

CEFR: A Global Framework for Global Englishes?

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Abstract

Since it was first published by the Council of Europe in 2001, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has become one of the most widely referenced documents in language education, particularly in English language teaching and assessment (Savski, in press). The recently released CEFR Companion Volume (2020), with its new descriptions of plurilingual and pluricultural competence and mediation, has done much to extend the potential of the framework, as it provides a more concrete foundation for using CEFR to support heteroglossic pedagogies. In this way, CEFR has acquired a greater level of potential relevance to innovative pedagogies in English language education, such as Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT), which seeks to equip learners with communicative skills and dispositions needed for success in a world where the target interlocutors are linguistically and culturally diverse (Rose & Galloway, 2019). In this paper, we examine the prospects for using CEFR to support heteroglossic pedagogies like GELT, highlighting points of convergence between descriptions of competence in CEFR and current scholarship in Global Englishes, as well as points of divergence between the two. We underline the need to embed CEFR in decentralizing educational reforms, in which the framework is used to facilitate teacher agency, rather than to impose objectives and methods upon them.

Keywords: Global Englishes; CEFR; language policy

A defining feature of the past decades has been an apparent loosening of many traditional boundaries - of cultures, languages, identities, economies, and other entities conventionally seen as separate. Much of this blurring of boundaries is owed to globalization, a process which involves the rapid intensification of movement of people, products, resources and information across traditional borders (Appadurai, 1992). Such mobility has significant consequences for language education, since it means that questions are naturally raised regarding many conventional assumptions about which languages should be taught, why, how, and following

what norms. In English language education in particular, such questions have been asked with increasing intensity in recent years, reflecting how globalization has added new levels of complexity to the already diverse face of English across different contexts (stemming primarily from the history of Anglophone colonialism/imperialism). Sociolinguistic accounts of the embeddedness of English in global cultural flows have in particular problematized static, structural models of English as a global language, highlighting the need to think beyond traditional (national) borders (see e.g., Pennycook, 2006). Over the last decade, increasing scholarly attention has been paid to the need to translate such conceptual innovations into new pedagogical practices, with work on Global Englishes Language Teaching (Rose & Galloway, 2019) in particular highlighting the need to reshape English language classrooms into sites of critical investigation of linguistic diversity.

In parallel with this new focus on the diversification of English, the field of language education has also seen the rising importance of universalizing forces, such as global language policies. By this, we mean language policies which are created by and/or represent the interests of institutions operating at the transnational scale – either political-economic organizations (e.g., European Union, ASEAN and the OECD), non-governmental organizations (e.g., UNICEF) or businesses (e.g., Cambridge University Press), and to which nation-states are seen to be subject. The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is a particularly visible global language policy, originally enacted by the Council of Europe (a non-governmental organization) but since adopted by a number of different actors. As discussed by Savski (2020; 2021; in press), key among these are global testing organizations and textbook publishers, which typically use CEFR as a neutral point of reference, as well as national governments, most notably in Asia those of China, Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Vietnam. The use of CEFR is justified by these national governments as a key step toward improving English proficiency, seen as a key precondition for continued economic and political integration in Asia, as well as part of overall social development (Savski, 2020).

The rapid spread of CEFR as a global language policy presents a potential, practical and conceptual contrast to the proposals of Global Englishes scholarship as, most notably, CEFR is affiliated with forces of centralization and homogenization, either in its use as a top-down instrument by national governments (Franz & Teo, 2018) or its association with the global ELT business (Savski, in press). However, as there is as yet little discussion of how, if at all, the framework can support Global Englishes-informed pedagogy, whether it must by necessity be a force of centralization is still an open question. In this article, we examine to what extent CEFR may support Global Englishes-informed pedagogy in terms of its conceptual features (the understanding of competence it draws on), its contents (how it describes language ability) and its use (how it may be interpreted and implemented).

CEFR in Context

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is at present without doubt a highly significant, if not the most significant, policy text in language education. Its roots lie in the European context, where it was intended to be a common point of reference for actors working across different education systems, primarily in order to facilitate the greater social and economic mobility sought by European integration policies. Indeed, much of the development of CEFR correlates with the intensification of economic cooperation in Europe, reaching back to the 1970s and 80s, when a series of descriptions of specific proficiency levels was produced to address particular needs (e.g., *Threshold* as a description of the communicative competences needed by migrants, see Van Ek & Trim, 1990). Ultimately, these were drawn together during the 1990s and published as a single framework in 2001 (below: CEFR 2001). In 2020, CEFR 2001 was complemented by the CEFR Companion Volume (below: CEFRCV), which contains

a number of revisions and improvements. At the outset, we wish to clarify that we use the acronym ‘CEFR’ to refer to both, acknowledging the fact that both documents share an overall concept of language education, in spite of the differences between them. When citing specific descriptors, we use CEFRCV as the main point of reference, however, as it is the most up-to-date version.

