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„An 'End' to Reading? On the Conflicting Logics of Hermeneutics and CEFR "

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Clemens Wagner, BEd

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Acknowledgements

I am writing these lines on an early evening in late January; as I am sitting alone in my cold room, my face is illuminated only by my laptop's screen. In these regards, this day ends like any other of the many days that I have spent on this thesis. Despite my solitary working conditions however, I cannot say that I have ever been truly alone while writing what (hopefully) is my last major contribution to my studies in teacher education: I am very lucky to be able to look back at my time at the University of Vienna and remember not only a great number of amazing personalities, but also a plethora of instances in which I was able to meet them in an atmosphere of reciprocal support and solidarity. In this tone, I would like to express my thanks:

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> I would also like to thank my parents Alice and Christian. Without you, I would not be the person I am today. I sincerely hope that person is someone you can be proud of. Thank you.

To my friends, I would like to say the following:

> Calvin, you taught me stubbornness in the face of malaise. Thank you.
>
> Johanna, you taught me to find contentedness in what we have. Thank you.
>
> Lucia, you taught me that there is more to life than official recognition. Thank you.
>
> Nina, you taught me that we need to pick the hills we die on very carefully. Thank you.

and last, but not least,

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Chapter 4 of this thesis also addresses issues that I have dealt with in one of my bachelor's theses. The thesis in question was submitted to the University of Vienna in 2020 and is titled *Letters to Andy: The Suitcase Kid and teaching emotional intelligence through literature in the lower-secondary EFL classroom*. It was never used or published elsewhere. The relevant passage is marked accordingly.

1. Introduction

Questioning a layperson about what they consider to be the most significant developments in education throughout the last decades would (in addition to the CoVid-19 pandemic and, more or less consequently, digitalisation) most certainly yield a mentioning of efforts related to standardisation. This is unsurprising, given that such developments are amongst the most publicly present shifts in international educational policies in recent history. Moreover, their image is largely positive: They seem intuitively associated with notions of fairness through comparability and are frequently deemed a necessary reaction to the demands of globalised societies. In this light, educational standardisation indeed comes with its own set of advantages and opportunities. However, what is oftentimes less present in societal discourse on this paradigm-shift are its potential pitfalls. Arguably the most drastic of these is that wherever we strive for standardisation, draw up benchmark-curricula and work with data or metadata, we simultaneously run the risk that our work becomes self-perpetuating. Simply put, it often seems disregarded that our collective efforts towards (educational) standardisation may be tainted by a reversal of the answer to a simple, yet fundamentally important question: *Who serves whom?* Is it *us*, who design educational standards for the creation of a fairer, more egalitarian society or is it the *standards* themselves who have come around to shape *us* by imposing an ethos of their own onto young generations?

By adopting the arguably more controversial latter of these two positions, this thesis hopes to serve as a critical contribution to this enormously important question. It attempts to show that contemporary educational standardisation, which oftentimes bears the name 'outcomes-orientation' or 'outcomes-based education' (these and similar terms are used interchangeably from henceforth), is characterised by an inherently individualistic logic that is geared towards economic growth. Further, it argues that this very logic disregards many of the philosophic aspirations and foundations that have previously informed education. From this, it concludes that ultimately outcomes-based approaches to education replace pedagogical ideals with those of neoliberal capitalism. To exemplify these claims, this thesis discusses the role of foreign language (FL from henceforth) literature in contemporary Austrian education.

Literature's role in Austrian FL-education is fundamentally characterised by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR from henceforth; Council of

Europe[1]), which this thesis considers representative for outcomes-based approaches to education. Thus, its second chapter, *Relevance*, begins with an investigation of the logic represented in this document. There, we attempt to highlight and summarise the understanding of input-student interactions that is expressed in CEFR and consider its implications for the role of literature. To exemplify the relevance of CEFR for language education, we also investigate to what degree relevant Austrian curricula reproduce the document's logic. Hence, this chapter attempts to answer the following question: *What is the underlying logic of input-student interactions applied by CEFR and what is its relevance for the role of literature in Austrian foreign language education?*

Having established the logic of CEFR and its relevance, this thesis compares it against more 'traditional' understandings of engagements with literature in its third chapter, *Reconciliation?*. To this end, it is necessary to consider literary hermeneutics which, in a German-speaking context, have been prominently characterised by reader response theory and particularly its approach of reception theory. Informed by the works of Wolfgang Iser, Hans Robert Jauß and the fundamental contributions of Hans-Georg Gadamer, this chapter thus attempts to arrive at a concise description of a hermeneutic understanding of literature-reader interaction. Subsequently, we contrast this model with the logic of CEFR; a comparison that yields discrepancies, paired with simultaneous similarities. In summary, chapter three attempts to answer the following question: *Is the logic applied by CEFR reconcilable with that of hermeneutics according to reception theory?*

The following fourth chapter, *Remedies?,* investigates the similarities between outcomes-orientation and hermeneutics and discusses a potential 'missing link' that may bridge discrepancies between them: At first glance, the so-called ability model of emotional intelligence is compatible with the logic of CEFR, while simultaneously addressing the interests of reception theory. However, instead of providing a true 'remedy' to their discrepancies, this comparison leads us to conclude another attribute of outcomes-based approaches: Their significant adaptability, paired with a strict resolution to satisfy their fundamental demand for measurability. In summary, chapter four attempts to answer the following question: *Does the ability model of emotional intelligence present a potential remedy to the discrepant relationship between outcomes-orientation and reception theory?*

In its last chapter, *Repercussions,* this thesis points out how outcomes-orientation's previously exemplified attributes encapsulate its role as an advocate for neoliberalism. Thus, we attempt to arrive at a working definition of neoliberalism before comparing its attributes against those of CEFR. Additionally, we consider the implications of an unchecked primacy of outcomes-based approaches to education and discuss alternatives to them in an effort to answer the question: *Why and how does outcomes-orientation reflect a neoliberal agenda and what are the repercussions of this?*

As a whole, this thesis provides a far-spread critique of outcomes-orientation. However, it nonetheless should not be seen as a polemic 'manifesto' against it. Instead, it is a contribution to the ongoing and open discussion on the future of education; in this regard, it hopes to at least (re-)direct some attention to an understanding of it that is less mechanical and instead leaves more room for what originally inspired it: the individual student.

2. *Relevance* – CEFR and its 'Primacy of Outcomes'

Education has changed significantly throughout the last decades. For example, in 2003, Austria, although comparatively belatedly, experienced what is commonly referred to as a 'shock'[1] triggered by the nation's lacking scores in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). As a response to these unsatisfactory results, drastic efforts to reorganise the nation's system of secondary education were undertaken. Most importantly, this meant that virtually all national curricula were redesigned; in the wake of PISA, they now followed the newly found and upheld principles of outcomes-orientation. As its name suggests, this paradigm shift demanded that all learning processes were from then on to be understood as revolving primarily around precisely defined and standardised outcomes, rather than being based first and foremost on inputs. While it is easy to dismiss these changes as primarily nomenclatural, this chapter attempts to show that outcomes-orientation actually entails a very specific understanding of how and why learners are taught to interact with the inputs they are presented with and, consequentially, with the world into which they are socialised.

To exemplify this logic of outcomes-based education, this chapter analyses input-student interactions in Austria's FL-education with particular regards to the role implied for the input that is (or: *was*) literature. Obviously, such an investigation would be impossible without delving into CEFR, the document that significantly informed Austria's shift towards outcomes-based language education. Therefore, this chapter attempts to summarise CEFR's understanding of input-student interactions and particularly considers how it affects the document's treatment of literature. The resulting insights serve as a foundation for the following parts of this thesis, where CEFR's interactional logic is compared against more 'traditional' understandings of individuals' interactions with literature. To highlight CEFR's relevance, this chapter also shows its influence on the placement of literature in relevant Austrian curricula for English as a foreign language. All this is done in an effort to answer the first question of this thesis: *What is the underlying logic of input-student interactions applied by CEFR and what is its relevance for the role of literature in Austrian foreign language education?*

[1] This belated 'shock' was also triggered by the controversies surrounding the discrepancies between the Austrian PISA-results of 2000 and 2003. More on this can also be found in Neuwith's, Ponocny's and Grossmann's 2006 investigation into the matter.

2.1. The Logic of the Common European Framework of Reference

It is virtually impossible to elaborate on the shift towards outcomes-oriented language education in Austria without considering the benchmarks set through CEFR. This elaborative document was originally published by the Council of Europe in 2001 and, to this day, represents a model of language learning and use that is of great importance all over Europe. Moreover, the model has also gained international relevance since its conception and is now available in over 40 languages (Council of Europe[2] online). Austria in particular is in many ways representative for CEFR's influential status, as the document was and is used as an important guideline for the design of the nation's legislatively binding foreign language curricula. More recently, CEFR even influenced the Austrian *Bildungsstandards*. Essentially, these are a list of descriptors that are designed to be a condensed summary of what is to be achieved through the implementation of curricula. In the words of Austria's federal ministry for education, science, and research, they are considered an essential "reference point for those competences that teaching should develop" (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung[1] online; own translation). Additionally, they serve as final benchmarks for the testing and subsequent development of educational facilities and efforts in Austria. As of 2021 and 2022, this testing is conducted by the *Institut des Bundes für Qualitätssicherung im österreichischen Schulwesen* (iKM Plus), which was specifically established to this end (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung[2] online).

2.1.1. Basic Observations

From these circumstances, we can already draw a first conclusion about outcomes-orientation as represented by CEFR: Because it influences legally binding standards and benchmarks, it ultimately needs to be considered prescriptive. Of course, both CEFR and the more recently published Companion Volumes that expand on the original document avoid this negatively connotated term (e.g. Council of Europe[1] 29). Indeed, the documents themselves are not prescriptive in any traditional sense. Rather, their prescriptive nature is indirect or 'hidden', as it only comes into effect via the influence they exert; through a hierarchy of promotion via supranational institutions and subsequential legislative implementation and control by national institutions, outcomes-orientation as represented by CEFR can be considered an act of top-down institutionalisation. Obviously, neither

prescriptive efforts in general nor institutionalisation in particular work arbitrarily. Instead, they can be considered a realisation of the exertion of social control (also cf. Esser 12ff.). While this thought is further elaborated on in chapter 5, it shall, for now, primarily serve as an invitation to carefully consider CEFR's logic and its conception.

Historically speaking, many of the notions that would later become CEFR's agenda can be traced back to the European Cultural Convention of 1954. According to the Council of Europe, this treaty was originally conceived to "commit […] [member states] to facilitating the communication among citizens through the promotion of each other's languages" (Council of Europe[3] online). Its ideas reflect the changing zeitgeist of the time and already foreshadowed the spirit of the communicative turn in language learning and teaching, which is most clearly observable from the 1960s onwards (n.b.: Chomsky; Hymes; Halliday). In turn, this paradigm shift would go on to drastically alter overall conceptions of language learning on a global level (also cf. Littlewood 541), implying an at least partially reciprocal relationship between these new understandings. The ideas presented in the European Cultural Convention were gradually developed throughout subsequent decades, culminating in a 1991 Council of Europe symposium in the Swiss municipality of Rüschlikon. This event can be seen as the factual starting point of CEFR as we know it today. From there on, the document was further adapted until it was officially launched as part of the European Year of Languages in 2001 (Council of Europe[3] online).

At this point, it should be noted that the following subchapters primarily relate to this 2001 version of CEFR. Since then, multiple Companion Volumes to the original document have been published (n.b. Council of Europe[4] 2020). These are designed as user-friendly, elaborative guides for teachers and teacher educators. However, current Austrian foreign language curricula generally do not maintain version-specific references to CEFR. Additionally, the most recent edition of these companion volumes explicitly states that "[r]esearchers wishing to interrogate the underlying concepts and guidance in CEFR chapters about specific areas should access the 2001 edition, which remains valid" (Council of Europe[4] 2020). We shall thus view the Companion Volumes as corrective reactions to the original document and consequently touch on them only where necessary throughout this thesis.

2.1.2. The Self-Declared Aims of CEFR

When beginning to actually consider CEFR's logic, it seems highly unlikely that its authors were ever unaware of the far-reaching implications of their efforts and the justifications necessary for them.[2] Consequently, the document's entire first chapter is dedicated to a detailed self-description of its political and educational context and its resulting aims, principles, and criteria. From this we can gather that, essentially, CEFR describes itself as a common basis to be used for the elaboration of language syllabi, curriculum guidelines as well as the materials and tools best used for their implementation. The self-declared aims of CEFR confirm its indirectly prescriptive ambitions and are visualised in Figure 1 below (cf. Council of Europe[1] 2ff.).

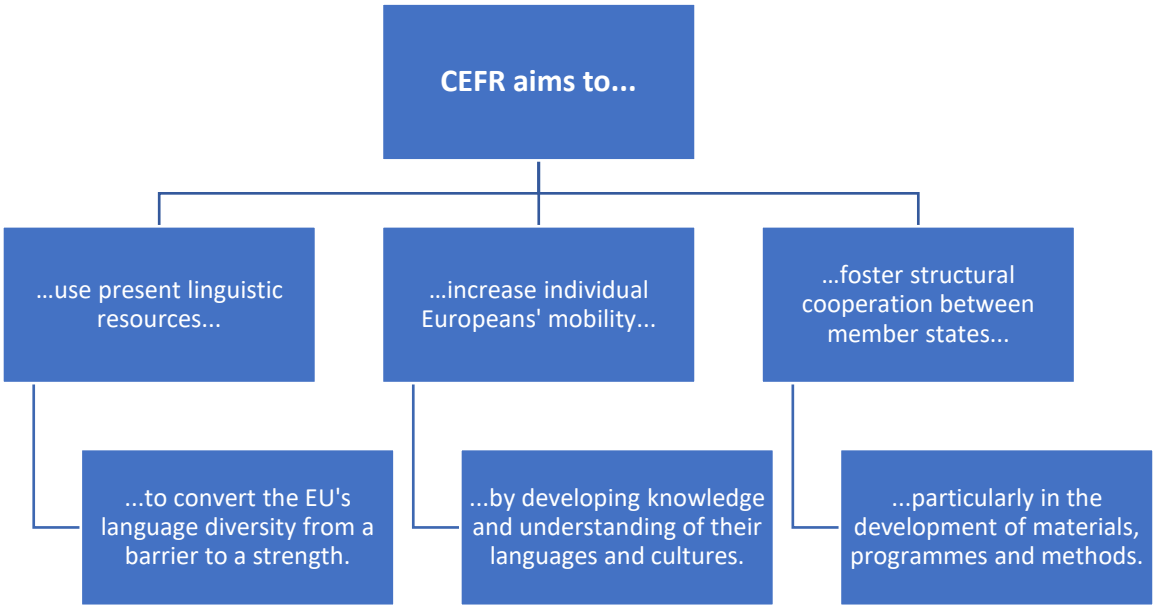


Figure 1: Summary of CEFR's self-declared aims (cf. Council of Europe[1] 2ff.)

Based on this, we can summarise the self-declared aims of CEFR as relating to at least one of the three following categories:

1.) 'overcoming' cultural diversity

2.) linguistic mobility with the aim to increase sociocultural and economic mobility

3.) structural exchange and cooperation to further foster 1.) and 2.)

Every one of these categories in turn relates to common action in what we can refer to as culture-adjacent fields. The enabling medium through which these become accessible is

[2] An elaborative multi-part series of interviews on this topic featuring CEFR author John Trim can be found on the YouTube-outlet of Cambridge Assessment English (online).

considered language. Thus, CEFR's self-declared aims strongly imply enabling people to access diverse cultural products; an important example for this would be literature in many of its forms and realisations. As is elaborated later in this chapter (cf. chapter 2.2.), this implication unfortunately remains exactly that: An implication that is not strongly reflected elsewhere in the document.

In summary, outcomes-orientation as represented by CEFR presents its own nature as "comprehensive, transparent and coherent" (Council of Europe[1] 7). It explicitly states that it seeks to increase the abilities of *individuals* to access diverse cultures on an *international* scale (primarily, but not exclusively member states of the EU) to promote their economic and sociocultural *growth* by *prescribing* certain standards primarily related to language. For now, it seems that it is particularly CEFR's *individualistic* and *prescriptive* attributes that are best suited to further exemplify an answer to the question of how outcomes-based education views language use and, consequently, engagements with literature.

2.1.3. Language Use according to CEFR

Following the declaration of its aims, the subsequent second chapter of CEFR is dedicated to a detailed description of the approach adopted to reach them. Also due to its above-discussed aims, it is unsurprising that the document describes its own view of language as "very general" (Council of Europe[1] 9). In practice, this means that CEFR acknowledges that its understanding of language use does not solely relate to lexical fields and states that

> "[…] it views users and learners of a language primarily as 'social agents' […] who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action." (ibid. 9)

This direct result of CEFR's *individualistic* nature (cf. chapter 2.1.2.) is dubbed "action-based" or "action-oriented" (ibid. 9) and cumulates in a particular view on language use that is visualised in Figure 2 below:

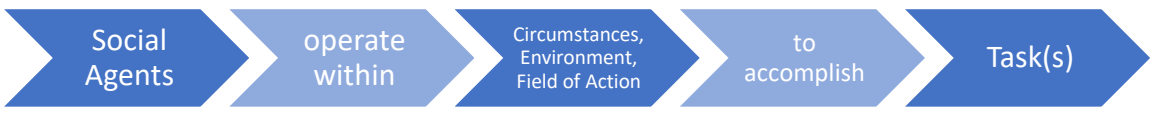


Figure 2: Basic logic of 'action based' language use according to CEFR.

