The Influence of the Work of the Council of Europe on Language Teaching in Austria

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Contents

ABBREVIATIONS

CE	Council of Europe
ECML	European Centre for Modern Languages *(EFSZ Europäisches Fremdsprachenzentrum)*
ACCML	Austrian Centre of Competence in Modern Languages (*ÖSPK oder ÖSZ Österreichisches Sprachen-Kompetenz-Zentrum*)
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CEF	Common European Framework
ELP	European Language Portfolio

Syllabuses (Lehrpläne)

LP 1985	Syllabus for 1st and 2nd grade
LP 1985[1]	Syllabus for 3rd and 4th grade
LPK 1985	Commentary booklet (Lehrplankommentar) for 1st and 2nd grade
LPK 1985[1]	Commentary booklet for 3rd and 4th grade
LP 1989	Syllabus for 5th to 8th grade
LPK 1989	Commentary booklet for the syllabus for 5th to 8th grade.

Textbooks

TB	*Ticket to Britain*
TBTB	*Ticket to Britain* teacher's book
EYM	*English for You and Me*
EYMTB	*English for You and Me* teacher's book
CON	*Contacts*
CONTB	*Contacts* teacher's book

1 INTRODUCTION

The Council of Europe (CE), an intergovernmental organisation, has aimed to support democratic stability and the defence of human rights in Europe since its foundation in 1949. It has also been involved in discussions of social and political issues. The promotion of the teaching and learning of foreign languages has always formed an intrinsic part of the Council's work.

It was during my studies at university that I first came in contact with the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML), an institution of the Council of Europe. The ECML was founded in 1994 and is seated in Graz. Since then I have been interested in the European dimension of language teaching and the work of the Council of Europe in this field. It seemed clear to me that it had influenced foreign language teaching in Austria too, but I wanted to find out in which way and to what extent. There have been individual reports and articles written about these influences, but there was no comprehensive summary to be found. Thus, in the present thesis I will analyse the Council of Europe's impact on Austrian language teaching from the 1970s onwards and hope to provide a useful and interesting overview.

Milestones in the work of the Council of Europe were the setting up of a unit/credit system at the beginning of the 1970s, when language teaching was influenced widely by the communicative movement, and the publication of the significant *Threshold Level* in 1975. Another notable success concerning the harmonisation of language teaching in Europe was achieved in 2001, when the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEF) was published. The setting up of the *European Language Portfolio* is one of the Council's latest focal areas. I concentrated on these significant stages of the Council's work, as to me they seemed the most significant achievements of the Council of Europe in the field of modern language learning and teaching over the past few years – or even decades.

In order to make more apparent the structure which I have followed throughout the thesis, I would like to briefly present the individual chapters:

After this introductory chapter, in **chapter two** I will provide relevant background information about my topic to lay the basis for the subsequent chapters. This part contains a short discussion of language teaching in Austria in general, including the description of some historical details, the Austrian curriculum, methodology and approaches as well as a presentation of the Austrian Centre of Competence in Modern Languages, or ACCML (*Österreichisches Sprachen-Kompetenz-Zentrum, ÖSPK*). In the same chapter I will take a closer look at the general role of language teaching within the work of the Council of Europe.

In **chapter three** I will initially comment on the developments in language teaching that led to the establishment of the *Threshold Level* specifications in 1975. In the 1970s the new focus on language, the communicative potential it carried and the way we *used* language had as a consequence also influenced the approach that was taken to the teaching of foreign languages. The so-called 'communicative movement' came into being and the Council of Europe played an influential role in the developments that followed. Since the early 1970s its work was dedicated to the setting up of a European unit/credit scheme and the description of learning objectives through functions and notions. It was crowned by the publication of the significant *Threshold Level* in 1975, a language-based specification, that describes through functions and notions the minimum requirements which learners should be familiar with in order to 'cross the threshold' to another language community. In 1976 *The Threshold Level for Modern Language Learning in Schools* was published. In this chapter I will thus present these initial changes in the outlook on language, the innovations the communicative approach brought to language teaching with it and will also discuss the *Threshold Level*.

What follows in **chapter four** is a description of the implementation of the *Threshold Level* in Austria and a first analysis of the actual influences of the work of the Council of Europe. The analysis in this chapter consists of two parts: in the first I will concentrate on the Austrian syllabuses for lower and higher secondary level, which came out in 1985 and 1989 respectively; in the second part, national textbooks for English are examined. The areas of interest for my analysis of the syllabuses will be the objectives and the contents of teaching which were specified. The schoolbooks are analysed with regard to notions and functions, grammar, topic-related behaviour and the four skills.

The **fifth chapter** is again dedicated solely to the work of the Council of Europe, in this case, to the significant document of the *Common European Framework of Reference – Learning, Teaching and Assessment*, published in 2001. The CEF offers a common basis for the description of objectives, contents and methods of language courses and reflects the tendencies in language teaching which have been going on during the last few years. It also includes, for instance, concepts such as cultural awareness or sociocultural competence. In this chapter I will try to present a comprehensive summary of the CEF, although anyone who has read and consulted the document will understand that due to its complexity this is a very challenging task. A subchapter of this part of the thesis is dedicated to the *European Language Portfolio*, which, in my opinion, is a very inspiring project. The developments and influences arising from the *Framework* were begun only a few years ago and are still on-going.

The last part of my thesis, **chapter six**, is again dedicated to the influences of the *Common European Framework* and the *European Language Portfolio* which are perceptible in language teaching in Austria. I will present parts of the new Austrian syllabus for English for higher secondary level and show the direct influence of the CEF on them; the new curriculum has been in use since the present academic year 2004/05. Since last autumn, schools in Austria also have the possibility to introduce the national version of the language portfolio for lower secondary education, which was set up by the ACCML. I will also comment on these undertakings. The impacts of CEF and language portfolios on the learning of foreign languages in Austrian are still very new. In what way they will really be implemented in the language classrooms remains to be seen in the coming years.

By means of this structure I hope to provide a comprehensive overview of the influences that the work of the CE has had on a national basis. It is my purpose to show both very recent developments as well as those that occurred almost 30 years ago. In this way, I hope to guarantee that the reader is aware of the importance of the Council's work in the field and that language learning and teaching is a dynamic, ongoing process which continues to be developed and improved over the years. In the structure of my thesis I decided to follow the historical progression and therefore vary between theoretical and analytical parts in order to make the relationship between theory and practice clearer.

A final point should be stressed with regard to the title of this thesis. It has to be made clear that this thesis concentrates in its analyses on the influences on language teaching in general secondary education - *Allgemeinbildende höhere Schulen (AHS).* Also, the focus is laid on the instruction of English as a foreign language.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Foreign Language Learning and Teaching in Austria

In this first chapter I will give a short overview of the teaching of foreign languages in Austria in general, of the curricula and teaching materials used and of the approaches adopted in Austrian schools.[1]

2.1.1 Developments in Language Teaching in Austria since 1962

As De Cillia argues in the introduction to his essay "Fremdsprachenunterricht in Österreich nach 1945", the research which has been done so far about the historical development of language teaching in Austria is unsatisfactory (cf. 2002:115). Isabel Landsiedler comes to a similar conclusion in her article "Der Englischunterricht in Österreich im 20. Jahrhundert", which specifically investigates the development of the instruction of English (cf. 2002:221). Hardly any essays written explicitly about the development of language education in Austria over a period of time exist. Help is provided by descriptions made at a certain moment of time. Thanks to general surveys conducted at Austrian schools, at least the development of language teaching at schools can be reconstructed to a certain extent. Language education at adult level or non-school institutions lacks empirical research (De Cillia 2002:115).

According to De Cillia, the developments of the Austrian school system after the Second World War can be divided into two phases: the first being from 1945 to 1962, still highly influenced by the regulations of the system before 1934; the second from 1962 onwards, the year in which the new Education Acts were passed. In the meantime, these Acts have been altered by several amendments, as since the 1970s a high number of educational experiments have been carried out at Austrian schools. It is also in this period that language teaching in Austria has been influenced by the communicative approach.

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[1] For more details about the national, social and educational context of language learning and teaching in Austria, the consultation of the IEA Language Education Study / National Profile: Austria, published in 1996, can be recommended.

We can speak of a continual development of the Austrian school system and in particular in the field of language teaching over the last thirty years. On the one hand this concerns changes in language teaching approaches and methods, and on the other hand more general issues such as language learning in primary school, compulsory language learning at lower secondary level, bilingual school forms etc. (cf. De Cillia 2002:116). For example, in 1983 Austria was one of the first European countries where compulsory language learning in primary schools was introduced.

Austria has taken an active role in contributing to and making use of innovative developments in language teaching - and has not stopped doing so. Kettemann and others argue in the IEA Language Study that this happened mainly in collaboration with the Council of Europe. They say that "all major innovations and reforms concerning language education in Austria over the past 20 years have been formulated and carried out in close co-operation with the Modern Language Project Group of the Council of Europe" (IEA Study 1996:31). A reciprocal and continuous exchange of ideas and suggestions for innovations and improvements in the field of language teaching between the Council of Europe and its member country Austria can be clearly identified.

Taking a look at the latest developments in Austrian language teaching we can find a notable emphasis put on the fields of Intercultural Learning, Early Language Learning, Language and Cultural Education (cf. project "*Sprach- und Kulturerziehung"* by the ACCML), Bilingual Education and English as a Medium of Instruction (*EAA – Englisch als Arbeitssprache*). Learner-centred Teaching and Learner Autonomy are also gaining importance (cf. Kettemann 1997:178-184; IEA Study 1996: 131-132). These areas reflect general international tendencies.

2.1.2 The Austrian Curriculum

The Austrian curriculum is a so-called 'framework curriculum', which means that it provides only certain guidelines for teachers. It indicates aims, but the teachers have the freedom to choose the teaching methods and topics they consider best to achieve these aims and to respond to the guidelines given. It is, however, explicitly stated that the varied access to knowledge is important, i.e. that the teachers should use a variety of teaching methods.

Curricula in Austria are revised every ten to fifteen years. In the 1980s it became obvious that the curricula, which dated back to the 1960s, needed to be revised and replaced by new ones which included the developments and innovations of the time. With the academic year 1985/1986 the new curriculum for lower secondary education was introduced, four years later, in 1989/1990, the curriculum for higher secondary education. A detailed analysis of these syllabuses will follow in chapter four of this thesis.

Over the last few years, there has again been intensive work on the design of a new curriculum. The curriculum for lower secondary level has been in use since 1999/2000; the curriculum for higher secondary level since the beginning of the present academic year (2004/2005). In the setting up of the recent syllabus for English the designers tried to include the latest tendencies in language teaching and include ideas from the *Common European Framework of Reference* (see chapter five).

The Austrian syllabus for English is divided into the following three parts:

I	**Bildungs- und Lehraufgabe (Educational Aims)**
II	**Lehrstoff (Syllabus)**
III	**Didaktische Grundsätze (Didactic Principles/Approach)**

The actual 'Syllabus', of course, changes from grade to grade, while the 'Educational Aims' and the 'Didactic Principles' are described once for the four years of lower secondary level (*Unterstufe*) and once for those of higher secondary level (*Oberstufe*). The didactic principles should facilitate the practical application of the syllabus in the classroom for teachers.

2.1.3 Teaching Material

It is perfectly clear that the efficiency of teaching and learning depends to a large extent on the use of appropriate classroom materials. As mentioned above, the Austrian syllabus serves only as a framework for teachers. As a result, the teaching material has a great

influence on what actually happens in the foreign language classrooms. The textbooks, of course, have to follow the innovations and methodological developments described in the syllabus in order to guarantee the achievement of the goals and objectives indicated. In Austria, textbooks have to be approved by expert commissions in the Ministry of Education before they enter a list of recommended teaching materials. For this thesis, three Austrian textbooks of English for lower secondary education have been analysed, which, in the 1980s, were among those most often used: *Ticket to Britain*, *English for You and Me* and *Contacts* (see chapter 4.2.).

2.1.4 Methodology and Approaches

As mentioned above, teachers in Austria have the freedom to choose the teaching method they consider best, with regard to the class, the classroom, their own and their students' personalities. Although the communicative approach should have replaced the grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods, there are still traces of them to be found in Austrian schools:

> The teaching of grammar (as such) […] appears to have persisted throughout all other changes. The reasons for this lie […] in the shortcomings of 'communicative' textbooks, in the constraints of the school system, in the lack of a consistent in-service training system for teachers, and perhaps in the imperfections of the communicative approach itself. (Internet 1:4)

The reasons for the present situation are thus manifold. In this context it is interesting to take a look at a survey carried out in autumn 2003 by a group of students of the Karl-Franzens University of Graz (cf. Hanak-Hammerl/Newby 2003). The aim of the survey was to find out which interface existed between theory and practice in second language acquisition in Austrian schools. The survey included 88 teachers at 17 schools in Styria, 50% of the teachers, answering to the question of how well they were informed about certain theories of learning and teaching, maintained that they knew 'quite a lot' about the communicative approach. 29.5% even said that they knew 'very much' about this approach. 2.6% stated that they had never heard about it, a surprising fact if we consider that the communicative approach is said to be predominant in Austrian schools since the late 1970s. The teachers who knew about the approach also indicated that they were 'very much' (39.2%) or 'quite a

lot' (44.6%) influenced by it. Also Landsiedler's results of her survey about "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in Austria" in 2000 mirror these findings: 83% of 134 teachers questioned found that the communicative approach was the most influential theory for them. The naturalistic and the cognitive approaches were not very familiar to the teachers and thus also influenced them only to a very small degree. However, 62.5% said they would still be influenced by traditional methods 'quite a lot' or 'very much'. Student-centred approaches were also very well known and were said to have a great influence on teaching. Some teachers even said they would see themselves more as advisors than as directors. This indicates a tendency which will certainly gain importance in the future.

The results of the survey support Kettemann's and others' observations as well, namely that nowadays most of the teachers in Austria use a combination of different approaches (cf. IEA Study 1996; Internet 1). This is also due to the fact that assessing 'communicative competence' is a well-known difficulty. Even if the communicative approach remains the most influential, teachers have to assess their pupils' work in a transparent, objective way and therefore tend to base their grading on what parents and the public consider 'objective': assessing written tasks simply by the number of grammatical mistakes made by the pupils. Most teachers keep the teaching of structural and lexical knowledge in mind but try to combine it with 'communicative' activities such as oral activities, games, songs, etc. (cf. Kerschbaumer et al. 1997:141). It seems desirable that theory and practice should be linked more strongly, but this would concern close co-operation and willingness by anyone working in the field of language teaching – by theorists as well as by syllabus and textbook designers as well as by teachers themselves.

2.1.5 The Austrian Centre of Competence in Modern Languages (ACCML)

An important part of the general developments taking place in Austrian schools concern the teaching and learning of foreign languages. The work of department III of the Centre for School Development of the Austrian Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, is solely dedicated to the teaching and learning of foreign languages. It is based in Graz and was renamed in 1994 into the Austrian Centre of Competence in Modern Languages, or ACCML (*Österreichisches Sprachen-Kompetenz -Zentrum,* ÖSPK or ÖSZ).

The work of the ACCML can be divided into three main areas: firstly, co-operation with international organisations and institutions, including the Council of Europe and the European Union. International trends and innovations are analysed, evaluated and documented. Secondly, the Centre tries to set up national and regional projects in order to implement these international developments. For example, it is the ACCML that is responsible for the implementation of the *European Language Portfolio* in Austria. The third field of interest in the work of the Centre is finally the dissemination of information. At the moment, important projects of the Centre, which also reflect the tendencies of language teaching in general, are Early Language Learning, English Across the Curriculum and the important project "*Sprach- und Kulturerziehung*".

2.2 The Role of Language Teaching Within the Work of the Council of Europe

The Council of Europe is an intergovernmental organisation which was founded in 1949 and currently consists of 46 member states[2]. Since its foundation it has aimed to support democratic stability and defence of human rights in Europe. It has also been involved in discussions of social and political issues (e.g. educational matters, minority problems, drugs, cloning) as well as in the development of a European cultural identity.

In 1954 the representatives of the member states of the Council of Europe signed the European Cultural Convention. They agreed that foreign language learning had to be promoted because a “greater understanding of one another among the peoples of Europe” (Van Ek 1976:1) would support the Council’s aim - the achievement “of a greater unity between its members” (Van Ek 1976:1). The field of language education is an important concern for the Council of Europe as it concerns mutual understanding between the citizens of the Council’s member countries and affects also other problem areas such as cultural integration.

[2] Albania, Principality of Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

The Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC) is responsible for work in the fields of education and culture. It is organised in a series of medium-term projects and obtains its coherent and continuous work thanks to the adherence to three principles which are part of the preamble to Recommendation R (82) 18 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe:

> 1) that the rich heritage of diverse languages and cultures in Europe is a valuable common resource to be protected and developed, and that a major educational effort is needed to convert that diversity from a barrier to communication into a source of mutual enrichment and understanding.
>
> 2) that it is only through a better knowledge of European modern languages that it will be possible to facilitate communication and interaction among Europeans of different mother tongues in order to promote European mobility, mutual understanding and co-operation, and overcome prejudice and discrimination
>
> 3) that member states, when adopting or developing national policies in the field of modern language learning and teaching, may achieve greater convergence at the European level by means of appropriate arrangements for ongoing co-operation and co-ordination of policies. (CEF 2001:2)

As can be seen, emphasis is put on the preservation of cultural and linguistic diversity, on the facilitation of communication between the citizens, on international co-operation and on the co-ordination of language policies. The activities of the Council for Cultural Co-operation, of its Committee for Education and of its Modern Languages Section, have tried to encourage, support, but also to co-ordinate the efforts of member governments and non-governmental institutions to improve language learning according to these principles.

The Council of Europe's most important contributions to the development of language teaching methodology were connected to the setting up of so-called Modern Language Projects which are usually programmed for four to eight years. The projects of the last 25 years were: Unit-Credit Scheme (1971-1977); Project 4 (1977-1981) "Modern Languages"; Project 12 (1981-1988) "Learning and Teaching Modern Languages for Communication"; "Language Learning for European Citizenship" (1989-1997). Of course, the outcomes of the Projects are also partly present in this thesis; to describe them all in detail would go beyond its scope. For detailed information about *The Work of the Council of Europe in the Field of*

Modern Languages, 1957-2001, John Trim's publication, which bears the same title, can be recommended (see Internet 2).

Milestones in the work of the Council of Europe were without doubt the setting up of a unit/credit system at the beginning of the 1970s and the publication of the significant *Threshold Level* in 1975, which influenced language teaching widely. Another notable success concerning the harmonisation of language teaching in Europe was achieved in 2001, when the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEF) was, after two pilot versions, finally published. The setting up of the *European Language Portfolio* (ELP) is one of the Council's latest concerns. All these aspects will be treated in detail in the following chapters. The work of the Council of Europe in the field of language learning and teaching is carried out at two complementary institutions: The Language Policy Division and the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML).

2.2.1 The Language Policy Division

The Language Policy Division is seated in Strasbourg. Its area of responsibility concentrates mainly on language education policies at European, national or local level. Its work focuses on three broad areas, namely on the "Assistance to member States with policy evaluation and formulation; the elaboration of instruments for policy analysis and standard setting; expert assistance concerning the language education rights and responsibilities of minorities (including [im]migrant communities) with a view to promoting integration and stability" (Internet 3). Experts at the Division thus offer help to the CE member states in the formulating, analysing or evaluating of their language policies. The Division was also concerned with the setting up of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, which contributes to the harmonisation and transparency of language teaching in the CE member countries and facilitates a mutual recognition of qualifications (see chapter 5). The CEF is furthermore closely linked to the *European Language Portfolio*. A final responsibility of the Division concerns the assistance for member countries in matters which regard minority languages and the recognition and integration of the same. The work is described in medium-term programmes, the current programme being "Languages, Diversity, Citizenship".

2.2.2 The European Centre for Modern Languages

The European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) is a partial agreement institution of the Council of Europe. It was founded in April 1994 upon the initiative of Austria, the Netherlands and France in order to improve communication between the Council's member states and their citizens. The ECML currently consists of 33 member states[3]. After an initial phase of probation, the Committee of Ministers decided in 1998 in favour of the continuation of the Centre (cf. Internet 4). The ECML collaborates with the Language Policy Division in Strasbourg, with the language department of the European Union as well as with national and multilateral partners. The centre's seat in Graz makes close co-operation with the ACCML possible.

The centre was founded in order to serve as a "forum in which the responsible persons for educational policy can meet up with specialists in language teaching methodology as well as with language experts" (Internet 5). In fact, the ECML fulfils its function as a meeting place for international specialists in the field of applied linguistics and didactics, but also teacher trainers, teachers, textbook and curriculum designers very well.

The ECML's medium-term programmes run for four years. From 2000-2003 the centre focused on the organisation of language education, Language Awareness, Intercultural Competence, the different aspects of Multilingualism, the usage and utility of new technologies in language education and quality assurance in project management. The new programme (2004-2007) includes projects for the following thematic areas: Coping with linguistic and social diversity; communication in a multicultural society; professional development and reference tools; innovative approaches and new technologies (cf. Internet 6).

Projects which comprise the medium-term programmes are selected by the Governing board of the ECML from those submitted to the Centre. Each project is coordinated by a small team of international FL experts, who are responsible for the content and organisation of the

[3] These are: Albania, Principality of Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the United Kingdom.

project as well as for the publication, which represents the tangible conclusion of the project outcome. A central focus of each project is a workshop held at the ECML and attended by one representative from each member state. Participants in the projects have the duty to disseminate the results or the project in their respective countries. In this they are usually supported by a nominating and dissemination body appointed by the local Ministry of Education. A list of projects comprising the second medium-term programme of the ECML can be found at http://www.ecml.at/mtp2/mtp2.asp.

Workshop reports and publications are usually available for anyone interested. In my opinion, however, more dissemination work should be done, especially at schools and universities. Many teachers and students who are to become future language teachers are not familiar with the Centre's important and innovative work. In the survey mentioned above (see 2.1.4; Hanak-Hammerl/Newby 2003), teachers were also asked how familiar they were with the activities and publications of the ACCML and ECML. Only 18% said they would be 'well' or 'very well' informed, 52% stated that they were 'not at all' or 'only hardly' informed (cf. Hanak-Hammerl/Newby 2003:87). In my opinion, these are unsatisfactory numbers, because they indicate (if we want to carry the thought further), that the innovative work carried out by the Centre never reaches the classrooms. A promising development has been the setting up of an experts group by the ACCML, which is explicitly concerned with the dissemination of the work of the European Centre for Modern Languages in Austrian schools. That way the present situation will hopefully change.

3 THE THRESHOLD LEVEL (1975)

3.1 Theoretical Background – Communicative Language Teaching

3.1.1 Developments Leading to Communicative Language Teaching

It is necessary to take a look at the changes that happened in language teaching in general in the 1970s and 1980s in order to understand the essential work of the Council of Europe and the developments that led to the establishment of the *Threshold Level* specifications. The 'communicative movement' gained importance in the early 1970s. Before that, the main teaching methods were the Grammar-Translation Method and the Audio-Lingual Method (for details see Rivers 1983; Richards/Rogers 2001; Johnson 2001). The development of the communicative approach brought a number of innovations in the field of foreign language teaching and learning, as well as new ways of understanding language in general.

The origins of communicative language teaching (CLT) and its focus on the communicative potential of language derive from linguistics, psychology, philosophy, sociology and the educational research of the time (cf. Savignon 2001:126). CLT was influenced, among others, by the work of British functional linguists such as M.A.K. Halliday and John Firth, as well as the American socio-linguists Dell Hymes, John Gumperz or William Labov and the pragmatists John Austin and John Searle (cf. Richards/Rogers 2001:153). What they all had in common was the focus on the language itself, on the meanings it carried and on the communicative *uses* made of it. The Speech Act Theory and the writings by Searle (e.g. 1972) and Austin (1962) formed the basis for the language 'functions' identified later in CLT (see 3.1.4).

Language learning in Europe assumed a new dimension due to the development of interdependencies of the European countries at the time and the growing number of immigrant workers and adults who needed to learn a foreign language for professional reasons. The Council of Europe – which in its work is also concerned with educational matters - played an influential role in the developments that followed. It organised conferences and published books on language teaching and reacted to the urgent need to

develop alternative methods of language teaching (cf. Richards/Rogers:154). In the Council's endeavour to set up a unit/credit scheme for language teaching, it was influenced widely by the paper on functional and communicative definitions of language by David A Wilkins, entitled "The Linguistic and Situational Content of the Common Core in a Unit/Credit System" (1973) (see 3.1.3).

Also in the early 1970s, the American linguist Dell Hymes reacted to Chomsky's identification of the linguistic competence of the ideal native speaker (cf. Savignon 2001:125). Hymes stressed the significance of the sociocultural context in determining certain patterns of behaviour, both linguistic and extra-linguistic. Reaching 'communicative competence' became one of the central concepts and main aims of the communicative movement. The term was described by the American linguist as "what a speaker needs to know to communicate effectively in culturally significant settings" (Richards/Rogers 2001:159). Hymes' concepts influenced communicative language teaching widely and textbook writers adopted them willingly in material design (cf. Rivers 1983:15). It was appreciated that emphasis was put on the importance of using language in a culturally appropriate way and also on how it had to be adapted according to different situations, surroundings and relationships between the speakers. Language became thus embedded in a context of social and cultural interaction. For this fact it was also important to create opportunities in which the students had to face real communicative situations in inter-action with native speakers, ideally in natural settings.

Savignon refers to the fact that the developments that led to the establishment of CLT were influenced both from Europe and North America (cf. 2001:124). Also according to Richards and Rogers, it was especially British linguists who "saw the need to focus in language teaching on communicative proficiency rather than on mastery of structures" (2001:153). According to the two authors, the influences that helped CLT develop are manifold:

> The work of the Council of Europe; the writings of Wilkins, Widdowson, Candlin, Christopher Brumfit, Keith Johnson, and other British applied linguists on the theoretical basis for a communicative or functional approach to language teaching; the rapid application of these ideas by textbook writers; and the equally rapid application of these new principles by British language teaching specialists, curriculum development centers and even governments gave prominence nationally and internationally to what came to be referred to as the Communicative Approach, or simply Communicative Language Teaching. (Richards/Rogers 2001:154)

Although the movement had origins mainly in the work of British linguists, as already mentioned, it was soon the subject of interest for language experts across Europe and the United States. It "appeared at a time when language teaching in many parts of the world was ready for a paradigm shift" (Richards/Rogers 2001:172). Even if there is no commonly accepted doctrine for the approach's characteristics, and interpretations of it vary in part widely, it is now mainly understood as to have the following two aims:

- make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and

- develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication (Richards/Rogers 2001:155).

The communicative model of language and the focus on communicative and contextual factors in language use constitute the theory of language teaching on which all interpretations are usually based.

3.1.2 Theory of Learning

Both Richards/Rogers (2001) and Cook (1991) criticise the fact that in CLT too little attention was given to learning theory. According to Cook, the communicative style does not hold a view about second language learning as such, but it argues that it happens automatically if the student communicates properly with others (cf. 1991:188). He calls it a "black box model of L2 learning, because it assumes little about the learning process" (Cook 1991:188). Richards and Rogers managed to identify different principles of a theory of learning only by interpreting the basic elements of CLT. For instance, they set up the principle that "activities that involve real communication promote learning"

(Richards/Rogers 2001:161), which is exactly the position Cook criticises. Other elements indicated by Richards and Rogers were the 'task principle' and the 'meaningfulness principle' (for details see Richards/Rogers 2001:161).

3.1.3 Syllabus Design

During the developments that led to the communicative approach to language teaching, experts also saw the need to occupy themselves with the reorganisation of language syllabuses. The purpose was to put emphasis on the meanings and uses of the foreign language and to find a syllabus compatible to the notion of 'communicative competence'. The old syllabuses in use were mostly 'structural' ones, which mean that they were mainly organised according to language structures. The learning steps were ordered in terms of increasing difficulty, the sequences of the learning processes were prescribed. A notional syllabus, on the other hand, is characterised by the fact that it emphasises the functions performed and meanings expressed through language. It was developed as one possible type of syllabus compatible with communicative language teaching. Other types of communicative syllabuses were described, for instance, by Yalden (1983) where the organisation of linguistic material according to semantic criteria became relevant.

The Council of Europe has played a significant role in the development of notional syllabuses and the setting up of language learning objectives described through functions and notions. In 1971 a group of experts was brought together with the aim to develop a language teaching system suitable for all the languages of its member countries (cf. Johnson 1981:2-3). The idea behind it was "that notions and functions would form the basis for syllabuses that listed these, rather than (…) grammatical structures" (Johnson 2001:184). In 1976, David Wilkins, a member of the expert group, expanded his article of 1973 into a book entitled *Notional Syllabuses*. His syllabus was "organized in terms of the purposes for which people are learning language and the kinds of language performance that are necessary to meet those purposes" (Wilkins 1976:13). It was he who, already in his earlier document, had proposed two categories - the 'communicative' and the 'semantico-grammatical', which could be used as the means for listing uses and concepts in a syllabus. Later, the category of 'communicative function' was shortened to 'functions' and the 'semantico-grammatical categories' were in the end described simply as 'notions' or

'concepts'. Subsequently the two terms became important in the discussion of communicative language teaching.