Over the two decades since the original version was released, the framework has seen wide uptake, very rapidly moving beyond the borders of the European continent (Byram & Parmenter, 2012) and becoming a prime example of a globalized language policy (Savski, 2020). This global spread has been powered by two forces in particular, namely its uptake by national governments across the globe as a means of objective-setting and evaluation (De Costa et al., 2019; Franz & Teo, 2018), and its adoption by the ELT industry (corporations involved in test and textbook development) as a means of comparing different products (e.g., IELTS scores with TOEFL scores). These different uses of CEFR reflect the flexibility inherent to the structure and design of the framework as a policy text. The most familiar part of the document are the six levels (A1-2, B1-2, C1-2) described to varying degrees of detail and systematicity in a varied array of reference scales (e.g., ‘Addressing audiences’), produced through a statistical generalization of judgments expressed by teachers participating in a research project in Switzerland (North, 2000). The scales contain ‘can do’ statements (e.g., ‘Can deliver very short, rehearsed announcements of predictable, learnt content which are intelligible to recipients who are prepared to concentrate’) describing the abilities second language speakers can be expected to have at different levels of proficiency. These ranges, very broadly, from familiarity with a narrow range of words or phrases associated with daily communication (A1-2) to the ability to deal with various needs associated with travel and employment (B1-2) and, at the top end of the scale, the demands of academic literacy (C1-2). Thus, while they may intuitively be viewed as such, the six CEFR levels do not represent a universal scale of second language acquisition, being rather reflective of the different sociolinguistic needs underlying language education in Europe: mobility for tourism (A1-2), work (B1-2) and study (C1-2). Indeed, the relative lack of theoretical and empirical backing for the six levels in second language acquisition research has been an area of much critique of CEFR (see e.g., Deygers, 2021), along with the general vagueness and open-endedness of its descriptions (e.g., Alderson, 2007). As argued by Savski (in press), such critiques often appear to reflect the differing priorities of those working with the framework: while vagueness and open-endedness are potential pitfalls for language testers, since they make the identification of a clear CEFR-based construct rather challenging, the same qualities are positive from a policy perspective, as they allow different users to generate context-appropriate interpretations, thus allowing for local actors, such as teachers, to act in an autonomous way.

A marker of how central open-endedness to the design of CEFR is the lack of focus on creating more precise, easily measurable descriptions as part of the revisions that led to CEFRCV, with the main focus instead having been on revising existing descriptions (particularly those relating to pronunciation, see Harding, 2016; Horner, 2014) and extending the framework in new directions while retaining the same overall approach. Particular additions are new descriptions of mediation (which is now featured as one of CEFR’s “four skills”, alongside reception, production and interaction) as well as of plurilingual and pluricultural competence (Galante, in press). In doing so, CEFRCV fills a gap left by CEFR 2001, which positioned plurilingualism and pluriculturalism as central to its conceptualization of competence, declaring that “as an individual person’s experience of language in its cultural contexts expands [...] he or she does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 4),

but ultimately provided few concrete exemplars of how this may be conceptualized as a form of competence. This gap was a further area in which CEFR 2001 received much critique, particularly by Shohamy (2011), as its descriptions were ultimately conventional in their monolingualism and were predominantly used in support of monolingual instructional and assessment models.

While the publication of CEFRCV may be seen as a positive step, our understanding of the framework is as a starting point – a generic shell which offers users a plethora of possibilities but which must be filled and contextualized before it can support teaching and learning practices. In particular, CEFR does not refer to any language(s), so a necessary step toward its use in English language education is consideration of how its generic descriptions may be made more specific to English. Thus far, this issue has been approached in line with conventional notions, with existing efforts to create more specific links between CEFR and English generally reproducing assumptions about the universality of the ‘native speaker’ norm in English. *English Profile*, a wide-ranging vocabulary and grammar resource developed by, among others, the British Council and Cambridge Assessment English, draws heavily on data obtained from global proficiency tests and global textbooks to make links between CEFR levels and users’ ability to use particular features of standard English grammar. While information about the fact that, typically, English users taking a writing test aligned to B2 were able to “use the affirmative form [of future perfect] with will” can be invaluable for planning teaching materials and curricula, *English Profile* provides little insight into how well such users are able to negotiate linguistic differences in intercultural communication (Cambridge University Press, 2015). Such assumptions regarding the universality of linguistic norms have come under significant criticism in recent years, particularly in light of work on the diversity of English as a global language, or Global Englishes, which we discuss in the following section.

Conceptualizing Global Englishes in Language Pedagogy

Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT) is an emergent field of research that extracts implications from sociolinguistic research into the global spread of English (Galloway & Rose, 2015). The primary focus of this sociolinguistic research historically was on the diversity of Englishes as a product of the spread of English across the globe, spurred by colonization, migration and globalization (e.g., Canagarajah, 2013; Jenkins, 2015; Pennycook, 2006). However, the focus of work in this area has more recently shifted from the study of Global Englishes as a merely sociolinguistic phenomenon to a more applied stance, in which the ramifications of the diversity of English across the world for teaching and learning are key considerations (Rose & Galloway, 2019). The resulting stream of scholarship on GELT challenges taken-for-granted assumptions about what English is and how it should be taught (Galloway & Rose, 2015), with a particular focus on preparing learners to use English with target interlocutors from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds (Rose & Galloway, 2019).