Essentially, this outcomes-oriented approach language use is an attempt at filling a black-box system that puts the acting individual in a crucial, active position when it comes to the achievement or construction of something, in this case a task, or rather: a titular 'outcome'. This also means that if 'social agents' (here interchangeable with 'language users/learners') take no actions, their circumstances, environments, and fields of action become irrelevant. Of course, the reversed scenario seems equally fruitless: Agents cannot accomplish tasks or produce meaningful outcomes if they are assumed to operate in a hypothetical vacuum. In CEFR's own words, the actions carried out by a language user are only considered truly meaningful in "a wider social context" (Council of Europe[1] 9). At first glance, dubbing this understanding 'outcomes-oriented' seems almost misleading, because it implies that this approach to education is utterly uninterested in inputs, which, in reality, quite simply is not the case: Instead, our analysis of CEFR shall reveal that outcomes-orientation 'merely' elevates the role of (the competences of) agents relative to circumstantial factors (i.e. 'inputs'). To highlight this continued (though shifted) role of inputs, we shall subsume the terms 'circumstances, environments, and fields of action' as 'inputs' from henceforth. This results in the following modifications to Figure 2 (also cf. ibid. 2ff.):

Figure 3: Basic logic of 'action based' language use according to CEFR, described using modified terminology. The order of the factors engaging with one another has been altered in the interest of clarity.

Unsurprisingly, this simplistic model does not do justice to the full depth of language use according to the 2001 version of CEFR. Instead, the document goes beyond this basic logic and provides various further terms to elaborate upon and break down its own understanding of language use. Many of these terms are summarised at the beginning of CEFR's second chapter, where the document strongly highlights a self-provided description of "any form of language use and learning" (ibid. 9):

> "Language use […] comprises the actions performed by persons who […] as social agents develop a range of *competences*, both *general* and in particular *communicative language competences*. They draw on the competences at their disposal in various contexts under various *conditions* and under various *constraints* to engage in *language activities* involving *language processes* to produce and/or receive texts in relation to themes in specific domains, activating those *strategies* which

> seem most appropriate for carrying out the tasks to be accomplished." (ibid. 9; no emphases added)

At first glance, these elaborations seem too convoluted to arrive at any form of concise model. This is particularly due to the unclear definitions for much of the terminology used. To remedy this issue, CEFR adds a list of explanations for many of the concepts given in the above-quoted summary. Unfortunately, their relatively concise nature still leaves much to be desired in terms of comprehensiveness. The document therefore refers to subsequent chapters, where further extensive elaborations are presented (ibid. 10). To arrive at a concise, yet comprehensive summary of how outcomes-based education views language use and where it consequently places literature, it thus seems necessary to summarise exactly how CEFR breaks down language use.

Before we do so, it should be highlighted at this point that, relating to the above-quoted passage, CEFR itself stresses that "it is accepted that the different dimensions highlighted above are interrelated in all forms of language use and learning" (ibid. 10). While it is hard to disagree with this general understanding, the following subchapters nonetheless groups the factors CEFR uses to describe language use as belonging either to inputs (i.e. context) *or* social agents. Such a categorisation does not dismiss the idea that its classifications are interdependent; instead, they are an effort to produce a summary of CEFR's logic from which we can draw insights into how CEFR understands interactions between literature and reader.

2.1.4. Inputs according to CEFR

For elaborative reasons, we shall therefore subsume all factors of language use that are *not* agent-immanent (i.e. all contextual factors) under the category of inputs. However, a closer analysis of CEFR reveals that this assumption turns out more complicated than may initially appear. This is because the document itself describes 'context' as "the constellation of events and situational factors […], both *internal and external* to a person, in which acts of communication are embedded" (Council of Europe[1] 9; emphasis added). This implies the existence of two different kinds of 'context': First, 'External contexts', which are independent of the respective agent and are easily attributable to the realm of inputs according to our above-proposed distinction. However, the classification of their counterparts is more complicated. As mentioned, they refer to "situational factors […] internal […] to a person" (ibid. 9) and thus, at first glance, would need to be described using

the somewhat self-contradicting term 'internal contexts'. CEFR avoids this problem by instead referring to such factors as "user/learner's mental context" (ibid. 50ff.). These factors describe both short- and long-term dispositions of agents that influence how they may be able to engage with (linguistic) inputs they are confronted with. Despite the potentially misleading name, this thesis therefore categorises a language user's mental 'contexts' as non-contextual (i.e. not as an input). Simultaneously, this is not to be confused with what CEFR dubs "mental context of the interlocutor(s)" (ibid. 51), which quite aptly describes the inner dispositions of interlocutors of the acting agent. However, because an agent can only ever experience how the mental context of the interlocutor is translated (by them) into expressions, this thesis groups this type of mental context with other inputs. Let us consider Figure 4 as a visualisation:

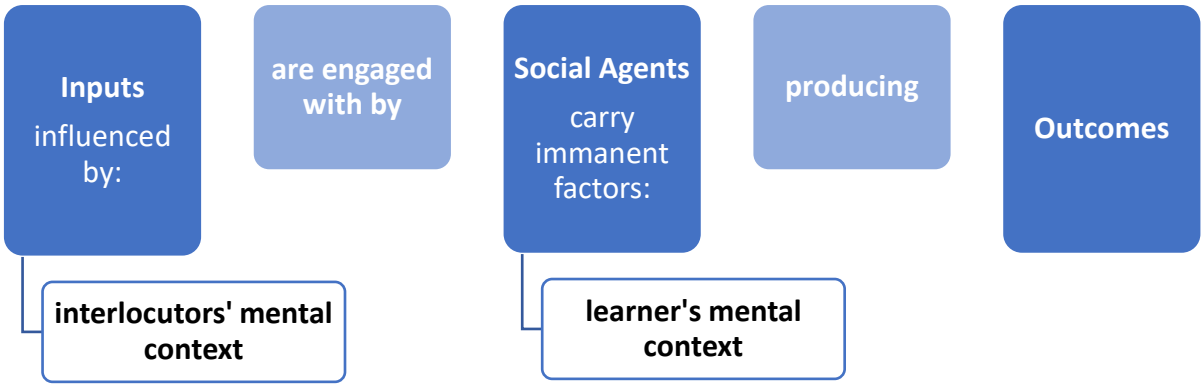


Figure 4: Grouping learner's and interlocutors' mental contexts according to their place in outcomes-oriented language use.

Luckily, most other terms CEFR uses to describe language use fit more neatly in either one of the two categories. The most influential umbrella category determining inputs are considered to be domains (ibid. 44ff.). Domains are described as "spheres of action or areas of concern […] in which social life is organised" (ibid. 44). Given this basic role, they significantly (though mostly indirectly) influence what kinds of input social agents may be confronted with in language use: Primarily, domains determine the kinds of situations individuals may have to operate within. In turn, these situations are the sum of external factors such as the locations, institutions and, most immediately relevant for literature, *texts* that agents encounter in an instance of language use (ibid. 46). Additionally, domains also significantly influence the possible themes (i.e. topics) of communication (ibid. 51ff.). Further, they also partially influence external conditions and restraints, such as the social

relationships between interlocutors or temporal limitations (ibid. 47). Similarly, the influential role of domains greatly (though not exclusively) determines the kinds of activities (i.e. receptive, productive activities etc.) that agent may have to engage with in a particular instance of language use. However, some contextual factors that are arguably mostly uninfluenced by domains remain: Examples here may include auditory distortions (e.g. poor telephone connections) or visual distortion (e.g. poor lighting). This summary allows us to expand Figure 4 as follows to concisely summarise CEFR's understanding of what determines inputs in Figure 5:

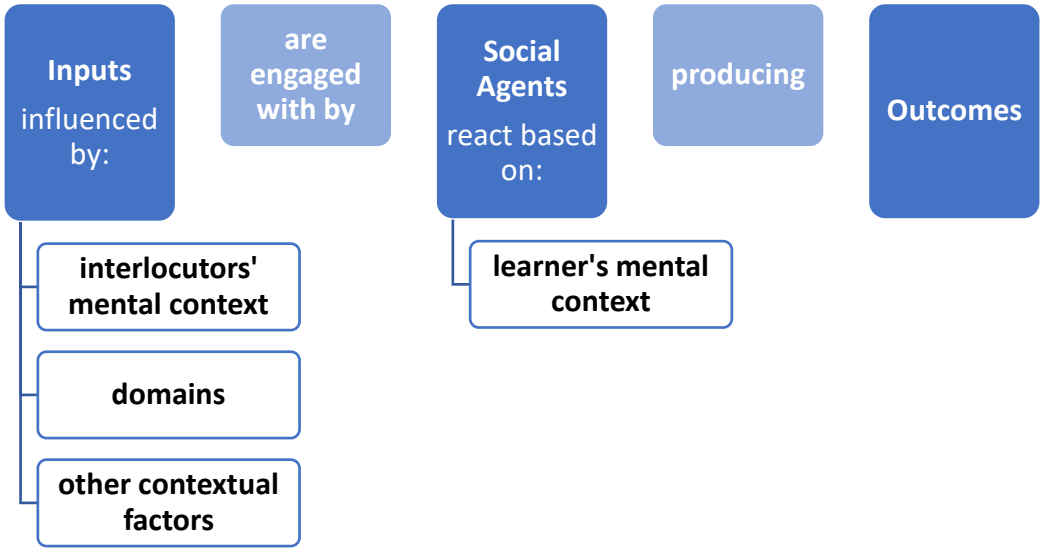


Figure 5: Grouping contextual factors according to their place in outcomes-oriented language use.

2.1.5. Agent-Immanent Factors according to CEFR

Now that we have broadly categorised most contextual factors of language use according to CEFR, it is time to also consider agent-immanent factors. In this context, the document describes agents as influenced by their mental context (Council of Europe[1] 50ff.), as using particular strategies (ibid. 57ff.) and as being equipped with a particular set of competences (ibid. 101ff.).

As we have discussed before (cf. chapter 2.1.4.), CEFR uses the term "user/learner's mental context" (Council of Europe[1] 50ff.) to refer to agent-immanent dispositions that influence how they may engage with inputs. A mental context is dependent on features that influence an agent's observation of the inputs they are presented with. These include physical attributes (e.g. the ability to perceive), attention span, long-term experiences and mental systems of classifications, including linguistic categorisations (ibid. 50). These factors in turn influence an individual's intentions, thoughts, expectations, reflections (in action),

motivational factors, overall mental state and thus (partially) some conditions and restraints that may apply (cf. ibid. 50).

Activations of this mental context are frequently realised as strategies an agent uses. They are largely considered reactions to the kinds of input, or, more generally speaking, the activities (also cf. chapter 2.1.4.) they are presented with. In other words, strategies can be considered responsive activations of an agent's (mental) resources (cf. mental context) (Council of Europe[1] 57); in this light, they are not truly entirely agent-immanent; while they are hugely dependent on an agent's mental context, they can also be used to describe the actual stages of a concrete language activity. CEFR groups language activities as described in Figure 6 below:

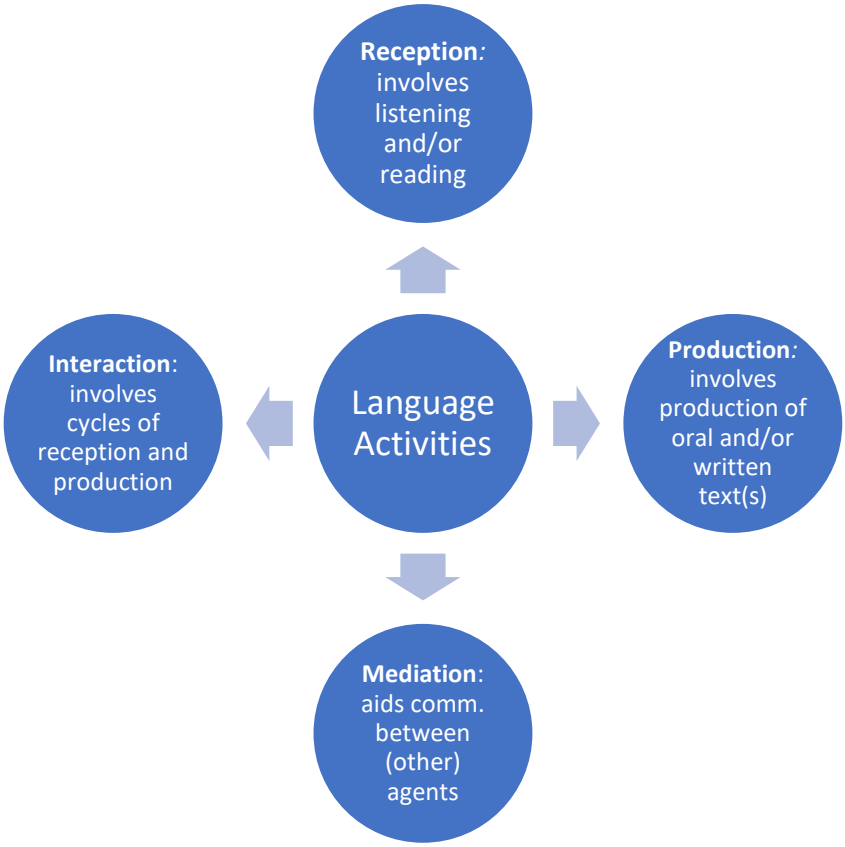


Figure 6: CEFR's categorisation of language activities.

Because outcomes-orientation as represented by CEFR seems to view engagements with literature (only) as receptive activities, they are most immediately relevant for our exemplary analysis. These strategies are generally assumed to follow a four-step structure consisting of the following steps (in order; cf. ibid. 72):

1. Planning: Setting up expectations based on previous knowledge.
2. Execution: Inferring based on cues (i.e. 'reading' in the common sense of the word)

3. Evaluation: Comparing step 1. against step 2.
4. Repair: Changing step 1. in light of the results of step 3.

Interestingly, this bears a striking resemblance to the overall structure of hermeneutic processes, where a similar (though *non-finite* and *reciprocal*) process is assumed to take place. While the implications of this go beyond the aims of this chapter, they are nonetheless of great relevance for the overall scope of this thesis and are further discussed in its third chapter. For now, it shall suffice to summarise that strategies are dependent on a learner's mental context, are reactions to activities and are essential for the comprehension of texts.

Finally, agents are also assumed to wield a set of competences, which are considered essential "[i]n order to carry out the tasks and activities required to deal with the communicative situations in which they are involved" (ibid. 101). In other words, competences are of crucial importance for reacting to inputs. Like strategies, they thus are not entirely agent-immanent, but also influence the realisation of a language activity. For the scope of language teaching and learning, CEFR groups them into general competences and communicative language competences (ibid., 9, also cf. ibid. 101ff.).

General competences are defined as being a conglomerate of declarative knowledge, skills (i.e. 'know-how'), existential competence and the ability to learn (n.b. ibid., 106). The latter aspect, the ability to learn, has an enabling role, meaning that it "mobilises existential competence, declarative knowledge and skills" (ibid., 12). CEFR consequently acknowledges that "the strategies selected in order to accomplish a given task will depend on the diversity of the various abilities to learn at his/her [the agent's] disposal" (ibid., 13). The other aspects of general competences are knowledge, skills and existential competence. Regarding knowledge, CEFR provides the following example in relation to culture and cultural products: "[A]wareness that there may be a taboo or particular rituals associated with dietary or sexual practices in certain cultures or that they may have religious connotations" (ibid., 12). This reflects the document's primarily declarative understanding of knowledge (also cf. ibid. 103). Skills are primarily described as the ability to engage with or navigate various form of media and intercultural sensitivity (ibid. 104ff.). Finally, existential competence revolves around the conscious elements of self-perception and includes agents' abilities to engage with communication on a meta-level (ibid. 105ff.) For example, taking or yielding the floor as

appropriate in a conversation can be considered an aspect of existential competence (ibid., 12).

Similarly, communicative language competence is also considered to be a conglomerate of diverse elements. CEFR tells us that it "can be considered as comprising several components: *linguistic, sociolinguistic* and *pragmatic*." (ibid., 13, also cf. ibid. 108ff.; no emphasis added). In turn, each of these components of communicative language competences can be dissected even further: As with general competences, they are all considered to consist of knowledge and skills (again, i.e.: know-how) and are influenced by learning processes (i.e. the ability to learn*;* ibid., 13ff.). However, contrary to general competences, communicative language competences are not made up of existential competences.

