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Threshold Level series

Reference Level Descriptions for national and regional languages

Série Niveaux-seuils

Descriptions de niveaux de référence pour les langues nationales et régionales

Prefaces and Introductions / Préfaces et Introductions  
(1975 – 2005)

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**A1 – Εισαγωγικό Επίπεδο για τα Νέα Ελληνικά, 2005 ('Breakthrough' for Greek / Niveau A1 pour le grec), Preface : J.L.M. Trim**

# A1: Εισαγωγικό Επίπεδο για τα Νέα Ελληνικά

Κέντρο Ελληνικής Γλώσσας  
Υπουργείο Εθνικής Παιδείας και Θρησκευμάτων  
Συμβούλιο της Ευρώπης

Επιστημονικός υπεύθυνος: *Στάθης Ευσταθιάδης*  
Ερευνήτριες: *Νιόβη Αντωνοπούλου*  
*Σμαρώ Βογιατζίδου*  
*Δήμητρα Μανάβη*  
Συνεργάτες/ιδες: *Αργύριος Αρχάκης*  
*Αμαλία Αρβανίτη*  
*Μαριάνθη Μακρή-Τσιλιπάκου*  
*Δημήτριος Παπαζαχαρίου*  
*Αναστάσιος Τσαγγαλίδης*  
*Αγγελική Ψάλτου-Joycey*  
*Βικτωρία Παναγιωτίδου*

Εξωτερικός Σύμβουλος: *John L.M. Trim*

Διεύθυνση Γλωσσικής Πολιτικής  
Συμβούλιο της Ευρώπης, 2005  
Strasbourg

## PREFACE TO GREEK BREAKTHROUGH SPECIFICATION

It is a great pleasure to welcome the successful completion and publication of the Breakthrough specification for Modern Greek. The authorial team at the Centre for the Greek Language at Thessaloniki are to be congratulated on their efficient and pioneering work.

This Breakthrough specification for Modern Greek is in fact the first such specification to be published in any language. Though the team has been able to consult the as yet unpublished Breakthrough specification for English, it has exercised its own independent judgement throughout and has made changes and additions, including a number of new chapters, wherever it considered them to be necessary.

Breakthrough corresponds closely to A1, the lowest level recognised in the 6-level system proposed in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment*. However, it is at this level that the tension between criteria for the assessment of proficiency and the specification of learning objectives is most acute. In assessment, the lowest level tends to attract descriptions which characterise poor performance, whereas learning objective must be substantial and worthwhile if it is to merit accreditation in a public system.

It is only over many years that the need for such a specification has been recognised. Originally, the *Threshold Level* was considered to be the lowest level deserving of any recognition. It soon became apparent that the goal of functional independence in the face of the challenges posed by daily life in a foreign country was ambitious, requiring a substantial educational effort. *Waystage* was soon developed as an earlier objective derived by reducing options for the expression of functional and notional categories, the full range of which was, so far as possible, retained. Later, the demand for a third level, above Threshold, was met by the development of the *Vantage* level. For some years, this 3-level specification appeared to satisfy the requirements of educational systems of qualification. It is only recently that the need for the accreditation of a level of proficiency below *Waystage* has been recognised and that demand from a viable audience has grown. This demand has come from three main sources. First, the promotion by the Council of Europe of *plurilingualism* as an educational objective has increased the interest in adult education for a limited but usable competence in a number of European languages which are virtually unrepresented in school education, to be achieved, say, in a one-month's summer course in the country itself, or by a semester's study in home-based adult education, perhaps with IT support. Such courses may well aim at an A1 proficiency and be accredited in the European Language Portfolio. Secondly, the great increase in personal mobility has seen an influx of substantial numbers of work migrants and asylum seekers into many European countries. These people may have received limited education and have no previous experience of language learning and therefore benefit greatly from working towards a limited competence in the language of the host country. Seeing its achievement formally recognised may usefully motivate further learning. This may also be true of middle-aged persons in previously closed societies who wish to enlarge their horizons by learning something of the language of their neighbours. Finally, the progressive lowering of the starting age of language learning in schools makes it increasingly important for a clear early learning objective to be set as a benchmark for the interface between primary and secondary education, so that secondary school teachers have confidence in building further rather than starting all over again.

It is very much to be hoped that the development of a Breakthrough level for Greek will stimulate its learning as a foreign or second language and contribute to the maintenance of European linguistic and cultural diversity. The work of the Centre for the Greek Language had now resulted in the only 4-level specification of language-learning objectives to be published based on the Threshold Level model (*Profile Deutsch*, the only 6-level description, attempts a unitary treatment following the Framework model). Taken together with the questionnaire published as

an Appendix to the *Threshold Level* volume, it offers a coherent basis for progression in the learning of Greek from its earliest stages to a level of proficiency which will empower the learner to cope with both the practical and the intellectual challenges of Modern Greek society. The Centre for the Greek Language is to be warmly congratulated on a solid achievement and an important contribution to European understanding and co-operation. It is very much to be hoped that those responsible for the teaching, learning and assessment of Greek across Europe and beyond will make full use of this valuable tool and that others will follow its example.

J.L.M. Trim, Cambridge, November 2004

**Niveau B2 pour le français – un référentiel – 2004 (B2 for French),  
Présentation : J.C. Beacco**



Division des Politiques linguistiques, Strasbourg  
Référentiels pour les langues nationales et régionales

# **NIVEAU B2 POUR LE FRANÇAIS** (utilisateur/apprenant indépendant)

## **TEXTES ET RÉFÉRENCES**

par

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# INTRODUCTION

## DES RÉFÉRENTIELS POUR LE FRANÇAIS

### LES RÉFÉRENTIELS POUR LES LANGUES NATIONALES ET RÉGIONALES

La réalisation du *Niveau B2 pour le français* entre dans le cadre d'une action du Conseil de l'Europe destinée à favoriser l'élaboration de référentiels fondés sur le *Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues* (désormais : le *Cadre*) mais déclinés langue par langue : de tels référentiels ont déjà été produits ou sont en cours de réalisation pour l'anglais, l'allemand, le grec, le portugais,...

#### Des référentiels

Ces référentiels de langue sont des instruments partagés par les utilisateurs, qui ont pour fonction de décrire, sous forme d'inventaires de « mots », des contenus possibles d'enseignement. De la sorte, ils peuvent servir de base à l'élaboration de programmes d'enseignement, en français langue première, seconde ou étrangère, en français langue d'enseignement, qui soient comparables, même s'ils sont différents.

En effet, ces référentiels ne visent pas à imposer de mêmes contenus d'enseignements pour toutes les situations éducatives, mais ils entendent donner des moyens d'élaborer ceux-ci à partir des mêmes matériaux de base. L'objectif recherché n'est pas de normaliser ou d'uniformiser les contenus d'enseignements mais de les rendre compatibles.

Plus largement, on rappellera d'abord ce que le *Niveau B2 pour le français* présenté ici **n'est pas** :

- le *Niveau B2 pour le français* n'est pas une méthode d'enseignement : ce n'est pas un matériel pédagogique prêt à l'emploi pour enseigner : il propose des inventaires dans lesquels il reste à choisir ce qui est à enseigner ;
- le *Niveau B2 pour le français* n'est pas un guide pédagogique : il ne propose ni ne préconise aucune manière particulière d'enseigner ;
- le *Niveau B2 pour le français* n'est pas une grammaire : on n'y décrit pas le français, mais on y recense des formes enseignables : les chapitres 3, 4 et 5 présentent des inventaires de contenus et de formes (classés suivant des catégories très larges) et exemplifiés, correspondant à des besoins d'utilisateurs de niveau avancé, selon les critères B2 du *Cadre* ;
- le *Niveau B2 pour le français* n'est pas un dictionnaire : les chapitres 4 et 6 présentent des inventaires de mots mais n'en décrivent ni le(s) sens ni les emplois ; il conviendra de se reporter aux dictionnaires d'usage, monolingues ou bilingues, en cas de besoin ;
- le *Niveau B2 pour le français* n'est pas un programme officiel d'enseignement ayant un caractère d'obligatoire : il ne définit ni ne délimite ce qui est à enseigner et à apprendre, de manière précise, à un niveau d'apprentissage donné, à un public donné et dans un volume horaire d'enseignement/apprentissage donné. Ces choix dépendent des situations d'enseignement et des systèmes éducatifs ;
- le *Niveau B2 pour le français* n'est pas un outil d'évaluation, qui délimiterait tout ce qui est à identifier comme connu ou non connu, compris ou non compris, appris ou non appris. Il permet de spécifier les compétences de sortie attendues, qui peuvent corres-



pondre entièrement au niveau B2, mais qui peuvent aussi n'en viser qu'une partie (par exemple : 75 % de B2 dans sa totalité, 100 % de B2 uniquement pour l'interaction orale et l'écoute...). Pour l'évaluation, les référentiels par langues doivent être utilisés conjointement aux référentiels de compétences (*Cadre*) :

- le *Niveau B2 pour le français* n'est pas un référentiel au sens institutionnel (français) du terme : il ne définit pas les objectifs, les savoirs et les savoir-faire et les contenus langagiers nécessaires à l'obtention d'une certification ou d'un diplôme précis, définissant une qualification dans un contexte donné.

Ce matériau, comme tous les autres, a pour rôle majeur de permettre l'élaboration d'outils de pilotage des politiques linguistiques éducatives, de programmes d'enseignement, de certifications... compatibles entre eux et repérables mutuellement pour une même langue et entre les langues enseignées en Europe.

Il s'agit d'un outil commun pour l'enseignement/apprentissage des langues, destiné à des utilisateurs comme :

- les concepteurs et responsables de programmes de langues (au niveau national, régional, à celui d'un établissement, d'une école privée de langues...), en relation avec les responsables des politiques linguistiques éducatives ;
- les inspecteurs de langues ou les responsables de la qualité de leur enseignement ;
- les formateurs d'enseignants ;
- les responsables et les concepteurs d'épreuves d'évaluation et de certification ;
- les auteurs de matériel d'enseignement (manuels, méthodes...), quels qu'en soient les supports (papier, vidéo, numérique...) ;
- les enseignants de langues eux-mêmes si et quand ils ont à élaborer ou à adapter des programmes et/ou du matériel pédagogique ou lorsqu'ils réalisent, pour leur usage, du matériel d'enseignement, sous forme de fiches pédagogiques, par exemple, qu'ils peuvent ensuite faire circuler.

### **Des référentiels fondés sur le *Cadre européen commun de référence***

La caractéristique majeure de ces référentiels pour le français est de proposer des inventaires des formes en les rapportant à la typologie des compétences et à l'échelle correspondante des niveaux de maîtrise de ces compétences élaborées au Conseil de l'Europe depuis le début des années 1990, telles qu'elles figurent dans l'instrument de politique linguistique éducative constitué par le *Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues : apprendre, enseigner, évaluer*<sup>1</sup>.

Dans ce document, qui est commun à toutes les langues enseignées, on décrit les contenus d'enseignement en termes de compétences (c'est-à-dire de savoir-faire mettant en jeu des connaissances) ou d'éléments de compétences et non de formes à maîtriser. Par exemple, on y identifie une compétence comme *l'interaction écrite générale* (que l'on désigne aussi ordinairement sous le terme d'*écriture*). Celle-ci est spécifiée, pour premier niveau de maîtrise (A1), sous les formes comme : *(L'apprenant/utilisateur) peut demander ou transmettre par écrit des renseignements personnels détaillés* (*Cadre*, p. 68). Les compétences sont analysées au moyen de descripteurs (dans l'exemple ci-dessus : *demande par écrit des renseignements personnels*) et étalonnées en six niveaux de maîtrise (du plus élémentaire : A1, comme ci-dessus, au plus expert : C2).

1. Le *Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues* sera cité dans sa version française, publiée en 2001 chez Didier (Paris).

L'objectif des référentiels pour les langues nationales et régionales est de transposer les descriptions du *Cadre*, établies en termes de compétences (ou éléments de compétences) et de niveaux (ou degrés) de maîtrise dans une compétence en inventaires de signes linguistiques. La maîtrise de ceux-ci par les utilisateurs est réputée permettre, en français, la mise en pratique de ces compétences à un niveau donné.

On fait l'hypothèse qu'il est possible d'identifier des formes linguistiques qui, pour le français, correspondent globalement aux compétences décrites dans le *Cadre* indépendamment des langues considérées : ces formes constituent le matériau nécessaire à la communication, ainsi calibrée par compétence et niveau de maîtrise dans chaque compétence. On passe donc d'un référentiel général commun à différentes langues à un référentiel spécifique au français, mais surtout d'un objet d'enseignement « communication » à un objet d'enseignement « langue », plus immédiatement opérationnel pour les utilisateurs, en ce qu'il est constitué d'inventaires de formes linguistiques.

## **DE UN NIVEAU-SEUIL AUX RÉFÉRENTIELS POUR LE FRANÇAIS**

Cette entreprise s'inscrit dans une continuité institutionnelle et didactique que l'on rappellera succinctement.

### **Les niveaux-seuils des années 1970**

Le contexte du présent projet est d'abord celui du Conseil de l'Europe et des instruments mis au point dans le cadre de la Division des langues (puis Division des politiques linguistiques) : l'impulsion donnée par l'élaboration du *Threshold Level* (pour l'anglais, réalisé par J. A. van Ek et J. E. M. Trim, 1975) a la création d'une culture didactique européenne commune s'est concrétisée par la mise au point de référentiels comparables pour d'autres langues d'Europe. Cette action a été reprise et développée par l'élaboration d'un niveau dit *Waystage* pour l'anglais (1990) puis celle d'un niveau *Vantage*, pour l'anglais d'abord (1995) et ensuite pour d'autres langues (allemand, grec...). Par ailleurs, l'Association ALTE (*The Association of Language Testers in Europe*) a elle-même élaboré des référentiels de ce type. Il a paru opportun aux promoteurs des présents référentiels et aux Institutions qui en ont ensuite rendu possible la réalisation d'insérer le français dans cette dynamique.

En effet, ce projet s'honore de repartir des travaux de cette nature effectués pour le français dans le cadre du *Credif* (Centre de recherche et d'étude pour la diffusion du français : Ecole normale supérieure de Saint-Clément, puis de Fontenay-Saint-Clément), travaux qui ont conduit à la réalisation, qui a fait date, de *Un niveau-seuil* (1976) et de *L'adaptation de Un niveau-seuil pour des contextes scolaires* (1979). Ces référentiels sont demeurés les seuls pour le français : il n'y a pas eu création d'autres niveaux, pour de multiples raisons, dont la moindre n'a pas été la décision de supprimer le *Credif* en 1996.

### **Convergences des systèmes éducatifs**

Depuis quelques années, ce contexte a évolué de manière significative. Le programme des *niveaux-seuils* du Conseil de l'Europe avait comme finalité première de faciliter la mobilité des personnes dans l'espace européen<sup>2</sup>. À ce projet s'en adjoignait un autre, celui de créer un système européen d'apprentissage des langues par les adultes, organisé de manière modulaire en unités capitalisables, et fondé sur une analyse des besoins langagiers. Ce projet n'a pas vu le jour, sans doute parce que les conditions politiques n'étaient pas mûres.

<sup>2</sup> Voir les pages concernées dans *Un niveau-seuil*, p. 45-82.

Avec le recul, il apparaît aussi que l'une des finalités de fait de ce programme de la Division des langues a été de diffuser l'approche communicative de l'enseignement des langues par le haut, c'est-à-dire par le biais des programmes d'enseignement. On cherchait ainsi à agir sur les systèmes éducatifs, en promouvant une approche des enseignements de langues réputée plus efficace par rapport aux finalités recherchées : la communication effective entre les locuteurs. Cet objectif relatif aux méthodologies d'enseignement a fini par prendre le pas sur celui d'ordre politique : devant les difficultés à institutionnaliser des dispositifs ajustables d'enseignement des langues, on a privilégié la création d'une culture didactique européenne partagée. Celle-ci s'est concrétisée ultérieurement par la réflexion sur les auto-apprentissages et l'apprentissage réflexif comme forme de l'appropriation d'une langue, donc comme démarche d'appropriation des langues toujours possible par défaut, à laquelle il a semblé important de préparer les institutions éducatives et les apprenants<sup>3</sup>.

Il ne s'agit plus, aujourd'hui, de promouvoir la « méthodologie communicative ». Un facteur nouveau est surtout constitué par le fait que, toujours sous l'impulsion de la Division des langues, un rapprochement des enseignements de langues est en passe de se réaliser en Europe. Ces convergences sont rendues possibles par la mise au point et la diffusion du *Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues*. Ce document, élaboré collectivement (les premiers travaux ont commencé au début des années 1990), autorise une détermination partagée, sur la base de définitions communes, de la nature des compétences d'enseignement et d'apprentissage en langues et des niveaux de maîtrise dans ces compétences. Cette exigence de comparabilité des compétences en langues entre les différents programmes d'enseignement et entre les différentes langues est une attente du marché des langues et du marché de l'emploi, car elle permet un contrôle de qualité. Elle constitue surtout une condition de la mise en place d'une éducation plurilingue, puisqu'elle permet la spécification d'objectifs diversifiés (par compétences, par langues, par cycle et phases de la formation aux langues tout au long de la vie...) et, en conséquence, la création d'itinéraires d'apprentissages diversifiés, dans lesquels il sera peut-être plus aisé de ménager des espaces pour l'appropriation de davantage de variétés linguistiques.

## CONSTITUER UN OBJET-LANGUE

C'est dans cette conjoncture que prend place l'élaboration des référentiels pour le français. Pour des raisons de commodité et pour éviter de devoir rechercher des équivalents aux désignations métaphoriques utilisées pour désigner ces niveaux pour l'anglais et en anglais, on a choisi de s'en tenir à la désignation allant de A1 à C2, qui est utilisée couramment dans le *Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues*. Le niveau B2 correspondrait donc au *Vantage* anglophone, B1 au *Threshold*...

La volonté de réaliser ces différents référentiels dans un même cadre institutionnel et avec les mêmes équipes de linguistes et didacticiens tient à la nécessité d'ajuster les niveaux de référence entre eux et donc de concevoir l'ensemble dans sa totalité, de manière à en assurer la cohérence. Pour le français, cette entreprise commence par la construction de B2 et elle sera suivie de celle de A1. Il est ensuite prévu de réaliser les niveaux A2 et B1 et d'élaborer ultérieurement les deux niveaux C. Ces derniers concernent un nombre d'apprenants potentiels plus limité et posent des problèmes théoriques et techniques d'une grande complexité mais ils sont pertinents pour des publics stratégiquement décisifs, comme les enseignants ou les interprètes.

3. Voir, en particulier, HORTÉ H., *Autonomie et apprentissage des langues étrangères*, Conseil de l'Europe, Strasbourg, 1979 (puis 1982, Hatier, Paris).

## Référentiels et norme linguistique

Les référentiels sont élaborés en relation étroite avec les catégories et les descripteurs (c'est-à-dire les éléments permettant de spécifier ou de définir la nature de chaque compétence au niveau de maîtrise envisagé) du *Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues*.

Mais cette articulation au *Cadre* ne permet pas de résoudre la question du rôle normalisateur qu'est amené à jouer *de facto* tout référentiel. La synergie francophone à l'œuvre dans ce projet ne doit pas laisser croire que, pour l'heure, les référentiels pour le français prennent en compte massivement les particularités régionales du français, quelle que soit la définition sociolinguistique que l'on donne de *région*. Cela a été une position souvent clarifiée au Conseil de l'Europe : les *niveaux* décrivent les compétences visées dans des variétés de langues dites *standards*. Cette dénomination de *standard* ou *international* n'est certes pas exempte d'ambiguïtés, quand on la rapporte aux réalités sociolinguistiques et aux enjeux politiques. Cependant le propos n'est pas ici de décrire des pratiques sociolinguistiques, mais de construire des objets didactiques en mesure de permettre de créer des programmes d'enseignement compatibles. On s'en tiendra donc ici à un « français international » aussi largement partagé que possible, en tant que variété ne correspondant sans doute à aucune compétence concrète et à aucune performance observable, puisqu'elle est construite pour l'enseignement.

L'élaboration de référentiels spécifiques à certaines variétés de français (international, de Belgique ou du Québec, du sud de la France, des Antilles françaises...) est cependant parfaitement envisageable, dans le cadre du Conseil de l'Europe, mais aussi en dehors de celui-ci. Si l'on souhaite disposer de référentiels spécifiques pour le français, là où il est langue officielle ou nationale, il sera possible d'utiliser le présent *Niveau B2 pour le français* pour sa méthodologie de réalisation, la catégorisation adoptée, le matériel verbal réuni... Il peut en aller de même pour d'autres langues : les langues dites *régionales, autochtones, du territoire*, ou les langues utilisées par les communautés récemment installées dans les États francophones.

