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L2 input in French official instructions for elementary school

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International Conference on Child Foreign Language Acquisition
October 16 - 17, 2014 Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain

IDÉFI INNOVALANGUES PROJECT

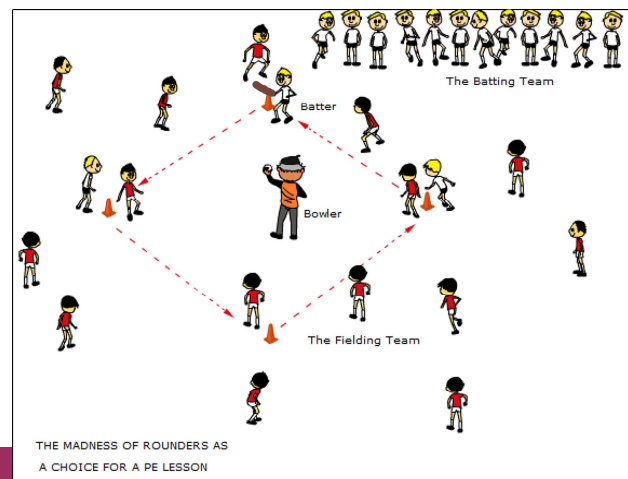
- **Objectives:**
 - ✓ Create online remedial modules;
 - ✓ Help French university students reach CEFR level B2.
- **Several Foreign Languages:**
 - ✓ Italian, English, Chinese,
 - ✓ Spanish & Japanese (soon).
- **This project covers:**
 - ✓ Online placement tests;
 - ✓ Diagnostic tests;
 - ✓ LMS;
 - ✓ Online remedial courses.

PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER TRAINING

- 2010: teacher training reform
- Foreign language training = dual requirements:
 - ✓ Acquisition of language skills => B2 level;
 - ✓ Acquisition of didactic skills.
- Official instructions for foreign language teaching in elementary school:
 - ✓ Words in the vocabulary/culture and function lists



Lollipop
lady



Rounders

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN FRENCH SCHOOLS

School level	Class	Normal age of children
Ecole maternelle		2 - 6
Ecole élémentaire	Cours préparatoire (CP)	6 - 7
	Cours élémentaire 1 ^{ère} année (CE1)	7 - 8
	Cours élémentaire 2 ^{ème} année (CE2)	8 - 9
	Cours moyen 1 ^{ère} année (CM1)	9 - 10
	Cours moyen 2 ^{ème} année (CM2)	10 - 11

Primary teaching consists of 3 cycles:

1st cycle: early learning cycle - *maternelle* (nursery school): *petite section* (2-3 years) and *moyenne section* (3-4 years);

2nd cycle: basic skills cycle: *maternelle grande section* (4-5 years), CP (6 years) and CE1 (7 years);

3rd cycle: consolidation cycle: CE2 (8 years), CM1 (9 years) and CM2 (10 years).

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN FRENCH SCHOOLS

- **FL: compulsory subject**
- **Starting age: 7**
- **Emphasis placed on listening and speaking, i.e. on oral communication**
- **Goal at the end of primary school: A1**
- **Range of languages offered:**

Foreign languages	Public schools	Private schools
English	92, 83 %	96,54 %
German	6, 16 %	3, 38 %
Spanish	1, 23 %	1, 78
Italian	0.62 %	0,21 %
Portuguese	0.11 %	0,02

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN FRENCH SCHOOLS

Foreign language teachers	Public schools	Private schools
Primary school teachers	94 %	70, 23 %
Secondary school teachers	1, 06 %	12, 68 %
Supply teachers	4, 94 %	17, 09 %

- **Instructional time: 54h/year**
 - ✓ 3 weekly classes of 30 minutes or 2 classes of 45 minutes.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE INPUT FOR FRENCH LEARNERS

- **Few informal FL learning opportunities (Surveyang, 2012):**
 - ✓ Limited target FL exposure in the home or through media;
 - ✓ FL films and series are dubbed.
- **Classroom input:** mainly from teachers
- **Curricula for French schools:**
 - ✓ Groups of experts chosen by the Ministry of Education;
 - ✓ **1998:** introduction of compulsory FL teaching (grade 5, then grade 4) = publication of 1st guidelines;
 - ✓ **2002:** new instructions (FL teaching reached grade 2);
 - ✓ **2007:** current instructions;
 - ✓ **2012:** grade by grade sequencing, light introduction in 1st grade.