3.1.4 Notions and Functions

The concepts of 'functions' and 'notions' underline the communicative view of language as a "system for the expression of meaning" (Richards/Rogers 2001:161). Yet, it has to be kept in mind that the terms 'communicative' and 'functional-notional' are not to be used as synonyms, as is sometimes the case. Johnson describes their relationship as "of means to end" (1981:11): describing learning objectives in the communicative approach through functions and notions is only one possible way of doing it. Thus, a 'communicative approach', in theory, does not necessarily have to be the same as a 'notional-functional approach'.

Following Van Ek, functions can be explained as "what people do by means of language" (1976:5) or, according to Johnson, as "'uses' of the language" (2001:184). We perform certain functions, for instance, 'denying something' or 'expressing surprise', by acts of speech in communication. While functions are therefore related to human behaviour, notions "denote abstract concepts which reflect general, and possibly universal, categories of human experience [and thought], such as time, space, quantity, location etc." (Newby 2001a:449). They can be defined as what we 'handle', the concepts we refer to while fulfilling language functions (cf. Van Ek 1976:6). In short, notions and functions thus characterise *what* we say and *why* we say something respectively (cf. Newby 2001a:450).

It was, without doubt, difficult to decide *which* meanings and concepts in the foreign language should be taught to learners. Gerngroß also points to this problem (cf. 1982:236ff). He refers to Wilkins who had stated in *Notional Syllabuses* that there had been no objective observational research done about how speech functions could be realised linguistically. In addition there arises the problem of how to grade functions, because a hierarchical order is impossible.

The Council of Europe team, especially the Swiss applied linguist René Richterich, tried to face and resolve this problem by looking at the 'language needs' of certain groups of

learners. In this needs-analysis, the *situations* in which the language would probably be used by the learners were decisive. Van Ek describes communicative situations as "the complex of extra-linguistic conditions which determines the nature of the language-act" (1975:4). Situations are then further influenced by settings, roles (both psychological and social) and topics, as we will see in more detail in chapter 3.2.3. of this thesis.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the Council of Europe language specialists elaborated the so-called *Threshold Level*, or *T-Level*. It was first published in 1975 and tried to meet the needs of the average adult learner within the European Economic Community (cf. Rivers 1983:17). It has to be made clear, though, that it is "not itself a syllabus, but a statement of objectives" (Van Ek 1991:iii), it can also be called a 'syllabus inventory'. Based on this inventory, syllabuses can then be set up. The *T-Level* describes through functions and notions the minimum requirements which learners should be familiar with in order to communicate successfully in certain situations. This specification of objectives had a wide influence on language teaching and the establishment of syllabuses in Europe.

By the late 1970s and 1980s notional-functional syllabuses were predominant in syllabus design. According to Savignon, language programmes were judged 'communicative' as soon as they used notional-functional syllabuses based on needs assessment (cf. 2001:125). Many national syllabuses, including the Austrian, were changed from structural to notional-functional. However, Johnson argues, for instance, that many sorts of syllabuses could have come out of a document like the *T-Level* (e.g.: setting-based syllabuses, topic-based, role-based) (cf. 2001:12). Richards and Rogers maintain that the discussion about the 'ideal' syllabus model still continues in CLT research (cf. 2001:165).

3.1.5 The Role of Grammar

The communicative approach brought about a shift from the focus on form and structure to the focus on function. The learning of structures, grammar and vocabulary was not seen as an isolated process, but served the learners primarily for understanding, negotiating and expressing meaning – which are considered important aims of the approach (cf. Sheils 1992:1). Obviously, the learning of correct grammatical structures does not automatically mean that the foreign language will also be *used* correctly by the learner. This is also what

Hymes' maintains when he says: "There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless" (1971:10). Language learning means learning to be appropriate in a foreign language, i.e. to say the right thing at the right moment, and not only to be grammatically accurate. Particularly in the beginning the communicative approach was misunderstood for this abandonment of any focus on grammar. However, it was clear that it was impossible to learn a language entirely without grammatical rules, structures and forms. So-called 'communicative grammars' were published (e.g. Leech/Svartvik 1975; Newby 1989a), which tried to embed grammar in a communicative context.

The question of what role grammar plays in the communicative approach is still a subject of discussion. Notional descriptions in the end did not prove to be as useful and easy to handle for non-experts as expected (cf. Newby 2001a:451). As a consequence, later developments led back from the 'notional-functional approach' to what was then characterised a 'functional-structural' approach.

3.1.6 Methodology and Material Development

After the setting up of new syllabuses and the focus on needs-analyses, language experts finally turned to the question of which methodology best suited the new approach. According to Savignon, Germany played a primary role in the development of methodologies (cf. 2001:125). Significant names which she cites in the international field of material developers are Candlin, Piepho, Maley and Duff.

Materials in communicative language teaching should, of course, serve as the means for promoting communicative language use. Richards and Rogers differentiate between three types of materials used in CLT: text-based material, task-based material and so-called 'realia' (cf. 2001:168-170). Text-based material relates to textbooks designed to support communicative language learning. Task-based materials include, for instance, various games, role plays or simulation activities. And what the authors describe as 'realia' is authentic teaching material (e.g. signs, magazines, advertisements, maps, pictures, charts etc.) in communicative language classes (cf. Richards/Rogers 2001:170).

Widdowson reminds us in *Aspects of Language Teaching* of the fact that successful teaching depends very much on methodology, i.e. the set of techniques actually used in the classroom (1990:159): Learners will need to have the opportunities to do and act and to "realise the notional and functional character of the course specification". He continues arguing that notions and functions can be treated "as items to be learned in the same way as structures. […] The notional/functional syllabus only becomes 'communicative' when it is implemented by appropriate methodology" (Widdowson 1990:159).

3.1.7 Types of Activities

Activities compatible with a communicative approach include tasks in which learners fulfil communicative objectives, engage in communication and use communicative processes as well as interaction. Activities can, for example, consist of completing exercises or be based on information-sharing between the learners (cf. Richards/Rogers 2001:165), which presupposes interaction among them. Communicative situations are created through the use of pair and group work as well as of role plays. However, as Savignon states, this is not always a necessity: "CLT does not *require* [my italics] small group or pair work […] [it] may well be inappropriate in some contexts" (2001:128).

Sheils states that the "[l]earners' communicative ability is developed through their involvement in a range of meaningful, realistic, worthwhile and attainable tasks, the successful accomplishment of which provides satisfaction and increases their self-confidence" (1992:1). The words 'meaningful' and 'realistic' are important here because they convey the idea that language teaching which reflects or simulates real life situations promotes learning and even contributes positively to the development of the learner's personality. Ideally, learners are even confronted with a choice of topics and themes and can hence contribute actively to what happens in the foreign language classroom.

3.1.8 Roles of Learner and Teacher

An important and innovative feature of the communicative approach was without doubt its focus on the learner and his/her needs and interests. It was assumed that a learner who is interested and sees a certain sense in what he/she is doing shows a higher degree of

motivation and as a consequence learns more easily. In CLT the learner assumes new roles, interacts primarily with other learners and learns to understand unsuccessful communication not as the fault of a single speaker or listener, but as a shared responsibility (cf. Richards/Rogers 2001:166). Also, the teacher no longer takes full responsibility for the success of a lesson, he/she assumes many different roles, for instance those of a manager, facilitator, negotiator, motivator, adviser etc. (cf. Sheils 1992:3-4).

Due to the fact that the principal aim of the communicative approach is (expressed very simplistically) to be able to understand and make oneself understood, errors are usually accepted with more tolerance than within other approaches. It is assumed that even weaker learners can have a sense of achievement and become thus encouraged in their learning processes. Cook criticises, though, that the learning success in the communicative approach is limited to certain types of students (cf. 1991:187). Field-independent students benefit from the approach more than field-dependent; extroverts more than introverts.

3.1.9 *Communication in the Modern Language Classroom* (1988)

In the discussion of the communicative movement, it seems appropriate to mention Joe Sheils' *Communication in the Modern Languages Classroom* published by the Council of Europe in 1988. It is mainly concerned with classroom methodology. Unfortunately it never gained as much public attention as it deserved. The work shows and mirrors the ideas brought together in Project No. 12 of the CE ("Learning and teaching modern languages for communication"), which focussed on the application of the communicative approach and the *Threshold Level* for classroom practice.

With his publication, Sheils also presents an interesting overview of the communicative approach, its features and practical applications. The author's main interest was in presenting "some methodological principles underlying the production of material and treating the problems posed by communicative classroom practice by presenting specific, varied examples of suitable materials" (Girard/Trim 1996:51). In the publication, examples from Austrian, German, British, Spanish, French and Italian textbooks are given and classified in relation to the four skills; classroom activities observed during visits of expert groups or taken from workshop reports are analysed. Many of the examples were taken from

the Austrian textbooks *Ticket to Britain* and *English for You and Me*. The fact that these textbooks appeared in the mid-1980s and Sheils' publication later, in 1988, shows the interaction which took place between the CE and national language teaching. It also makes evident that the work of the Council of Europe was already put into practice in Austria at a very early stage.

The document is divided into eight chapters. In the first, Joe Sheils deals with communicative language teaching from a theoretical point of view and includes in this introductory chapter the (at the time) latest developments concerning the approach. It serves as a useful overview for anyone who is not yet familiar with communicative language teaching. In the following chapter the author comments on the "Promoting [of] Interaction in the Classroom". He refers once again to the fact that for classroom interaction, pair and group work are of high importance. He is well aware of the fact that there are a number of possible objections to group work, but tries to give some guidance through helpful suggestions for their organisation.

The main part of the document is dedicated to the development of the four skills: "Developing Listening Skills"; "Developing Reading Skills"; "Promoting Speaking Skills"; "Promoting Writing Skills". As we can see, each skill is analysed separatel, for the sake of clarity; however, the author emphasises the fact that they should, of course, be taught in an integrated way (cf. Sheils 1992:v). The last chapter points to the question of the importance of grammar in a communicative approach. Again, Sheils supports his theoretical arguments with practical illustrations. For instance, he shows an example of the 'cyclic approach' to presenting grammar items from *Ticket to Britain* (cf. Sheils 1992:266-270).

The publication is structured very clearly and can be recommended to every (future) language teacher as it gives many useful techniques and serves as an interesting and vital repertoire of practical examples. Communicative language teaching becomes embedded in a practical context and the document can, without doubt, influence and inspire language teaching in a positive way. Through the additional presentation of a wide range of suggestions and questions teachers are invited to ask of themselves, the book can help them reflect on the teaching taking place in the language classroom.

3.2 Mediation by the Council of Europe – The Threshold Level

As has been stated before, language experts had worked on the development of a unit/credit system in language teaching since the beginning of the 1970s. Their work was without doubt successful: the system today differentiates six levels of proficiency[4]. *The Threshold Level in a European Unit/Credit System for Modern Language Learning by Adults,* or simply *Threshold-Level* or *T-Level*, was published in 1975 after a more than three-year-period of work of a CE expert group. All in all, more than 100 people from more than 15 countries (cf. Van Ek 1975:i) made their contributions to the important document.

The *T-Level* is a level of *communicative ability*. It describes what the learner should be able to *do* at this level and which language forms he/she is able to use properly. Its aim is to "enable learners to survive (linguistically speaking) in temporary contacts with foreign language speakers in everyday situations, whether as visitors to the foreign country or with visitors to their own country, and to establish and maintain social contacts" (Van Ek 1976:24-25). The *Threshold Level* can be described as a standard reference level and the author J. A. Van Ek seems to recognise its importance when he explains that "[…] it is [...] more explicit in more dimensions of linguistic analysis than any previous statement of linguistic objectives, the content of any other course, any other examination syllabus, any linguistic or communicative proficiency can be measured against it [...]" (1975:ii). The publication can thus be described as the keystone in the development of a European unit/credit system and can be seen as the point of departure for many developments which followed.

3.2.1 *The Threshold Level for Modern Language Learning in Schools (1976)*

In 1976 Van Ek published *The Threshold Level for Modern Language Learning in Schools*[5]. This version of the *Threshold Level*, adapted for the needs of learners at school age, does not - in its organisation - differ from the original. The two objectives have the same common

[4] These levels are: 'Waystage', 'Threshold Level', 'Basic', 'General Competence', 'Advanced' and 'Full Professional'. The Threshold Level was considered the lowest until in 1977 the lower level called 'Waystage' was introduced

[5] In the following *Threshold Level for School'*

core, but differ in the selection of specific notions (see also 3.2.4). They are thus seen as two versions of one and not as two different objectives (cf. Van Ek 1976:17).

The demand for an application of the *T-Level* to school level was of great interest for the following reasons:

> a) it would provide the great majority of pupils in a very large part of Europe with an objective in terms of practical communicative ability;
>
> b) it would give meaningful direction to foreign language teaching and contribute to increased efficiency and motivating power;
>
> c) it would be a basis for the harmonization of foreign language teaching in the member states of the Council of Europe;
>
> d) it would form a foundation for international co-operation in educational innovation, the production of learning-materials, tests, the exchange of experiences, the conduct of experimentation, etc. etc., on a hitherto unprecedented scale;
>
> e) it would fall within the same system as that developed for adult education and thus fulfil an essential condition for the implementation of any scheme of permanent education or recurrent education;
>
> f) as a low-level objective in its own right it would provide a useful learning-aim for pupils unable to receive more than a minimum – say three years – of instruction in a foreign language;
>
> g) it would enable curriculum-planning, particularly the definition of successive terminal objectives, to start at the logical end, i.e. at the lowest objective, rather than starting at the highest – academic – objective and derive lower objectives by means of a process of elimination. (Van Ek 1976:3)

As can be seen above, emphasis was put on the fact that the *T-Level* could contribute to the general aim of the CE of 'permanent learning', but also to the harmonisation of language teaching in Europe, which is also what the *Common European Framework of Reference* (2001) aims at. In addition, not only the importance of a European-wide exchange of

experiences (cf. d) and objectives were underlined - but also the international collaboration in material design.

3.2.2 Target Group(s)

Before setting objectives, the experts had to decide which target group they were working for. Ideally, every child should be given the chance to learn a foreign language. However, there are also a lot of adults who have not had the chance to do so, or have forgotten what they had learnt. In its original form the *Threshold Level* was therefore intended for adult language learners, living in any of the Council's member countries, wishing to learn any of a number of languages for any of a number of purposes. This, on the one hand, constitutes the value of the *T-Level* in that it responds to different learner backgrounds and needs, but, on the other hand, requires a high level of flexibility in the framework.

The target group for which the original *Threshold Level* was developed was characterised as follows:

1. They would be temporary visitors to the foreign country (especially tourists); or:

2. They would have temporary contacts with foreigners in their own country;

3. Their contacts with foreign language speakers would, on the whole, be of a superficial, non-professional type;

4. They would primarily need only a basic level of command of the foreign language (cf. Van Ek 1975:9).

In the *Threshold Level for Schools* the description of the target group was widened only by a fifth characteristic:

5. Their contacts with foreign language speakers will not only be oral contacts but, to a greater or lesser extent, also contacts in writing (cf. Van Ek 1976:11).

Whereas in the original *Threshold Level* preference was given to the language activities carried out through the oral use of the foreign language (cf. Van Ek 1975:17), it seemed

necessary to increase the requirements for the receptive skills, i.e. reading and writing, in the school version. This was explained by the fact that school-children often had the opportunity to correspond with pen-friends and that they would get in contact with speakers of the target language on an (informal) written basis more easily than adults. It should be mentioned, though, that this was (or is) not very often the case in Austrian schools; Today, in times of easy and quick international connections thanks to the internet and e-mail exchanges, this is hopefully changing. However questionable the argument about pen-pals may be, writing is without doubt of higher importance in school, since what "the pupils learn orally is almost invariably reinforced by written work" (Van Ek 1976:11).

3.2.3 Language-Learning Objectives

In the definition of the learning objectives in a unit/credit system, Van Ek already pointed to the different personalities of language learners and to the importance of responding to the individual needs resulting from them (cf. 1975:2). A unit/credit-system like the *Threshold Level* divides learning tasks into portions, or units, which change according to the learners' needs, but which are systematically related to each other. Credits or some kind of official recognition are then given for the achievement of certain units. What the learner reaches after the completion of a unit is a so-called 'learner-objective'. These objectives have to be described in detail and be as explicit as possible in order to be understood in the same way by anyone whom it may concern. Language learning objectives are defined by a change in behaviour. This means that after the completion of a learning process the learner is able to *do* something he/she was not able to do before.

Of course, it is essential to think at this point about what learners need to do with the foreign language. For this it is necessary to define the *situations* in which the learner may need the foreign language. As already mentioned in 3.1.4., four things have to be considered when specifying the situations in which a language act takes place:

1) the *social roles* which the learner will be able to play (stranger/stranger; friend/friend)

2) the *psychological roles* which the learner will be able to play (e.g. neutrality/equality/ sympathy/antipathy)

3) the *settings* in which the learner will be able to use the foreign language (e.g. geographical location/place/indoors/ surroundings)

4) the *topics* which the learner will be able to deal with in the foreign language (e.g. personal identification/house and home/ trade, profession, occupation/etc.). (cf. Van Ek 1975:10)

Van Ek also speaks of the importance of specifying the *language activities*, *language functions* and *notions* (cf. 1975:4). After setting up the latter three it must be decided which *language forms* to use and which *exponents* to build. Finally, the specification of the *degree of skill*, i.e. the quality of the results or performances expected of the learner, play a significant role.

Certain items of the objectives can be changed according to the learners' demands. Van Ek argues that "The model of definition [...] combines explicitness with adaptability and can be used effectively to counteract the tendency towards petrification which is inherent in highly developed systems" (1975:6). Although the high flexibility of the system is certainly to be seen as a positive feature of the *Threshold Level*, Van Ek's continual justifications and his references made here and there to the possibilities of adapting the objective to individual needs, leave a feeling of uncertainty and confusion with the reader.

3.2.4 Language Functions, General and Specific Notions

The learners should be able to perform a whole series of functions at *Threshold Level* and refer to or express notions. In the following we can find the lists of functions and notions that were specified for the *Threshold Level for Schools*.

The six (general) functions, which were then each distinguished in more detail (all in all 68 functions were expressed), are given in the following box. It has to be made clear, though, that Van Ek emphasised the fact that it was not claimed that these lists were definite or exhaustive (cf. 1975:19).

General Functions
1. imparting and seeking factual information
2. expressing and finding out intellectual attitudes
3. expressing and finding out emotional attitudes
4. expressing and finding out moral attitudes
5. getting things done (suasion)
6. socialising

FIGURE 1 General Functions indicated in the *T-Level* (Van Ek 1975:19).

The *topic areas* that were specified for the *Threshold Level for Schools* were:

Topic Areas
1. Personal identification
2. House and home
3. Life at home
4. Education and future career
5. Free time, entertainment
6. Travel
7. Relations with other people
8. Health and welfare
9. Shopping
10. Food and drink
11. Services
12. Places
13. Foreign language
14. Weather

FIGURE 2 Topic Areas indicated in the *T-Level* (Van Ek 1976:25).

In the original *T-Level* the topic areas were similar to these, with the only difference being the introduction of the thematic area of "trade, profession, occupation" instead of "life at home", which reflects the needs of the original target group of the document.
The *general notions* that were set up are:

General Notions	
1. existential	e.g.: existence/non- existence;
2. spatial	e.g.: location; distance;
3. temporal	e.g.: point of time/period;
4. quantitative	e.g.: number; quantity;
5. qualitative	
5.1. physical	e.g.: shape; dimension;
5.2. evaluative	e.g.: value; price;
6. mental	e.g.: reflection; expression;
7. relational	
7.1. spatial relations	
7.2. temporal relations	
7.3. action/event relations	e.g.: agency; objective;
7.4. contrastive relations	e.g.: equality/inequality;
7.5. possessive relations	e.g.: ownership/possession;
7.6. logical relations	e.g.: conjunction; disjunction;
8. deixis	

FIGURE 3 General Notions indicated in the *T-Level* (Van Ek 1976:39-42).

Specific notions are then listed in relation to the topics specified in the document[6]. The selection of specific notions is very subjective, and was based on the experts' introspections, intuitions and experiences.

[6] The list of specific notions is too long to be quoted here.

The biggest differences between the *Threshold Level* for adults and the adapted version for pupils are to be found in the specification of topics and in what the learners will be able to do with respect to the topics. To understand this organisation better, the following model might be useful:

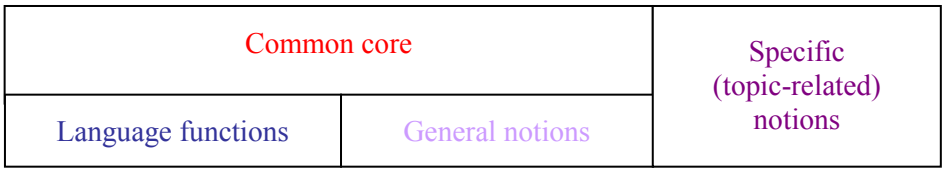


FIGURE 4 Model of *Threshold Level* specifications (Van Ek 1976:8).

It can thus be said that the common core, i.e. the language functions and general notions, remained the same, while the specific, i.e. topic-related, notions changed according to the (assumed) needs and interests of the target group.

3.2.5 Critical Voices

A revised version of the *Threshold Level* was published in 1990, after a series of case studies and pilot experiments. Looking back at the original *T-Level* only a few years after its publication, its influence was clearly observable: it had given rise to curricular reforms, had influenced examination developments, textbook writing and course design. The integration of functional and notional categorisation into the established framework of language learning and teaching had fully taken place. The *Threshold Level* was also published for other languages – not mere translations, though, but models corresponding to the individual languages.

Yet, some criticism had arisen as well. The critics said, among other grievances, that the fact that the socio-cultural and grammatical parameters had been ignored was unacceptable. Trim replied to this criticism saying that they were actually omnipresent in the document (cf. Van Ek 1990:iii). Maybe they had not been treated in as much detail as necessary or not evidently enough. Another critical point concerned the disregard of statistical material. Also, the development of the individual as a communicator, learner and social subject should have featured more strongly. The revised version of the *T-Level* tried to compensate for the

shortcomings of the first publication and included discourse strategies, sociocultural components, compensation strategies, and other major and minor improvements like the rearrangement of language functions, two new categories in language functions (structuring discourse, communication repair), a re-designed grammatical summary and a subject-index, intonation patterns. Based on the fact that "the promotion of learner autonomy is a fundamental objective of the communicative approach adopted by the Council of Europe" (Van Ek 1990:114), we can also find a *Learning to Learn* section in the *T-Level* of 1990 (see 114pp). Girard and others see a general problem in the fact that the *T-Level* does not consider that communication always needs a transmitter *and* a receiver : "Reference works such as the threshold levels have neglected the textual side of language communication by presenting acts of speech in isolation" (1994:106). The criticism of the fact that the actual communicative situations cannot be completely foreseen, put to paper or drawn up in lists is perhaps reasonable.

Dagmar Heindler referred critically to the fact that motivation from the learners' side could not arise only through the presentation and description of functional learning objectives (cf. 1985:16). She also warned of the euphoria with which the publication of the *Threshold Level* was welcomed. New teaching materials which came out after the publication of the *Threshold Level* and notional syllabuses connected to it, did not show many renewals from a methodological point, but just presented the speech functions in 'drill version' (cf. Heindler 1985:16).

Another critical remark was made by Gerngroß about the fact that in the *Threshold Level for Schools* in the section about 'settings', reference was simply made to those of the adult version (cf. 1982:240). That way, however, the setting of the classroom itself was neglected. This makes it impossible for pupils to speak about the here and now and to comment on the classroom situation and the lesson itself. In addition to the missing lists for classroom vocabulary, like 'chalk', 'overhead projector' etc. in the *Threshold Level*, possibilities for expressing emotions cannot be found either (cf. Gerngroß 1982:267).

Also, it seems necessary to provide learners with the necessary skills in order to face situations which are unforeseen or not indicated in the lists of the *T-Level*:

> We can [...] make useful estimates and prepare the learner for those foreign language contacts he is most likely to engage in. Moreover, such is the transfer-potential of linguistic ability, once the learner has been successfully prepared for certain foreign language contacts he will find that he can also cope more or less adequately in numerous other foreign language situations. (Van Ek 1976:7)

Gerngroß (cf. 1982:241) also maintains that the model of the *T-Level* is useless in what concerns reading and writing exercises, because it is too much concerned with the field of tourism. Extensive reading or creative writing do not enter at all.

Critical comments about the *Threshold Level* can also be found in Widdowson, who argues that the *Threshold Level* primarily regarded the ends and not the means of learning (cf. 1990:12-13). According to him the emphasis was not put on the learning process itself, but on the aim of meeting the learners' needs in communicative interaction. He argues further that the specifications were often considered to be universally relevant, which in fact they were not, because in other situations the "eventual aims cannot be so readily related to learning objectives" (Widdowson 1990:12-13).

Yet, the *Threshold Level* has without doubt given important impulses for developments and experiments - not only in Austria, but in almost all of the Council's member countries. Between 1979 and 1981, for instance, language teaching projects in twelve different nations were carried out, including Austria with its project "*Englisch an Gesamtschulen*" (cf. Heindler 1985:14).

4 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THRESHOLD LEVEL IN AUSTRIA

4.1 Analysis of the Austrian Syllabus for English

4.1.1 Aims of the Analysis

My interest in this first part of my analysis was to find out in what way the developments discussed above, i.e. CLT and the *Threshold Level*, were implemented in the Austrian syllabuses for English in lower and higher secondary education. I will examine how objectives and teaching contents are described and in how far influences of the communicative movement can be recognised. The syllabuses came out in 1985 and 1989 respectively. I want to stress the fact that I only analysed those parts of the syllabus which concern English as the first foreign language in schools for general secondary education (*Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schulen, AHS*).

4.1.2 Procedure of the Analysis

My analyses of the syllabuses are based on the model of analysis applied in the Council of Europe study "Selection and Distribution of Contents in Language Syllabuses" (1994). In this study, Denis Girard and others tried to analyse in what ways the *Threshold Level* had influenced national school syllabuses of the member states of the Council. The report comprised 15 English, French, German, Dutch and Swedish syllabuses of 10 member countries of the Council for Cultural Co-operation. The Austrian syllabus for lower secondary education formed part of the analysis, too. The findings were described in detail and listed in two clear tables at the end of the publication (see Girard 1994:49).

The two broad areas of interest for my analysis will consequently be the following:

a) The **General** and **Specific Objectives** specified in the syllabuses;
b) The **Contents** of the teaching indicated in the syllabuses and the specification of the items proposed for selection. This section includes

the following subsections: The Four Skills; Notions and Functions; Vocabulary; Topics and Settings; Grammar.

These two main categories were also differentiated in the CE study (cf. Girard 1994:26). There was also a third one referred to, namely "Teacher Guidelines". I have not taken it into account, however, as it did not seem of relevance for the purpose of the present analysis. Neither have I adopted all of the subsections which were indicated in the CE study, but have added 'The Four Skills' to the 'Contents' section.

4.1.3 Difficulties When Applying the *Threshold Level* to Syllabuses

Before presenting my results, I briefly want to point out some of the critical comments the CE expert group made about the application of the Threshold Level to school syllabuses. In the introductory chapter ("Theoretical Aspects and Problem Areas") of their study, they listed a series of difficulties (cf. Girard 1994:19-23). These were, for instance, the fact that the *T-Level* for schools was close to the original, which had been designed for adults and in which emphasis was put on spoken language and the 'linguistic survival' in a foreign country. In language teaching in schools, which is embedded in a far more complex educational context, this is not the main aim. Another problem was that too little importance was given to cultural content conveyed in writing - writing tasks in school do not only focus on the exchange of letters with pen-pals, as I have discussed in 3.2.2. Gerngroß maintains that the model of the *T-Level* is useless concerning reading and writing, because it is too much concerned with the field of tourism (cf. 1982:241). For instance, extensive reading or creative writing, two areas which are important for school pupils, do not enter at all.

Other difficulties arose in connection with the grading and lack of guidelines for the distribution of the language items over a certain period of time. Gerngroß also criticizes the fact that there were no practical guidelines given which regard the hierarchical order of functions (cf. 1982:239). It is clear that the hierarchy of functions is a (unsolvable) problem in itself. However, there is no help for how to face this problem given in the *T-Level*. These problems, however, are also relevant to textbook design.

A last difficulty concerned the simple fact that the new syllabuses also had to convince the supporters of more traditional and institutional educational habits. Therefore, the change

from structural to functional-notional teaching was not expected to occur too radically, but was still nevertheless important. This was certainly no easy task.

