

The CEFR CV revisited: Aligning didactic audiovisual translation to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

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This paper explores how the Action-oriented Approach (AoA) sits within the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and its recently released version of the Companion Volume (COE 2020). It discusses updates carried out to the Framework, which includes mediation acquiring a pivotal role, the creation of new categories and illustrative descriptors, including those for sign language, as well as the emphasis given to plurilingual and pluricultural competences among other aspects that have recently been revised, but giving particular attention to the impact of mediation in language learning. This paper also investigates the differences between the AoA and previous communicative trends by looking at the type of syllabus used for each methodological approach. Didactic audiovisual translation (DAT), that is the application of audiovisual translation (AVT) practice to the language learning setting, is perceived as a mediation strategy for learners. With the incorporation of sign languages to the last version of the CEFR/CV, and the subsequent emphasis on accessibility features, this paper promotes the idea that all DAT modes can be included within the Framework, but in particular didactic audio description (DAD) and SDH (subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing). Therefore, a new category to accommodate DAT modes to the CEFR/CV, and DAD's corresponding illustrative descriptors have been developed.

Keywords: CEFR/CV, mediation, didactic audiovisual translation (DAT), didactic audio description (DAD), illustrative descriptors.

1 The CEFR and its Companion Volume (CEFR/CV): introduction

Taking into consideration the existing migration flows and cultural interactions, the Council of Europe recognises the necessity of redefining the social context within language learning in order to promote a more democratic society. Consequently, there has been a shift in approach prompted by ongoing discussions in the fields of human and social sciences, leading to a reconceptualisation of the learning experience centred around the concept of social agency (Piccardo and North 2019). This new approach,

1. The Council of Europe was founded in 1949 with the objective of protecting human rights and avoid future war. Its work in language education started in the 1960s. It is an intergovernmental institution with no directive powers, but it is based on consensus and “can make Recommendations to member states and its work can lead to European conventions” (Trim 2012: 21, cited in Piccardo and North, 2019). Today it has 47 member states, it aims at promoting democracy, human rights, the rule of Law, international understanding (through the learning of languages, cultures and history), and protection of the rights of minorities and migrants. In the last decade, its efforts “in the language field is on the right to quality inclusive education for all, plurilingual and intercultural education, and the promotion of competences for democratic citizenship” (Piccardo and North 2019: 151).

known as the Action-oriented Approach (AoA), shares similarities with previous communicative approaches, as it incorporates many of their characteristics while placing mediation as its primary strategic focus.

The CEFR/CV serves as a policy guidance tool and holds significant influence in the field of language education. It embodies philosophical perspectives and offers a robust yet adaptable Framework built upon the “can do” descriptors, which are widely recognised by teachers and curriculum developers. These descriptors are categorised according to different language proficiency levels ranging from A1 to C2. They are concise, practical, and relevant, aiming to ensure consistency across language courses. They have “helped educators to provide transparent, coherent goals for practical language proficiency that policy makers were demanding” (Piccardo and North 2019: 150). However, it is important to note that these descriptors are presented as recommendations rather than strict rules to be followed.

The CEFR/CV aims to broaden efforts made—already started in the CEFR—to move away from elitism into inclusion, which means education for all, as postulated by Piccardo and North (2019). A clear example of this shift can be seen in its new incorporation of linguistic, pragmatic and sociolinguistic signing competences. This has been done with the support of the Swiss National Science Research Project and the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe’s ProSign Project. Many CEFR descriptors, particularly for communicative language activities, apply to sign languages just as they do to spoken languages. These descriptors are considered modality-neutral and have been adjusted to highlight this quality. However, sign languages differ notably from spoken languages due to their use of “diagrammatical competence,” involving the spatial aspect. They also expand the concept of “text” to encompass video-recorded signing without a written script. Sign languages embrace syntax, semantics, morphology, and phonology, varying between different sign languages, yet sharing common elements like indexing, pronouns, and classifier constructions. Moreover, non-manual elements like facial expressions and body movements play a significant role alongside traditional hand and arm movements as articulators in sign languages (COE 2020).

This is also true for the accessibility AVT modes of didactic audio description (DAD) targeted to visually impaired audiences and SDH (subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing) where semiotic signs, such as facial expressions, and sounds are key elements in the act of communication. Despite the fact that the social and mediation perspectives align clearly with the Framework’s most recent evolution of language learning views advocating for an Action-oriented Approach AoA, both of these AVT modes have not yet been explicitly included. This is potentially due to time limitations and difficulties in increasing the number of experts collaborating in the design of additional illustrative descriptors. However, as the Framework stands, with its current descriptive scheme, creating new sets that account more visibly for these mediation activities is a straightforward action.