OUR STUDY

- **Research questions:**

- ✓ What kind of input do French children get in elementary school?
- ✓ How were words and structures selected for inclusion in the official instructions?
- ✓ Did frequency of occurrence, or other factors identified in the FL acquisition literature as important, play any role?

- **Our data:**

- ✓ French official instructions:
 - 2002 instructions;
 - 2007 instructions.
- ✓ Comparison with Breakthrough

2002 instructions

List of functions with examples of corresponding language use



Parler aux autres

Relations sociales - se saluer - répondre positivement - négativement - remercier - présenter ses excuses - souhaiter (anniversaire - fête...) - encourager/féliciter - exprimer son : . accord . désaccord . incertitude . jugement .vrai faux	Hello ! Hi ! Good morning ! See you ! Bye-bye ! Good afternoon ! Good night ! Goodbye ! See you on Monday ! Have a nice day ! Yes/No. Yes/Yes, please. It's mine. No, thanks. It's not mine (it's Peter's). Thank you/Thanks. Sorry! I'm sorry ! Merry Christmas ! Happy New Year ! Happy Easter ! Happy birthday to you ! Great ! /Super !/Excellent !/Well done ! I agree. I don't agree. Maybe. (It's) right. (It's) wrong.
Demander des informations à quelqu'un - Nom - Âge - Adresse - Téléphone	What's your name ? Who are you ? How old are you ? Where do you live ? Where do you come from ? What's your phone number ?

Vocabulary list organized thematically



Individu

Le corps humain

- Head, hair, face, eyes, ears, mouth, nose, tooth /teeth
- Arm, hand, fingers
- Knees, foot /feet, toes, leg

Vêtements

- T-shirt, pullover
- Jeans
- Dress
- Socks, shoes, boots, slippers
- Anorak
- Put on, wear, take off
- Glasses

Description

- Big, large, tall, fat, long
- Small, little, thin, short
- Heavy
- Nice, beautiful
- Young, old
- Be/was-were, look/looked

Couleurs

- White, black, yellow, orange, pink, red, blue, green, grey, brown, purple

2007 instructions

Can-do statements corresponding to the 5 “language activities”



A1 - Comprendre, réagir et parler en interaction orale

L'élève sera capable de communiquer, en des termes simples et en utilisant des expressions élémentaires, au besoin avec des pauses pour chercher ses mots, si l'interlocuteur répète ou reformule ses phrases lentement et l'aide à formuler ce qu'il essaie de dire

Capacités	Formulations		Connaissances		
	Cycle 2 (CE1)	Cycle 3	Culture et lexique	Grammaire	Phonologie (ces remarques s'appliquent à l'ensemble du tableau)
Se présenter * ou se présenter dans le cadre d'un jeu de rôle	- Good morning / afternoon (children)! - Hello! Good morning / afternoon Miss / Sir. - What's your name? / Who are you? - Cinderella / I'm Cinderella. - How old are you? - Seven / I'm seven. - Where do you live? - In ... / I live in ...	- Good evening / good night. - My name's ... - I'm ten (years old) / I'm ten and a half. - When is your birthday? - In December / It's in December / on December 10th. - What's your mobile / phone number? - 01234567....	Les différentes manières de se saluer en fonction de l'interlocuteur et du moment de la journée L'âge <i>I live</i> (bloc lexicalisé) L'anniversaire Les mois Moyens de communication	Pluriel irrégulier (<i>children</i>) WHAT? / WHO? BE (1 ^{ère} personne du singulier) HOW OLD? Nombres cardinaux WHERE? Préposition de lieu : IN WHEN? Prépositions : IN + mois / ON + date	Schémas intonatifs Rythme Bonne réalisation de la longueur et de la qualité des sons vocaliques (ex : /u:/, /u:/, /i/ /i:/) Bonne réalisation des diphtongues (ex : /ei/ name, eight ... ; /ou/

OUR STUDY

■ Procedure:

✓ Corpus:

- Language functions/ can-do statements (2002 & 2007)
- vocabulary list (2002 & Breakthrough);
- Exponents of phonology, syntax, culture (2002 & 2007)

✓ Properties:

- Number of words
- Frequency bands
- Noun/ verb ratio
- “natural” order of acquisition

✓ RANGE analysis:

- Computer program freely available from Paul Nation’s website (<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/about/staff/paul-nation>);
- Classify the vocabulary of any text into frequency bands.