Des variantes régionales sont cependant inventoriées, de manière bien délimitée, dans ce *Niveau B2 pour le français*. La compétence relative à la perception des variétés sociales et régionales est localisée dans les niveaux C du *Cadre*, mais il a semblé opportun, du point de vue pédagogique, de faire figurer des variétés lexicales du français utilisées en Belgique et en Suisse dans le chapitre 6 qui concerne les notions spécifiques.

Enfin, comme pour *Un niveau-seuil*, on n'a pas écarté de ces inventaires des réalisations verbales relevant de l'oral spontané, volontiers considérées comme non acceptables au regard de la norme sociolinguistique. Mais, si l'on peut s'interroger sur la nécessité de faire maîtriser certaines de ces formes, il est évident que les apprenants-utilisateurs seront amenés à les rencontrer et donc à les reconnaître et à les comprendre.

## Méthodologie de réalisation

La méthodologie adoptée pour la construction de ces référentiels pour le français peut être décrite dans les mêmes termes que celle retenue pour l'élaboration des échelles du *Cadre* (p. 150 et suiv.) :

- méthodes intuitives pour la collecte des données linguistiques : appel à des experts (des linguistes, en l'occurrence), première mise au point en groupe d'experts et expérimentation (expertise professionnelle et sociale contextualisée, issue des institutions d'enseignement) ;
- méthodes quantitatives : vérification des données à partir de listes de fréquence. Mais celles-ci sont très incomplètes, puisqu'on ne dispose pas, à l'évidence, de fréquences

d'emploi pour les fonctions ni pour les énoncés qui les actualisent. On peut avoir recours à des relevés de fréquence concernant les mots :

- méthodes qualitatives, qui concernent la formulation (par exemple, dénomination des fonctions), le classement (des formes linguistiques par lesquelles une des fonctions discursives se réalise dans la communication ou des éléments du lexique qui correspondent à des notions spécifiques), la cohérence générale...

Ces démarches ne prennent leur sens que par rapport aux catégorisations retenues pour classer les éléments constitutifs de cet objet-langue, qui est un objet pour l'enseignement, à distinguer donc des usages observables de la langue. Or, le choix de ces catégories pour les inventaires relève de décisions théoriques, puisqu'on se réfère pour ces classifications à des concepts linguistiques comme : phonème, fonction, classe distributionnelle, genre discursif...

Ces référentiels sont donc fondés à la fois sur les connaissances scientifiques disponibles dans le champ de la didactique des langues/cultures, ainsi que dans celui des sciences du langage (pour la classification) et sur des connaissances d'un autre ordre (en particulier pour la distribution des formes selon les différents niveaux de maîtrise). Ces dernières relèvent de la connaissance professionnelle que les didacticiens, les responsables d'enseignement et les enseignants ont de la langue. Cela implique donc une mise au point collective.

En effet, il n'existe pas de théorie linguistique qui permette de passer, comme automatiquement, de descripteurs qualitatifs d'une compétence de communication (par exemple : *être capable de lire un texte informatif court*) à des ensembles de signes linguistiques qui sont considérés comme nécessaires à cette compétence et à ce niveau de maîtrise. Les choix constitutifs des inventaires de ce niveau B2 relèvent de décisions raisonnées mais comportent aussi une part irréductible d'arbitraire. La connaissance de « ce que doit savoir » un apprenant pour être communément considéré comme possédant tel niveau de maîtrise dans telle compétence sera ancrée dans un savoir expérientiel collectif et c'est celui-ci qui fondera, à terme, la légitimité de ces niveaux de référence. Cette mise au point ne pourra s'effectuer qu'avec l'apport de professionnels du domaine, comme les responsables de certifications en français ou celui d'enseignants opérant dans des institutions où la détermination du niveau d'entrée des apprenants est capitale.

Le Niveau B2 pour le français occupe une position bien particulière : premier de la série à être produit, il l'a été sans que l'on dispose d'autres niveaux sur lesquels le caler. Ce référentiel, comme les suivants, est susceptible d'ajustements successifs, rendus nécessaires, par ailleurs par l'évolution de la langue. Est envisagée l'élaboration du référentiel A1 et ensuite, si les conditions institutionnelles sont réunies, l'élaboration d'une version numérique des quatre niveaux, de A1 à B2. Ces instruments devraient être directement accessibles aux utilisateurs, de manière à ce que ces derniers puissent proposer des ajustements, dans une interaction indispensable entre des usagers et un objet-langue partagé.

Jean-Claude Beacco

**Sporazumevalni pra za slovenščino, 2004 (a Threshold Level for Slovenian / un niveau seuil pour le slovène), Preface : J.L.M. Trim**

Ina Forbežar, Mihaela Knez, Andreja Markovič,  
Nataša Pirih Svetina, Mojca Schlamberger Brezar, Marko Stabej,  
Hilimir Tivatlar, Jana Zemljarič Miklavčič

# **Sporazumevalni prag za slovenščino 2004**



COUNCIL OF EUROPE    CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

## **Preface to the Threshold Level for the Slovene Language**

**by J.L.M.Trim**

It is a great pleasure to welcome the publication of *Sporazumevalni prag za slovenščino*, the specification of the threshold level objective for the Slovene language. The threshold level concept has been developing as a common model of description of language-learning across Europe for the last thirty years. It is still developing as national and regional teams consider how best to apply the basic concepts to the language which they are themselves responsible for teaching to speakers of other languages. The Slovenian and Romanian versions bring the number of European languages, large and small, to have been treated in this way to 24, covering all the language families represented in Europe. Not only the Germanic, Romance, Balto-Slav, Celtic and Greek branches of the Indo-European family, but also Finno-Ugrian, Semitic and Basque languages have proved amenable to description according to the same model. This is because it starts from the universal need to communicate for the many purposes of daily life and only then shows how this is achieved in different ways by the diverse forms of language we use for the purpose. As the work proceeds, each team has approached its task in a critical spirit. It is not a question of literally translating an existing version. Each version is an adaptation of the same basic model to the specifics of the language and culture concerned and many innovations have been introduced, including a major revision of the model in *Threshold Level 1990*. As the work has progressed, all previous versions have been at the disposal of each successive team, which then has an ever-widening pool of experience to draw upon in its own reflections.

Our congratulations are due to the team from the Centre for Slovene as a Second/Foreign Language of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Ljubljana under the leadership of Dr. Marko Stabej for the way in which they have followed these principles. After carefully defining the target audience (students, business people, visitors and Slovenes living abroad), its communicative needs and situations of use, they have not only specified the functions and general and specific notions required, but have given special attention to patterns of communicative interaction and to the processes of learning as well as to the specifics of Slovene grammar, vocabulary and phonetics.

We trust that *Sporazumevalni prag za slovenščino* will prove a valuable resource for the learning teaching and assessment of proficiency in the Slovene language and its use in daily life for many years to come. Our thanks are also due to the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia for its firm moral and financial support for the project and in particular to Ms. Zdravka Godunc for her commitment and enthusiasm in initiating and co-ordinating the project.

Προχωρημένο Επίπεδο για τα Νέα Ελληνικά, 2003 ("Vantage" for Greek / pour le grec), *Preface : J.L.M. Trim*

## Προχωρημένο Επίπεδο για τα Νέα Ελληνικά

Κέντρο Ελληνικής Γλώσσας  
Υπουργείο Εθνικής Παιδείας και Θρησκευμάτων  
Συμβούλιο της Ευρώπης

Επιστημονικός υπεύθυνος: *Στάθης Ευσταθιάδης*

Ερευνήτριες: *Νιόβη Αντωνιοπούλου*  
*Σμαρώ Βαγιατζίδου*  
*Αίματρα Μανόλη*

Συνεργάτες/ίδες: *Αργύριος Αρχάκης*  
*Αμαλία Αρβανίτη*

Εξωτερικός Σύμβουλος: *John L.M. Trim*

Συμβούλιο της Ευρώπης  
Στρασβούργο 2003



## **Preface to the Vantage Level for Modern Greek**

It is with considerable pleasure that we greet the completion of the Vantage Level for Modern Greek, produced by the Centre for Greek Language, Thessaloniki at the request of the Greek Ministry of Education.

Vantage Level is a third level in a series of specifications of learning objectives developed within the Council of Europe's programme for the promotion of language learning in Europe.

The series provides a series of reference points, common objectives towards the achievement of which all can work independently but in harmony. It sets out to define in some detail what users of a language are most likely to wish or need to be able to do in the communication situations in which they take part and consequently what they have to know and the skills they have to develop in order to be able to communicate effectively in those situations.

**The Threshold Level (TL)** may be regarded as the key element in the series, since it attempts to identify the minimal linguistic equipment which will enable a learner to deal with the more predictable situations of daily life, transactional and interactional, as an independent agent.

**Waystage (WS)** has subsequently been developed as an early learning objective designed to provide the learner with a broad range of resources at a very elementary level so as to satisfy the most urgent requirements for linguistic survival in the most predictable situations facing a visitor.

**Vantage Level (VL)** carries learners with the same needs and perspectives a stage further.

Following the publication of *Threshold Level 1990* and *Waystage 1990*, their authors were asked to develop the specification of a learning objective which would represent a further stage, approximately as far above TL as WS is below it, for learners who have the same needs and perspectives, namely to 'use another language for communication with persons who speak it, both for transacting the business of everyday life and for exchanging information and opinions on private life and public affairs' and who are dissatisfied with the 'minimally adequate equipment' available to them at TL. Such learners 'are not so much called upon to do entirely new things in the language as to meet the challenges of daily living in a more adequate and satisfying way, less restricted by the limited resources –especially perhaps in vocabulary– which they have been able to acquire in the time available. At the same time they will achieve a more fluent and accurate control over the communicative process'. Accordingly, VL goes beyond TL in the following respects:

- the refinement of functional and general notional categories.
- a considerable enlargement of concrete vocabulary
- recognition and limited control of important register varieties
- increased ability to understand and produce longer and more complex utterances
- increased range and control of goal-directed conversation strategies

- greater socio-cultural and socio-linguistic competence
- improved reading skills applied to a wider range of texts
- a higher level of skill in the processes of language production and reception

The authors have made it clear that, together with its predecessors, WS and TL, VL is concerned to build up the ability of learners to deal effectively with the complexities of daily living. It is then for any particular user, or group of users, to decide what use to make of the descriptive apparatus made available, so as to define objectives appropriate to the learners with whom they are concerned. They can supplement the specification if some learner needs are not met and items felt to be of marginal value can be omitted or replaced. Furthermore, the fact that the three successive objectives have been described according to the same model makes it possible for progress in learning to be articulated into more stages or fewer as appropriate.

It should be borne in mind that a clearly defined common objective is of particular value as a basis for the co-ordination of decision-making among the often independent providers of services for language learning teaching and assessment. However, the requirements of different providers may well lead them to use the document in different ways. There are essential differences between curriculum designers, textbook writers, language testers, teachers and teacher trainers. For instance, textbook writers may look to it for guidance in the content of a textbook and perhaps the nature of exercises and tasks to be set. Teachers, concerned with the management of language learning, its organisation and monitoring, may look to it for a description of the directions in which the learners for whom they are responsible should be enabled to progress.

Following the successful conclusion of the projects for the production of Threshold Level and Waystage specifications for Modern Greek, the Greek Ministry of Education decided to make a further generous contribution to the language programme of the Council of Europe by commissioning the Centre for Greek Language in Thessaloniki to proceed to the production of this Vantage Level. Like its predecessors, the Vantage Level for Modern Greek takes fully into account the findings of the Survey of communicative needs which they conducted among learners of Modern Greek, both in Greece itself and abroad, to provide a firm scientific basis for the specification of learning objectives.

The publication of the Vantage Level for Modern Greek now provides the first 3-level description on the Threshold Level model of a European language other than English. It makes a highly significant contribution to the promotion of European plurilingualism, a major objective of Council of Europe language policy.

We warmly congratulate the authorial team under the direction of Professor Stathis Efstathiadis on the successful completion of their work, which we are confident will be highly beneficial, not only to the work of the Centre for Greek Language itself, but also to all students and learners of Modern Greek in countries all over the world. We trust that the example they have set will be followed by many more.

John L. M. Trim  
 Cambridge  
 Former Director of Modern Languages Projects  
 Council of Europe

## Profile deutsch (Manual / Manuel & CD-ROM), 2002, (Levels / Niveaux A1, A2, B1, B2), Vobermerkung : Martin Müller & Lukas Wertenschlag

### Vorbemerkung

*Mit dem Plan eines Weges kam die Freude am Unterwegssein.*  
(Peter Handke)

#### „Profile deutsch“ als Kompass und Weg-Begleiter

Vor Kurzem noch ein Plan, liegt mit „Profile deutsch“ heute ein fertiges Produkt vor. Entstanden ist ein Hilfsmittel und Werkzeug, um sich in der vielschichtigen Welt „Deutsch als Fremdsprache und Deutsch als Zweitsprache“ zurechtzufinden. Mit der Veröffentlichung ist für das Autorenteam ein freudvolles und teilweise auch hartes und mit Entbehrungen verbundenes Unterwegssein abgeschlossen. Dass auf diesem Weg ab und zu Abkürzungen, aber oft auch Umwege und unsichere Pfade gegangen wurden, war für alle wichtig, um an ein Ziel zu kommen. Das Ergebnis, das heute vorliegt, verstehen wir als Kompass, ein offenes Instrument gewissermaßen, das allen Benutzern helfen soll, einen eigenen Weg durch die persönliche berufliche Arbeit zu finden oder diese optimal zu gestalten.

#### Sprachen lassen sich nicht über Niveaus definieren – und Menschen noch weniger

„Profile deutsch“ ist die erste konkrete Umsetzung der Grundideen des „Gemeinsamen europäischen Referenzrahmens für Sprachen“ für eine Einzelsprache. Dies war ein spannendes Unterfangen, denn Konzepte und Postulate des Referenzrahmens mussten zuerst interpretiert und dann auf einer praktischen Ebene umgesetzt werden. Herausgekommen sind Niveaubeschreibungen, Lernzielbestimmungen und sprachliche Mittel für vier der sechs Niveaustufen des Europarats. Wir verstehen diese „Stufen“ nicht als „ein für alle Mal in Stein gemeißelt“, sondern als Orientierungspunkte und Leitplanken für Lernende, Lehrende und Vertreter von Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft in unterschiedlichsten Institutionen. Viele Entscheidungen, die wir selbst nach längeren Diskussionen getroffen haben, werden hoffentlich wieder zu neuen Diskussionen führen. Dies ist ganz in unserem Sinn, denn Sprachen – und noch viel weniger Menschen – lassen sich nicht erschöpfend über Niveaus definieren. Wir sind aber fest davon überzeugt, dass unsere „Stufen“ als Richtgrößen helfen werden, mehr Transparenz und Kohärenz in das Lernen und Lehren der deutschen Sprache zu bringen.

#### Inhalte und Listen als Vorgaben und als Anregung und Anstoß für Veränderungen

Ein zentrales Anliegen von „Profile deutsch“ ist, dem bestimmenden und normierenden Charakter, den Niveaubeschreibungen bekommen können, entgegenzuwirken. Die Niveaubeschreibungen verstehen sich als Richtgrößen, nicht als hermetisch-objektive Vorgaben. Die Listen sind als Anregungen gedacht, die man für die eigene Praxis umschreiben oder den spezifischen Bedürfnissen von Lernenden oder Institutionen anpassen kann. Dank dem technischen Mittel der CD-ROM ist dies möglich geworden. Viele Inhalte können regionalen oder spezifischen Bedürfnissen angepasst werden, ohne dass dabei der Wert international vergleichbarer „Stufen“ verloren geht. Damit ist natürlich unser Wunsch verbunden, dass Sie als Benutzer nicht nur Ihre eigenen Erfahrungen einbringen, sondern auch kritisch und verantwortungsvoll mit dem vorliegenden Material umgehen.

#### Viele Menschen haben uns und das Projekt unterwegs begleitet

„Profile deutsch“ ist ein Projekt von und mit Menschen, war und ist somit nicht frei von Problemen und Fehlern. Wir möchten allen danken, die uns geholfen haben, auf dem Weg zum Ziel ein tragfähiges Netzwerk aufzubauen und damit dem gesamten Autorenteam zu ermöglichen, die Motivation und die Bereitschaft zu einem enormen Arbeitsinsatz aufrecht zu erhalten.

Ein erstes Dankeschön gehört unseren **Auftraggebern**, die nicht nur finanzielle Mittel bereitgestellt, sondern auch den Umfang des Projektes klar abgesteckt haben:

- Margareta Hauschild und Jochen Neuberger von Goethe-Institut Inter Nationes und Joe Sheils vom Europarat, die 1997 die Initiative für dieses Projekt ergriffen haben;
- Gertrude Zhao-Heissenberger vom Österreichischen Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur, die von Anfang an die Wichtigkeit des plurizentrischen Aspektes erkannte;
- Werner Schmitz und Hans Simon-Pelanda, die als Projektverantwortliche des Goethe-Institut Inter Nationes das Projekt umsichtig und beruhigend begleitet haben;
- Margareta Hauschild, Eva Marquart, Dieter Arnsdorf, Günther Hasenkamp und Otfried Zimmermann, die uns als Projektgremium während all den Jahren kritisch und mit Wohlwollen unterstützt haben.

Unsere **Experten**, die uns mit viel Unterstützung begleitet und uns in kritischen Momenten Mut gemacht haben, können wir hier gar nicht genug danken. Sie haben durch kompetente, sachliche Mitarbeit und durch Bescheidenheit geholfen, eine Atmosphäre zu schaffen, die frei von akademischem „Gerangel“ war. Wir danken:

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- Richard Bausch (Ruhr-Universität Bochum) für seine konstruktive Begleitung, begriffliche Schärfe und seine immer sicheren „Geografiekenntnisse“;
- Robert Saxer (Universität Klagenfurt) für seine große Hilfe, Geduld und Unnachgiebigkeit, vor allem in Sache Grammatik;
- Günther Schneider (Universität Freiburg/Fribourg) für seine Kompetenz und seine Erfahrung mit Niveaubeschreibungen und die vielen kritischen Anmerkungen, vor allem zu den Kannbeschreibungen;
- John Trim (Europarat) für väterliche Ratschläge und seine Gesamtsicht des Projektes im europäischen Kontext.

Als Projektleiter haben wir in den vergangenen Jahren immer wieder erfahren können, wie außergewöhnlich wichtig die Arbeitsatmosphäre und der gegenseitige Respekt in einem **Team** sind. Dank der gegenseitigen Unterstützung in guten und schlechten Zeiten, vor allem aber dank dem Engagement und der Arbeit, die das normale Maß oft we übertrafen haben, war es möglich, die Geister, die wir riefen, wieder zu besänftigen. Großen Respekt und herzliche Dank an das ganze Team:

- Helen, die nimmermüde Grüblerin;
- Manuela, die vermittelnde Strategin;
- Paul, der horizontal und vertikal liest;
- Stéfanie, die das Projekt nach einem Jahr verlassen hat.

Das Neue an „Profile deutsch“ ist – neben dem Inhalt – die „Verpackung“. Was früher in dicken Büchern mit lange Listen im Bücherregal stand, ist heute auf einer dünnen Scheibe eingebrannt. Unsere **Programmierer** wissen, wovon die Rede ist, da für alle Beteiligten diese Art von Umsetzung Neuland war. Die effiziente Zusammenarbeit zwischen dem Autorenteam und den IT-Spezialisten war nur möglich, weil beide Seiten immer wieder bereit waren, weiter zu lernen und sich auf das Prinzip „work in progress“ einzulassen: Merci milles fois à:

- Christophe Berger, der teilweise als Einziger noch daran glaubte, dass eine CD-ROM machbar ist;
- Tobie Gobet, der nie aufgab, ungewohnte Verknüpfungen nachzuvollziehen;
- Mike Wiegand, der immer die Ruhe bewahrte und nur mit einem guten Essen auf andere Gedanken zu bringen war.