The CEFR/CV adopts a dynamic approach centered around learner autonomy and promotes intercultural, plurilingual, and lifelong learning. Additionally, it encourages the co-construction of knowledge through collaborative and interactive real-life tasks, which aligns with the practices of SDH (subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing) and DAD for individuals with sensory impairments. Such activities are best carried out through collaboration and interaction.

As indicated in CEFR/CV (COE 2001: 9) “[l]anguage use, embracing language learning, comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of competences,

2. Brian North and Enrica Piccardo are some of the main architects of both the CEFR (2001) and CEFR/CV (2020).
3. Swiss National Research Programme Project 100015_156592 Gemeinsamer Europäischer Referenzrahmen für Gebärdensprachen: Empirie-basierte Grundlagen für grammatische, pragmatische und soziolinguistische Deskriptoren in Deutschschweizer Gebärdensprache conducted at the Zurich University of Applied Science (ZHAW, Winterthur).
4. A breakdown of all scales is available online at: <https://www.ecml.at/ECML-Programme/Programme2012-2015/ProSign/PRO-Sign-referencelevels/tabid/1844/Default.aspx>

both general and in particular communicative language competences” (CEFR, COE, 2001: 9) summarises its overall approach. It highlights some relevant points, in particular the notion of learners becoming social agents when carrying out mediation activities, and the flexibility of the learning process.

Although the above quote does not make it explicit, learners must perform a range of tasks in collaboration in order to develop relevant linguistic competences and strategies. The conversion of the descriptive scheme in the CEFR/CV into practical application occurs through the use of an AoA. However, it is necessary to stress that the Framework has a dynamic as well as flexible nature due to “the precise form that tasks in the classroom may take, and the dominance that they should have in the programme” (COE, 2020: 32).

Mediation had limited inclusion in the CEFR/CV (COE 2001); however, in its most recent revision, the CEFR/CV (COE 2020), this aspect has gained significant recognition. The updates incorporated new descriptors to promote the development of mediation activities, strategies, plurilingualism, pluriculturalism, and other related competences. The language learner has transformed into a language user as well as a social agent who facilitates knowledge exchange through mediation with others. This shift towards a more social and democratic linguistic and cultural context opens up various perspectives for language learning. As a result, research groups consisting of scholars and language practitioners are collaboratively working to adapt curricula and teaching practices in line with emerging language trends. Furthermore, syllabi are being redesigned to align more efficiently with the new descriptors, and relevant tasks are being created to assess the potential effectiveness of these innovative approaches.

In a broad sense, mediation is defined as “any procedure, arrangement or action in a given context to reduce the distance between two (or more) poles of otherness between which there is tension” (Coste and Cavalli 2015: 27). It is crucial to emphasise that mediation has always been present in the language community, often performed by various individuals involved in the learning process, with the teacher taking on a role as a moderator or facilitator in the classroom. In this context, the distance mentioned by the authors can arise from factors such as physical space, time, language barriers, or a combination of these elements (Sánchez Cuadrado and Pedregosa 2022). Additionally, these factors may relate to accessibility issues, resulting from sensory or cognitive impairments experienced by the message recipient. As stated in the CEFR/CV (COE 2001: 87), “[i]n mediating activities, the language user is not concerned with expressing 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.” Therefore, interlingual mediation takes place when the intended recipient cannot comprehend the original message’s language and cultural background.

Within this context, it is key to promote the idea that all AVT modes but, in particular, DAD and SDH would be excellent candidates to be included in the CEFR/CV (2020), as this incorporation has already done with sign language. Both didactic AVT modes are mediation practices that aim to develop accessible AV products for people with either auditive or visual impairments. However, due to space restrictions, we will only be referring tangentially to the categories and descriptors that have been created for didactic SDH and dubbing.

2 The Action-oriented Approach as a context for the CEFR CV

The CEFR/CV needs to be understood within the context of the AoA, which has gained increasing significance since the publication of the CEFR in 2001, particularly over the past decade (Piccardo and North 2019). Since then, there has been a debate on whether the AoA can be considered a new approach or “simply old wine in a new bottle” (Piccardo and North 2019: 1). It is clear that this metaphor refers to the communicative approach and has advocates on both sides (Beacci 2007; Bento 2012; Puren 2009a; Richer 2009, cited in Piccardo and North 2019).