NUMBER OF WORDS

✓ French official instructions

✓ CEFR:

- “users of the Framework may wish to consider ... what size of vocabulary (i.e. the number of words and fixed expressions) the learner will need...’ in seeking to attain a particular level of performance (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 150)” ;
- CEFR vocabulary range descriptors :
 - A1: Has a basic vocabulary repertoire of isolated words and phrases related to particular concrete situations

✓ Breakthrough:

- “Overall, the active lexicon available to a learner at Breakthrough level for both productive and receptive purposes seems likely to amount to some **650-700** headwords (p. 16).”

NUMBER OF WORDS

- 500 (German association of Chinese teachers) vs.
- 1500 (Milton, 2010 & 2013);
- Number of words acquired per hour in child FL acquisition (Donzelli 2007, Alcazar 2011): 3-6
- 200 hours x 3 wph = 600 words
- **Breakthrough:** « The number available for receptive purposes is likely to be higher, depending on age, knowledge of the world, educational level, heuristic skills and previous plurilingual experience -including the presence of loanwords from L2 in L1 (p. 16)».

FREQUENCY

■ Importance:

- ✓ **Nation, Macalister (2010)** “A language course should provide the best possible coverage of language in use through the inclusion of items that occur frequently in the language, so that learners get the best return for their learning effort”.
- ✓ **Breakthrough** “many of the items, though introduced in connection with a particular theme, are of a wider application, [...and] at Breakthrough level, where learners are encouraged to make the widest use of very limited resources, breadth of application is a strong criterion for lexical selection”.

■ Role:

Milton: “balance appears to be about appears to be about 50% frequent vocabulary and 50% infrequent thematic vocabulary”

RESULTS: vocabulary frequency

	Word types	% one	% two	% three	Not found	% of band 1 word families
Breakthrough	828	57.97	23.43	2.05	16.55	40.6 %
IO 2002	665	52.78	23.46	0.45	23.31	27.8 %
IO 2007	585	54.97	17.09	0.17	27.86	24.3 %

- Type: any different form that appears in a text
- % one: items from the 1000 most frequent word families in General English (rel to corpus)
- % two: items from the 1,000 to 2,000 frequency band in General English
- % three: items from the 2,000 to 3,000 frequency band in General English (not among the most frequent words but usually found in upper secondary and university texts).
- Not found: the words that do not fit in any of the three lists
- % word fam in band: how many of the 1,000 band 1 word families are represented

100 most common words

- **Objectives and method:**

- ✓ Identify extremely frequent words missing from 2002 (2007)
- ✓ Mark Davies (2010): 5,000 most common lemmas

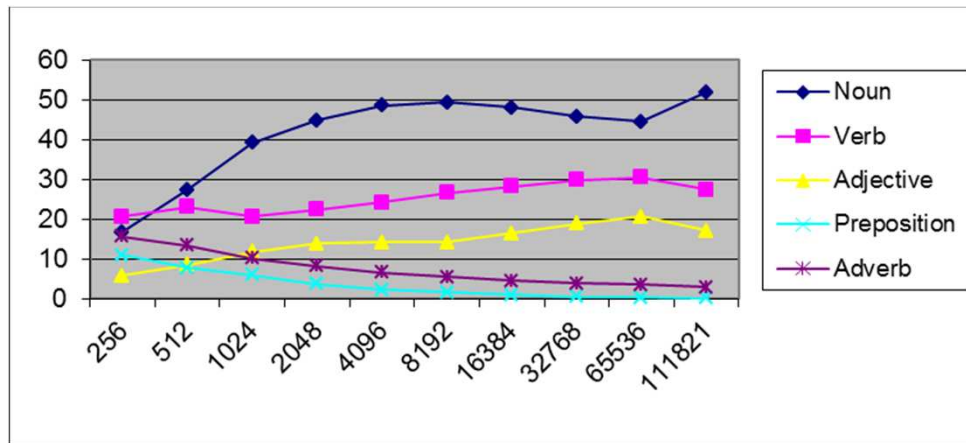
- **Results:**

- ✓ Missing words:

prep		conj		verbs		nominals		adverbs	
of	4	that	12	get	39	all	43	just	66
for	13	(but)	23	make	45	which	58	then	77
(with)	16	as	33	(know)	47	people	62	also	87
by	30	if	40	use	92	other	65	well	100
about	46	(because)	66	find	95	more	81		
as	49	than	73			way	84		
into	65					new	88		
like	74					thing	97		

NOUN/ VERB RATIO

- In a balanced corpus (Richard Hudson, based on Mark Davies):



- 2002:

verbs	nouns	Proper N	pronouns	Tot N
80	329	29	21	379

- Noun acquisition easier :
 - ✓ SLA: Ellis & Beaton 1993
 - ✓ NLA: Tomasello et al 1997

NATURAL ORDER OF ACQUISITION

- **Krashen (1973) :**
 - ✓ Stage 1: -ing/ plural –s/ copula
 - ✓ Stage 2: auxiliary/ article
 - ✓ Stage 3: irregular past/ regular past/ 3rd person singular/ possessive -s
- **2007 (section on syntax):**
 - ✓ Plural –s/ present tense for “be”
 - ✓ Articles (a/the/ 0)
 - ✓ Possessive ‘s

CONCLUSION

- **A preliminary study:**
 - ✓ Action-oriented vs. structural
 - ✓ Child language acquisition vs. adult norms
- **A1 = lowest productive level of language use:**
 - ✓ Decontextualization (word list)
 - ✓ **Breakthrough:** danger of thematic organization: “missing members of closed lexical sets and high frequency generic vocabulary (eg prepositions, “thing”, “nothing” etc)”
- **New official instructions?**

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● Figure E14: Priority given to the aims associated with the four communication skills in compulsory foreign language curricula, full-time compulsory general education, 2010/11

Figure E14a: At the start of compulsory teaching of the first foreign language

Figure E14b: At the end of full-time compulsory general education

Explicit priority						No reference to part of five		Explicit priority						No reference to part of five
Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	The major skills are equally important				Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	The major skills are equally important		
■	■						BE fr					■		
■	■						BE de					■		
■	■						BE nl					■		
				■			BG					■		
					■		CZ						■	
	■						DK	■	■					
■	■						DE					■		
				■			EE					■		
⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗		IE	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	
■	■	■					EL					■		
							ES						■	
■	■						FR					■		
				■			IT					■		
■	■						CY					■		
							LV						■	
				■			LT					■		
				■			LU					■		
				■			HU					■		
				■			MT					■		
■	■	■					NL			■				
■	■						AT					■		
				■			PL					■		
							PT						■	
				■			RO					■		
				■			SI					■		
				■			SK					■		
							FI						■	
				■			SE					■		
							UK (1)						■	
⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗		UK-SCOT	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	
				■			IS					■		
■	■						LI					■		
							NO						■	
				■			HR					■		
				■			TR					■		

