Teaching the Genres of Comparison and Contrast in English Writing: From the Perspectives of *Cooperative Principles*

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Abstract

This pilot study aims at integrating a socio-pragmatic concept, Cooperative Principles, into an experimental writing project on the genres of comparison and contrast. It reports on a six-week study of five undergraduates voluntarily recruited in a university located in central Taiwan. In surveying their writing momentum before and after the instilments of relevant knowledge needed for these genres of English writing, the researchers conformed to the qualitative paradigm, collecting the Pre-test and Post-test writing products, distributing B2- and C1-leveled CEFR self-assessment questionnaires over the first and last class sessions, conducting a self-reflection questionnaire survey at the last session, and keeping a reflexive journal to trace the learning momentum of each of the five participant. The instructional process was not entirely lecture-oriented; the participants were encouraged and guided to construct knowledge in each of the class-based activities.

With content analysis and constant comparative method, the results indicated two primary facets of issues essential for teaching the genres of comparison and contrast in a L2 writing setting. In addition, constructs for teaching such writing genres were pointed out, and learners' momentum was transparently manifested by means of the established CEFR can-do statements. Other pedagogical suggestions were also included in this study and they were anticipated to inform future practitioners of diversified aspects in teaching the comparison and contrast genres linguistically, semantically, and pragmatically.

Keywords: Comparison and contrast; English writing; Cooperative principles.

Introduction

As globalization progresses, English education at the tertiary level has been highly addressed in Taiwan. Most EFL learners acknowledge the value of learning second language (henceforth, L2) writing, but they may have difficulties transferring L2 reading to L2 writing, using appropriate strategies or mastering the process of writing (Chen, 2001; Liu & Tseng, 2013; You, 1999; You & Joe, 2001; Wang, 2008). For L2 writing instructors, some may regrettably dawdle their time away and intuitively find their learners' writing capacity far behind their expectations. In response to L2 learners' difficulties, some scholars suggest leading learners to critically think, read, and write (McCarter & Jakes, 2009; Vermillion, 1997), whereas others focus on university L2 writing in view of the genre-based approach that advocates the targeted readership or discourse community in L2 writing (see, for example, Johns, 2003; Swales, 1990). Still others conduct empirical studies that examine the Chinese use in English composition process (Mu & Carrington, 2007; Wang & Wen, 2002). To be more specific, Mu and Carrington's (2007) study concluded that, except for the rhetorically organizing and cohesive strategies, "most of the metacognitive, cognitive, and social/affective strategies can be transferred across languages positively, at least from Chinese writing to English writing" (p.15).

Despite all these aforementioned contentions, the process of writing entails a variety of cognitively demanding activities that occur as a result of rhetorical situations, where various rhetorical appeals have to be perceived, utilized or assessed. As learners initiate the processes of "planning (prewriting or prereading), drafting (initial writing or reading), revising (modifying and extending), and editing (correcting or rereading)" (Johns, 1997, p.12), they may simply draw on spoken forms of the target language into writing. Eventually their instructors may be daunted by the inconsistency of stylistic features, not to mention other problems such as loose organization or the lack of cohesion.

Shifting from the sole emphasis on linguistic competence in the early 1980s, the teaching of L2 writing nowadays foregrounds the composing process and has developed itself into some interdisciplinary field of inquiry in accordance with functionalism or discourse analysis (Leki, 1996; Matsuda & Silva, 2010). Such a concern was brought to attention by McNamara (2003), who asserted that "the context of use is increasingly understood theoretically as a social arena, as in virtually all current work in discourse analysis (p.468)". It is of higher significance that L2 writers should be nurtured to deepen their awareness to balancing the elements of audience, purposes, processes, and context in their own writing. That is to say, L2 writing concerns not only the structural accuracy but also contextual appropriateness. Hence, the researcher cannot help but wonder in what way L2 writing instructor can assist learners in composing a text that reflects learners' awareness in both linguistic well-formedness and contextual appropriateness.

In order to discover the aforementioned phenomenon, the researcher initiated a small-scale experimental project, whose duration was a total of six weeks, and each session lasted for 1.5 hours. This research took place in a private university located in central Taiwan. The researcher served as the instructor of this series of courses, an there were five undergraduate students participating in this study, three of whom were one-semester-long exchange students from Mainland China, and they voluntarily signed up for this experimental series. Since this series aimed to incorporate the concept of functionalism and discourse into this L2 writing instruction, the researcher relied heavily on pragmatic functionalism as the heuristic subject matter knowledge in his writing instructions. He focused on the genres of comparison and contrast initially in light of these two genres' close liaisons in everyone's daily lives and, furthermore, because of the possibility of which L2 writers might be given an opportunity to justify their ground by means of ample and well-chosen supporting details for the issues of writers' interests (Reinking, Hart, & Osten, 2002).