GELT as a framework for language education draws on a number of different paradigms. These include the body of work on the diversity of English across the world (World/Global Englishes) as well as research on the use of English in intercultural communication (English as a Lingua Franca, English as an International Language). We note that while these traditions have separate histories and are often seen as distinct by scholars (e.g., different journals, conferences and professional associations), GELT draws flexibly and often eclectically on their various insights (e.g., combining the focus of World Englishes on the local distinctiveness of particular varieties with the research on intelligibility strategies in English as a Lingua Franca, see Galloway & Numajiri, 2020; Rose & Galloway, 2019). Drawing on sociolinguistic research in World Englishes, GELT acknowledges that English is by nature fluid and adaptable, tied to

multiple norms of appropriateness in varied contexts (Galloway & Numajiri, 2020), and that it is thus no longer relevant to associate English purely with native-speaking nations like the UK, USA or Australia (Galloway & Rose, 2015), but that new models of ownership of English should be explored (Matsuda, 2003; Widdowson, 1994). In line with this view, GELT calls for learners to be exposed to a variety of Englishes (Matsuda, 2019) in order to develop awareness of how norms of English usage correspond to how it is used, in what context and by whom (Jenkins, 2015). From this perspective, it is essential to equip learners with the ability to adapt to diverse communicative contexts, such as using communication strategies for ELF use (Vettorel, 2018). As a result, adaptability and intelligibility become key benchmarks to assess competence in English, rather than conformity to a fixed learning goal, anchored in standard language ideology (Rose & Galloway, 2019).

We note that while GELT continues to explicitly invoke ‘English’, it does also call for a reconsideration of how much ‘English’ there should be in language classrooms. A long-standing dogma of language teaching has been that learners should be compelled to use only the target language in the classroom to maximize learning. Considering the fact that, to this day, imaginations of ‘native English speakers’ tended to presume monolingualism, it is indeed unsurprising that these orientations have often coincided in theory and practice. GELT here aligns itself with the recent multilingual turn in applied linguistics, particularly work on multi-competence (Cook, 1992) and translanguaging (Li, 2018), both of which aim to disturb such historic assumptions of monolingualism by instead positioning multilingualism as the norm. Translanguaging does this by arguing that any individual who can use multiple languages does not keep these languages in separate mental compartments, but that all knowledge of language is combined into a single, unitary linguistic repertoire (Otheguy et al., 2015). What follows from this is that, just as languages are not naturally separate in the mind of a speaker, there is no inherent need to keep languages separate in communication, for instance in language classrooms. Such a reorientation toward accepting learners’ L1 in English classrooms is part-and-parcel of the GELT perspective. It is particularly relevant when it comes to the growing popularity of English-medium instruction, where the ability of students’ to engage all of their linguistic repertoire to acquire content knowledge is a key step on the path to success (Sahan, Galloway, & McKinley, in press).

Drawing on these conceptual principles, a number of more practical proposals have been made to help shift English language education toward GELT-informed pedagogy. However, implementing GELT in the classroom context is not a straightforward process. Since GELT is a paradigm of language teaching, implementing it in the classrooms places focus on teachers, as it requires them to localize the concept according to the needs of their own teaching and learning setting (Prabjandee, 2020; Rose & Galloway, 2019). In theory, GELT is proposed as an alternative or complementary approach to prepare learners to use English with socio-culturally diverse English users outside of the classroom (Rose & Galloway, 2019) and a form of resistance against underrepresentation of linguistic diversity in ELT (Jindapitak, Teo, & Savski, in press). However, implementing GELT does not necessarily involve abandoning extant practices entirely. Instead, GELT seeks to challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions around English and call into question those current practices which do not correspond to the current sociolinguistic reality of English (Rose & Galloway, 2019).

The practicality of GELT (or lack thereof) has been a significant area of critique, reflecting the rather conceptual nature of many early proposals (Galloway & Rose, 2018). However, several recent studies (e.g., Boonsuk, Ambele, & Mckinley, 2021; Fang & Ren, 2018; Jindapitak et al., 2022; Rosenhan & Galloway, 2019; Galloway & Rose, 2018; Rajpravit, 2022; Smidt, Chau, Rinehimer, & Leever, 2021; Tardy, Reed, Slinkard, & LaMance, 2021) have responded to calls for more classroom implementation of GELT principles to explore its potential benefits.

Generally, these studies reported that implementing GELT in the classroom increased learners' awareness of English varieties (Boonsuk et al., 2021; Fang & Ren, 2018), gained more self-confidence in language use (Jindapitak et al., 2022), increased their respect for diverse English varieties (Rosenhan & Galloway, 2019), and changed perception of their own English (Boonsuk et al., 2021; Fang & Ren, 2018). Taken together, these studies highlight that GELT is becoming a more concrete alternative approach in English language education, contributing to the gathering momentum of paradigm shift in ELT (Galloway & Numajiri, 2020).

As highlighted in this section, a key step in facilitating such a paradigm shift is identifying how GELT may complement existing teaching and learning practices. This includes examining how existing language education policies like CEFR may support practitioners' efforts to develop and implement GELT-informed pedagogies in their own contexts. In the case of CEFR, identifying synergetic points is not necessarily straightforward, as the framework was not produced only with English in mind, but rather as a generic tool from which practitioners can draw as and how they see fit. Thus, while it is important to examine what elements of CEFR may be compatible and what elements may be incompatible with GELT principles, there is also a need to consider how the overall conceptualization of language can support the view of English promoted by GELT, as well as how both of these may be mobilized as when the framework is used as part of the process of teaching and learning. We examine these points in the following sections.