4.1.4 Results of the Analysis of the Syllabuses for Lower Secondary Level

As we have seen in 2.1.3, the Austrian syllabus for English consists of three parts: *Bildungs- und Lehraufgabe* (General Aims), *Lehrstoff* (the actual Syllabus) and *Didaktische Grundsätze* **(**Didactic Principles/Approach). In addition to the syllabus, two commentary booklets for teachers for lower secondary level exist: one for the first and second grade and the other for the third and fourth. In these booklets we can find clear explanations of the main innovations of the syllabus of 1985 and an overview of the importance of the four skills, of the role grammar plays in communicative language teaching in general and a separate section on classroom language. In my opinion, the syllabus meets the needs of a framework curriculum: the teachers get both enough guidelines as well as suggestions for possible practical applications of the innovations. At the same time, however, there is a lot of room for the teachers' and textbook designers' own ideas.

I want to mention another general observation. In the syllabus, no indications or guidelines about the assessment of the pupils' achievements are to be found. In the *Threshold Level* it is stated that "the main criterion in assessing the learner's success is whether communication takes place with some degree of efficiency" (Van Ek 1976:19). For the school context, this indication will not be sufficient - assessment has to be transparent and based on objective criteria. The grading of oral performance proves to be particularly difficult and it is questionable in how far a teacher is able to assess communication objectively if not based on certain guidelines. Therefore it seems surprising to me that no guidance is given to the teachers. The only advice offered are suggestions for appropriate types of exercises and possibilities for testing the pupils. For instance, recommended for written tasks are *Einsetz- und Zuordnungsübungen* (fill-in exercises), *Diktate* (dictation) or *schriftliche Spiele und Rätsel* (games and puzzles) (cf. LP 1985:112).

4.1.4.1 Objectives

This section is subdivided into 'general' and 'specific' objectives. General objectives describe the broad aims of language teaching (e.g. "to be able to interact with native

speakers in real situations" [Newby 2001b:591]), while specific objectives are performance-based and describe what the pupils will know at the end of a certain learning period and what skills they will have acquired (e.g.: "to be able to ask for directions" [Newby 2001b:591]).

4.1.4.1.1 General Objectives

The statement of Heindler that "Der neue Englischlehrplan ist [...] dem kommunikativen Konzept verpflichtet" (1984:457), becomes apparent, if we take a look at the first sentence of the part of the curriculum which is dedicated to foreign language learning in general. It states that: "Wichtigstes Ziel des Fremdsprachenunterrichts ist der Aufbau einer altersgemäßen Kommunikationsfähigkeit". The importance of this main objective of language teaching, namely the achievement of communicative competence, is emphasised by the key position it assumes in the syllabus.

There were five further objectives indicated in the syllabus, which were summarised in the commentary booklet as follows:

- Entwicklung einer aufgeschlossenen Haltung gegenüber Menschen anderer Sprachgemeinschaften,

- Förderung der Bereitschaft zum Zuhören, zum Gespräch, zur Zusammenarbeit und zur Verantwortung in der Gemeinschaft,

- Vermittlung von Einsichten in das Funktionieren von Kommunikation,

- Vermittlung von Lerntechniken, die den selbständigen Fremdsprachenunterricht unterstützen,

- Vorbereitung auf die Fortsetzung des Bildungsganges bzw. auf den Eintritt in das Berufsleben. (LPK 1985:46)

According to the Council of Europe study by Girard and others, the Austrian syllabus was one of the few that explained in a particular way the general objectives of communication in the foreign language classroom, cultural objectives and more generally educational objectives (cf. Girard et al. 1994:27). A cultural objective which is pointed out in the

syllabus is that the students should develop an open-minded attitude towards the speakers of other linguistic communities. General educational objectives are indicated several times throughout the syllabus. For example, the pupils' willingness to listen and talk should be fostered as well as their senses of responsibility and cooperation in a community (cf. LP 1985:94). Furthermore they should get: "Einsichten in das Funktionieren der Sprache als Mittel der Kommunikation [...] Sie sollen die Beziehungen der sprachlichen Äußerungen zueinander und deren Gebundenheit an bestimmte Situationen verstehen, sowie imstande sein, Sprechintentionen zu erkennen und darauf zu reagieren" (LP 1985:94). The pupils should thus understand the fact that utterances are always embedded in particular contexts. This is definitely an innovative approach and a turn away from the well-known 'pattern drill' exercises, where examples are often taken fully out of context only to practise a certain grammatical phenomenon. The reference to the importance of understanding a speaker's intention and reacting in the right way to it emphasises the pragmatic view of language use.

It is interesting to see that in the descriptions of other general objectives in the syllabus considerable emphasis is put on the development of the pupils' autonomy in language learning:

> Die Schüler sollen auch motiviert und angeleitet werden, die erworbenen Fähigkeiten und Fertigkeiten selbständig anzuwenden und weiterzuentwickeln. […] (LP 1985:93)

and

> Im Rahmen des Unterrichts sind den Schülern nach Möglichkeit Ziele und Arbeitsweisen einsichtig zu machen sowie Lerntechniken zu vermitteln, die den selbständigen Fremdsprachenerwerb unterstützen. (LP 1985:94)

This focus on the learners' autonomy and the importance attached to the teaching of learning techniques are without doubt innovative influences which indicate a turn away from traditional teaching and the usual teacher-learner roles. Even though concepts such as learner autonomy or learning techniques/strategies/styles have become prominent in foreign language teaching only during the last few years, initial stages of their development can already be recognised in this part of the Austrian syllabus.

As we have seen, in the developments that led to the *Threshold Level* specifications, needs analyses have played an important role (see 3.2.3). In the *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Language Teaching and Learning* reference is made to an "inseparable relationship between objectives and needs" (Dautry 2001:453). It would therefore seem obvious that the objectives and contents of a syllabus can only be established if the needs of the learners have been analysed in detail. Only then can the teaching truly become efficient. However, the pupils' language needs are not explicitly indicated in the Austrian syllabus. The type of pupils for which the syllabus was designed is not clearly identified. Analysing the learners' needs is obviously left to the teacher, which would also reflect Richards' and Rogers' view indicated in their publication *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. They state that "the CLT [Communicative Language Teaching] teacher assumes a responsibility for determining and responding to learner language needs" (Richards/Rogers 2001:167).

4.1.4.1.2 Specific Objectives

The knowledge which students should have about the foreign countries or the language itself at a certain grade is never specifically indicated in the syllabus. Yet, we can find detailed descriptions of the skill objectives, specified separately for each of the four skills for each grade. For instance, with regard to "listening", first year English students in Austria must learn to:

- understand simple expressions such as orders, questions and information given by the teacher;
- understand classroom talk;
- understand short texts (put together from known elements presented in another form);
- understand spoken texts (including unknown components which do not correspond to key functions) connected with the subjects which appear in the contents of the syllabus. (Girard et al. 1994:29; cf. LP 1985:95)

The objectives for speaking, reading and writing are also indicated in the same way and, of course, vary from grade to grade. The opportunities created for the pupils' oral performances in the first year have to correspond to their interests. However, the learners should also be

prepared for possible situations and roles in which they might need to use the foreign language in the future (cf. LP 1985:96). The terms 'situations' and 'roles' remind us of the definition of communicative situations in the *T-Level* (cf. 3.2.3).

4.1.4.2 Contents

The actual teaching material (*Lehrstoff*) for English is divided into ten smaller chapters: one is dedicated to each of the four skills, followed by "Topics and Vocabulary", "Grammar", "Speech Functions and Roles", "Pronunciation", "Spelling" and "Written Work". This makes evident that the syllabus is not structured according to or dominated by grammar chapters, but that it tries to show the wide diversity of language use (cf. Heindler 1984:458). Emphasis is also put on the fact that even if in these parts lists are drawn up to describe grammatical items, this does not mean that one item has to be learnt after the other - the building up of communicative competence happens in concentric circles, not in linear steps (cf. Heindler 1984:457; cf. LPK 1985:49). Also Wilkins had proposed "a cyclical, rather than linear, presentation of concepts and functions, so that as students advance they will be learning to express the same semantic notions with greater finesse and nuance" (Rivers 1983:17).

4.1.4.2.1 Functions and Notions

The importance attached to the functional description of language is definitely recognisable in the Austrian syllabus. For instance, in the *Lehrstoff* section for the first grade, one part is dedicated entirely to speech functions and roles. They remain the same for all grades. It is clearly stated that they cannot be assigned to any specific grade: "Eine auf einzelne Schulstufen bezogene Festlegung ist nicht möglich" (LP 1985:99). This is obvious because of the fact that the same function can be expressed through various linguistic means which might differ in complexity, length and grade of abstraction. With the pupils' expanding linguistic repertoires the type of realisation of the communicative functions will naturally vary.

On the left side of the following table the general functions indicated in the Austrian syllabus are listed. In the syllabus they are all listed with examples of specific functions,

though these are not quoted here. The general functions specified in the *T-Level* are cited on the right-hand side in order to make a clear comparison possible.

Austrian Syllabus for English (1985)	***Threshold Level for Schools* (1976)**
Soziale Kontakte herstellen und fortführen (establishing social contacts)	socialising expressing and finding out emotional attitudes expressing and finding out moral attitudes expressing and finding out intellectual attitudes
Beziehungen regeln (settling relationships)	expressing and finding out intellectual attitudes getting things done (suasion)
Kommunikation sicherstellen (ensuring communication)	
Stellungnahmen abgeben (making comments)	expressing and finding out intellectual attitudes expressing and finding out emotional attitudes
Wünschen und Bitten äußern bzw. erfragen (expressing/inquiring about desires)	
Gefühle, Meinungen erfragen bzw. ausdrücken (expressing/inquiring about feelings)	expressing and finding out emotional attitudes
Handlungen veranlassen bzw. zur Unterlassung auffordern (getting things done)	getting things done (suasion)
Informationen geben und erfragen (imparting and seeking information)	imparting and seeking factual information

FIGURE 5 Comparison of speech functions in Austrian syllabus and *T-Level* (cf. LP 1985:99-101; Van Ek 1976:37-39).

If we take a look at the general functions indicated in the *Threshold Level for Schools* (cf. 4.2.4) we can see that some of the functions relate directly to those indicated in the Austrian syllabus, namely ‘Imparting and Seeking Information’ or ‘Getting Things Done’. However,

differences can also be found: some of the specific functions indicated in the syllabus are grouped together under different general functions in the *T-Level*. For instance, 'Establishing Social Contacts' in the syllabus is further explained by: "starting to talk to someone; when introducing people and when being introduced; greeting people, inviting someone/accepting or refusing an invitation, apologising, answering the telephone, expressing gratitude" (cf. LP 1985:99). These specific functions are assigned to other general functions in the *Threshold Level*. 'Apologizing', for instance, makes part of 'Expressing and Finding Out Moral Attitudes' in *T-Level* specifications. This explains why a complete one-to-one comparison of the functions proved to be impossible. Yet, the influence of the *T-Level* is clearly noticeable.

There are differences made between the receptive and productive roles the learner can assume in the realisation of speech functions (cf. LP 1985:99). It is of great interest that 'Ensuring Communication' is indicated as a function of its own in the syllabus. This makes a focus on the listener/receiver evident. The *T-Level* has been criticised for its negligence of the listener (see Heindler 1980:36), while the specific examples given in the syllabus under the above heading indicate the importance of the same: asking for attention, asking for repetition and slower speaking, expressing non-understanding or ignorance, expressing further inquiries (cf. LP 1985:100). Indeed – these functions all reflect primarily the situations in which a listener can find him/herself.

The speech functions which are indicated in the syllabus show for what purpose the students can *use* their knowledge of the English language. Because of the fact that these functions can be expressed through different linguistic means, the syllabus does not list exponents for English as the *Threshold Level* does. It is stated explicitly that in the beginning a series of speech acts can already be fulfilled by simple expressions (cf. LPK 1985:64). Later these can become more complex, as I have stated above.

4.1.4.2.2 Topics and Settings

According to Girard et al., the topics and settings specified in the Austrian syllabus "stick to the pupils day-to-day lives" (1994:34). This is true if we take a look at those indicated for the first grade: the child and his/her family; the child and his/her friends; the child and daily life; the child at school; the child and his/her interests and experiences (cf. LP 1985:97-98). It seems that the choice of topics was in fact made with regard to the pupils' interests and

experiences which they probably have in and out of school. The topics correlate also to those indicated in the *T-Level*. Parts of the topic areas such as 'personal identification', 'life at home', 'education and future career', 'house and home', 'free time/entertainment' and 'relations with other people' of the *Threshold-Level* can be compared with the topics selected for Austrian pupils.

4.1.4.2.3 Vocabulary

The syllabus (cf. LP 1985:98) states that in relation to the topics a basic amount of vocabulary (*Basiswortschatz*) should be built up. The importance of the connection between topics and vocabulary is underlined. The syllabus gives examples of the most important areas for which the vocabulary should be set up. For "the child and his family", for instance, the following examples are listed: "family members, occupation, living, name, age,…". However, no exact lexical inventory is given as there is in the *Threshold Level*. It is obviously up to the teachers and textbook designers to decide which vocabulary to teach. The syllabus explicitly indicates that teachers should aim to teach the basic vocabulary which results from the topics, situations, speech functions and reading and writing tasks which come up in the foreign language classes. However, the criteria of frequency of occurrence, usefulness and difficulty or simplicity for the learner also have to be taken into account (cf. LP 1985:98).

4.1.4.2.4 The Four Skills

The four skills assume an important position in the syllabus, they are described separately in all of the three main parts. Yet, as we have also seen in Sheils' publication (1992), this isolated description of each of the skills is done only for the purpose of a clearer structure. They are not to be taught one by one, as is explicitly stated in the syllabus (LP 1985:108):

> Die Fertigkeiten können in der Regel nicht isoliert voneinander unterrichtet werden, da Sprachhandeln meist mehrere Fertigkeiten umfasst und die Fertigkeiten einander in vielfältiger Weise beeinflussen.

In the *Threshold Level for Schools* the four skills are indicated in the chapter about the specification of language-activities (cf. Van Ek 1976:25-27). There are skill objectives given which learners should achieve at *T-Level*. As we have seen above, in the adaptation of the

document for school use, more weight than in the original was put on informal writing. The question of which importance reading assumed within the *T-Level* specifications was answered simply with reference to the general aim - the linguistic survival in temporary contacts with foreign language speakers (cf. Van Ek 1976:11). Thus, the only reading and writing tasks which were included in the *Threshold Level for Schools* was the reading and writing of informal letters, because after all "the objective remains essentially an objective for oral communicative ability" (Van Ek 1976:12). This argument, as desirable as it may sound, seems inadequate for the school context. It is clear that in school reading and writing tasks cannot be only restricted to informal correspondence. It is not at all surprising, then, that the designing of a syllabus for schools could not be based in this point merely to the document. The understanding of informal letters *is*, of course, one of the skill objectives for reading of the first and second grade in the Austrian syllabus, but only one out of many.

As has been stated above, the skill objectives are described in detail and very clearly in the Austrian syllabus. The commentary booklet dedicates seven pages to "Die ‚vier Fertigkeiten' im zeitgemäßen Englischunterricht" (see LPK 1985:51-57). Special emphasis is also put on the importance of the receptive skills, the teaching of which until then had not been a declared aim of the English syllabus (cf. LPK 1985:51). This is another clear indication of the influence of the communicative approach.

4.1.4.2.5 Grammar

References to the question of the role grammar plays in the foreign language classroom, can be found several times throughout the Austrian syllabus. I want to quote three of them:

> The aim of grammatical studies is to ensure and support communication. Thus, in reception, grammar makes for better understanding and, in production, it helps the speaker/writer to express himself. Grammatical explanations and exercises must follow from the communicative settings and relate to them. (Girard et al. 1994:39; cf. LP 1985:98)

> Im Sinne des Lehrplans ist daher ein Englischunterricht kommunikativ, der sein Ziel nicht in der Bildung grammatisch richtiger Sätze erfüllt sieht, sondern stets auf der Verwirklichung der Mitteilungsabsicht, auf die Aussage, hin ausgerichtet ist. (LPK 1985:48)

> Grammatische Strukturen dienen der Bedeutungserfassung und Ausdruckssicherung. (LP 1985[1]:54)

The subordinate role of grammar is apparent. Grammar primarily serves to guarantee communication and is always embedded in the communicative situational context. It is not treated as an isolated subject, but as a means to fulfil communicative functions. As we have seen above, the aim is no longer to form grammatically correct sentences, but to realise communicative intentions.

In the 'Didactic Principles' section there is another reference to the fact that the functional aspect of grammar is treated with priority to its formal aspect (cf. LP 1985:112). It is also mentioned that the receptive and productive skills of how to deal with grammatical items are not identical. As with lexical items, learners usually understand more than they are able to produce spontaneously. References to this fact can also be found in the *Threshold Level for Schools* (cf. Van Ek 1976:16), where all of the language exponents, the items of the lexical inventory and all the verb forms of the grammatical inventory are marked with a respective R (for receptive) or P (for productive). This should indicate whether the pupils should only be able to use the exponents receptively or whether they should also manage to use them actively.

The grammatical inventory presented in the *Threshold Level for Schools* contains explanations and lists of different sentence types, verbs, nouns, adverbs, articles, pronouns (including pronominal adjectives), numerals, word order and word formation. Pupils certainly need a clear grammatical organisation in their learning in order to secure their linguistic autonomy in case they find themselves in situations which they have not been prepared for (cf. Girard 1994:38). It remains questionable how helpful the grammatical summary of the *T-Level* is for this purpose.

As the CE study mentions correctly, the Austrian syllabus sets out the grammatical content within broad grammatical categories (cf. Girard 1994:39). We can find the following grouping: sentence/sentence patterns; verb; noun, article; pronouns, quantifiers; numerals; prepositions, prepositional phrases. Examples of a few of them are given, e.g. the quantifiers at the first grade "some, a lot of, many,…" (LP 1985:98). The question of which grammar

items exactly to teach is related to the topics and the requirements that result from the teaching situations.

The functional-notional approach is also noticeable if we take a look at the verb forms that should be covered at each of the grades and the explanations given in accordance with them. I have listed only those forms which are explicitly described with the help of or reference to functions:

Verb Forms	Functional/Notional Descriptions
1st grade	
present progressive	current action
going to	intention
can, may, must	permission, capability, possibility, obligation
Would you like…?, I'd like…, I'll…	inquiring about desires, requests, expressing willingness
2nd grade	
past simple	reporting about the past (stories, reports)
present perfect simple	expressing results or experience (ever, never)
3rd grade	
past progressive	action
present perfect	past up to now

FIGURE 6 Functional/notional description of verb forms in the Austrian syllabus (cf. LP 1985:98-99;104-105/ LP 1985[1]:54-55).

These functional descriptions of verb forms definitely relate to the single functions indicated in the *Threshold Level*. Next to 'can, may, must' we no longer find a term like 'modal verbs', which would refer only to the linguistic form (cf. LPK 1985:62). On the contrary, we are given suggestions for the uses and for the expression of which meanings they can serve: permission, capability, possibility and obligation.

Practising grammatical structures is relevant also in communicative language teaching. However, we again find the reference to the importance of communicative intentions and the

situational context in which communication takes place: “Da die Beachtung formalgrammatischer Richtigkeit alleine noch keine sinnvolle Äußerung gewährleistet, sollen grammatische Formen nicht losgelöst von Redeabsicht und Situationsbezug geübt werden“ (LP 1985:113). It is therefore of great importance to embed grammatical exercises in meaningful contexts. This point is also discussed also in 3.1.5. of this thesis.

4.1.5 Results of the Analysis of the Syllabus for Higher Secondary Level

The syllabus for higher secondary level (1989) was influenced by communicative language teaching and the *Threshold Level*, although the impacts are not as apparent. In the commentary booklet to the syllabus, which is valid for all four grades of higher secondary education, a report is included which reflects on the motives for the setting up of a new syllabus in Austria. In the same, two references to the Council of Europe can be found. The first in connection to the different approaches to language teaching which were discussed for implementation in the Austrian syllabus. Among these, the communicative and the functional-notional approaches are also mentioned. The fact that the latter is characterised by the question of what we *use* language for and by what means of expression we *act* linguistically, implies that the needs of the pupils have to be analysed. In this connection, there is a quote given in the syllabus, taken from the Council of Europe publication *A European Unit/Credit System*: “The analysis of needs will lead to a definition of aims” (cf. LPK 1989:31). Strangely, however, needs analyses were not presented in this syllabus either.

The second reference to the Council of Europe can be found in relation to the discussion of learning objectives. It is stated explicitly that the objectives of the syllabus for English were set up following those proposed by the Council: “Der kommunikative Aspekt […] muß das oberste Ziel beim Erlernen der Fremdsprache sein. [...] die Ziele des Englischunterrichts [wurden] in Anlehnung an die im Europarat entwickelten Lernziele des modernen Fremdsprachenunterrichts formuliert. [...] Sie manifestieren den Vorrang des Erwerbens der vier Fertigkeiten [...]“ (LPK 1989:33). Thus, it seems that these two references provide evidence of the fact that the publications of the Council of Europe have been closely examined during the drawing up of the Austrian syllabus.

4.1.5.1 Objectives

4.1.5.1.1 General Objectives

The general objectives of language teaching in higher secondary education are described in detail. They are divided into four parts:

- Die Beherrschung der Fremdsprache als Kommunikationsmittel, welche die [vier] Fertigkeiten […] umfasst und auf der das Hauptgewicht zu liegen hat;

- Die Erweiterung des Erfahrungshorizontes durch das Kennenlernen der englischsprachigen Länder und durch Auseinandersetzung mit ihrer Kultur, insbesondere im Spiegel ihrer Literatur;

- Die Einsicht in Struktur und Wesenszüge der englischen Sprache sowie in das Funktionieren der Sprache als Mittel der Kommunikation;

- Die Persönlichkeitsbildung […]. (LP 1989:122)

Again, the general objectives concern those of communication in the foreign language classroom, a cultural objective (including literature) and a more general educational objective which regards the development of the pupils' personalities. There is a noticeable focus on the recognition of the foreign language as a means of communication.

4.1.5.1.2 Specific Objectives

In the 'Didactic Principles' section there are several specific objectives indicated. The skill objectives are also specified in this part of the syllabus and no longer in the *Lehrstoff* for each grade separately. There is usually one main objective given with a few more detailed aims following. For 'listening', the main objective is "die Schüler zu befähigen, akustisch wahrgenommenes Englisch sofort und ohne Hilfe zu verstehen" (LP 1989:138), that for 'speaking' is the "möglichst freie und sichere Gebrauch der Sprache im Mündlichen" (LP

1989:140). Speaking has the further objective to influence social behaviour positively (cf. LP 1989:140). We can find the objectives indicated for reading and writing in the same way. The syllabus offers guidance to the teachers on how to reach the objectives most effectively. There are also specific objectives for vocabulary work (e.g. that the students should be able to guess words from context and be aware of 'false friends' [cf. LP 1989:146]) and for the study of literature and *Landes- und Kulturkunde*.

4.1.5.2 Contents

4.1.5.2.1 Functions and Notions

In this syllabus emphasis is also put on the importance of what we *do* with language. The job of the teacher is clearly to teach communicative functions. The functions and notions are indicated under the teaching material for fifth grade, but remain the same, of course, for the following grades. Indeed, in the syllabus we find the direct reference to the fact that: "Die Denkkategorien und Sprachfunktionen bleiben in den Klassen 5 bis 8 ihrer Natur gemäß grundsätzlich gleich. Ausdifferenzierungen und Lernfortschritt ergeben sich durch die Lehrplanangaben zu den thematischen Bereichen, grammatikalisch/strukturellen Kategorien, sowie den mündlichen und schriftlichen Übungsformen [...]" (LP 1989:123). This description is similar to what we have seen in the syllabus for lower secondary education (see 4.1.4.2.5). The student's learning progress results from the varying possibilities and situations as well as the growing complexity of the linguistic realisations of the communicative functions.

There are eight notional categories and notions relating to them listed:

Notional Categories	Notions/Explanations
Existenz	Sein, Scheinen, Gleichbleiben, Verändern, Möglichkeit, Unmöglichkeit
Raum	Dimensionen, Ort, Bewegung, Richtung
Zeit	Zeitpunkt […], Zeitdauer […]; allgemeine Feststellung ohne konkreten Zeitbezug;

	Zeitstufen und Zeitformen
Quantifizierung	Zählbar, nicht zählbar

Notional Categories	**Notions/Explanations**
Qualifizierung	Von Personen, Örtlichkeiten, Dingen, Zuständen, Vorgängen und Handlungen
Logische Beziehungen	Verbindung, Trennung; Ursache, Wirkung, Grund, Zweck, Bedingung
Bestimmter und unbestimmter Bedeutung; spezifischer/konkreter und Gattungsbezeichnung	
Einschränkender und nichteinschränkender Bedeutung	

FIGURE 7 Notional categories listed in the Austrian syllabus (LP 1989:124).

They relate closely to the notional categories listed in the *Threshold Level for Schools* (see 3.2.4). At this point, however, I also ask myself if an average teacher knows what to do with indications like 'expression of quantification - countable or not countable'. Newby, in his contribution about "Notions and Functions" to the *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Language Learning*, also refers to these problems which often arose in a notional approach to syllabuses (2001:451). While the concept of language functions was easily understandable by both teachers and learners, difficulties occurred with regard to notions: "[…] since a notional specification had by necessity to be formulated in rather abstract and sometimes unwieldy terms, the resulting categorisation tended to be regarded as somewhat inaccessible to teachers and learners" (Newby 2001a:451). In my opinion, it would have been good to introduce teachers to these notional categories with more explanations or maybe give examples of specific notions, simply in order to guarantee comprehension and subsequently the correct practical realisation in class.

The speech functions are grouped together in another way: General headings are indicated and then several specific functions given in reference to it[7]:

[7] I will illustrate these only for the first heading.

Areas of Speech Functions	Examples of Specific Functions
Informationen	- Informationen erfragen/geben - Sachverhalte darlegen; erzählen, berichten; beschreiben - Erläutern, detaillieren, aufzählen; mit Beispielen belegen - Informationen ergänzen/berichtigen/widerlegen/ bestätigen - Nach der Richtigkeit/Verlässlichkeit fragen - Wissen/Nichtwissen bekunden - Erinnern, vergessen - Begründen
Haltungen (intellektuelle – emotionale – moralische)	(See LP 1989:124-126)
Handlungssteuerung und Willensäußerung	
Sozialbezüge	
Gesprächsverlauf	

FIGURE 8 General and specific speech functions of the Austrian syllabus (cf. LP 1989:124-126).

Again we can see a connection to the functions indicated in the *Threshold Level*. Yet, as we have also seen in the syllabus for lower secondary education, the groupings differ from the ones of the CE document. For instance, whereas intellectual, emotional and moral attitudes each constitute a single function in the *T-Level* (see 3.2.4), they are grouped together under one catchword ('*Haltungen*', i.e. attitudes in general) in the syllabus.

Interestingly, the Austrian syllabus mentions 'Course of Conversation' (*Gesprächsverlauf*) which includes specific functions concerning communication between two or more people in general, for instance, 'opening a conversation', 'asking for repetition' or 'changing the theme' (cf. LP 1989:126). Whereas in the *T-Level* publications of 1975 and 1976 these were not taken into account, in the revised version of 1990 two new categories of functions were introduced: 'structuring discourse' and 'communication repair' which also include the specific functions indicated in the Austrian syllabus. It seems that only over the years has the importance of these aspects of communicative ability been recognised.

The commentary booklet refers to the fact that because of the integration of notional categories in the syllabus, a growing repertoire of means of expression has to be elaborated. These means are not topic-related like vocabulary, but more general. Expressions of space and time, for instance, with further possibilities of differentiation, are: dimension, point of time, duration, temporal relations etc. (cf. LPK 1989:35).

In the 'Didactic Principles' another reference to 'notions and functions' can be found. There, teachers are recommended to take the following points into consideration:

- Der sprachliche Ausdruck von Denkkategorien, z.B. Ausdruck von Möglichkeit – Unmöglichkeit; Relationen; Ursache-Wirkung;

- Die kommunikativen Funktionen von Sprache, wie das Aufsuchen und Weitergeben von Informationen; das Herausfinden, Ausdrücken und Darstellen intellektueller, emotionaler und moralischer Haltungen […]. (LP 1989:147)

Again the importance of including the concepts of functions and notions in the teaching is underlined. The fact that this occurs both in the syllabus and the commentary booklet, bears witness to its significance.

4.1.5.2.2 Topics and Settings

Topics are again listed separately for every grade, although some of them seem to repeat themselves. 'The individual and society', for example, is a topic for all four grades of higher secondary education. It is clear that in the treatment of a broad thematic area such as this, changes in its intellectual demands must be made according to the age of the pupils.