Considering the discoursal aspects of L2 writing and the divergences the comparison and contrast genres might bring about, the researcher employed Grice's (1975) *Cooperative Principles*, originally postulated to analyze the verbal language in the field of pragmatic functionalism, as the underlying framework for delineations of this study. Through this pedagogical undertaking, the researcher posed two research questions:

(1) How do *Cooperative Principles* assist L2 learners in their own writing?

(2) What is the essential construct needed for these two genres of writing, comparison and contrast?

Review of Literature

Writing is a representation of a language user's thought, belief, competence, and linguistic knowledge, and it involves the construction and end-product of a written text. Differentiated from spoken language, writing entails different aspects such as purposes to fulfill, contexts to use, or discourse communities to address to (Hinkel, 2006; Matsuda & Silva, 2010). Silva's early study (1993) clearly indicates that, despite certain similarities between L1 writing and L2 writing, salient discrepancies exist ranging from composing processes to the features of written texts, and that L2 writing process is strategically, rhetorically, linguistically different from L1 writing process.

To cope with demanding challenges in L2 writing, strategy use seems inevitable for some learners, for strategies may serve as effective ways of organizing or developing writing. Comparison and contrast, among all the strategies, assist learners in choosing among possible alternatives. They also allow learners to acquaint themselves with something less familiar or connected to prove a particular point (Donald, Morrow, Wargetz & Werner, 1996; Reinking, Hart & Osten, 2002). In order for L2 writers to strategically identify and associate the lexis that enable them to maintain their objectives

and communicate with their intended readers while still conforming to writing conventions, the concepts of discourse community may come into play (Johns, 1997; Swales, 1990). On top of that, Leech (1983) contends that the language use transcends the linguistic forms per se; the appropriate use of these linguistic forms in a wide variety of contexts and situations should also be in focus. Phrased by Grice (1975), the *Cooperative Principles* depicts the dynamics of interacting among individuals and enables effective communication in conversation that can be achieved in social undertakings. Inspired by the socio-pragmatic use of natural language, Grice proposed four principles, the first two of which are mainly relevant to the amount of information needed and processed by the hearer and the speaker (Grice, 1975, p.308; Cited by Leech, 1983):

(1) Maxim of Quantity:

    1.   Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).

    2.   Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

(2) Maxim of Quality:

    1.   Do not say what you believe to be false.

    2.   Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

(3) Maxim of Relation: Be relevant.

(4) Maxim of Manner:

    1.   Avoid obscurity of expression.

    2.   Avoid ambiguity.

    3.   Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity/verbosity)

    4.   Be orderly.

Resembling the scheme for the *Cooperative Principles*, Leech (1983) proposes a scheme for the *Textual Rhetoric* that consists of the *Processibility Principle*, the *Clarity Principle*, the *Economy Principle*, and the *Expressivity Principle* to embrace the stylistic preference in language use. These proposed pragmatic principles cover a wide range, from those which are highly social in nature such as Leech's *Politeness Principle*, to those which specifically cope with the form of sentences such as Leech's *End-weight* and *End-focus* maxims.

Echoing with the socio-pragmatic facets of the aforementioned principles, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (henceforth, CEFR) has successfully proven itself to promote the concept of 'plurilingualism' (Council of Europe, 2001) in conjunction with the cultural and linguistic diversities across Europe. Through six distinct scales composed of a compendium of ascending level descriptors, the CEFR has made a great impact in learning to learn, teacher education, course and curriculum design, and assessment across borders (Morrow, 2004; O'Sullivan & Weir, 2011).

Taking on an supporting role in this study, the CEFR provides a set of guidelines within which learning/teaching objectives and achievement standards are identified and through which both teachers and learners can thus make informed choices (Mariani, 2004; Newby, 2011). It also provides learners with practical skills or strategies that demand cognitive and metacognitive operations. The former ones entail making inferences, noticing, formulating grammatical rules, or classifying items into meaningful categories, whereas the latter counterparts include the skills of reflecting, evaluating, or even self-assessing (Mariani, 2004). Acknowledging abundant advice for language practitioners, however, criticism arises on the issue of comparability and false assumption of equivalence between descriptor scales (North, 2002; North, 2004; Weir, 2005). Despite the

deficiency to develop comparable tests from the CEFR, however, the CEFR is still believed to be "a heuristic device rather than a prescriptive one, which can be refined and developed by language testers to better meet their needs (Weir, 2005, p.298; Cited by Shaw & Weir, 2007, p.1)." These underlying features of the CEFR are deemed consonant to the research and pedagogical design of this study.