Ein großes Dankeschön geht aber auch an den **Verlag** Langenscheidt, in dem sich im Hintergrund viele Personen um markttechnische und inhaltliche Lösungen bemühten:

- Herbert Bornebusch, der das Projekt so spannend und innovativ fand, dass er es ins Verlagsprogramm aufnahm;
- Manuela Beisswenger, ohne die der Tippfehler-Teufel ständig auf dem Bildschirm erscheinen würde;
- Sabine Wenkums, die der Broschüre und dem Buch viel Sorgfalt und kreative Kritik entgegenbrachte;
- und alle anderen Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter des Verlages, die sich um Druck und Grafik gekümmert haben.

Hinter den Kulissen und manchmal auch im Vordergrund haben uns viele begleitet, die wir nicht alle auflisten können. **Freundinnen und Freunde**, denen ob all unserer „Niveauprobleme“ manchmal fast der Appetit vergangen ist. Wir danken allen für die Geduld. Speziell danken möchten wir:

- Hanna Bancher, die viele Wörter beispielhaft eingebunden hat;
- Duri Darms, der nicht nur listig ein-gelesen hat;
- Hans-Dieter Dräxler, auf dessen Vorarbeiten wir aufbauend zugreifen konnten;
- Frau Hirschfeld und Frau Reinke, die die mündlichen Textmuster zum „Klingen“ gebracht haben;
- Toni Näf, der „grammatische Bäume“ erklimmen hat;
- Peter Sauter, der zu gewissen Zeiten mit-meditiert hat;
- Regula Schmidlin, die den Durchblick bei Dreierlei Deutsch bewahrte.

Dass in der heutigen Zeit der allgemeinen Finanzknappheit Geld zur Verfügung gestellt wurde, um dieses Projekt zu ermöglichen, ist keine Selbstverständlichkeit. Wir möchten dafür namentlich den folgenden **Institutionen** danken:

- dem Goethe-Institut Inter Nationes (GIIN);
- dem Österreichischen Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur (BMBWK);
- dem Österreichischen Sprachdiplom (ÖSD);
- dem Eidgenössischen Departement für auswärtige Angelegenheiten.

Wir wünschen Ihnen als **Benutzern und Benutzerinnen** viel Spaß beim Entdecken von „Profile deutsch“ und hoffen, dass das Buch und die CD-ROM Ihnen hilfreiche und nützliche Weg-Begleiter bei Ihrer täglichen Arbeit sein werden.

Freiburg im Üechtland, Frühjahr 2002

Martin Müller und Lukas Wertenschlag

**Nivel Prag, Pentru învățarea limbii române ca limbă străină, 2002 (a  
Threshold Level for Romanian / un niveau seuil pour le roumain),  
Preface : J.L.M. Trim**

## **Nivel prag**

**Pentru învățarea limbii române ca limbă străină**

Victoria MOLDOVAN, Liana POP, Lucia URICARU

Departamentul de Limbă, Cultură și Civilizație Românească  
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și  
Institutul Limbii Române  
Ministerul Educației și Cercetării București

**CONSILIUL EUROPEI**

Strasbourg 2002

## Preface to *Nivel prag*

by J.L.M.Trim.

It is a great pleasure to welcome *Nivel prag*, the Romanian version of *The Threshold Level*, to the still expanding circle of similar specifications. The Threshold Level concept has proved of an astounding longevity. It was first conceived in the early seventies, almost forty years ago, as part of an attempt by the Council of Europe to provide a solid structure for life-long learning. The 'functional-notional' approach adopted gave priority to what learners want to **do** with a language, in order to communicate effectively, over the actual linguistic forms used for that purpose. Of course, both are necessary, but the reversal of the descriptive order had two positive effects. On the one hand, the needs and motivations of learners were more directly addressed and course designers were given a very detailed picture of what they should present. On the other, the classification of language functions and of the notions to be expressed was applicable to all languages, certainly to all those in use in the general European cultural space. As a result, it was not only taken up with enthusiasm by the vast English teaching industry, but has since proved its value as an intellectual tool for planning the teaching and learning of by now well over twenty European languages, including many of the less widely taught national and regional languages. With the dismantling of artificial political barriers to free interpersonal communication across the whole of Europe in the past decade, contacts between ordinary people in all social classes and of all nationalities have multiplied, both in the private and public domains, whether for purposes of education, work or leisure. It is no longer a question of training a small group of highly proficient translators, interpreters and guides to manage a limited amount of carefully controlled international contact. We are all involved in each other's lives, to a greater or lesser extent, at one or another time in our lives.

As the most easterly of the Romance languages, Romanian, though surrounded by languages belonging to other families, survived some 1500 years of relative isolation following the collapse of the Roman Empire. As a result of interaction with other Balkan peoples, it has developed some areal features which give it a distinctive position in the Romance family. Over the past two centuries, its development as an intellectual and cultural means of expression has benefited greatly from the relations with France and Italy. The speed and dedication with which Victoria Moldovan, Liana Pop and Lucia Uricaru, the authoring team from the University of Cluj, with strong ministerial support and encouragement, particularly from Dan Nasta, Romanian National Correspondent with the Council of Europe Language Policy Division in Strasbourg, has produced so substantial a functionally-oriented description of Romanian, testifies to the determination of Romania to play a full part in European communication and co-operation. We also welcome the critical and innovatory spirit in which the team has approached the functional and notional taxonomy and taken into account the new dimensions of description offered by the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* and the *European Language Portfolio*.

We trust that *Nivel prag* will provide a stimulus and a firm basis for the revitalisation of the teaching and learning of Romanian as a foreign and as a second language both in Romania itself and in further, higher and adult education across our Continent and, indeed, on a global scale.

## Αρχικό Επίπεδο για τα Νέα Ελληνικά

Κέντρο Ελληνικής Γλώσσας  
Υπουργείο Παιδείας και Θρησκευμάτων  
Υπουργείο Εξωτερικών Ελλάδας  
Συμβούλιο της Ευρώπης

Επιστημονικός υπεύθυνος: *Στάθης Ευσταθιάδης*

Ερευνήτριες: *Ντόβη Αντωνοπούλου - Ελλάδα*  
*Σμαρώ Βογιατζιζίδου - Ελλάδα*  
*Δήμητρα Μανάβη - Ελλάδα*

Συνεργάτες/ίδες: *Θεοδωσία Παυλίδου - Ελλάδα*  
*Αγγελική Ψάλτου-Joycey - Ελλάδα*  
*Αναστάσιος Τσαγγαλιδής - Ελλάδα*  
*Αργύριος Αρχάκης - Ελλάδα*  
*Αμαλία Αρβανίτη - Κύπρος*

Εξωτερικός Σύμβουλος: *John L.M. Trim*

Συμβούλιο Πολιτισμικής Συνεργασίας

Συμβούλιο της Ευρώπης 2001

## **Preface to the Waystage for Modern Greek**

It is a great pleasure to welcome the publication of the Waystage for Modern Greek, produced at the request of the Greek Ministry of Education by the Centre for the Greek Language in Thessaloniki.

The 'Waystage' concept was first developed from the Threshold Level for English in 1978, in connection with the media-based language course *Follow Me*. An experiment conducted in the Volkshochschulen in Vienna had shown that the content of *Threshold Level* was too rich for students working under the normal conditions of adult education to master productively in one year. It was therefore decided to extract from *Threshold Level* a lower objective which would concentrate on the most basic communicative needs of the learner and the simplest forms of expressions so as to produce a viable 'first pass' at the development of a communicative competence on the way to the achievement of independence in everyday living, which was the aim of *Threshold Level*. It was then used as the basis for the first year syllabus for *Follow Me!*

*Waystage* proved to be a very valuable early learning objective, both for teenagers at school and for adult learners. In Spoken English, simplicity is a virtue and the highly restricted formal means specified in *Waystage* for the expression of basic functions and notions, general and specific, proved to empower learners to take part in practical transactions as well as in human interaction in a simple but effective way. *Waystage* thus became (especially after its updating and enrichment in *Waystage 1990*) a useful, valid objective in its own right for learners unable to find the time to reach the threshold of full independence, as well as a well marked objective on the way to *Threshold Level* for those intending to study further. As the concept of plurilingualism has become central to the planning of the language development for learners, the value of developing a limited communicative competence in a number of languages has come to be more widely appreciated, as opposed to concentrating all efforts on reaching a higher and higher level of competence in a single language for international communication (usually English). In the context of life-long education, it makes very good sense to devote the necessary time and effort to gaining access, in a modest way, to the ways of thinking and acting of our neighbours in other European countries, so as to share something of their rich cultural life and heritage. Among European languages and cultures, Greek has a very special place and the *Waystage for Modern Greek* offers a key to a treasury which all may turn.

The Council of Europe has now published Threshold Level-type descriptions for over 20 European national and regional languages. In all cases it has encouraged the teams concerned to regard the existing specifications as a point of departure for their work. They should then consider carefully not only the specific character of the language concerned and of its cultural setting, but also the needs of learners in the situations in which they can be expected to use the language. They should then innovate accordingly, whilst continuing to bear in mind the real advantages of a common model for learners in developing a plurilingual repertoire.



Our Greek colleagues have indeed followed this course in all respects. In particular, they have conducted a survey of communicative needs among learners of Modern Greek both in Greece itself and abroad to provide a firm scientific basis for the specification of objectives first at Threshold Level and now at Waystage. The questionnaire devised for the purpose and the results obtained have been published in connection with *The Threshold Level for Modern Greek* and will be of great value to teams working on other languages in the future.

The Council of Europe greatly appreciates the generous contribution to its programme made by the Greek Ministry of Education by commissioning the Centre for the Greek Language, Thessaloniki, to proceed from the specification of a Threshold Level for Modern Greek, recently published by the Council of Europe, to the production of this *Waystage* and subsequently to that of a Vantage Level. This project will provide the first 3-level description of a European language other than English – an example we hope will be followed by many others. We heartily congratulate the authorial team under the direction of Professor Stathis Efstathiadis on their excellent work and look forward to its continuance.

John L. M. Trim  
Selwyn College, Cambridge  
Former Director of Modern Languages Projects  
Council of Europe

**Prahova Uroven – Cestina Jako Cizi Jazyk, 2001 (a Threshold level for Czech/ un niveau seuil pour le tchèque), Preface : J.L.M. Trim**

# **PRAHOVÁ ÚROVEŇ**

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**a**

**Ústav jazykové a odborné přípravy**

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L. Lánská, Z. Palková, M. Turzík**

**vedení projektu: M. Šára**

## Preface to the Threshold Level for Czech

*Prahová úroveň—čeština jako cizí jazyk*, the Threshold Level for Czech as a foreign language, is a most welcome addition to the set of intellectual tools which researchers across Europe have placed at the disposal of the language teaching profession.

It is now more than 25 years since *The Threshold Level* was first published in its original form, and a full decade since its updating in *Threshold 1990*, upon which *Prahová úroveň* is broadly based. That teachers, researchers and planners still find this model an appropriate way of providing a common reference framework and standard as a focus for their professional interaction is a tribute to the fruitfulness and practicality of the original conception, weaving together a number of strands in applied linguistics which have proved to be of lasting value. In particular, by looking at language primarily as a mode of action arising from the human need to communicate, the Threshold Level model has brought the peoples of Europe together, rather than emphasising the differences in the external forms of linguistic expression, which separate them. If we recognise our fundamental unity, as fellow human beings with the same basic needs, feelings, hopes and fears, trying to 'make friends and influence people' in similar ways for similar purposes, we can find a common basis for cooperative enterprises. At the same time we can all the more readily appreciate, enjoy and celebrate our linguistic and cultural diversity without falling prey to ethnic intolerance and xenophobia.

The Threshold Level model has shown itself to be equally applicable to all European languages, irrespective of the linguistic type or language family to which they belong. It is particularly welcome that Czech adds a further Slavonic language to those so far described. Indeed, with its lively cultural life and its situation in the centre of our continent and having a consistent writing system employing the Roman alphabet, Czech is certainly one of the most attractive and accessible of the Slavonic languages. It is much to be hoped that the appearance of *Prahová úroveň*, as well as the teaching materials and courses which will be based upon it, will stimulate a substantial growth of interest in the learning of the Czech language.

*Prahová úroveň* has been produced by the co-operation of a number of colleagues from different institutions in the Charles University of Prague, with contributions from the Department of Applied Linguistics of Palacký University of Olomouc and strongly stimulated and supported by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic. All are to be warmly congratulated on the efficiency and enthusiasm with which they have brought their long experience and deep understanding to the task, and on producing an invaluable document which is faithful to the basic principles of the Threshold Level 'family', which have stood the test of time, whilst doing full justice to the unique specificity of the Czech language. I wish the authors, and all future users of *Prahová úroveň*, every success.

J.L.M.Trim, Cambridge, September 2001

**Küszöbszint, Magyar mint idegen nyelv, 2000 (a Threshold level for Hungarian / un niveau seuil pour le hongrois), *Preface : J.L.M. Trim***

Aradi András  
Erdős József  
Sturcz Zoltán

# KÜSZÖBSZINT

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Magyar mint idegen nyelv

Szerkesztette  
Erdős József

Műegyetemi Távoktatási Központ  
Budapest, 2000

## Foreword to the Threshold Level for Hungarian.

The Threshold Level for Hungarian is a welcome addition to the specifications of functional objectives for European languages sponsored by the Council of Europe, bringing their number to over twenty. It is of particular value, not least because it helps to heal the disruption of European communication and co-operation in the years during and following the Second World War. Hungarians attach great importance to foreign language learning. However, like many speakers of languages which are not widely spoken outside their borders, they are often inclined to underestimate the interest of foreigners in learning their language. The Council of Europe strongly promotes a policy of *plurilingualism*. That is to say that every European should build up, over the course of a lifetime, a communicative competence drawing upon the experience of learning and using a number of languages. The proper response of Europeans to the great variety of languages and cultures in our continent is to be prepared to go out to meet our neighbours and learn to interact with them on terms as equal as possible. In any case, increasing educational, vocational and leisure mobility bring increasing numbers of people to spend longer periods in other countries. It is then a matter of necessity or common sense for the students, business people and temporary residents of all kinds as well as regular visitors to enter into the life of the community concerned. Anyone who is not prepared to learn its language will be self-condemned to be a perpetual outsider. In the case of Hungary, the vicissitudes of recent history have also produced a world-wide diaspora of some size as well as substantial Hungarian-speaking minority communities in neighbouring countries. The threshold level specification for Hungarian will be of particular value to young people in the countries concerned in developing their plurilingual and pluricultural competence.

The specification is also of general interest because Hungarian, though situated in the centre of Europe, is a linguistically isolated Finno-Ugrian language surrounded by members of the Germanic, Romance and Slav branches of the great Indo-European family of languages. Some critics of the Threshold Level concept have held that it would prove to be inapplicable to languages outside the Germanic and Romance branches of the Indo-European family of languages. In fact, the model has been successfully applied much more widely, to Greek, Russian, to the Baltic languages (Latvian and Lithuanian), to Celtic (Welsh), to Semitic (Lebanese, Maltese), to Basque and to Estonian as well as Hungarian in the Finno-Ugrian language family. The languages concerned vary widely also from the typological point of view, including isolating, inflectional and agglutinative types.

To what should we attribute the durability and wide applicability of the Threshold Level concept? Perhaps it is because the functional/notional approach on which it is based concentrates attention on what the users of a language have to **do** in order to communicate in the situations of daily social life, which is something we all share, rather than on the formal structure of languages, which separates us. Perhaps also, because the approach concentrates on specifying objectives which we have in common rather than on methods of learning and teaching, where opinions and practices diverge according to traditions, learner characteristics, resources and other practicalities.

Of course, each language is an organised lexical and grammatical system, and it remains, as ever, a major and indispensable part of language learning to know the words and control the grammatical processes needed to express the notions and to perform the functions and to engage in meaningful discourse. The question is, where to place the emphasis. In 1975, it was necessary to give priority to function over form in order to break the long tradition which treated the manipulation of the system as an end in itself – a tradition reinforced (if not intentionally) by the structuralist behaviourism of the post-war period.

By 1990, however, it was necessary to show, in a substantial appendix, that the lexical and grammatical resources presented in *The Threshold Level* piecemeal as exponents of particular functions and (especially general) notions, though giving the superficial impression of being selected *ad hoc*, nevertheless constitute a coherent, and actually quite rich, system which could be presented as such. In fact, the well-known 'double articulation' of language means that the systematic presentation of form atomises meaning and vice versa. Accordingly, the decision of the Hungarian team to separate the functional and formal linguistic aspects of the specification into two more or less equal parts is welcome. It will, of course, remain the responsibility of course designers and other users to resynthesise and order the material present in the two parts so as to structure and guide the progress of learners to the goal of a communicative competence adequate to deal with the necessities of daily living in a Hungarian-speaking environment.

It remains to express appreciation of the initiative taken by the Hungarian Ministry of Education in stimulating and supporting this project as a contribution to European mutual understanding and cooperation, and to congratulate the authors on the quality of the work and the speed and efficiency with which it has been carried out.

J.L.M.Trim, Cambridge April 2000

**Aukštuma, 2000 ("Vantage" for Lithuanian / niveau B2 pour le lituanien),  
Preface : J.L.M. Trim**

# **Aukštuma**

Joana Pribušauskaitė, Meilutė Ramonienė,  
Stasė Skapienė, Loreta Vilkienė

Kultūrinio Bendradarbiavimo Taryba

Council of Europe Publishing 2000

## PREFATORY NOTE TO VANTAGE FOR LITHUANIAN

*Aukštuma*, the Vantage Level for Lithuanian, is the latest addition to the series of functionally oriented language descriptions inaugurated by the publication in 1974 by the Council of Europe of the Threshold Level, produced by Dr J.A. van Ek on the basis of preliminary studies by members of the Expert Group set up to investigate the feasibility of a European unit-credit system for language learning by adults. The model has proved its vitality and usefulness over more than twenty-five years. Versions which have been published or are in preparation for over 24 European languages have provided a basis for the development of curricula, materials and examinations in many countries. The model itself has continued to develop, particularly in respect of its socio-cultural aspects and its handling of communication strategies. It has now been developed for three levels: Waystage, Threshold and Vantage, of which Threshold Level remains the central pivot of reference.

The Threshold Level may be regarded as the key element in the series, since it attempts to identify the minimal linguistic equipment which will enable a learner to deal with the more predictable situations of daily life as an independent agent.

The political changes of the recent past in Eastern Europe have led to a powerful resurgence of the national language of the Republic of Lithuania, which having regained its independence has taken energetic measures to reassert the position of Lithuanian as a state language, the normal vehicle for political and public affairs. It is in this perspective that the elaboration of first a Threshold and now a Vantage level for Lithuanian has been undertaken. *Slenkstis* provided a sound basis for a realistic assessment of the communicative requirements of non-native speaking residents using the state language. *Aukštuma* will carry learners with the same needs and perspectives a stage further. The learner will be equipped to deal with a wide range of situations in daily life, and strategies to use that equipment to the best effect. As such, *Slenkstis* and *Aukštuma* may be found of value as points of reference in the interpretation of linguistic aspects of citizenship and employment legislation.

I should like to congratulate Dr Meilute Ramoniene and the members of the Working Group on their excellent achievement and to thank the Lithuanian Government for the initiative taken and the support given to the Project, as well as Mr Joseph Sheils and Mr Jose Pascoal for their valuable role in consultation.

John L.M. Trim



Κατώφλι για τα Νέα Ελληνικά, Α΄ τόμος, 1999 (a Threshold level for Greek /  
un niveau seuil pour le grec) : Volume A & B, Preface : J.L.M. Trim

## Κατώφλι για τα Νέα Ελληνικά Α΄ τόμος

Κέντρο Ελληνικής Γλώσσας  
Υπουργείο Παιδείας και Θρησκευμάτων  
Υπουργείο Εξωτερικών Ελλάδας  
Υπουργείο Παιδείας Κύπρου  
Συμβούλιο της Ευρώπης

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Ερευνήτριες: *Νιόβη Αντωνοπούλου - Ελλάδα*  
*Σμαρώ Βογιατζίδου - Ελλάδα*  
*Δήμητρα Μανάβη - Ελλάδα*

Συνεργάτες/ιδες: *Θεοδοσία Παυλίδου - Ελλάδα*  
*Αγγελική Ψάλτου - Ελλάδα*  
*Αμαλία Αρβανίτη - Κύπρος*  
*Βαρνάβας Λοιζιόης - Κύπρος*

Εξωτερικός Σύμβουλος: *John L.M. Trim*

Συμβούλιο Πολιτισμικής Συνεργασίας

Συμβούλιο της Ευρώπης 1999

## **Preface to Threshold Level for Modern Greek.**

It is a great pleasure to welcome Threshold Level for Modern Greek to the expanding family of threshold level specifications of learning objectives for European languages.

