriptors. Each scale of descriptors is preceded by a summary of the content covered by the descriptors themselves (the so-called 'operationalised key concepts'), which is a very useful element for understanding in brief what a scale contains without having to read all the descriptors, making the selection of the scale or scales by the user much faster and more effective. The example given below is the scale for the communicative language activity 'Watching TV, films and videos' (Council of Europe 2020a: 52-53), for which the following explanation has been given:

**Table 1. Rationale of the scale 'Watching TV, films and videos' (Council of Europe 2020a: 52)**

This scale includes live and recorded video material plus, at higher levels, films. Key concepts operationalised in the scale include the following:

- following changes of topic and identifying main points;
- identifying details, nuances and implied meaning (C levels);
- delivery: from slow, clear standard usage to the ability to handle slang and idiomatic usage.

Regarding descriptors, new ones have been added to those of 2001. We have specified that the previous descriptors are not distinguished from the ones newly added (as was the case in the 2018 prototype) and that their extension takes place at all levels. It was then considered important to bring to mind what we can call the 'method of descriptors' because it was observed that, in many teaching situations, the full potential of the Can Do statement is not exploited. Thus, some basic elements have been recalled:

- descriptors contain mainly concrete and observable aspects of communicative performance;
- scales and descriptors serve firstly to identify which scales are relevant to meet the needs of a particular group of learners and only secondly to establish what level these learners need to achieve to reach their goals;
- descriptors' immediacy and transparency, in the sense of clarity and definition, allow the learners themselves, if they are adults, to negotiate with the teacher what they need to become able to use the language, rather than just to study it for no real purpose.

It was important to point out that descriptors are examples of typical language use and that, since the CEFR 2001, they are called 'illustrative' for this reason. They provide a basis for the development of behaviours that are appropriate to a given context but are not prescriptive in themselves. They are a basis for reflection, discussion and planning based on needs analysis. It has been pointed out that it is important to work with descriptors, even by modifying them, because they provide a common metalanguage that facilitates networking, the creation of communities of practice by groups of teachers and, only lastly, the definition of transparent criteria for evaluation.

One of the key elements we have returned to concerns programming with descriptors. In the classroom, the teacher derives the task that is to be proposed to the students from the descriptor – or

from several descriptors combined together – and, more generally, the teacher derives the programme of a whole course from quite a large number of selected descriptors.

At this point the structure of the descriptor is shown by listing the following parts:

- The communicative language activity involved;
- The textual type/form, which may sometimes be appropriate for several language levels;
- The subject matter of the communication: what is being talked about?;
- The conditions and constraints under which the learner has to learn to operate. The same task, in fact, may be required at different levels but under different conditions, i.e., more or less favourable or more or less complex (e.g., leaving time to think before speaking, speaking with a collaborating interlocutor, in neutral circumstances or challenging situations). Such conditions and constraints, of course, increase as the level rises.

As an example, we have illustrated the descriptor for level B1 and level C2 in the scale ‘Understanding as a member of a live audience’ (Council of Europe 2020a: 50-51):

Table 2. Descriptors B1 and C2 of the scale ‘Understanding as a member of a live audience’ (Council of Europe 2020a: 50)

B1	Can follow in outline straightforward short talks on familiar topics, provided these are delivered in clearly articulated standard language or a familiar variety.
C2	Can follow specialised lectures and presentations employing colloquialism, regional usage or unfamiliar terminology.

In both descriptors, we recognise the four categories that have been listed above and which we break down here in the following table:

Table 3. Breakdown of descriptors B1 and C2 of the scale ‘Understanding as a member of a live audience’ (Council of Europe 2020a: 50)

	B1	C2
Activity	can follow in outline	can follow
Textual type/form	straightforward short talks	lectures and presentations
Subject matter	on familiar topics	specialised
Conditions and constraints	provided these are delivered in clearly articulated standard language or a familiar variety.	employing colloquialism, regional usage or unfamiliar terminology.

