

# RELANG

**Relating language examinations to the common European reference levels of language proficiency**

*Promoting quality assurance in education and facilitating mobility*

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**European Centre for Modern Languages and European Commission  
Cooperation on Innovative Methodologies and Assessment in Language  
Learning**

## RELANG Team Members

- *Éveline Bérard*: (formerly) Université de Franche-Comté, Centre de linguistique appliquée, France
- *Jana Bérešová*: Trnava University, Slovak Republic
- *Rita Juknevičienė*: Vilnius University, Lithuania
- *José Noijons*: (formerly) Cito, Institute for Educational Measurement, The Netherlands (Coordinator)
- *Gábor Szabó*: University of Pécs, Hungary

## Basic Documentation

Four Council of Europe / ECML publications on the construction and validation of language tests linked to the CEFR:

- Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR)
- Companion Volume to the CEFR
- The ALTE Manual for Language Test Development and Examining
- Relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR): Highlights

## Linking Procedures in the Manual

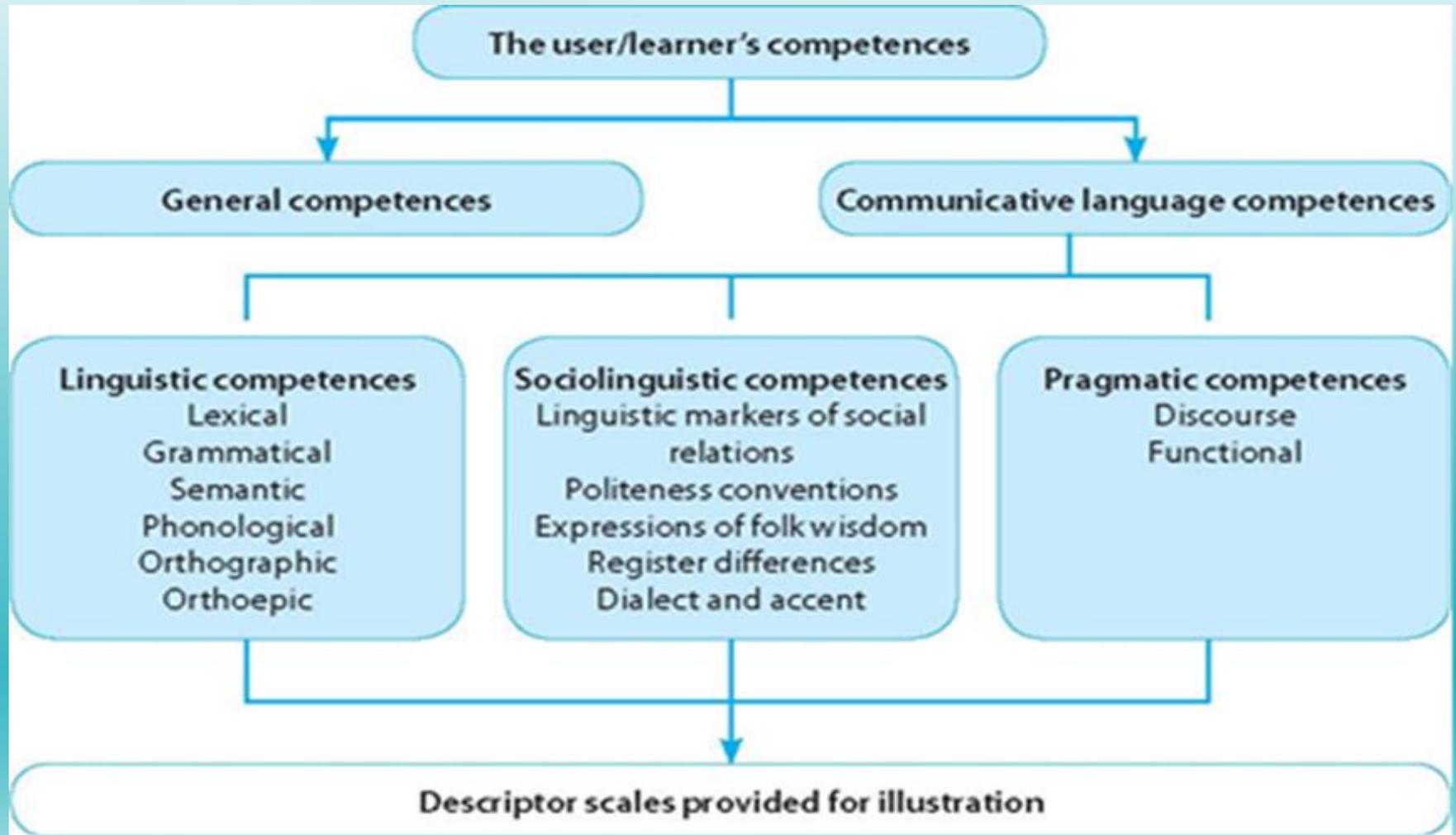
- Familiarisation with the CEFR
- Linking on the basis of specification of examination content
- Standardization and Benchmarking
- Standard setting
- Validation: checking that exam results relate to CEFR levels as intended