The vitality of the threshold level concept has gone far beyond the expectations of the expert group on a European unit/credit scheme for language learning by adults, which provided the basic conceptual scheme and raw materials for Dr. J.A. van Ek's justly celebrated pioneering work in 1974. Since that time, corresponding specifications have now been produced for 21 European national and regional languages and the work has influenced similar developments across the globe.

The concept has, of course, not remained static. Even in the earliest days, the descriptions for French and German were in many ways innovatory. Following a series of studies in the eighties, leading to a reformulation of the basic model by Dr. van Ek, a revised and extended version was produced in *Threshold Level 1990*. This revised model has been followed in a new version, *Waystage 1990*, of the intermediate objective developed in the mid seventies in connection with the Anglo-German multimedia course *Follow Me!* It has also been used for the 'third level' objective *Vantage Level*, directed towards those of the same target groups who wished to extend their linguistic competence quantitatively and, especially, qualitatively beyond the minimum required for social independence in the country or countries concerned.

*Threshold Level 1990* has also provided a point of departure for teams set up by governments and regional authorities in the Council of Europe's member states to develop comparable communicative objectives for learners of their national or regional language. The Council of Europe has at their request provided consultative advice, but not directives. There is no question of simply translating an existing specification into another language. It is for the ministry and team concerned to consider how its national needs and those of learners are best served. For instance, the Scandinavian countries have paid particular heed to the communicative needs of migrant workers. The regional authorities of Spain and the governments of the Baltic States have felt the need for a communication-oriented description of their languages as a central point of reference for the re-establishment or reinforcement of the role of the language at the heart of national or regional life, often after long periods of decline as a result of neglect or even active oppression.

In the case of (Modern) Greek, the team felt, rightly, that if the specification was to be truly learner-centred, the situations, characteristics, motivations and communicative needs of learners should be first objectively established by an international survey. The survey was in the form of an extended questionnaire given to 740 adults all over Europe. The use of the questionnaire was a unique feature of the Greek specification; the responses to it were statistically analysed, carefully evaluated and, presented alongside the T-Level objective itself, go far to confirm the relevance to learners of modern Greek of the situational, functional and notional categories in terms of which other European languages have been described.

This is one way in which the authorial team at the newly-founded Centre for the Greek Language set up by the Greek government in Thessaloniki of which the Department for the Support and Promotion of the Greek Language under the direction of Professor Stathis Efstathiadis of the University of Thessaloniki has broken new ground. Another innovation is that the project has been an intergovernmental undertaking involving both Greece and Cyprus. The Consultative Group set up by the Council of Europe has included representatives of both countries and the Appendix on the specific characteristics of Greek as spoken on the Island of Cyprus was commissioned by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Cyprus. We have to express our indebtedness to the Governments of both countries for the material and moral support they have given to the Project as well as to the authorial teams for their excellent, innovative work and to the members of the Consultative Group for their advice and commitment.

The Greek Government has now charged the Centre for the Greek Language with the further development of specifications corresponding to the 'Waystage' and 'Vantage' levels. We look forward eagerly to the completion of this work, which will make available to teachers, curriculum planners, course developers, textbook writers, examiners and others a common instrument for assuring the progression, coherence and transparency of institutional arrangements for the learning of the Greek language. It is not, of course, in any sense a language course, but may perhaps also be of direct use as a reference source to experienced language learners wishing to add Modern Greek to their plurilingual competence for European communication, which is the central concern of the work of the Council of Europe in the language field.

J.L.M. Trim, Cambridge, September 1998.

**Nivel Llindat per a la llengua catalana, 1999 (revised Threshold level for Catalan/ niveau seuil révisé pour le catalan), Pròleg : L.J. i Mirabent**

Direcció General de Política Lingüística

**NIVELL LLINDAR**  
**per a la**  
**LLENGUA CATALANA**

Marta Mas  
Joan Melcion



Generalitat de Catalunya  
**Departament de Cultura**  
Barcelona 1999



Latviesu valodas prasmes līmenis, 1997 (a Threshold level for Latvian / un niveau seuil pour le letton), *Preface/Préface* : J.L.M. Trim

# Latviešu valodas prasmes līmenis

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**Préface à *Latviešu valodas prasmes līmenis*,  
niveau seuil pour le letton**

*Latviešu valodas prasmes līmenis*, ou niveau seuil pour le letton, constitue le dernier titre d'une série d'ouvrages décrivant les langues européennes sous leur aspect fonctionnel; cette série avait été inaugurée en 1974 avec la publication, par le Conseil de l'Europe, du premier *Threshold Level*, («niveau seuil») réalisé par J.A. van Ek sur la base d'études préliminaires menées par un Groupe d'experts chargé d'étudier la possibilité de mettre en place un système européen d'unités capitalisables pour l'apprentissage de langues vivantes par les adultes. Ce modèle a fait la preuve de sa vitalité et de son efficacité pendant plus de vingt ans. Les versions déjà publiées ou en préparation pour plus de 21 langues européennes ont servi de base à l'élaboration de programmes d'enseignement, d'outils pédagogiques et de sujets d'examen dans de nombreux pays. Ce modèle a lui-même poursuivi son développement, notamment du point de vue de ses aspects socioculturels et de la place faite aux stratégies de communication. Il existe aujourd'hui pour trois niveaux: *Waystage*, *Threshold* et *Vantage*, dont le second (*Threshold*, u niveau seuil) demeure le maillon de référence.

L'évolution politique récente en Europe orientale a conduit à une spectaculaire renaissance des langues nationales dans les Etats baltes lesquels, ayant retrouvé leur indépendance, ont pris des mesures rigoureuses pour rendre à leurs langues nationales le statut de langue officielle, véhicule naturel de la vie politique et publique. C'est dans cette perspective qu'a été entreprise l'élaboration de niveaux seuils pour l'estonien, le letton et le lituanien. Si la situation linguistique de chacun de ces pays est unique et soulève des questions de fond différentes, dans chacun de ces cas le modèle s'est révélé, *mutatis mutandis*, une base solide pour procéder à une évaluation réaliste des besoins ressentis en matière de communication par les résidents allophones utilisant ces langues officielles. En tant que tels, ces ouvrages peuvent également constituer de précieux éléments de référence pour l'interprétation des aspects linguistiques des législations en matière de citoyenneté et d'emploi.

Je voudrais féliciter M<sup>me</sup> Ieva Zuuicena et les membres du Groupe de travail pour l'excellent travail qu'ils ont accompli et remercier le gouvernement letton pour son initiative et le soutien qu'il a apporté au projet, ainsi que M. J. Sheils et M. M. Llobera pour leur précieuse contribution.

John L. M. TRIM

**Prefatory Note to *Latviešu valodas prasmes līmenis*,  
Threshold Level for Latvian**

*Latviešu valodas prasmes līmenis*, the Threshold Level for Latvian, is the latest addition to the series of functionally oriented language descriptions inaugurated by the publication in 1974 by the Council of Europe of the original *Threshold Level*, produced by Dr J.A. van Ek on the basis of preliminary studies by members of the Expert Group set up to investigate the feasibility of a European unit-credit system for language learning by adults. The model has proved its vitality and usefulness over more than twenty years. Versions which have been published or are in preparation for over 21 European languages have provided a basis for the development of curricula, materials and examinations in many countries. The model itself has continued to develop, particularly in respect of its socio-cultural aspects and its handling of communication strategies. It has now been developed for three levels: Waystage, Threshold and Vantage, of which Threshold Level remains the central pivot of reference.

The political changes of the recent past in Eastern Europe have led to a powerful resurgence of the national languages of the Baltic States, which having regained their independence and have taken energetic measures to reassert the position of those languages as state languages, the normal vehicles for political and public affairs. It is in this perspective that the elaboration of Threshold Levels for Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian have been undertaken. The linguistic situation in each country is different and raises different policy issues, but in each case the model has, with appropriate adaptations, provided a sound basis for a realistic assessment of the communicative requirements of non-native speaking residents using the state languages. As such, they may also be found of value as points of reference in the interpretation of linguistic aspects of citizenship and employment legislation.

I should like to congratulate Dr Ieva Zuuicena and the members of the Working Group on their excellent achievement and to thank both the Latvian Government for the initiative taken and the support given to the Project, as well as Mr J. Sheils and Mr M. Llobera for their valuable role in consultation.

John L.M. TRIM



**Eesti Keele Suhtluslävi, 1997 (a Threshold level for Estonian / un niveau  
seuil pour l'estonien), Prefatory Note /Préface: J.L.M. Trim**

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Council of Europe Publishing

**Prefatory Note to *Suhtluslävi*,  
Threshold Level for Estonian**

*Suhtluslävi*, the Threshold Level for Estonian, is the latest addition to the series of functionally oriented language descriptions inaugurated by the publication in 1974 by the Council of Europe of the original *Threshold Level*, produced by Dr J.A. van Ek on the basis of preliminary studies by members of the Expert Group set up to investigate the feasibility of a European unit-credit system for language learning by adults. The model has proved its vitality and usefulness over more than twenty years. Versions which have been published or are in preparation for over 21 European languages have provided a basis for the development of curricula, materials and examinations in many countries. The model itself has continued to develop, particularly in respect of its socio-cultural aspects and its handling of communication strategies. It has now been developed for three levels: Waystage, Threshold and Vantage, of which Threshold Level remains the central pivot of reference.

The political changes of the recent past in Eastern Europe have led to a powerful resurgence of the national languages of the Baltic States, which having regained their independence and have taken energetic measures to reassert the position of those languages as state languages, the normal vehicles for political and public affairs. It is in this perspective that the elaboration of Threshold Levels for Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian have been undertaken. The linguistic situation in each country is different and raises different policy issues, but in each case the model has, with appropriate adaptations, provided a sound basis for a realistic assessment of the communicative requirements of non-native speaking residents using the state languages. As such, they may also be found of value as points of reference in the interpretation of linguistic aspects of citizenship and employment legislation.

I should like to congratulate Mr Martin Ehala and the members of the Working Group on their excellent achievement and to thank both the Estonian Government for the initiative taken and the support given to the Project, as well as Mr J. Sheils, Mr M. Hughes, Mr S. Salin and Mr S. Takala for their valuable role in consultation.

John L.M. TRIM



**Slenkstis, 1997 (a Threshold level for Lithuanian / un niveau seuil pour le lituanien), Prefatory Note : J.L.M. Trim**

# **Slenkstis**

Edmundas Narbutas, Joana Pribušauskaitė,  
Meilutė Ramonienė, Stasė Skapienė, Loreta Vilkienė

Kultūrinio Bendradarbiavimo Taryba

Council of Europe Publishing

## PREFATORY NOTE TO THRESHOLD LEVEL FOR LITHUANIAN

*Slenkstis*, the Threshold Level for Lithuanian, is the latest addition to the series of functionally oriented language descriptions inaugurated by the publication in 1974 by the Council of Europe of the original *Threshold Level*, produced by Dr J.A. van Ek on the basis of preliminary studies by members of the Expert Group set up to investigate the feasibility of a European unit-credit system for language learning by adults. The model has proved its vitality and usefulness over more than twenty years. Versions which have been published or are in preparation for over 21 European languages have provided a basis for the development of curricula, materials and examinations in many countries. The model itself has continued to develop, particularly in respect of its socio-cultural aspects and its handling of communication strategies. It has now been developed for three levels: Waystage, Threshold and Vantage, of which Threshold Level remains the central pivot of reference.

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I should like to congratulate Dr Meilute Ramoniene and the members of the Working Group on their excellent achievement and to thank both the Lithuanian Government for the initiative taken and the support given to the Project, as well as Mr J. Sheils and Mr Miguel Llobera for their valuable role in consultation.

*John L.M. Trim*

**Fug I-Għatba tal-Malti, 1997 (a Threshold level for Maltese / un niveau seuil pour le maltais), Preface : J.L.M. Trim**

# Fuq I-Għatba tal-Malti

Deskrizzjoni komunikattiva  
ta' l-Ilsien Malti  
fuq il-mudell ta' "Threshold Level 1990"

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Evaluation Committee

Comitato Culturale Cooperativo

Council of Europe (Venezia)

## PREFACE

It is a particular pleasure to welcome *Fuq l-Ghatba tal-Malti* to the still expanding family of Threshold Level specifications of language learning objectives for the languages of Europe. Malta is one of the smallest of the forty four member states of the CDCC, but since joining the Council of Europe in 1965, it has made a contribution to the Modern Languages Projects out of proportion to its size. Malta's geographical position, placed centrally in the Mediterranean Sea, has made the island a focus of the most diverse cultural and linguistic influences, which have left their imprint on its language. The Maltese are inevitably and famously plurilingual and multicultural, and as such are well placed to facilitate communication between Eastern and Western Mediterranean countries and between Europe and North Africa.

The survival of the indigenous language of the island is a striking example of the vitality of the languages of small peoples, the bearers of their identity, culture and integrity, as they function as the omnipresent, intimate medium of daily life. The Council of Europe is proud of its role in supporting the work of those dedicated scholars and teachers who have carried out pioneering descriptions of smaller national and regional languages. The 'threshold' concept, first developed for English, French, German and Spanish, has increasingly proved itself to be the most powerful tool for promoting European plurilingualism and multiculturalism. Threshold Level descriptions for these languages have generally been the first attempts to reflect upon and characterise them as autonomous, coherent and self-sufficient bearers of the full pragmatic, intellectual and emotional demands of communication in everyday living. By doing so, they serve not only to reinforce and normalise the role of these languages in the community, but also to raise the self-awareness and self-confidence of its members.

We congratulate our Maltese colleagues on the high quality and originality of their work, especially in dealing with the first language of the Semitic family to be described in Threshold terms. We warmly thank the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Malta for taking the initiative in commissioning the study and for firmly supporting and monitoring the operation. Our thanks are also due to Dr Joseph Cremona, Fellow of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, for his valuable contribution to the work as Project Consultant and to Dr J.A. van Ek for his valuable advice.

J.L.M. Trim  
Project Director

Cambridge, January 1997

**Porogovyj Urovenj Russkyj jazyk, 1996 (a Threshold level for Russian / un niveau seuil pour le russe), Volume I & II, Preface/Préface : J.L.M. Trim**

Совет по Культурному Сотрудничеству

**Пороговый уровень  
русский язык  
том I  
повседневное общение**

Работа выполнена в Институте русского языка имени А. С. Пушкина  
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Волкова Т. Г., Корчагина Е. Л., Кузнецов А. Л., Орлова Е. М.,  
Самуйлова Н. И., Степанова Е. М., Трушина Л. Б., Чеботарев П. Г.

Руководитель проекта Степанова Е. М.

Иностранные языки

Совет Европы Пресс, 1996



*Preface to Porogovyi uroveni Russkyi jazyk  
(Threshold Level for Russian)*

*It is a great pleasure to welcome Porogovyi uroveni Russkyi jazyk v povssiednievnom obsjeniji (Volume I) and Porogovyi uroveni Russkyi jazyk v professionalnom obsjeniji (Volume II) to the ever-growing family of Threshold Level specifications for European Language. When those now approaching completion have been published, versions will be available for 21 languages: English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Danish, Dutch, Swedish, Portuguese, Norwegian, Catalan, Basque, Galician, Welsh, Estonian, Latvian, Russian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Irish and Greek. Interest is being shown in the preparation of specifications in respect of further national and regional languages of our multilingual continent. Together, they constitute a major contribution to the practical implementation of Council of Europe language policy, namely to increase European mobility and mutual understanding by giving better access to the diversity of European languages and cultures to all sectors of the populations of member countries, leading to the freer flow of people and ideas across the Continent and smoother adjustment to the steadily increasing internationalisation of daily life. In these respects the enlargement of the Council to cover virtually all European countries is a great step forward, giving its work renewed vitality and dynamism.*

*It is particularly valuable that a Threshold Level specification of basic learning objectives for Russian is now available. It is now time for a revitalisation and resurgence in the learning and teaching of the Russian language not only in Russia and in neighbouring countries but in all member states. For this purpose, a description of Russian which concentrates attention on its use for communication in daily life rather than on its notorious formal complexity for speakers of differently organised languages should prove invaluable.*

*All Threshold Level-type specifications of learning objectives have innovative aspects, which help to maintain the dynamism of the concept. Porogovyi uroveni Russkyi jazyk is the first to be conceived in two largely complementary sections, one addressed to the temporary visitor interested in transacting the business of daily living and in establishing social and human relations with ordinary Russian speakers (corresponding closely to the original Threshold Level concept and the other addressed to important sub-groups with definable special purpose requirements (especially business people). Both share basic common interests, similar to those set out in Waystage, but diverge in the direction subsequently given to enrichment or to specialisation. In the present condition of the relations between the Russian Federation and the rest of Europe, such a choice is reasonable and practical.*

*I should like to express my gratitude and that of all concerned with the Council of Europe Project: Language learning for European citizenship, to the teams from the Pushkin Institute and the Moscow Linguistic University both for the quality of the product and for the dedication with which they have worked and their openness to dialogue and suggestions from the Consultative Group. Our thanks are also due to the members of that group: Professor Jean DURIN, Ecole Normale Supérieure de Fontenay/Saint-Cloud, Professor Jan van EK, Mrs Gitta GODEL, Bundesinstitut für Ostwissenschaft und Internationale Studien, Mr James HALLIDAY, Herriö - Watt University, Dr Neil LANDSMAN, University of Portsmouth, School of Languages and Area Studies, Ms Sirkka-Liisa OJANEN, Modern Languages Section, Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration, for the care with which they have examined successive versions of the specifications and for the many valuable suggestions they have made.*

*John L.M. TRIM*

Préface au Porogovi ouroven Rousski iazik  
(Niveau-Seuil pour le russe)

*C'est un grand plaisir de pouvoir inclure Porogovi ouroven Rousski iazik v povsednevnom obchtchenii (volume I) et Porogovi ouroven Rousski iazik v professionalnom obchtchenii (volume II) dans la série en pleine expansion des spécifications de niveau-seuil pour les langues européennes. Dès achèvement des niveaux-seuils actuellement en cours d'élaboration, nous disposerons de spécifications pour vingt et une langues: anglais, français, allemand, espagnol, italien, danois, néerlandais, suédois, portugais, norvégien, catalan, basque, galicien, gallois, estonien, letton, russe, lituanien, maltais, irlandais et grec. De l'intérêt se manifeste actuellement pour l'élaboration de spécifications relatives à d'autres langues nationales et régionales de notre continent multilingue. L'ensemble de ces travaux constitue une contribution majeure à la mise en œuvre pratique de la politique linguistique du Conseil de l'Europe, qui vise à accroître la mobilité et la compréhension mutuelle en Europe en facilitant à toutes les couches de la population des pays membres l'accès aux diverses langues et cultures européennes, favorisant ainsi la libre circulation des personnes et des idées sur tout le continent et l'adaptation aisée de chacun à l'internationalisation de plus en plus marquée de la vie quotidienne. A cet égard, l'élargissement du Conseil de l'Europe à pratiquement tous les pays européens constitue un grand pas en avant et confère un nouvel élan et un nouveau dynamisme à son action.*

*Le fait que l'on dispose à présent d'une spécification de type niveau-seuil définissant des objectifs fondamentaux pour l'apprentissage du russe revêt une importance particulière. L'heure est venue, en effet, de donner un nouvel élan à l'apprentissage et à l'enseignement de la langue russe, non seulement en Russie et dans les pays voisins, mais dans tous les Etats membres. A cet effet, une description de la langue russe axée sur son emploi à des fins de communication dans la vie quotidienne plutôt que sur sa complexité formelle bien connue des personnes pratiquant des langues structurées différemment devrait s'avérer extrêmement précieuse.*

*Toutes les spécifications de type niveau-seuil définissant des objectifs d'apprentissage contiennent des éléments novateurs qui permettent de maintenir le dynamisme de ce concept. Porogovi ouroven Rousski iazik est le premier niveau-seuil de la série à être conçu en deux parties largement complémentaires, la première s'adressant au visiteur temporaire qui souhaite pouvoir se débrouiller dans la vie quotidienne et nouer des contacts humains et sociaux avec des russophones (ce qui est proche du concept initial du niveau-seuil), l'autre étant destinée à des sous-groupes importants ayant des besoins spécialisés précis (notamment les hommes d'affaires). Ces deux types d'apprenants ont les mêmes intérêts au départ, semblables à ceux présentés dans Waystage, mais qui divergent ensuite vers un enrichissement des connaissances pour les uns et une plus grande spécialisation pour les autres. Dans l'état actuel des relations entre la Fédération de Russie et le reste de l'Europe, un tel choix est judicieux et utile.*

*Je tiens à exprimer ma gratitude et celle de toutes les personnes impliquées dans le Projet du Conseil de l'Europe «Apprentissage des langues et citoyenneté européenne» aux équipes de l'Institut Pouchkine et de l'Université Linguistique de Moscou, tant pour la qualité du produit que pour le temps et l'énergie qu'ils ont consacrés à ce travail, mais aussi pour leur ouverture au dialogue et aux suggestions du groupe consultatif. Nos remerciements s'adressent également aux membres de ce groupe: le professeur Jean Durin (Ecole normale supérieure de Fontenay/Saint-Cloud), le professeur Jan van Ek, M<sup>me</sup> Gitta Godel (Bundesinstitut für Ostwissenschaft und Internationale Studien), M. James Halliday (Université Herriot-Watt), M. Neil Landsman (Université de Portsmouth, Ecole de langues et d'études régionales), M<sup>me</sup> Sirkka-Liisa Ojanen (Section des langues vivantes, Ecole de sciences économiques et de gestion des entreprises d'Helsinki), pour le soin avec lequel ils ont examiné les versions successives des spécifications et pour leurs nombreuses et précieuses suggestions.*

John L.M. TRIM

Vantage level, 1996, *Introduction: J.A. van Ek & J.L.M. Trim*

# Vantage



*J. A. van Ek and J. L. M. Trim*

 **CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

# Introduction

*Vantage* is the third level in a series of specifications of learning objectives developed within the Council of Europe's programme for the promotion of language learning in Europe. The series is intended to offer guidance and support to the many 'partners for learning' whose co-operation is necessary to the creation of a coherent and transparent structure of provision for effective learning relevant to the needs of the learners as well as of society, which normally provides the resources. Without setting up bureaucratic mechanisms of control, it provides a series of reference points, common objectives towards the achievement of which all can work independently but in harmony - curriculum planners, examining and qualifying authorities, course designers and materials producers, teacher trainers and last but by no means least the teachers and learners through whose interaction organised learning takes place.

