



Marita Härmälä, Finnish Education Evaluation Centre
Eli Moe, University of Bergen

DEVELOPING LANGUAGE AWARENESS IN SUBJECT CLASSES

7th CEFR SIG Meeting,
May 2018, University of Bochum

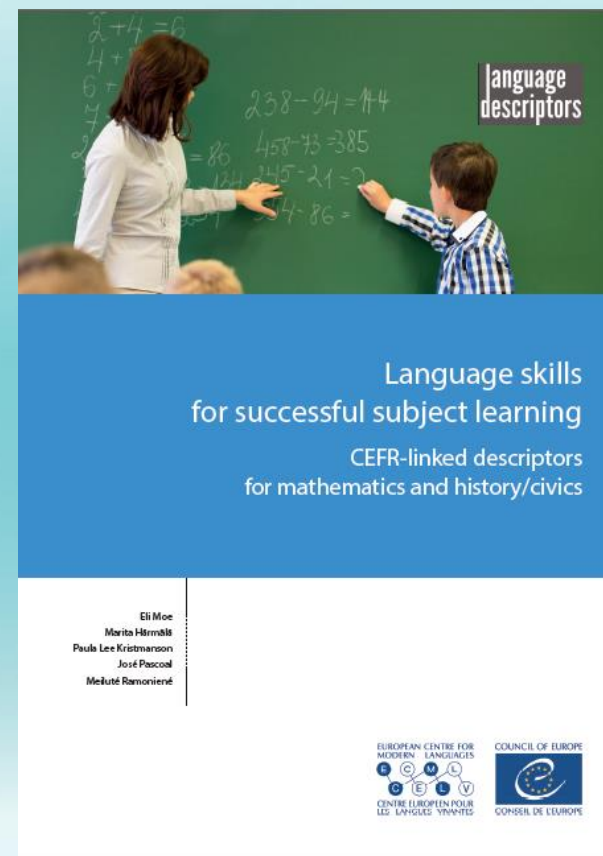


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Language skills for successful subject learning: CEFR-linked descriptors for mathematics and history (2012-2015)

- For raising awareness of the language-related aspects and the importance of language in constructing knowledge in non-language subjects
- For setting language objectives in lessons
- For use as assessment criteria (formative and summative)
- For gauging the language level used by teachers in subject classes and adapting it accordingly



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Developing language awareness in subject classes 2016-2019

- Team:
 - Marita Härmälä (Finland); Artashes Barkhanajyan (Armenia), Jérôme Béliard (France), Eli Moe (Norway), Susan Ballinger (Canada)
- Aim:
 - 1) tools for recognising students' language needs in different school subjects
 - 2) examples of language supportive teaching materials
- Data gathering:
 - Questionnaire (<https://www.ecml.at/ECML-Programme/Programme2016-2019/languageinsubjects>)
 - Workshop in Graz November 2017
 - Network meeting October 2018
 - National seminars, workshops, school visits

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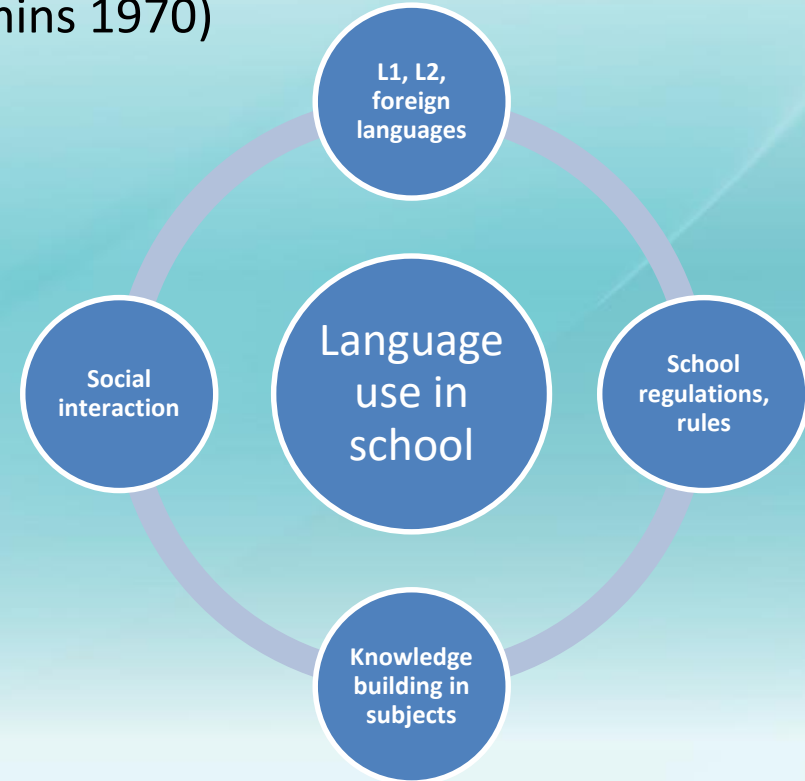


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Languages at school

- Everyday language vs. academic language (Cummins 1970)
- Language of schooling (Schleppegrell)
- CLIL
- Subject specific language:
 - genres, text types
 - ways of thinking, talking, writing
 - grammatical structures, concepts
 - language functions
 - etc.