It seemed fundamental at this point to remember the distinction between the descriptors of the communicative language activities that indicate *what* a person is doing at a linguistic level and the descriptors of the communicative language competencies that indicate *how* s/he is doing it. The function of the descriptors for the communicative language strategies for the four modes of communication (reception, production, interaction, mediation) is, on the other hand, a connection between the two groups of descriptors because they link the *what* to the *how* on the path to proficiency.

Proficiency is a key concept that we explored. The question we addressed was, ‘How do we progress?’ In summary, we answered ‘by practising’, as the action-oriented approach claims. In the beginning, the learners know little or nothing. Their ‘bridge’ to the second or foreign language is them with their knowledge; but then, by practising the language, the learners learn, develop new skills, acquire new strategies and, therefore, increase their proficiency. In other words, the learners progress because they

practise the language in performing tasks and also through reflection with the Can Do statements. In this process, the learners also use their general skills, their communicative language skills and their plurilingual and pluricultural competence. We have highlighted how this learning process is circular, self-sustaining and self-stimulating from the lowest levels according to the principle that a person is always able to communicate something. In this regard, we felt it was important to point out that this principle must be clear to both parties involved in the learning process, teachers and students so that this document serves to learn and teach before assessing, just as the subtitle of the CEFR 2001, and now the CV of 2020 indicates.

Regarding assessment, we wanted to insist on using Can Do statements as a reference that teachers and students can share to measure progress. The descriptors facilitate the work of both parties: having established the goal to be reached, the teacher can plan 'backwards' what to do (backplanning). Once the goal has been achieved, the learner can become aware of what s/he can do through the descriptors and a 'backward' self-assessment. To illustrate how progress is made, we have shown the (Council of Europe 2020a: 36). In the concentric circles, the levels and their descriptors expand and contain the previous ones.

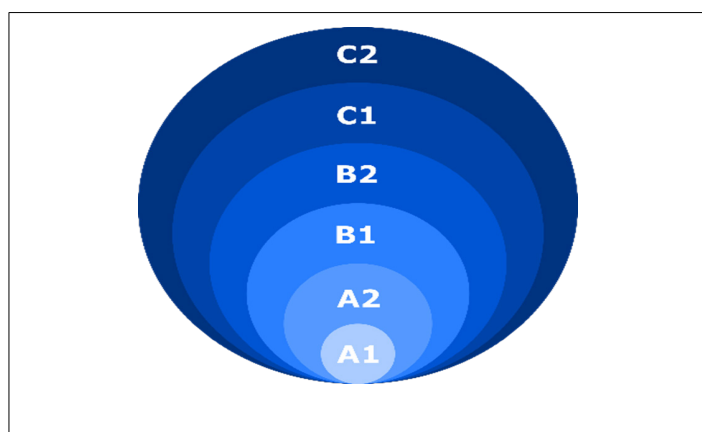


Figure 1/CV Figure 3. Representation of the CEFR Common Reference Levels (COE 2020a: 36).

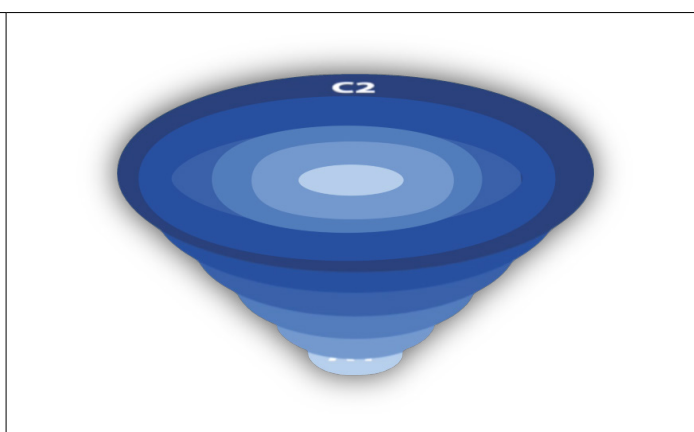


Figure 2. Rendering the representation in a slightly different manner, attempting to mirror the development required by the learner.