The series is directed towards those - probably the great majority of ordinary language learners - who want to use another language for communication with people who speak it, both for transacting the business of everyday life and for exchanging information and opinions on private life and public affairs.

It therefore sets out to define in some detail what such an objective means in practice; what users of a language are most likely to wish or need to be able to do in the communication situations in which they take part and consequently what they have to know and the skills they have to develop in order to be able to communicate effectively in those situations.

*The Threshold Level* may be regarded as the key element in the series, since it attempts to identify the minimal linguistic equipment which will enable a learner to deal with the more predictable situations of daily life, transactional and interactional, as an independent agent. 'Minimal' is somewhat misleading here, of course; a substantial learning effort is required, not only to cover the range of language functions and the expression of general and specific notions which constitute the building blocks, but also to gain control over them to the extent necessary to deal with the situations of use with some degree of confidence and facility. Even so, 'independence' is relative. A learner at *Threshold* level is still dependent on the goodwill of the interlocutor, especially a more experienced or native speaker.

*Waystage* has subsequently been developed as an early learning objective designed to provide the learner with a broad range of resources at a very elementary level so as to satisfy the most urgent

requirements for linguistic survival in the most predictable situations facing a visitor.

*Vantage*, as the name implies, carries learners with the same needs and perspectives a stage further. What are the needs and motivations of such learners?

First, they will be aware that the principles of 'maximum exploitation of minimal means' will have given them a minimally adequate equipment to deal with a wide range of situations in daily life, and strategies to use that equipment to the best effect. However, they will realise that their ability is very limited by comparison with their ability to deal with similar situations in their native language. They can deal with straightforward situations in a straightforward way, but may feel some sense of frustration when a situation becomes more problematic and they need to understand and express ideas in a more developed way, making finer distinctions of meaning than their linguistic equipment allows. They may feel that they are unable to do themselves justice, that they are obliged to say what they *can* say rather than what they *want* to say. This feeling is common, of course, to users of a foreign language at any level, and to native speakers too when they are on unfamiliar ground. It is likely to be particularly strong, however, when a learner can cover a wide communication range, but with only a small vocabulary to deal with the vast wealth of specific notions in each area. Furthermore, whilst the exponents of language functions and general notions will have covered between them the major grammatical resources of the language, the learner at T-level will be far from having these resources under control for general purposes. They may well have figured as part of a fixed formula for expressing a particular function. Even where a structure rather than a fixed formula has been listed as the exponent of a function, the learner is not necessarily expected to be able to handle its full potential in such a way as fully to meet the criteria of accuracy, fluency and appropriateness of usage. An obvious example is the function of 'reporting (describing and narrating)' for which the primary exponent is given as 'declarative sentences'. This cannot, of course, be interpreted to mean that when narrating an event or describing a person or object, a learner after some 400 hours of initial language learning is expected to have at his or her disposal the full unbounded set of declarative sentences of indefinite complexity, using all resources brought together in the Grammatical Appendix and incorporating all the general notions set out in Chapter 6.

For these reasons, language learners who have reached *Threshold* level in a particular language and want to continue to learn are not so much called upon to do entirely new things in the language, as to meet the challenges of daily living in a more adequate and satisfying way, less restricted by the limited resources - especially perhaps in vocabulary -

which they have been able to acquire in the time available. At the same time, they will achieve a more fluent and accurate control over the communication process. Accordingly, *Vantage* level goes beyond *Threshold* level particularly in the following respects:

- the refinement of functional and general notional categories, with a consequent growth in the available inventory of exponents. In the functional area (Chapter 5), the expansion is perhaps most notable in the expression of emotions and in the conduct of discussion.
- a considerable enlargement of concrete vocabulary expressing specific notions in thematic areas set out in Chapter 7. It should be emphasised that at *Vantage* level we make no attempt to propose a defined recommended vocabulary. The needs and interests of learners are by this time far too diverse for such a proposal to be desirable or realistic. Experience takes us all in different directions and we need to talk to other people about our own situations, jobs and leisure interests. Of course, post-*Threshold* level learners will continue to share a common framework of 'universal experience' and to build up a shared vocabulary for referring to the people, creatures and objects that form the common context in which our lives are led. However, above *Threshold* level we expect learners to be more autonomous, able to take increasing responsibility for their learning and able to make more effective use of reference books and other information sources in order to develop a vocabulary appropriate to their own needs and interests. We therefore have made more use of open word classes with suggestions for an increased range of specific items which we should expect to figure in a common core.
- recognition and limited control of important register varieties. Up to *Threshold* level we have advised learners to keep to a 'neutral' register, avoiding excessive formality on the one hand and colloquial or familiar usage on the other. In moving to *Vantage* level, learners will gain more experience of the situations which call for more formal or more colloquial usage and judge when they may appropriately follow suit. Correspondingly, a number of colloquial exponents are given for those language functions in which they are more likely to occur. At the phonetic level, *Vantage* learners will be able to cope with the degree of phonetic reduction normal in informal spoken English.
- increased ability to understand and produce longer and more complex utterances. Up to *Threshold* level, it is expected that learners will mostly be participating in dialogues consisting of short turns. In many cases simple sentences or very short sequences of simple sentences will be used, the relations between them being inferred by the listener. At *Vantage* level learners will be able to follow and

produce longer discourses structured by such means as the use of sentence adverbs, the anaphoric use of pronouns and generics to refer back to items already mentioned, the use of intonational prominence to distinguish given from new information, the construction of complex sentences by the embedding of subordinate clauses (though not too many!), etc. (See Chapter 8.)

- increased range and control of goal-directed conversation strategies. Up to *Threshold* level, learners are preparing to deal with the simpler, more predictable situations of daily life in a straightforward way, following the Co-operative Principle (see Chapter 4) and expecting their interlocutor to do likewise. They are able to answer the question: 'What do I say next?' by reference to the relatively fixed schemata (verbal interaction patterns) that underlie most routine transactions and exchanges of information. They are likely to have difficulty in coping with unexpected twists in conversation, or with those complications in everyday transactions that always seem to affect the customer just ahead of one in a queue! They may then use compensation strategies to enlist the aid of the interlocutor. More experienced (and sympathetic) interlocutors will most probably adjust their normal conversational behaviour to simplify the communicative task for the benefit of the less experienced foreign learner. At *Vantage* level, interaction is less constrained and both partners can act in a more flexible and natural way, following basic goal-directed conversation strategies rather than adhering as closely as possible to fixed verbal exchange patterns (see Chapter 8).
- greater sociocultural and sociolinguistic competence. Some earlier criticisms of *The Threshold Level* centred on its alleged minimalism and neglect of cultural issues. In fact, the level represented, though it attempts to set out the minimal linguistic requirements for a communicative proficiency sufficient to meet the demands of everyday living, is far from 'minimal' in the learning effort required. As for the neglect of sociocultural values, language is a socio-cultural phenomenon central to human social existence. The everyday use of any language is impregnated with the culture of the community that uses it to organise its communication. All language learning involves intercultural experience. However, in *Threshold 1990* the relation was made more explicit by the addition of a new chapter on *Sociocultural competence*, including a more detailed treatment of politeness conventions in a variety of British English often taken as a model for foreign learners. At *Threshold* level, the sociocultural is largely a matter of awareness, though learners are encouraged to act in accordance with that awareness. By *Vantage* level, the learner's grasp of interculturality will be that much deeper, so that he or she will be able to respond more flexibly to the nature of the situations of use and the interpersonal as well as the social role relations appropriate to the situation. This flexibility is of

course all the more important when English is being used as a means of communication between non-native speakers. It is not to be expected that they will both conform to the same British cultural norms. Sensitivity, awareness, openness to new experience, tolerance and acceptance of sociocultural diversity are needed. To act accordingly is a sign of the increasing linguistic maturity appropriate to a *Vantage* learner (see Chapter 11).

- improved reading skills applied to a wider range of texts. Up to *Threshold* level, learners are expected only to be able to deal with written texts of a type related directly to the situations and topics set out in the extended characterisation of the global objective (Chapter 3). They are largely confined to public signs and notices, private and routine public correspondence and information in newspapers and magazines. Learners who choose to go on with language learning may be expected to have a wider range of interests, which they will wish to develop through written media – perhaps increasingly electronic as well as printed – and extended listening. As their general and more specific vocabulary expands, and their use of dictionaries, encyclopaedias and other reference materials becomes more efficient, as well as their ability to deduce word meaning from context, they will be able to select and understand more demanding texts and become increasingly able to differentiate their mode of reading, employing different strategies according to what they need to take from a particular text. This flexibility will increase their reading speed so as to cross the threshold of satisfactory ‘value for effort’.
- a higher level of skill in the processes of language production and reception. It has often been remarked that the use of language by a mature adult native speaker is the most highly skilled activity anywhere to be found. We have to accept the fact that in attempting to deal with a full range of communicative tasks which arise in daily living *Threshold* learners will have problems in doing so with the very limited resources at their disposal and that they will have further problems in actually bringing those resources to bear on a particular occasion in a particular situation. Whilst learner aptitudes and abilities undoubtedly vary greatly, we cannot expect, at any level, perfect execution of the tasks, activities and processes set out in the objective, nor should we. Perfect execution would only be attainable by spending a great deal of time on overtraining at the expense of broadening experience. There is a necessary balance to be struck between extending knowledge and training performance. Thus the *Threshold* learner not only has a wider coverage than the *Waystage* learner, but also has a more consolidated and firmer grasp of the *Waystage* objectives. Similarly, in moving from *Threshold* to *Vantage*, the learner improves not only in the respects set out above, but also consolidates the *Threshold* objectives and satisfies higher



performance criteria in these areas. These will include greater freedom from memory lapses, fewer mistakes and slips of the tongue, fewer blockages and hesitations, fewer false starts and incomplete sentences, a smoother utterance with better phrasing and intonation and a higher speech rate with shorter delay in response. There will be less need to use compensatory strategies. As to receptive processes, *Vantage* learners will have less difficulty in identifying words, phrases and sentences in the flow of speech, especially when phonetically reduced forms are used or when a slight foreign or non-standard accent is used. They will be better able to understand speech under noisy conditions, or with acoustic distortion in public address systems, or with interference from other sound sources. They will 'lose track' less frequently and when they do so will find it easier to break back in.

In all, *Waystage*, *Threshold* and *Vantage* now offer to all practitioners a description of the language needed to assure a learner's ability to deal effectively with the challenges presented by everyday life, presented at three levels rising from a minimal equipment to deal with the highest priority needs, through the minimum needed to deal with the full range of requirements for a visitor or temporary resident, to an enriched equipment adequate to deal effectively with the complexities of daily living. It is, of course, for the individual user to decide how to make use of this descriptive apparatus, in order to define appropriate objectives for a particular set of learners, whilst of course bearing in mind the need to co-ordinate the efforts of different providers in developing a learning/teaching system. Users can supplement the specification if some needs of the constituency are not met, or cut out elements they do not need. Items which are of marginal value to the learners envisaged can be replaced by others. The process can be articulated into more stages if a particular educational system is organised in a 'drip feed' mode, or fewer if there is a full-time intensive programme for experienced and gifted learners. With courses for non-beginners, the description can be used to specify a prior knowledge requirement as well as the objective. Modules can be derived by concentrating on some defined sub-part of the specification, as can partial competence.

This flexibility is possible because a single model has been used for the successive levels *Waystage*, *Threshold* and *Vantage*. We trust that all those concerned with planning and implementing language teaching and learning will find it useful in setting objectives which are desirable, appropriate and feasible for the particular learners towards whom they undertake responsibility.

J. A. van Ek  
J. L. M. Trim  
June 1996

**Y lefel drothwy Ar gyfer y gymraeg, 1994 (a Threshold level for Welsh / un niveau seuil pour le gallois), Preface : J.L.M. Trim & J.A. van Ek**

# **Y lefel drothwy**

## **Ar gyfer y gymraeg**

Prifysgol Cymru Coleg Caerdydd  
Noddwyd gan y Swyddfa Gymreig

**Yr Athro Glyn E. Jones  
Dr Medwin Hughes  
Delyth Jones**

Cyngor Er Cydweithredu Diwylliannol

Gwasg Cyngor Ewrop, 1996

Preface to Y Lefel Drothwy (Threshold Level for Welsh)

Y Lefel Drothwy is the fourteenth in the series of 'threshold level' specifications for European languages produced within the Council of Europe framework, following English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Swedish, Danish, Dutch, Norwegian, Portuguese, Catalan, Basque and Galician. Six more are in active preparation, with yet more planned. The original Threshold Level, introducing the descriptive 'functional/notional' model for the specification of language learning objectives and applying it to the English required by temporary visitors, was developed by Dr J.A. van Ek in 1974 on the basis of preliminary studies by a group of experts convened by the Council of Europe to investigate the feasibility of a European unit-credit system for language learning in adult education. It is a tribute to the strength and power of the original concept that applications are in full flow some twenty years later modified, of course, in accordance with cumulative experience over the intervening years incorporated in particular in the revised and expanded Threshold Level 1990 by J.A. van Ek and J.L.M. Trim.

At first, fears were expressed that the development of a powerful new tool for the teaching of English as a foreign language would reinforce the tendency for that language to become established as not only the primary, but indeed the only language taught in schools as a means of international communication. Such a monopoly is far from the intention of the Council of Europe. In its Recommendation R (82) 18 to member States concerning modern languages, the Committee of Ministers considered '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'. Furthermore, on the initiative of the Parliamentary Assembly, a Charter of Regional and Minority Languages has been adopted, proposing a series of practical measures to protect the use of these languages and to promote their development. It will be seen that the availability of a well-developed descriptive model, far from reinforcing the hegemony of a single language, has stimulated the teaching and learning of the smaller national languages of independent states and also of regional languages. This has already occurred in the case of the languages of the autonomous regions of Northern Spain, Catalan, Basque and Galician, which were subject to severe oppression under the Franco regime. Nivell Lindar, Atalase Maila and Nivel Soleira have each played an important role in the resurgence of these regional languages. Their concern has, however, shifted from the temporary visitor in relatively brief, occasional contact with the indigenous population to the resident population itself. They have acted as a focus for the normalisation of languages sometimes fragmented geographically into dialects, none of which, for political reasons, can claim to be the indisputable standard. They have provided a common point of reference for all those concerned with the re-establishment of the language as the medium of everyday social intercourse and public life.

The position of the Celtic languages is in many ways not dissimilar. Once widespread in Central and Western Europe (as the place name element *wal-* or *gal-* attests) they have been confined for more than a millennium, under the successive pressures of Romanisation and Anglicisation, to steadily shrinking regions on the Atlantic Seaboard of Britain, Ireland and France. In Cumberland, Cornwall and, recently, the Isle of Man, Celtic has become extinct. Over the last Century, improved communications, immigration and emigration, mass production and marketing of packaged goods, mass media information and entertainment have increased the pressures, producing diaglossic situations in which the role of the Celtic language in the public lives of its mother tongue speakers has become progressively reduced.

There are now very few, if any, monolingual adult speakers of any Celtic language. In the early years of compulsory education, draconian measures were taken to force pupils to use only the official standard language of the state, even outside the classroom. Though these policies have since been reversed, their social and psychological effects and those of the values and attitudes underlying the policies have been deep and long-lasting.

Over the years, the situation of the Welsh language has significantly improved. Official policies such as establishing the Welsh Language Act 1993 along with a more informed public opinion, have led to an improvement in the status of the language. Welsh is taught in almost all of the schools in the country and is available as a medium of education to the highest levels. Whilst it is not to be expected that modern conditions will make it possible to restore Welsh monolingualism, even if that were a desirable development, active bilingualism in all domains of social existence is now a viable option, even a natural development. We trust that Y Lefel Drothwy will play a significant part in maintaining the language in active use in the daily lives of all inhabitants of Wales, not only those born into indigenous Welsh speaking families for whom Welsh remains the mother tongue and home language. We trust that it may also help to make the spoken language more accessible to the many anglophone immigrants and their children and enable them to understand and share the language and culture of Wales. Y Lefel Drothwy is also, of course, well able to fulfil the original function of the Threshold Level series, namely to provide access for tourists and other temporary visitors to the Welsh language and culture as they find them in use in the country.

A Threshold Level for Irish is already in preparation by a team set up at the Irish Linguistics Institute (ITÉ). We look forward to its appearance and also, in due course, to versions for the two remaining Celtic languages. Meanwhile, we congratulate Dr Medwin HUGHES and his colleagues for the excellent work they have carried through and wish them every success in applying Y Lefel Drothwy to the reinforcement and development of the use of Welsh in Wales and the wider appreciation and understanding of its unique contribution to European culture.

