

Level		Table 1.1. Salient Characteristics: Interaction & Production (CEFR Section 3.6, simplified)
Proficient User		It cannot be overemphasized that Level C2 is not intended to imply native-speaker competence or even near native-speaker competence. Both the original research and a project using CEFR descriptors to rate mother-tongue as well as foreign language competence (North 2002: CEFR Case Studies volume) showed the existence of ambilingual speakers well above the highest defined level (C2). Wilkins had identified a seventh level of "Ambilingual Proficiency" in his 1978 proposal for a European scale for unit-credit schemes.
	C2	<b>Level C2</b> is intended to characterise the degree of <b>precision, appropriateness and ease with the language</b> which typifies the speech of those who have been highly successful learners. Descriptors calibrated here include: <i>convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of modification devices; has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative level of meaning; backtrack and restructure around a difficulty so smoothly the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.</i>
	C1	<b>Level C1</b> is characterised by a <b>broad range of language, which allows fluent, spontaneous communication</b> , as illustrated by the following examples: <i>Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions. There is little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies; only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.</i> The discourse skills appearing at B2+ are more evident at C1, with an emphasis on more fluency, for example: <i>select a suitable phrase from a fluent repertoire of discourse functions to preface his remarks in order to get the floor, or to gain time and keep it whilst thinking; produce clear, smoothly-flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.</i>
Independent User	B2+	B2+ represents a strong B2 performance. The focus on argument, effective social discourse and on language awareness which appears at B2 continues. However, the focus on argument and social discourse can also be interpreted as a new focus on discourse skills. This new degree of discourse competence shows itself in conversational management (co-operating strategies): <i>give feedback on and follow up statements and inferences by other speakers and so help the development of the discussion; relate own contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.</i> It is also apparent in relation to coherence/cohesion: <i>use a variety of linking words efficiently to mark clearly the relationships between ideas; develop an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail.</i>
	B2	<b>Level B2</b> represents a break with the content so far. Firstly there is a focus on <b>effective argument</b> : <i>account for and sustain his opinions in discussion by providing relevant explanations, arguments and comments; explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options; develop an argument giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view; take an active part in informal discussion in familiar contexts, commenting, putting point of view clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypotheses.</i> Secondly, at this level one can hold your own in <b>social discourse</b> : e.g. <i>understand in detail what is said to him/her in the standard spoken language even in a noisy environment; initiate discourse, take his turn when appropriate and end conversation when he/she needs to, though he/she may not always do this elegantly; interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without imposing strain on either party.</i> Finally, there is a <b>new degree of language awareness</b> : <i>correct mistakes if they have led to misunderstandings; make a note of "favourite mistakes" and consciously monitor speech for it/them; generally correct slips and errors if he becomes conscious of them.</i>
	B1+	B1+ is a strong B1 performance. The same two main features at B1 continue to be present, with the addition of a number of descriptors which focus on the exchange of <b>quantities</b> of information, for example: <i>provide concrete information required in an interview/consultation (e.g. describe symptoms to a doctor) but does so with limited precision; explain why something is a problem; summarise and give his or her opinion about a short story, article, talk, discussion interview, or documentary and answer further questions of detail; carry out a prepared interview, checking and confirming information, though he/she may occasionally has to ask for repetition if the other person's response is rapid or extended; describe how to do something, giving detailed instructions; exchange accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his field with some confidence.</i>
	B1	<b>Level B1</b> reflects the <b>Threshold Level</b> specification and is perhaps most categorised by two features. The first feature is the ability to <b>maintain interaction and get across what you want to</b> , for example: <i>generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her, provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect; express the main point he/she wants to make comprehensibly; keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.</i> The second feature is the ability to <b>cope flexibly with problems in everyday life</b> , for example <i>cope with less routine situations on public transport; deal with most situations likely to arise when making travel arrangements through an agent or when actually travelling; enter unprepared into conversations on familiar topics.</i>
Basic User	A2+	A2+ represents a strong A2 performance with <b>more active participation in conversation</b> given some assistance and certain limitations, for example: <i>understand enough to manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; make him/herself understood and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations, provided the other person helps if necessary; deal with everyday situations with predictable content, though he/she will generally have to compromise the message and search for words; plus significantly more ability to sustain monologues</i> , for example: <i>express how he feels in simple terms; give an extended description of everyday aspects of his environment e.g. people, places, a job or study experience; describe past activities and personal experiences; describe habits and routines; describe plans and arrangements; explain what he/she likes or dislikes about something.</i>
	A2	<b>Level A2</b> has the <b>majority of descriptors stating social functions</b> like <i>use simple everyday polite forms of greeting and address; greet people, ask how they are and react to news; handle very short social exchanges; ask and answer questions about what they do at work and in free time; make and respond to invitations; discuss what to do, where to go and make arrangements to meet; make and accept offers.</i> Here too are to be found descriptors on <b>getting out and about</b> : <i>make simple transactions in shops, post offices or banks; get simple information about travel; use public transport: buses, trains, and taxis, ask for basic information, ask and give directions, and buy tickets; ask for and provide everyday goods and services.</i>
	A1	<b>Level A1</b> is the lowest level of generative language use - the point at which the learner can <i>interact in a simple way, ask and answer simple questions about themselves, where they live, people they know, and things they have, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics</i> , rather than relying purely on a very finite rehearsed, lexically organised repertoire of situation-specific phrases.