Like strategies, it can be argued that competences too are largely dependent on the respective learner's mental context (n.b. their ability to learn). However, for the scope of this summary, both strategies *and* competences shall be categorised *alongside* the learners' mental contexts to account for their contributions to the relations of the respective instance of language use. This allows us to expand Figure 5 as follows to concisely summarise CEFR's understanding of agent-immanent factors:

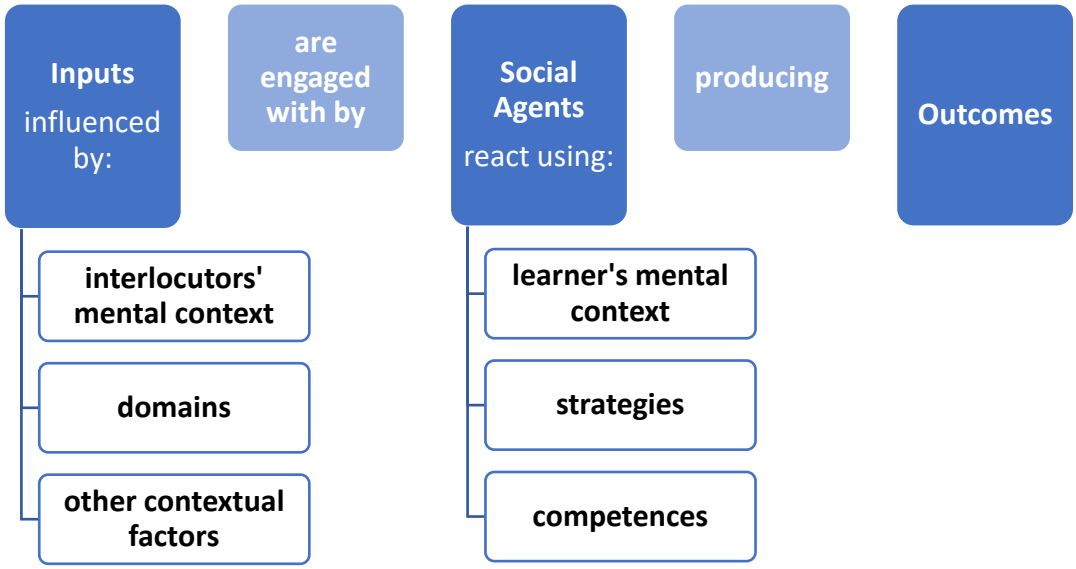


Figure 7: Grouping contextual and agent-immanent factors according to their place in outcomes-oriented language use.

2.1.6. Outcomes according to CEFR – The Primacy of Outcomes

As already discussed in chapter 2.1.3., CEFR's (and thus, outcomes-orientation's) notion of language use essentially revolves around the accomplishment of tasks. In essence, tasks are understood as an abundant feature of everyday life and their

> "[…] accomplishment by an individual involves the strategic activation of specific competences in order to carry out a set of purposeful actions in a particular domain [i.e. language use] with a *clearly defined* goal and a specific outcome […]." (Council of Europe[1] 157; emphasis added)

In other words, tasks according to CEFR are inherently connected to the fulfilment of an aim, realised as a specific outcome. The "clearly defined' (ibid. 157) nature of these outcomes means that any instance of language use is implied to have some sort 'ideal' or 'correct' solution that is *reachable*, exists *prior to* and is *independent of* its actual realisation. In many situations outside educational contexts, this "specific outcome" (ibid. 157) of any task involving *productive* activities usually is some sort of concrete "artefact" (ibid. 55). Frequently, these take the form of texts.[3] Educational tasks that mimic these circumstances and thus require students to produce such 'textual artefacts' can also be found in the classroom; they are also referred to as "'real life', 'target' or 'rehearsal' tasks" (ibid. 157). Perhaps the most important example for such situations can be found in school leaving exams. However, regardless of whether they are set in educational or 'real-life' contexts, *receptive* tasks (for example, reading a piece of literature) do not necessarily produce 'readable' texts. In fact, they frequently do not produce any form of directly measurable outcome at all. Instead, receptive tasks may 'merely' influence the individual engaging with them (also cf. the 'repair'-step in strategies, chapter 2.1.5.) as their outcome.

This lack of directly measurable outcomes in reading means that whether an agent is capable of 'correctly' engaging in the respective receptive activity must be tested through their subsequent actions. In a pedagogical context, this usually involves the production of 'proxy-artefacts'. These may include answers to multiple choice questions relating to the contents of a text or producing a verbal summary of a previously heard speech. However, in the context of outcomes-oriented education, *all* artefacts must be considered proxies. This is because (such) approaches to education are of course not interested in the actual, student-produced artefacts. Instead, the primary value of artefacts comes from the fact that they allow testers to draw conclusions about the individual that brought them into existence. This means that in the educational practice of outcomes-orientation, the primarily important outcomes are to be understood as "learning outcomes such as improved competences, awareness, insights, strategies, experience in decision making and negotiation etc." (ibid.

[3] The term 'text' needs to be understood as any product, situation or performative act that can be 'read', i.e. interpreted here. It does not just refer to written utterances.

55). In other words, (all of) outcomes-oriented language learning as represented in CEFR desires the 'production' of outcomes in the form of agents that can cope with particular inputs.

However, these 'ideal agents' are defined *prior* to and *independent* of the *actual* agents. Further, the reactions and subsequent 'transformation' of *actual* agents into 'ideal agents' are considered dependent on the kind of *input* they are presented with (cf. chapters 2.1.4. & 2.1.5.). Thus, it is necessary for outcomes-oriented language learning to choose its *inputs* according to their potential for contributing to outcomes. In this role, outcomes have come to dictate the selection of inputs; in outcomes-based language education, the choice of any input, be it a prompt for a roleplaying activity or (not) choosing to use a piece of literature in class, must be checked against the contribution it can offer to reaching pre-set outcomes. Wherever CEFR is legislatively embedded in Austrian curricula (cf. chapter 2.3.), this interest in reaching outcomes becomes a legal responsibility for teachers. This shows just how far outcomes-oriented education elevates the importance of agents' learning outcomes compared to inputs: Outcomes are not only the final benchmark for considering the success or failure of agents' engagements with inputs, but they are also given a legally binding role and thus become central for all educational efforts. Effectively, this strongly discourages educators operating within such systems from using inputs unrelated to desired outcomes. Moreover, it also means that if no outcomes relate to a particular kind of inputs, there is little incentive to use them. Thus, the importance assigned to literature (and any other input) in CEFR almost exclusively depends on its representation in the described outcomes; simply put, outcomes-based education is characterised by a 'primacy of outcomes'. Consequently, chapter 2.2. is dedicated to an analysis of the representation of literature in CEFR's outcomes. First however, let us consider further what this logic implies for the act of reading itself:

First, the logic of outcomes-orientation assumes a potential 'ideal' outcome for any language activity, including any act of reading. Second, this 'ideal' outcome is an individual capable of engaging with a piece of literature in a desired way, thus we can describe it as an 'ideal reader'. Third, this 'ideal reader' can be expressed without reference to any actual reader and is defined prior to choosing a piece of literature. In other words, outcomes-orientation's 'ideal reader' exists largely independent of both actual agents and pieces of literature.

Fourth and finally, once an individual has become an 'ideal reader' (i.e. has become suitably competent), there no longer is any need to repeatedly engage with piece of literature that brought them there; the act of reading has found its 'correct end'. While at first glance, all this may seem only economic, this logic drastically influences how students are understood and taught to engage with literature and, more generally speaking, the world surrounding them. The results – and cost – of these implications are expressed throughout the succeeding chapters of this thesis. For now, however, it shall suffice so provide Figure 8 as summary of outcomes-orientation as presented in CEFR:

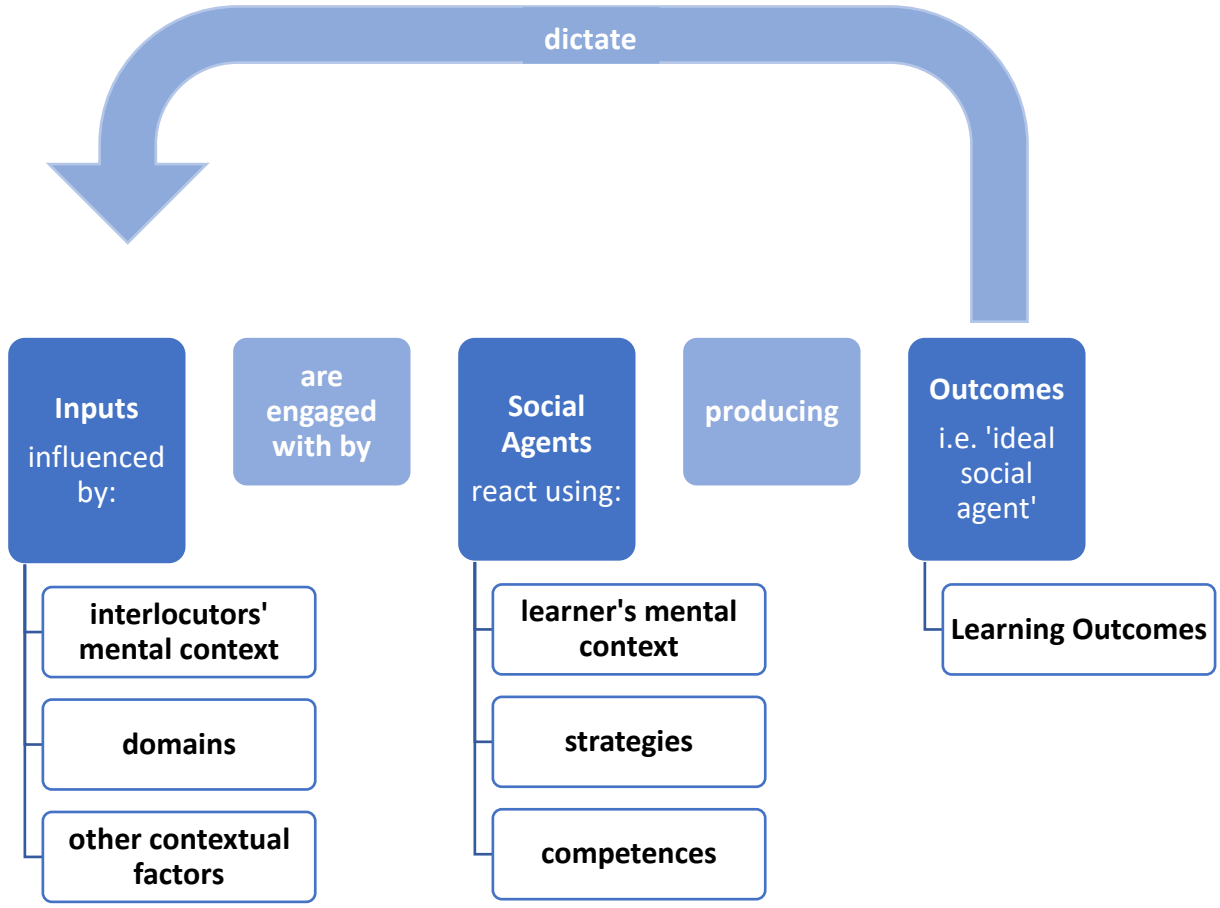


Figure 8: The primacy of outcomes in outcomes-oriented language use.

2.2. The Position of Literature in CEFR

The primacy of outcomes in CEFR makes it abundantly clear that the role of literature in outcomes-based education is strongly dependent on its representation in desired outcomes. Considering that CEFR thoroughly emphasises the importance of culture and, by implication, cultural products such as literature (cf. chapter 2.1.2.), we should expect literature to be appropriately represented in CEFR.

In this light, it is immediately noteworthy that CEFR does not provide any form of concrete literary canon that should be employed in teaching. This circumstance is (also) a direct result of the multilingual applicability of the document and these aspirations and should not necessarily be viewed as an inherent downside. However, even when scanning CEFR for references to literary texts in general, it soon becomes obvious that they are frequently not even referred to as their own pedagogical or linguistic category. Instead, references to agents' capabilities of dealing with literature are sporadically made as examples for the higher competence levels B2 and C1. Unsurprisingly, this is particularly true in relation to reading (n.b. Council of Europe[1] 27 & 69) and the receptive aspects of writing summaries, reports, essays, or mediating translations (n.b. ibid. 62 & 87). Here, outcomes-orientation's 'ideal reader' is commonly described as being able to "understand" (e.g. ibid., 27) literary works. Obviously, this term brings with it imprecise and convoluted connotations. Even CEFR itself acknowledges this in relation to a research project conducted by the Swiss National Science Research Council between 1993 and 1996 (ibid. 220ff.) but does little to remedy the issue. Other than in such instances, literature is only rarely mentioned: While it is sometimes given as an example for the types of texts students may or should encounter (e.g. ibid. 95), these cases are also related to the achievement of benchmark competences.

The perhaps most significant and explicit statement related to literature that can be found in CEFR is contained in its elaborations of communicative tasks and purposes (ibid. 53-56). In relation to aesthetic uses of language (which include literature), the document states:

> "This summary treatment of what has traditionally been a major, often dominant, aspect of modern language studies in upper secondary and higher education may appear dismissive. It is not intended to be so. National and regional literatures make a major contribution to the European cultural heritage, which the Council of Europe sees as 'a valuable common resource to be protected and developed'. Literary studies serve many more educational purposes – intellectual, moral and emotional, linguistic and cultural – than the purely aesthetic. It is much hoped that teachers of literature at all levels may find many sections of the Framework relevant to their concerns and useful in making their aims and methods more transparent." (ibid. 56)

Essentially, this statement can be considered as serving a dual purpose: First, it satisfies the document's need to refer to its self-declared aims (cf. chapter 2.1.2.) by re-emphasising the relation between literature and culture. Second, it simultaneously provides an answer to why CEFR, despite acknowledging this connection, only peripherally indulges in the aesthetic aspects of literature. It is implied that it would essentially be a diminutive use of literature if

one were to focus solely on its aesthetic aspects. Instead, literature should also be used to aid the achievement of "intellectual, moral and emotional, linguistic and cultural" (ibid. 56) outcomes.

Again, this re-affirms the reduction of (all) inputs to their net use in the pursuit of desired outcomes. Moreover, there are multiple problems with this categorisation of literature: First and foremost, it implies a conceivable distinction of each of "intellectual, moral and emotional, linguistic and cultural" (ibid. 56) fields from aesthetic appreciation. This goes against CEFR's own understanding of language use that clearly highlights their at least partial connection (cf. chapter 2.1.2.) and thus also neglects the solid case that could be made for an inherently reciprocal relationship between aesthetic appreciation and developments in each of these fields (more about this in chapter 3). Further, CEFR, despite this alleged plethora of uses for literature, primarily relates it to declarative knowledge that can be gained from interaction with it (n.b. ibid. 103 & 135). Finally, as suggested in chapter 2.1.6., this grouping gives the interaction with literature aims for the achievement of which there may be far more 'effective' inputs. Solutions to these inconsistencies are subsequently and similarly overtly outsourced to the educators, who are invited to reflect on the importance they attach to the aesthetic appreciation of literature in the document's discussion of methodology (n.b. ibid. 143ff.). In summary, outcomes-based education as exemplified in the 2001 version CEFR views literature (as any other input) as a means to an end and generally does not view it as its own, distinct linguistic or cultural category.

Of course, the Council of Europe itself is not fully unaware of the kind of criticism uttered here and has consequently published Companion Volumes to CEFR which, amongst addressing other issues, attempt to remedy this situation by providing more outcomes that are inherently related to "creative texts (including literature)" (Council of Europe[4] n.b. 106ff.). While adding outcomes this way may increase the perceived necessity of literature in outcomes-based education, the overall critique uttered here still holds true even for the 2020 version of CEFR: Literature is still given a summary treatment together with all other forms of creative texts, neglecting its unique characteristics and allowing the achievement of these outcomes without actually employing literature in the classroom. Furthermore, even if these added descriptors would truly promote the use of literature, the restraints CEFR understanding of language use imposes on the act of engaging (n.b. chapters 2.1.6.) would

still apply. This results in, as we elaborate particularly in chapters 3 and 4, a continually ambivalent and ultimately philosophically impoverished treatment of reader-literature interactions. Thus, as concisely phrased by Deygers, it seems as though "the CV [companion volume] incorporates comments on the CEFR that suit its original purpose but largely disregards fundamental criticism" (186).

Ultimately however, it is the respective curricula of a subject that determine whether and to what degree educators can or should employ certain inputs. Thus, we can only conclude our exemplification of the relevance of outcomes-orientation as represented in CEFR by investigating to what degree the document's logic is reproduced in Austrian curricula for foreign language education.

2.3 The Reproduction of CEFR in Austrian EFL-Curricula

As mentioned before, CEFR serves as foundation for the design of foreign language curricula in Austria (cf. chapter 2.1.); although the Austrian educational system reacted to international trends pushing towards the adoption of outcomes-orientation relatively belatedly,[4] CEFR from then on nonetheless quickly became an important guideline for these changes. It has since been used for the design of foreign language curricula in virtually all Austrian school types as well as the standardised exit exams for secondary education (also cf. Horak et. al. 6ff.). In the following, we can thus focus on how and to what degree CEFR is reflected in some relevant Austrian FL-curricula in order to exemplify just how drastically important the logic of outcomes-based education has become. However, before doing so, the complex nature of the Austrian educational system demands a few preliminary limitations to ease the scope of such an analysis.