No direct relations to the *T-Level* specifications can be found, which, however, seems obvious. The CE document aims at the learner's *linguistic survival* in a foreign language environment. School pupils, who have had (in some cases more than) eight years of foreign language instruction, should be streets ahead of the *T-Level* target group and already be prepared to discuss more complex topics.

4.1.5.2.3 Vocabulary

The only information given in the vocabulary section is "see thematic areas" (cf. LP 1989:123). This means that teachers are advised to look at the topics before drawing up the vocabulary which they consider necessary for their pupils. Once again no lexical inventory is given in the syllabus. However, the 'Didactic Principles' indicate that the teacher's choice of which vocabulary to teach should be based on frequency, range, coverage and availability (cf. LP 1989:146-147).

4.1.5.2.4 The Four Skills

The four skills are not described as detailed in the syllabus for higher secondary education. In the '*Lehrstoff*' for the single grades no skill objectives are indicated. They are described in very much detail in the 'Didactic Principles' section, where one main objective is pointed out, with a few further specified objectives following (e.g. LP 1989:138).

However, what we can find in the '*Lehrstoff*' section are suggestions for different types of exercises for each of the four skills, which should all support their acquisition. For instance, for improving the students' speaking skills it is recommended, among other things, to exercise intonation and articulation and to use fluency drills (cf. LP 1989:128).

In the 'Didactic Principles' section, there are also examples given of how to integrate the four skills. For instance, listening and speaking skills can be exercised together if students are asked to answer questions after a listening activity. Pair work and group discussions can follow after questions given about a particular text, which would combine reading and speaking skills (cf. LP 1989:139).

4.1.5.2.5 Grammar

In this syllabus, the functional role of grammar is emphasised, although it is given less attention than in the syllabus for lower secondary education (cf. 4.1.4.2.5). In the commentary booklet we again find a reference to the fact that "grammatikalische Formen und Strukturen nicht losgelöst von Inhalt, Redeabsicht und Situationsbezug behandelt und geübt werden sollten" (LPK 1989:123). Grammar is treated again as a means of supporting communication.

Interestingly, grammar in this syllabus is no longer introduced simply as 'grammar', but carries the headline 'grammatical-structural categories'. For the fifth grade we find the following categories in the syllabus: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, prepositions and syntax. For instance, the verb structures for this grade include: the progressive and non-progressive aspect, […], the perfective and non-perfective aspect, expression of futurity (intention, promise,…), […], modal verbs (cf. LP 1989:126). This listing actually emphasises the two ways in which grammar can be described: as a formal and as a functional system. On the one hand we find grammatical categories such as 'modal verbs', but on the other hand we get the indications for notional/functional categories such as 'intention or promise' or 'expression of futurity'. The syllabus clearly states that the two systems presuppose and complement each other (cf. LP 1989:148). However, it is emphasised that the focus should be put on the functional character of grammar (cf. LP 1989:148).

4.2 Analysis of Austrian Textbooks for English

In this part of the thesis I want to take a look at the way CLT and the *T-Level* specifications have influenced textbook design in Austria in the 1980s. I want to make clear that my aim is to present a brief general overview of these influences; a completely comprehensive analysis would go beyond the scope of this thesis.

4.2.1 The Modern Language Project *Englisch an Gesamtschulen*

Before presenting my analysis I see it as necessary to comment on the Austrian pilot project "*Englisch an Gesamtschulen*", which took place between 1976 and 1984. It made up a part of the Modern Language Projects of the Council of Europe that had been started across Europe in the 1970s. The Austrian project was one of the first that tried to put the communicative approach, the *Threshold Level* - and developments connected to them - into practice. As Karl Sornig, who was a member of the project group, states, it was two events that influenced the setting up of the project: in November 1975 H.-E. Piepho held a seminar on the possibilities for the methodological implementation of CLT, which until then had not been considered and studied in much detail, because at the time the developments were recent – and still on-going; in December of the same year a meeting with Jan van Ek took place in the Austrian Ministry of Education, where he presented the *Threshold Level for Schools* and discussed the possibility of applying it to foreign language teaching at schools (cf. Sornig 1985:85). Subsequently it was decided to set up a project group which focused on evaluating the communicative approach and *T-Level* for implementation in Austrian schools.

Dagmar Heindler, who took part in the national Modern Language Project group since its beginning in September 1976, argues that the work on "*Englisch an Gesamtschulen*" was based on two things: on the one hand on similar projects taking place all over Europe at the time, and on the other hand on the many school experiments going on in Austria at that period (cf. 1993:39; see 2.1.1). The project thus comprised European as well as national tendencies and developments. The experiences the experts gained from the project subsequently influenced the design of the Austrian syllabuses and teaching materials. The

textbook *Ticket to Britain*, which is also a part of the analysis of this thesis, resulted from the outcomes of this project. Therefore the schoolbook was embedded in the background of the Modern Language Project work by the Council of Europe and I will thus lay the focus of my analysis on it.

4.2.2 CLT, *T-Level* and Textbook Design

In the publication *Selection and Distribution of Contents in Language Syllabuses* (1994) Denis Girard and others also dedicate one chapter to syllabuses devised for textbooks. He lists three problems which arise in a notional-functional approach for the setting up of contents of textbooks: firstly, there is again the difficulty of grading (i.e. the grouping/sequence of forms and items); secondly, the concept of communicative competence (i.e. the importance of cultural, pragmatic and social imprints of speech acts and the problem of how to present it); and finally the problem of the grammatical treatment of data (1994:73-75).

Dagmar Heindler, in her description of the developments that led to the setting up of *Ticket to Britain*, also lists a few critical remarks about the *Threshold Level* and shows in which ways in the design of the textbook attempts were made to compensate for the shortcomings (cf. 1980:36). For instance, as we have already seen, the *Threshold Level* and similar catalogues are speaker-orientated and neglect the hearer and his/her reactions. Through the introduction of so-called dialogue charts (*Baupläne)*, which offer a choice of possible reactions from the hearer's side in dialogic situations, the authors of *Ticket to Britain* tried to make up for this weakness. Another example of Heindler's critical remarks would be the fact that the *T-Level* does not contain study skills, which the authors of *Ticket to Britain* tried to include. And finally, she also criticises that the *Threshold Level* specifications do not consider intonation, interjection or paralinguistic means, while the textbook does so. Karl Sornig comments on some negative aspects of the *T-Level* as well. For instance, he maintains that the *T-Level* pays too little attention to reading and writing (Sornig 1985:90); that classroom situations are not considered in enough detail; and that the *T-Level* presents only successful interactions, while TB includes also thematic areas which could cause conflicts (cf. Sornig 1985:91).

4.2.3 Aims of the Analysis

The aim of the present analysis of three Austrian textbooks for English is to provide a brief overview of the influences of the *T-Level* specifications on the textbooks, in what way they have been implemented and to present also some illustrative examples. I also want to make clear that I have only used textbooks for lower secondary education, and in particular the materials for the first grade.

4.2.4 Procedure of the Analysis

The analysis will mainly focus on the categories indicated in the Threshold-Level, namely functions, notions and topic-related behaviour. I will thus concentrate mainly on the language-based contents of the textbooks. I will also briefly comment on grammar and the four skills.

Therefore I decided that for my analysis I will examine the following areas:

a) **general observations**: to get an idea of the general differences of the textbooks;
b) dealing with **functions and notions**;
c) the treatment of **grammar**;
d) topics and **topic-related behaviour**,
e) communicative objectives – and the importance conceded to each of the **four skills.**

4.2.5 Presentation of Textbooks

The three textbooks for English which are analysed in the following were all used in lower secondary education. They are: *Ticket to Britain* (TB), *English for You and Me* (EYM) and *Contacts* (CON).

4.2.5.1.1 Ticket to Britain

As we have already seen, *Ticket to Britain* is certainly an interesting textbook to analyse for the purpose of my thesis, because it was directly influenced by the Modern Language

Project work of the Council of Europe. I will analyse the edition of the textbook published between 1985 and 1988. In a revised edition and entitled *Ticket to English,* the textbook is still used in schools nowadays. For each grade, TB consists of two textbooks, two workbooks, a revision book, a teacher's book, copy sheets and tape recordings.

The units of the textbooks are subdivided into 'steps' (*Thematische Bausteine*), which are then split again into smaller parts. The learning objective of each unit is indicated in the head-piece of each page of the text/workbook. In the teacher's book each 'step' is introduced with a short (often functional) description the communication exercise. For instance, step 3 of the first unit of TB for the first grade is entitled "Greeting someone". The communicative purpose is indicated with '*Freunde begrüßen und anderen vorstellen*'. Then, there are also the communicative objectives are also specified. In this case, for instance, they are: "*Klassenkameraden, Lehrkräfte und Bekannte begrüßen können; verschiedene Personen miteinander bekannt machen können; Aus einem Dialog bestimmte Informationen heraushören können*" (cf. TBTB 1985:25). In the teacher's book we can also certainly find detailed descriptions and explanations of the individual exercises of the textbook.

In the introduction to the teachers' book, we can find an account of the organisation of TB, as well as on communicative language teaching in general. It is clearly stated that the project work connected to the design of TB made an important contribution to the implementation of CLT in language teaching: "Die im Rahmen des Projekts seit 1976 durchgeführte fachdidaktische Entwicklungsarbeit lieferte einen vielbeachteten Beitrag zur Konkretisierung des ‚kommunikativen Ansatzes' im Fremdsprachenunterricht" (TBTB 1985:3). What also characterises the project and the setting up of the textbook is, without doubt, the close collaboration with schools and the research work that was carried out. Teachers and pupils were interviewed, their opinions evaluated and the materials revised accordingly. Interviews were also conducted in order to be able to specify the pupils' communicative needs (cf. Sornig 1985:91).

Interestingly, the authors distinguish between 'communicative exercises' and 'pre-communicative exercises'. The first indicate tasks which aim at the linguistic act (*Sprachhandeln*), like dialogues, dialogue charts, role plays, information-gap activities etc.; The second aims at the exercise of certain linguistic patterns (*sprachliche Teilsysteme*),

which comprises all vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling and grammar exercises. These should, however, be embedded in certain communicative situations. Furthermore there are two concepts of communicative language teaching which the authors of TB support: firstly, that language is a means to other ends and secondly, that language learning is language processing. The first means that the use of a language is always connected to certain communicative situations. The second, that the learning of a foreign language is in itself a communicative process (cf. TBTB 1985:6).

The innovative concept of TB included the following points:

- Sprachhandlungssituationen als Grundlage des Materialangebots

- Systematische Berücksichtigung aller vier Fertigkeiten

- Verdeutlichung des Gebrauchswertes sprachlicher Mittel durch Erklärungen und Übungen (...) (TBTB 1985:3)

Thus the textbook includes important points that show the emphasis put on language use in communicative situations. In the teacher's book the fact that students should learn to *act* correctly with the help of the foreign language is directly referred to (TBTB 1985:4). This is also the aim that Van Ek indicated in the setting up of the *Threshold Level* (see 3.2). In the textbook we also find emphasis put on the four skills as well as on the possibility for differentiation according to the pupils' personalities and competences.

4.2.5.1.2 English for You and Me

The textbook *English for You and Me* also appeared in its first edition between 1985 and 1988. In the 1990s It a revised edition was published, entitled *The New English for You and Me* (1994-1997). Nowadays it is the most commonly used textbook for lower secondary education in Austria. The EYM teaching materials comprise four parts for each grade: a textbook, a workbook, a teacher's book and tape recordings.

The objectives for the four skills, vocabulary, and grammar are indicated in the teacher's book at the beginning of each unit, followed by methodological suggestions. The individual units of the textbooks are structured very clearly and include various types of exercises. All

the units conclude in a '*Lernpaket*', which summarises vocabulary and grammatical structures that have been used during the unit. The exercises of the workbook are connected especially to vocabulary, grammar, dialogue writing and writing in general. EYM also provides a 'Learning to Learn' section, which should help the students in their learning process in that it offers advice for working methods and learning strategies.

In the general introduction to the book ('*Die Konzeption des Lehrwerks*') it is stated that it was designed due to the implementation of the new syllabus in Austria. It thus aims at the achievement of communicative competence as is required by the syllabus. It is clearly maintained that the schoolbook intends to present the English language as a comprehensive system, not as a collection of isolated vocabulary and grammatical rules (cf. EYMTB 1986:3).

4.2.5.1.3 Contacts

One of the authors of the third textbook, *Contacts,* is the German linguist Hans-Eberhard Piepho, also referred to above. He is well-known for his writings on communicative language teaching and methodology (e.g. *Kommunikative Didaktik des Englischunterrichts* [1979]). *Contacts* was originally published in Germany, but has appeared in adapted versions in other European countries, including Austria. It consists, for each grade separately, of a textbook, a workbook, a teacher's guide, tape scripts and tape recordings.

Already in the introduction to the teacher's book (cf. CONTB 1985:2), the cyclic structure of CON is underlined which concerns thematic areas, grammar and vocabulary. The pupils should thus have a cyclic learning progression. Topics, grammar items and words are treated in the first units and then repeated again in later units. This should guarantee the pupils' understanding of the foreign language, because the textbook authors hold the view that everything that the pupils recognize again in another context or communicative situation is understood and learned more easily than the first time (cf. CONTB 1985:8). It is furthermore stated that CON is neutral with regard to methods (cf. CONTB 1985:2), it leaves the decisions of how and what to teach to a large extent to the teacher.

The course book is organised in two ways: the textbooks for first and second grade are entitled 'Situations 1' and 'Situations 2'; those for third and fourth grade 'Topics 1' and

'Topics 2'. This is due to the fact that in the first two years the pupils should practise coping with everyday situations, while in the second two, they become acquainted with the English language through specific topics and texts as well as exercises based around these. Every unit is subdivided into two 'Contacts' and 'Study Packs'. These study packs include 'Words', 'Grammar and Patterns' and 'Mini Model Texts' (which the students either have to learn by heart or have to reformulate). From unit ten onwards, the units are additionally divided into two levels. While level one contains again contacts and study packs, level two is aimed at 'efficiency training' (cf. CONTB 1985:5), which means that it contains additional texts for reading and further exercises for oral and written production. I personally find the organisation of *Contacts* confusing. Furthermore the arrangement of the individual units is not appealing: the pages are overfilled with information, the illustrations are big and instructions are non-existent or un-clear.

4.2.6 Results of the Analysis

4.2.6.1 General Observations

I will start my analysis with a look at some general differences between the three schoolbooks. I was interested in finding out whether they all included the same sections and all put emphasis on the same areas. I have drawn up a list of things which I considered important in order to get a general idea of the schoolbooks. The "+" indicates that the area is covered in the textbook, "+/-" means that it is covered, but not in as much detail as in the other book(s) and "-" stands for the non-existence of this area:

	TB	EYM	CON
Reference to *T-Level* in Teacher's Books	-	-	-
Reference to CLT in Teacher's Books	+	+	+/-
Functions/Notions	+	+/-	+/-
Explanations in Mother Tongue (German)	+	+/-	-
Grammar Revision and Explanations / Reviews **German** **English**	+ +	- +	+/- +
Pronunciation and Intonation	+	+	+
Dialogue Charts	+	+	+
Four Skills	+	+	+
Learning to Learn / Study Skills	+/-	+	+/-
Differentiation	+	+	+
Classroom Phrases	+	+	+

FIGURE 9 General observations of schoolbooks.

There are no direct references to the Threshold-Level found in any of the teacher's books. In my opinion this could be because the Austrian syllabus is usually the main document that schoolbooks rely on. The syllabus functions as a kind of 'buffer' between the Threshold-Level and the teaching material. 'Communicative Language Teaching' can be seen as the basis on which all the textbook authors have tried to build their materials. This influence is clearly noticeable. The importance of 'Functions and Notions' is especially evident in TB, much less so in the other two textbooks. The differentiation of the 'Four Skills' and possibilities for 'Differentiation' are common to all three of them. Furthermore they all use 'Dialogue Charts' to make learners aware of the structure of discourse. All three textbooks

contain also an ‘Intonation and Pronunciation’ section, which, as we have seen, the *T-Level* in its original version does not refer to. A special section about ‘Classroom Phrases’ can be found in the TB and EYM textbooks and the CON workbook, which shows that the classroom is taken seriously as a setting where communication takes place. Communicative situations are thus not only created in the classroom, but also experienced in ‘real life’ at school. In EYM there are special sections which try to help the pupils ‘Learn to Learn’. TB offers self-assessment grids in the workbook which shows that the students are encouraged to reflect on their individual learning progress.

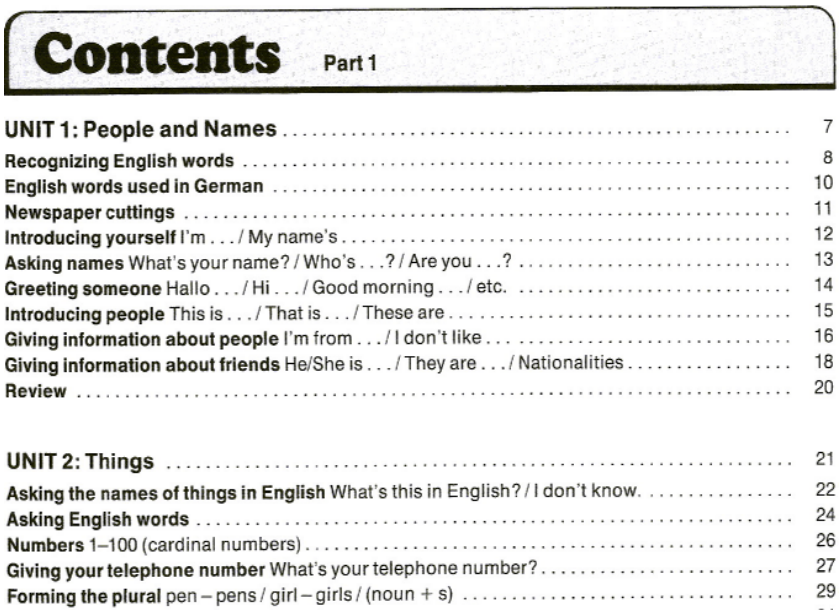
It is also interesting to take a look at the use of the mother tongue in the course books. TB, for example, apparently aims at being used by the pupils autonomously and outside of school. To facilitate self-directed learning, the learning objectives are also indicated in German. Explanations, pointed out by ‘Wuff’, a dog, are also often given in German, as well as the descriptions of dialogue exercises. This is because the authors of TB maintain that the use of the mother tongue is essential in learning processes where cognitive understanding is important (cf. TBTB 1985:10). It has to be made clear, however, that TB does not indicate mere translations, but rather German (functional) descriptions of English phrases. For example, for dialogue exercises, the German explanation says “*so fragst du, wenn du wissen willst, wie jemand heißt*”. Next to it we can find the English phrase “What’s your name?” (TBTB 1985:12). In my opinion this is a very valuable way of presenting a foreign language to learners, because it puts the emphasis on what the pupils can communicate in the foreign language and not on what they can ‘translate’ from their own. It is in fact important for the pupils to understand that gaining ‘communicative competence’ means much more than translating from one language to another. Through descriptions such as these, pupils are made conscious of what they have to learn and understand more easily for which purpose they do it. The CON textbook, on the contrary, hardly uses German at all. Only the first few introductory pages are written in German, the rest of the textbook is almost solely in English. EYM uses English as well as German, although the main focus is laid on using the English language.

4.2.6.2 Language Content – Functions and Notions

I will now comment on the observations I have made when looking at the way functions and notions have been dealt with in the textbooks. It is evidently noticeable that TB tries to

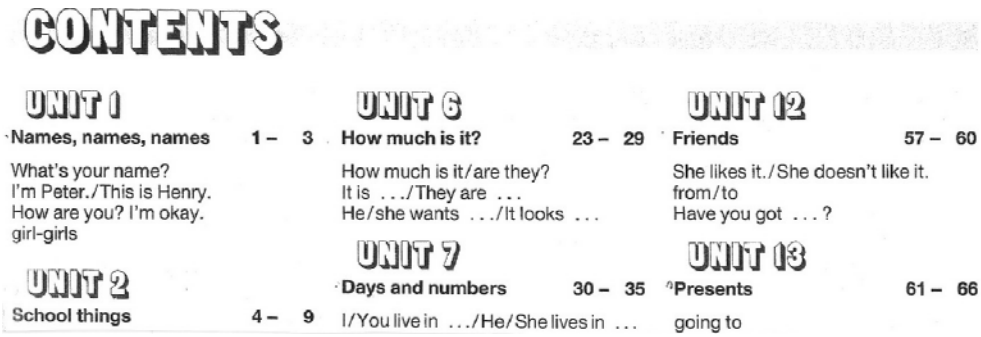
describe the language content of the course book through functions and notions, while the other two course books show fewer tendencies in this direction. Heindler stated clearly that for the dialogues in TB, notional and functional contents of the *T-Level* specification were considered (cf. 1980:44). In fact, the direct influence of the *Threshold Level* on *Ticket to Britain* is perceptible. The other two textbooks may have been set up with regard to the new syllabus or CLT in a more general sense, but not with the specific focus on the *Threshold Level*.

We can find the first differences already by looking at the contents of the textbooks. For instance, the contents of the TB textbook for the first grade look like this:



Contents Part 1

The contents of EYM are described in this way:



CONTENTS

And finally, the contents of CON look like this:

Contents

The contents of TB and CON already contain descriptions of the language functions which will be covered in the indivudal units. For instance, TB indicates the function 'Introducing yourself' and next to it exponents like 'I'm…/My name is…'. CON describes the name of the unit, the 'contacts' (which, in this case, are the speech functions covered) and which grammatical chapters are dealt with. EYM only shows the heading of the unit and exponents which will appear, but does not indicate the specific speech functions. However, as Johnson argues, attention has to be paid when analysing the contents page(s) of textbooks, because they can be misleading: the description of the units in the contents through language functions does not automatically guarantee a notional/functional syllabus underlying the course book (2001:233). It is more important to analyse the units themselves and to find out how they are organised.

In his publication *Untersuchungen zur Evaluation von Materialien des Curriculumprojekts "Ticket to Britain" für den Englischunterricht in den Schulen der Zehn- bis Vierzehnjährigen* (1987), Gottfried Petri shows illustrative lists of the exponents of language functions which have been introduced in *Ticket to Britain* and the textbook *Ann and Pat*. I have taken these lists as a model and have in the same way evaluated the exponents which

occur in the textbooks in my analysis[8]. To set up these lists I have only analysed the textbooks for the first grade. The eight categories which have been differentiated relate to those indicated in the Austrian syllabus (see 4.1.4.2.1).

Through this inventory it becomes easier to recognise differences and similarities of the three textbooks. For instance, 'Describing the way' is not covered by CON, while in the other two it is. In the *T-Level* there is a section of topic-related behaviour dedicated to the heading 'Places', which comprises way descriptions. 'You should' and 'shall' are introduced only in TB. 'Should' occurs in the *T-Level* as an exponent of the function 'advising others to do something', 'shall' of 'suggesting a course of action' and 'offering to do something' (cf. van Ek 1976:134). These are exactly the functions which TB also indicates: 'You should (go to the dentist's)' is explained by **"***Wenn du jemandem einen Rat geben willst, kannst du das mit* "you should" *einleiten"* (TBTB 1985:188). 'Shall I…(water the flowers)?' is described by "*So kannst du deine Hilfe anbieten*" (TBTB 1985:200). This is just to name a few of the differences.

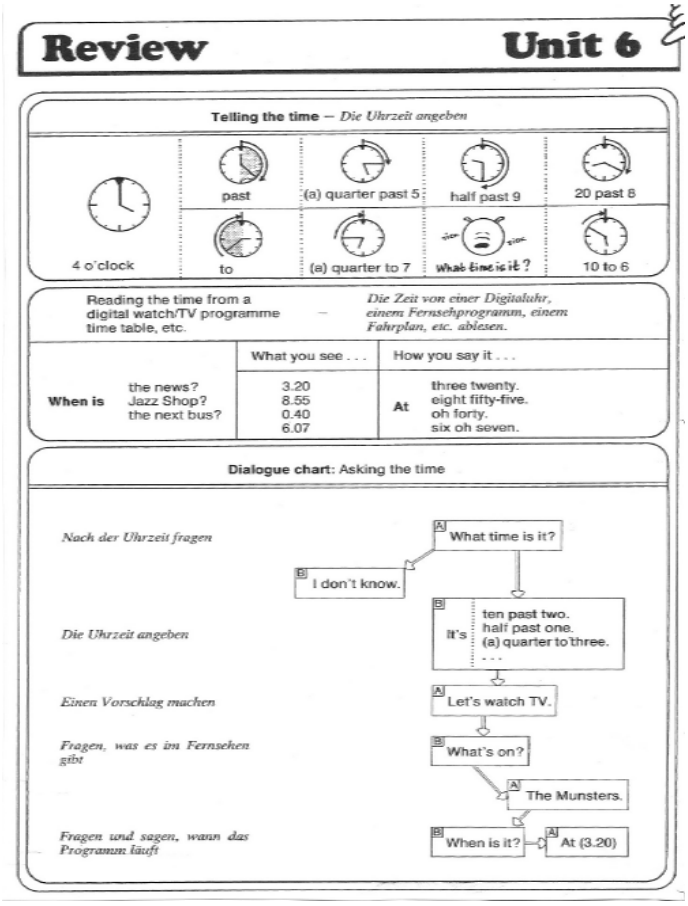
In general, however, I have to say that the exponents for the functions were very similar and differed only in very few respects. The quantity of exponents also seems similar. What is not made visible through these lists is that sometimes the grading of the functions differed from one textbook to another. For instance TB introduces 'Expressing Likes and Dislikes' for the first time in the initial unit already, while the other two do so in later units (CON in units seven and nine; EYM in unit four, nine and twelve). As mentioned in chapter 4.1.4.2.1., the Austrian syllabus does not indicate exponents for the functions as does the *T-Level*. Most of the exponents which occur in the textbooks for the first grade are those which are specified in the *Threshold Level*.

As we have already seen in earlier chapters, a major problem that arises in a functional-notional approach to syllabus design (not only for textbooks) is the grading of language functions. The authors of TB tried to resolve this difficulty by applying a 'pragmatic progression' (Heindler 1980:37). The communicative distances between sender and recipient were considered. Speech functions were put in the order in which the authors thought language users would need them. As a result, phatic speech acts (socialising), for instance,

[8] See Appendix

come first, because people have to get in contact with each other, or else no communication takes place (cf. Heindler 1980:37). This is the reason why course books, including the ones which form part of the present analysis, usually begin with the function of 'establishing social contacts'. Heindler describes further that for the design of the TB teaching materials, the textbook authors have tried to reorder the *T-Level* specification (functions, general and specific notions) into concrete objective specifications for the single grades (1980:42-43). The learning objectives of one grade should be taken up again in the next so that a progression in concentric circles becomes possible. However, it soon became clear that for the project group a lot of concrete communicative objectives were missing in the *T-Level* lists (cf. Heindler 1980:42-43). Sornig argues that in the setting up of TB many basic problems had to be faced. "Uns wurde oder war eines klar: dass man zur Entwicklung von Lernmaterial mit einer bloßen Liste von Sprachfunktionen als Lehrzielen nicht das Auslangen finden würde" (1985:86). When designing a course book, it is thus not enough simply to take an inventory of speech functions and to describe these as learning objectives. He further states that for the setting up of *Ticket to Britain* adding specific notions to the *T-Level* which thematically seemed appealing to children was attempted (1985:90).