## 5 The second stage

At the second stage, entitled The CEFR descriptive scheme, we focused on the following figures within the original document of the *Companion Volume*, as follows: CV Figure 1 (Council of Europe 2020a: 32), CV Figure 2 (Id.: 34), CV Figure 4 (Id.: 36) and CV Figure 5 (Id.: 36) within the original CV, which dynamically represent the four modes of communication and the complexity of proficiency. We have recalled how already in 2001, the four skills of listening and reading/speaking and writing, i.e., oral and written reception and oral and written production, had been replaced and included in the current 'four modes of communication', i.e., reception, production, interaction and mediation. From the four skills to the four modes of communication, the change was fundamental to overcome the linear view of learning, based on the simple sum of parts that, it was assumed, could be broken down and taught and assessed separately. In the CEFR, the vision of didactics has always been completely holistic: the whole does not correspond to the sum of its parts; it is a unicum; the learners are 'social agents', who mobilise in the relationship with other individuals, their linguistic resources – not only formal ones – to communicate, that is to negotiate and co-construct the sense of the exchange. The movement of the arrows is explained in CV Figure 2 (Council of Europe 2020a: 34): interaction includes both reception and production, but is more than the sum of these two parts; mediation is even all-encompassing: it includes reception and production and, frequently, interaction.

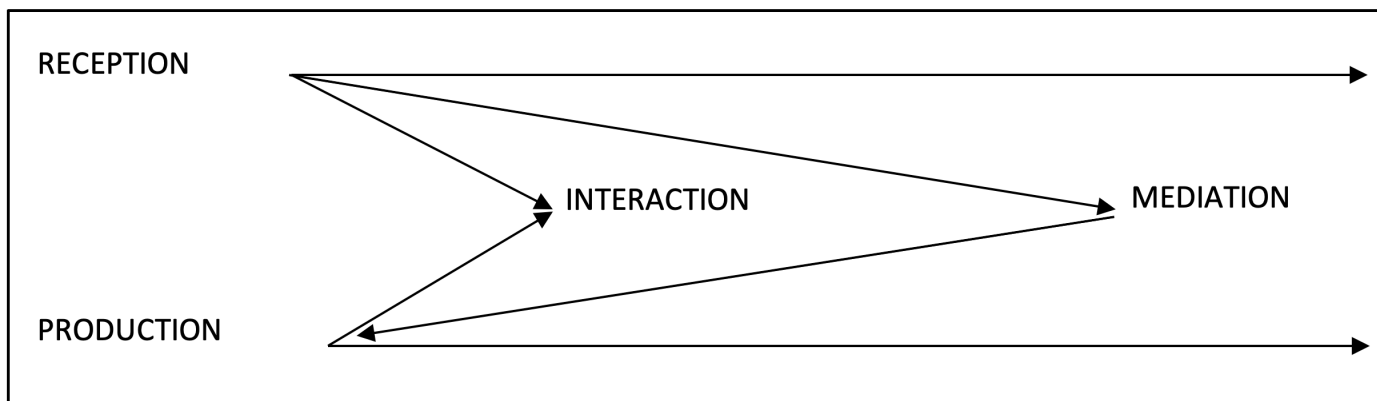


Figure 3/CV Figure 2. Representation of the relationship between reception, production, interaction, and mediation (Council of Europe 2020a: 34)

At this point we are taking a closer look at the descriptive scheme, i.e., CV Figure 1 (Council of Europe 2020a: 32):