5. Some of these groups were formed in the Strasburg’s CEFR/CV launching conference (COE 2018).

With the growing attention given to the AoA by language practitioners, there has been a proliferation of materials claiming to align with this approach for the study of various languages in different contexts. Furthermore, pioneering projects such as the FIDE project in Switzerland (2017) and the Durham Project in Canada (2016) have been developed (Piccardo and Hunter 2017). While the AoA has gained widespread acceptance, Piccardo and North (2019: 3) acknowledge the challenge of defining it as “a practice in search of a theory”. This indicates that although language teachers and curriculum developers have recognised the potential of the AoA, they have been in search of a conceptual Framework since the term came into use. This socio-constructivist perspective moves beyond the achievements of previous innovations in language education, particularly the communicative approach (Piccardo and North 2019: 2). This crucial question, which we are currently exploring, seeks to provide clarification, though it may not be fully resolved, in our ongoing argument.

Furthermore, Piccardo and North (2019) indicate how this term AoA comprehends several concepts. First, the idea that a language learner becomes a social agent, a member of a community in charge of accomplishing tasks (not exclusively language-related) “in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action” (COE 2001: 9, cited in Piccardo and North 2019). Second, the close relationship between a number of factors: language tasks, how they are viewed, the role of the resources used which might vary from a cognitive, emotional or volitional nature, as well as precise individual abilities. Finally, the term refers, as indicated by Piccardo and North (2019), to the CEFR/CV contribution to the transparency and coherence of the complexity involved in language use and language education, but it does not intend to create a methodological agenda; instead, it means a “powerful foundation that relates the individuals to the social context, and suggests real-life situations with their implications and outputs” (Piccardo and North 2019: 4).

3 Evolution features from communicative approaches into AoA

In order to appropriately describe the methodological background of the AoA and the CEFR as the tool that puts it into practice, it is essential to look at the main methodological approaches that have taken place over the last few decades. One needs to figure out what might be the departing features from previous approaches, namely communicative and task-based language teaching (TBLT) into the AoA. To accomplish such task, it would be crucial to look at the key aspects of the different types of syllabuses used for each particular teaching approach, especially if the CEFR/CV can be regarded as a flexible and non-prescriptive type of syllabus for curriculum developers.

There are three types of task-based syllabuses (or Analytic Type B syllabuses); they have in common that “each allows both language and task to be negotiated in the classroom” (Long and Crookes 1992: 30). They all started in the eighties; Procedural (Prabhu 1987), Process (by Breen and Candlin, 1980) and TBLT (Long & Crookes 1987). The unifying theme is that they all appeared as a reaction against Synthetic and Type A syllabuses (such as Structural, Situational and Notional-functional), which follow a step-by-step process in which language items are learnt as building blocks that can be synthesised into a larger whole—this is where their name comes from (Nunan 2008). Conversely, the second type of syllabuses refer not to what the syllabus designer does, but they focus on how the language is to be learned. According to Long and Crookes (1992), the focus of Analytic, Type B syllabuses

6. The evolution of the procedural syllabus can be closely tied to the efforts led by Prabhu and his associates in the Bangalore Project. During the 1960s and 1970s, there was dissatisfaction with the prevailing structural-oral-situational (S-O-S) method in India. Prabhu, through his experimental project, introduced the principles of communicative language teaching. Unlike conventional methods, this syllabus does not prioritise pre-established language content. Instead, it promotes language acquisition by involving learners in problem-solving tasks. Prabhu (1987) contends that language acquisition happens when learners focus on meaning rather than on the structure of the language. This aim is best achieved by engaging learners in activities that highlight the importance of communication itself, thus encouraging natural and genuine language usage.

lies in the knowledge about the processes involved in language learning, that is, how languages are learned. They point out that these processes are not interventionist, as they do not involve “artificial preselection or arrangement of items and allow objectives to be determined by a process of negotiation between teacher and learners after they meet, as a course evolves” (Long and Crookes 1992: 41). Therefore, these are based on a process of negotiation between learners and teachers who become joint decision-makers. As the emphasis lies in the process of learning rather than in the subject matter, task accomplishment is based on “the learners’ criteria for success” (Long and Crookes 1992: 41). However, as suggested by these authors, procedural and task-based syllabuses share a Type A feature which is the pre-specification of target tasks; but they allow the negotiation of those tasks to take place in the classroom (Long and Crookes 1992).