While in TB speech functions are also referred to directly throughout the textbook and the reader really has the feeling that the book is constructed around them, in CON and EYM this is not the case. Language functions which should be fulfilled are only indicated in the EYM teacher's book when an overview for the planning of the teaching for the academic year is given: for each unit there are the time span, the titles of the units, the communicative functions and structures/grammar indicated. In the EYM textbook we do not find functional descriptions. In CON the functions are indicated, as mentioned above, in the contents pages and the teacher's book. I could imagine that the TB textbook is more appealing to pupils, because it shows them what they are able to express and describes the purpose of the uses of certain language forms to them. The fact that the functional description of language plays a central role in TB is also stated in the teacher's book: "Die funktionale Beschreibung der Sprechmittel soll ihr Erfassen und Behalten erleichtern, ihre Zusammenfassung auf den "Bauplänen" ("dialogue charts") Übersichtlichkeit gewährleisten und die Beziehung von Äußerungsmustern zueinander verdeutlichen" (TBTB 1985:10). For instance, after a series of exercises for the giving indications about time, the function 'Asking the Time' is presented in a dialogue chart in the Review section of unit six:



Review **Unit 6**

Telling the time – *Die Uhrzeit angeben*

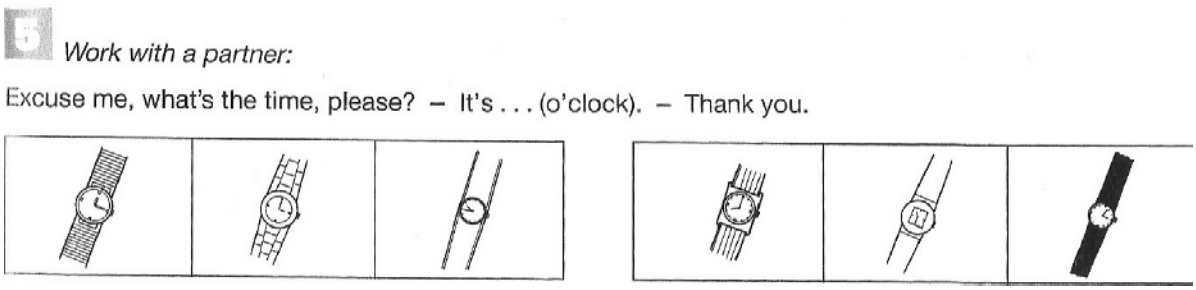
Reading the time from a digital watch/TV programme time table, etc. – *Die Zeit von einer Digitaluhr, einem Fernsehprogramm, einem Fahrplan, etc. ablesen.*

		What you see . . .	How you say it . . .
When is	the news?	3.20	three twenty.
	Jazz Shop?	8.55	eight fifty-five.
	the next bus?	0.40	oh forty.
		6.07	six oh seven.
			At

Dialogue chart: Asking the time

(TB 1985:98)

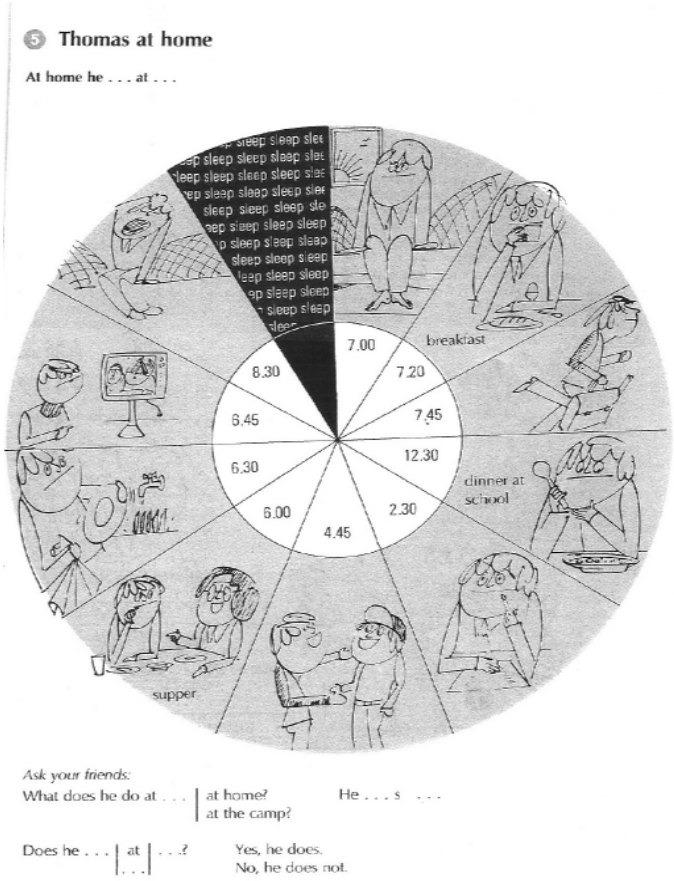
As we can see, the dialogue charts consider also reactions from the hearer's (B) side on which again the speaker (A) has to then re-act. This requires that the two listen to each other, especially if several possibilities of hearer reactions are given, as is often the case in the discourse chains of the dialogue charts. On the left side there functions are indicated which are fulfilled. If we take a look at the way EYM and CON have treated 'Asking for the time', differences between the textbooks becomes clear:



Work with a partner:

Excuse me, what's the time, please? – It's . . . (o'clock). – Thank you.

(EYM 1985:85)



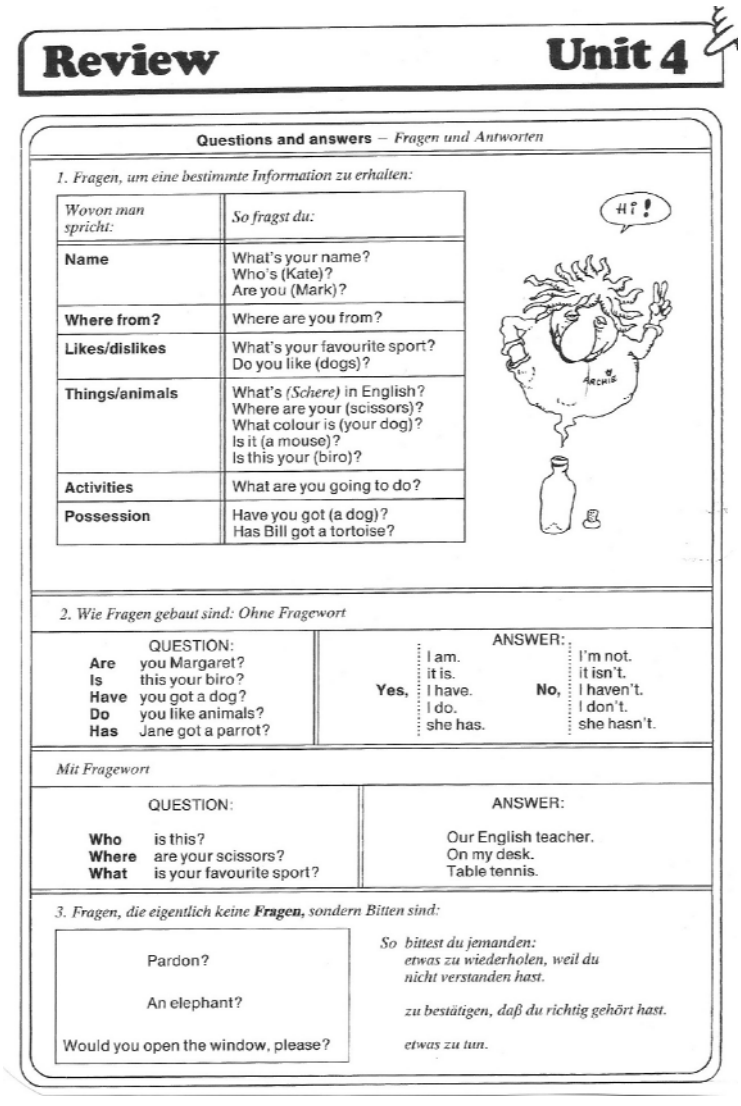
(CON 1985:142)

In the examples of CON and EYM no functional descriptions are found. Only phrases and exercises are given, but these do not form part of the revision sections at the end of the units. TB obviously tries to implement the concepts of 'functions' and 'notions' in the teaching material while the other two schoolbooks are much more hesitant to do so. I have to also mention that the exercise proposed in CON does not seem very appealing to me. I do not consider the dialogue about which habits Thomas has at home very constructive in the sense that I think this dialogue would rarely take place between two persons in 'real life'. The dialogue proposed in TB seems more valuable to me as the function of 'Asking the Time' is embedded in a communicative situation and the dialogue furthermore does not only consist of question and answer.

4.2.6.3 Grammar

I briefly want to comment on the way grammar is treated in the textbooks. In TB grammar is not presented according to difficulty but to the communicative needs (cf. Heindler 1980:25),

which shows the weight that is put on the functional aspect of grammar. While CON and EYM both have grammar boxes, TB describes these summarising sections simply as 'Reviews' where the actual word 'grammar' never occurs. In TB, grammatical forms are usually elaborated in the context of communicative situations (cf. Projektgruppe "*Englisch an Gesamtschulen*" 1984:549). The significance of a grammatical form is made clear first through its use, then through the formal explanation and finally through the summary in the review sections of the textbook, which also contain notional descriptions (cf. Projektgruppe "*Englisch an Gesamtschulen*" 1984:551). For instance, the function indicated in the *T-Level*, 'Imparting and Seeking Factual Information' with the specific function 'Asking', is treated from the first unit onwards, but the review for 'Questions and Answers' follows only at the end of unit 4 when different types of questions have already been covered in all of the units:



Review **Unit 4**

Questions and answers – *Fragen und Antworten*

1. Fragen, um eine bestimmte Information zu erhalten:

Wovon man spricht:	*So fragst du:*
Name	What's your name? Who's (Kate)? Are you (Mark)?
Where from?	Where are you from?
Likes/dislikes	What's your favourite sport? Do you like (dogs)?
Things/animals	What's *(Schere)* in English? Where are your (scissors)? What colour is (your dog)? Is it (a mouse)? Is this your (biro)?
Activities	What are you going to do?
Possession	Have you got (a dog)? Has Bill got a tortoise?

2. Wie Fragen gebaut sind: Ohne Fragewort

QUESTION:		ANSWER:			
Are	you Margaret?	**Yes,**	I am.	**No,**	I'm not.
Is	this your biro?		it is.		it isn't.
Have	you got a dog?		I have.		I haven't.
Do	you like animals?		I do.		I don't.
Has	Jane got a parrot?		she has.		she hasn't.

Mit Fragewort

QUESTION:		ANSWER:
Who	is this?	Our English teacher.
Where	are your scissors?	On my desk.
What	is your favourite sport?	Table tennis.

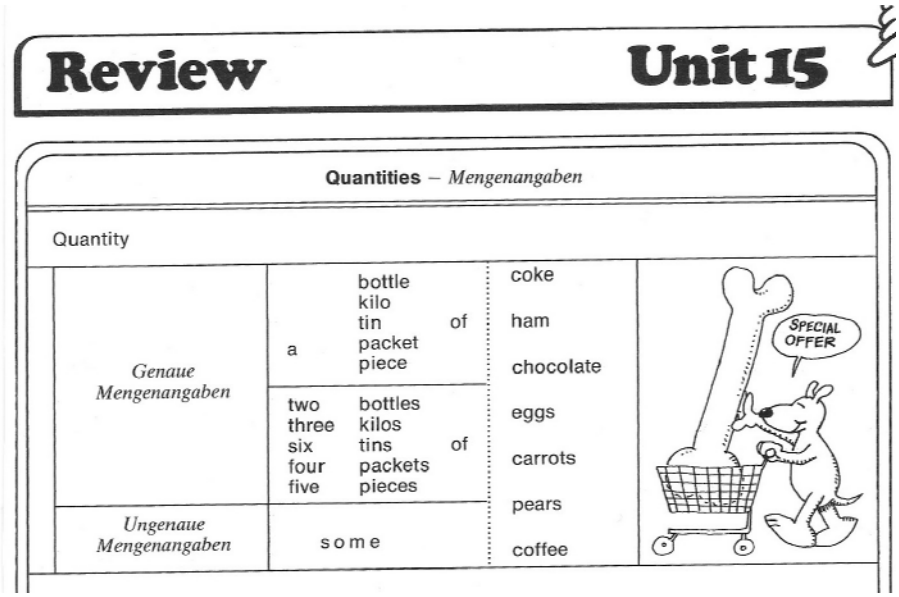
3. Fragen, die eigentlich keine ***Fragen,*** *sondern Bitten sind:*

Pardon?	*So bittest du jemanden: etwas zu wiederholen, weil du nicht verstanden hast.*
An elephant?	*zu bestätigen, daß du richtig gehört hast.*
Would you open the window, please?	*etwas zu tun.*

(TB 1985:74)

In the first unit we find the questions ‘What’s your name?’ and ‘Who’s...?’, in unit two ‘Is this…?’, in unit three ‘What are you going to do?’ and in unit four ‘Do you like?’ and ‘Have you got…?’. The review page of unit four then combines them all in a clear table. Another review about questions follows in chapter nine. This example shows the way in which TB tries to acquaint pupils with grammatical forms. They are always closely related to communicative situations. Sheils, when describing the cyclic approach to grammatical content, also cites the way TB has approached the present perfect in three units (cf. 1990:266-270).

I want to show an example of a review section in which the notion “Quantity” is treated:



Review **Unit 15**

Quantities – *Mengenangaben*

Quantity			
Genaue Mengenangaben	a	bottle / kilo / tin / packet / piece of	coke / ham / chocolate
	two / three / six / four / five	bottles / kilos / tins / packets / pieces of	eggs / carrots / pears
Ungenaue Mengenangaben	some		coffee

(TB 1985:214)

In EYM, grammar is also supposed to be used as a means to ensure communication, as is demanded by the syllabus. Grammatical forms are explained in connection with skills and topics. As in TB, grammatical phenomena are therefore first presented in use and then discussed in special grammar boxes. Very often grammatical rules are explained by small visual presentations, which should facilitate understanding and memorising. CON shows in its ‘Grammar and Patterns’ boxes a list of the grammatical forms which have occurred, but only very rarely comments on them or gives explanations. In my opinion, this is quite confusing for pupils and makes an autonomous use of the schoolbook by the pupils very

difficult. Sometimes we can find functional descriptions, for instance: “to express intention we use GOING TO + base form” (CON 1985:111), but these are very rare.

Using Newby’s theories of notional grammar (see Newby 1989b and 1991), Kettemann analyses in his article “Notionale Grammatik in den österreichischen Englischlehrbüchern der Unterstufe“ (1990) how far notional categories influence the presentation of grammar in six Austrian textbooks for lower secondary education. Kettemann examines in particular the treatment of the present progressive (current action), going to (intention), past (past reference) and past progressive (reporting past events), the present perfect (past up to now; result and experience) and the modal verbs ‘can’, ‘may’ and ‘must’ (permission, ability, possibility, obligation) in the textbooks. He comes to the conclusion that the notional description of grammar in the textbooks could be improved, that neither of them fully responds to the demands of the syllabus and that notions are still often mixed up, ignored or forgotten (Kettemann 1990:106).

4.2.6.4 Topic-Related Behaviour

I will also examine the topics that have been treated in the textbooks. They all claim to have chosen their topics with regard to the pupils’ interests and the world they live in, *Ticket to Britain* has even interviewed students (cf. TBTB 1985:11). When deciding about which topics to include in a textbook, it is important to think about which communicative objectives a topic can express and also which thinking processes have to take place (cf. Sornig 1985:92). I can imagine that the *T-Level* specifications have helped in the decision of which topics to include in the textbooks because to a great extent they seem appropriate for beginners. However, there are topics also indicated in the syllabus for first grade (see LP 1985:97).

In the following I want to present a list which shows the headings of the chapters indicated in the textbooks for the first grade. In the column on the left, I have tried to find the corresponding or related topic-areas specified in the *T-Level*:

Topic-areas *T-Level*	**TB**	**EYM**	**CON**
Personal Identification	People and Names	Names, Names, Names	Girls and Boys
House and Home		Cosy Rooms and Corners My Place	At Home
Life at Home	Animals		In a Family Homes and Families
	Things	School Things Classrooms More Classroom English Children in Their Schools	In Class In the Classroom
Free Time, Entertainment	Activities What Do You Like Doing?	Hobbies Television Weekend Dialogues on a Monday Morning	Toys, Games and Hobbies Pets and Hobbies
Travel			On a Camping Site Skiing Holidays People and Places
Relations With Other People	Letter Writing to Pen-Friends	My English Teacher Friends	
Health and Welfare	What's the Matter With You?		
Shopping Food and Drink	The Food You Like Shopping For Food Buying Souvenirs	Food and Drink How Much Is It?	Shopping and Breakfast Eating and Drinking Friends, Meals and Fun That's the Way Money Goes
Places	Asking One's Way	Asking the Way	

Topic-areas ***T-Level***	**TB**	**EYM**	**CON**
	Happy Birthday Christmas	Happy Birthday Presents Easter Christmas	Birthdays and other Dates
	Guessing and Describing	Colours Who Is It? What Is It?	
	What Time Is It?	Days and Numbers	
	Making a Wall Chart		
	Telephoning	Who Is Speaking?	
	Helping		
	Lost and Found	Children Think Back	Stories and Past Events
	New Things		
		Grey streets and happy streets	
		Where Is It?	
		Dreams	
		The Elephant, the Hippo and the Mouse Butterflies The Box of Nuts The Clever Crow	

FIGURE 10 Comparison of topic areas: *Threshold Level* and schoolbooks.

Of course this list only helps us to get a better overview of the topics treated in the textbooks, an exact comparison is not possible this way, because the textbooks do not always exactly cover the *T-Level* topic-areas and do not contain the topic-related behaviour indicated. However, as we can see, many topic-areas correspond to those of the *Threshold Level*. For instance, 'Asking the Way' which relates to the topic-area of 'Places' in the *T-Level*, does not occur in CON, but does so in the other textbooks. Some topic-areas which have been indicated there, however, do not occur at all, or only in little detail in the three textbooks for first grade. These are: education and future career, health and welfare,

services, and weather (cf. van Ek 1976:25). They occur in part in the textbooks for second grade. Some areas cannot be related to specific *T-Level* topic areas, such as 'Happy Birthday' or 'Merry Christmas'. These are topics which are not necessarily covered if we think of the 'linguistic survival' of a tourist in a country. However, I think that they are important topics and ought to be spoken about in school.

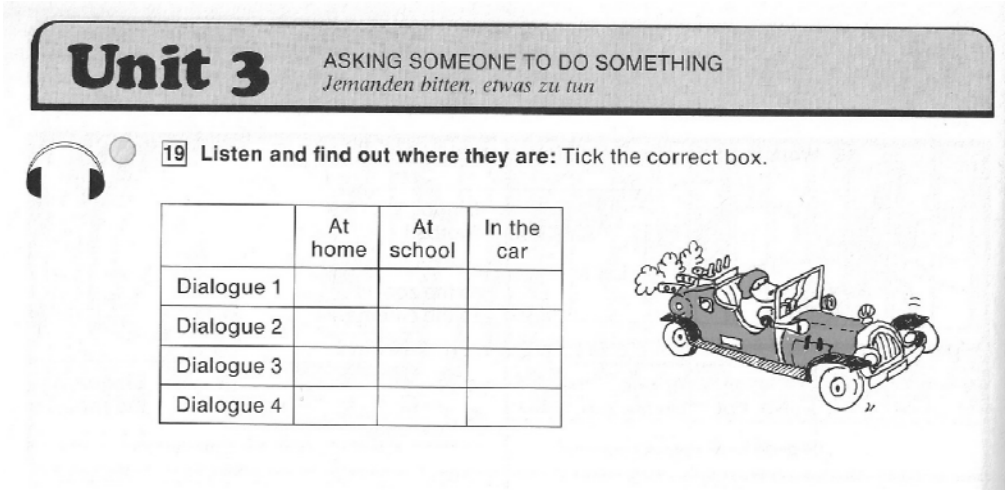
In my opinion, some parts of the topical areas indicated in the *T-Level* for schools relate too strongly to the language needs of adults and tourists. For instance, I do not think that 11-year-olds necessarily need to know how to ask for the nearest petrol station or garage or how to inquire about bathing, washing and hairdressing facilities. This is why it seems quite obvious why some specific topic-areas have been left out of school books for the first grade and others added. It is interesting to see that all the three textbooks have at least one chapter dedicated to the 'classroom' as a setting where communication takes place. There is a topic-area indicated as 'Education and Future Career' in the *T-Level* for Schools (cf. van Ek 1976:25). Yet, there are only descriptions of general information regarding school, i.e. an exchange of information which takes place in another communicative situation *about* school, but not about those taking place *in* school. For instance, it contains the demand for pupils to learn how to exchange information which regards 'daily routines' at school or 'subjects', but not how to understand and express 'Go and get me some chalk, please!' or ' I've forgotten my homework'. There are lists of classroom phrases both in the EYM and TB textbooks, the CON workbook covers some classroom phrases in every unit of its workbook.

4.2.6.5 Communicative Objectives – Four Skills

'Communicative objectives' can both indicate the know-how that the pupils are expected to obtain in connection with the four skills or from a communicative functional point of view, as well as the communicative competence, i.e. the consideration of socio-cultural and pragmatic aspects (cf. Girard 1994:77). In this analysis I will briefly comment only on the competences pupils are expected to obtain in the textbooks with regard to the four skills.

The emphasis that the communicative approach puts on receptive skills (listening and reading) is noticeable also in the organisation of the three textbooks. While reading was a part of language teaching before (even if not in the same way), the importance of listening skills and the understanding of natural speech has been recognised only with CLT. In the *T-*

Level for schools it is also indicated that "the objective cannot be reached unless the learner is confronted with many more voices than that of his teacher; […] intensive practice with recorded material will be essential" (van Ek 1976:22). Furthermore we read that "the objective is primarily designed for […] the ability to carry on a conversation. This involves two skills: speaking and understanding" (van Ek 1976:12). The textbooks seem to acknowledge this significance. Out of the 30 exercises of the first unit of TB ten are listening exercises, in unit two, eleven out of 52 are. In unit one of EYM out of five exercises four are listening comprehensions, as are two out of seven in unit two. In the first unit of CON, there are six listening exercises. The recordings consist mostly of dialogues, interviews, informational texts, as well as stories, songs and poems. EYM also has listening activities entitled 'Keep Fit in the Classroom'. What surprised me was that TB also has a tape recording of a text which 'in real life' usually would not be listened to - the one of a letter (cf. 1985:235-236). In a communicative classroom, pupils have to be made familiar with authentic or 'semi-authentic' recordings which will enable them to get used to natural speech. Ideally they would then also be provided with pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening activities right from the start. In the textbooks the listening exercises are mostly coupled with exercises where pupils have to find out specific information. They have to practise separating important information from less important, and have to be encouraged to keep listening to a recording even if they have not understood parts of it. There are several examples for pre-listening and while-listening activities to be found in the textbooks. For example, while-listening activities would be the following:

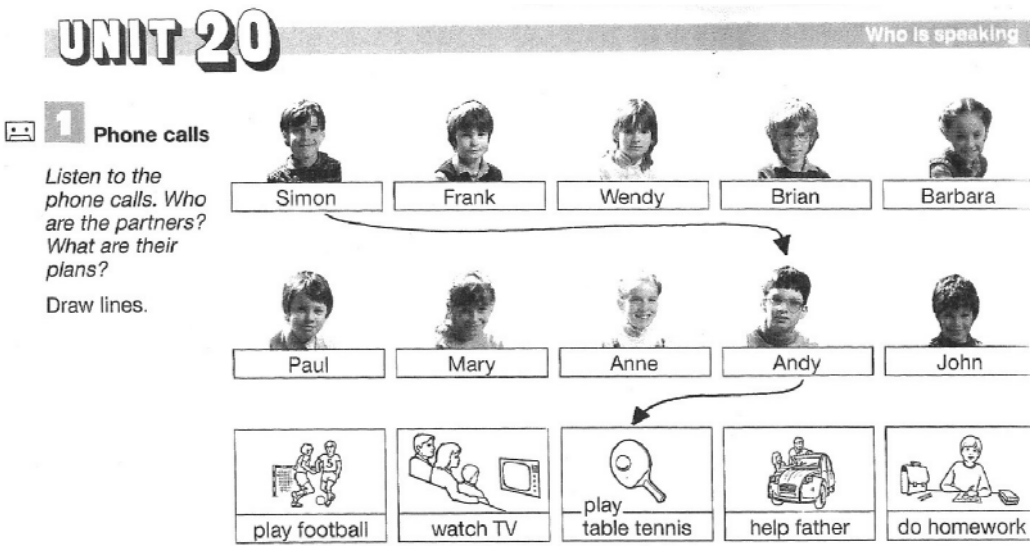


Unit 3 ASKING SOMEONE TO DO SOMETHING
Jemanden bitten, etwas zu tun

19 **Listen and find out where they are:** Tick the correct box.

	At home	At school	In the car
Dialogue 1			
Dialogue 2			
Dialogue 3			
Dialogue 4			

(TB 1985:46)

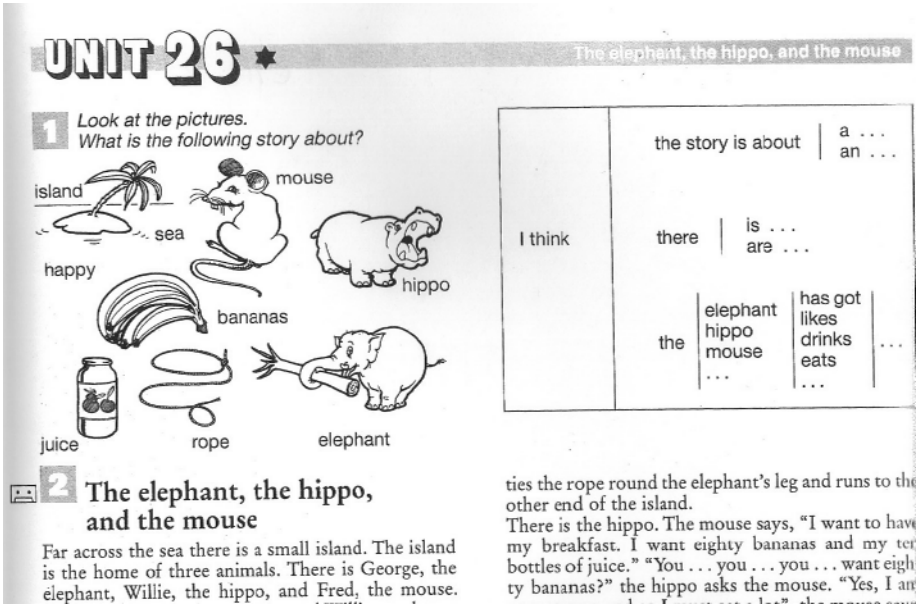


(EYM 1985:92)

TB presents many while-listening exercises, "listen and tick off" exercises especially can be found in almost every unit. In general I have to say that all three textbooks have used listening recordings from the start and throughout the whole course book, which shows that they all fulfil the demand for practising pupils' listening skills.

With regard to reading skills, the Austrian syllabus for first grade states the following: "Die Anbahnung und der Aufbau des Leseverstehens, d.h. des stillen, sinnerfassenden Lesens, sind Ziele des Unterrichts in der 1. Klasse" (LP 1985:96). TB presents different types of texts, for the first grade these are comics, stories and factual texts. 'Reading for fun' exercises are introduced from chapter three onwards. EYM offers 'Stories for Extra-Reading' in the workbook, which should motivate pupils to read outside school too. Reading in the textbooks is closely related to the other skills, because pupils are supposed to speak or write about the texts after the actual reading. Reading is an active process and should thus also lead to a result (cf. Sornig 1985:93). Pupils should be encouraged to become autonomous in their reading and to face unfamiliar texts with the right strategies, attitudes and motivation. As Sheils mentions in *Communication in the Modern Languages Classroom* correctly: "An autonomous reader is a flexible reader who applies a variety of reading strategies depending on the reading purpose and who knows when his/her comprehension is adequate for that purpose" (1992:81). Textbooks can help the pupils use the right approach to unfamiliar texts when they make the reading exercises easier with the help of pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading exercises. They are present in all the textbooks that I have

looked at. An example of a pre-reading exercise is presented in EYM, for example, where the most important key words that occur in the story that follows are illustrated and are presented to the pupils:



(EYM 1985:120)

They have to guess what the story will be about. On the right there is a box with useful phrases.

At *Threshold Level* pupils are supposed to read letters and simple brochures, informal letters, road-signs, public notices and announcements, and, more generally speaking, texts which contain only structures and vocabulary which are specified in the exponents for functions and notions (van Ek 1976:26-27) . It is not surprising that there are no references made about the importance that pupils develop reading strategies, because, as already mentioned several times throughout this thesis, learning skills are not considered in the *T-Level* specifications.

The speaking skills also assume an important role in the textbooks. According to the syllabus pupils are supposed to be able to use the English language in situations which occur in class and in the most important situations of everyday life. These objectives are manifold and need good planning. It is noticeable that most speaking occasions are created through

dialogues between two pupils and with the help of where the phrases that might be used are already given (see example above). Furthermore the pupils are asked to speak about certain topics (also with the help of exponents already given), they have to talk about texts or participate in role-plays. They are supposed to speak about their own experiences and likes/dislikes.

The Austrian syllabus for first grade indicates that writing is seen as having mainly "lernunterstützende Funktion" (LP 1985:97), i.e. it helps support the whole learning process of the pupil, but does not carry the same weight as the other skills. However, there are writing exercises found in the textbooks, e.g. "Write a letter to Tim" (EYM 1985:59) or "Can you make a little story?" (EYM 1985:69) or "Write some more dialogues in your notebook" (TB 1985:159). In TB there are several possibilities given to practise the pupils' writing skills, like dialogue and report writing, dialogue completion, summary writing of interviews or fill-in exercises. In the EYM teacher's book there is a paragraph dedicated to letter writing (EYMTB 1986:11) where it says that pupils should learn to write personal letters in English. Other exercises that occur are note-taking and note-making. Additionally, EYM offers 'Study and Change' texts. In the workbooks more written tasks are given, which, however, consists mainly of vocabulary, grammar or spelling exercises. It is mentioned in the *T-Level* for schools that pupils at *Threshold Level* stage are supposed to write letters in accordance with the following specifications: formal letters (accommodation, recreation, employment, courses) and informal letters (cf. van Ek 1976:26). We can see again that the world of adult workers and tourists has been given more emphasis than that of the teenage learners. Short stories or texts about the pupils' own experiences are not mentioned, although the textbooks do include them.