Comparing Conceptualizations of Competence

A key consideration in assessing whether CEFR can support GELT-informed pedagogies is considering to what extent the two share a common conceptual groundwork. In particular, this refers to how competence – the skillset which speakers deploy in communication and which education aims to develop – is to be conceptualized. This is an area of applied linguistics that has seen significant evolution in recent decades, one that can broadly be described as a process of gradual blurring of boundaries between *competence* (repertoire) and *performance* (action). These were once clearly separated by the Chomskian framing of linguistics as the study of the possible rather than the actual, and their separateness has been evident in the teaching of not only linguistic knowledge (e.g., grammar outside of context) but also communication skills. Communicative competence has until now often been treated as a relatively fixed “set of semiotic resources used by speakers to make meaning in context”, one that can be described in terms of specific vocabulary or grammar structures (Leung, 2013, p. 285). Such a perspective is evident in many contemporary ELT coursebooks, which espouse a focus on ‘communication’ but largely focus on teaching snippets of language (e.g. ‘rules’ for the use of present perfect), assuming that a learners’ knowledge of a particular set of words or structures translates into an ability to produce a particular type of meaning (Thornbury, 2016). While this view continues to be influential, it is largely at odds with newer perspectives in applied linguistics, which see language, not as a system of set meanings, but as defined by context, inseparable from human action and experience (Li, 2018). That is, much applied linguistics now tends not to see communicative competence as something one *has in their mind, outside context*, but as something one *does through action in context*, and which should thus be taught with reference to specific contexts of communication (Piccardo & North, 2019).

The way competence is described in CEFR arguably reflects the fact that its development began in the 1970s, before this conceptual transition, but also that it has continued through it until the 2020s. CEFR includes a number of rather conventional elements, in particular in its description of ‘communicative competence’, which offers scales for linguistic competence (e.g., “General linguistic range”, “Vocabulary control”), sociolinguistic competence (“Sociolinguistic appropriateness”) and pragmatic competence (e.g., “Flexibility”, “Thematic development”).

From a GELT perspective, these appear to contain the highest degree of reference to static linguistic norms, implicitly invoking a “native speaker”-centric perspective through references to “errors” and “slips”, thus appearing to position communicative competence as “a stable phenomenon and a repertoire that can be specified in advance” (Leung, 2013, p. 295). Such descriptions, as argued in Savski (in press), tend to play to a view of CEFR as representing a linear process of language acquisition, universal, predictable and symmetric in its nature. In other words, they appear to promote the view that a CEFR level like B1 can be objectively described with reference to a relatively predictable set of linguistic resources, and that empirical correlations can in turn be established between CEFR levels and variables like, for instance, vocabulary size (see e.g., Milton, 2010). This, finally, serves existing mechanisms centered on “native speaker” English, particularly global proficiency tests and textbooks.

Somewhat at odds with this implicitly normative approach, CEFR also offers a vast number of scales in which there is less presumption of a clear-cut relationship between linguistic form and meaning. By presenting competence in the form of ‘can do’ statements like “Can evaluate the way the work encourages identification with characters, giving examples” (B2, *Analysis and criticism of creative texts [including literature]*), the framework attempts to highlight the actions that speakers are able to complete, thus also shifting attention toward contexts in which such actions are performed rather than focusing on the linguistic means they may (or may not) involve. This action-oriented approach, elaborated into a holistic vision of language education in Piccardo & North (2019), repositions learners as social agents, demanding not only that education focus on developing learners’ ability to act but also that it do so by engaging them in action as part of the learning process. As argued by Piccardo (2010), CEFR thus intends to facilitate a “post-communicative” approach to language teaching and learning, one able to make better sense of the complex, diverse and fleeting picture of meaning-making than conventional communicative theories and methods. This is particularly evident in the way CEFR recasts the traditional “four skills”: reframed as “communicative activities”, these cover a much wider range, complementing the conventional written or spoken reception and production with interaction (in which reception and production are intertwined) and mediation (which involves transformation and reformulation of meaning). In this way, the framework places focus on the agency of language users in meaning-making, offering a path away from the conventional focus on the passive acquisition of vocabulary, grammar patterns and pragmatic or sociolinguistic routines.

From the perspective of GELT, we may thus make a case for the view that the vision of competence presented by CEFR in its action-oriented scales appears to have overcome the attachment to conventional “native speaker” norms of English and are more in line with the diversity, dynamicity and hybridity of Global Englishes uses and users. However, a comparison with literature on GELT suggests that at least two more intertwined aspects of competence must be considered in addition to action, namely awareness and attitude. That is, while literature on Global Englishes, particularly research on use of English as a lingua franca, has highlighted the role that the ability to perform particular actions, such as interactional strategies, may play in facilitating communication across cultural boundaries (Kirkpatrick, 2010), it has also made a clear argument for the importance of the dispositions that interlocutors bring into interactions. In particular, GELT literature has foregrounded the need to develop awareness of linguistic diversity among speakers of Global Englishes (see e.g., Rose & Galloway, 2017), positioning such awareness as a stepping stone toward a broadly positive attitude toward linguistic and cultural difference. Such a focus on the affective is not without parallels – indeed, literature on critical thinking in education has stressed the need to develop not only the narrow skill-set related to how individuals process and interrogate information but also a person’s disposition toward the use of this skill-set (Paul & Elder, 2008) – but is, as

discussed below, largely absent from CEFR. This suggests that while many conceptual elements of CEFR can support a Global Englishes orientation toward language pedagogy, there is a need to ‘bridge the gap’ between what the framework offers and what such a pedagogy demands.