2.3.1. General Remarks on the Austrian System for (Language) Education

Traditionally, the Austrian educational system has been and still is characterised by high levels of complexity. Without even attempting to fully account for the plethora of school types or the growing importance of integrative education, the Austrian system for secondary education can essentially be understood as being categorised along two axes: On a chronological axis, it is split according to two levels of secondary education; years five to

[4] e.g.: The *Bildungsstandards* were only legally validated between 2008 and 2009; cf. Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung[2], n.d., online

eight for lower secondary and years nine up to 14 for upper secondary education. On the axis of educational foci, which only applies in upper secondary education, a broad differentiation between general (*Allgemeinbildende höhere Schulen, AHS* and *Polytechnische Schulen*) and vocational (*Berufsbildende Schulen*) education can be made. Within these foci, there is an enormous multitude of school types, many of which have their own curricula. This is particularly true for vocational schools, where an additional differentiation between vocational middle (*Berufsbildendende Mittlere Schulen, BMS*) and high schools (*Berufsbildende Höhere Schulen, BHS*) can be made. Figure 9 is a drastically simplified version of the structure of the Austrian educational system; a more detailed description can be found on the website of Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation (online):

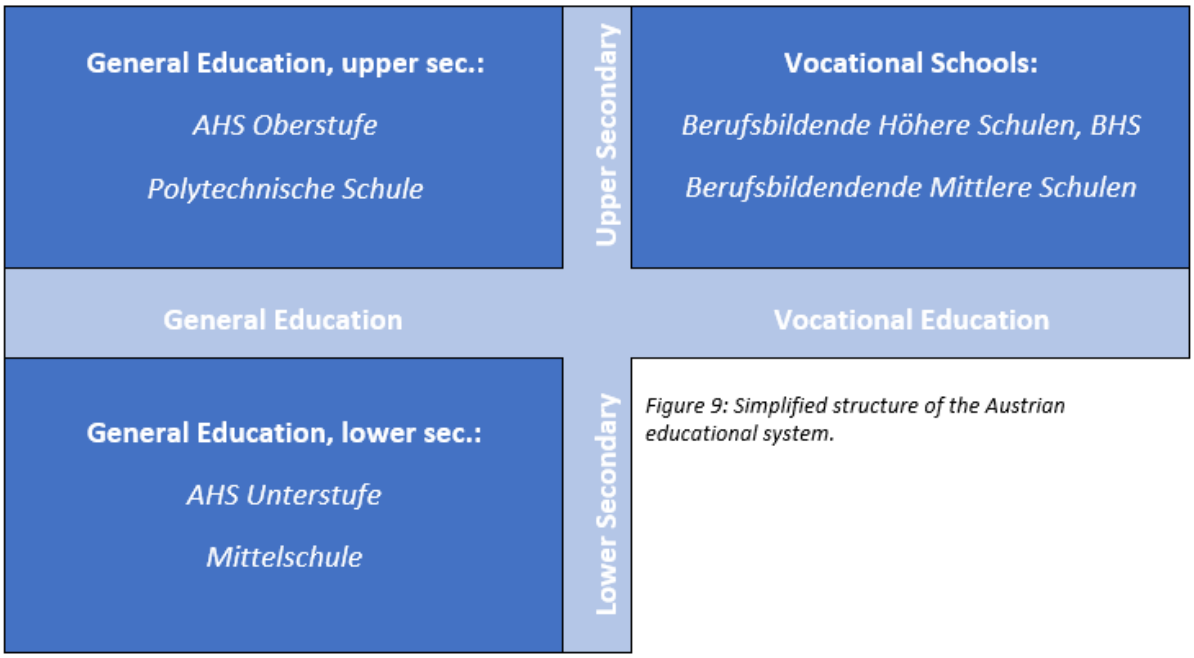


Figure 9: Simplified structure of the Austrian educational system.

In relation to language education, we can observe that the Austrian educational system reflects the country's long and sometimes ambivalent relationship with its own history of rich multiculturalism and multilingualism (Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur & Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung 5). As such, it is not always mandatory for students to learn English as their first foreign language in secondary education. Instead, the curricula group English with the general curricula for first living languages. The contents of the resulting texts are thus comparable across many school types. Additionally, Austrian schools may be subject to efforts in decentralisation referred to

as school autonomy, which allows individual schools to have their own respective educational foci or (more or less drastically) shift the foci given in curricula.

Due to this vast room for individualisation, the sheer number of available curricula and the overall nonetheless present comparability between curricula, it has been decided that a full-scale analysis of *all* available documents would far exceed the scope of this thesis. Consequently, this chapter only focuses on instances of first foreign language education as a compulsory subject or a compulsory elective. It only touches on English as a free elective if this circumstance makes special conditions and restraints apply to it. Further, it fuses its analyses of the curricula for both the *AHS Unterstufe* and the *Mittelschulen* into a general review of lower secondary education. Finally, it only reviews representative curricula for upper secondary education to summarise the role of literature in Austrian curricula for foreign language education.

2.3.2. Lower Secondary Education

First foreign languages at Austrian *Mittelschulen* and *AHS Unterstufen* are taught throughout all four years of this school type. In *Mittelschulen,* the first two years are taught for four weekly lessons, though this volume is lowered to three in the latter two years (Rechtsinformationssystem des Bundes[1], 2022: 22). Contrary, *AHS Unterstufen* follow the same formula if they have a focus on natural sciences or economics (*Realgymnasien*) but not if they have a focus on languages (*Gymnasien*). In *Gymnasien,* throughout the first three years, four weekly lessons are to be conducted and this volume is only lowered to three in their last year (Rechtsinformationssystem des Bundes[2], 2022, 25). The curricula for both school types view the (independent) development of communicative competence(s) as their primary objectives (cf. ibid.[1] 35ff. & ibid.[2] 54ff.) and also make frequent references to the *Bildungsbereiche* (areas of education), which can be understood as meta-topics of education that all subjects (must) relate to more or less heavily.

As some of these areas of education are directly related to culture and adjacent fields, both curricula set aims that could potentially also be realised through the implementation of literature. However, at no point binding or explicit demands in relation to literary texts are made. In fact, the curricula only explicitly mention them as a potential example for one of the various topics (ibid.[1] 38 & ibid.[2] 57) students are to be familiarised with throughout their

education. Simultaneously, the curricula provide explicit references to CEFR that set desired outcomes for both *AHS Unterstufen* and *Mittelschulen* as described in Figure 10 below.

In summary, Austrian curricula for *Mittelschulen* and *AHS Unterstufen* do not provide any specific guidelines that explicitly advocate for or against the use of literature in first foreign language education. At the same time however, they set relatively strict guidelines through reference to CEFR. Thus, they essentially directly reproduce the logic outlined in the previous chapters.

	Listening	Reading	Spoken Interaction/Production	Writing
Year 1	A1			
Year 2	A2		A1	A2
Years 3 & 4	A2/B1		A2	A2/B1

Figure 10: Desired outcomes in accordance with CEFR in Austrian Mittelschulen and AHS Unterstufen (cf. Rechtsinformationsystem des Bundes[1] 40; Rechtsinformationsystem des Bundes[2] 59).

2.3.3. Upper Secondary Education

After lower secondary education, Austrian students usually have completed four out of the five years of their compulsory education. They then are given the options of either enrolling in individual vocational training (not analysed here) or upper secondary education with either a general or a vocational focus. In terms of general foci, they can either elect to enrol in upper secondary *AHS* or pre-vocational schools (*polytechnische Schulen)*, each of which have their own curricula. Vocational foci can either be realised through attending vocational middle or high schools (*Berufbildende mittlere* or *höhere Schulen*). As mentioned before, there is a plethora of different vocational schools. Thus, only some representative curricula are discussed below, namely those of *Handelsakademien* (*HAK*) and *Höhere technische und gewerbliche Lehranstalten* (*HTL*).

2.3.3.1. General Foci – *Polytechnische Schulen* and *Allgemeinbildende höhere Schulen*

The pre-vocational *polytechnische Schulen* are designed as a direct follow-up to lower secondary education, regardless of the school type attended there. They usually take only a single year to complete and aim to prepare students for their (occupational) lives after

compulsory education. They do so by focusing on the working world, also by providing practical experiences through mandatory internships. Contrary to most other Austrian school types, English usually is the only foreign language offered at *polytechnische Schulen*. The general volume for foreign language education here is three weekly lessons, though a free elective class consisting of an additional two weekly lessons may be offered. General English classes and free elective classes differ in some regards, and each have their own section of the curriculum. Contrary to lower secondary education, the curriculum for *polytechnische Schulen* does not feature dedicated areas of education as guidelines. Instead, it lists certain principles for each subject that are to be adhered to. In the case of English, the only aspect of these that may be related to literature is a call for teachers to use authentic texts that reflect the interests of students (Rechtsinformationssystem des Bundes[3] 12). Other than that, no references to the teaching of literature are made in the curriculum for general English classes. This may also be related to the fact the curriculum is primarily designed around the goal that students are expected to reach CEFR levels A2-B1 after their only year at this school type (ibid.[3] 11 & 18ff.). Neither of these levels make explicit references to the use of literature. Contrary, the curriculum for free elective English classes expands on these demands by explicitly setting the aim that students should be able to understand simple literary texts (ibid.[3] 11 & 37). Interestingly, the curriculum groups this competence with others from CEFR level B1, despite the fact that literary texts are not explicitly mentioned there (cf. Council of Europe[1] 26).

Thus, the curricula for *polytechnische Schulen* is only partially like those for lower secondary education; general English classes do not demand the use of literature in foreign language learning and CEFR's primacy of outcomes is reproduced there. However, literature is indeed given a dedicated place as part of free elective English classes, albeit without any explicit deviation from CEFR's logic and demands, implying that in practice, similar conditions as in general English classes likely apply.

Upper secondary levels of *Allgemeinbildende höhere Schulen* offer English as part of their compulsory subjects as well as their compulsory and free electives, though the latter do not differ significantly from the former. As a compulsory subject, students are taught three weekly lessons of their first foreign language, regardless of the specific focus of their school (cf. Rechtsinformationssystem des Bundes[2] 35ff.). As a compulsory elective, the first foreign

language may be chosen for six, eight or ten weekly lessons combined over all four upper secondary years in schools with foci on language, natural sciences, and economics respectively (ibid[2] 34-39).

As a compulsory subject, learning objectives are set through references to the areas of education as well as CEFR. Again, the former references technically allow for a connection with literature to be made and again, communicative competence is viewed as the overarching goal of foreign language education (ibid.[2] 139ff.). However, upper secondary education also explicitly calls for the use of literary works at multiple occasions: Students are to be motivated to engage with literature independently (ibid.[2] 141), literary works are to be given appropriate attention as part of the diverse topics of the subject (ibid.[2] 142) and they are to attain overall CEFR level B2 after their fourth year in upper secondary (ibid.[2] 143). As reading competences at this level explicitly refer to literature to some degree (e.g. Council of Europe[1] 27), the curriculum makes multiple references to its use in all semesters, except for the last half of year eight, where it is simply implied (Rechtsinformationssystem des Bundes[2] 143ff.). However, the overarching goal of all this is, similarly to the phrasing of CEFR, presented as allowing students to 'understand' literary texts. In summary, compulsory first language education in *Allgemeinbildende höhere Schulen* explicitly demands engagements with literature but does not provide any guidelines for it other than implying those of CEFR, meaning that it *at least* partially reproduces its primacy of outcomes.

As a compulsory elective, the objectives of the curriculum relatively closely adhere to the limitations of the compulsory subject, though it demands an increased focus on speaking and communication and allows for a more detailed engagement with the topics outlined there (ibid.[2] 243ff.). In other words, teachers could technically cover literature as part of free elective English classes. However, similar issues as with compulsory classes arise, with the added layer of the demand for an increased focus on speaking activities, potentially leading to even more intense organisational issues than can be expected in 'regular' teaching.

2.3.3.2. Vocational Foci – *Handelsakademien* and *Höhere technische und gewerbliche Lehranstalten*

The Austrian *Handelsakademien* (*HAK*) are upper secondary schools that are usually attended for a total of five years. In comparison with schools of a more general focus, they feature a heavy emphasis on economic education and offer comparatively few elective

options. Thus, English is a compulsory subject in all five years of this school type and is taught during three weekly lessons in every year but the third, where only two lessons are conducted (Rechtsinformationssystem des Bundes[4] 8). *HAK*-curricula also do not feature areas of education; instead, the curriculum is prefaced by a preamble detailing the overarching goals of the school type. As with many of the areas of education, some of these goals may be related to the teaching of literature, though none of them explicitly mention it (ibid.[4] 1).

In fact, the curriculum does not mention literature at all in relation to English language education. While students are expected to reach level B2 after their fifth year at *HAK*, it heavily emphasises the use of English for economic ends and overall provides teachers with a rather detailed and dense list of aims their students are to reach per semester (ibid.[4] 29ff.). In other words, teachers may theoretically cover literature as part of compulsory foreign language education at *HAK*. However, this is neither encouraged by CEFR, nor explicitly called for by the curriculum.

Höhere technische und gewerbliche Lehranstalten (HTL) on the other hand are also usually attended for five years. *HTL* is an umbrella terms for a vast multitude of different schools with highly specified technical-vocational foci. As such, their respective document stating curricular details is a conglomerate consisting of over thirty different school curricula. In each of these, English usually is a compulsory subject and with only four exceptions, it is taught for two weekly lessons per year. In all these cases, English is taught for an additional weekly lesson for two of the five years. The exceptions are:

- aeronautics (*Flugtechnik,* Rechtsinformationssystem des Bundes[5] 414ff.)
- metal materials engineering (*Metallische Werkstofftechnik,* ibid.[5] 961ff.)
- metallurgy and environment engineering (*Metallurgie und Umwelttechnik,* ibid.[5] 988ff.)
- material technology and environment technology (*Material- und Umwelttechnologie,* ibid.[5] 1392ff.).

The curricula for English are virtually identical across all *HTL* school types, even those with additional weekly lessons. This is because the document gives one general curriculum for the subject (ibid.[5] 7ff.), which may be adjusted according to the needs of the specific school

type. Regarding its relation to CEFR, the curriculum for *HTL* states that students are to attain level B2 after five years. It also states that it makes modifications to CEFR in the form of *added* general competences that are of importance for the practical application of the benchmark document (ibid.[5] 16). However, these modifications are related to literature in no way other than student's abilities to organise and extract factual information from scientific literature; simply put, literature is understood as to be dealt with, rather than engaged with.

This means that in the case of *HTL,* similar guidelines and restrictions as with all other curricula analysed here are present: Again, teachers can technically cover literature in English classes. However, they must do so within the tightly set agenda of the curricula, the overarching limitations of CEFR and, in the case of *HTL*, within added dimension of the demands for an even more particularly organisational and extractive understanding of literature.

2.4. Conclusion for Chapter Two

After these comprehensive discussions and analyses, it is finally time for a review of the propositions put forth in this chapter, all of which can be viewed as partial answers to the question: *What is the underlying logic applied by CEFR and what is its relevance for the role of literature in Austrian foreign language education?*

In this context, it first seems relevant to re-emphasise that the aims of outcomes-orientation as represent through CEFR can be summarised as being *individualistic*. Moreover, they promote social, cultural and, most importantly, economic *growth* by *prescribing* certain standards primarily related to language. Even though the actual document presents itself as *descriptive*, its realisations in (Austrian) foreign language curricula ultimately make it *prescriptive* (cf. chapters 2.1.1. and 2.1.2.). We have also shown that, to realise these aims, CEFR's outcomes-orientation produces a particular understanding of language use that is characterised by a primacy of outcomes (cf. chapters 2.1.3., 2.1.4., 2.1.5. and 2.1.6.). Additionally, we have concluded that this primacy of outcomes means that pre-set, desired outcomes almost fully dictate the selection of inputs. Further, it implies that language use and, thus, language learning and reading are considered finite processes with 'ideal' results which primarily take the form of more competent agents (hence, its growth-orientation). Moreover, these results can be defined independent of actual realisations of the process.

We have noted that this may have drastic implications regarding how students are taught to engage with the world into which they are socialised (cf. chapter 2.1.6.). Because we noted that the role of inputs in CEFR is almost entirely dependent on its representation in outcomes, we have also checked the 2001 version of the document for its treatment of literature. There, we have concluded, only very general and ambiguous references to it are made (cf. chapter 2.2.). To further exemplify the drastic importance of outcomes-orientation, we have also shown that CEFR's logic and its placement of literature are reproduced in Austrian curricula for foreign language learning (cf. chapter 2.3.). The result of this is a what we can describe as a marginalised placement of literature; the curricula's overall strict adherence to CEFR gives foreign language education aims which are in many cases better realised using inputs other than literary works. Simply put, literature is largely unnecessary for the achievement of Austria's curricula for foreign language education. While it is not formally forbidden, its use is discouraged and must, in those rare cases that it actually is employed, adhere to the logic of outcomes-orientation.

Informed by all this, the following chapters shall elaborate that the result of CEFR's logic is an ambivalent and ultimately philosophically impoverished relationship with literature, based on which we can formulate a more general critique of outcomes-based education.

3. *Reconciliation?* – Literature Didactics and the Hermeneutic Process

As suggested throughout the preceding chapter, this thesis supposes problematic implications of CEFR's outcomes-orientation for (literature) education that are related to but go beyond the approach's primacy of outcomes (cf. chapter 2.1.6.). Simply put, these issues may be more deeply rooted; they can be exemplified by describing the ambivalent relationship of CEFR with the philosophic understandings that have previously informed literature education. In particular, these discrepancies relate to differences between CEFR's outcomes-orientation and hermeneutic models of reader-literature interaction.