Research Design and Implementation

Qualitative researchers, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), "study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (p.2)". Aiming to explore the effect of *Cooperative Principles* on L2 learners' writing through the genres of comparison and contrast, the researcher conformed to the qualitative research paradigm (Janesick, 1991; Merriam, 1998; O'reilly, 2005), selecting five "information-rich cases for study in depth (Patton, 1990, p.169)". Each participant's demographic information is provided in the following table.

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Participants

Participant	Gender	Grade	Major	Nationality
Lynn	Female	Junior	English	Taiwanese
Vanessa	Female	Senior	International Trade	Taiwanese
Eleanor	Female	Junior	Sociology	Mainlander
Lily	Female	Junior	English	Mainlander
Tracy	Female	Junior	Information Science	Mainlander

In addition to the selection of participants, the researcher utilized ethnographic techniques (Merriam, 1998; Nunan, 1992; O'reilly, 2005; Patton, 1990) to penetrate this study. The raw data collected for this study included:

(A) Pre-test and Post-test writings, whose question remained identical:

> *"Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Face-to-face communication is better than other types of communication, such as letters, email, or telephone calls. Use specific reasons and details to support your answer."*

(B) Participants' self-evaluation of the differences emerged on both writings from the Pre-test and the Post-test

(C) CEFR Self-Assessment Checklists (Level: B2 and C1), focusing on three categories only: strategies, language quality, and writing. [see Appendix I]

(D) Self-reflection Questionnaire

(E) Instructor's Reflexive Journals

Over the first week, the researcher borrowed the CEFR Self-assessment Checklists for both Level B2 and Level C1 for the purpose of pinpointing the existing strengths and deficiencies of these five participants. Immediately following that, each participant was required to complete the Pre-test writing within the maximum length of 40 minutes. Four participants used up the full duration of 40 minutes, while it took less than 30 minutes for the only participant, Lily, to complete the Pre-test.

Over the following week, the researcher introduced the concepts of the block pattern as well as the alternating pattern, one pivotal set of writing constructs relevant to the genres of comparison and

contrast (Reinking, Hart & Osten, 2002). After the researcher's lecturing, the participants perceived better how to classify or categorize their ideas with better clarity. One week later, the *Maxim of Relation* and the *Maxim of Manner* were firstly instructed and exemplified by means of the following agenda: *"Will you hire a new talent mainly depending upon his/her leadership skills or execution skills*?"

The participants were gradually led altogether to incorporate the patterns instilled over the previous week into these two newly-gained maxims, and they afterwards worked together to meaningfully create, delete and allocate their responses to this given agenda. In the end, all of the six participants agreed upon employing the block pattern to illustrate two of the major theses: leadership and execution, under the former of which they expounded on the significance of delegating and amplifying employees' strengths. For the second thesis, they originated two themes for further elucidation: problem-solving and efficiency.

The next week, the *Maxim of Quantity* and the *Maxim of Quality* were introduced, and the researcher gave a systematic outline of the advantages and fallacies of using each of the four maxims. All of these preliminary instructions were conducive to the last instruction on the concept of analogy over the fifth week. After learning the essences behind analogy, the participants were instantaneously given a task where they all needed to apply analogy in a mind-mapping application.

After five consecutive gatherings, the participants had thus acquired skills to write more relevantly, consistently and concisely. Over the last session, they were firstly required to fill in both levels of the CEFR checklists so as to trace and verify their learning progress. Then they were immediately asked to complete the Post-test within the maximum length of 40 minutes, which was exactly the time constraint on the Pre-test. In comparison, a stark contrast emerged was that each of the five

participants finished the task within 35 minutes and held a firmer attitude towards their processes of writing, including planning, drafting, revising and editing.

With the underlying pragmatic framework of *Cooperative Principles* in mind, the participants found it fairly accessible to offer substantive critiques on their own writing products. More details pertaining to course proceedings and instructions within these six weeks could be found in the following table.