Global Englishes and the CEFR Descriptive Scheme

Above, we have examined to what extent the conceptualization(s) of competence underlying CEFR may support GELT-informed pedagogies, concluding that there is a scope for development of synergies between the two, but also that the framework is somewhat ambivalent in its theoretical stance and that some types of competence foregrounded by GELT appear to be absent. These issues are also confirmed by a closer examination of the CEFR descriptive scheme. Here, we must at first restate that, as CEFR does not provide descriptions specific to any language, it does not in itself contain any references to Global Englishes or any related concept (e.g., ELF, EIL). However, a look at the descriptive scheme does suggest some potential compatibility between the two, for instance when considering the broad way in which the CEFR descriptive scheme is presented. Global Englishes highlights the need to reconceptualize the notion of “English”, arguing that it is no longer relevant to associate English merely with ‘native speaker’ societies (the Inner Circle, according to Kachru’s well-known model), instead viewing it as plurilithic, defined by multiple forms and norms (Galloway & Rose, 2015). From a GELT perspective, communication thus becomes the central focus, because it is the goal of English use in the globalized world. CEFR appears to be deeply compatible with this approach, as it replaces “the traditional model of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)” with a scheme more reflective of “real-life language use” (CEFRCV, p. 33), involving three types of communicative activities: *reception*, *production*, *interaction*, and *mediation*. A vision of communication in which interaction and mediation are foregrounded in particular appears more compatible with GELT principles than the traditional four skills, as it places more stress on the collaborative nature of meaning-making between interlocutors, a key feature of research into Global Englishes (e.g., work on strategies used to ensure communicative success, see Kirkpatrick, 2010).

Table 1. Selected descriptors from CEFR scales (drawn from CEFRCV)

Scale	Level	Descriptor
(a) Overall reading comprehension	C2	Can understand (and interpret critically) virtually all (forms of the written language) types of written/signed texts including abstract, structurally complex, or highly colloquial literary and non-literary writing.
(b) Strategies to explain a new concept	B2	Can make a specific, complex piece of information in their field clearer and more explicit for others by paraphrasing it in simpler language.
(c) Understanding an interlocutor	C2	Can understand any interlocutor, even on abstract and complex topics of a specialist nature beyond their own field, given an opportunity to adjust to a less familiar variety.
(d) Formal discussion (meetings)	C2	Can hold their own in formal discussion of complex issues, putting forward an articulate and persuasive argument, at no disadvantage to other participants.

With regard to specific features of descriptors, several examples can be given of descriptors which, if read from a GELT perspective, appear to foreground relevant features. In Table 1, example (a) relates to a key GELT concern, namely the pluricentric nature of English in the globalized world. The GELT perspective here is that teaching practice should ELT should

move away from depicting English as having only one norm (represented by standard English as used by ‘native speakers’), as norms are flexible depending on communicative context, involving both features local to specific geographic contexts (e.g., Singapore) as well as those associated with register and genre. Example (a) appears to address this concern by making it clear that a core feature of comprehension at an advanced level of proficiency is not only to process information effectively, but to do so against the background of a great diversity of language uses, modes and varieties, thus positioning awareness of diversity as key to proficiency. Example (b), which describes the ability of individuals to mediate information, underlines this point, as it describes a skill in which, naturally, a person would encounter and be required to cross differences between norms. The anchor points for these norms can vary, as the framework allows for mediation between two ‘languages’ to be interpreted as involving “different languages, varieties of the same language, registers of the same variety, modalities of the same language or variety, or any combination of the above” (CEFR CV, p. 93). From a GELT perspective, such descriptions place most stress on the agency of interlocutors, both speakers/writers/signers and listeners/readers/addressees, placing their ability to adapt to communicative contexts in greater focus than, for instance, rigid linguistic norms.

The relativization of rigid norms is a particular area of evolution of CEFR descriptions, as a concerted effort has taken place to shift the framework’s point of reference with the publication of CEFR CV. In CEFR 2001, the descriptor in example (c) for instance included the phrase “non-standard accent or dialect”, replaced in CEFR CV by “less familiar variety”. While this may appear superficial, such a change is highly meaningful from a GELT perspective, as it implies a clear shift from a single, fixed norm of comprehension (standard ‘native speaker’ English) to multiple contextualized norms, relative to the listener and the setting. For instance, the revised descriptor would allow practitioners to place a Thai listener at level C2 even if they had some difficulty understanding an academic lecture given in British English on the basis that they may be more familiar with the Englishes of Thai lecturers. Elsewhere, such a reorientation has been achieved in CEFR CV by the replacement of the term ‘native speaker’ with various alternatives, including ‘proficient speakers’, ‘users of the target language’, etc. In example (d), for instance, the phrase ‘at no disadvantage to native speakers’ was replaced with ‘at no disadvantage to other participants’. From a GELT perspective, these changes once again reflect a shift in viewing English as having a much more complex global ownership than was conventionally the case (Rose & Galloway, 2019), and direct the attention of CEFR users toward the specifics of interactional contexts and participants in interactions.