Although it is not necessary to look at them individually in exhaustive detail, Long and Crookes (1992) indicate that these syllabuses differ in some aspects, such as their rationale, their definition of task, the formal needs analysis to determine the syllabus content, the way the tasks are selected and sequenced and the methodological options such as groupwork, focus on form, or what they prescribe and proscribe. Moreover, the boundaries between them are not so clear as Markee (1997: 44) points out: “TBLT is not a distinct type of analytic syllabus as implied by Long and Crookes, it is an umbrella term that subsumes the process syllabus, the procedural syllabus and pedagogical applications of more recent theoretical and empirical work in SLA [Second Language Acquisition] studies.” Therefore, it is evident that Type B syllabuses share many similarities.

Johnson and Johnson (1999) explain how task-based teaching focuses on the nature of classroom activities to be undertaken by the learners and the potential of these tasks to become the basis for syllabus design. Therefore, a task-based syllabus is organised, not by the presentation and practice of the language to be learned, but by how activities are designed to engage learners despite the relevant specific linguistic features which such activities are likely to involve. This implies an emphasis on task completion rather than on form. Furthermore, Ellis (1997: 216) indicates that TBLT is based on the principle that task performance will develop knowledge and skills in learners “in accordance with the way their own language learning mechanisms work”. Thus, tasks create the required conditions for language acquisition. However, this author explains that there is disagreement in relation to what these actual conditions are, whilst according to the body of theory, “learners need opportunities to engage in meaning and negotiation in order to obtain the kind of input that works for acquisition and to experience occasions when they are *pushed* to use the second language more precisely and appropriately” (Ellis 1997: 216, emphasis in the original).

Going back to the CEFR/CV, as indicated by Piccardo and North (2019: 173), adding descriptors of strategies to the curriculum, in addition to the existing descriptors of communicative activities “makes it easier to focus on process, not just on product”. This is a way of fostering the autonomy of the learner

7. The process syllabus, as defined by Breen, “a context within which any syllabus of subject-matter is made workable” (Breen 1987: 169). Rather than being a predefined learning plan, it functions as an infrastructure that empowers class participants to collaboratively construct their own ongoing syllabus within the classroom. This approach acknowledges the dynamic nature of learners’ abilities, learning needs, and perceptions, without prescribing specific content, methodology, vocabulary, structure, or grammar. Candlin (1984) introduces the concept of a “retrospective syllabus,” which can only be fully described after the completion of a course. This approach intentionally promotes reinterpretation and explicitly addresses the capacities of both teachers and learners to select, organize, and sequence subject matter for language learning that they perceive as most valuable (Breen 1987: 166).
8. Task-based language teaching is considered as the basis for planning and designing task-based syllabus. Long and Crookes (1992) can be considered their main advocates. Its rationale derives from SLA research, particularly descriptive and experimental studies which compared tutored and naturalistic learning. They concluded that formal instruction has no effect on developmental sequences; it has a positive effect on the use of some learning strategies, such as the relative frequency of certain error types in both tutored and non-tutored learners, and it clearly improves the rate of learning, and it possibly improves the ultimate level of SL attainment (Doughty 1991; Long, 1988).

as explicit work on strategies helps the learner “to recognize them, [...] use them more effectively and transfer them in a process of lifelong learning” (Piccardo and North 2019: 173). Clearly, one of the key diverging points among these approaches is mediation, gaining pivotal recognition, but also the inclusion in the Framework of additional instruments (descriptors for relevant strategies which include those for sign language) needed to acquire language and to succeed in completing tasks. Hence, it has definitely *made it easier to focus on the process rather than on the subject matter* (as in Type A syllabuses) *or on the product* (as in Type B syllabuses) [my own emphasis]. The new version of the CEFR/CV has suggested responses to areas that were previously more blurred, such as what are “the required conditions for language acquisition” referred to by Ellis (1997: 216). Despite this, it is not possible to oppose North and Piccardo’s reflection (which was alluded to earlier), that AoA is a “practice in search of a theory” (North and Piccardo, 2019: 3). 2

As North (2021) points out, the CEFR/CV extends the concept of the AoA by incorporating the agentive and complex ecological perspectives. Unlike more advanced forms of TBLT, such as Van den Branden (2006, cited in North 2021), the AoA distinguishes itself through concrete goals outlined in the descriptors, the emphasis on agency in relation to the opportunities presented by plurilingualism, and the design of tasks (Piccardo and North 2019). In the AoA, student behaviour is driven by motivation rather than being casual; students are assigned a mission, and it is their responsibility, not the teacher’s, to make decisions regarding its execution (Bourguignon 2010, cited in North 2021).