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Example: math and history

	History	Math
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chronological order - Change: causes and consequences - Facts, interpretations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not connected to time - No emotional content - Exactitude (e.g. definitions)
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Historical empathy: to step into other people's shoes (Rantala 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Worded problems: challenging both languagewise and mathematically (Barbu & Beal 2010) - Implicit logical relationships (Schlepperegell 2007)

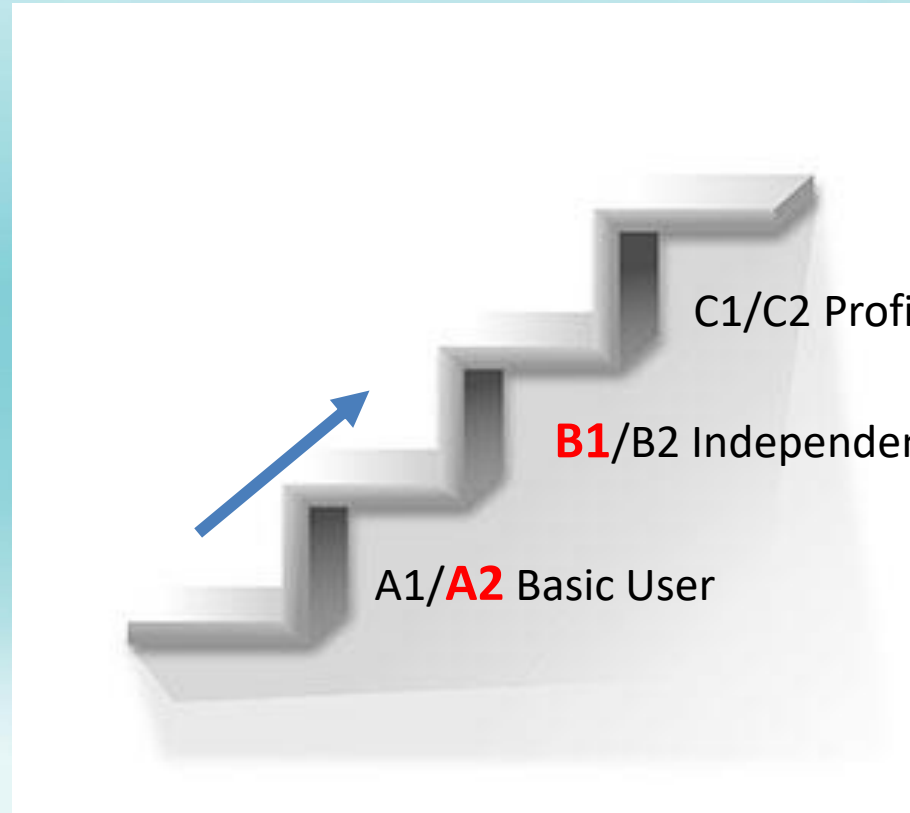
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Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2003)



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Situations where L2 speakers have language-related difficulties

(Härmälä, Moe, Béliard, Barkhanajyan 2017)

Situation	%
During whole-class discussions	67,8 %
During group work activities	44,9 %
During pair work activities	28,4 %
On written assignments	84,8 %
During social interactions (at break time, etc.)	26,7 %
During oral presentations	65,3 %
My L2 students do not face language-related difficulties	4,7 %
Other	12,3 %