One salient feature of CEFR CV is a clearer description of plurilingual and pluricultural competence. Though they are described in separate scales in CEFR CV, plurilingual and pluricultural competence is seen as a unitary construct rather than as two separate ideas, reflecting the fluid connections that exist between language and culture in a broader sense (Galante, in press). CEFR CV characterizes plurilingualism as “an uneven and changing competence, in which the user/ learner’s resources in one language or variety may be very different in nature from their resources in another” (p. 30). In CEFR 2001, plurilingual competence was described in rather broad terms, as involving the ability to shift from one language to another, understand a person speaking one language and express in another, use full language repertoires to understand a text, recognize vocabulary used by international language users, mediate communication between language users from different diverse backgrounds, experiment alternative forms of communication, and exploit paralinguistics. In CEFR CV, these general ideas were further developed into a set of scales and descriptors for ‘Building on pluricultural repertoire’, ‘Plurilingual comprehension’, and ‘Building on plurilingual repertoire’, thus opening the framework up to practices of language use in which the conventional borders of languages are relativized, and where individuals may draw on any

part of their integrated semiotic repertoire to make meaning (Li, 2018). Though the notion of “translanguaging”, now typically used to describe such practice, was not mentioned specifically in CEFR 2001, the new scales for plurilingual and pluricultural competence provide a basis for the repositioning of translanguaging practice as a form of competence rather than an indicator of deficit, a key aim of translanguaging and GELT (Rose & Galloway, 2019).

Facilitating GELT with CEFR: Considering Conditions and Blind Spots

As we have highlighted thus far, there are a number of elements of CEFR that can be made use of in support of developing GELT-informed pedagogies, among these in particular being the descriptions of mediation and plurilingual/pluricultural competence provided by the framework, as well as its overall orientation toward action and the agency of learners. However, a key point that must be made is that this potential for CEFR to support a GELT orientation can only be realized if the framework is embedded in broader decentralizing education reforms which foreground not only the agency of learners as English users in the Global Englishes context but also of teachers tasked with the enactment of such a pedagogy. This reflects a trend in applied linguistics scholarship over past decades toward more systematic treatment of teacher agency, both in terms of gaining a better understanding of how teachers make sense of their place in the education system (e.g., Hult, 2018) as well as with regard to better describing their influence over teaching and learning practices at the grass-roots. Language policy literature in particular has highlighted how teachers, under the right conditions, can act as policy arbiters (Johnson, 2013), empowered to make context-appropriate pedagogical decisions with a degree of autonomy. While CEFR has through its global spread become associated with particular types of pedagogy (in particular, the ‘communicative approach’ as presented by global textbooks, see Savski, in press), its stated original intention was to offer a relatively open frame of reference which could support practitioners’ implementation of different types of pedagogy. Indeed, while it is not referenced explicitly in the framework, CEFR in this sense appears to be most in line with post-method pedagogy (Kumaravadivelu, 2001) and its rejection of pre-packaged ‘methods.’

Observations from work on teacher professional development in the Thai context (Prabjandee, 2020; Prabjandee & Fang, in press) appears to suggest that a framework like CEFR could support teachers’ autonomy and guide their implementation of GELT-informed pedagogies in their own contexts. In general, to help teachers implement GELT, it is important to involve teachers in a series of experiential learning activities, rather than to inform them explicitly how they should implement it. This is because implementing GELT requires teachers to examine their extant practices critically and reflect upon alternative solutions for classroom implementation. Such requirements may challenge their entrenched beliefs – formed throughout their lifetime – about how English should be taught and may ultimately lead to ideological tensions within the teacher themselves. For example, teachers who were taught by using traditional ELT methods, grounded in ‘native speaker’ ideology, may find it challenging to implement GELT. To address such challenges, Galloway and Rose (2015) brought forward six broad proposals for change: increasing World Englishes and ELF exposure in language curricula, emphasizing respect for multilingualism in ELT, raising awareness of Global Englishes in ELT, raising awareness of ELF strategies, emphasizing respect for diverse cultures and identities, and changing English teacher hiring practices. These six proposals require teachers to think differently when designing curricula and planning lessons, with Galloway and Rose (2015) referring to the transformation as “a paradigm shift in ELT” (p. 209). It is at this early point, when teachers must navigate multiple sources of information when setting learning objectives, that CEFR can be useful as an initial point of reference in the design of curricula and planning of lessons. Above, we pointed out that several ideas of GELT are present in CEFR, such as the plurilithic nature of language, the shift away from the ‘native speaker’ as a

reference point, and plurilingual and pluricultural competence. Thus, involving teachers to use CEFR as a guideline may potentially create opportunities for GELT implementation.

The question becomes: How can we help teachers implement GELT through CEFR? As indicated above, simply telling teachers to implement GELT may not be effective because they have considerably established cognition, ideology, and belief about their profession (Prabjandee, 2020; Prabjandee & Fang, in press). Guided by transformative learning theory (Jarvis, 2009), Prabjandee (2020) designed a teacher professional development programme for English teachers in Thailand to implement GELT. The programme aimed to help teachers understand the theoretical foundations of GELT, and potentially, may inspire them to implement it in their classrooms. Five experiential learning activities (trajectory of English: from past to present, a shift to teaching Global Englishes, role model of English users: ‘Native or Non-native?’, ‘World Englishes’, and ‘Listen and Guess’) were implemented to help teachers understand basic GELT concepts (see Prabjandee, 2020 for the description of each activity). The goals of each activity were not to instruct teachers about Global Englishes as a scholarly field, but rather to engage them to think about *why* and *how* issues raised by such scholarship may or may not be relevant to their contexts. The ‘why’ and the ‘how’ questions are very crucial to engage teachers in thinking about GELT implementation since it helps them see the relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability (see Rose & Galloway, 2019 for more discussion). In this sense, the teacher professional development did not impose GELT to teachers, instead engaging teachers in a series of experiential learning activities and asking them to reflect upon their experiences. The activities were reported useful (e.g., increased GELT awareness, positive attitudes toward GELT, and willingness to learn more about GELT) to help teachers understand GELT even though the concepts were not taught explicitly. Such a programme thus had the most significant result of imbuing teachers with a sense of agency both as educators and as speakers of English, thereby providing a strong counterpoint to the many structural pressures Thai teachers of English experience within their educational system.