To exemplify and better understand their ambivalent relationship, this chapter thus sets out to compare CEFR's underlying logic against that of (literary) hermeneutics. To this end, it first attempts to provide a concise overview of the influences of literary studies and outcomes-oriented education on literature didactics. Following this, it describes a model of the hermeneutic understanding of reader-literature interactions. Relating to a German-speaking context, we focus primarily on the reception theory branch of reader response criticism. Throughout its description, this model is compared against CEFR's understanding of the same process as outlined in chapter 2. It is hoped that this comparison generates insights into the possibility of a reconciliation between outcomes-orientation and reception theory. The chapter closes with a summary of these differences that serves as a basis for the discussion of a potential remedy to these issues in chapter 4. In summary, it is an attempt at answering the following underlying question: *Is the logic applied by CEFR reconcilable with that of hermeneutics according to reception theory?*

3.1. Literature Didactics and Outcomes-Oriented Education

To begin with such a comparison, we first need to compare outcomes-orientation's relationship to its most important 'counterpart' for the context of literary education: literary studies. Together, these two currents have drastically shaped literature didactics. Thus, the following shall provide a concise overview of the genesis of this relationship as well as its current status.

3.1.1. Earlier Developments: Didacticism and New Criticism

Unsurprisingly, literature didactics can look back on long and complex history. Yet, their establishment as their own subdiscipline did not take place until the 1970s. Both before and

after this point, they were essentially a conglomerate of insights accumulated in literary studies and general didactics as well as trends in educational politics (cf. Surkamp 119). In its earlier years, the use of literature for (foreign language) education usually followed rather mechanical principles and was not necessarily designed to foster linguistic knowledge in its students; instead, literary texts were viewed as vehicles for moral, philosophical, or historical instruction. As William Casement has pointed out, this understanding of literature is referred to as didacticism (101). It can be considered essentialist insofar, as it assumes that certain universally applicable values are somehow captured by (canonical) authors and are simply made available by reading the respective text (ibid. 102). Let us employ a rather simple graphic to summarise this logic of didacticism:

Figure 11: The logic of didacticism; note how reading merely makes inherent values available.

In the case of foreign language literature, this logic resulted in pedagogical concepts that primarily revolved around the translation of canonical or otherwise important works (Surkamp 119). Both Surkamp (ibid. 119) and Casement (101) agree that these assumptions had had considerable impact on the use of literature in the foreign language classroom well into the 20th century. It was only after this time that insights gathered in fields such as psychoanalysis, semiotics and, especially within a German-speaking context, (literary) hermeneutics (ibid. 102) started to influence the development of new currents within literature didactics. Most notable amongst are the subdisciplines of new criticism and reader response criticism (also cf. Surkamp 119).

While new criticism significantly diminished the role of the author when it came to the interpretation of literary texts, its efforts remained text-immanent (ibid. 120). This means that interpretation was still considered primarily dependent on the text at hand and a careful analysis of its precise realisations (i.e. forms), their meaning and the interplay of these latter two factors, but *not* the reader. This resulted in largely text- and teacher-centred approaches to the teaching of literature that were not too far from didacticism in their logic. Let us again employ a graphic to visualise this:

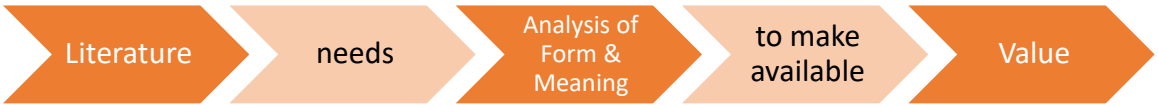


Figure 12: The logic of new criticism; note how the same logic outlined in Figure 11 still applies.

Following this development, the previously mentioned works of Noam Chomsky, Dell Hymes and Michael Halliday (cf. chapter 2.1.1.), amongst others, laid the foundation for the communicative approach to language teaching. In contrast to new criticism, this approach highly emphasised the role of learners and their respective contexts. Thus, it is connected to the genesis of outcomes-oriented language teaching (cf. chapter 2.1.1.): For example, it resulted in educational trends in the 1970s and 1980s that primarily viewed literature (and any other text) as a platform for communication in the target language (Surkamp 120); an application of literature that bears significant similarities to an outcomes-based understanding of its 'utilisation'. Thus, it is at this point that we can probably pinpoint the origins of some of the present differences between outcomes-orientation as represented in CEFR and (literary) hermeneutics: While the communicative approach (e.g. Hymes) would go on to at least partially inform the underlying logic of outcomes-oriented language education, literary hermeneutics would spawn a similar, though nonetheless different logic; that of reader response criticism.

3.1.2. Similarities and the Need for Reconciliation: Reader Response Criticism

The emergence of reader response criticism from the 1980s onwards can be seen almost as an antithesis to new criticism: In a nutshell, it opposed the view that the process of reading is a largely passive act of 'excavating' inherent value from a literary text. Instead, the reader is now put in an active position when it comes to the construction of meaning (also cf. Surkamp 120); simply put: Without a reader, literature was assumed to have no meaning and without literature, the reader could not construct any literary meaning. Let us again employ a visualisation of this understanding:

Figure 13: The logic of reader response criticism; note how (inherent) 'value' has been replace with 'meaning'. Also note how Literature is now dependent on the constructive effort of its readers to have meaning.

In these basic characteristics, this model of the underlying logic of reader response criticism does not deviate too far from that of the communicative approach or CEFR: After all, all these perspectives view the accomplishment of something (an outcome or a meaning respectively) as a reaction of a reader (an agent) to literature (an input). However, as we shall shortly elaborate, this admittedly oversimplified model does not yet capture the full scale of the theory behind reader response criticism.

Still, this congruent highlighting of agent-immanent efforts likely contributed (and *contributes*) to didactic principles informed by reader response criticism that are comparable to those of outcomes-orientation: These can be subsumed under the category of "learner orientation" (Surkamp 120); they emphasise the role of readers' (agents') engagements with literary works (inputs) and strive towards a use of literature that is connected to the needs of learners. As chapter 4 elaborates, these developments are also related to the ongoing discussion of the emotional impacts of reading (e.g. Donnerstag & Bosenius; Hogan) or the role of books aimed specifically at young audiences (e.g. O'Sullivan & Rösler; Nikolajeva). Thus, outcomes-orientation and reader response criticism are characterised by basic principles that are at least comparable in their emphases. However, outcomes-orientation has since asserted itself as an oftentimes dominant approach to (language and, thus, literature) education and, through CEFR, has become legislatively anchored in many foreign-language curricula. In 2012, Surkamp suggested that this has led to a need for "efforts [that] are being undertaken to show how the use of literary texts can be reconciled with […] the principle of output orientation." (125). This implies a relationship between reader response theory and outcomes-orientation that had turned unequal; one in which the former needed to be reconciled with the needs and demands of the latter.

Today, reader response theory still is subject to such reconciliatory efforts: A review of contemporary English-language publications shows a continued scholastic and pedagogic interest in its use in educational contexts (e.g. Shin; Ekstam; Gardner; Lewis; Cushing), though a decline of publications on the matter (cf. Browne et. al. online) that also correlates with the rise of a more absolute predominance of outcomes-orientation from approximately the 2010s onward can be observed. In a German-speaking context, it is particularly influences from the reception theory branch of reader response theory that are still used in attempts to reconcile the two; for example, in the form of 'action- and production-oriented

literature lessons' (Ger.: *Handlungs- und produktionsorientierter Literaturunterricht*[5]). In this light, the status of reception theory seems to remain important, yet ultimately uncertain (also cf. Reichl 127), particularly when considering that discussions on the feasibility of uniting its more abstract interactional principles with outcomes-based education remain relatively scarce.

3.2. The Logic of Reader Response Theory

To change this and simultaneously contribute to a larger-scale discussion of outcomes-based education as whole, we shall provide an attempt at comparing these underlying logics of the two approaches. To this end we should treat it similar to CEFR's logic: Thus, the following is an attempt at providing a concise model of how (literary) hermeneutics, particularly informed by reception theory, understand interactions between texts and individuals. Throughout its description, this model is compared against the understanding of the same process in CEFR that is summarised in chapter 2.

3.2.1. Hermeneutics: Gadamer and Jauß

In a European and especially a German-speaking context, reader response criticism was strongly influenced by the elaborations of the Constance School; in particular, scholars Hans Robert Jauß, Wolfgang Iser and their approach of reception theory. It would be beyond the scope of this thesis to recite the full history and impact of the Constance School.[6] However, it is nonetheless important to review its central assumptions: In essence, both Jauß and Iser proposed hermeneutic approaches, though Iser's focus arguably lies more on underlying theories of the text(ual genesis) rather than its interactions with readers (cf. chapter 3.2.2.; also cf. Holub[1] 31). This means that while both scholars agree with the stance that meaning can exclusively be derived from a text through active, constructive participation on the side of the reader (also cf. Leiteritz 146ff.), we should first investigate Jauß' propositions. In 1970, he described the basic principle of Reception Theory as follows:

> "Only through their [the readers'] mediation the work steps into the changing horizon of expectations of a *continuity*, in which the continuous transition of mere reception into critical understanding, from passive to active reception […] takes place" (Jauß 169; own translation; emphasis added).

[5] For a recent introduction into the matter cf. Haas' *Handlungs- und produktionsorientierter Literaturunterricht*.
[6] A concise, yet insightful summary of the history of the Constance School can be found in volume 8 of *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism* (Holub[2] 319ff.).

This concept of a "continuity" (ibid. 169) proves fundamentally important for Jauß' theory: In line with its hermeneutic nature, it implies that literature and reader are not only interdependent, but that this relationship is also circular (or rather: spiral) in nature. Simply put, any engagement between literature and a reader's disposition can cause a 'change' in the latter. Therefore, in following (or: 'continuous', to use Jauß' terminology,) interactions with literature, it is a 'changed' reader's disposition that engages with it. Thus, the previously employed single-axis graphic does not seem sufficient anymore to visualise the underlying structure of this hermeneutic approach. Instead, consider Figure 14 below:

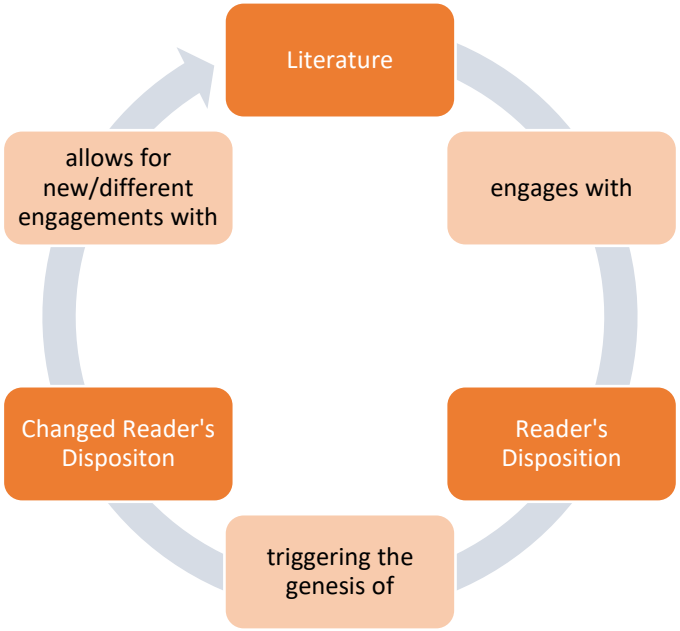


Figure 14: Basic structure of the hermeneutic spiral.

Again, the basic description of this logic in Figure 14 does not seem to deviate from that of outcomes-orientation too far: In both approaches, engagements with input are assumed to change the acting agents; while reception theory refers to changes in overall disposition, CEFR revolves around the accumulation of competences; a model that could very well also be represented as a continually expanding spiral (more about this in chapter 4). However, a closer investigation reveals more profound discrepancies. To make these accessible, a short digression is necessary:

In this context, it is of utmost importance to highlight that the hermeneutic description of engagements is necessarily built on several fundamental assumptions:[7] First, the hermeneutic spiral must not be considered a closed system. Second, it has neither a

[7] This should not be viewed as an exhaustive list of all attributes of hermeneutic engagements. Instead, only assumptions directly relevant for the scope of the present discussion are presented here.

fathomable beginning nor end and finally, the engagements it describes elude traditional notions of 'successful' or 'unsuccessful'. Neither of these assumptions were first proposed by Jauß himself. Instead, they can be derived from the works of German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, particularly his seminal publication *Truth and Method* (Ger.: *Wahrheit und Methode*).[8] While it would be far beyond this thesis to recite Gadamer's impact on hermeneutics in full, parts of his work nonetheless are necessary to understand the above-listed attributes and, in turn, the discrepancies between reception theory and outcomes-orientation as exemplified in CEFR:

To begin with, the hermeneutic spiral must not be considered a closed system that can only be applied to engagements with language or literature. Following Gadamer, this attribute is related to fundamental aspects of the relationship between the human experience and language. What is perhaps one of his most concise quotes relating to this can be found in of his discussions of Humboldt (qtd. in Leitzmann). There, Gadamer writes:

> "Not only is the world world insofar as it comes into language, but language too, has its real being only in the fact that the world is presented in it. Thus, that language is originally human means at the same time that man's being-in-the world is primordially linguistic" (Gadamer; translation by Weinsheimer and Marshall 459).

Simply put, Gadamer assumes a reciprocal relationship between an individual's worldview and (their) language. In relation to literature, this means that readers' dispositions (their 'worldviews') are influenced by their engagements with literature (their 'experience of language') and vice versa. Thus, a reader's disposition can not only be asserted to and influenced by engagements with literature but also the world in general (also cf. Jauß 199ff.). Thus, the hermeneutic spiral cannot not be considered a 'closed system' that is only applicable to literature (more about some implications of this in chapter 5.5.). While this is fundamental for understanding further attributes of the hermeneutic spiral, it does not yet represent a deviation from the logic of CEFR: On the contrary, it seems to even underline outcome-orientation's understanding of flexibly applicable competences.

However, discrepancies arise when also considering the implications of this first principle: Because of the reciprocal genesis of language and world(view), this is impossible to fathom any formal or clearly distinguishable 'beginning' to it. A 2007 contribution by Donatella Di Cesare to a volume discussing Gadamer's work provides a concise summary of this:

[8] Here qtd. as a 2004 translation by Weinsheimer and Marshall.

> "[…] hermeneutics […] rejects all beginnings. Thus, any beginning should not be considered absolute. If there is a beginning to hermeneutics, it always is to be found the middle of dialogic practice, where every question already is an answer and every answer is a question – and that towards infinity." (Donatella Di Cesare 184; own translation)

This implies that going into *any* engagement with literature, readers' dispositions are already influenced by previous encounters with it or the world in general. Simply put, readers can never be considered a *tabula rasa*. Additionally, the above-quoted passage also hints at the consequential infinity of this relationship. In reference to Jauß, engagements with literature can therefore ultimately be described as dual in nature (165ff.; also cf. Urban 181): They are historic, meaning that spirals of engagements continue across human generations, backwards to their unfathomable 'beginning'. Simultaneously, these relationships can also be considered aesthetic, as previously read literature exerts influence over a reader's disposition at the time of a present engagement and that (theoretically) *ad infinitum*. This hypothetical, infinite extension implies that hermeneutic engagements (including, of course, those with literature) cannot ever be considered formally 'finished': It is impossible for an individual to reach the 'end' of hermeneutics and 'complete' the process of understanding; simply phrased, according to hermeneutics, there is no 'end' to reading. In light of the previous chapter's discussion of outcomes-orientation according to CEFR, this attribute of hermeneutics immediately becomes problematic: This is because inherent to outcomes-orientation is the assumption that (learning) engagements must necessarily have a reachable, expressible and, most importantly, measurable 'end' – something that hermeneutics quite simply does not consider possible. The implications of this shall be explored in chapter 4 and discussed in chapter 5.

Particularly in relation to CEFR's desire for measurability, we must also investigate a third principle of hermeneutics according to Gadamer: The infinite, open nature of the process eludes any traditional consideration of engagements within it as 'successful' or 'unsuccessful'. This is related to the hermeneutic understanding of truth, which is relatively concisely expressed in Theodore George's summary of Gadamer's elaborations. He states that:

> „[t]he hermeneutical experience of truth can be described as the success of conversation so conceived. But, in this, truth is not experienced as a matter of "correctness," […]. In the experience of truth as correct predication, truth is typically conceived as the property of a *proposition, statement or utterance that suitably*

> *connects a subject with a predicate* [cf. artefact-outcomes; chapter 2.1.6.]. In the hermeneutical experience of truth, by contrast, the concern is not with predication, […] but, instead, with *conversation* [cf. chapter 3.2.2. below], grasped as an event of interlocution concerned with the being of a subject itself. In such a conversation, truth is reached, if it is reached, not when a subject is suitably connected with something else, but, instead, when the subject is sufficiently shown in its own being, as it truly is. The measure of such sufficiency is *established not in advance*, but is achieved in the course of conversation along with the claim of truth that it measures.“ (George online*;* emphases added*)*

In simpler terms, the very nature of the hermeneutic process implies that it must necessarily elude *all* externally imposed attempts at measurements. Thus, literary hermeneutics and reception theory in particular hold the position that notions of ‘correctness’ or ‘success’ cannot simply be applied to an engagement with a (literary) text based on externally applied measures. Instead, they can be set and ‘achieved’ only in each individual engagement. Of course, this stands in stark contrast to the logic of outcomes-orientation as represented by CEFR, where externally imposed benchmarks are not only used for measuring success or failure of students’ engagements, but they are also fundamental to the process in the first place. Moreover, the above-quoted passage also implies that hermeneutics views its process as (continued) *conversations* rather than merely *receptive* activities, a claim that shall be discussed in more detail in chapter 3.2.2. below.