Table 2. Course Proceedings and instructions of the Entire Series

Week	Orientation	Remark
1	CEFR Self-Assessment / Pre-test.	Participants took turns narrating their writing problems and experiences of attending composition classes.
2	Written feedback to each participant / Instruction and illustration on the block and alternating pattern.	The researcher assigned an article, *Let Kids Have Fun*[1], as an extended drill and the first required reading.
3	Analysis of the first reading / Instruction on the Maxim of Relation and the Maxim of Manner.	The researcher assigned another article, *Becoming Helpless*[1], as the second required reading.
4	Analysis of the second reading / Instruction on the Maxim of Quality and the Maxim of Quantity.	The researcher assigned the third article, *Coming Home*[2], as the take-home assignment.
5	Analysis of the third reading /	The researcher reminded participants of

| | Instruction and illustration on the concept of analogy. | an in-class writing task on comparison/contrast. |
| 6 | CEFR Self-Assessment / Post-test / Verbal feedback on students' writings. | Finale. |

NOTE [1]: Both articles, whose major rhetorical modes were centered upon illustration and Comparison/Contrast, were derived from a reader entitled *Pattern and Themes*.

NOTE [2]: This article, whose major rhetorical modes were centered upon illustration and Comparison/Contrast, was selected from a textbook entitled *Strategies for Successful Writing: A Rhetoric, Research Guide, Reader and Handbook*.

On top of the aforementioned information, another research instrument was a qualitative self-reflection questionnaire oriented towards the participants' self-reflection. The questions and essences behind the questions could be observed in Table 3.

Table 3. Questionnaire questions for the participants

No.	Question	Essence
1	What do you think an ideal English Writing Class should teach?	Structural
2	What do you think the most essential elements should be as a writer begins to draft a comparison/contrast essay? Please list some underlying ones in an order of significance.	Structural
3	In what way is this English Writing Class different from the previous one(s)	Contrastive

	that you took, regardless of the length?	
4	Have you gone through any alternations in concepts regarding English writing? What have you gained the most from this short series of English Writing Class?	Descriptive

The construction and corresponding essences of interview questions were based upon by Janesick's (1991) suggestion as the theoretical underpinning. The researcher, in addition to up-close observations of each participant, also kept a reflexive journal noting the undertakings of each session.

All these sets of data were carefully cross-referenced and interpreted by means of content analysis (Patton, 1990), which marked the procedures of coding, categorization, description, and interpretation. Apart from the content analysis, the constant comparative method (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) were additionally used to compare elements and sub-categories emerging during the process.

Findings

In the following section, the results are presented in response to the research questions: "How do *Cooperative Principles* assist L2 learners in their own writing?" and "What is the essential construct needed for these two genres of writing, comparison and contrast?"

Through a closer look at the triangulated sources of data, two primary facets are generated: brand-new pedagogical underpinnings and transparent learner momentums. Details pertaining to each facet are depicted as follows:

Facet One: Brand-new pedagogical underpinnings

From the outset, the participants had indicated that this experimental series of courses seemed to be an entirely different approach to learning English writing. Given congruently correlated and instructions, all of the five participants reported they had learned more diversified ways of developing and expressing their arguments and that they all could immediately come in handy. Among all of their new gains, in addition, they appreciated the concept of analogy the most. One participant from Mainland China expressed clearly her perceptions towards English writing:

{Quote 1} We were normally educated to simply mimic a [template] of English writing. You demonstrated to us the important constructs on writing, and these constructs were frequently repeated in your writing class, which did help me to remember how to write English compositions in a brand-new way.

(Eleanor; derived from her questionnaire)

{Quote 2} At first, I thought English writing is to write whatever you think is true and [that] what we need to do is follow an existing pattern. Now, I realize that different skills can make writing better. The concept of analogy and the Maxim of Relation are what I gained most from this series of classes.

(Lynn; derived from her questionnaire)

Moreover, thanks to the in-class analysis of all the required readings, the participants appreciated the researcher's elicitation in either exploring the embedded stylistic features or mapping out the potential development of ideas. They accordingly learned how to heed their own writing locally and globally. Two participants, for example, clearly specified the alternations they experienced in writing English compositions in the following remarks:

{Quote 4-3} The teacher started with an overview of the assigned article and allowed us to induce or generalize the specific features of that article. Following that, he made the hidden styles of the article manifest to us, had us cross-check our findings, and pinpointed the pros and cons of our own writing products. Most of his reminders were new to me!