Promoting agency among teachers is a particularly key concern when it comes to CEFR, as the embeddedness of the framework in top-down structural forces in language education can quickly leave users with little sense of power. National policies, for instance, often make use of the framework to dictate learning goals at particular stages (e.g., B1 by the end of secondary education), aligning such objectives with broader aspirations for development (Savski, 2020; 2021), thus leaving little scope for teachers to act as policy arbiters by, for instance, using the framework to estimate what their students can do and what their learning objectives should be. The association of CEFR with global proficiency tests like IELTS and TOEFL as well as with global textbooks is also an obstacle to agentive uses of the framework from a Global Englishes perspective – if CEFR is most visibly associated with ELT products that represent the interests of ‘native speaker’ nations, how can the framework be read as anything other than a representation of ‘native speaker’ English? This is a particular key concern, as the use of CEFR in support of GELT-informed pedagogies must by necessity involve a level of agency, in the form of selective reading and creative interpretation. The framework not only does not provide information specific to Global Englishes but includes elements which, if interpreted as key criterial features, are potentially antagonistic to a GELT perspective (e.g., its rather norm-focused description of communicative competence). Additionally, elements which are potentially conducive to the development of GELT-informed pedagogy (e.g., descriptions of interaction, mediation, plurilingual and pluricultural competence) offer only partial information in generic form, and must thus be localized and filled out with meaning to create a genuine link with practice. Integrating CEFR into broad transformative projects like GELT, while being advantageous in the sense of establishing links between new agendas and existing

policy, thus also necessitates a broader push for professional development activities with a focus on building teachers' policy literacy – both skills and awareness of having the ability (and duty) to act as policy arbiters (Hult, 2018). Such skills may not come naturally to many teachers, particularly those socialized into centralized, top-down education systems, and there must thus be a more concerted effort than ever to promote them in an era when global policies wield increasing influence over day-to-day practice.

Practical Applications of CEFR in Designing Global Englishes-informed Pedagogy

To design Global Englishes-informed pedagogy, it is important to start with determining expected outcomes. We note here that we use the term outcome, focusing on the needs and abilities of learners, rather than objective, which tends to reflect the teachers' perspective. Global Englishes-informed pedagogy suggests a focus on outcomes, since its goal is to prepare learners to communicate with linguistically and culturally diverse English users in the globalized world. Communication should be viewed as performance expected from the learners, so it corresponds suitably with the notion of outcomes. The question becomes: What basis is there for teachers to set outcomes? It is at this point that CEFR becomes important, since it was developed precisely to offer a starting point for setting outcomes in the development of programmes, courses, and lessons. Two broad ways of reading CEFR are possible: The first can be described as 'top-down' reading, which starts from selecting an overall level (e.g., B1) as the desired learning outcome, with teaching thus tasked with achieving the same level across all skills (reception, production, interaction, mediation). The key considerations here are, on the one hand, whether the chosen target level is appropriate to the group of learners in question, and on the other hand, whether enough learning time is available to achieve such a broad target. The latter condition makes this approach particularly suitable for the development of programmes, where sufficient time to focus on various skills is available, and less useful for designing shorter courses or lessons. For these, a 'bottom-up' reading may be more useful. Here, the teacher selects a particular type of skill (e.g., writing business correspondence) and finds the CEFR scale that corresponds to that skill (e.g., 'Correspondence', CEFR CV, p. 82-83), then estimates the learners' current ability on that scale (e.g., A2) and selects a learning outcome from the level above (i.e., B1). The same process can then be repeated for other outcomes, either under the same skill (e.g., other types of written interaction) or another one (e.g., related skills in spoken interaction), with the awareness that learning outcomes may be set at different levels (e.g., B1 for one skill, B2 for another), depending on the learners' profile, and that teachers may deviate from CEFR if needed (e.g., developing outcomes by rephrasing CEFR descriptors).

Once outcomes have been decided, the next step is to place the 'can do' statements in the context of authentic English communication in the globalized world. This is where GELT comes into consideration: Since the 'can-do' statements in CEFR describes modes of communication in general, the teachers need to take a step further by considering in *what contexts* and *with whom* the learners will use English in real life. In Table 2, the descriptor in example (a) reads "Can understand virtually all types of written/signed texts including abstract, structurally complex, or highly colloquial literary and non-literary writing". To infuse this outcome with a GELT perspective, the teacher can select reading texts that learners will read in their real life, such as news, online discussion boards, movie reviews, travel guides, or novels. These should be authentic to the maximum extent feasible from a linguistic perspective (acting as starting points for developing awareness of the multiple norms of English across these different genres) and should be reflective of specific cultural contexts (acting as starting points for developing intercultural awareness). In other cases, there may be opportunities to develop learners' awareness of different Englishes (example b), honing their ability to adapt to differences (c) and to mobilize knowledge of differences to their advantage (d).