To make this abstract system more approachable, Jauß employs two terms, namely the *Erwartungshorizont* (horizon of expectations) and the *ästhetische Distanz* (aesthetic distance). The *Erwartungshorizont* essentially describes what has been dubbed ‘reader’s disposition’ until this point: It entails a reader’s expectations before engaging with literature, also based on their respective knowledge of cultures, genres, forms as well as themes in both literary and general terms. The *ästhetische Distanz* on the other hand is closely related to what has been previously called ‘change’: It describes the metaphorically titular ‘distance’ between a reader’s *Erwartungshorizont* and the contents of the piece of literature (also cf. chapter 3.2.2.) at hand. Depending on the extent of this difference between the two factors, an engagement between them can cause changes within the reader, triggering what Jauß called a *Horizontwandel,* a change of horizon (Jauß 177ff.; also cf. Urban 181). Applying these nomenclatural changes to our graphic results in Figure 15.

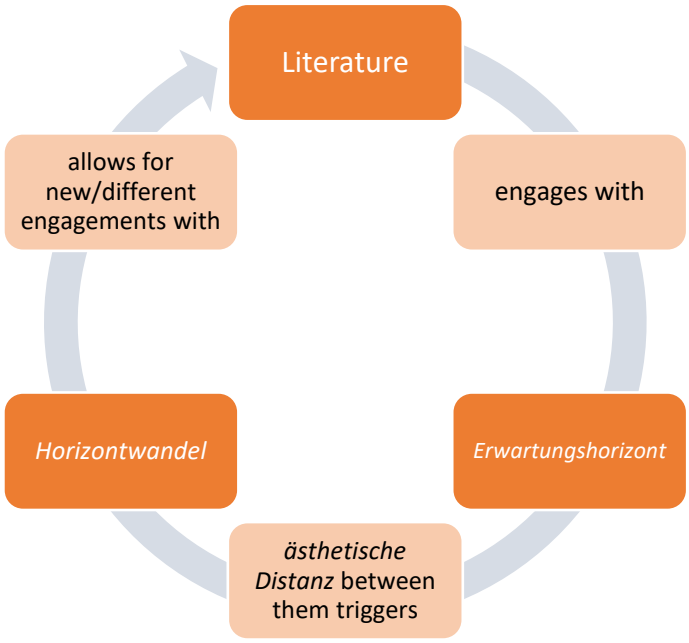


Figure 15: The hermeneutic spiral visualised using some of Jauß' terminology.

3.2.2. Hermeneutics: Iser

Before we delve further into any detailed comparisons, it is necessary to elaborate on the above-stated conversational understanding of reader-literature interactions according to hermeneutics. To this end, Wolfgang Iser's contributions to reception theory are helpful. Essentially, Iser's argumentation is in line with Jauß' (and Gadamer's) theories in so far, as he too assumes an interconnected relationship between literature and reader (e.g. Iser 38ff.). However, his elaborations highlight that in the engagement between literature and *Erwartungshorizont*, the literary work is not merely a passive, coherent set of forms. Iser writes:

> "[T]he work is more than the text, as it only achieves its life through concretisation [i.e. engagement with a reader], and it is itself not totally free of the dispositions that the reader brings into it, *though these dispositions are activated according to the conditions of the text*. Where text and reader achieve convergence lies the place of the literary work and it [the place] is necessarily virtual in its character, as it cannot be reduced to the reality of the text, nor the reader's dispositions." (Iser 38; own translation; emphasis added).

In light of this, the use of the term 'literature' as it has been employed in this thesis until now seems insufficient; its implications are too static, too predicative (cf. chapter 3.2.1.) to do justice to its role in the hermeneutic process. In accordance with Iser's above-quoted understanding, the term 'literature' rather should refer to the engagement in its entirety.

After all, it is only there that he assumes the text to become a literary work.[9] Following Iser, what a reader's *Erwartungshorizont* instead engages with are the "conditions of the text" (ibid. 38). He elaborates on the nature of these through a description of the relationship between 'actual' texts (i.e. the coherent sets of forms) and what he refers to as *Leerstellen* (empty spaces). Iser considers *Leerstellen* to be elements of "omitted connectivity" (ibid. 302; own translation) inscribed (though not *scripted*) *in* a text, meaning they can be considered intra-textual (also cf. Reichl 125). Simply put, they are whatever is not expressed by the actual textual forms,[10] but nonetheless is important for the meanings authors attempted to convey when writing them. Wherever reading takes place, individuals engaging with the text first tap into their *Erwartungshorizont*, second, thus identify a particular network of relations between forms, *Leerstellen* and meanings, third, compare this network against the actual text, which, fourth, potentially triggers a *Horizontwandel,* thus completing once 'lap' in the hermeneutic spiral. As mentioned in chapter 2.1.5., this four-part structure is strikingly similar to CEFR's description of receptive strategies. There, a distinction between the steps of planning, execution, evaluation, and repair is given. Again, this confronts us with a structural similarity between the two logics that may also contribute to continued attempts at highlighting a compatibility or reconcilability between them. In this context, it must be emphasised that the discrepancies highlighted by this thesis are not necessarily to be found in descriptions of *single-instance* engagements in either approach. Rather, it is primarily in their larger-scale, underlying understandings of their respective processes that fundamental differences can be found (also cf. chapter 3.3.).

In addition to all this, Iser's argumentation highlights the text's (author's) intentions in this process over the reactive efforts made by the individuals engaging with it. According to him, even though it is the readers who actually read the text, identify (some) empty spaces, and assume a network of relations, they do not do so arbitrarily:

> "[I]f empty spaces open a network of relationships, it must have a[n inherent] structure, lest the reciprocal relations between text segments would be indeterminable due to arbitrariness of individual adjustment." (ibid. 302ff.; own translation)

[9] To ease readability, the term 'literature' is nonetheless employed in its common sense from henceforth.
[10] Iser uses the term 'segments', referring to lager units of forms (302).

Thus, inherent to any literary text, there is not only a particular constellation of actual, textual, segments but also a particular constellation of *Leerstellen*, the existence of both are the result of efforts on the side of the author. The resulting texts operate on the (actually futile) assumption that their readers can identify these two constellations exactly as intended by the author. The sum of these two constellations and this assumption results in the (active) projection of what is oftentimes called an 'implicit' or 'implied' reader by the text('s author). This means that is therefore possible to substitute the previously used term 'literature' with 'implicit reader', resulting in the visualisation given in Figure 16.

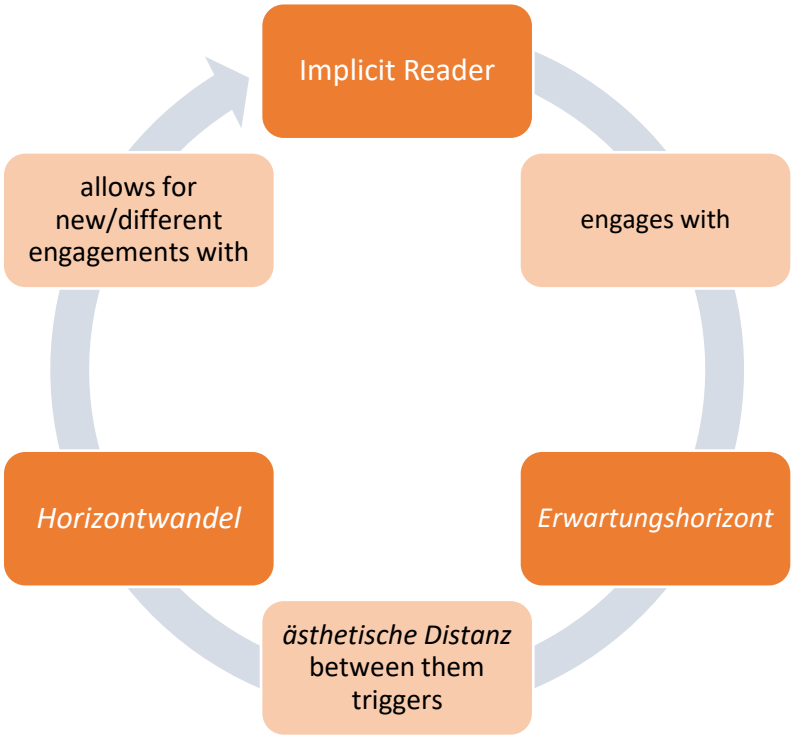


Figure 16: The hermeneutic spiral expressed using Jauß' and Iser's terminology.

Contrary to CEFR's 'ideal reader' (cf. chapter 2.1.6.), this implicit reader is both inherent to the text (making it impossible to define it without reference to a specific 'input') and necessarily virtual in character: Due to nature of intersubjectivity, it must be assumed that no implicit reader can ever be congruent with any *Erwartungshorizont* or *Horizontwandel* of any individual that is not the author of the respective text. The reason for this is twofold: On the one hand, such an overlap would make further engagements in the hermeneutic process redundant, thus imposing and 'end' to the process of reading and neglecting its inherent attributes as discussed in chapter 3.2.1. Secondly, phenomenologically speaking, we can never leave our role as individuals, making us unable to ever understand the *exact* intentions of any other (authorial) individual. Concisely phrased, reception theory assumes that we can

never be 'ideal readers' of a literary text, we can only continually approach understanding of it, repeatedly negotiating the notion of meaning through repeated engagements with it. Thus, Iser's elaborations re-emphasises the necessarily infinite nature of the hermeneutic spiral and the fact that it eludes all attempts at traditional, external evaluation.

As Reichl points out in her 2009 publication on reading in tertiary education, it is Iser's highlighting of the text and his resulting relative distinction of it from actual readers' abilities that distinguishes him from more 'purely' constructivist perspectives (ibid. 125). Naturally, the resulting status of the literary text in Iser's work is ultimately ambivalent. It is also due to this reason that he has not gone uncriticised: For example, authors such as Stanley Fish went as far as to conclude that his concepts are "nothing more than a loosely constructed network of pasted together contradictions." (12ff.). It is due to this ambivalent status of the text that the conversational nature of hermeneutics implied by the works of Iser should not be considered an absolute attribute of reception theory that is utterly unreconcilable with the principles of outcomes-based education: Indeed, chapter 4 shows that concepts such as emotional intelligence may be able to at least account for both a dialogic understanding as well as an individualist-constructivist view of reading. Despite this, Iser's relevance for the purpose of this thesis remains: In summary, we can say that it his relative elevation of the texts' role allows us to highlight outcomes-orientation's comparatively *individualist* agenda (cf. chapter 2.1.2.); an understanding necessitates that any engagement with a (literary) text must prominently be related to (the accumulation of gains for) the individual agent and is further discussed in chapter 5.

3.3. Conclusion for Chapter Three

Outcomes-Orientation (CEFR)	Hermeneutics (Reception Theory)

• *Individualist*
  • 'Subject-Predicate' relationship
• *Closed*
  • Predefined end
• *Prescriptive*
  • legally binding
  • necessarily measurable
  • 'Primacy of Outcomes'
	• *(Arguably) Conversational*
	  • 'Subject-Subject' relationship
	• *Open*
	  • Inherently infinite
	• *Descriptive*
	  • No notion of 'sucessful' or 'unsuccessful'

Figure 17: A comparison between outcomes-orientation as set in CEFR and the Reception Theory branch hermeneutics.

Having continually cross-referenced the attributes of hermeneutics and, in particular, reception theory with those of outcomes-orientation according to CEFR, it is now time to concretely summarise the accumulated insights in a definitive comparison of the logics underlying these two respective approaches in order to answer this chapter's underlying question: *Is the logic applied by CEFR reconcilable with that of hermeneutics according to reception theory?* To this end, Figure 17 provides a summary of the most important aspects of the of either approach as worked out on chapters 2 and 3 respectively.

Obviously, this comparison alone already suggests a lot about this thesis' answer to the question of the feasibility of reconciliation between the two approaches: While the fact that CEFR's approach to agent-input interactions is highly *individualistic* is contrasted by the more *conversational* elements of Wolfgang Iser's approach is no reason for assuming that the approaches are not reconcilable, there are more absolute differences between them. Most importantly, CEFR necessarily demands measurability to satisfy the primary aims of its conception. It is for this reason that it needs to predefine both literal and figurative *ends* to interactions, after which the engagement between input and agent is considered completed, either successfully or unsuccessfully. Reception theory on the other hand views input-agent engagements as continuous and *open*; they have no fathomable beginning and, as full overlap between implicit reader and *Erwartungshorizont* is considered impossible, are characterised by an ongoing approach of the reader that is never truly finished. It is due to this necessary infinity that conventional notions of 'success' or 'failure' cannot be applied in reception theory; *external* benchmarks impose a harsh stop to the free unfolding of the relationship that is inherent to the hermeneutic description of the continual (re-) arrangement of 'truth' or 'meaning' in the act of reading. Together, these respective attributes lead to a relationship between the CEFR and Reception Theory that does not seem easily reconcilable.

It is due to these relatively abstract discrepancies that this thesis repeatedly highlights that reasons for the non-reconcilable relationship between the two are to be found primarily in the 'underlying' or 'fundamental' logics of the respective approaches. Additionally, this emphasis, though admittedly repetitive at times, was deliberately employed to also highlight that even the relatively frequent instances of similarities between them should not suggest the feasibility of reconciliation: For instance, throughout this chapter we have pointed out

an overlap in some principles between the approaches (cf. chapter 3.1.2.), we have highlighted parallels in structure and even in the actual stages of the respective interactional processes (cf. chapter 3.2.1.). Further, we have noted that even the conversational nature of Iser's reception theory may not be utterly incompatible with outcomes-based approaches. Considering all this, we can re-emphasise that it is very likely that these multiple, relatively easily accessible similarities significantly account for the continued (scholastic) attempts of combining the two approaches. After all, they strongly suggest that their differences may be nomenclatural only: Does it really matter whether students in an EFL classroom undergo a *Horizontwandel* or develop more intuitive and less abstract competences? Does it really matter whether students can engage personally and emotionally with texts in a reciprocal exchange, or they "obtain information" (Council of Europe[1] 70) from them? And finally, does it matter whether they identify relations between forms, *Leerstellen* and meanings or they merely "execute" (Council of Europe[1] 72) the act of reading? This thesis' answer to all these questions turns out as perhaps its most straightforward proposition until this point: Yes, these differences do matter, because similarities between reception theory and outcomes-based approaches ultimately turn out to be a chimera. While it is possible to simultaneously relate to some attributes of the two, such alleged 'missing links' cannot do full justice to either approach. Simply put, it is not possible to do full justice to literary hermeneutics and reception theory while also adhering to the principles of outcomes-orientation, while viewing literature and reading primarily as a mere means to an end. To exemplify this, the following fourth chapter of this thesis analyses a psychological construct that, at first glance, seems compatible with both approaches: emotional intelligence.

4. '*Remedies'?* – Emotional Intelligence and Literature

We have closed the preceding chapter by emphasising that attempts at reconciliation between outcomes-orientation as reflected in CEFR and reception theory are necessarily tainted by significant disregard of the basic understandings of at least one of the logics. Such admittedly bold statements of course beg for exemplification. To satisfy this need, this chapter sets out to investigate a potential 'remedy' that seemingly presents (itself as) an ideal missing link between the two: emotional intelligence (EI from henceforth).

For the scope of this exemplification, we shall focus on the so-called ability model of EI (n.b.: Mayer, Caruso, Salovey 3-31), as it seems particularly conductive in our context:[11] Its problem-based understanding of how EI may be 'used' to engage with situations seems compatible with many notions also present in outcomes-orientation. Moreover, it also explicitly aspires integration into contemporary teaching (cf. ibid. 297). At the same time, it is of concern for reception theory, as it deals with titular emotions; elements of the human psyche that are frequently expressed through literary writings and are related to the concept of the *Horizontwandel* as well as the continuous exchange Iser assumes between reader and text (also cf. chapter 3). However, after elaborating these promising attributes, this chapter explains that they are 'too good to be true': Instead, approaches such as the ability model are exemplary for how superficial similarities between outcomes-orientation and reception theory cannot satisfy both approaches simultaneously. Instead, such attempts at 'remedying' their discrepant relationship ultimately end up satisfying the logic of one of them, while at best superficially relating to the other.

Highlighting apparent compatibility just to point out its shortcomings may seem like an attempt at strawman-argumentation. However, this chapter also uses its example as a basis to describe a final attribute of outcomes-orientation: Its resolution in its fundamental demands and its simultaneous, significant level of adaptability. Thus, our exemplary discussion of EI should instead also be viewed as a transition to the succeeding chapter, where we consider some larger-scale repercussions of outcomes-orientation. Ultimately, this chapter thus represents an effort to answer the question: *Does the ability model of*

[11] The author of this thesis has also dealt with the ability model (and its applicability in outcomes-based education) in his unpublished bachelor's thesis (n.b. Wagner 4ff.).

emotional intelligence present a potential remedy to the discrepant relationship between outcomes-orientation and reception theory?