5 THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE FOR LANGUAGES - LEARNING, TEACHING, ASSESSMENT (2001)

5.1 The Common European Framework of Reference (CEF)

5.1.1 What is the CEF?

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (or CEF) is a highly complex document consisting of about 260 pages in the English version. It follows and incorporates the overall aim of the CE as described by the Recommendations R (82) 18 and R (98) 6 of the Committee of Ministers, namely "to achieve greater unity among its members and to pursue this aim by the adoption of common action in the cultural field" (CEF 2001:2). The necessity of establishing a common framework for language teaching in Europe seemed a logical consequence to the active work of the CE in the field of language teaching and the developments that had resulted from the *T-Level* specifications. The *Threshold Level*, with its focus on the communicative use of language and on the reaching of certain objectives even only with a restricted mastery of the foreign language, was a forerunner of the ideas implemented in the CEF (cf. Morrow 2004:5).

The importance of a common, objective framework was recognised and committed to paper at an Intergovernmental Symposium held in Rüschlikon, Switzerland, in 1991 on "Transparency and Coherence in Language Learning in Europe: Objectives, Evaluation, Certification":

> (…) It is desirable to develop a Common European Framework of reference in language learning at all levels, in order to:
>
> Promote and facilitate co-operation among educational institutions in different countries;
>
> Provide a sound basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications;

> Assist learners, teachers, course designers, examining bodies and educational administrators to situate and co-ordinate their efforts. (CEF 2001:5-6)

The keywords are ‘co-operation’, ‘mutual recognition’ as well as ‘situating and co-ordinating’. In fact, by offering a common basis for the description of objectives, contents and methods, the CEF guarantees that language courses, syllabuses and qualifications become more transparent and facilitate international co-operation in the field of language learning. Thanks to the *Common European Framework* it has become possible to compare the language competences of learners in an objective way. Due to the common parameters for describing these competences, the CEF makes the mutual recognition of qualifications easier and will, as a result, foster European mobility. In addition, the CEF is needed for the planning and co-ordination of language learning programmes, of language certification and of self-directed learning (cf. CEF 2001:6).

In order to fulfil all these functions appropriately, the *Framework* needs to be comprehensive (i.e. it should specify language knowledge, skills and use), transparent (i.e. the information it contains has to be clearly formulated) and coherent (i.e. descriptions should be free from internal contradictions) (cf. CEF 2001:7). Ideally, at the same time, it should remain flexible and multi-purpose, open, dynamic, user-friendly and non-dogmatic (cf. 2001:7-8). That it is difficult to respond to all these demands, we will see later.

5.1.2 Plurilingualism and Life-Long Learning

A concept that has lately gained high importance in the work of the Council of Europe is that of 'Plurilingualism'. It is not to be mistaken for 'Multilingualism', which describes “the knowledge of a number of languages or the co-existence of different languages in a society” (CEF 2001:4). ‘Plurilingualism’ refers to a more personal basis, namely to the fact that a learner does not keep the diverse knowledge he/she has about one or more languages and cultures in “strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contribute and in which languages interrelate and interact” (CEF 2001:4). The term ‘communicative competence’ is thus presented in the CEF as an accumulation of the linguistic experiences we have had. Thus, the aim of language learning changes from the wish to achieve 'mastery' of one, two or

more languages, to the establishment of a linguistic repertory into which all linguistic knowledge and abilities go (cf. CEF 2001:5).

Governments, educational authorities, schools, teachers etc. should provide the best opportunities and conditions for their learners to follow this aim and to develop their plurilingual competences. Additionally, it is as important as ever to encourage and motivate young learners to face a new language with confidence and to supply them with the right strategies, study skills and general educational competences so that their learning continues even if the teaching finishes (cf. CEF 2001:174). A positive attitude towards language learning will contribute to the concepts of autonomous and life-long learning. With the *European Language Portfolio* (ELP), experts at the Council of Europe have tried to set up a tool for this new challenge (see chapter 5.2).

5.1.3 Language Use and Competence

The approach which has been followed throughout the CEF is described as 'action-based', i.e. the importance is lain again on what we can *do* with language and how we *use* it. 'Language use' is defined very well in the *Framework*:

> Language use, embracing language learning, comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of **competences**, both **general** and in particular **communicative language competences**. They draw on the competences 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. The monitoring of these actions by the participants leads to the reinforcement or modification of their competences. (CEF 2001:9)

This paragraph tries to describe in a very dense way the essential components of language use and language learning. It is consequently of high relevance to analyse each carefully. The words which are highlighted above are all discussed in detail in the *Framework*. Particular weight is, of course, put on the description of language competences, activities and strategies.

The general language competence of an individual is divided into different components. It involves both competences which regard a person in general ('general competences') as well as those more closely related to language ('communicative language competences'). Both groups are then again sub-categorised. Therefore 'general competences' of an individual include knowledge (*savoir),* skills and know-how *(savoir-faire),* existential competence *(savoir-être)* and the ability to learn *(savoir apprendre);* 'communicative language competences' include linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences.

It is important to make clear that general language competence involves the whole human being in its role as an individual and as a social agent. For the development of our individual personality and identity we have to learn to interact with the people surrounding us, respond to our cultural background and develop the right attitude towards otherness and other languages. If we speak of human language and language competence we thus have to keep in mind that it describes a very complex interplay of many separate components (cf. CEF 2001:1). However, as we can imagine from this, describing all the (sub-)competences which are involved in communicative language use and assigning them, where possible, to different levels of proficiency, is a very difficult undertaking. Given the complexity of this task itself, it is then even more difficult to do this clearly and comprehensively. Yet this was what the *Common European Framework* aimed at doing.

In his paper "Why the CEF Is Important" (2004), Frank Heyworth refers to an important issue which language teachers should be aware of when working with the *Framework*, namely that "the idea of thinking of a 'unique individual competence' including the whole repertoire of languages and competences available provides a justification for more emphasis to be placed on developing strategies and skills for 'learning to learn languages'" (Heyworth 2004:15). Learners could use the knowledge and skills which they gain during the learning of one language, for the facilitated - and, ideally, autonomous - learning of another. They should be directed to reflect on the way a new language can contribute to their general linguistic repertoire and in which way the same can help them in their learning process.

Heyworth maintains that nowadays language learning "is not an 'all or nothing' undertaking" (2004:15) anymore. Thanks to the division of the general language competence

into different components it becomes possible to value also the minimum or restricted knowledge of a language which a learner might have. By describing "partial qualifications", the CEF puts emphasis on the "recognition rather than [the] recall [of] skills" (CEF 2001:2). Keddle also refers to the fact that one of the positive sides of the CEF is that "the descriptors allow an 'imperfect' performance to be appropriate for someone of that level" (2004:46). Many people only have a slight knowledge of another language or are not even aware of having it. They should be encouraged to value this as something important and useful – as a contribution to their linguistic repertoire.

5.1.4 The Common Reference Levels

The most widely applied out of the so-called scales is the 'global scale'[9]. It describes what users, ranging from 'basic' (A) to 'independent' (B) to 'proficient' (C), can do at six different levels of proficiency (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2). 'Proficiency' is described as "competence put to use" (CEF 2001:187).

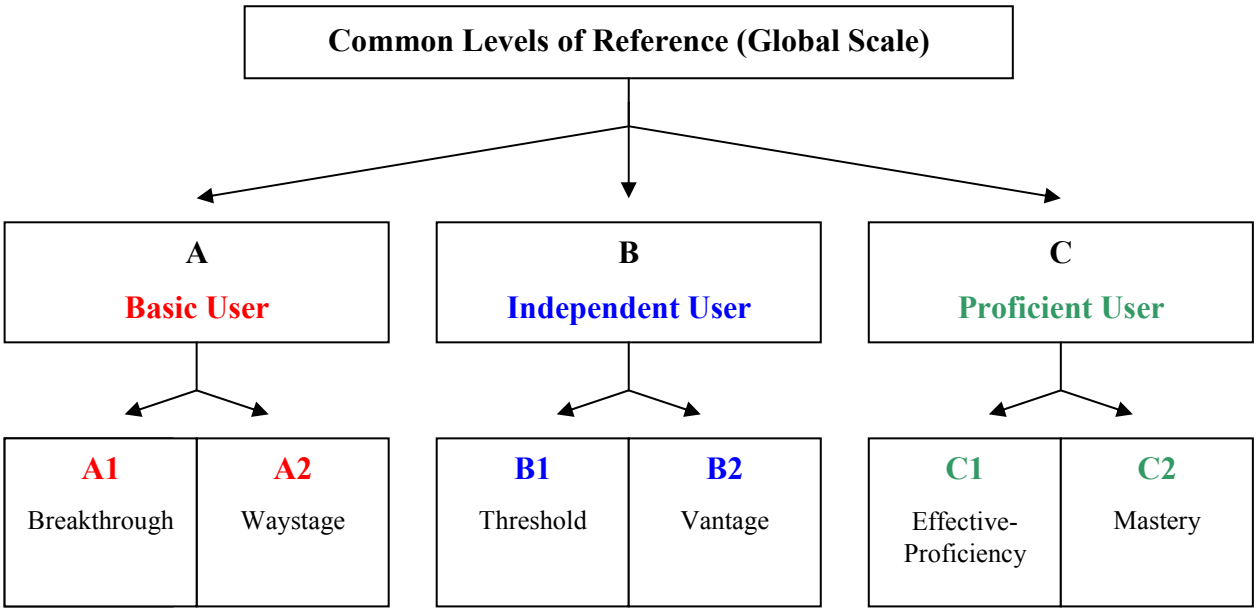


FIGURE 11 Common Levels of Reference (cf. CEF 2001:2).

As we can see, the *Threshold Level* specifications indicate level B1 of the 'Independent user'. Also the levels A2 (Waystage) and B2 (Vantage) refer to content specifications of the

[9] See Appendix

CE. These specifications, which have been published in English and, only in the case of the *T-Level*, in more than 20 European languages, "can be seen as ancillary to the main Framework document" (CEF 2001:179). What characterises this scale and the others of CEF is that the descriptions are always positively worded in order to emphasise what the language learner is able to do at a certain level and not where his competences still lack. At the beginning of language learning this is particularly difficult, because the quantity of what learners do *not* know yet is much higher than what they know.

Language experts have appreciated the levels for their thorough description. They have proved to be helpful for the definition and setting up of objectives, assessment planning and qualifications. In my opinion, however, the descriptors are not always very clear for non-experts. For instance, the global scale indicates that a learner at level A1 is able to do the following:

> A1: Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

It is clearly understandable that these descriptions leave a lot of room for interpretation – for example, a reader can ask him/herself: What are 'familiar everyday expressions'? What is meant by 'satisfaction of needs of a concrete type?' What does 'interact in a simple way' mean exactly? In my opinion, this is both a weak and a strong point of the CEF. On the one hand they are not detailed enough and users do not always know exactly what is meant; yet on the other hand this means that they are not restrictive either, but, because of their description, cover every aspect that could be of relevance. It has to be mentioned as well that the descriptors have been analysed carefully and have also gone through different test phases (for details see CEF 2001:217-225; North 2004:77-78). In addition, we have to keep in mind that this scale describes the global levels of proficiency. In order to obtain a more comprehensive description, the CEF contains all in all 34 scales for describing language activities (always based on the six levels, from A1 to C2) and 13 for aspects of learner proficiency (cf. North 2004:77) 2. These categories are: communicative language competences, communicative activities and strategies.

The communicative language competences, which are described by scales, are: linguistic (lexical, grammatical, phonological, orthoepic), socio-linguistic and pragmatic (discourse, functional) competences (see CEF 2001:108-130). Communicative language activities are traditionally split up in the well-known 'four skills'. In the CEF, remedying one of the shortcomings of the *T-Level*, there is a distinction made between 'reception' and 'production', 'interaction' and 'mediation' (e.g. interpretation, translation, paraphrasing). Morrow presents a clear table as an overview of the language activities which are described by different lists of receptive, interactive and productive activities and strategies in the CEF:

Reception			**Interaction**		**Production**	
Spoken	**Audio Visual**	**Written**	**Spoken**	**Written**	**Spoken**	**Written**
Overall listening comprehension	Watching TV and film	Overall reading comprehension	Overall spoken interaction	Overall written interaction	Overall spoken production	Overall written production
Understanding Interaction between native speakers		Reading correspondence	Comprehension in interaction	Correspondence	Sustained monologue – describing experience	Creative writing
Listening as a member of live audience		Reading for orientation	Understanding a native speaker interlocutor	Notes, messages, and forms	Sustained monologue – putting a case	Reports and essays
Listening to announcements and instructions		Reading for information and argument	Conversation		Public announcements	
Listening to radio and audio recordings		Reading instructions	Informal discussion		Addressing audiences	
			Formal discussion			
			Goal-oriented co-operation			
			Obtaining goods and services			
			Information exchange			
			Interviews			

FIGURE 12. Communicative activities which underlie the global scale (cf. Morrow 2004:9).

All these communicative activities are described through so-called 'can-do' descriptors according to the six reference levels. This list of communicative activities is far from exhaustive, but, as Morrow maintains, by "producing these 'illustrative' areas […], the CEF makes it possible for users to produce their own specifications for their own specific purposes" (2004:10).

The *Common European Framework* is made up of both a horizontal and a vertical dimension (cf. CEF 2001:16). The vertical dimension describes the ascending reference levels, the horizontal the single parameters of language competence and communicative activities which we have seen above. This structure makes it possible to follow first the horizontal level and then ascend on the vertical scale; or, if a specific competence is needed for a specific purpose, allows the emphasis on one single aspect of language use.

5.1.5 Assessment

The full title of the framework is *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages - Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. From this we can see that assessment of language proficiency is a major concern of the CEF. The last chapter of the document is thus dedicated entirely to questions of assessment.

The three essential concepts of assessment - validity, reliability and feasibility – are also relevant in connection with the CEF. 'Validity' refers to the fact that "what is actually assessed is […] what […] *should* be assessed" (CEF 2001:177). 'Reliability' describes the necessity of the consistency of assessment. The *Framework* can be used in order to address these issues by describing 'what is assessed', 'how performance is interpreted' and also 'how comparisons can be made' (cf. CEF 2001:178). 'Feasibility' means that the assessment procedure needs to be practical. For the latter, the CEF can serve as a reference point in the definition and limitation of criteria and categories.

To assess the attainment of a certain learning objective rating scales can be set up, the descriptors can help in the stating of criteria (cf. CEF 2001:179). However, it is important to understand the difference between the descriptors of communicative activities and those of aspects of proficiency, which are linked to particular competences. While the first can be

used for teacher-assessment or self-assessment, the latter are in general more advisable for assessing learners, because they make it possible to focus not on one single performance, but on the general competence of the learner (cf. CEF 2001:179-180).

The main part of the chapter, though, is dedicated to different types of assessment, where distinctions are made, for instance, between 'achievement assessment' and 'proficiency-assessment' or 'norm-referencing' and 'criterion-referencing'. All in all, there are 13 contrasting pairs presented. There is always a comment on the relevance of the CEF in connection with the types of assessment made.

The Common Scale of Reference is also taken as the basis for a self-assessment grid where 'can do'-descriptors are used - again for reception, interaction and production. These description should give the learner the possibility to understand better which level he/she has already reached and what he/she is able to do and which competences he/she has achieved. Also these scales are described in a positive way and should thus also be encouraging and motivating for the learner. These grids are of high value for the *European Language Portfolio* (see chapter 5.2)

5.1.6 The CEF in the School-Context

I want to consider the way the CEF can contribute to language teaching in school. In the chapter about 'Linguistic Diversification and the Curriculum', it is maintained that in school general and communicative competences play the major role while in language courses for adults often specific language activities or functional ability for a particular context are stressed. The CEF can contribute to link these two processes (CEF 2001:168-169).

There are two examples of possible school curricula presented (see CEF 2001:171-174). However, I find them both more idealistic than useful for school reality, due to both a lack of financial resources and of time. I do not know whether schools could afford to supply its pupils with a 'language resource centre', with the help of which they can work autonomously, as is proposed in the first scenario in the CEF. The second demands "revision and discussion sessions […] as to accommodate an increasing differentiation between the profiles of different pupils and their expectations and interest" (CEF 2001:173) and time

spent on looking at the different approaches and learning routes which pupils follow. This idea sounds well-meant, but I could imagine that this demand fails due to the lack of time at the teachers' disposal, apart from the fact that many of them would not even feel prepared for this task. Perhaps teacher training should thus be offered more often and teachers should also be supported in their efforts. Since I am convinced that 'autonomous language learning' and raising 'learning awareness' have become crucial components of language teaching I hope not to be misunderstood for criticising these requests by the CEF. But I also think that it will be difficult to put these two ideas into practice in schools. It is positive to be optimistic and idealistic, but school reality should not be ignored.

In her article "The CEF and the Secondary School Syllabus", Julia Keddle criticises the fact that the CEF seems to take little consideration of the world of teenagers or young learners, but is mainly concerned with adult topics and explanations. For instance, the descriptors for self-assessment "reflect a reality which seems more closely linked to the world of work, business, travel and cultural exchange, or academic work. […] There is a general tone to the CEF that doesn't sound like the world of the classroom" (Keddle 2004:50). The *Framework* does not reflect in enough detail the reality of language learning in school. As I see it, the CEF puts too much emphasis on language learning as the development of the individual's pluricultural competence. Language learning in schools is therefore only a part of the whole process, which, ideally, should begin before the pupils enter school and continue after they have left. Many aspects which concern the school-context are therefore left out. According to Keddle, the "work involved in using and understanding the CEF creates barriers between its widespread application in the school classroom" (2004:43).

One of the missing aspects is the lack of the treatment of grammar. The grading of grammatical items and grammatical progression are not dealt with in the *Framework*. While in schools we still find a strong focus on grammar (for reasons, for instance, referred to in 2.1.4) and syllabuses are partly based on a grammatical progression, it is difficult to match this with the descriptor scales of the CEF (cf. Keddle 2001:44). Keddle even talks about missing grammatical concept areas such as 'talking about the future', which is never referred to explicitly in the *Framework* (cf. 2004:49). There is no consistent approach to grammar and the "general descriptors are not sufficiently linked to concept areas to provide a basis for

a teaching programme" (Keddle 2004:49). There would have to be more linking areas in the descriptors given, in order to make it possible to relate grammar to performance.

There are, certainly, also many advantages if the *Framework* is used in the school context. For example, it can facilitate a pupils' transfer from one school to another, because his/her performance can easily be compared. Furthermore, it is possible to support learners as individuals who all have their personal strengths and weaknesses and concentrate on the improvement of particular skills and competences. Self-assessment checklists can be used in order to make the pupils aware of what they learn and to give them a sense of their achievements. And finally, the *European Language Portfolio* is certainly a useful tool for the school-context. We will see this in chapter 5.2.

5.1.7 Critical Voices

The *Common European Framework* represents an end product of a series of developments in language teaching, but can also be seen as a crossroad which opens many new opportunities for future developments. As we have already seen above, it seems clear that a document which is studied by many language experts cannot be entirely free of criticism. However, I believe that this is something positive, because it shows that the CEF is taken seriously. I want to point to some examples here.

A first criticism regards the general idea of developing common levels of proficiency. Krumm, for instance, sees a danger in the fact that the guidelines of the CEF could be misunderstood as a norm which demands that all languages are taught and learnt in the same way (cf. Internet 7). I do not share this opinion, however, because it is emphasised several times throughout the CEF that what is indicated is just descriptive and not prescriptive. The only danger, in my eyes, lies in people who are involved in language teaching and who are not well informed about the CEF. I can also understand that a certain contradiction lies in the fact that on one hand (language) teaching tries to stress more and more the importance of the individual learner, while on the other hand more and more publications for the harmonisation of language teaching and learning are created. However, the CEF has to be understood as a help to focus on individual needs, because through its diagnostic function it becomes possible to find out in which areas improvements are necessary, not to mention the

Language Portfolio, which symbolises an example par excellence of learner-centeredness and the weight put on the individual and his/her particular language experiences.

Yet, Keddle also criticizes the fact that the individual self-assessment descriptors are not exhaustive and that there are some functional areas missing completely (2004:51). She sees a problem in the fact that the average teacher will not be conscious of these problems, also because "the CEF gives the impression of being exhaustive in relation to functional areas" (Keddle 2004:51).

Another criticism, which appears frequently, regards the general composition and organisation of the *Framework*. Anyone who has studied the whole document of the CEF, realises its complexity and the complexity of human languages in general. I can only support what Morrow states, namely that "the published versions of the CEF are not exactly user-friendly. (…); the print is small, the layout 'dense' and heavy, the language itself is ponderous and often convoluted (…) and there are seemingly endless tables and descriptors whose relationship to one another is very difficult to discern" (2004:7).

A reader who is introduced to the *Framework* for the first time will be put off at the beginning. The pages are packed with information and it is very difficult not to lose track of the argumentation. However, after every smaller chapter, the CEF provides several questions which readers can reflect upon and then decide whether the chapter is of interest for them or not. I think the CEF should be taken as what it is, a framework of "Reference". The majority of the readers will probably consult the *Framework* and use parts of it for consultation and regard it really as a document of reference. As said in the section about assessment, but valid for the whole document: "The Framework must be comprehensive, but all its users must be selective" (CEF 2001:178). Also Komorowska, who has tried to implement the CEF in in-teacher training, states that "students criticized both the length of the document and its structure, pointing to overlaps […]; they also complained about never-ending typologies and lists" (2004:57) – a criticism, which I in part share.

5.2 The European Language Portfolio

5.2.1 Aims and Functions

A development that was closely linked to the *Common European Framework* was the setting up of the *European Language Portfolio* (ELP). It is seen as a "tool to promote plurilingualism and pluriculturalism" (Internet 8), a document into which all language learning and cultural experience of a learner goes. It combines a presentation of both the officially recognised certificates obtained in formal language learning contexts (e.g. the completion of a language course at a language school) and the informal experiences a learner has had with the language(s), its speakers and other cultures (cf. CEF 2001:175). The ELP is actually made up of three parts: the Language Biography, the Language Passport and the so-called Dossier. I will comment on them in 5.2.3.

The idea of setting up a Euro*pean Language Portfolio* was also born at the symposium of the CE in Rüschlikon in 1991. However, first drafts were designed only between 1998 and 2000 in pilot projects in fifteen countries across Europe (cf. Matzer 2001:8). Each CE member country was asked to design their own language portfolio, based, however, on the CEF. This phase was intended to design, try out and evaluate model portfolios and to prepare the implementation in the educational systems. At the same time guidelines were set up as well as criteria for accreditation which should guarantee a common base for the outline of the national portfolios (cf. Matzer 2001:6).

The *European Language Portfolio* has two principal aims:

> To motivate learners by acknowledging their efforts to extend and diversify their language skills at all levels.
>
> To provide a record of the linguistic and cultural skills they have acquired (to be consulted, for example, when they are moving to a higher learning level or seeking employment at home or abroad). (Internet 8)

Through the use of the ELP, learners should be motivated to learn new languages and encouraged to learn autonomously. The Portfolio is thus also often referred to as a tool to promote learner autonomy. Usually there is a distinction made between two functions that the portfolio fulfils: on the one hand it has the 'pedagogic function' of guiding and supporting the learner in his/her learning process and on the other hand it performs the 'documentary function', i.e. it serves as a means of reporting and documenting the learner's proficiencies (cf. Internet 8). Single authors and national portfolio projects differentiate between at least two more functions: the political and that which concerns school development. This implies that the Portfolio can be seen as an instrument to realise the European dimension in education. At the same time it helps schools in their developments as language learning across the curriculum can also foster co-operation among teachers, parents and pupils (cf. Thürmann 2001:5-6).

5.2.2 National Models of the ELP

Countries are invited to develop their own portfolio models for different age groups, which relate to the national educational systems and curricula. The Council of Europe approves one official version of the Portfolio for every country. In Austria, the official Portfolio was developed by the ACCML. I will discuss the developments connected to it in 6.3. However, unification among the national models and international recognition is reached through the use of the *Common European Framework* which makes a transparent presentation of language competences possible. By the end of 2003 the CE had accredited about 50 different ELPs by over 20 countries which varied widely in appearance (cf. Lenz 2004:24).

5.2.3 A Three-Part Structure

The three-part structure of the portfolio facilitates its use both for the learners as well as for teachers, job-interviewers, etc. because it is easy to get a quick overview of the information and to find what they need (cf. Meister 2003:74).

5.2.3.1 The Language Passport

This part of the ELP contains a description of the learner's profile of language skills, his/her level of communicative language proficiency, significant language and intercultural learning

experiences and formal qualifications and certifications which he/she has obtained. It is updated regularly by the learner. To secure pan-European recognition and comparison, the assessment of the learner's skills always has to relate to the six levels of the CEF. There is a standard model of a passport promoted by the Council of Europe.

5.2.3.2 The Language Biography

In this section the learner's history of language learning is described. The learner has to reflect about his/her learning, to self-assess him/herself and to judge his/her competences autonomously according to the CEF. There are sheets provided for self-evaluation, so-called 'can-do' checklists. Pupils have to assess their competences in listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production and writing according to the six common reference levels A1/A2, B1/B2 and C1/C2. Furthermore the learner receives advice for different learning strategies and to reflect on their learning. Learners are expected to set themselves goals and to check later whether they have achieved them or not. This part also includes reports about visits and exchanges as well as work experience abroad.

5.2.3.3 The Dossier

For the third section learners have to choose illustrative material that reflects their achievements they have recorded in the Passport and Learner Biography. The Dossier contains certificates, documents that confirm important language learning experiences (e.g. participation in language courses, exchange programmes, or stays abroad in general) and examples of personal work (texts, papers, videos, tapes etc.) (cf. Krieger 2001:14).

5.2.4 The Use of Portfolios in Schools

How useful is the Portfolio for schools? In the following I want to summarise some of the aspects which in my opinion express best the benefits the use of the portfolio can bring:

- The Portfolio can certainly contribute to the European dimension in language teaching as it provides a European-wide possibility of comparing the experience pupils make with their own and foreign languages. This is also thanks to the use of the CEF for the description of language competences.

- The Portfolio can be used at all ages and allows also to consider different types of schools and educational levels when being set up.
- The ELP facilitates the change from one educational institution to another. If the learner is equipped with his personal portfolio it will be possible for, e.g. the new teacher to understand right away the pupils' language experience.
- The use of the ELP in schools across Europe happens on a voluntary basis. For pupils it is exciting to work with this new tool, which puts them at the centre of language learning.
- It helps pupils realise that language learning does not only take place in school, but that they are exposed to language every moment of the day. It raises language awareness. This is a move away from seeing foreign language learning as 'another boring subject' where they are assessed and tested continuously to something which they also experience out of the school context.
- The portfolio tries to underline the 'can-do' aspect of learning and should thus have a motivating effect on the pupils.
- The use of the Portfolio in schools makes it possible for teachers to prepare lessons according to the pupils' entries (cf. Meister 2003:76). For instance, if he/she sees that his/her pupils are only little confident in writing in a foreign language, he/she can put more weight on practising writing in his/her classes.
- The Portfolio also addresses the issue of Cultural Awareness which is becoming increasingly important in language learning.
- Students learn to become independent in their learning and learn to reflect upon their learning processes. Self-assessment concedes a great amount of independence to the pupils. Heyworth (2004:20), in asking himself how reliable self-assessment is, refers to research carried out by Schneider and North (2000) which showed a high reliability.
- The portfolio supports the idea of 'life long learning' (cf. 5.1.2). Ideally, children in school are introduced to the portfolio and continue to use it after school.
- And finally, in the world of employment employers could find out what experience with (foreign) languages the employees has had. These days, where mobility on the job market gains importance, the use of the ELP could be of great relevance. The international recognition of the ELP will again be secured by the use of the CEF.

It has to be emphasised that the portfolio belongs to the learner and is not to be misused by teachers to assess the pupils (cf. Internet 9). The teacher plays an important role and has to encourage the student to make use of the portfolio and give advice if necessary. Although the ELP is far from exhaustively used across Europe, I see it as a step in the right direction. Edith Matzer maintains that in the next ten years the ELP will influence language teaching in Europe strongly and will maybe even lead to a paradigm shift (cf. 2001[1]:39). It will be interesting to find out whether it will find wide acceptance as a tool to promote self-assessment, cultural and language awareness. Again it would be useful to organise seminars to acquaint teachers with portfolios and to make them realise the advantages the use of the portfolio can bring both to teachers and learners.