In conclusion, it is rather ambitious to define potentially distinct departure points from these approaches. This is partly because it would be difficult to argue about all notions of communicative trends and their interrelations with AoA as their barriers are imprecise. However, it would be necessary (and we will encourage new users of the CEFR/CV to do so) to carry out a series of case studies to analyse the views that learners, teachers, researchers and curriculum developers have about these practices. This action will gather relevant data that might be able to provide a more exhaustive response to the topic discussed in this section.

4 CEFR/CV recent updates

The evolution of language learning methodologies and research over the last two decades has resulted in scholars and practitioners working in collaboration on relevant updates for the new version of the CEFR/CV (COE: 2020). As stated on the Council of Europe’s website “[t]he *CEFR* does not represent a revolution but is part of an evolution of practice” as it has pulled together—in a pragmatic and non-prescriptive manner – up-to-date changes that have taken place in the study of language teaching over time. The initial descriptive scheme has been amended with the transformation of the four conventional skills into communicative modes, and it has been completed with significant additions: illustrative descriptors created from scratch for both plurilingual and pluricultural competences, online and literature interactions (including reactions to creative texts), and signing competences, which are categories that were non-existent in the initial descriptive scheme. Moreover, all existing scales have been revised and amended when needed and descriptors have been added—many of which have been calibrated through rigorous processes of evaluation, as stated in the CEFR/CV (COE: 2020). At this stage, it is noteworthy to highlight that our proposal is based on suggesting scales from the mediation activities section based on the description of images.

A significant innovation introduced by this descriptive scheme is the substitution of the traditional four language skills (speaking, listening, writing, and reading) with the linguistic modes of reception, production, interaction, and mediation. However, the CEFR (COE 2001: 257) already recognised

9. Some of these groups were formed in the Strasburg’s CEFR/CV launching conference (Council of Europe 2018).

communication as an “integral part of tasks where participants engage in interaction, production, reception, mediation, or a combination of two or more of these.” Thus, the transition from linguistic skills to communicative modes was somewhat present in the previous version and poised for further development in future iterations through the inclusion of corresponding illustrative descriptors. Learners can engage in activities that focus on any of these modes while simultaneously developing relevant strategies to enhance them. It is worth noting that the addition of the “images” component in “mediation” is our proposed category, incorporated into the descriptive scheme of the Framework, specifically referring to “Mediating a sequence of images”.

It is essential to emphasise the integration of mediation with the other three modes (reception, production, and interaction), as depicted in Figure 1. Language serves not only as a means of conveying a message but also as a tool for developing ideas, articulating thoughts, and facilitating understanding and communication. This phenomenon, commonly known as “languaging”, is frequently observed among plurilingual individuals who engage in communication involving multiple languages (COE 2020).

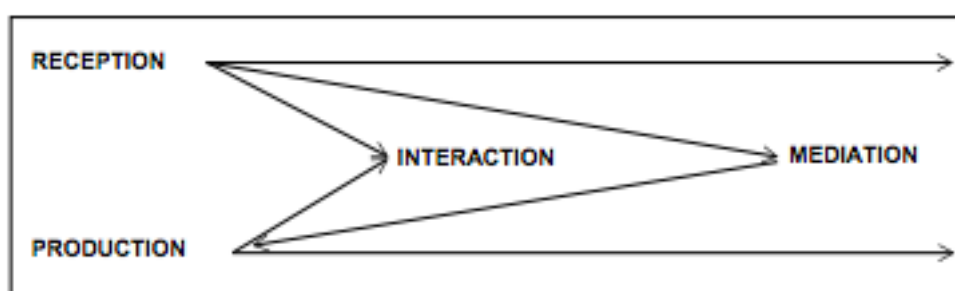


Figure 1. The interrelation between the four modes (COE, 2020: 34)

Moreover, as rightfully indicated by Piccardo and North (2019: 165), this shift has the advantage of being an approach that “actually marks a progression of difficulty and so might aid the development of the concept of partial qualifications.” It is understood that the scales to which they are referring would increase in complexity from reception to production, interaction and mediation. Figure 1 illustrates this idea with the above diagram connecting all modes and mediation practices.