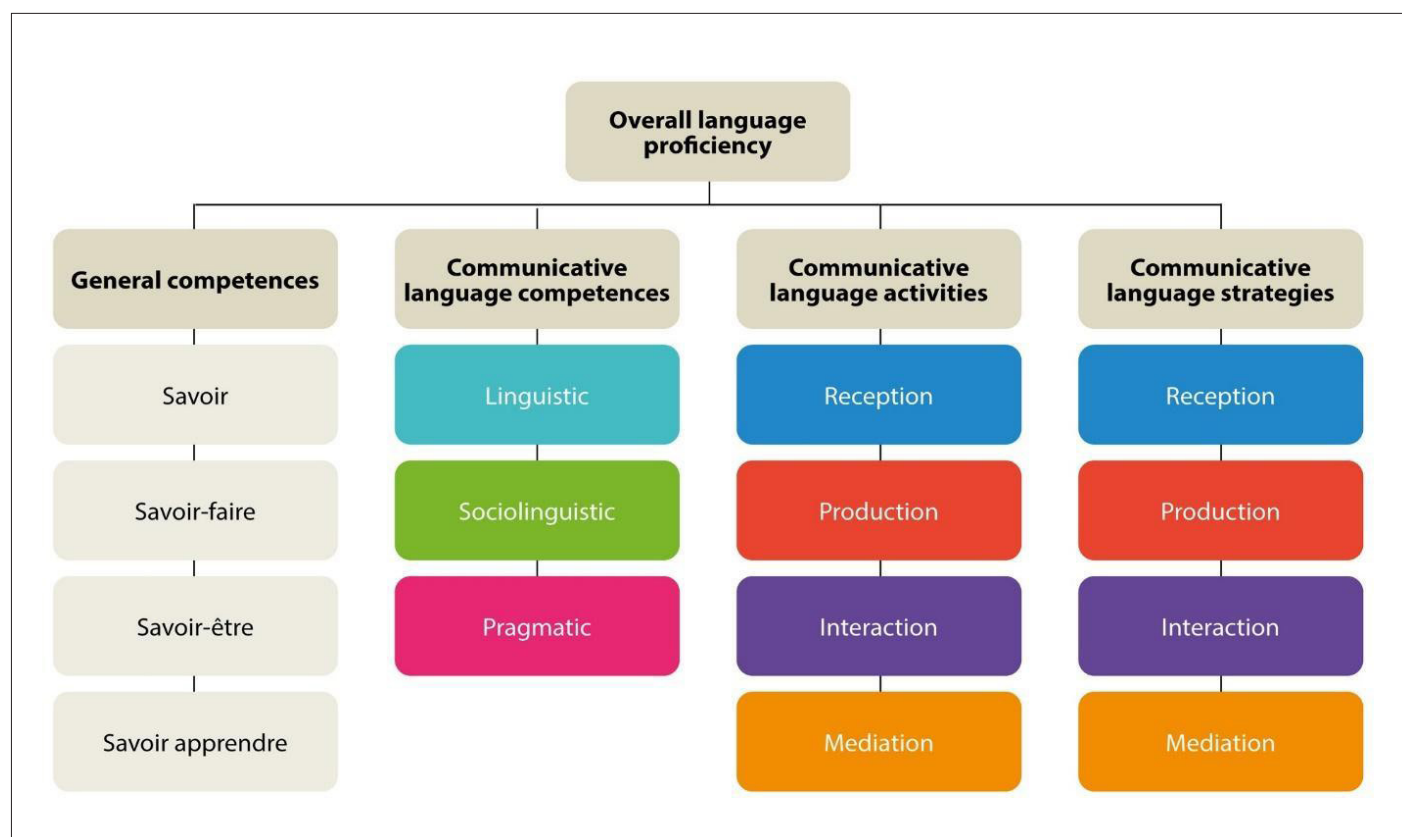


Figure 4/CV Figure 1. Representation of the CEFR descriptive scheme (Council of Europe 2020a: 32)