## The CEFR Model of Language Use

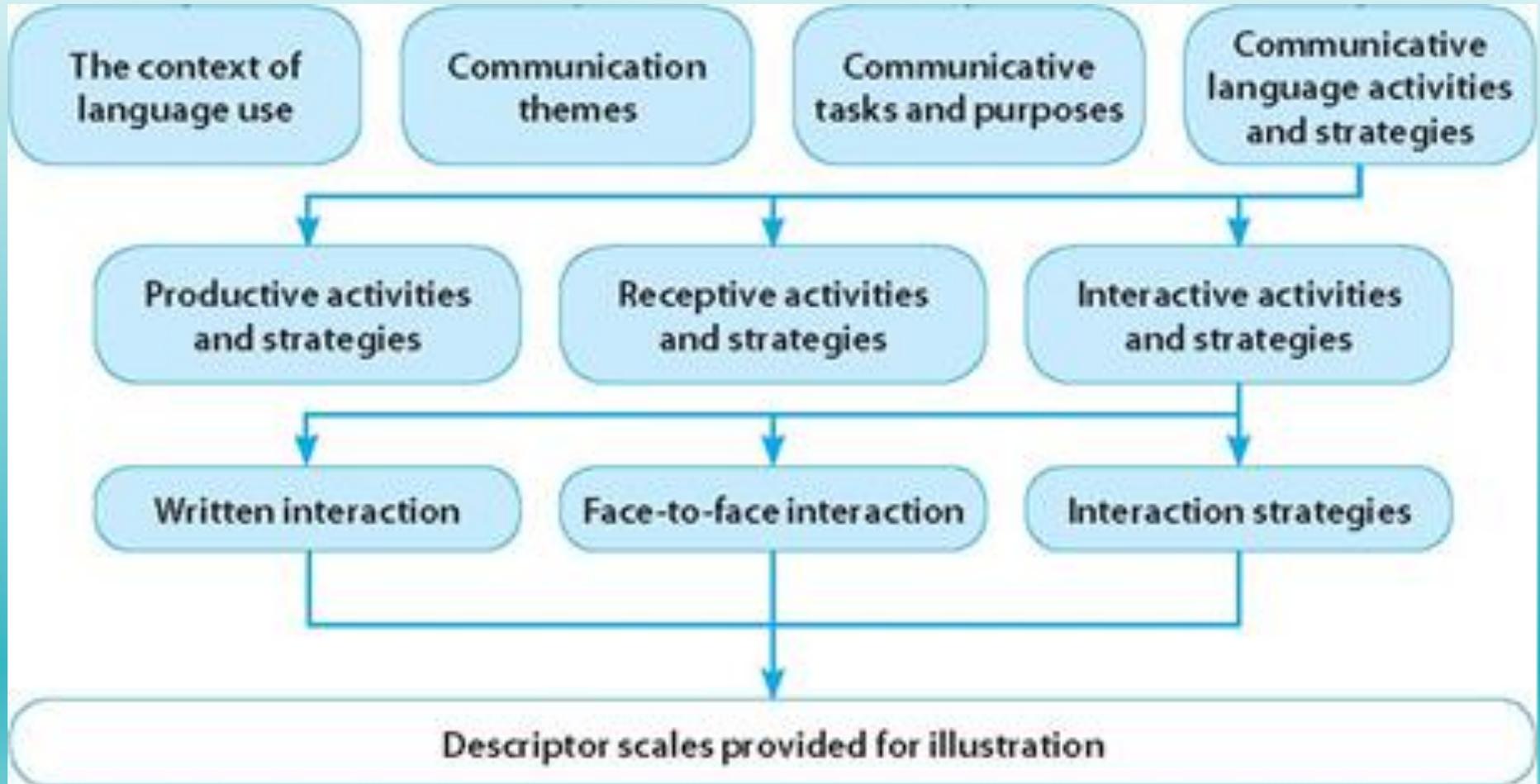
Action-oriented approach:

- Actions performed by persons - individuals and social agents
- A range of competences
  - general
  - communicative language competences
- Various contexts under various conditions and constraints to engage in language activities
- Language processes to produce and/or receive texts in relation to themes in specific domains

# The user/learner's Competences



# Language use and the user/learner



# Companion Volume (CV)

CV is an update of the CEFR illustrative descriptors by:

- highlighting CEFR areas for which no descriptor scales had yet been provided, especially mediation and plurilingual/pluricultural competence.
- Extended definition of 'plus levels' and a new 'Pre-A1' level.
- More elaborate description of listening and reading in existing scales, and for descriptors for activities such as online interaction, using telecommunications, expressing reactions to creative text and literature.
- enriching the description at A1, and at the C levels, particularly C2.

## What is Validity?

- A test is valid if it measures what we intend it to measure.
- Definition extended to the way tests are *used*, i.e. the interpretations of test scores

## Validity and the CEFR

- Demonstrating that a learner reported to be at B1 actually *is* at B1 according to the evidence
- Focus on *use*: validity evidence relates to language used for communicative purposes
- Focus on *competence*: validity evidence relates to cognitive skills, strategies and language knowledge

## What is Reliability?

- Reliability in testing means consistency
  - same or similar results on repeated use
- High reliability does not mean the test is valid

## Reliability in Practice

- Minimising likely sources of error
- Using statistics to estimate reliability of test scores
- No reliability target for the scores of all tests: estimates dependent on how much scores vary
- Reliability depends on task type and way of marking

# Fairness

- Making the test as fair as possible
- Codes of Practice or Codes of Fairness to assist test providers
- Minimising bias when designing tests
  - list of topics to avoid

## Ethical Concerns

- High-stakes language tests can have negative consequences (e.g. in the context of migration)
- Test providers to ensure relevant principles are widely disseminated and understood