6 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CEF IN AUSTRIA

6.1 Analysis of the Syllabuses for Higher Secondary Level

6.1.1 Aims of the Analysis

In the following I will analyse the syllabus for English for higher secondary level. My aim is simply to find out whether the *Common European Framework* has been implemented in the syllabus and which general tendencies of language teaching were taken into account. I have not followed any special procedure, but have simply compared the syllabus to the CEF.

6.1.2 Results of the Analysis

For the design of the new curriculum for lower secondary level, introduced in the academic year 2000/1, the CEF was not considered yet as the developments were still too recent. The new curriculum for higher secondary level, which has been in place since the present academic year 2004/5, includes references to the CEF in the syllabus for foreign languages. It also tried to implement innovative working instruments like the *European Language Portfolio*.

The ACCML states the following: "Eine der Hauptintentionen war es, den neuen Fremdsprachenlehrplan durch eine Orientierung am Europäischen Referenzrahmen des Europarates verstärkt in einen gesamteuropäischen Kontext einzubinden" (Internet 10). This is also stated in the syllabus itself: "Im Fremdsprachenunterricht ist der europäischen Dimension sowie den zunehmenden Mobilitätsanforderungen an die Bürgerinnen und Bürger der europäischen Gemeinschaft Rechnung zu tragen". It seems, therefore that the 'European dimension' and the importance of learning foreign languages for reasons of mobility have also entered the syllabuses.

The '*Bildungs- und Lehraufgabe'* is divided into three types of competences: action-oriented, concerning the language itself, where we find again the division of the four skills as well; intercultural competence; and finally the competence for autonomous life-long learning (including the acquisition of learning strategies). All of these competences reflect ideas which are also embodied in the CEF. With regard to learner autonomy the syllabus also advises the following: "Möglichkeiten zur Selbstevaluation sind dabei besonders zu berücksichtigen" (cf. Internet 11). The ELP would be such a tool, for instance.

While in the '*Bildungs-und Lehraufgabe'* the syllabus still speaks of the four skills (listening, reading, speaking, writing), in the '*Didaktische Grundsätze*' there is a distinction made between listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production and writing, which are exactly those indicated in the CEF. In this section of the syllabus there are also different competences described which the pupils should acquire. Apart from the linguistic competence (which regards intonation, pronunciation, vocabulary and idioms as well as grammar), these are pragmatic and socio-linguistic competences. These three types of competences are again those which the CEF describes (see 5.1.3). Pragmatic competences relate to the appropriate use of the language in specific communicative situations and speech functions thus assume an important role. Socio-linguistic competences describe the ability to note differences in register.

The direct influence of the CEF is to be seen in the '*Lehrstoff*' section of the syllabus. It is built up around the six reference levels:

> Die kommunikativen Teilkompetenzen, die Schülerinnen und Schüler im Laufe der Oberstufe erwerben sollen, folgen den international standardisierten Kompetenzniveaus A1, A2, B1, B2 des Gemeinsamen Europäischen Referenzrahmens (ERS) des Europarates und umfassen die Kann-Beschreibungen des Rasters zu den Fertigkeitsbereichen Hören, Lesen, an Gesprächen teilnehmen, zusammenhängend Sprechen und Schreiben. (Internet 11)

The 'can-do' lists have been adapted to German and descriptors of the levels are formulated as in the following example:

> Kompetenzniveaus A2: Hören: Die Schülerinnen und Schüler können einzelne Sätze und die gebräuchlichsten Wörter verstehen, wenn es um für sie wichtige Dinge geht (z.B.: sehr einfache Informationen zur Person und zur Familie, Einkaufen, Arbeit, nähere Umgebung). Sie verstehen das Wesentliche von kurzen, klaren und einfachen Mitteilungen und Durchsagen. (Internet 11)

The German descriptions of the reference levels relate to those that we find in the self-assessment grid in the CEF (see 2001:26-27). In order to compare the two, I want to cite the description for 'Listening' at level A2 of this grid:

> A2: Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and mattes in areas of immediate need. (CEF 2001:26)

The relation becomes clearly apparent. There are descriptions of this kind found for all the six levels of competence in the syllabus. The levels are then assigned to the single grades. Thus, pupils at fifth grade (with five years of instruction of the foreign language) are expected to have reached level B1. At sixth grade this level remains, although communicative situations, topic areas and different types of text have to be treated in more detail. After seventh and eighth grade, i.e. when the pupils leave school, they ideally have reached level B2. These are the levels for the first foreign language the pupils learn.

In general, there is a noticeable emphasis that the learner and his/her needs are really put at the centre of the language learning process. For instance, it is recommended to use many learner-centred, process- and product-oriented teaching methods, working methods and learning strategies; to introduce many different working methods (e.g. project work, reading diaries, *portfolios* [my italics]*);* to take different types of learners, learning styles and social skills into account; to use a wide variety of media, information and communication technologies; to offer the instruction of the language across the curriculum. (cf. Internet 11).

These are only a few of the points which I think represent the new position towards language teaching which has been taken in the syllabus. It mirrors many developments which have

occurred in language teaching today and addresses issues such as different types of learners and the importance of their individual support. The question, however, remains of how teachers will put the stipulation of the syllabus into practice.

6.2 The National Language Portfolio in Austria

6.2.1 Developments in Austria – Pilot Project Phase

Austria was one of the 15 countries which comprised part of the pilot project phase for the ELP from 1998-2000. That is why, when in March 2001 the Austrian Ministry of Education, Science and Culture gave the go ahead to design a national portfolio for pupils, the national project could already relate to initial work experience with portfolios. As mentioned in 5.2.2, the Austrian project of the pilot project phase was an adaptation of the ELP for Viennese vocational schools (cf. Matzer 2001:8).

Wernfried Krieger, who has represented Austria in this pan-European pilot project phase, describes some of the experiences with the national project in his article "Von Babel nach Europa. Sprachkenntnisse werden transparent" (2001). 57 teachers from 17 schools and 1300 pupils participated in the project (cf. Schärer 2000:34). The portfolio was made up of the usual three parts and contained in addition a dossier folder for further documentary material. Krieger speaks of the positive outcomes of this project: the majority of the pupils confirms that the ELP helps them become aware of their language competences and the assessment of their skills; the language passport was regarded as something practical, although checklists often had to be explained (especially to younger learners); and finally also the teachers have experienced the work with the portfolio as constructive and as a means of getting new approaches to language teaching and assessment (cf. Krieger 2001:14-15).

Parallel to this project there were further activities connected to portfolios going on in Austria at the time: from 1999-2001 the *Verband der Wiener Volksbildung* had set up a portfolio model for adult teaching; and in 2001 the CELP (*Central European Language Portfolio*) was initiated in international co-operation with Austria's neighbouring states.

6.2.2 The Portfolio for Lower Secondary Level

In 2001 the ACCML was commissioned by the Ministry to design Austrian models of the *European Language Portfolio*. In February 2002 for the first time a working team met at the ACCML, consisting of teachers, representatives of the pedagogic academies and school supervisory board and members of staff of the ACCML. The first development concerned the setting up of a portfolio for 10-15-year-olds at lower secondary level (*Unterstufe AHS* and *Hauptschule*) The Austrian portfolio project carries the title "*Das europäische Sprachenportfolio als Lernbegleiter in Österreich*", it should thus serve as a 'companion' for language learning, which in my opinion expresses very clearly the concept of portfolios. It should complement the learning process and give the learner guidance in his/her activities and transparency in his/her learning progress.

The first printed version of the portfolio was available in January 2003 and from March of the same year until March 2004 the trial period of the implementation of the Austrian language portfolio took place with the participation of 26 Austrian schools, 43 teachers and 750 pupils. The evaluation was carried out by the pedagogic academy of Graz-Eggenberg in co-operation with the Centre for School Development, Department II (cf. Internet 12). The results of this evaluation of the Austrian language portfolio are still not officially available. This will follow in spring 2005, which also, however, shows how recent these developments are.

Since the present academic year 2004/5, first language portfolios have been in use in schools all over Austria. It has to be stated, though, that the use of the ELP happens on a completely voluntary basis. As the portfolios can be independently ordered by the schools, it will also be difficult to get an overview of how many portfolios were bought and actually used. Matzer states that the ACCML does not plan seminars for teachers about the implementation of the ESP, but leaves this to pedagogic academies and universities (Matzer 2001[1]:42). I hope that this is really the case as it would be a pity if the implementation of the ELP fails due to a lack of teacher training.

In a seminar that was held at the end of the implementation phase on March 31st and April 1st 2004 with the participants of the project at the ACCML in Graz, the role of the ELP

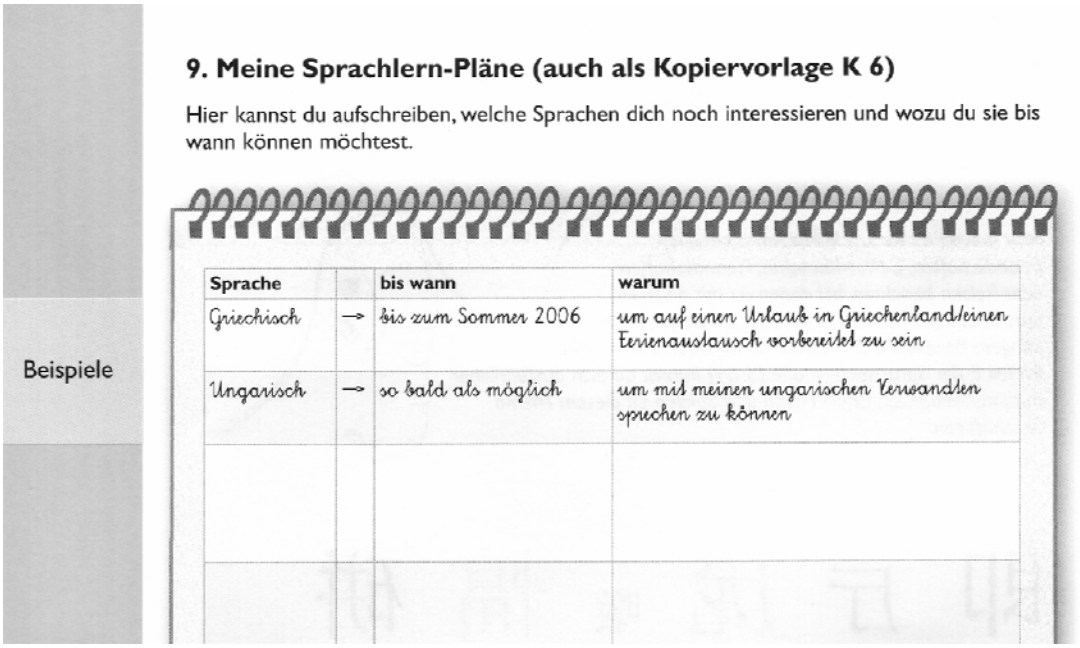
within teacher education was discussed. In the results it became clear that participants of the workshop hoped for, among others: a presentation of the portfolio as part of the work of the Council of Europe in a more general sense (i.e. also more information about the work of the CE and European tendencies in language teaching in general); a definition of the ELP in relation to other portfolio concepts; a description of the connection of the ELP with the Austrian curriculum and educational standards; a list of the benefits of the use of the portfolio with which teachers can identify; transparency in the work with the ELP and preparation for the presentation of the ELP to parents (cf. Internet 13). This shows that there is still a lot of work to do and that teacher training, in my opinion, will be important and crucial in the realisation of the Portfolio concept. Future developments regard also the setting up of a portfolio for elementary and higher secondary school (both general *AHS* and vocational *BMHS*), the latter in co-operation with the centre for job-related languages (CEBS – *Center für berufsbezogene Sprachen*) in Salzburg. There is also a planned version for adults.

6.2.3 Structure and Important Features of the Portfolio

The national model consists of the three usual parts (Language Passport, Language Biography and Dossier, see 5.2.3) and additionally contains learning advice, advice for how to successfully carry out conversations and how to act correctly and purposefully in groups. In the Language Biography there is also a part dedicated to intercultural learning. The design seems appropriate for 10-15-year-olds as they are directly addressed and the language is kept simple, e.g.: “Du hast das Europäische Sprachenportfolio, kurz ESP genannt, bekommen, es gehört dir und soll dich von nun an beim Sprachenlernen in der Schule, aber auch außerhalb der Schule, begleiten” (Abuja et al. 2004:5). The ‘Portfoliant’, an elephant who speaks to the pupils, explains the individual parts to them and guides them through the portfolio, is probably more suitable for 10-year-olds.

In the following I want briefly to comment on the Language Biography, which consists of five parts. The first concerns the linguistic history of the language learner: ‘My language learning: past – present – future’. Pupils have to describe which languages they have learnt in their family, in the kindergarten and elementary school and lower secondary school. Furthermore they have to explain if their schools have laid any special focus on language

learning (e.g. English across the curriculum), language projects in which they have participated, languages which they have learnt outside school, language and intercultural experience they have had with media in general (e.g. writing emails, pen-pals, etc.). The final table asks the learners to set themselves goals they want to achieve. For each scheme the pupils have to fill out examples are also given. This is, for example what the description of "*Meine Sprachlern-Pläne*" looks like:



Beispiele

9. Meine Sprachlern-Pläne (auch als Kopiervorlage K 6)

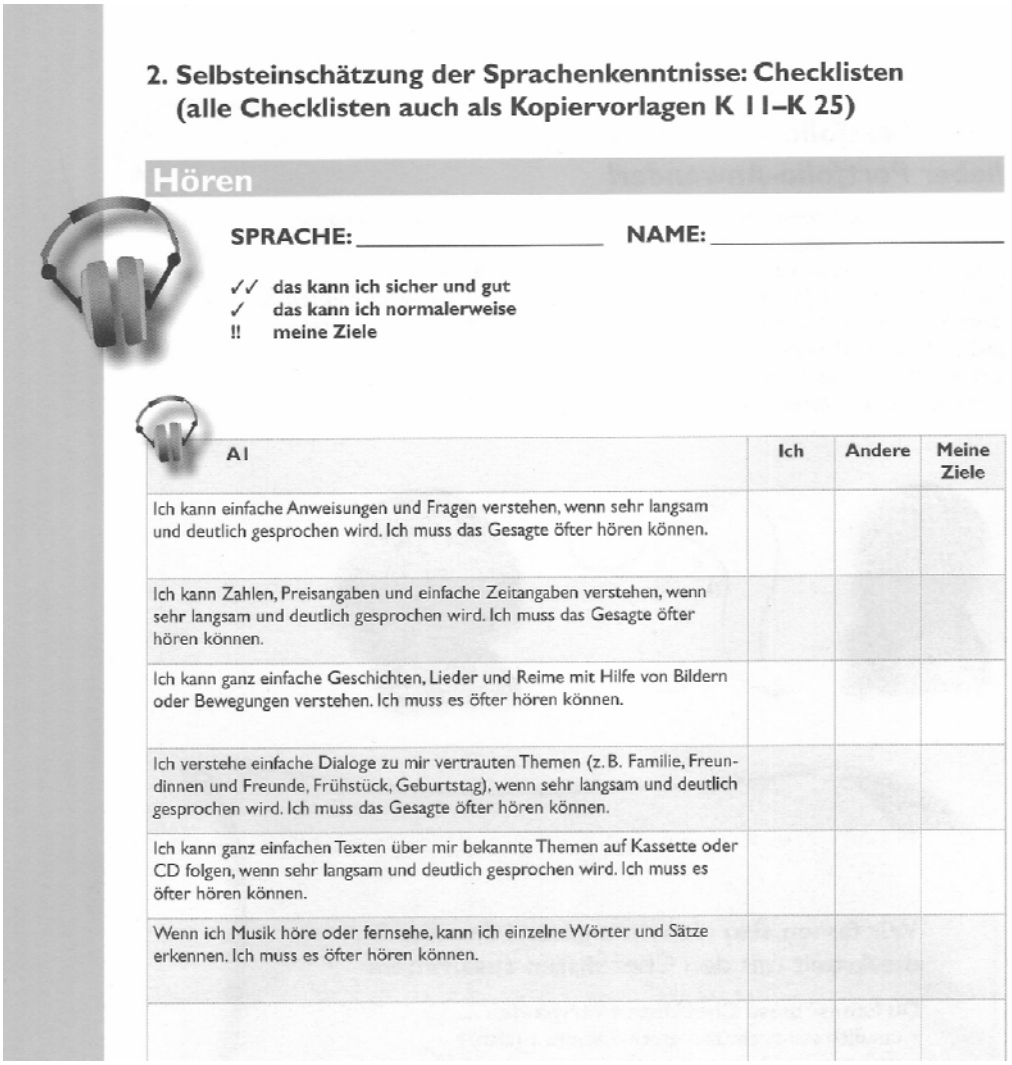
Hier kannst du aufschreiben, welche Sprachen dich noch interessieren und wozu du sie bis wann können möchtest.

Sprache		bis wann	warum
Griechisch	→	bis zum Sommer 2006	um auf einen Urlaub in Griechenland/einen Ferienaustausch vorbereitet zu sein
Ungarisch	→	so bald als möglich	um mit meinen ungarischen Verwandten sprechen zu können

(Abuja et al. 2004:20)

The second part of the Language Biography contains advice for the pupils' leaning strategies. In my opinion, this section is very helpful and clearly structured. The third part concerns more specifically language learning, the things the pupils do habitually and plan to do in the near future.

The fourth part includes the checklists for self-assessment which consist of 'can do' grids related to the five skills and six levels of performance indicated in the CEF. Two pupils, 'Nick' and 'Lena', are taken as examples of how learners are introduced to the checklists. The 'Portfoliant' describes how to handle them. The checklists contain both a section for self-assessment and the assessment of others *('Andere')*, which can be either teachers or classmates. This is, for instance, the checklist for 'Listening' at level A1:



2. Selbsteinschätzung der Sprachenkenntnisse: Checklisten (alle Checklisten auch als Kopiervorlagen K 11–K 25)

Hören

SPRACHE: _____ **NAME:** _____

✓✓ das kann ich sicher und gut
✓ das kann ich normalerweise
!! meine Ziele

A1	Ich	Andere	Meine Ziele
Ich kann einfache Anweisungen und Fragen verstehen, wenn sehr langsam und deutlich gesprochen wird. Ich muss das Gesagte öfter hören können.			
Ich kann Zahlen, Preisangaben und einfache Zeitangaben verstehen, wenn sehr langsam und deutlich gesprochen wird. Ich muss das Gesagte öfter hören können.			
Ich kann ganz einfache Geschichten, Lieder und Reime mit Hilfe von Bildern oder Bewegungen verstehen. Ich muss es öfter hören können.			
Ich verstehe einfache Dialoge zu mir vertrauten Themen (z. B. Familie, Freundinnen und Freunde, Frühstück, Geburtstag), wenn sehr langsam und deutlich gesprochen wird. Ich muss das Gesagte öfter hören können.			
Ich kann ganz einfachen Texten über mir bekannte Themen auf Kassette oder CD folgen, wenn sehr langsam und deutlich gesprochen wird. Ich muss es öfter hören können.			
Wenn ich Musik höre oder fernsehe, kann ich einzelne Wörter und Sätze erkennen. Ich muss es öfter hören können.			

(Abuja et al. 2004:40)

If we compare these descriptions with the self-assessment grid that is indicated in the CEF, and, for instance for 'Listening' at level A1, we can recognise the direct relations. It states:

> I can recognize familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly. (CEF 2001:26)

This relates almost directly to one of the descriptions of the portfolio: "Ich verstehe einfache Dialoge zu mir vertrauten Themen (z.B.: Familie, Freundinnen und Freunde, Frühstück, Geburtstag), wenn sehr langsam und deutlich gesprochen wird. Ich muss das Gesagte öfter hören können" (Abuja et al. 2004:40). In the portfolio skill descriptions, which occur in the CEF and the Language Passport, are thus divided into smaller parts and more specifically.

The final part of the Language Biography is dedicated to the pupils' intercultural experience in Austria and elsewhere.

6.2.4 Portfolio and Curriculum

The portfolio can perfectly fulfil many of the demands of the syllabus for lower secondary level, which was designed for lower secondary level in 2000. The ACCML presents a whole list of the parts of the curriculum which correspond to the intentions of the ELP (Internet 13)[10]. I will name four of them which occur in the syllabus for foreign languages.

For instance, under the section '*Bildungs- und Lehraufgabe*' we find:

> Der Prozess des Fremdsprachenerwerbs bietet zahlreiche Möglichkeiten der Auseinandersetzung mit interkulturellen Themen. Das bewusste Aufnehmen solcher Fragestellungen soll zu eine verstärkten Sensibilisierung der Schülerinnen und Schüler führen und ihr Verständnis für andere Kulturen und Lebensweisen vertiefen. (Internet 13)

Fostering Intercultural Awareness is one of the aims of the ELP. Pupils have to record their language and intercultural experiences and therefore also become more sensitive to cultural differences. As I have mentioned above (cf. 6.2.3.), in the Austrian language portfolio there is a whole section of the Learner Biography dedicated to 'Intercultural experiences'. There, it is proposed, for instance, to collect greetings and numbers in different languages. The portfolio would fulfil this demand very well.

Under the section '*Didaktische Grundsätze*' we find the following examples:

> Ein bewusster und reflektiver Umgang mit Sprache ist zu fördern. (Internet 13)

It is clear that through the use of the Portfolio pupils are forced to reflect on their language experience, become aware of their own and the language they are learning. The whole Portfolio can even be used in the teaching of the mother tongue. In my opinion, this is a strong point of the Portfolio, as reflecting about languages, the uses of them and about

[10] In the ACCML they have taken the syllabus for *Hauptschule*, which, however is almost identical to the *AHS* one.

language learning is very useful and can certainly have a positive influence on the learner's motivation.

> Die Vermittlung und Anwendung von Lerntechniken, insbesondere im Hinblick auf autonomes Lernen und als Grundlage für das Erlernen weiterer Fremdsprachen, soll zentrales Anliegen sein. (Internet 13)

This quote taken from the syllabus is also a crucial point. The instruction of different learning techniques with regard to autonomous learning is another request which the Portfolio certainly responds to. The section in the Language Biography about 'Tips for effective learning' can help the students to reflect on their techniques, illustrate some new ones for them and thus contribute to efficiency of learning. This is also seen by the syllabus as the basis for the learning of further languages which responds to the demands of the CE of plurilingualism and life-long learning.

> Die Lehrerinnen und Lehrer sollen auf die Qualität der sprachlichen Äußerungen achten. Der individuelle Lernfortschritt und das Bemühen um die Optimierung von Arbeitsergebnissen ist zu beachten. (Internet 13)

The last example refers to the importance of supporting the pupils' individual learning progress. For this, the Portfolio is also the perfect tool as it illustrates the learner's personal level of competence and makes individual developments transparent.

These examples are just a few out of many, which illustrate that the portfolio can be used perfectly with regard to the syllabus. This may also motivate teachers who might be skeptical about using the ELP in their lessons. I see the European Language Portfolio as an instrument which reflects many tendencies of the instruction of foreign languages of our times and fulfils the demands that are made of language teaching. In the following years it will be interesting to find out whether it manages to find its fixed place in language classes in Austria.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The learning of foreign languages is an enormously important part of the education of our times. We need our own and foreign languages in order to communicate, to exchange ideas and co-operate with other citizens, to fight against and overcome prejudices and stereotypes, to preserve the rich cultural heritage we have in Europe, to find our place in a world of globalisation and to fulfil the demands of mobility during our studies or in our work place. I thus maintain that research made in the field of language teaching and learning is not only very interesting, but also useful and valuable. In this thesis I have tried to show in which way language learning in Austria was influenced by the activities of the Council of Europe as well as how it has changed during the past few years. Thus, it was interesting to look at the historical developments that have taken place in Europe, including Austria. Having arrived at the goal I set myself before writing this thesis, I will now comment on some of the results which I have obtained.

The first part of my analyses concerned the influences of communicative language teaching and the setting up of the *Threshold Level* on the Austrian syllabuses for English of 1985 and 1989 and three textbooks. The influences on the syllabuses were clearly visible. The main objective of the syllabus for lower secondary level was the achievement of communicative competence. Importance is attached to the notional/functional description of language. Through the tables which I have drawn up it became noticeable in what ways the categories of the *Threshold Level* corresponded to those indicated in the syllabus. Most were to be found in both documents, although the arrangement in the syllabus is different. The syllabus also took the function of 'ensuring communication' into consideration, which the *T-Level* did not. The topic areas corresponded to a great extent to both documents. The four skills assume an important role in the syllabus and also the subordinate role of grammar as a means to guarantee communication became evident, which show the influence of the communicative approach. Grammatical forms were also indicated by notional/functional descriptions. The syllabus for higher secondary level showed fewer influences, but they were still perceptible. This can be seen, for instance, through the tables of the notional categories and speech functions which I have compiled. With this syllabus the general influence of the communicative approach was more visible; less so that of the *Threshold Level*. This is perhaps obvious considering the fact that students at higher secondary level

should already be able to survive linguistically in a foreign country. All in all I have to say that it was interesting to examine the syllabuses and directly see the influence and adaptation of the theory which I had studied before.

Taking a step further from the analysis of the syllabuses, I analysed three Austrian schoolbooks for English which were used in the 1980s at lower secondary level. This part of the analysis proved to be more difficult. I retrospect that it might have been of more interest to analyse also a textbook which had come out before the communicative approach gained a foothold. This way the differences would have probably been more apparent. The three course books were all published in the mid 1980s and are thus all influenced by communicative language teaching. In their choice of topics they relate to a great extent to the *Threshold Level*, as can be seen from the table which I have compiled. I have also created a table in which I compared the realisations of the speech functions of the course books, but have not found very many differences. The textbook which was certainly most interesting to analyse was *Ticket to Britain* as it was the outcome of a project that formed part of the Council of Europe's Modern Language projects. The direct influence was thus perceptible with regard to structure, content and the choice of exercises of the textbook.

The study of the *Common European Framework* was very interesting as it showed the most recent tendencies of language teaching. Although the *Threshold Level* is also a document that aims at the harmonisation of language-learning and teaching, it is noticeable that it was primarily concerned with language based specifications, while the CEF also includes the learner's cultural and more personal competences. It thus guarantees a more comprehensive overview of the field of language learning and teaching. The analysis of the syllabus for higher secondary level showed the influence of this document, as there were the six levels of reference indicated and also the 'can-do' lists which form part of the self-assessment grid of the CEF. The Austrian portfolio was set up after the pan-European pilot project phase and has been officially accredited by the Council of Europe. It shows without doubt the influences of the developments happening at a European level. It will be interesting to look at the actual effects the *Common European Framework* has had on language teaching in Austria in a few years time. The fact that the work for implementing the document is still in progress did not allow me to make any detailed analysis at the present time.

In this conclusion I also want to express some wishes and suggestions that have arisen during the research for this thesis and of my studies in general. For example, the fact that the ECML should try to reach more students at university level as I have found many of my colleagues have never heard of the Centre or its work. The resource centre could prove useful for specific research projects or also simply for general interest. I consider it important to inform future language teachers about the developments which have been going on or, even more important, are still on-going. One successful example of the co-operation between university students, the ECML and ACCML was the project seminar "Second Language Acquisition: The Interface Between Theory and Practice" (see 2.1.4 and 2.2.2 in this thesis), which was held at the university of Graz in the winter semester of 2002/3. The results of the project, which were also summed up in a publication (available also online on the ECML website: http://www.ecml.at/doccentre/doccentre.asp?t=relresearch), were presented by the students to members of the ECML Governing Board, to representatives of the Language Policy Division and to other FL experts in January 2003. I took part in the seminar myself and greatly enjoyed it as we were given the possibility to get insights into the work of the ECML and ACCML. Everyone proved helpful and interested in our project, which was very motivating for us students. In addition to this successful project seminar, I also want to point to the dissemination project 'Connecting Tertiary Education Experts - CONTEXT' by the *Verein EFSZ in Österreich*. This project is concerned with the dissemination of the work of the ECML at tertiary educational level. These two examples show that dissemination work is in progress, which is very positive.

Another wish which I would like to express is that as a future language teacher I hope to find support also for the teacher's side. 'Learner-centeredness' often only concentrates on the learner and leaves the teacher on his/her own. My suggestion therefore would be not only to think of and study innovations, but also to ask whether schools and teachers are ready and prepared for them. A final, more personal, wish would be to find opportunities for further trainings for graduates in Austria, ideally at a university, for instance, some post-graduate programmes.

Clearly, Austria has benefited enormously from its close connection with the Council of Europe, particularly from the setting up of the ECML in Graz. It is a fitting culmination of this relationship that one of the leading Council of Europe theorists, John Trim, has donated

his papers and other work documenting the important phase of language teaching history which is the subject of this thesis to the ECML in Graz. The 'John Trim Collection', which will be available to researchers and FL experts, will be opened at a ceremony marking the European Day of Languages in September 2005.