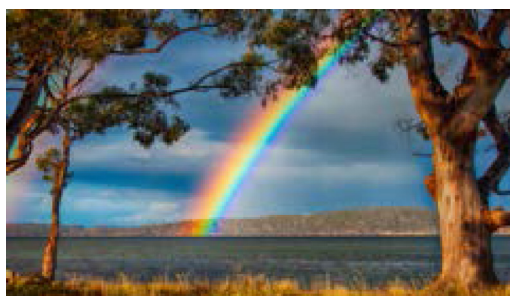
The explanation of the descriptive scheme allows us to recall the theoretical framework of the CEFR 2001. The learners/speakers are social agents who ‘produce messages’ (written, oral or combined and/or in sign language) through communicative language activities and strategies, mobilised by their personal general and communicative language competencies. In short, the learners/speakers communicate by bringing their whole self into play, not only the notions they learn in class: for example, they use their previous knowledge, their being in the world, making comparisons with their culture of origin and the



culture of the language being studied. This is why we have warned that, at the same level of achievement, two students in a B1 class will have arrived there through very different dynamics, such as according to their own personality, background and expectations.

From this perspective, language is no longer just the product of learning but an ongoing process. In this process, the ways of communicating are the expression of both skills and activities, which are linked by the strategies that are, to all intents and purposes, a connecting element. The question we formulated was, 'What are the best didactics to use'? According to the CEFR, it is an action-oriented one: the learners mobilise all their competencies to effectively complete tasks involving communication activities in collaboration with other people. In this way, they do not accumulate knowledge but practise it, even when it is very limited and, by practising, they build new knowledge and thus move forward, progressing in the different competences, often summarised as 'proficiency', that is the concept we highlighted in the first stage.

To explain the vision of the CV in its deepest dimension, we have chosen to use the image of the rainbow in CV Figure 4 and CV Figure 5 (Council of Europe 2020a: 36), which metaphorically represent general language competence and its holistic vision of action-oriented learning: if in the rainbow, the colours are clearly distinguishable but the boundaries are poorly marked – they 'blend' into each other, creating a coloured continuum-in the same way, in the descriptive scheme of the CV, general linguistic competence is made up of pieces of different colours which, in a dynamic relationship, contribute to the 'language process'.



*Figure 5/CV Figure 4.* Representation of a rainbow (Council of Europe 2020a: 36)



*Figure 6/CV Figure 5.* Representation of the conventional six colours (Council of Europe 2020a: 36,)

Each of these pieces has descriptor scales, i.e., contributes in its own way to the language process, but at the same time, all of them together must be considered a continuum.

The link with the CEFR 2001 for the general competences seemed to us to be necessary because of the perspective given by colours in the CV. In fact, the *savoir*, '*savoir être*', '*savoir faire*', '*savoir apprendre*' described in the CEFR 2001 are not coloured and still have no descriptors in 2020. Therefore, the explanations of the CEFR 2001 have been summarised with a visualisation of the four types of knowledge.

## 6 The third stage

The third stage listed the 2020 changes, which we commented on in this order:

1. Pre-A1 level.
2. Modified descriptors (Appendix 7).
3. New detail at 'plus' levels (It is highlighted that the transition to the plus level is indicated by a white horizontal line).
4. Phonological proficiency (The concept of intelligibility is explained).

5. Mediation (A brief explanation of mediation is given, with reference to a specific section currently under development).
6. Plurilingual and pluricultural competence (A reference is also made to the CARAP<sup>8</sup>).
7. Creative texts (Three new illustrative scales are listed: 'Reading as a leisure activity'; 'Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature)'; 'Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature).')
8. Online interaction<sup>9</sup>.
9. Sign language (It is explained that all descriptors have been made usable in sign language and 14 specific scales for sign language skills have been created).
10. Young learners (Reference is made to the section on the Council of Europe website: Council of Europe 2018a, 2018b).

The appendices have been carefully presented so that they are not overlooked, given their position in the *Companion Volume*. In particular, Appendices 2, 3, 4 and 5 have been described. This part of the Volume is, in fact, particularly rich. It contains, for example, the self-assessment grid, which, as well known, has been used in many cases as the only tool taken from the CEFR 2001.