John L.M. TRIM  
Jan A. van EK

**Nivel Soleira, 1993 (a Threshold level for Galician / un niveau seuil pour le galicien), *Préface* : J.L.M. Trim**

## **Nivel Soleira**

**Instituto da Lingua Galega**  
(Universidade de Santiago de Compostela)

Xosé Antonio Fernández Salgado, Henrique Monteagudo Romero,  
Manuel Pugal Moruxa

Consello de Cooperación Cultural  
Linguas Vivas

Council of Europe Press, 1993

Préface par J.L.M. Trim, Directeur de projet  
pour le Projet Langues Vivantes du Conseil de l'Europe  
"Apprentissage des langues et citoyenneté européenne"

*C'est un grand plaisir que d'accueillir le Nível Soleira dans la famille des "niveaux-seuils" des langues européennes. Nous rappellerons que la notion de "niveau-seuil" est née d'un travail visant à mettre en place un système général d'unités capitalisables pour l'enseignement des langues aux adultes en Europe. Il est ressorti notamment de ce travail qu'un programme d'enseignement des langues, quel qu'il soit, doit partir d'une appréciation des besoins, des motivations et des caractéristiques des apprenants concernés, et des ressources disponibles. Cette appréciation permet aux personnes chargées de la conception des enseignements de fixer des objectifs fondés, réalistes et appropriés, et, à la suite de cela, de choisir ou de réaliser des méthodes et matériels pédagogiques adaptés aux objectifs convenus. Il est apparu que la première des priorités pour la majorité des apprenants était d'acquérir la langue de base nécessaire pour faire face aux situations de la vie quotidienne et pouvoir échanger des idées et des expériences avec des personnes de rencontre. Le "niveau-seuil" a donc été une tentative pour définir ce que les apprenants ont besoin de savoir faire dans ce genre de situation, puis de spécifier la langue qu'ils doivent utiliser. Ce concept fut d'abord appliqué à l'anglais et au français, puis successivement à d'autres langues nationales: espagnol, allemand, italien, danois, suédois, néerlandais, norvégien et portugais. Ces spécifications descriptives ont ensuite servi de base à de nombreux projets de réforme des programmes d'enseignement ou des examens, mais aussi à l'élaboration de cours multimédia pour l'enseignement des langues comme **Follow Me** et **Viaje al Español**.*

*Ces dernières années, avec l'approbation du Gouvernement espagnol, le Conseil de l'Europe a soutenu diverses actions entreprises par les autorités des régions autonomes en vue de rétablir la place de leur langue dans la vie quotidienne, après les longues années consécutives à la Guerre civile durant lesquelles l'usage des langues régionales fut activement découragé, voire interdit. Des niveaux-seuils ont été publiés déjà pour le catalan (**Nivell Llindar**) et le basque (**Atalasa Maila**). Ils ont joué un grand rôle dans le processus de normalisation et ont servi de base à l'élaboration de programmes d'enseignement dans les écoles et, surtout, dans le secteur de l'éducation des adultes; ainsi, le **Nivell Llindar** définit la spécification de contenu pour le cours multimédia de catalan **Digui digui**. Les auteurs se sont concentrés sur les éléments essentiels du modèle original présenté dans le **Threshold Level English** (1975, republié par Pergamon Press en 1980): les fonctions linguistiques, les notions générales et spécifiques avec leurs actes de parole, mais ils les ont modifiés et développés en fonction des besoins spécifiques du public-cible, les résidents parlant le castillan. L'équipe responsable du **Nível Soleira** a suivi la même démarche, dans la mesure où les problèmes et les buts éducatifs de ces deux régions sont assez semblables et où il est prévu aussi d'élaborer un cours multimédia.*

*Ces éléments fondamentaux du niveau-seuil ne constituent évidemment pas un programme d'enseignement, de cours ou d'examens. Ce n'est pas non plus une présentation complète ou exhaustive d'objectifs éducatifs dans le domaine des langues. Depuis quelques années, les experts travaillant pour les Projets "Langues vivantes" successifs du Conseil de l'Europe ont accordé une attention particulière à certains aspects complémentaires tels que:*

- les stratégies dont disposent les apprenants pour faciliter l'interaction communicative;*
- la manière dont les lecteurs et auditeurs abordent les textes (écrits ou parlés) plus longs, et les types de textes que sont susceptibles de rencontrer les apprenants du niveau-seuil;*
- la connaissance de la société et de la culture qui sous-tendent la langue apprise;*
- les manières de préparer l'apprenant à continuer à apprendre de façon autonome.*

*Les caractéristiques phonologiques et grammaticales de la langue peuvent aussi être utilement présentées sous une forme systématique, pour aider les apprenants à intérioriser un modèle cohérent de la langue. Une première tentative pour intégrer ces dimensions complémentaires de la spécification des objectifs figure dans le **Threshold Level 1990**, de J.A. van Ek et J.L.M. Trim, publié par le Conseil de l'Europe.*

*Le **Nivel Soleira** contient une description complète des fonctions et notions nécessaires pour une communication simple mais efficace. Les responsables des programmes d'enseignement, les concepteurs de cours, les enseignants et les apprenants avertis y trouveront un instrument inestimable de planification de l'apprentissage de la langue. Pour les autres dimensions, ils pourront consulter avec avantage le **Threshold Level 1990**. Nous espérons qu'en temps utile, peut-être dans la version finale du **Nivel Soleira**, ce contenu complémentaire - adapté comme il convient aux besoins des apprenants concernés - sera directement accessible en galicien.*

*En attendant, il convient de féliciter l'Instituto da Lingua Galega de l'Université de Saint-Jacques de Compostelle pour cet excellent travail qui permettra de structurer et d'encourager avec force l'apprentissage et l'enseignement de cette partie du patrimoine linguistique et culturel de l'Europe.*

**Waystage 1990 (1991), Preface : J.A. van Ek & J.L.M. Trim**

# Waystage 1990



*J. A. van Ek and J. L. M. Trim*





# Preface

*Waystage 1990* is the latest, thoroughly revised, extended, corrected and reset version of *Waystage: an intermediary objective below Threshold Level in a European unit/credit system of modern language learning by adults* by J. A. van Ek and L. G. Alexander, in association with M. A. Fitzpatrick. This work was first published by the Council of Europe in 1977 and republished in 1980 by Pergamon Press for and on behalf of the Council of Europe under the title *Waystage English*.

*Waystage* was originally conceived in the context of the preparation for the broadcast-led Anglo-German multimedia co-production *Follow Me*. Overall, *Follow Me* was originally planned as a two-year English language course for use by the DVV (*Deutscher Volkshochschulverband*) in its adult education classes. The final objective was set as *The Threshold Level*, first produced for the Council of Europe by Dr J. A. van Ek, which sets down in specific detail, exemplified for English, what a language user needs to do by means of language in order to 'communicate socially with people from other countries, exchanging information and opinion on everyday matters in a relatively straightforward way, and to conduct the necessary business of everyday living when abroad with a reasonable degree of independence' (preface to *Threshold*, CUP 1998). An experiment conducted in Vienna *Volkshochschulen* showed that the full attainment of this objective under the normal conditions of adult education would take a full two years. Yet, realistically, it was likely that local conditions would oblige broadcasting and education authorities in many countries to use only the first year of the course. Together with the *Follow Me* course designers, van Ek therefore examined carefully the content of *The Threshold Level* and extracted what were considered to be the most basic categories within each of its parameters – the most essential situations, topics and functions, inescapable general notions and their simplest and most basic lexical and grammatical exponents to enable the learners to cope at least minimally in those communicative situations which may be most directly relevant to them. This specification then provided the basis for the first year *Follow Me* course design drawn up for the Council of Europe by L. G. Alexander. At first *Waystage* was not considered a legitimate terminal objective in its own right, but rather as one of many possible intermediate objectives on the way to threshold level. However, by 1980, experience with *Waystage* had shown that whilst 'we should not favour a "minimalism" which saw this first objective as a terminal goal for the mass of learners, it has in fact a coherence and breadth which make it a worthwhile objective in its own right'. (*Waystage English* p. viii) Learners who for one reason or another have only a strictly limited amount of time available for learning English will find its 'cost-effectiveness' very high.

In broadcasting terms, *Follow Me* was highly successful. First broadcast in 1979 to Germany, Austria and Switzerland, it has now been shown in some 70 countries to a combined audience of several hundred million learners. The success of this venture in international co-planning and co-production (notoriously difficult to achieve) was due, on the one hand, to the high professional expertise of the many partners involved in the planning, production, distribution and use of TV, radio and printed components, and on the other to what proved to be the universal relevance to language learners of the functional/notional framework set out in *Waystage*. However, no media product has an unlimited life. By 1989, it was time to plan for a replacement series, which BBC English again wished to situate in an international context under Council of Europe auspices. Meanwhile, a considerable amount of work had taken place within successive Council of Europe Modern Languages Projects towards the development of an enriched model for the specification of language teaching objectives, resulting in the publication in 1986–7 of J. A. van Ek's two-volume study on *Objectives for Foreign Language Learning*. The revision of the original threshold level specification as applied to English, 'to take account of developments in the fifteen years since it was conceived as a first pioneering experiment' was included among the priority areas and themes for the Council for Cultural Co-operation programme *Language Learning for European Citizenship* initiated in 1989. BBC English expressed their willingness to support revision of *The Threshold Level* and also of *Waystage*, which would follow similar lines. A similar willingness was expressed by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate in view of the relevance of this revision to their continuing programme of examination reform and by the British Council in the light of its more general concern for curriculum development in the teaching of English as a foreign language. A thorough revision was accordingly undertaken and carried out in 1989–90 and published by the Council of Europe in 1991. That version forms the basis for the present publication, which has been further revised, corrected and reset.

The authors wish to acknowledge here with gratitude the support received from BBC English, UCLES, the British Council and the Council of Europe. We also wish to acknowledge our continuing indebtedness to L. G. Alexander and M. A. Fitzpatrick for the skill and judgement they brought to the fundamental task of honing down the original *Threshold Level* specification to produce the compact yet comprehensive *Waystage*. The results of that work are still apparent in the selection of functional and notional categories for *Waystage*.

Furthermore, van Ek's words in his introduction to *Objectives for Foreign Language Learning* are as relevant to *Waystage* as to *Threshold Level*: it is 'one of the results of many years of intensive collaboration and genuine interaction with colleagues from several European countries brought

together in the framework of successive modern language projects of the Council of Europe. The number of those who in some way or other, directly or indirectly, have contributed to our study is so large that we can only say to them collectively. "Thank you all".'

J. A. van Ek

J. L. M. Trim

Threshold level 1990 (1991), Preface: J.A. van Ek & J.L.M. Trim

# Threshold 1990

Council of Europe  
Conseil de l'Europe



*J. A. van Ek and J. L. M. Trim*

 **CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

# Preface

*Threshold* is the latest, thoroughly revised, extended, corrected and reset version of *The Threshold Level* by Dr. J. A. van Ek, first published by the Council of Europe in 1975 as part of a project to investigate the feasibility of a unit/credit system for adult language learning in Europe. The Project Group set out to develop conceptual and planning instruments to assist teachers and course planners to analyse the needs of the learners towards whom they had responsibilities and to set, consciously and explicitly, appropriate learning objectives.

Learning objectives will, in principle, be as diverse as the learners and the lives they lead. However, large-scale educational systems have to base their provision on learners' common needs. By far the largest single group of language learners everywhere consists of people who want to prepare themselves to communicate socially with people from other countries, exchanging information and opinions on everyday matters in a relatively straightforward way, and to conduct the necessary business of everyday living when abroad with a reasonable degree of independence. *The Threshold Level* was the first attempt to set out in systematic detail just what such an objective implies in terms of the situations the learners might have to deal with and what they should be able to do by means of language in those situations – what feelings and ideas they would need to express, or ask about, or argue about, and in general conduct personal relations in daily life. It then made recommendations as to the language needed to express functions and notions concerned, whether through the set formulae in which every language abounds, or by the freer use of words in grammatical constructions. What was revolutionary for language teaching, however, was that the apparatus of sentence formation, the grammar and lexicon, were not seen as ends in themselves, but as means to communicative ends. Communicative effectiveness becomes the criterion by which the learners' success (and that of the teaching programme) is to be judged, rather than the error-free performance of formal exercises. The effect was to 'convert language teaching from structure-dominated scholastic sterility into a vital medium for the freer movement of people and ideas' with an emphasis on the use of language in direct person-to-person encounters.

Since 1975, *The Threshold Level* has been used on a large scale by the designers of syllabuses of all kinds: for curricular reform, for examination development, for textbook writing and course design. Functional and notional categorisation has been fully assimilated into the established framework of language learning and teaching. The selection of situations and topics, with the associated specific notions, has stood the test of time reasonably well, as has the framework of

- strategic competence
- socio-cultural competence
- social competence
- optimal development of personality:
  - cognitive development
  - affective development

Following the successful completion of Project 12 in 1987, the Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe launched a further Project: *Language learning for European citizenship*. Among its priority themes in the area of language learning and teaching methodology was 'revising the original threshold level specification as applied to English to take account of developments in the 15 years since it was conceived as a first pioneering experiment'. A number of institutions concerned with the promotion of English as a foreign language: the British Council, the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate and BBC English expressed their readiness to support the work of revising and extending both *The Threshold Level* and *Waystage*. We should like to take this opportunity of thanking them warmly for this. Accordingly, the Council of Europe commissioned a thorough revision, which was undertaken in 1989–90 and published as *Threshold Level 1990*. This edition is closely based upon that publication, but the opportunity has been taken to make corrections and to improve the presentation.

We wish here to acknowledge our indebtedness to L. G. Alexander for his contributions to the original specification. It will, however, be seen that the present work is, echoing van Ek's Introduction to the 1986 volume: 'one of the results of many years of intensive collaboration and genuine interaction with colleagues from several European countries brought together in the framework of successive modern language projects of the Council of Europe. The number of those who in some way or other, directly or indirectly, have contributed to our study is so large that we can only say to them, collectively, "Thank you all".'

J. A. van Ek

J. L. M. Trim

Nível limiar, 1988 (a Threshold level for Portuguese / un niveau seuil pour le portugais), Prefacio: R Richterich



## Nível limiar

(Para o ensino/Aprendizagem do Português  
como língua segunda/Língua estrangeira)

João Malaca Casteleiro, Américo Meira, José Pascoal

Departamento de Língua e Cultura Portuguesa  
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e  
Instituto de Cultura e Língua Portuguesa

Conselho de Cooperação Cultural

Strasbourg 1988

## PREFACIO

Não conheço o português. Não o falo, não o escrevo e, sobretudo, não o compreendo. Não obstante, pondo em acção diversas estratégias de leitura em relação ao francês, ao italiano, ao espanhol, até mesmo ao latim, chego quase a lê-lo.

Não conheço o português e, no entanto, orientei um grupo de trabalho encarregado pelo Conselho da Europa de preparar a realização do Nível Limiar do Português.

Isto poderia surpreender alguém que tivesse esquecido que um nível limiar não é apenas uma compilação de actos de fala, de palavras, de estruturas ou de regras de gramática de uma dada língua, mas é também eu seria tentado a insistir, sobretudo um instrumento metodológico, uma caixa de ferramentas, segundo a expressão de Louis Porcher, que ajuda o utilizador a construir objectivos e conteúdos de aprendizagem em função das suas necessidades.

No momento em que a didáctica das línguas vivas se debruça sobre a sua história, seria interessante traçar as dos níveis limiares. Desde o primeiro esboço de Jan van Ek, aparecido em 1972, até ao Nível Limiar, do inglês ao português, passando pelo norueguês, o dinamarquês, o italiano, o basco, uma dúzia de línguas foram objecto de um tratamento do tipo nível limiar. Mas o modelo metodológico de partida, o do inglês, modificou-se durante o percurso, nomeadamente com o aparecimento dos níveis limiares para o francês em 1976 e o alemão em 1980. Hoje, a caixa de ferramentas enriqueceu-se e renovou-se mais uma vez com o Nível Limiar, que marcará certamente uma etapa no desenvolvimento dos níveis limiares. Introduzindo novas componentes, tais como as estratégias de comunicação e de aprendizagem e os tipos de textos, o Nível Limiar faz já obra de inovação. Mas é sobretudo ao apresentar sistematicamente, sob forma de quadros recapitulativos, as interacções entre as componentes que ele enriquece fundamentalmente a metodologia. A abordagem sistemática, que procura assegurar as influências mais harmoniosas e eficazes possíveis entre todos os elementos constitutivos de um sistema de ensino/aprendizagem das línguas vivas, é uma das constantes dos trabalhos do Conselho da Europa. Ela encontra aqui uma expressão exemplar tanto na forma como no fundo.

Aquando da primeira sessão do grupo de trabalho, que reunia M. da Piedade Mendes, S. Parvaux, L. Porcher, G. Schneider e J. Trim, tínhamos negociado com os autores um projecto ambicioso e exigente. Era um desafio. Ele foi enfrentado com imaginação e competência por J. M. Casteleiro, A. Meira e J. Pascoal.

O Nível Limiar do Português não é só imponente pelo número de páginas, mas sobretudo pelas inovações que traz à definição dos objectivos e conteúdos de aprendizagem do português.

René Richterich  
Membro do Grupo de Projecto "Línguas Vivas"  
do Conselho da Europa

(Traduzido do Francês)



**Atalase Maila, 1988 (a Threshold level for Basque / un niveau seuil pour le basque)** (out of print / épuisé) *Hitzaurrea : J.A. van Ek*



## Atalase Maila

Alan King-ek  
Hezkuntza, Unibertsitate eta Ikerketa Sailarentzat  
prestatua

Laguntzaileak:  
Sorkunde Artetxe, Marian Astigarraga, Elena Beloki,  
Iñaki Gaminde, Xan Goenaga, Idola Ibero, Irene Ithurrsary, Edorta Jimenez,  
Roger Labiano, Gabriel Piedra, Enrike Urrutia

KULTUR LANKIDETZARAKO KONTSEILUA

Strasbourg 1988

## Hitzaurrea

Europako Kontseiluak lehenengo Atalase Maila 1975ean argitaratu zuen. Bertan, hizkuntzen ikas-helburuak espezifikatzeko eredu berri bat aurkeztu zen eta eredu hori inglesari aplikatu zitzaion. Zenbait akats teoriko gora behera, ereduaren arrakasta handia izan da. Arrakasta horren zergatia, ikas-helburuak lehen aldiz hizkuntzaren erabilpenaren terminoetan zehazteko prozedura koherente bat proposatzean datza hein handian, ez hizkuntz formenetan. Honela, hizkuntzen ikaskuntza gaitasun komunikatiboaren eskurapenaren inguruan orientatzeko joeran kokatzen zen, diziplina intelektualtzat edo erantzun-mekanismoen eskurapentzat jo ordez. Ereduaren arrakastaren aldeko beste faktore bat honen gardentasuna eta aplikagarritasun praktikoa izan zen. Bai irakaslegoak, bai honen premiak betetzeko eginkizuna dutenek, laster bereganatu zituzten bertan proposatutako kategoriaz berriak. Bestalde, ereduaren hizkuntza konkretu bati nola aplikatu zekiokkeen gaitasun beharrezkoak hau konbentzigarriago bihurtu zuen, balioari eta egingarritasunari zegokionez. Geroztik kalitateok behin eta berriro konfirmatu egin dira Europako hainbat hizkuntzari aplikatuz, hala nola frantses, aleman, espainol, italiara, daniera, suediera, noruegiara, holandes, portugesez eta katalanari. Ezinbestez, bertsioetako batzuek besteak baino gehiago zabaldu dira eta eraginkorragoak izan dira. Haatik ia denek bultzada handiak eman dizkiote joera berritzaile sakonei kasuan kasuko hizkuntzaren ikaskuntza eta irakaskuntzaren antolatketan eta praktikan. Honez gero ez da arraroa atalase mailaren eredu oso finkatua aurkitzea nazio, herrialde eta erakunde mailako programetan.

Guzti hau ereduaren sortzaileentzat arrazabagarri izan arren, kanonizaturik eta fosilizaturik geratzeko arriskua dago. Hala eta guztiz, hobetzeko eta etengabe eraberritzeko potentzialaren lekukotasuna eman dute bertsio berriek. Objectives for foreign language learning izeneko lehen liburua (Europako Kontseilua, 1986), partikularizki 'Scope' delako lehen tomoan, marko zabalago baten beharra defenditu nuen, hau lortzeko bide batzuei seinalatuz. Atalase mailarik berrienak, hemen aurkezteko ohorea dudanak alegia, kontuan hartzen ditu esplizitoki marko zabalago horren zentzu ezaugarri. Honek berak Euskalduntzerako Atalase Maila seinalatzen du aportunazio mamitsu bezala funtsezko ereduaren eboluzio jarraikorrean. Alan King eta honen euskaldun laguntzaileek burututako lanaren orijinaltasuna, ordea, ez da honekin agortzen. Lehen aldiz ereduaren hizkuntza ez-indoeuropear bati aplikatu dakiokela erakutsi dute, eta lehen aldiz zenbait eskualdetako aldakizun dialektalak jasotzen dituzte. Euskalduntzerako Atalase Maila besteetatik bereizten duen beste ezaugarri bat, katalanarenekin batera, bertako herrian erabiltzeko moldatua izatea da, eta ez atzerriko ingurune batean. Faktore honek, besterik ezean ere, sartzeko edukiaren hautapenaren printzipioak eta xehetasunak birplanteatzea eskatu zuen.

Alan King eta haren laguntzaile talde txikiak, hain denboraldi laburrean, beren proiektu itzel hau burutzea, eta hori egiteko berauei ez ezik Europako Kontseiluaren Kultur Lanbidetzerako Kontseiluaren Hizkuntza Modernoen Proiektuari mesede handia egiteko moduan gainera, lorpen ohargarria izan da. Zabalantzarik gabe, lanari jarraipen egoki bat ematen baldin bazaio, atalase maila berri hau faktore nagusia bihurtuko da Euskal Herriaren nortasunarentzat hain oinarritzakoa den hizkuntza honen berreskurapen ahaleginetan.