There are further updates to the descriptive scheme of the Framework which are particularly significant to our proposal for the inclusion of DAD practice, since its flexibility for the creation of new categories and their corresponding illustrative descriptors is clear. A new phonological descriptor for all levels has been included and up to fifty *near native* allusions have been removed in the *CEFR/CV*, which implies a vital switch in the perception of intelligibility. Furthermore, the addition of signing competences, which are categories that were non-existent in the initial descriptive scheme, show a relevant move for change which implies a clear broadening ethos for inclusion in the new version of the Framework. Although we will not include these competences in our discussion, they will be used as a supporting argument for our proposal.

The inclusion of illustrative descriptors represents a significant expansion of mediation in the new version of the Framework, and this is particularly significant for DAD practice. As depicted in Figure 2 below, these activities are categorised into three groups based on the object of mediation: text, concept, or communicative interaction. The *CEFR/CV* also encompasses various strategies to be promoted when working with new concepts or adapting texts to different formats during mediation practices. Our proposal involves the addition of a new category called “Mediating a clip”, a subcategory of which is “Mediating a sequence of images” whilst additional categories can be created to cover for other AVT modes such as dubbing. For DAD, the descriptors of certain activities within the “Mediating a text”

section of the CEFR/CV have been adjusted accordingly. This step will ensure that all categories fully encompass DAD practice, which entails providing spoken descriptions of relevant images in a video clip.