⊗ No compulsory foreign languages

UK (1) = UK-ENGL/SPR

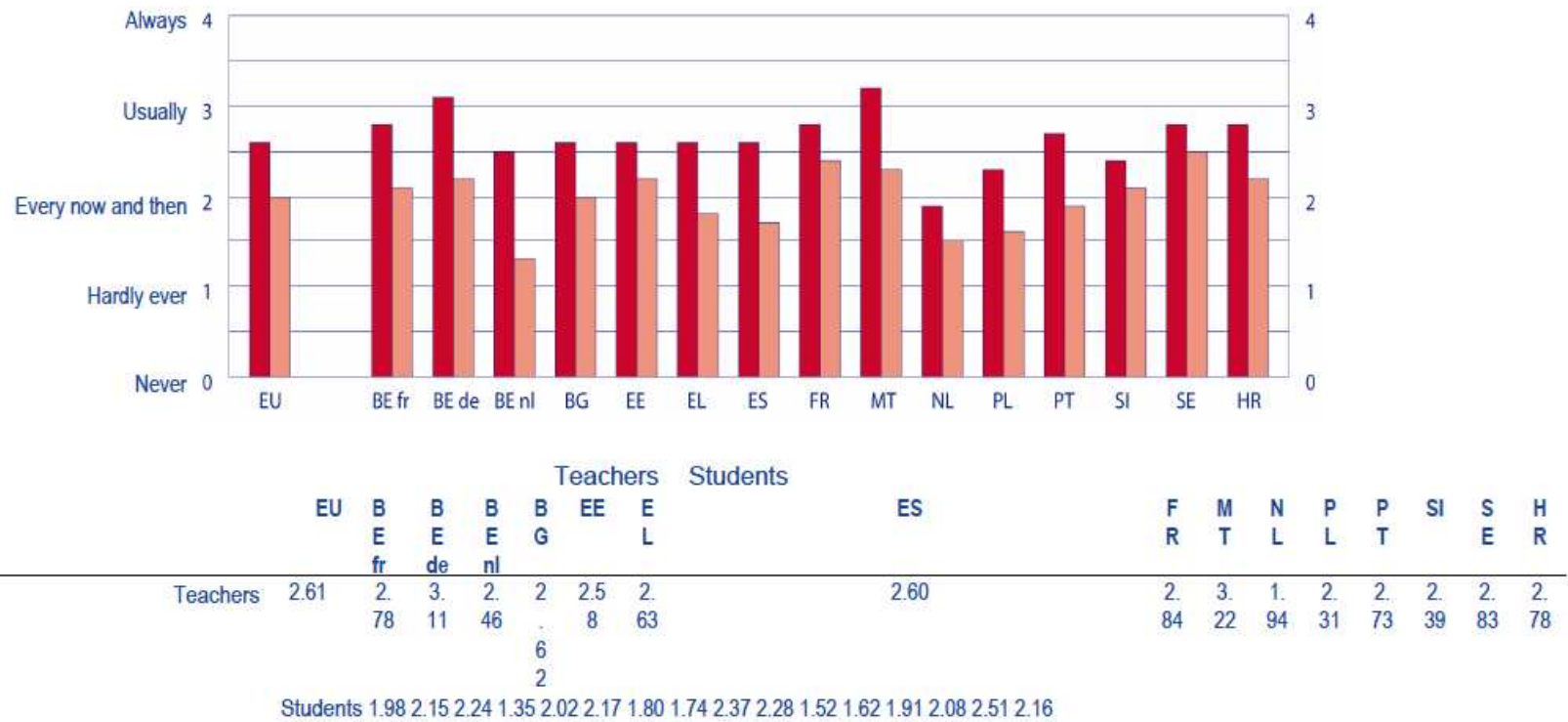
Source: Eurydice

France: at the start of compulsory foreign language teaching, + emphasis is placed on listening and speaking, i.e. on oral communication