Jan A. van Ek  
Europako Kontseiluaren  
Hizkuntza Modernoen Proiektuko kidea

**Drempelniveau, 1985 (a Threshold level for Dutch / un niveau seuil pour le néerlandais), *Ten Geleide* : J.L.M. Trim**



RAAD VAN EUROPA  
Raad voor Culturele Samenwerking

# Drempelniveau

NEDERLANDS ALS VREEMDE TAAL

Armel Wynants  
Universiteit Luik  
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Strasbourg  
1985

## TEN GELEIDE

### I.

Het verheugt me ten eerste het "Drempelniveau" te mogen verwelkomen onder de steeds talrijker wordende leden van de familie van taalbeschrijvingen die nu ruim tien jaar geleden "gesticht" werd door het *Threshold Level* en het *Niveau-seuil*. Toen hebben sommigen hun bezorgdheid uitgesproken : ze vreesden namelijk dat deze nieuwe werken de "hegemonie" van de twee officiële talen van de Raad van Europa alleen maar zouden versterken. Nu blijkt duidelijk dat die vrees ongegrond was. Welliswaar werden de toen uitgewerkte modellen om te beginnen toegepast op het Engels en het Frans, maar ook in alle andere lidstaten hebben ze taalkundigen en taalleraren ertoe aangespoord hun leerdoelen te herzien om ze beter te laten aansluiten bij de communicatieve behoeften van de leeders. Daarbij kwam men tot de conclusie dat de bestaande grammatica's en woordenboeken in dat opzicht veelal tekortschoten en dat het dus nodig was dergelijke werken te relateren aan de situaties waarin de taal gebruikt wordt, aan de functies die ze vervult en aan de begrippen die ze helpt uit te drukken.

Herhaaldelijk hebben het Ministercomité, de Parlementaire Vergadering en de Raad voor Culturele Samenwerking van de Raad van Europa er met nadruk op gewezen dat de taaldiversiteit in Europa gehandhaafd dient te worden, want die hoeft niet langer een hinderpaal te vormen voor de communicatie. Zij pleiten dan ook voor een versterking van het vreemde-talenonderwijs, waardoor de diversiteit aan talen inderdaad een bron van onderlinge verrijking kan worden, die iedereen te baat kan komen. Het uitwerken van "Drempelniveau"-beschrijvingen voor een toenemend aantal nationale en regionale talen is een wezenlijke bijdrage tot dat doel, dat alleen via permanente educatie waargemaakt kan worden. Wie op school een beperkte, maar succesvolle en genoeglijke ervaring met het leren van vreemde talen heeft gehad, kan wellicht bereid gevonden worden om een gedeelte van zijn volwasseneleven te besteden aan het leren communiceren met een steeds grotere reeks mede-Europeaanen, in de taal van de partner. De taak van de leeders wordt meteen een stuk vergemakkelijkt als ze daarbij kunnen beschikken over expliciet omschreven en vergelijkbare leerdoelen.

De Nederlanders en de nederlandstalige Belgen hebben - niet ten onrechte - de reputatie goede vreemde-talenkenners te zijn. Dat neemt echter niet weg dat zij ook een levende cultuur bezitten, met oude en minder oude tradities, waaraan in de eigen taal uiting wordt gegeven. Ik hoop dat het *Drempelniveau* de mensen uit andere landen kan helpen die cultuur te begrijpen en erin te delen.

John-L.M. TRIM  
Project Adviser  
to the Council of Europe's  
Modern Languages Project.

**Et terskelnivå for norsk, 1988 (a Threshold level for Norwegian / un niveau seuil pour le norvégien) Foreword : J.L.M. Trim**

# **Et terskelnivå for norsk**

**Björg Svanes, Jon E. Hagen,  
Gerd Manne, Arne S. Svindland**

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Rådet for kulturelt samarbeit

Council of Europe Press, 1992

## FORORD

Det er en stor glede å hilse *Et terskelnivå for norsk* velkommen som et nytt tilskudd i serien av terskelnivåer. Dette er spesifiserte beskrivelser av det språkgrunnlag den som lærer et fremmedspråk trenger å tilegne seg for å kunne utføre dagligdagse gjøremål på en selvstendig måte og for å utveksle informasjon og uttrykke personlige følelser, holdninger og oppfatninger. Fra Europarådets side blir *Et terskelnivå for norsk* sett på som et viktig bidrag til å bygge opp tillit og samarbeid blant europeere basert på gjensidig forståelse og respekt. Terskelnivåbeskrivelsen vil være av stor verdi for utlendinger som kommer til Norge for å leve og virke der og for andre som ønsker å ta del i norsk samfunns- og kulturliv slik nordmenn selv opplever det.

Vi gratulerer Bjørg Svanes og hennes kolleger for det grundige arbeidet de har nedlagt og for den nytenkning de har vist som vil være av interesse for kolleger som arbeider med tilsvarende språkbeskrivelser andre steder. Den systematiske avgrensning mellom *eksempler* på funksjons- og begrepskategorier og *beskrivelsen* av uttryksmåtene er nyttig. Vi ser det også som positivt at det er tatt med en metodisk veiledning for norsklærere som vil undervise ut fra terskelnivåbeskrivelsen. En ting er å inndele kommunikative aspekter i kategorier og å beskrive de mekanismene som uttrykker mening. Noe annet er det å hjelpe den som lærer et språk til å opparbeide ferdigheter og sikkerhet nok til å kunne kommunisere effektivt. Kunnskap og innsikt er viktig men ikke nok.

Vi retter en takk til Lars Stølen, leder for Informasjonssenteret for språkundervisning og norsk medlem i Europarådets prosjektgruppe 12, for hans stimulerende støtte og veiledning i prosjektarbeidet. På den måten han kombinerer nasjonal stolthet med en ekte åpenhet for internasjonalt samarbeid og med sin praktiske sans og omtanke for lærernes behov i klasserommet har han vært en inspirasjon for oss alle.

J. L. M. Trim

Prosjektrådgiver for Europarådets prosjekt nr. 12:  
"Learning and teaching language for communication"

**Et taerskelniveau for Dansk, 1983 (a Threshold level for Danish / un niveau  
seuil pour le danois), *Introduction : Jom Jessen***

## Introduction

In June 1979 a group of experts met in Strasbourg to discuss the possibility of producing a "T-Level Danish". In June 1980 it was decided to produce a Danish version. I was requested to carry out this work having formerly carried out a similar task, "Grundbaustein Dänisch", for Deutscher Volkshochschulverband.

Due to planning and budget restrictions within the Council of Europe only a very short time, about one year, could be allocated for carrying out the work. Considering the size and the scope of such a task this would normally not be considered sufficient. Furthermore I was alone in carrying out the job, whereas "Kontaktschwelle" (the German t-level) and "un niveau-seuil" (the French counterpart) had both been carried out by project teams.

The fact that it has proved possible to perform this task is the result of various favourable circumstances: I could base it on existing editions of t-level (English, German, French and Spanish) and a Danish group of experts was placed at my disposal.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those who have helped me during my work. Considerations of space prevent me from mentioning them all, but a few must be mentioned: Merete Biørn, Fl. Palle Hansen and Troels Dannerfjord (all members of the Danish group of experts who have helped me enormously in the preparation especially of exponents, their relevance and linguistic correctness), Martin Müller and Günther Schneider (the authors of "Kontaktschwelle") and Jan van Ek (the author of "The Threshold Level"). In addition to that I wish to thank the Ministry of Education in Copenhagen, and the Council of Europe, who took the initiative to produce "T-Level Danish".

The assistance rendered by these persons and institutions has made many things easier for me, but I would like to stress that any mistakes and shortcomings are my sole responsibility.

Having consulted the Danish Unit-Credit group I chose the name of "Et tærskelniveau for dansk" for the Danish edition of "T-level". The word "tærskelniveau" stresses the fact that the present curriculum is intended for learners beginning to study Danish in order to cope with everyday situations. Unlike the English edition ("The Threshold Level") I have preferred to call the Danish edition "Et tærskelniveau" as we have here one of several possibilities (dependent on target-groups).

By and large "Et tærskelniveau for dansk" complies with "T-Level English" (framework of disposition and adoption of explanatory text), but other t-levels have been taken into consideration (especially "Kontaktschwelle"). I would like to thank Jan van Ek, who allowed me to use his material as a basis. This is not a direct translation but an adaption. Naturally the exponents and the grammatical structures have not been adopted, and the appendix "Udblik" ("Prospects") has not either. The scope - and with that contents - was limited by the time factor and consequently the numbers of hours I was able to put in. The Council of



Europe in fact wanted a "T-Level Danish" corresponding in size to that of the English edition. The structure of English and Danish together with their linguistic affinity, made it easier to use the English t-level than any other. "Kontaktschwelle" has many advantages which I would have liked to have taken more into consideration e.g. in the elaboration of variants of lexical and grammatical exponents. Such considerations would have delayed the work. A revised edition of "Et tærskelniveau for dansk" might include more variants than this edition.

"Et tærskelniveau for dansk" is designed first and foremost for authors of textbooks and authorities and persons responsible for curricula. It is not intended as a textbook for teachers - still less for students. So it is not a book where you can just pick out some things and apply them directly in teaching. The material has to be taken as a whole. It is a proposal - under no circumstances to be seen as prescriptive, something you must use or must know. It is my hope that the material will form the basis of textbooks, suggest improvements, and call out discussions on the subject etc. So this work is a presentation which will need re-adjustment later on.

In my work I have taken it for granted that the reader is familiar with Danish. This has been necessary in order to avoid various explanations, additions etc. Besides, it naturally follows that readers of "Et tærskelniveau for dansk", who show an interest in the problems, are no beginners.

I hope this book will be able to inspire. It is not a grammar nor a dictionary. It is a proposal which tries to consider the needs and individual interest of students. There may be things missing here and there - there are many loose ends which call for further work with this material. It does not come up with a ready-made solution.

The ability of being able to express oneself orally and understand is the central issue. Not knowledge of language but the use of language.

I have not taken progression into consideration as this belongs to methodology. I hope that teaching problems connected with "Et tærskelniveau for dansk" can be dealt with at a later time.

The Danish language is rich in expressions which may be characterized as "understatements" and "slang". Understatements like "det er da ikke helt galt" ("not altogether wrong") are very characteristic and of great importance in Danish, but it has, unfortunately, only been possible to consider them to a small extent - they are too difficult for beginners. In textbooks and teaching, however, they ought to play a part, but only as receptive structures. Slang I have not included as it often changes quickly and can cause difficulties for beginners.

Readers who have suggestions for improvement or who wish to start experiments based on this material can apply to: Council of Europe, Division for Out-of-School Education, F-67006 Strasbourg Cedex.

D-2330 Kochendorf  
August 1981

Jørn Jessen

**Livello Soglia, 1982 (a Threshold Level for Italian / un niveau seuil pour l'italien), Prefazione : J.L.M. Trim & J.A. van Ek**

# **Livello soglia**

per l'insegnamento dell'italiano  
come lingua straniera

**Nora Galli de' Paratesi**  
Università della Calabria

**Consiglio della cooperazione culturale**

**Edizioni del Consiglio d'Europa, 1994**

(new edition)





Kontaktschwelle, 1981, (a Threshold for German / un niveau seuil pour l'allemand), (out of print / épuisé), *Vorwort : J.L.M. Trim*

EUROPARAT  
RAT FÜR KULTURELLE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

# Kontaktschwelle Deutsch als Fremdsprache

Markus Baldegger  
Martin Müller  
Günther Schneider  
in Zusammenarbeit mit  
Anton Näf



LANGENSCHIEDT  
BERLIN · MÜNCHEN · WIEN · ZÜRICH · NEW YORK

## Vorwort

Zur 'Threshold-Level-Familie' tritt mit der *Kontaktschwelle* ein viertes Familienmitglied neben J. VAN EKS *The Threshold Level* (1975), *Un niveau-seuil* (1976) des CREDIF und *Un nivel umbral* (1979) von P. STÄGER. In seiner Pionierarbeit erforschte VAN EKS, explizit wie niemand vor ihm, die sprachlichen Handlungen, mit denen der Lernende je nach seinen kommunikativen Bedürfnissen voraussichtlich konfrontiert wird, wenn er in einem anderen Land Alltagssituationen zu bewältigen hat und persönliche und soziale Beziehungen aufzubauen beginnt. VAN EKS ausführliche Behandlung der Funktionen von Äußerungen in der Kommunikation sowie der allgemeinen und spezifischen Konzepte, die in der Sprache zum Ausdruck gebracht werden, war die erste konsequente Durchführung eines lernerzentrierten, funktionalen und notionalen Ansatzes zur Lernzielbestimmung für den Fremdspracherwerb. Dieses Werk ist denn auch in den fünf Jahren seit seiner Veröffentlichung außerordentlich einflußreich gewesen.

*Un niveau-seuil* baut auf den bei VAN EKS geschaffenen Grundlagen auf. Das von DANIEL COSTE geleitete Team des CREDIF hat jedoch eine Reihe neuer Aspekte eingeführt. Statt sich auf eine einzelne Publikumsgruppe festzulegen und sich auf deren spezifische Bedürfnisse zu konzentrieren, bietet *Un niveau-seuil* eine Fülle von Material, aus dem Kursautoren und Lehrer auswählen können, was für ihr jeweiliges Zielpublikum benötigt wird. Die Darstellung der Sprachfunktionen wurde erweitert durch ein Kapitel *Actes de parole* mit einer Sammlung von Ausdrucksformen für Sprechakte, die nach ihrer kommunikativen Funktion angeordnet sind und für deren Realisierung eine breite Skala stilistischer Alternativen aufgezeigt wird. Die als Exponenten der einzelnen Funktionen und der allgemeinen Begriffe etwas atomistisch behandelten grammatischen Strukturen wurden systematisch in einer kommunikativen Grammatik erfaßt.

Die *Kontaktschwelle* hat wie alle guten Kinder die besten Züge beider Elternteile geerbt und weiterentwickelt. Teil I stellt prägnant und klar die Grundprinzipien der Lernzielbeschreibung dar, definiert die Zielgruppe und erläutert näher die verschiedenen Dimensionen des Lernziels, ergänzt durch praktische Hinweise für die Benutzung. Teil II bietet eine detaillierte Darstellung der sprachlichen Exponenten von Sprechakten und allgemeinen wie spezifischen Begriffen, die nach einem straffen Begriffsraster organisiert sind. Im anschließenden Grammatikteil sind auf glückliche Art formale und funktionale Kategorien verbunden.

Deutschlehrern in den verschiedensten Ländern wird mit der *Kontaktschwelle* ein wirksames und praktisches Werkzeug für einen auf direkte Kommunikation ausgerichteten Sprachunterricht in die Hand gegeben. Wir von der Projektgruppe für moderne Sprachen sind zuversichtlich, daß sie positiv aufgenommen und breite Verwendung finden wird und so zu einem besseren und zielgerichteteren Fremdsprachenlernen beiträgt. Wir sind überzeugt, daß unsere Fachkollegen, die europäische Sprachen unterrichten, die *Kontaktschwelle* als das nehmen, was sie sein will; nämlich nicht eine endgültige Lösung, die Behörden und Lehrer in allen Ländern blindlings übernehmen mußten, sondern eine Grundlage, die es Planern, Autoren und Lehrern ermöglichen soll, die Bedürfnisse der Lernenden, für die sie zuständig sind, sorgfältig zu prüfen und sie in ihre Arbeit einzubeziehen.

## Un nivel umbral, 1980 (a Threshold level for Spanish / un niveau seuil pour l'espagnol), Prefacio : J.L.M. Trim – Prólogo : J.A. van Ek

Prefacio por el Director del proyecto, Señor J.L.M. Trim, Director del Centro de Información e Investigaciones para la Enseñanza de Lenguas (C.I.L.T.) de Londres

Este volumen forma parte de una serie de presupuestos de objetivos para el aprendizaje de lenguas vivas, y se inscribe en el proyecto del Consejo para la Cooperación Cultural del Consejo de Europa, que tiene por objeto el desarrollo de un sistema de unidades acumulables para el aprendizaje de lenguas por parte de personas adultas. Su objetivo es permitir a todos los que se ocupan de la planificación de la enseñanza de lenguas para adultos la construcción y utilización de eficaces sistemas de aprendizaje que se basen en un estudio de las necesidades de los alumnos, haciendo el mejor uso posible de sus recursos y motivaciones. Por este motivo, el proyecto tiene mayor alcance que la mera determinación de objetivos apropiados para un programa de aprendizaje que a la vez sean relevantes y aplicables, como el paso más importante, de donde más tarde se derivarán otras decisiones necesarias para la enseñanza y la evaluación en general.

Cada grupo de alumnos, e incluso cada alumno, es un entidad única. A la hora de preparar sistemas de aprendizaje, debemos plantearnos el problema de cuál es la mejor manera de hacer justicia a la naturaleza y a las necesidades de cada uno de los alumnos que está bajo nuestra responsabilidad; pero ya no podemos permitirnos el lujo de volver a los principios básicos y establecer programas nuevos para cada ocasión nueva. Debemos tener en cuenta, especialmente en el caso de grandes grupos de alumnos, qué tienen en común la mayoría de ellos. Por lo que podemos ver, es el deseo de poder participar en la vida diaria de una comunidad lingüística y así, el "nivel umbral" se presenta como el mínimo dominio necesario para incorporarse eficazmente en esa comunidad.

Los presupuestos de los niveles umbral pueden utilizarse de varios modos. Como son el resultado de un profundo estudio por parte de especialistas, muchos centros de enseñanza, especialmente los que se ocupan de la enseñanza en gran escala, y también aquellas que se fijan primordialmente en los objetivos que puedan ser comunes antes que en diferencias triviales, se sentirán en condiciones de adoptar los objetivos en su estado actual. Otros, tal vez prefieren utilizarlos como base para una consideración racional de objetivos específicos, teniendo en cuenta los recursos, necesidades y motivaciones de los alumnos que están bajo su responsabilidad. Esto será especialmente válido cuando no se puedan seguir los supuestos acerca del grupo al que se dirige la descripción (véase capítulo 4). Otros tal vez deseen utilizar el documento como lista de control para determinar si los presupuestos, programas y cursos contienen elementos supérfluos u omisiones. En lo que a esto último se refiere, debe hacerse hincapié enérgicamente en que esta comparación no puede hacerse simplemente cotejando el vocabulario y la lista de estructuras. Estos sólo son medios para la consecución hacia fines comunicativos. La dimensión funcional y nocional es la que puede merecer más la pena de un estudio detallado.

El concepto general de "nivel umbral", desarrollado y elaborado por el doctor J.A. van Ek dentro del sistema europeo de unidades acumulables, aunque aplicado primeramente al inglés por él mismo, fue presentado como marco descriptivo no específico para una sola lengua en particular. La aplicación del concepto al español sigue de cerca el trabajo de van Ek, en *Systems Development in Adult Language Learning: The Threshold Level in a European unit-credit system for modern language learning by adults*, publicado por el Consejo para la Cooperación Cultural del Consejo de Europa, Estrasburgo, 1975. El presente documento constituye, por lo tanto, como lo dice el doctor Van Ek en su introducción, una prueba de la aplicabilidad general del concepto. Las ventajas de un sistema con aplicabilidad general, si resulta factible, apenas si hace falta destacarlas. Un marco de referencia común con objetivos armonizados simplificaría el problema de las equivalencias en altísimo grado. Además, el aprendizaje de lenguas sucesivas hasta el nivel umbral podría verse facilitada por la estrecha aproximación de los objetivos.

Finalmente, hay que hacer hincapié (ya lo aclaró suficientemente la introducción del Señor Slaughter) que este documento que el lector tiene ante sí, al igual que todos los demás documentos dentro del proyecto europeo de unidades acumulables, se ofrece como contribución a una discusión y *de ninguna manera* obedece a un espíritu dogmatista o autoritario. La División para la Enseñanza No-escolar del Consejo de Europa gustosamente recibirá reacciones de profesores y estudiantes de español. Además de la crítica constructiva a esta descripción (especialmente si la crítica se basa en lo experimentado al intentar una utilización práctica), tendría gran satisfacción en poder disponer de informaciones procedentes de planificadores educativos escritores de cursos, profesores y alumnos que estuvieran en condiciones de emprender experimentos piloto prácticos con el nivel umbral de español y las ideas que contiene. Al grupo de expertos encargado de desarrollar el sistema de unidades acumulables le gustaría ver efectuada tal experimentación dentro de una variedad de entidades educativas tan amplia como fuera posible.