Table 2. Potential ways to add a GELT perspective to CEFR ‘can do’ statements

Scale	Level	CEFR Descriptor	GELT Context
(a) Overall reading comprehension	C2	Can understand virtually all types of Reading texts relevant to learners’ written/signed texts including abstract, real-life exposure to different structurally complex, or highly Englishes, such as news, online colloquial literary and non-literary discussion boards, movie reviews, writing.	
(b) Understanding an interlocutor	B2	Can understand in detail what is said to them in the standard language or a varieties of English, including non-familiar variety even in a noisy standard varieties potentially relevant environment.	Developing familiarity with new to the learners
(c) Strategies to explain a new concept (Adapting language)	A2	Can repeat the main point of a simple message on an everyday subject, using different formulation to help someone else understand it.	Developing strategies of adapting to diverse English users
(d) Formal discussion (meetings)	C2	Can hold their own in formal discussion of complex issues, putting forward an articulate and persuasive argument, at no disadvantage to other participants.	Developing intercultural communication strategies, considering different rhetorical styles and conventions

After selecting outcomes and adding a GELT perspective, the teachers must then decide on an approach to classroom implementation. While CEFR is relatively open-ended when it comes to teaching methods, the fact that it makes use of ‘can do’ statements implies an orientation to instruction in which learners have the maximum possible opportunity to genuinely engage in the actions it describes. For instance, a class in which students debate social issues (Table 2, example [d]) should involve authentic exchange of opinions, with attention to content, rather than merely a performance of debating for the purpose of using certain kinds of language. Indeed, the *action-oriented approach* formulated on the basis of the framework by Piccardo & North (2019) talks about “opening up the class to the outside world, to the society” (p. 245), stressing the importance of injecting greater authenticity into the learning process than the existing communicative approach has generally done. With regard to how GELT can be added to such a classroom, two general paths seem to be possible. Much of the current literature on GELT (e.g., Boonsuk, Ambele, & McKinley, 2021; Fang & Ren, 2018; Galloway & Rose, 2018) has involved the use of what may be described as a *content-based approach*, in which content related to Global Englishes is explicitly taught (e.g., as part of a dedicated course), with language-specific outcomes given less explicit attention. Such a class may for instance involve explicit debating of issues related to Global Englishes, as done by Rose and Galloway (2017). While this approach can yield positive outcomes, we note that it is also ecologically confined to a narrow set of contexts, since it is only relevant to the needs of few students (e.g., undergraduate students majoring in English), can only be implemented competently by teachers with significant background knowledge about Global Englishes, and may not be possible in contexts where opening up a dedicated course is unfeasible (e.g., secondary education). Thus, the use of CEFR together with GELT can also suggest a different approach, which can be described as *integration*. This involves ‘turning’ an existing teaching/learning context by shifting objectives in line with CEFR and GELT, as we have indicated above. The primary focus remains on outcomes related to using English, either generally or in specific contexts (e.g., professional communication), with a GELT perspective adopted to, first, shift attention away from the static ‘native speaker’ norm, and, second, to raise awareness of the diversity of Englishes and cultures. Such an approach can be adopted alongside existing teaching/learning materials, even ELT coursebooks, though a full implementation of a GELT

perspective would likely require teachers to extend certain activities (e.g., add different pronunciation models in a pronunciation task based on only one variety of English, see Siqueira, 2020) or subvert others (e.g., deviate from an overly narrow presentation of grammar ‘rules’ to a model more tuned to intelligibility). This approach empowers teachers to exercise their agency in the classroom, and underlines the need to avoid the top-down imposition of methods and approaches on teachers.

Finally, CEFR and GELT can be brought together to design feedback and assessment strategies which ensure that learners achieve expected outcomes. While a general principle drawn from CEFR and the theory underlying it may be that assessment, just as instruction, should focus on the learners’ ability to perform actions in context (as opposed to their ability to reproduce forms of grammar and vocabulary out of context), the question of how assessment may be handled from the perspective of GELT remains under-discussed. As a broad orientation, an “*assessment for learning*” approach, in which the goal is to provide feedback for the learners for the sake of learning rather than for demonstrating achievement, appears most suitable. Implementing such assessment can guide teachers to focus more on the process of communication rather than merely on products (e.g., by using performance tasks or interaction tasks) since communication in the globalized world is complex and requires ongoing preparation. A key challenge for teachers is to avoid referring to a static, single imagined norm of English (whether based on ‘native speaker’ English or not), and instead consider what norms are relevant to the outcomes set previously and to the learners as English users in the global context. This implies that a ‘one size fits all’ approach to different outcomes and contexts is unsuitable, and that both feedback and assessment should be narrow in scope, focused on specific traits rather than all aspects of language. In an academic writing class, for instance, the generic features typical of academic articles (e.g., topic sentences, transitions, signposting, quoting verbs, hedging) should be presented and assessed with reference to norms in the scholarly field (e.g., engineering) and region (e.g., SE Asia) relevant to the learners, rather than as a universal, global norm. In such a way, the GELT focus on awareness, intelligibility, and adaptability is maximized, and the preparation of learners to deal successfully with the diversity of Global Englishes is optimized.

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