4.1. A Brief Outline of Emotional Intelligence

Before we delve into any detailed elaborations, it seems necessary to briefly consider the scientific genesis of (research into) EI: Despite its almost explosive appearance in popular and scientific discourse from the end of the 20th century onwards, the origins of the concept(s) underlying EI are far from new. Instead, they can probably be traced back to either the ancient Indian Sanskrit scripts Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, and Ayurveda (cf. Gayathri & Meenakshi 2ff.) or the Delphic Maxims of Ancient Greece (Gerwal & Salovey 2ff.). While this emphasises that the general concepts underlying EI were neither 'discovered' nor 'invented' by contemporary scholars, going back this far would place the focus of this chapter in the realms of theology or history.

Instead, it seems more appropriate to primarily consider those developments that took place in and after the 1990s, as it was only at this point that we can observe an interest in EI that reached even beyond the scientific community. Considering a review of EI published by Grewal and Salovey, it was an increased "emphasis on research on the interaction of emotion and thought" (3ff.) at that time that triggered its (re-)emergence. The perhaps most seminal work inspired by this focus was the publication of Daniel Goleman's enormously successful 1995 book *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ.* It is almost exclusively due to Goleman's work that today, EI is a commonplace concept that even most laypeople can at least outline. While the altogether rather anecdotal evidence for the importance of EI presented in Goleman's work has made it the object of criticism (also cf. Neubauer & Freudenthaler 33), its publication can nonetheless be considered fundamental in further fuelling the continual growth and expansion of the concept. Despite this, the remainder of the 1990s still were primarily characterised by theoretical considerations regarding possible definitions and frameworks for EI; it was not until the early millennium that empirical research into EI truly took off (cf. Fernández-Berrocal & Extremera 11). However, this outright surge of interest in EI has also amplified adaptions of the concept that can be considered pop-scientific or pseudoscientific (cf. ibid. 8) and, consequently, consensus seems still somewhat rare in this field of psychology to this day.

However, what is common to virtually all contemporary approaches to EI is their emphasis on the importance of emotions and the allegedly significantly positive influences their reflected and mediated 'use' may have (also cf. Ciarrochi & Mayer qtd. in Rouhani 42). A publication by Neubauer and Freudenthaler (32ff.) summarises that, in a scientific context, three distinct and generally approved approaches to EI have emerged: The first one of which was originally conceived by Mayer and Salovey in 1997; it is referred to as the ability model of EI and shall be the focus of this chapter from henceforth (n.b. Mayer & Salovey). The other two prominent models were popularised in the early 2000s by Petrides and Furnham (referred to as the Trait-Model) and Bar-On (referred to as the Mixed Model) respectively.[12] The primary differences between all of them can be found first and foremost in their fundamental conception of the make-up of EI and the consequential processes employed in its measurement; titularly, they have different answers to the question: 'Is EI an ability, a trait or both?'. Neither of these three approaches have fallen in scientific disgrace. Instead, they are, to a certain degree, even compatible with one another (cf. Neubauer & Freudenthaler 33).

However, for the scope of our exemplary elaborations in this chapter, we shall focus exclusively on the ability model: Its origins precede Goleman's work and can be traced back to the year 1990, when US-American scholars Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer first proposed the very concept of EI as we know it today (185ff.). Following the popularisation of EI in the wake of the 1990s, a revision of this original outline was published by the same authors in 1997. In this first important update, a framework that viewed EI as a resource for problem-solving and can be categorized according to four main areas was established (also referred to as 'branches'; cf. Mayer, Caruso & Salovey 290). As we shall elaborate shortly, it is this problem-based nature of the model that makes it interesting for the principles of outcomes-based education: Primarily, this is because it makes it easily employable in relation to "performance related psychological constructs" (Neubauer & Freudenthaler 45), an interest that can of course also be considered fundamental to outcomes-based education, which is very much concerned with student performance (cf. chapter 2). Additionally, the ability model is made more attractive for our purposes by its interest in human *interaction* as (also) expressed through language, which, as chapter 3 has shown,

[12] For comparisons of these models cf.: Neubauer and Freudenthaler; Fernández-Berrocal & Extremera or Dhani & Sharma.

may make it compatible at least with Iser's contributions to reception theory. Moreover, in comparison, Goleman's (1995) elaborations have been increasingly used for application in the (sometimes) pseudoscientific field of commercial self-improvement literature (cf. Dhani & Sharma 194) and Bar-On's mixed model is based on self-report scales (cf. Neubauer & Freudenthaler 42). Thus, in the following we shall further elaborate on why the ability model may indeed be the most attractive theoretical framework under consideration for reconciling outcomes-based (language) education with reader response theory. To this end, we consider its most recent 2016 update (Mayer, Caruso & Solovey 290-300), first with regards to CEFR, then focussing on reception theory.

4.2. The Ability Model and (CEFR's) Outcomes-Based Education

In this version of the ability model, the actual framework is preceded by a list of seven basic assumptions the authors propose regarding EI (Mayer, Caruso & Solovey 2016: 290-293). Following this, an updated version of the 1997 four-branch model is provided (ibid. 2016: 293ff.). Both these underlying principles and the model itself are particularly compatible with outcomes-based education according to CEFR, as shall be elaborated in the following subchapters.

4.2.1. The Seven Principles of Emotional Intelligence

The seven principles that underlie the authors' attempt at "theorizing about emotional intelligence" (Mayer, Caruso & Solovey 290) are the fundament on which any of their further elaborations on the ability model are constructed. Some of them are primarily concerned with the testing of EI in individuals and are therefore more incidentally relevant for our purposes, while others allow us direct insights into the very logic of its concept. In any case, all these principles are at least indirectly compatible with the fundamental logics and aspirations of outcomes-oriented teaching as proposed by CEFR:

For example, the first principle states that EI is to be considered a titular mental *ability* (290). This already implies a shared basis with outcomes-based education according to CEFR, where an agent's *ability* to perform (language) activities is the enabling factor in student's engagement with virtually any input (also cf. chapter 2). Following this rather general statement, the second principle expands on this by adding that "Emotional Intelligence Is [thus] Best Measured as an Ability" (Mayer, Caruso & Solovey 291). While at first glance, this may seem like a tautology, it is nonetheless important for understanding that this model

does not rely on self-report scales for evaluating EI. Instead, it aims to draw conclusion about an individual's EI through comparing their performance when solving problems against *external* benchmarks. Again, a resemblance to CEFR can be observed, where problem-solving (assessed through *artefact-production*) is of central importance for the testing of competences (also cf. chapter 2.1.6.).

Somewhat in contrast to what is implied in CEFR, the third principle emphasises the lack of reliable correlation between (emotional) intelligence and intelligent behaviour: The authors state that, in real-life situations, the vast number of unpredictable variables in individuals and situations make it virtually impossible to pinpoint any link between singular instances of (emotionally) intelligent behaviour and actual (emotional) intelligence (Mayer, Caruso & Solovey 291). In relation to outcomes-oriented pedagogy this may prove problematic insofar, as a significant portion of such educational systems rely on single-instance testing to assess students. However, the principle also notes that (emotional) intelligence "predict[s] some long-term behavioural outcomes" (ibid. 291), the achievement of which are thoroughly comparable to the overarching aims of outcomes-based education, particularly that of CEFR (cf. chapter 2.1.2.). In relation to this, the fourth principle is thus concerned with test content, which must "sample from a wide range of […] problems in order to assess a test-taker's problem-solving ability" (Mayer, Caruso & Solovey 291). Similarly, principle five dictates that a test's subject matter must consequently be "Well-Defined" (ibid. 292), resulting in a need for accurate descriptions of both the problem to be solved as well as the abilities needed to solve it. Both these principles can be aligned with the outcomes-orientation's notions of outcomes, competences, and its strong desire for measurability.

Finally, the second-to last principle underlying the ability model attributes EI to the realms of the so-called broad intelligences, a construct of intelligence that can be located between the overarching (non-specific) general intelligence and the task-specific narrow intelligence (cf. ibid. 294). Again, uniting this concept with CEFR's competences is feasible, as the definitions for many of them bear striking resemblance to the definition of the realm of broad intelligence (also cf. ibid. 293). Following this, the authors also highlight that (board) intelligences can additionally be categorized along an axis of cool and hot intelligences, EI being a hot intelligence (ibid. 294ff.). While cool intelligences are primarily concerned with impersonal comprehension (e.g. spatial and visual thinking), hot intelligences have a

stronger focus on individuals, their ability to self-regulate and the influence of these factors on their interactions with others. Obviously, this distinction also lends itself to a comparison, if not an outright adaption in the recent paradigm shifts in language education also embodied in CEFR, where the influence of individuals' abilities and competences on communicative interaction related to it have become central.

In summary, we can thus state that all of the seven underlying principles of the ability model of EI are all *at least* incidentally compatible with the aspirations and logic of outcomes-orientation as presented in CEFR. Let us further investigate this compatibility by considering the four branches of the actual model.

4.2.2. The Four Branches of the Ability Model

In essence, the actual ability model groups the development and application of EI into four branches. Each of these is "increasingly integrated and more complex" (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso 293) with regards to the respective types of reasoning associated with them. While this basically makes the model hierarchical in structure, this assumption does not yet cover its full complexity. This is because not all lower branches of EI necessarily *must* be fully developed to employ reasoning featured in its higher tiers. If fact, the development of the different branches may be partially parallel (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso 293). To illustrate this, first consider the authors' summary of the model reproduced in Figure 18:

1. Perceiving emotions	2. Facilitating thought using emotions	3. Understanding emotions	4. Managing emotions
• Identify deceptive or dishonest emotional expressions •Discriminate accurate vs. inaccurate emotional expressions •Understand how emotions are displayed depending on context and culture •Express emotions accurately when desired •Perceive emotional content in the environment, visual arts, and music •Perceive emotions in other people through their vocal cues, facial expressions, language, and behaviour •Identify emotions in one's own physical states, feelings, and thoughts	•Select problems based on how one's ongoing emotional state might facilitate cognition •Leverage mood swings to generate different cognitive perspectives •Prioritize thinking by directing attention according to present feeling •Generate emotions as a means to relate to experiences of another person •Generate emotions as an aid to judment and memory	•Recognize cultural differences in the evaluation of emotions •Understand how a person might feel in the future or under certain conditions (affective forecasting) •Recognize likely transitions among emotions such as from anger to satisfaction •Understand complex and mixed emotions •Differentiate between moods and emotions •Appraise the situations that are likely to elicit emotions •Determine the antecedents, meanings and consequences of emotions •Label emotions and recognize relations among them	•Effectively manage others' emotions to achieve a desired outcome •Effectively manage one's own emotions to achieve a desired outcome •Evaluate strategies to maintain, reduce, or intensify an emotional response •Monitor emotional reactions to determine their reasonableness •Engage with emotions if they are helpful; disengage if not •Stay open to pleasant and unpleasant feelings, as needed, and to the information they convey

Figure 18: The four branches of the Ability Model (qtd. verbatim from: Mayer, Salovey & Caruso 294).

As can be seen, the types of reasoning expressing the respective branches of the model can, to some degree, be considered hierarchical and thus dependent on one another. For example, one could hardly conceive a situation in which "[e]ffectively managing other's emotions to achieve a desired outcome" (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso 294) seems probable without being able to "[p]erceive emotions in other people" (ibid. 294). However, some of the types of reasoning associated with the upper branches of the model may potentially be tapped into by individuals without full control over the preceding tiers; an individual could very well be able to "[r]ecocnize cultural differences in the evaluation of emotions" (ibid. 294) without being able to "[l]everage mood swings to generate different cognitive perspectives" (ibid. 294). In other words, the branches are in partial "parallel developmental progression" (ibid. 293) and can thus be considered semi-hierarchical in nature.

Compare this to CEFR, where the growth-oriented aims of the document (cf. chapter 2.1.2.) and its general logic regarding the achievement of learning outcomes (cf. chapter 2.1.6.) suggest a similarly hierarchical structure for the development of (language) competences. Here, this strict 'hierarchy' in the development of competences is mitigated through the fact that proficiency descriptions are also suggested to be "a set of parallel scales for separate categories" (Council of Europe[1] 2001: 181). In relation to literature for example, an individual may very well be able to "express in some detail their reactions to the form of expression, style and content of a work, explaining what they appreciated and why" (CEFR level B2; cf. Council of Europe[4] 106) without the ability to "relate events in a story, film or play to similar events they have experience or heard about" (CEFR level B1; cf. Council of Europe[4] 107). Hence, the structural nature of CEFR's proficiency levels may also be considered semi-hierarchical and thus comparable with the ability model.

4.2.3. The Logics of the Ability-Model and CEFR

Now that we have established the compatibility of the ability model's underlying structure with that of CEFR, it is time to analyse whether the model's description of actual 'engagements' of individuals with (emotional) inputs is in line with CEFR's logic. Of great interest for this purpose is the fact that all four branches of the ability model are directly relatable to "Specific Forms of Problem Solving" (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso 296).

The authors elaborate further on this by stating that their "[…] model can be expanded to describe the *units*, *operators* and *solutions* of each intelligence that people manipulate to analyze the problem" (ibid. 296; emphasis added). *Units* are "a finite [but not necessarily small] set of information" (ibid. 296), *operators* are primarily individual-immanent abilities belonging to one of the four branches of the model described in Figure 18 above and *solutions* are relatable to so-called *aims of reasoning,* which describe an *externally defined* and *desirable* product of the engagement of the latter two factors (cf. ibid. 296ff.).

Obviously, this three-factor approach quite easily lends itself to a comparison with the logic extracted from CEFR in chapter 2, where (language-based) problem solving is described as involving inputs (units), agent-immanent factors (operators) and outcomes (solutions). Consider the comparison in Figure 19 below:

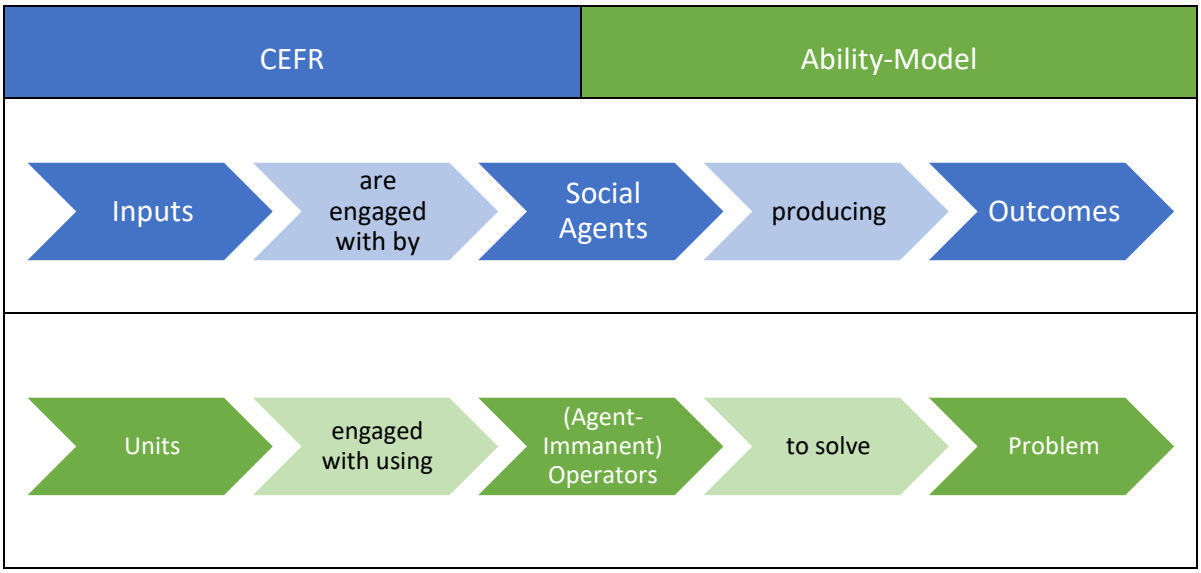


Figure 19: A comparison of the ability model with CEFR.

Simply put, the ability model's task-based and *end*-oriented conception of how individuals engage with the (emotional) contents of any given situation is thoroughly comparable to how the CEFR views language use (or: 'language problems', to merge terminologies). In the case of *these* two approaches, their parallels even go beyond mere structural similarities: They can be described as structurally equal with regards to their logics, *because* both are end-oriented. In other words, both are outcomes-based approaches. This adjacency of the ability model to outcomes-based education is also hinted on by its authors, who suggest that "educators can develop new curricula that explicitly focus on the[se] units of problem

solving [.]" (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso 297). In the case of EFL-teaching this could be achieved through inputs that involve both emotions and foreign language and thus may simultaneously foster the development of both foreign language skills and EI. For example, by using literature.

4.3. The Ability Model and Reception Theory

Having established the (structural) compatibility of the ability model with CEFR, it is now time to also consider how it – at least superficially – lends itself to satisfy some interests of reception theory. Through this comparison, we shall not only highlight why full reconciliation between CEFR and reception theory remains impossible even in light of the ability model, we shall also identify a crucial attribute of CEFR; its strict resolution to satisfy its fundamental demand, paired with significant adaptability.

4.3.1. Reception Theory and Emotions

It has been mentioned before that particularly the works of reception theorist Wolfgang Iser highlight a comparatively conversational relationship between literature and reader (cf. chapter 3.2.2.). The resulting mutuality of the engagement is a neat entry point for a comparison between reception theory and the topical interests of the ability model of EI.