#### Prólogo

El desarrollo de un sistema europeo de aprendizaje de lenguas presupone un alto grado de generalización que va más allá de las fronteras nacionales y lingüísticas. Uno de los supuestos en los que se basa el concepto del nivel "umbral" es que independientemente de donde viva un adulto, en cualquiera de los estados miembros del Consejo de Europa, e independientemente de cualquiera que sea la lengua europea que el alumno quiere aprender, sus necesidades de comunicación básicas serán idénticas, si su fin es el empleo de las mismas, en términos lingüísticos, en contactos temporales con hablantes extranjeros en situaciones cotidianas, bien sea como visitantes o en su propio país, y para establecer y mantener contactos sociales. En otras palabras, se presupone que, a pesar de toda su variedad, la escena socio-cultural en los estados democráticos de Europa, es suficientemente homogénea como para poder generalizar. Esta generalización incluye las situaciones en que los alumnos se encontrarán muy probablemente, el comportamiento lingüístico que desarrollarán en esas situaciones y la capacidad lingüística que como mínimo se requiere para tal conducta. Esto no quiere decir, por supuesto, que los objetivos de aprendizaje para diferentes lenguas han de ser idénticos en todos los sentidos. El modelo usado en la especificación del nivel "umbral" deja margen a varias clases de adaptaciones. Sin embargo, se había previsto que los niveles "umbral" para las diferentes lenguas europeas serían sustancialmente los mismos. Y consecuentemente, en rigor, comparables en términos de conducta verbal y de nivel de realización. El desarrollo del nivel "umbral" para el español fue un test de la validez de este supuesto. De resultar posible la transposición al español de las descripciones que originalmente habían sido formuladas para el inglés, con las modificaciones que, sin alterarlo, permitiese el modelo, la pretensión de generalización del objetivo podría darse como realizable. El presente estudio, es lo que esperamos, suscitará suficientes reacciones para indicarnos si esta pretensión estaba justificada o no. Si tales reacciones son positivas, no quedará lugar a dudas respecto a la factibilidad del desarrollo de un sistema de aprendizaje a escala europea y multilingüe.

Dr. J.A. van Ek



**Waystage English (1980), Pergamon Press** (out of print / épuisé), ***Preface: J.L.M. Trim***

## PREFACE TO THIS EDITION

Following the publication of *The Threshold Level* in 1975, it became clear that language teachers in Europe – and indeed further afield – welcomed the approach it incorporated and the model for the explicit statement of communicative objectives which it presented. On the other hand, as had been expected, it also became clear that although it had been devised as the lowest level of general language proficiency to be recognized in a system of objectives (because unless the language we have learnt is capable of covering a reasonably full range of social needs we cannot speak of a general level at all) such expressions as ‘lowest level’ and ‘minimal means’ could be very misleading. For adults starting to learn English from the very start, it was a long and demanding task to reach the goal of being able to move relatively freely in another society. Moreover, since in most European countries English is now taught to most if not all pupils in secondary schools, true adult beginners would often be the middle aged, or the educationally underprivileged. One of the basic principles of the Modern Languages Project has been that educational provision should be appropriate to the needs, motivations, characteristics and resources of the learner. For the learner who has no record of academic success, no established study ability and limited time and energy at his disposal, Threshold Level is not a ‘minimal’ but an ambitious, far-off objective. Remember that we are thinking not just of a knowledge of the elements, but the ability to put them into use in the hurly-burly of daily life.

It is an important educational objective to bring the less successful school leavers back into the educational process by giving them the experience of success, following limited short-term goals which are in themselves both useful and within the reach of the great majority. Swedish experience with the multi-media series *Start* had demonstrated the value of radio and television in reaching this audience. In 1977, under the aegis of the Council of Europe, with strong encouragement and support from the German *Bundesministerium für Bildung und Wissenschaft* and its Austrian counterpart, a powerful group of interests were brought together to plan a large-scale multi-media English course for Germany, Switzerland and Austria. The television programmes were to be co-produced by *Norddeutscher Rundfunk*, *Bayrischer Rundfunk* and *BBC English by Radio and Television*. Course books were planned for learners at home and those studying within the framework of the *Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband* (VHS), which not only provided a network of classes, but also the programme co-ordinator and an intensive programme of teacher training, as well as tests at the end of each year within the framework of the certification programme of the *Internationale Zertifikatskommission*. The associated Adolf-Grimme-Institut undertook the task of monitoring and evaluating the programme. This undertaking, now brought to fruition, represents an extraordinary achievement and a long step forward in inter-institutional and international co-operation. The specific contribution of the Council of Europe was to commission a course design, produced by the distinguished British designer of EFL courses, L G Alexander.

In this context a developed objective for a one-year multi-media course was urgently needed, since it was agreed that the VHS *Zertifikat* was, on average, a three-year objective and T-level a two-year objective. In principle, many different routes to T-level could be followed: half the functional-notional areas could be covered; structural skills could be developed in the first year and applicational skills in the

second; in fact Dr van Ek and Mr Alexander, working in consultation with M Fitzpatrick as course co-ordinator, closely concerned with the development of the corresponding *Grundbaustein* in the VHS system, followed what most people will probably recognize to be the most satisfactory principle, that of 'recycling' discussed by Wilkins in his 1973 paper.\* As a result, there is as wide a coverage and as great a simplicity of means as can be derived from within the T-level specification. Accordingly, whilst *Waystage* is given the status only of one of a number of possible intermediate objectives on the way to T-level (and we should not favour a 'minimalism' which saw this first objective as a terminal goal for the mass of learners) it has in fact a coherence and breadth which make it a worthwhile objective in its own right.

J L M Trim  
London, 1980

\* Wilkins, D A 'The linguistic and situational content of the common core in a unit-credit system', in *Systems Development in Adult Language Learning*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1973; Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1980.

**Un niveau-seuil, 1976 (a Threshold level for French), Avant-propos: J.L.M.  
Trim & J.E. van Ek**

CONSEIL DE LA COOPÉRATION CULTURELLE  
DU  
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

SYSTÈMES D'APPRENTISSAGE DES LANGUES VIVANTES PAR LES ADULTES

# Un niveau-seuil

par  
Daniel COSTE  
Janine COURTILLON  
Victor FERENCZI  
Michel MARTINS-BALTAR  
Eliane PAPO

(ÉCOLE NORMALE SUPÉRIEURE DE SAINT-CLOUD)

CREDIF  
et  
Eddy ROULET  
( UNIVERSITÉ DE NEUCHATEL )

NOTE AU LECTEUR

Dans le système d'unités capitalisables qu'un Groupe d'experts du Conseil de l'Europe met actuellement au point pour l'apprentissage des langues vivantes, le "niveau-seuil" constitue une étape fondamentale.

Des expériences pilotes, dont plusieurs ont déjà été lancées, permettront de vérifier certaines hypothèses et de tirer d'utiles enseignements pour la suite des travaux.

Les personnes et institutions qui se proposent de contribuer à l'expérimentation en cours, qui a pour but de concourir à la mise au point définitive de cette approche nouvelle de l'étude des langues vivantes, sont invitées à en informer le Conseil de l'Europe. Il importe, en effet, non seulement que le Groupe de travail précité soit au fait de toutes les expériences entreprises, mais aussi que soit assurée la coordination nécessaire entre celles-ci.

Toute correspondance relative au niveau-seuil ainsi que toute demande de reproduction ou de traduction de tout ou partie du présent document doit être adressée au Directeur de l'Enseignement et des Affaires culturelles et scientifiques du Conseil de l'Europe (F - 67006 Strasbourg-CEDEX).

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The Threshold Level for Modern Language Learning in Schools, 1976 (le niveau-seuil pour l'apprentissage des langues vivantes à l'école), (out of print / épuisé), *Preface: J. E. van Ek*

# The Threshold Level

*for Modern Language Learning in Schools*

Dr. J. A. van Ek

*Department of English/University of Groningen*

*with contributions by L. G. Alexander*



Longman



# Preface

The present study is based on the author's earlier publication, *The Threshold Level in a European Unit/Credit System for Modern Language Learning by Adults*, Council for Cultural Cooperation, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1975. This latter publication was drawn up as part of the work of the expert group set up by the Council for Cultural Cooperation of the Council of Europe to develop a unit/credit system for adult language learning. The project, which has since been extended to other sectors of education, is directed by Mr. J. L. M. Trim, Director of the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (CILT).

For the extent of the author's indebtedness to contributions by numerous colleagues the reader is referred to the introduction to the earlier document. In preparing the present study the author has again benefited from the encouragement and advice generously provided by a great many government officials, teachers and researchers in several European countries. He would like to express his gratitude to those who organized meetings for him and to all those who participated in them. Without these consultations it would not have been possible to give the "threshold level" the form in which it is now presented. The author can only hope that when reading the present document all those who in any way contributed to it will feel their advice has not been wasted. He also hopes they will forgive him for not referring to them individually. A full list would contain so many names that this preface would have to cover several pages. Special thanks, however, are due to the Austrian Ministry of Education, who, in the best European spirit, have once again taken the lead in initiating practical experimentation. The author would also like to thank the Dutch Minister of Education and his staff for enabling him to carry out his present task. Without the facilities provided by them *The Threshold Level for Schools* would not have been written.

The author is also particularly indebted to the Schools Council Modern Languages Project of the University of York, whose draft examination syllabuses, made available to him by Mr. Antony Peck, have provided some of the behavioural specifications used in the present document. He is also grateful for having been allowed to include the "structural inventory" originally prepared by Mr. L. G. Alexander for *The Threshold Level for Adults*.

A further contribution by Mr. Alexander is added as a supplement. It constitutes the first major analysis of various methodological implications of the approach used in *The Threshold Level*, some of which are summarily dealt with in the study itself (1.4). Strictly speaking, a document devoted to the specification of an objective is not the right place to deal with methodology. Yet, if an objective is to be considered for incorporation into educational curricula, insight into the problems involved in enabling learners to reach this objective is obviously required. Mr. Alexander's contribution on the subject should provide at least some of this insight.

Bussum, March 1976

Jan. A. van Ek

Threshold Level English, 1975 (un niveau-seuil pour l'anglais) (out of print /  
épuisé), *Preface & Foreword* : J.L.M Trim

# Threshold Level English

in a European unit/credit system for  
modern language learning by adults

*Prepared for the*  
**COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

*by*

**J VAN EK**  
*University of Groningen*

*with*

*appendices by*  
**L G ALEXANDER**

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## PREFACE TO THIS EDITION

The *Threshold Level* (T-level) is probably the best known of the documents issued by the Council for Cultural Cooperation emerging from the work of the group of experts established in 1971 to investigate the feasibility of the European unit/credit scheme for foreign language learning by adults.

The origin and early development of the concept is outlined in the introduction to *Systems Development in Adult Language Learning* (1973), also published in this series. The concepts embodied in these papers were presented to a governmental symposium held at St Wolfgang, Austria in June 1973. The symposium welcomed the concept of a T-level in principle, but urged that research should be undertaken, on a short-term basis, 'into the specification of an elementary level in a unit/credit system for individuals who, from time to time, have (personal or professional) contacts in the target countries' and that 'work towards defining this level should continue along the lines of the studies made by Wilkins and van Ek, that is, in terms of socio-semantic categories and their grammatical and lexical realisation.' (Doc E.E.S./symposium 57, 9, p3.)

In the same year Dr K Bung was commissioned to produce, in close consultation with the Project Director, a model for the specification of language learning objectives, in which the different parameters separately presented in the *Systems Development* contributions were brought together into a coherent whole, and to apply the model to the definition of the language needs of hotel staff. In the New Year of 1974 a short 'brainstorming' meeting was held in Selwyn College, Cambridge, at which a small group of experts with experience in functional/notional and situational classification examined as many relevant documents as possible and produced extensive lists of settings, roles, topics, functions, general and specific notions. The present document is then the result of intensive effort by Dr J van Ek during the greater part of 1974, for which time he was freed from other responsibilities by the Netherlands Ministry of Education.

*The Threshold Level* is remarkable for the systematic way in which the language behaviour appropriate to the defined target audience is specified in its various interrelated parameters. As such it has afforded a basis for the detailed and concrete examination of syllabuses in schools, colleges and universities as well as in adult education. Early fears that it would be slavishly followed and put European language teaching into a strait-jacket have proved false. The spirit of independence among European decision makers is too strong! A related, but somewhat differently conceived and organized French specification *Un Niveau Seuil\** followed in 1976, and closely related versions for Spanish, German and Italian are to be published in the near future. A modified version for schools was published in 1977. The influence of the work on the teaching of languages, not only in the member states of the Council of Europe but also in Eastern Europe and other continents has been very considerable.

As a preliminary work, *The Threshold Level* makes no claim to be definitive. It is a starting point rather than an end point of development. Early criticism, rooted in the

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\* COSTE, D *et al Un niveau-seuil*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1976.

earlier approach as developed in *Le Français Fondamental*,\* concentrated on details of the lexicon, or criticized the intentional disregard of statistical criteria. Of more significance are criticisms directed to the disregard of intonation as a means of realizing functional categories, and those which point to the absence of characterizations of discourse and conversational structures above the sentence. No doubt more sophisticated specifications will be developed incorporating these further parameters (a working group within the project is currently investigating the problem), and dealing with the questions, at present little understood, of the mental processes which govern the production and reception of speech and communicative interaction more generally.

Be that as it may, *The Threshold Level* remains a most powerful tool for those teachers and course planners who are converting language teaching from structure-dominated scholastic sterility into a vital medium for the freer movement of people and ideas and for those language learners who travel faster and more purposively for knowing where they are going.

J. L. M. Trim  
London, 1980

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\* France, Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale: *Le français fondamental, premier degré* (3rd edn), SEVPEN for Institut Pédagogique National, Paris, 1966; and *Le français fondamental, deuxième degré*, SEVPEN for Institut Pédagogique National, n.d.

## FOREWORD

This specification of a 'threshold' level of language proficiency has been drawn up by Dr J. A. van Ek, Director of the Institute for Applied Linguistics in the University of Utrecht, on behalf of the expert group convened by the Council for Cultural Cooperation of the Council of Europe and charged with the development of a unit/credit system for adult language learning in Europe. The project is directed by Mr J. L. M. Trim, Director of the Department of Linguistics at the University of Cambridge and is under the general oversight of the Committee for Out-of-School Education and Cultural Development and the Steering Group on Educational Technology, for whom it has the status of a pilot project in the application of the principles of educational technology in the international field.

The overall aim of the Project is to make the free movement of men and ideas in the European area easier by increasing the scale and effectiveness of language learning. Partly, this aim can be achieved by offering every European child the opportunity to learn – and use – one of the major languages of international intercourse during the period of compulsory education. But in the middle term, we can expect very large numbers of people who discover in adult life the urgent need to be able to use a foreign language they have either never had the opportunity to study, or else have forgotten. It is part of the responsibility of society, especially in the framework of permanent education, to make available to them efficient facilities to learn the language they need for the purposes for which they need it.

Accordingly, the expert group, with the active and wholehearted cooperation of linguists, experts in language teaching and testing, as well as educational administrators all over Europe, have set out to create the conditions for the development of large-scale language learning.

In this task they have been guided by the principles of educational technology. This is not a matter of gadgetry, nor even necessarily of radio, television and other audio-visual aids – though audio-visual aids are always useful and the mass media a highly desirable focus for learning systems on the grand scale. Educational technology is much more a question of the rational planning of learning systems. We have to analyse the operational needs of learners and translate them into a reasonable set of operational learning objectives. On the basis of what the learner already knows, we can then identify the set of learning tasks he has to face. We have to make assessment of the resources, human and material, that we can place at the learners' disposal and ascribe to each its appropriate role in an often complex teaching/learning system. We have to devise methods for testing the effectiveness of learning – not so much in order to classify people into the good, bad and indifferent as to let them know what they have and have not achieved. There is satisfaction in knowing that a job has been well done, and if there are gaps and deficiencies, it is as well to know them as a guide to future work. Above all, teachers and planners need to know whether the system they are operating works, where its strengths and weaknesses lie, so that the strengths can be exploited further and the weaknesses overcome. Of course, the system must be flexible enough to make it possible to learn from experience – and this is not nearly as easy as it sounds!

The early work of the expert group and their collaborators has been devoted to the

analysis of needs and the definition of objectives. The first group of studies were published by the Council for Cultural Cooperation under the title *Systems Development in Adult Language Learning*. Further theoretical and exemplificatory studies are listed in the bibliography at the back of this volume. Much of this work was programmatic and methodological, since for one thing it is always advisable to clarify principles before settling down to concrete work and for another the group has always been concerned to develop conceptual and planning instruments which will be of use to teachers and course planners in the field, casting, as it were, its bread upon the waters. After all, language learning is going on all the time all over Europe under the most diverse conditions. There can be no question of putting this vigorous, many-sided activity into the strait-jacket of a single monolithic system. Accordingly, we want to help people to analyse the needs of the learners they are responsible for, and to set, consciously and explicitly, appropriate learning objectives. These will be as diverse as the learners and the lives they lead, and we would not wish it otherwise.

Nevertheless, by far the largest single group of learners, everywhere, consists of people who want to prepare themselves, in a general way, to be able to communicate socially on straightforward everyday matters with people from other countries who come their way, and to be able to get around and lead a reasonably normal social life when they visit another country. This is not simply a matter of buying bread and milk and toothpaste and getting repairs carried out to a car. People want to be able to make contact with each other as people, to exchange information and opinions, talk about experiences, likes and dislikes, to explore our similarities and differences, the unity in diversity of our complicated and crowded continent.

It is to this type of learner that the organizers of mass adult education necessarily look, and the group felt that it could perform a useful function in providing, on the basis of its principles for the operational analysis of objectives, a detailed specification of what, in its opinion, the learner of a foreign language ought to be able to do with it, if he was to be reasonably in control of his social intercourse with speakers of that language – what feelings and notions he would need to express, or ask about, or argue about, and in general how to order the business of daily life. Then, of course, comes the question of *how* to express these notions, and so on. We must, of course, control a certain vocabulary and grammar, an indeterminately large set of utterances, partly remembered, largely specially put together for the purpose. But – and for the approach of the group this principle is of primary importance – this apparatus of sentence formation, the grammar and the lexicon is not an end in itself, it is simply a tool for the performance of the communicative functions, which are what really matter.

It is in this spirit that the threshold level is to be understood. It is *NOT* a recommended (still less a prescribed, or quasi-officially endorsed) minimal vocabulary and set of structures for a language, with some useful hints on how to use them in situations. Anyone who turns straight to the grammar and vocabulary and learns them off by heart, or checks the course he is producing against them and pats himself on the back if they are all there (or fits the absentees in willy-nilly) is not using the document but abusing it. Most essential are the language functions and the general notions; then the more concrete specific notions. Since these are very much dependent on the concrete situations and topic of discussion, no definitive list could possibly be set up. As Dr van Ek makes plain, the details given here of topics and situations, and

the concrete vocabulary derived from them, are but one variant of a threshold level equipment. On balance, we consider that this selection will suit the needs of the average man rather better than any competing equivalent selection. Clearly, there is room for some variation, especially where the needs of some special group can be more clearly specified. If some topics and vocabulary were replaced by others, an equally valid specification might be arrived at. But, the substitutions should be conscious, explicit and justified – and it should not be forgotten that the more different groups of learners can agree on a common objective, even if it be to some extent arbitrary in some details, the more language they share and the more effectively they can intercommunicate.

To some extent then, the threshold level is a kind of standard reference level. Because it is, so far as we know, 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 – in so far as it can be made equally explicit.

In this way, it is suitable as a basis for the establishment of a system of equivalences. It also acts as a 'keystone' in the erection of a wider 'unit/credit' scheme covering the whole area of language learning. It is possible, for instance, to define more limited objectives, short of the general social communicative ability it represents. It is possible, on the other hand, to define more advanced levels which presuppose the threshold level, whether they cover the same field but articulate it more finely, or extend the coverage perhaps in a way appropriate to definable specialized needs. Studies are at present in progress in pursuance of both these objectives. Furthermore, the threshold level concept is currently being applied to French, German and Spanish, and in these cases too, the possibility of establishing one or more 'waystages' is under investigation. It should be emphasized that these applications are no mere translations, but independent (though congruent) applications of the same principles to different languages. When these various specifications have been produced, case studies and pilot experiments will follow, with a view to testing the appropriateness and feasibility of the proposed objective in a variety of educational settings and under a variety of conditions.

Following the pilot experiments and case studies, the threshold level specification will be revised, harmonized across languages and republished in a final form. It will be clear that, pending that finalization, the specification is provisional in character.

J.L.M. TRIM, 1975