(Tracy; translated by the researcher from her questionnaire)

{Quote 4-4} Analogy is a new concept for me, and totally different ways of expanding and modifying ideas in my own writing are what I truly gained in this short series.

(Lily; derived from her questionnaire)

Overall, the *Cooperative Principles* provided the participants with brand-new perspectives on English writing. It has been evidenced in this study that these pedagogical underpinnings benefited the participants most in globally planning and drafting as well as locally revising and editing their own manuscripts.

Facet Two: Transparent Learner Momentums

From the learners' perspectives, this course planning proved to be innovative and helpful. For the researcher and the participants themselves, the CEFR checklists and Post-test writing served as transparent channels to reflect on their own momentums. As shown on the B2-leveled CEFR checklists, one participant, Lynn, noted her progress in one of the Writing can-do statements: "*I can develop an argument systematically in a composition or report, emphasizing decisive points and including supporting details*." This descriptor has indeed been evidenced in her Post-test writing. She could meaningfully churn out her content and she could even comment on her own progress expressively.

To take another participant, Vanessa, for example, she appeared to be even more indicative of her progress. Majoring in international trade, she bore sufficient English proficiency for conversational purposes. In this regard, her Pre-test writing displayed a great number of informal uses of English, and she apparently organized her argument incoherently. As the entire series approached the end, she evaluated her own improvement on 8 out of 15 can-do statements in total. The most revealing statement, for the researcher, was that "*I can put together information from different sources and relate it in a coherent summary*." In her Post-test writing, she linked the sentences more coherently, showed a greater degree of grammatical accuracy, and paid closer attention to the appropriateness of her language use.

With transparent momentums being observed on the rest of the participants, the researcher also noticed their improvements by examining the benchmarks suggested by the Written Assessment Criteria (Language Policy Division, 2009): range, coherence, accuracy, description, and argument. In addition to the benefits arising from the instructions on the *Cooperative Principles*, it was evidenced that those CEFR descriptors served as substantial self-referenced checklists. Learners could accordingly reflect upon their own language learning and ensure themselves to move towards a better command of language use.

In terms of planning, drafting, revising and editing their own writing, the participants have gained a better control in sorting out their arguments with the aids of either the block pattern or the alternating pattern. As they drafted their own Post-test task, they took heed of the quantity and the quality of their manuscripts. When they attained the final phase of revising or editing their end-product, the maxims of the *Cooperative Principles* facilitated the participants' examination in the relevance of their argument and the manners of their writing style.

Despite the orientation of the *Cooperative Principles* being mainly applicable to speeches and conversations, this study proved how they have been successfully implemented in L2 writing instructions and how they have effectively sharpen learners' awareness in rhetorical and discoursal aspects of L2 writing. With both research question being answered, more thoughts arising from the qualitative analysis will be explicated in the next section.

Discussion and Conclusions

In the previous section, the effects of the *Cooperative Principles* on helping L2 writers to regulate planning/drafting and facilitate revising/editing have been manifested, and the construct of analogy is the most essential one among other forms of input to help L2 writers to fulfill the writing of comparison and contrast genres. Nevertheless, some potential pitfalls were also worth noting.

In contrast with the gains out of these brand-new pedagogical underpinnings, the participants did flesh the content out to a linguistically and pragmatically well-written essay. Admittedly, nevertheless, the teacher written feedback, deemed as a means of advice to facilitate students' improvements by Hyland and Hyland (2006), was not sufficiently provided. Being greatly valued and highly rated by L2 learners (Tardy, 2006), the written feedback was given only in the second week of this series mainly because of the limited instruction time. As essential as the teacher written feedback seemed, it would certainly be better for L2 writing instructors to give written feedback either randomly or regularly, depending upon the changing dynamics of their own course.

In addition, looking back at the instructions on the third week, the researcher led all the participants to work together on a given question: *"Will you hire a new talent mainly depending upon his/her leadership skills or execution skills*?" Despite their obvious lack of working experiences, they collectively brainstormed before they drew up the conclusion by constructing two major theses and

four corresponding themes, as earlier mentioned in the section of Research Design and Implementation. The participants themselves attributed this pleasing result to the collaborative dialogues during the classroom, and they enjoyed the interactive prompts given and triggered by the researcher. The multiple roles the researcher played in this teaching scenario were in conformity with the multi-layered dimensions of a teacher's role in Webb's (2009) study, ranging from preparing students for collaborative work, structuring group interaction to "influencing student interaction through teachers' discourse (p.1)". In this regard, teacher written feedback and collaborative dialogue are advised to be the two pedagogical necessities of such a writing instructional setting.