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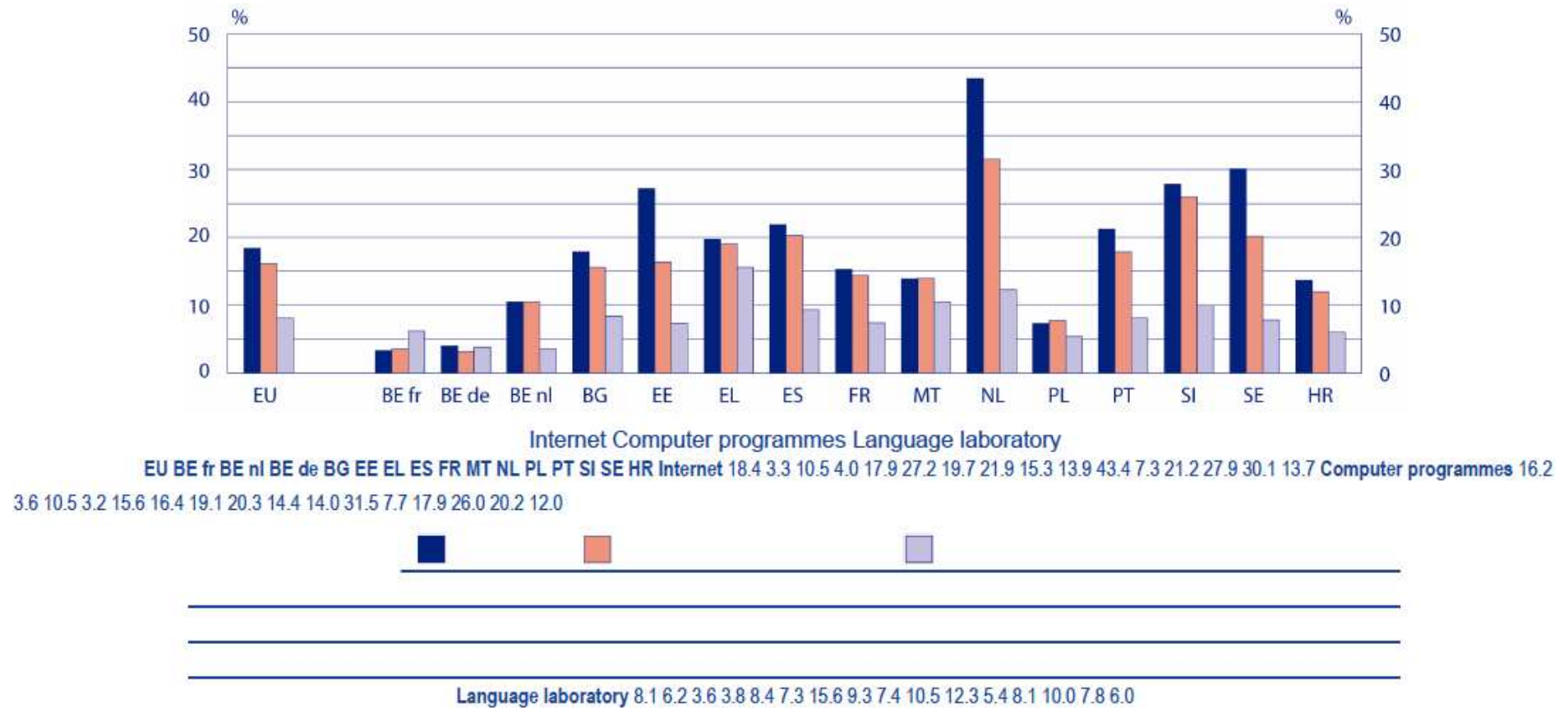
Other European countries: equal weight given to all four skills, from the start of compulsory foreign language teaching through to the end of full-time compulsory general education.

Figure E3: Frequency of use of the first tested language in the classroom by teachers and students, 2010/11



Source: ESLC 2011.

Figure E4: Percentages of students who say that ICT is regularly used during their language lessons, 2010/11



Source: ESLC 2011.

LEVEL	DESCRIPTOR
C2	Has a good command of a very broad lexical repertoire including idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; shows awareness of connotative levels of meaning
C1	Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions; little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies. Good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms
B2	Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to his/her field and most general topics. Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution
B1	Has a sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to his/her everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events. Has sufficient vocabulary to conduct routine, everyday transactions involving familiar situations and topics
A2	Has a sufficient vocabulary for the expression of basic communicative needs. Has a sufficient vocabulary for coping with simple survival needs
A1	Has a basic vocabulary repertoire of isolated words and phrases related to particular concrete situations

CEFR vocabulary range descriptors, P112

CEFR Levels	Cambridge exams	Xlex (5000max)
A1	Starters, Movers and Flyer	<1,500
A2	Kernel English Test	1,500 – 2,500
B1	Preliminary English Test	2,500 – 3,250
B2	First Certificate in English	3,250 – 3,750
C1	Cambridge Advanced English	3,750 – 4,500
C2	Cambridge Proficiency in English	4,500 – 5,000

Vocabulary size estimates, CEFR levels and formal exams
(Milton, 2010, p. 224 quoted in Milton, 2013)