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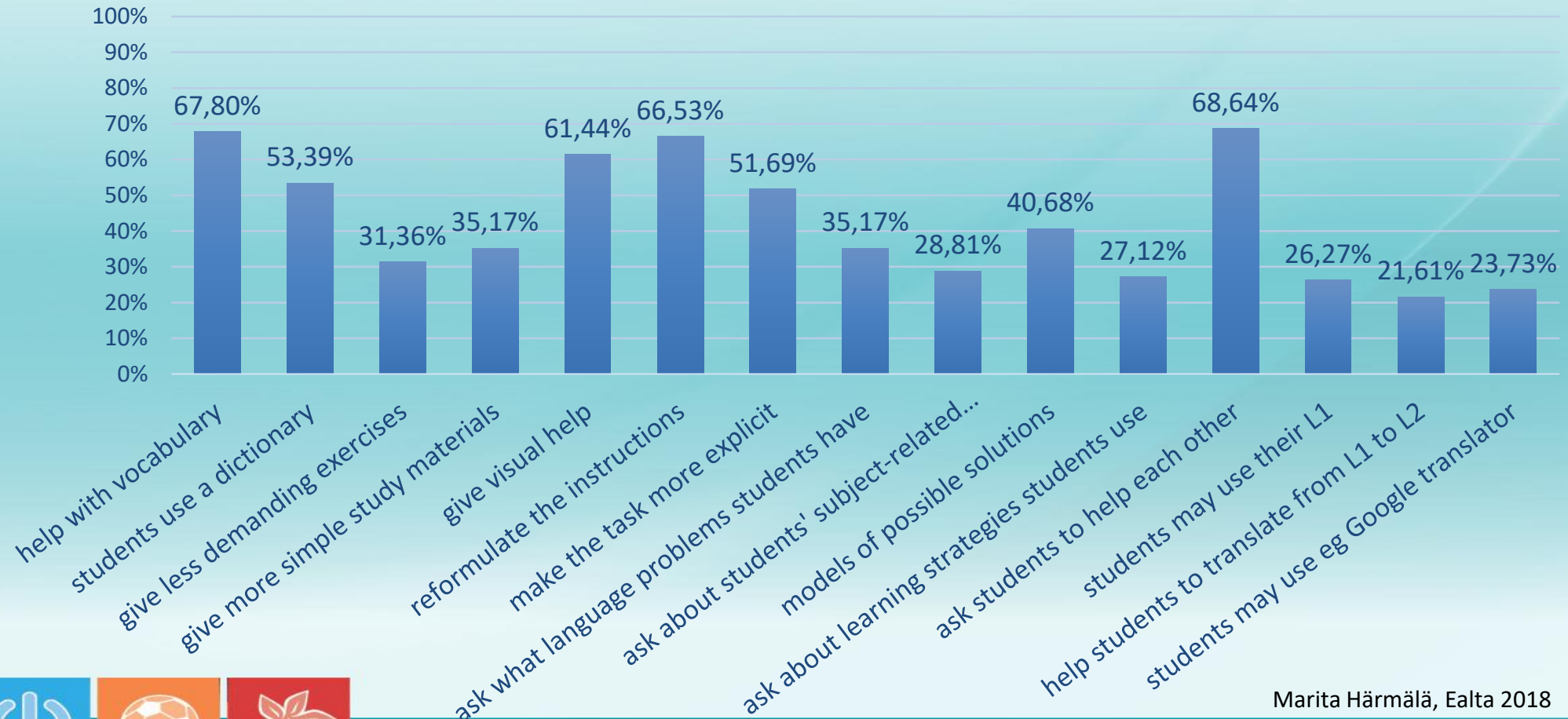


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Scaffolding techniques that respondents use

(Härmälä, Moe, Béliard, Barkhanajyan 2017)




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Finnish National Core Curriculum (2014): good skills at the end of 6th grade

History: The student is able to

- **describe** changes and **tell** why change is not always the same as progress
- broadly **describe** causal relationships for some historical phenomena
- **explain** with some examples why the same phenomenon or event may be interpreted in different ways
- **present a story** by **explaining** the event or phenomenon from the point of view of different actors

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What is 'to describe' on different proficiency levels and in different subjects?

- A2: Can describe events and activities in a simple list of points.
- B1: Can pass on information and **briefly describe events, observations and processes**. Can **describe how s/he is thinking** when solving a task in a straightforward way. Can **briefly describe a visual representation** (a graph, a figure, a table, a drawing etc.) **pointing out** important features.

Mathematics, history,
science, music, physical
education?

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Defining language goals

Functions

- Can describe causal relationships of a class society
- Can ask questions
- Can answer questions

Structures

- Cases in Finnish
- Wh-questions
- Past tense
- Conjunctions

Vocabulaire

- In 17th century, at the beginning of, gradually, all the time
- what, why, when?
- To become something (translat.)
- because, even though...

-> The student is able **to describe factors connected to the origins and consequences of a class society by using different temporal constructions and conjunctions** such as **in 17th century, gradually; because, even though**

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Challenges / Next steps :

Challenges:

- to get more subject teachers involved
- to illustrate how to define the language goals for different proficiency levels

Next steps:

- develop tools and teaching materials to help subject teachers to get started (Platform)
- to continue promoting cooperation between teachers and other persons involved



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THANK YOU!
QUESTIONS?



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