## 7 The fourth stage

In the fourth stage, we felt it was essential to highlight the educational idea of the *Companion Volume*, starting with one of the first paragraphs:

The Council of Europe hopes that the development in this publication of areas, such as mediation, plurilingual/pluricultural competence and signing competences will contribute to quality inclusive education for all and the promotion of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism. (Council of Europe 2020a: 11)

'Quality inclusive education for all' is the starting and ending point for teachers and learners, a virtuous circle to be covered in and out of the classroom. All of the changes seen in the different sections dedicated to them contribute to the inclusive model of the CV: sign language, the abandonment of the figure of the ideal native speaker, the Pre-A1 level for all, including semi-illiterates, the focus on children and pre-adolescents, and the importance given to mediation: all these aspects highlight the CV's educational idea that it is always possible to communicate and therefore to include people.

Plurilingual competence is also explored. In particular, we focused on plurilingual profiles, where the imbalance in skills is a value. This is because the learners/speakers who study/know more than one language are aware of their imbalances. Moreover, the learners/speakers are more or less consciously helped by what they can already do in (other) languages to strive for balance in the competencies of each language or to understand their primary needs in using the language they are learning. We have explained how the CV has fully embraced a holistic and dynamic view of competence in different languages. In fact, the underlying idea is not to separate the languages we know because they are all by nature always present in the speaker's mind, even if not at the same level. Precisely for this reason, they come into play in the learning of other languages through similarities and divergences.

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8. IL CARAP, Un quadro di riferimento per gli approcci plurali alle lingue e alle culture. Competenze e risorse (<https://riviste.unimi.it/index.php/promoitals/article/view/2823/3026>), available in its Italian translation in Italiano LinguaDue. Italian version of *FREPA – Competences and resources CARAP/FREPA – A Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches*.
  9. On online interaction, see Langé et al. 2020. The authors of the book have conducted a large-scale trial of the descriptors throughout Italy.

## 8 Conclusion

Translated over time into 40 languages, the CEFR 2001 has established itself in Europe as a soft law in the field of certification. This has created an ever-growing echo that has crossed European borders thanks to the highly effective sharing of its system for assessment and self-assessment. In fact, the structure of the CEFR 2001 clearly suggested the relationship between the descriptor scales and assessment, to which Chapter 9 was dedicated. It probably described less clearly the relationship between the descriptor scales and the action-oriented approach, i.e., teaching through tasks. Much space was also devoted to the task, but the concept was new, and the relationship between descriptor/descriptors and the task was not exemplified.

As Piccardo and North explain in their 2019 book (Piccardo-North 2019), the action-oriented approach, described very briefly in the CEFR 2001, has been an area of research for almost two decades<sup>10</sup>. Teachers who have adopted the action-oriented approach have enriched its conceptual framework by reproducing real-life situations in their classrooms to make students use language with a purpose, i.e., in a way that is immediately meaningful and in which the reason is not postponed to the future. They have identified and assigned tasks to their learners, prompting them to mobilise their resources and skills and, consequently, develop essentially but not exclusively linguistic competences, as well as appropriate learning skills. They have used the CEFR descriptors to construct the tasks and the teaching sequences in which the tasks have been embedded. They have innovated assessment by basing it on descriptors. They have shared with their classes the need to recall all the knowledge they had acquired to immerse themselves in this methodological approach. This approach was not only an experiment, but above all, a paradigm shift that had already been initiated by the communicative turn away from the previous foreign and second language learning-teaching methods.

The online orientation course presented in this article fully embraces this paradigm shift and a perspective determined by the complexity of reality to transform the needs of individuals and groups into glottodidactic action in the context of 'our' societies where linguistic and cultural identity assertion is growing. In fact, any kind of difference can be safeguarded and enhanced through the inclusive model promoted by the *Companion Volume* and its premise, namely that inclusiveness always goes along with dignity, which is a concept that represents – in every intellectual process – a crucial motivation element.

## 9 References

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10. See Bourguignon 2010 and Hoerath 2020 to cite just two examples in the French-speaking world.

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