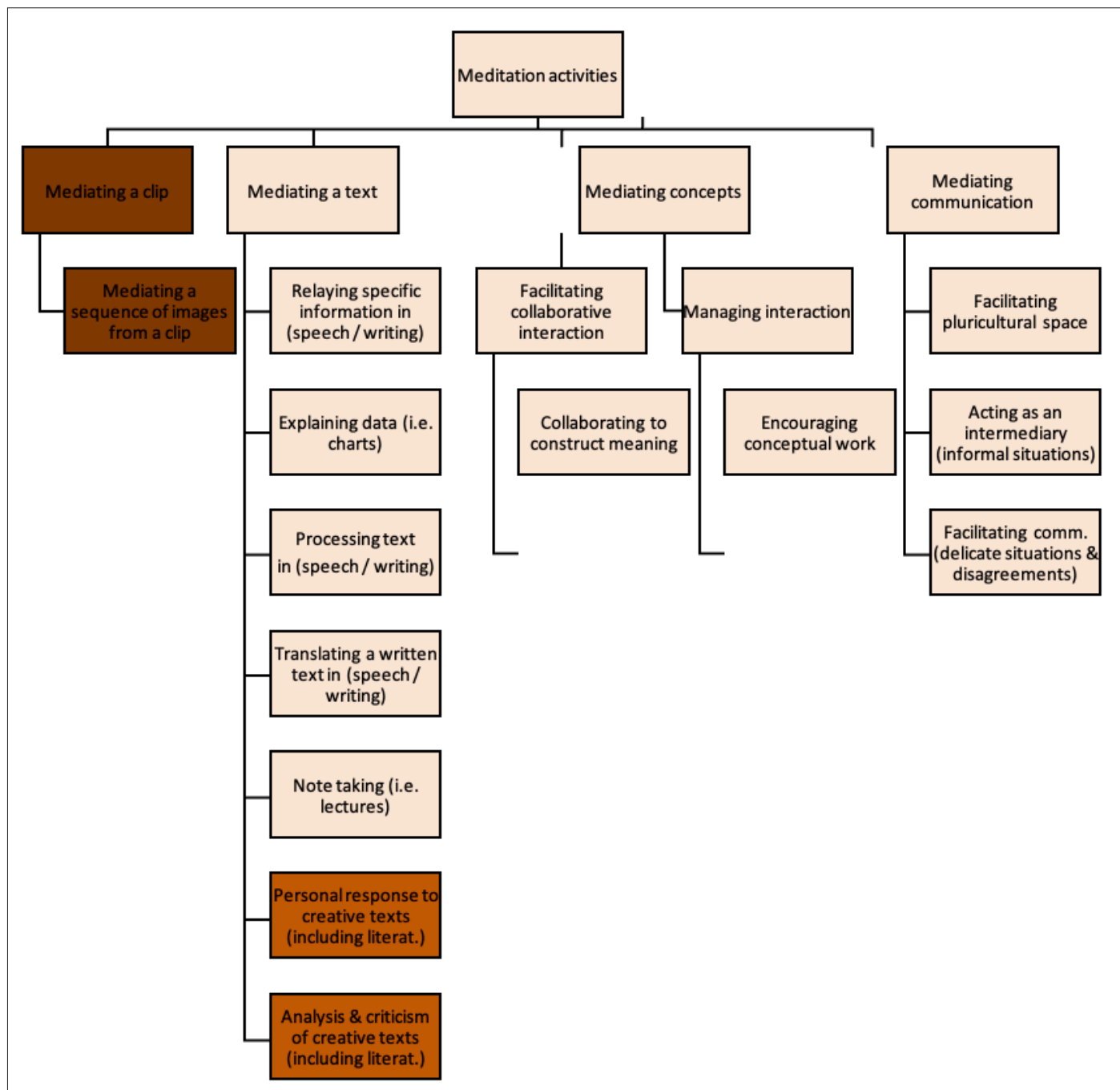


Figure 2. Adapted from the CEFR/CV (COE 2020) categories and scales, in addition to our suggested categories

Figure 2 shows the different descriptors for mediation activities, but our focus lies in the second category: “Mediating a text”. The figure, adapted from the CEFR/CV (COE, 2020) is based on previous descriptors from the CEFR (COE 2001) in light orange, the new descriptors from the CEFR/CV (COE 2020) in dark orange, and the new categories I/we propose (in dark brown). It has been necessary to incorporate an additional type of mediation activity called “Mediating a sequence of images from a clip”

so that other AVT modes can be included within this category such as DAD, didactic SDH and dubbing. Therefore, it is key to point out that following the work done so far on aligning DAD to the CEFR/CV, and by incorporating a new category that can cater for other modes of DAD, additional descriptors have also been created not only for SDH (Bolaños García-Escribano and Ogea Pozo 2023), but also, for dubbing (Bolaños García-Escribano and Navarrete 2022).

5 Aligning DAD to the CEFR/CV with new descriptors

DAD is an innovative area that has a significant potential for language learners. It is used for making video content accessible to blind and visually impaired viewers, a practice that consists of inserting a narration into the original soundtrack of a video clip, which describes information transmitted visually, converting images into words. Snyder (2008: 192) indicates that the AD procedure consists of “converting the visual into verbal”. It is a sort of literary art in itself that provides a verbal and aural version of the visual information that appears in an audiovisual text. In other words, it is a practice that comprises features that support learners to improve their linguistic and intercultural skills as many experimental studies have pointed out. DAT is viewed as a mediation practice, since the learner becomes a social agent that mediates between the clip and their audience, using aural discourse to interpret what can be seen or heard, which involves semiotic signs and images (Navarrete 2020).

These studies have focussed on gathering relevant quantitative and/or qualitative data to support the enhancement of different skills and competences, such as lexical competence (Ibáñez Moreno and Vermeulen 2013); integrated skills (Ibáñez Moreno and Vermeulen, 2014; Ibáñez Moreno and Vermeulen 2017); oral production skills (Ibáñez Moreno and Vermeulen 2015a, 2015b, 2016, 2021; Navarrete 2018, 2020; Talavan and Lertola 2016); writing skills (Calduch and Talaván 2018; Talaván, Lertola and Ibáñez 2022; morphology (Schaeffer-Lacroix 2020); didactic proposals (Navarrete 2018, 2020, 2022; Pintado Gutiérrez and Torralba 2022; Ogea Pozo 2022); intercultural competence (Ibáñez Moreno and Vermeulen 2017); media literacy (Herrero and Escobar 2018), learners’ perceptions (Bausells-Espín 2022). It is key to point out that studies by Navarrete (2020), Navarrete and Bolaños (2022) have focused on providing a methodological Framework for DAD that is aligned to the *CEFR Companion Volume* (2020) devoting their work to the DAT mode of DAD whilst Bolaños García-Escribano and Navarrete (2022) focused on didactic dubbing.