Lastly, some limitations of this study are noted as follows. For a more comprehensive look at the essences of the comparison/contrast genres, the researcher suggests that an extended in-depth one-on-one interview could have been held in the middle of the series. If the researcher had heard them voice their challenges or perspectives in the process, he might have instantaneously adjusted the course content. In spite of some limitations, this study may serve as a point of departure for integrating the whole set of *Cooperative Principles*, oriented towards pragmatic functionalism, into a process-oriented English writing course. It also provides a range of indications that can be of reference to more instructors or practitioners, particularly those who consider adopting diverse methodologies to sharpen or fortify L2 writers' developing or monitoring mechanisms in their own writing processes.

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APPENDIX I

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Level **B2**

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	I can do this	My objectives	Date
Use this checklist to record what you think you can do in **column 1**, and in **column 2** record what you cannot do yet but feel are important for you. Look at this checklist at regular intervals to update what you can do and what your priorities are. Write the date of when you use the checklist in **column 3**.			
If you have over 80% of the points ticked in **column 1**, you have probably reached **Level B2.**			
Use the blank spaces to add any other things you can do, or things that are important for your language learning at this level.			
Strategies	**1**	**2**	**3**
I can use standard phrases like "That's a difficult question to answer" to gain time and keep the turn while formulating what to say.			
I can make a note of "favourite mistakes" and consciously monitor speech for them.			

I can generally correct slips and errors if I become conscious of them or if they have led to misunderstandings.			
Language Quality	**1**	**2**	**3**
I can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo ; although I can be hesitant as I search for patterns and expressions, there are few noticeably long pauses.			
I can pass on detailed information reliably.			
I have sufficient vocabulary to express myself on matters concerned to my field and on most general topics.			
I can communicate with reasonable accuracy and can correct mistakes if they have led to misunderstandings.			
Writing	**1**	**2**	**3**
I can write clear and detailed texts (compositions, reports or texts of presentations) on various topics related to my field of interest.			

I can write summaries of articles on topics of general interest.			
I can summarise information from different sources and media.			
I can discuss a topic in a composition or "letter to the editor", giving reasons for or against a specific point of view.			
I can develop an argument systematically in a composition or report, emphasising decisive points and including supporting details.			
I can write about events and real or fictional experiences in a detailed and easily readable way.			
I can write a short review of a film or a book.			
I can express in a personal letter different feelings and attitudes and can report the news of the day making clear what – in my opinion – are the important aspects of an event.			

Level C1

Use this checklist to record what you think you can do in **column 1**, and in **column 2** record what you cannot do yet but feel are important for you. Look at this checklist at regular intervals to update what you can do and what your priorities are. Write the date of when you use the checklist in **column 3**.

If you have over 80% of the points ticked in **column 1**, you have probably reached **Level C1.**

Use the blank spaces to add any other things you can do, or things that are important for your language learning at this level.

Strategies	I can do this	My objectives	Date
	1	**2**	**3**
I can use fluently a variety of appropriate expressions to preface my remarks in order to get the floor, or to gain time and keep the floor while thinking.			
I can relate own contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.			
I can substitute an equivalent term for a word I can't recall without distracting the listener.			

Language Quality	1	2	3
I can express myself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.			
I can produce clear, smoothly-flowing, well-structured speech, showing control over ways of developing what I want to say in order to link both my ideas and my expression of them into coherent text.			
I have a good command of a broad vocabulary allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions ; I rarely have to search obviously for expressions or compromise on saying exactly what I want to.			
I can consistently maintain a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot.			
Writing	1	2	3
I can express myself in writing on a wide range of general or professional topics in a clear and user-friendly manner.			

I can present a complex topic in a clear and well structured way, highlighting the most important points, for example in a composition or a report.			
I can present points of view in a comment on a topic or an event, underlining the main ideas and supporting my reasoning with detailed examples.			
I can put together information from different sources and relate it in a coherent summary.			
I can give a detailed description of experiences, feelings and events in a personal letter.			
I can write formally correct letters, for example to complain or to take a stand in favour of or against something.			
I can write texts which show a high degree of grammatical correctness and vary my vocabulary and style according to the addressee, the kind of text and the topic.			
I can select a style appropriate to the reader in mind.			