I wrote this thesis bearing in mind my situation both as language learner and as future language teacher. A few of the things that I have come across during my research I have experienced personally in school. Others, more recent developments, I hope to be able to experience from the teacher's side. I am certain, however, that language learning and teaching will always remain a dynamic process. I look forward to being part of it in the future too.

8 ZUSAMMENFASSUNG - GERMAN SUMMARY

Der Europarat hat seit seiner Gründung 1949 das Ziel demokratisches Denken und Handeln sowie die Achtung der Menschenrechte in Europa zu sichern. Er hat sich in seiner Arbeit sozialen und politischen Angelegenheiten gewidmet und sich auch mit der Schaffung einer europäischen kulturellen Identität auseinandergesetzt. Besonders zu beachten sind seine bildungspolitischen Initiativen, die von Anfang an einen wichtigen Teil der Aktivitäten ausmachten. In der vorliegenden Diplomarbeit wird der Einfluss der Arbeit des Europarates im Bereich des Fremdsprachenunterrichts auf den Unterricht an Österreichs Schulen untersucht. Es wird dabei fast nur auf die Sekundarstufe, genauer auf die Allgemeinbildenden Höheren Schulen, eingegangen und im Besonderen auf das Unterrichtsfach Englisch.

Nach einem einleitenden Kapitel werden in Kapitel zwei allgemeine Hintergrundinformationen präsentiert, die die Basis für die folgenden Abschnitte darstellen sollen. Dabei wird einerseits auf die Situation in Österreich eingegangen und andererseits auf die Arbeit des Europarates. In der historischen Entwicklung des Fremdsprachenunterrichts in Österreich im 20. Jahrhundert spielen besonders die Neuerungen der letzten 30 Jahre eine wichtige Rolle. Das österreichische Sprach-Kompetenz-Zentrum (kurz ÖSPK oder ÖSZ) ist als Teil des Bundesministeriums für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur sehr stark in die Entwicklungen auf nationaler Eben eingebunden, agiert aber auch als Vermittler zwischen Europarat und Österreich. Die Arbeit des Europarates auf dem Gebiet des Fremdsprachenunterrichts findet einerseits in der *Language Policy Division* mit Sitz in Straßburg statt und andererseits im Europäischen Fremdsprachenzentrum (ECML), das sich in Graz befindet.

Der Hauptteil der Arbeit widmet sich zwei Dokumenten des Europarats und deren Einflüssen auf den österreichischen Fremdsprachenunterricht. Diese sind das *Threshold Level* (zu Deutsch meist ‚Kontaktschwelle'), das 1975 erschienen ist, und der *Gemeinsame Europäische Referenzrahmen* (GER), veröffentlicht im Jahre 2001. Beide dienen dem Ziel der Harmonisierung des Fremdsprachenunterrichts.

Vor der Beschreibung des *Threshold Levels* wird in der vorliegenden Diplomarbeit auch der theoretische Hintergrund, der zu seiner Entstehung geführt hat, beleuchtet. Die wichtigste Erkenntnis der Entwicklungen in der Linguistik der 60-er und 70er Jahre war, dass wir mit Sprache handeln, dass wir mit ihr kommunikative Funktionen erfüllen und dabei bestimmte Sprachkonzepte ausdrücken. Aus den Forschungen aus Sprachwissenschaft, Psychologie, Philosophie, Soziologie und Erziehungswissenschaft entstand schließlich in den 70er Jahren der sogenannte kommunikative Fremdsprachenunterricht. In den Entwicklungen die folgten, spielte der Europarat eine entscheidende Rolle. Seine Arbeit wurde schließlich durch die Publikation des *Threshold Level* gekrönt. Es handelt sich dabei um einen ‚Minimallehrzielkatalog', der zur Beschreibung von Lehrzielen für den Fremdsprachen-unterricht diente. Er beschreibt mit Hilfe von Funktionen und Notionen die Sprachmittel, die nötig sind, um die Kontaktschwelle in eine andere Sprachgemeinschaft zu überschreiten. Die ursprüngliche Version war für erwachsene Sprachlernende gedacht. Nach ihrer begeisterten Aufnahme wurde schließlich auch eine Version für Fremdsprachenlernende in der Schule erarbeitet. Danach wurde die praktische Realisation des *Threshold Levels* erprobt. Zur gleichen Zeit wurde auch eine Reihe von methodologischen Mitteln zur Umsetzung des kommunikativen Fremdsprachenunterrichts. entwickelt. Nachdem erste Einflüsse in der Curriculumentwicklung bemerkbar waren, wurden sie danach ebenso in Materialentwicklung und Methodik spürbar.

Auch im österreichischen Fremdsprachenunterricht sind all diese Tendenzen zu erkennen. In der vorliegenden Arbeit wurden die österreichischen Lehrpläne für Englisch von 1985 (LP Unterstufe) und 1989 (LP Oberstufe) sowie drei österreichische Lehrbücher untersucht. Bei der Analyse der Lehrpläne wurde der Einfluss des kommunikativen Fremdsprachenunterrichts und des Minimallehrzielkatalogs des Europarates deutlich. Im Lehrplan für die Unterstufe finden sich etwa Sprachfunktionen, die ähnlich denen der Listen des *Threshold Levels* sind. Die Unterscheidung der vier Fertigkeiten und die Wichtigkeit, die den rezeptiven Fertigkeiten zukommt, die Beschreibung von grammatischen Formen mit Hilfe von Notionen, das Erreichen kommunikativer Kompetenz als Hauptziel des Fremdsprachenunterrichts – das alles sind Indikatoren dafür, dass diese Beeinflussung eindeutig stattgefunden hat.

Der zweite Teil der Analyse widmet sich, wie gesagt, drei österreichischen Lehrbüchern für Englisch. Österreich hat eine aktive Rolle in der Arbeit des Europarates gespielt und hat unter anderem mit dem Projekt „Englisch an Gesamtschulen“ zu den am Ende der 70-er Jahre initiierten Sprachprojekten des Rates beigetragen. Aus den Ergebnissen des nationalen Projekts und der Reihe von Schulversuchen, die in den damaligen Jahren in Österreich stattfanden, entstand unter anderem das Schulbuch *Ticket to Britain*. Dasselbige, sowie *English for You and Me* und *Contacts* sind Untersuchungsobjekte dieser Arbeit. Alle drei sind Lehrbücher für die Unterstufe und weisen eine Orientierung am kommunikativen Fremdsprachenunterricht auf. Sie präsentieren eine ähnliche Menge an Sprachmitteln und versuchen alle Sprachfunktionen einzubauen. Dabei ist das Lehrbuch *Ticket to Britain* besonders zu beachten, weil es als direkte praktische Umsetzung des *Threshold Level*s gedacht war. Dies wird deutlich, wenn in der Analyse ein Blick auf Sprachfunktionen und Notionen geworfen wird. Mit der Schulbuchuntersuchung endet der erste wichtige Teil der Arbeit.

Der zweite Hauptteil beginnt mit dem 5. Kapitel. In den 90-er Jahren wurde, basierend auf dem kommunikativen Fremdsprachenunterricht, ein international gültiger und anerkannter Rahmen zur Beschreibung sprachlicher Kompetenzen formuliert - der *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (zu Deutsch „Der Gemeinsame europäische Referenzrahmen für Sprachen: lernen, lehren, beurteilen“). Dieser enthält eine Skala mit sechs Einteilungsstufen (A1/A2, B1/B2, C1/C2), mit Hilfe derer die Fertigkeiten der Lernenden beschrieben werden können. Der Referenzrahmen stellt nicht nur das sprachliche Können an sich dar, sondern geht darüber hinaus bei der Beschreibung der sprachlichen Kompetenz auch auf Einzelaspekte des Sprachenlernens ein, die bis dahin wenig Wichtigkeit hatten oder vielmehr nicht bewertet wurden. Ein Beispiel wäre etwa die wichtige kulturelle Komponente, die Teil des Sprachenlernens ist, beziehungsweise das Konzept der ‚interkulturellen Kompetenz’. Das Erlernen einer Fremdsprache wird in Einzelkomponente aufgeteilt und es wird dadurch auch erstmals möglich, Teilkompetenzen zu bewerten und vor allem wert zu schätzen. Ferner unterstützt der GER die Ideen des lebenslangen Fremdsprachenlernens und des Plurilingualismus‘ des Europarates.

Beim Symposium des Europarates 1991 in Rüschlikon wurde neben der Erstellung des GER auch der Beschluss gefasst, als konkrete Umsetzung des Referenzrahmens ein europäisches

Portfolio der Sprachen (ESP oder EPS) auszuarbeiten. Von 1998 bis 2000 nahmen 15 Nationen an einer Pilotphase dieses Projekts teil, um brauchbare ESP zu entwerfen, in Folge zu erproben und zu evaluieren, und sie so schließlich für eine großflächige Implementierung in Europa verfügbar zu machen. Auch Österreich beteiligte mit dem Portfolio Projekt für Wiener berufsbildende Schulen. 2001 wurde schließlich das ÖSPK vom Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur mit dem Auftrag vertraut, ein erstes offizielles, nationales ESP zu schaffen.

Nach den theoretischen Erläuterungen dieser Unternehmungen folgt in der vorliegenden Arbeit wieder ein Analyseteil. Der Einfluss des GER ist im Aufbau des neuen Oberstufenlehrplans, der seit dem heurigen Schuljahr 2004/05 eingesetzt wird, deutlich zu sehen. So werden auch im Lehrplan die sechs Einteilungsstufen zur Beschreibung der Kompetenzen und Sprachniveaus der Schüler angeführt; außerdem wurde festgesetzt, zu welchem Zeitpunkt die Schüler welche Stufe erreichen sollten. Das erste offizielle, vom Europarat akkreditierte, Sprachenportfolio, das das ÖSPK vorläufig für die Mittelstufe entworfen hat, kann auch seit diesem Schuljahr auf freiwilliger Basis in den Klassen eingesetzt werden. In der Diplomarbeit wird sein Aufbau präsentiert. Die Auswertung der Ergebnisse der offiziellen Testphase ist im Moment noch nicht beendet, sie wird im Frühjahr 2005 vom ÖSPK veröffentlicht werden. Auch weitere Portfolios für die Grundschulen, Oberstufe und für die Erwachsenenbildung sind in Planung.

Alle die hier nur kurz angeführten Aspekte und Entwicklungen wurden in dieser Diplomarbeit berücksichtigt, diskutiert und - wo möglich - analysiert. In den Untersuchungen der Lehrpläne, der Schulbücher und des nationalen Sprachenportfolios wurde der Einfluss der Arbeit des Europarates auf den Fremdsprachenunterricht in Österreich deutlich. Entwicklungen, die vom Europarat ausgegangen waren, fanden sehr oft ihre praktische Umsetzung auf österreichischer Ebene. Dabei kann man jedoch auch guter Dinge von einer gegenseitigen Beeinflussung sprechen, weil Österreich in seinen Bestrebungen auch aktiv zu den gesamteuropäischen Aktivitäten beigetragen hat.

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10 USEFUL LINKS

- **The Council of Europe**
  http://www.coe.int

- **Language Policy Division (Strasbourg)**
  http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/education/Languages/Language_Policy/default.asp#TopOfPage

- **European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) (Graz)**
  http://www.ecml.at/

- **"Second Language Acquisition. The Interface Between Theory and Practice."**
  Summary of findings of a project-based linguistics seminar held at the Department of English Studies of the University of Graz, Austria. Oct 2002 - Jan 2003.
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- **Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture (BMBWK)**
  http://www.bmbwk.gv.at

- **The Austrian Centre of Competence in Modern Languages** (**ACCML**)
  http://www.sprachen.ac.at/

11 APPENDIX

- Comparison of Realisations of Speech Functions in the Textbooks for First Grade

- Global Scale of the CEF

Comparison of Realisations of Speech Functions Introduced in the Textbooks for First Grade

1. Soziale Kontakte herstellen und fortführen (Establishing Social Contacts), z.B.:

jemanden ansprechen; jemanden/sich vorstellen; jemanden grüßen; jemanden einladen; eine Einladung annehmen/ablehnen; sich entschuldigen; sich am Telefon melden;

Ticket to Britain	English for You and Me	Contacts
What's your name? So fragst du, wenn du wissen willst, wie jemand heißt.	**What's your name?**	**What is your name?** **And who are you? And you? And your name?**
I'm + name So kannst du dich selbst vorstellen. **My name's + name**	**I'm + name.**	**I am + name.** **My name is + name.**
Hallo, + name So begrüßt man Freunde und Bekannte.	**Hello. / Hi.**	**Hello. / Hi.**
Good morning/afternoon/evening + name So begrüßt man andere (Erwachsene).	**Good morning/afternoon.**	**Good morning / afternoon / evening / night.**
Good-bye + name So verabschiedet man sich.	**Goodbye. Bye bye.**	**Good bye. Bye.**
This is + name So stellst du jemanden vor.	**This is...**	**This is…**
What's your telephone number?	**What's your telephone number?**	
Hallo. / Hallo, 4689327. So meldet man sich am Telefon.	**8532175./ Hello.**	**Hello, 40145.**
Hallo, is that (2748951)? So fragst du, ob du die richtige Nummer gewählt hast.	**Who is speaking?**	
Yes, (Mrs. Fowles) speaking. So kannst du antworten, wenn du angerufen wirst.	**This is Mary speaking.**	**Hello, this is…speaking.**
Sorry, but he's / she's not in / here. So sagst du, dass die gewünschte Person nicht da ist.	**Brenda isn't at home.**	
No, this is (7490423). So sagst du, wenn ein Anrufer die falsche Nummer gewählt hat.	**Sorry, this is (734569).**	
Sorry, wrong number So sagst du, wenn du selbst eine falsche Nummer gewählt hast	**Sorry, wrong number.**	

Can I speak to (Susan)? So fragst du am Telefon nach jemandem.	**Can I speak to (Brenda)?**	**Is (John) in?** **Can I talk to…?**
Just a minute So sagst du, wenn der andere einen Augenblick warten soll.	**One moment, please.**	**Wait a moment, please.**
I am sorry… / Sorry… So kannst du dich entschuldigen.	**I am sorry… / Sorry…**	**Sorry…/ I am sorry…** **Sorry, I'm late.**
I have forgotten (to do my homework). So sagst du, dass du etwas (zu tun) vergessen hast.	**I have forgotten (my exercise book).**	**Sorry, I haven't got my…today.**
Excuse me,… Wenn du eine fremde Person etwas fragen möchtest, kannst du sie so anreden.	**Excuse me,…**	**Excuse me,…**
Wenn du dich bedanken möchtest, sagst du „**Thank you.“**	**Thank you. / Thanks a lot.**	**Thanks. / Thank you.**
	Can you come over to my place? Can you come this afternoon?	**Have (tea) with us.**

2. Beziehungen regeln (Settling Relationships), z.B.:

Erlaubnis bitten, erteilen, verweigern; Rat geben; nach dem Befinden fragen; jemanden warnen; jemanden loben; eine Bedingung und deren Folgen ausdrücken;

Ticket to Britain	English for You and Me	Contacts
What's the matter (with Tom)? **Are you ill?** **Do/Does your…hurt?**	**What's the matter with you?** **Have you got a problem?**	
You should (go to the dentist's) Wenn du jemandem einen Rat geben willst, kannst du das mit "you should" einleiten		
		Fine. / Well done. / Very good. / Splendid. / Good.
How are you? **Fine, thanks. Not too bad. Okay, thanks. Not very well.**	**How are you?** **You look tired.** **Fine, thanks. I'm okay / not okay / tired.**	
Can I…	**Can/May I …borrow you (biro), please?+** **Can I …play with your computer game, Mike?** **Can I help you? Can I bring (a flowerpot)?** **Can I open the window?**	**Can I have a look at it?** **Can/May I…?** **Can I have a / another / a…of… / some… / some more…**
Yes, of course. Here you are.	**Yes, sure. / Here you are ./ Yes, of course. / Yes, good.** **Fine. Good. Yes, good idea.**	**Yes, of course. / Here you are. / One moment, please.**
	No, not a flowerpot. / No, sorry. I need it.	
		I could not play / go…

3. Kommunikation sicherstellen (Ensuring Communication) z.B.:

z.B.: um Aufmerksamkeit bitten; um Wiederholung und langsameres Sprechen bitten; Nichtverstehen/Nichtwissen äußern; Rückfragen äußern

Ticket to Britain	English for You and Me	Contacts
I don't know So sagst du, wenn du etwas nicht weißt	**(Sorry), I don't know.**	**No idea. I do not know.**
Wenn du einen Gesprächspartner nicht verstanden hast und möchtest, dass er ein Wort wiederholt, sagst du: **Pardon?**	**Pardon?** **I don't understand the word / sentence "…"** **Can you spell that, please? How do you spell that?** **Sorry, I don't understand.** **Not so fast, please!**	**Pardon?** **Sorry, I don't understand.** **I cannot understand.** **Say it again, please. Very slowly. Speak up, please!** **Can you spell / repeat it, please?** **Please, write it down for me.**
Kinder sind überrascht und fragen, ob sie wohl richtig gehört haben: **an elephant?**		
		Like this, you see?
	Excuse me, I've got a question.	

4. Stellungnahmen abgeben (Making Comments), z.B.:

Zustimmung/Ablehnung ausdrücken; widersprechen/verneinen; eine Begründung geben/erfragen; Vermutung/Zweifel äußern; Erwartung ausdrücken; Vorliebe ausdrücken; Vergleiche anstellen; sich über Vorhaben/Absichten äußern;

Ticket to Britain	English for You and Me	Contacts
Yes, of course. Yes, fantastic. Yes, okay. Okay. All right.	**Yes, sure.**	**Yes, of course. / Yes, sure. / Of course. / Sure.**
You are right.	**That's right.**	**Yes. / Yes, I am. / Yes, I do. / Yes, a little.**
Zustimmung: **Yes, okay/ All right / Yes, fantastic.**	**Yes, okay.**	**All right. That is a good idea.**
I think so, too. So sagst du, wenn du der gleichen Meinung bist	**I think you are right.** **I think so too.**	
	I don't think so. I think… **I think your (biro) is (green).** **I think the best present is…**	**I think he's busy. / I think… / I don't think it is…** **I think she called / phoned / took / kept / killed…**
I think it's Peter's. Wenn du nur vermutest, wem es gehört, sagst du so		
...too (expensive) So sagst du, dass dir etwas nicht passt	**They are too cold.**	**…too cold/hot.**
I can do it myself So sagst du, dass du es selbst machen kannst und keine Hilfe brauchst		
You are wrong.	**No, that's wrong.**	
Wenn du sagen möchtest, dass du etwas nicht hast, dafür aber jemand anderer, sagst **No, I haven't + BUT + Person + has**		**No, but I have Swedish friends. / No, but I play volleyball.**
Perhaps So kannst du sagen, wenn du etwas vermutest.	**Perhaps he is not strong enough.**	**Perhaps I can ring later. You are Bob, right?**
No, that's silly. / boring. / stupid.	**No, it isn't.**	**No, I am not. / No, we are… / No, it is not. / No, I don't. / No, not a word. / No, I cannot. / No, do you? / No, I don't like…**
I'm going to + (watch telly) damit kannst du ausdrücken, dass du die Absicht hast, etwas zu tun.	**Andy is going to buy a…for…** **I'm going to make …for…**	**…is going to buy…** **Who is going to buy…**
	I/We like English. **I don't like…**	**I like a big breakfast. / She is fond of… / She likes… / I do not like…**
	I hope to get …this year.	
	They want to watch TV.	

5. Wünschen und Bitten äußern bzw. erfragen (Expressing/Inquiring About Desires), z.B.:

Glückwünsche aussprechen; Wünsche und Bitten vorbringen; Bitten erfüllen/abschlagen; etwas anbieten, annehmen/ablehnen;

Ticket to Britain	English for You and Me	Contacts
Can I have < **some** } **tea**; **cake**; **a roll** So fragst du, wenn du etwas zu essen oder zu trinken haben möchtest.	**Can I have…?**	**Can/May I have…?**
Wenn du jemanden bitten möchtest, etwas für dich zu tun , so sagst du **Would you + Tätigkeit + please**	**Would you clean the blackboard, please?**	
I need (some nails) Mit dem Wort "need" kannst du sagen, dass du etwas brauchst.	**We need some bread.**	**They need one more / another…** **I need…, (please).**
	I want the blue skirt from Ann.	**I want…, (please). My mother wants me to…**
Can you wash the car, please.	**Can you bring us the menu, please?**	**Please, get a…for…** **Can you pass me the…, please?**
		Hand me the / a…, please. Pass the / a…, please.
Sorry, there isn't/aren't any left So sagt man, dass vom Gewünschten nichts mehr übrig ist.	**Sorry, I haven't got it.**	
I must finish my homework first.	**But Paul must…**	**O.K., but first I must learn.**
Yes, of course. Just a minute. No, thank you.	**Yes, sure. No, sorry. I need it.**	**Yes, please. No, thank you. Thanks. Thank you. That's all, thank you. Nothing, thank you. No, I never eat.**
Would you like < **some** { **tea**; **milk**; **a(n)** { **roll**; **ham sandwich** So sagst du, wenn du jemandem etwas anbieten möchtest.	**What would you like to drink / eat?**	**What would you like / like to have/eat?** **Anything to drink?**

Would you like to (read an Asterix book?) So fragst du, wenn du wissen willst, ob jemand etwas bestimmtes tun möchte.		**Would you like to live in a cottage?**
I'd like a pair of skis. **I'd like to buy…/have...**	**I'd like to have…**	**I would like a…**
Shall I (teach you)? So fragst du, wenn du wissen willst, ob du für jemanden etwas Bestimmtes tun sollst.		
Here you are.	**Here you are.**	**Here you are.**
	But what about some apples?	**Have tea with us, Heinz.** **Do you take…?** **Have some / another / a…of… / some… / some more…** **How about some…?** **Some more…, Jenny?**

6. Gefühle, Meinungen erfragen bzw. ausdrücken (Expressing/Inquiring About Feelings), z.B.:

Gefallen, Missfallen, Interesse, Begeisterung - Zuneigung, Abneigung, Freude, Angst;

Ticket to Britain	English for You and Me	Contacts
Ablehnung: **No, that's silly / boring / stupid**	**I think the text is silly.**	**Jogging is…not O.K. / good / fine.** **Jogging is…/is no fun/boring**
It's fantastic.	**It's great fun.** **It looks great. / okay. / beautiful. / fantastic / cosy. / interesting. / nice. / tidy. / messy. / ugly.** **I think the text is good. / great fun.** **I think it's useless. / fair. / unfair.**	**Playing table tennis is fine / O.K. / good / fun / great.** **…can be fun.**
Wenn du fragen willst, ob jemand etwas mag, sagst du: **„Do you like + (animals)?"** Antworten: **+ Yes, I do - No, I don't. ++: Yes, very much**	**I like my classroom.** **I like my…best.** **I don't like…**	**Do you like…?** **I like…** **I don't like…**
So sagst du, wenn dir etwas **nice** + gut gefällt **very nice** ++ besonders gut gefällt **It's** **not very nice** - nicht gefällt **horrible** -- gar nicht gefällt	**My classroom is nice.**	**He has a nice dog.**
		…is very important to me. / …means a lot to me. / means nothing to me.
	I'm afraid when I have / must…	

7. Handlungen veranlassen bzw. zur Unterlassung auffordern (Getting Things Done), z.B.:

Anordnungen erteilen; einen Vorschlag machen, annehmen/ablehnen; jemanden ersuchen, etwas (nicht) zu tun; Fähigkeit/Unfähigkeit ausdrücken; jemandem etwas verbieten; um Hilfe bitten/Hilfe anbieten;

Ticket to Britain	English for You and Me	Contacts
Willst du jemandem vorschlagen, etwas zu spielen, so sagst du: **Let's play + (Spiel)** Du willst lieber ein anderes Spiel spielen und machst einen weiteren Vorschlag, dabei verwendest du das Wort **„instead"** statt dessen.	**Let's hide Peter's rubber.** **Let's take…with** **We can go to…/ go on…/ play…/ have…us.**	**Let's go to the lift.** **Let us go.**
You should (go to the dentist's) Wenn du jemandem einen Rat geben willst, kannst du das mit **"you should"** einleiten		
Just a minute. So sagst du, wenn du willst, dass der andere einen Augenblick wartet.		
Can I help you to + (mow the lawn)? So sagst du jemandem, dass du ihm helfen möchtest. **Shall I help you?**	**Can I help you?**	**Can you help me, please?** **Can I help you?**
Can, can't, cannot + verb	**He can't because it's too late.** **A hamster cannot…**	**I can't do it.**
	Sally can watch the…	**Yes, you can help me. Let me see.**
	Please help me. I need help. Help me.	**Please, get a…**
Open the door, please!	**Can you go out, please?** **Please put the book on the shelf.**	
	Wash the potato. Cut it in two. Cut out a tree. … **Switch the light on! Don't switch the light off!**	
	You must not wear jeans here!	
	But what about some apples?	**How about some…?**

8. Informationen geben und erfragen (Imparting and Seeking Information), z.B.:

berichten, erzählen, erklären; benennen, Aussehen beschreiben, Eigenschaft angeben; Zustand beschreiben; Verwendungszweck angeben; Besitzverhältnisse, Zugehörigkeit angeben; etwas einordnen nach Ort , Richtung, Entfernung; etwas einordnen nach Zeitpunkt, Dauer, Häufigkeit; etwas einordnen nach Zahl, Menge, Grad; Meinung (Aussage) eines anderen wiedergeben;

Ticket to Britain	English for You and Me	Contacts
Do you know + WHAT this is? So fragst du, wenn du wissen möchtest, WAS etwas ist.		
What's the matter? So kannst du fragen, was los ist.	**What's the matter?**	
What are you looking for? So fragst du, wenn du wissen möchtest, was jemand sieht.		
Wenn du wissen möchtest, wie ein Wort in Englisch heißt, dann fragst du: **What's (Schultasche) in English?**	**What's (‚Tafel') in English?** **What does the word "…" mean?**	**What is (Schwarzbrot) in English?**
Wenn du wissen willst, wie ein Gegenstand in deiner Nähe heißt, dann fragst du: **What's this in English?**		**What's this/that in English?**
Do you know + WHO this is? So fragst du, wenn du wissen willst, WER das ist.		**Who are you? Who is your friend?**
Is he/she (Austrian)? So fragst du, wenn du vermutest, dass jemand einer bestimmten Nationalität angehört.		**Are you (from Austria)?** **Are you (English)?**
Is he a (footballer)? So fragst du, wenn du vermutest, dass jemand einen bestimmten Beruf hat.		**Is his your…?**
What is he/she doing? So fragst du, wenn du **are they** wissen willst, was jemand gerade tut.		**What does he do at…? Does he…?**
I don't feel well. So kannst du sagen, dass du dich nicht wohl fühlst.		

I have got a (head) ache. So kannst du sagen, wenn du Schmerzen (Kopfschmerzen) hast.		
Have you got a...? So kannst du fragen, ob jemand etwas Bestimmtes hat.	**Has he got a pet?** **Have you got a photo of your house?**	**Have you got…? Has your mother got…?**
I've got a (hamster) So kannst du sagen, was du hast.	**I've got…**	**I have got…**
It's Peter's. So kannst du ausdrücken, dass etwas einer bestimmten Person gehört.		
What time is it? So fragst du, wenn du wissen willst, wie spät es ist.	**What's the time?**	**What time is it?**
Wenn du sagen willst, wie viele Dinge vorhanden sind, sagst du: **There are + Zahl + Gegenstand**	**There is…** **There are…**	**There is…** **There are…**
Some (tea / apples) Wenn du nicht genau angibst, wieviel du möchtest, sagst du "some" (ein bisschen Tee, ein paar Äpfel).	**I'd like to have a / some**	**I know some words.**
You have got a lot of (stamps). Wenn du sagen möchtest, daß viele gleiche Dinge da sind, so verwen-dest du **a lot of**	**That's not a lot.** **That's a lot.**	**That is a lot.** **Not many.**
Go straight on. Go back. **Turn left. / Turn right.** **Opposite (the school).** **At the corner of Oxford Street.** **At the end of this street.** **Next to the school.** **The second road on the left.**	**It's over there on the left. / right.** **It's straight ahead.** **It is opposite / next to…** **Turn left / right.** **Go straight ahead.**	
Where…? How…? How many…? What…? When…? Is it…? Is there? Are there? Can I…? Do you…?	**Where…? How…? How many…? What…? When…? Is it…? Is there? Are there? Can I…? Do you…?**	**Where…? How…? How many…? What…? When…? Is it…? Is there? Are there? Can I…? Do you…?**
It is in / on / under / behind / in front of / between / next to.	**It's under / in front of / behind / in / on…**	**It is in / on / under…**
I often / sometimes played cards.	**My sister often / sometimes / never dreams of a ghost.** **I always watch…**	**Mostly my mother, sometimes my brother and I. My father never does the washing-up. My father often works in the kitchen.**

Common Reference Levels: Global Scale

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

(CEF 2001:24)