AD practice relies on both writing and non-spontaneous speaking skills, as learners are required to first write the narration that will later be recorded. Hence, the selected descriptors for these two categories have been carefully chosen and revised to suit AD practice, as demonstrated in Table 2. These descriptors follow the same organisation as the initial ones, ranging from Pre-A1 to C1 proficiency levels, with the addition of a C2 level. The inclusion of the C2 level distinguishes it from the lower range (C1), as it aims for near-professional standards in AD. The scale encompasses a range of language proficiency, starting from basic words and simple structures that require minimal reorganisation, and progressing to advanced structures and the use of sophisticated vocabulary that can adapt to various reformulations. This scale is designed to maintain synchronisation between the narration and the images. At more advanced proficiency levels (C1 and C2), learners are expected to have acquired a comprehensive understanding of lexical and grammatical knowledge, enabling them to employ synthesis and summarisation techniques necessary for AD.

Table 2. Sample illustrative descriptors for the CEFR/CV (Navarrete and Bolaños 2022)

C2	<p>Can audio describe (in Language B) relevant visual elements of a video clip to visually impaired viewers, using sophisticated vocabulary and minimalistic structures (when needed) for the narration to be in synchrony with the images of the clip (following near professional standards).</p> <p>This should be done producing an outstanding level of intelligible utterances in terms of fluency, pronunciation and intonation. As the speaker has an outstanding control of prosodic features, he/she can speak with very few hesitations, reproduce correctly all sounds, and intonation will have very little influence from other languages that he/she speaks.</p>
A1 & Pre-A1	<p>Can audio describe (in Language B) relevant visual elements of a video clip to visually impaired viewers, using basic words and structures that do not require much reorganisation for the narration to be in synchrony with the images of the clip.</p> <p>Can audio describe (in Language B) specific, relevant points contained in predictable information about times and places, short and simple texts, labels and notices and on basic situations appearing in a video clip whilst keeping the synchrony with its images and using short sentences.</p> <p>This should be done producing a (very) basic level of intelligible utterances in terms of fluency, pronunciation and intonation. As the speaker has a very limited repertoire of learnt words and phrases, he/she can speak quite slowly, reproduce correctly a very limited range of sounds, and intonation will have a strong influence from other language(s) that he/she speaks.</p>

One of the most important adaptations to the original descriptors has been that of changing the action of “relaying” information to that of “audio describing”. In the original descriptors of the CEFR/CV (2020), this action can be done in speech and in written discourse. Both categories belong to the “mediating a text” scales, but this adjustment with regard to the actions that learners are required to accomplish for their AD practice involves both written discourse as well as oral speech. This is due to the need to write their scripts before recording them.

6 Conclusion

The Council of Europe, with the objective of fostering a more democratic society, has taken into consideration the existing migration flows and social interactions among cultures and peoples, and has applied this social context to the language learning setting. This new approach involves reconceptualising it around the notion of social agency, where learners become social agents when engaging in mediation with others.

Recent perspectives on language learning advocate for the AoA, and this is how the Framework’s descriptive scheme has been put into practice. This article has aimed to identify potential deviations from previous communicative trends by examining the syllabus used in each approach. However, it concludes that defining clear boundaries between them is a challenging task, as they share many aspects, except for the AoA’s notable recognition of mediation practices. Therefore, it is suggested that new users of the CEFR/CV, learners, teachers, researchers and curriculum developers pursue these areas through case studies gathering data that provides a more comprehensive response to this issue.

This paper has discussed the Framework’s recent updates, which involve the incorporation of new

descriptors to promote the development of mediation activities, strategies, plurilingual, and pluricultural competences. By incorporating sign languages, it has made additional efforts to move away from being elitist and instead become more inclusive and accessible in its educational perspectives, which supports our proposal. Therefore, the focus has been on promoting the idea that all DAT modes, particularly DAD and SDH, can be included in the CEFR/CV. While SDH and AD serve as mediation practices aimed at making audiovisual products accessible to individuals with auditory or visual impairments, they had not been explicitly integrated until very recently. Hence, it is crucial to emphasise that, in the process of aligning DAD with the CEFR/CV by introducing a new category, it has made possible the development of new descriptors not just for a fully accessible mode, SDH (as outlined by Bolaños García-Escribano and Ogea Pozo in 2022), but also, for dubbing (as presented by Bolaños García-Escribano and Navarrete in 2022). These social and mediation perspectives align closely with the descriptive scheme of the Framework's recent evolution of language learning views, but due to space limitations, the focus here has been primarily on DAD practice.

7 References

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