First and foremost, the highlighting of the relatively intentional role of a text's implicit reader in Iser's model necessitates a view of literature as the result of a constructive effort by its respective author; in this regard, it is like any everyday emotional utterance. While it is true that literature is (quite literally) scripted in comparison to spontaneous reactions expressed in a verbal exchange, this does not mean that it is uninfluenced by similar perceptual mechanisms. After all, literature is, on this phenomenological level, virtually always the result (though not always an authentic reproduction) of real, past experiences of its respective authors. US-American scholar Patrick Hogan comments on this as follows:

> "[…] [Literature] is not the momentary result of a confluence of contingent particulars that have real consequences in our daily lives. But it is also not an entirely artificial and limited provocation undertaken in entirely contrived circumstances." (Hogan 21)

For our purposes, this means that the phenomenological roots of literature are (also) to be found in prior, directly emotional encounters of its author. While its role as an intermediating step may increase literature's perceived alienation from 'real' experience, it

is important to remember that conveying any experience between individuals always entails at least some level of abstraction: For example, expressing anger by loudly cussing is not the same as experiencing the emotion; the curse already is a representation, though it may be a spontaneously generated one. Similarly, reading an expression of anger in a book is a mere representation of a (potentially fictional) character's emotional stance, influenced by the author's prior experience of the emotion. In other words, 'spontaneous' verbal expressions of emotions essentially work on comparable levels of representation and abstraction as literature; the primary differences between them are their mode of expression and (usually) the temporal distance between perception and expression. Again, drawing from Hogan's elaborations, it can be summarised that, in both cases, "[t]he fundamental operation […] is encoding – the selection, segmentation, and structuration of input at various levels of processing." (Hogan 14).

Simply put, this means that both spontaneous utterances and written texts are abstract expressions perceived by a receiving individual and thus, none of them is more or less 'real' in its emotional content than the other. Of course, this argumentation neglects to consider body language, intonation, the agents' ability to directly interact and related factors. In this sense of the term, reading a book of course truly is less 'emotional' than actually conversing with an individual. However, in the context of emotional learning from situations, this only matters indirectly: Going back to our example from the last paragraph, is seems obvious that an individual's reactions to a verbal curse directly addressed at them may trigger (or allow for) different responses than an anger-provoking section read in a book. However, the fundamental experience (if not its representation, expression, or the ability to interact with it) remains comparable. It is precisely through these "proxy emotional experiences", that we can argue that literature "potentially prepares readers for dealing with empathy and mind-modelling in real life" (Nikolajeva 85). As pointed out by Hogan, "the crucial point here is that the depictive [emotional] validity of a literary work does not derive from its source in some prior experience. It derives from its production of such an experience" (22).

For pedagogical considerations this brings with it interesting implications: Individuals may not be able to react to emotion-provoking expressions in literature the same as in real-life, potentially reducing the social complexity of such encounters in some cases. However, the emotional experiences they have in response to such 'proxy-expressions', are no less 'real'

and may thus nonetheless be the basis for comparable emotional learning. Additionally, literature oftentimes allows readers to have different, more intrusive insights into the motives and emotional states of its characters, which of course more often than not is quite simply impossible in real life. In this context, Hogan has highlighted, that the emotions evoked by literary texts should be considered primarily empathetic (dialogic) rather than egoistic anyway (22ff), which is in turn supported by Iser's reciprocal focus. With regards to foreign language learning, literature's ability to produce 'real' and empathetic emotions in readers supports the frequently highlighted authentic nature that it brings with it; thus, when interacting with literature, students always also interact with 'authentic feelings'. Providing a nurturing context might consequentially also aid affective association with the respective target languages and cultures.

In summary, literature, while it cannot be considered equal to 'actual' social engagements with regards to emotions, works based on similar representational mechanism as them. Additionally, literature can provoke 'actual' emotions in readers that may be the basis for 'emotional learning'. It also comes with the added advantage of being able to allow for insights that oftentimes remain inaccessible in real life. All this seems a sufficient basis to further consider how emotional approaches such as the ability model could be compatible with reception theory.

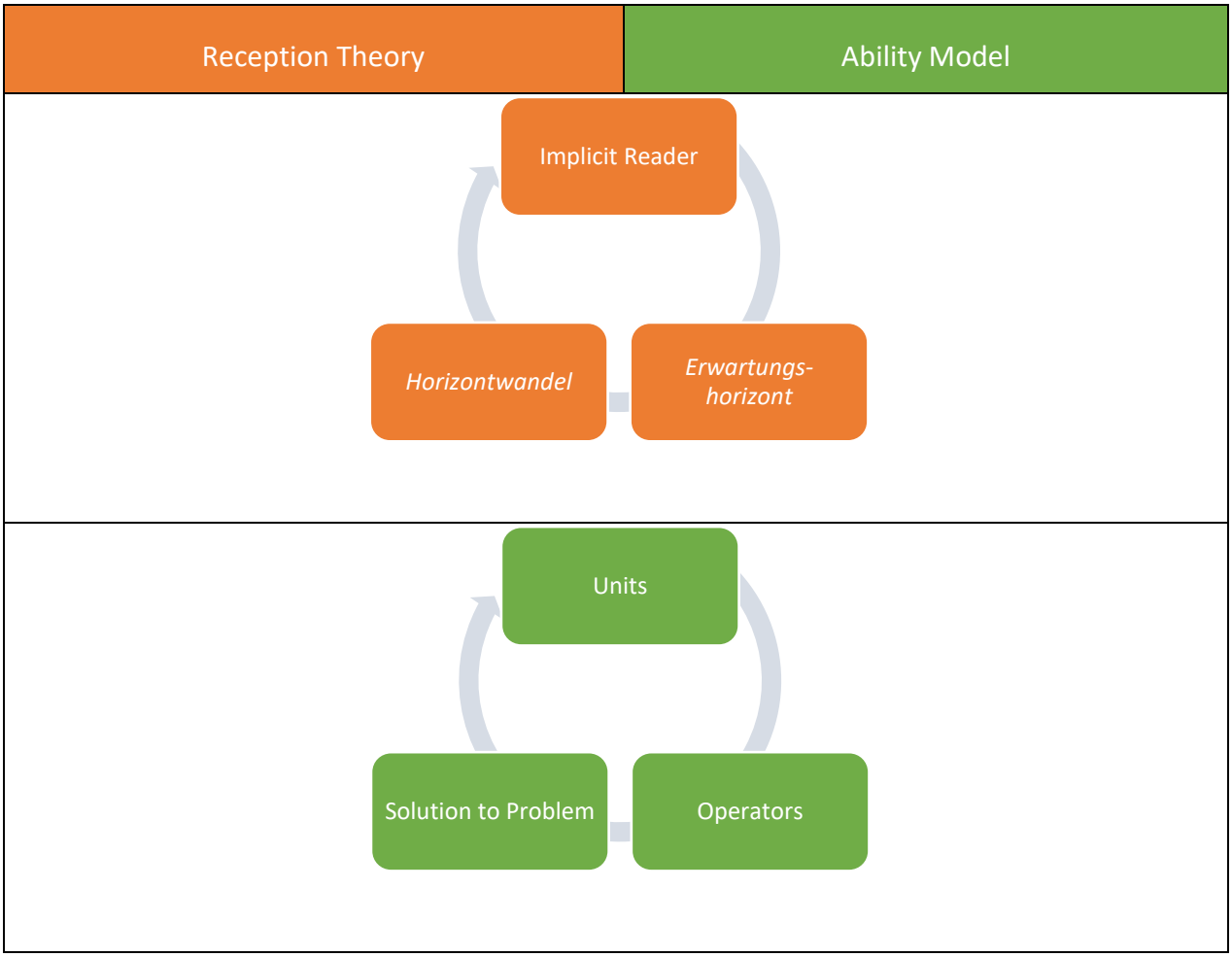
4.3.2. The Logics of the Ability-Model and Reception Theory

A first important suggestion for such a compatibility can already be found in the preceding subchapter: The engagement with literature can produce experiences which may serve as a basis for reader's emotional learning in real life. This can also be explained by drawing on the structure of the hermeneutic spiral: The (continuous) engagement with literature can trigger dispositive changes (*Horizontwandel*) within the reading individual that in turn can be applied to engagements with the 'world outside the book' (cf. chapter 3.2.1.). In this reciprocal relationship, the *emotional* disposition of the engaging individual is no exception from these changes. Hence, this role of literature as a suitable 'fertiliser' for emotional growth can be considered a neat argument for the compatibility of the ability model and reader response criticism.

Thus, we should not only consider whether literature may aid the development of EI, we should also consider how this influence can be represented structurally. As prominently

discussed in subchapters 3.2.1. and 3.2.2., particularly Wolfgang Iser views individuals' hermeneutic engagements with literature as a continuous interplay between a work-immanent implicit reader and a reader-immanent *Erwartungshorizont.* The latter of these two is the subject of the change (the *Horziontwandel*) triggered by the engagement between them. Adopting the terminology of the ability model, this relationship could also be described as an engagement between (in this case) literature-immanent units (the implicit reader) and agent-immanent operators (influenced by the *Erwartungshorizont*). In the case of the ability model, the confluence of these factors may cause an individual to conceive of a potential solution to an emotional problem. The success of that solution may then be (re-) applied by the acting individual to engage with future problems using 'changed' operators (cf. *Horizontwandel*); respectively, emotional learning occurs and the hermeneutic spiral repeats itself. In this regard, the ability model's structure can be represented similarly to that of receptions theory, as Figure 20 demonstrates:

Figure 20: An adaption of the ability model to fit in with reception theory.



While this comparison makes structural similarities between the two easily accessible, it must be highlighted that, despite them, the ability model ultimately remains unable to fully account for the hermeneutic process. This is because, as we have highlighted throughout this very chapter (n.b. chapter 4.2.1.), the ability model is compatible with the principles of CEFR, prominently *because* it revolves around benchmarked solutions (i.e. *because* it is outcomes-based). Thus, the ability model's capability to relate to the structure of the hermeneutic spiral, and some aspects of the conversational nature of reception theory do little do prove its role as a 'missing link': This is because its outcomes-based nature *necessitates* externally imposed, ultimately prescriptive benchmarks. In this regard, it too imposes literal and figurative 'ends' to the hermeneutic process.

However, the sudden shift from a linear to a circular representation of the ability model in Figure 20 seems, to say the least, noteworthy. This oddity is representative for an important and hitherto undiscussed attribute that is inherent not only to the ability model, but *all* outcomes-based approaches: Their topical and structural adaptability once their fundamental demands have been met.

4.4. Conclusion for Chapter Four

After all, the (superficial) structural compatibility of the ability model with hermeneutics exemplifies that the problematic relationship between outcomes-based approaches and reception theory does not come from its understanding of interactions. Instead, the proposition laid out in chapter 3.3. holds true: Discrepancies between the two are caused by the *restraints* outcomes-orientation imposes on that understanding. The least negotiable amongst these restraints is outcomes-orientation's central demand for 'objectively' measurable outputs. As soon as this condition is met however, outcomes-based approaches become enormously adaptable: As the ability model exemplifies, they can be applied to virtually any topic and even appropriate different structural forms; in fact, chapter 2 has deliberately visualised CEFR's interactional structure as linear to highlight its end-oriented nature and ease a comparison to reception theory. As hinted at in chapter 3.2.1. and visualised in Figure 21, it actually is possible to also conceive CEFR's logic as a circular or even a spiral relationship:

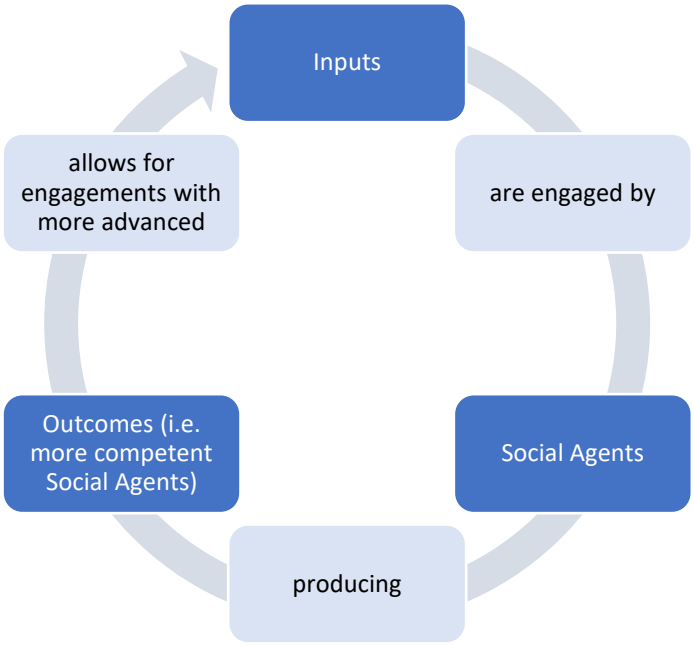


Figure 21: Outcomes-orientation according to CEFR as a circular/spiral relationship.

At first glance, this topical and structural adaptability makes outcomes-based approaches infinitely flexible. Indeed, it quite easily lends itself to the credos of many natural and formal sciences. However, it becomes fundamentally problematic as soon as it imposes its demands onto logics which question the *absolute reachability* and *external measurability* of (particular) outcomes themselves: In chapters 2 and 3, this thesis has compared CEFR and reception theory to show this. As this chapter exemplifies, attempts to nevertheless unite outcomes-based approaches and such logics necessarily result in an inhibition of the principles of at least one of them. Thus, we can answer this chapter's underlying question negatively, at least with regards to the ability model: *Do models of Emotional Intelligence present a potential remedy to the discrepant relationship between outcomes-orientation and the hermeneutic process?*

In the case of literature, the results of such an attempt at reconciliation become particularly poignant: An application of the principles of outcomes-orientation to literature education essentially swipes many scholastic and philosophical considerations of hermeneutics and reception theory off the table; it may leave their easily digestible (structural) facades, but fundamentally disregards their quintessential foundations. As also suggested in chapter 2.2., it is precisely for this reason that efforts such as the 2020 Companion Volume to CEFR (Council of Europe[4]), which merely add literature-related outcomes or attempt to link literature to the development of other outcomes, are also no remedy to the underlying

problem: Even here, engagements with literature must still aid the achievement of pregiven, set outcomes, though more explicitly than ever, CEFR wears the facade of compatibility with hermeneutics. For example, learners should be able to "express in some detail their reaction to the form of expression, style and content of a work, explaining what they appreciated and why" (ibid. 106) or to "describe the way in which different works differ in their treatment of the same theme." (ibid. 107). Even this superficial attempt at suggesting agreement already confirms that these logics cannot be combined without cost for one of them: First, the scales it attempts to produce here are vague (when exactly is a reaction to art *sufficiently* 'expressed in some detail'?), undermining CEFR's own desire for precise measurability. Second, they still set a reachable 'end' for engagements with literature; at some point, they suggest, they accumulate in students that 'can', based on these *external* scales, *produce* sufficient expressions, explanations, descriptions or even critical appraisal of *any* work. Neglecting how all of these may merely reflect an *ongoing internal* interaction between a *particular* reader and a *particular* literary text, reading should result in a fixed product that is the outcome of a finished process; simply put, even they necessitate an *end* to reading.

Considering outcomes-orientation's adaptability in combination with its prescriptive omnipresence in educational contexts (cf. chapter 2), it matters little whether students are actively aware of its shortcomings or agree with the ethos it implies: In their educational careers, they are presented with a flexibly applicable, extractive modus operandi of primarily individualist accumulation. This modus is not only reproduced, but oftentimes actively propagated by adult role models in the form of teachers. Together with the other attributes of outcomes-based approaches highlighted in this thesis, it is particularly this flexible omnipresence paired with a strict resolution to fulfil its central demands that reflect the fact that outcomes-based education ultimately propagates a *neoliberal* agenda. Let us elaborate on this claim in the following chapter.

5. *Repercussions* – Is there no alternative?

After highlighting the significant adaptability of outcomes-orientation, the preceding chapter has closed by suggesting that this attribute reflects its ultimately *neoliberal* agenda. In this final chapter, we set out to elaborate on this claim and discuss the consequential implications of an unchecked primacy of outcomes-orientation on education and its effect on the individuals exposed to it. This is done in an attempt to answer the following question: *Why and how does outcomes-orientation reflect a neoliberal agenda and what are the repercussions of this?*

To this end, we must first explain just why outcomes-orientation's adaptability reflects neoliberal conditions and ideals. We also do so by drawing parallels between the approach's flexibility and the prevalent (self-)presentation of the neoliberal condition as a pervasive atmosphere. This attribute has also been pointed out by English cultural theorist Mark Fisher and his influential work *Capitalist Realism: Is there no alternative?* from which this chapter also lends its title. Building on this, we also discuss how the adaptability of outcomes-orientation simultaneously serves as a strong mechanism against criticism: Its flexibility allows it to recuperate positively connotated ideals such as those of self-improvement and democracy. Subsequently, we move on to consider the potential implication of (CEFR's) outcomes-orientation on education as whole, as well as the individuals subjected to it. With regards to the former, this chapter argues that a functionalist agenda neglects educational ideals. Simultaneously, it ultimately leaves students alone with coping with the social, economic, and philosophical conditions of the world into which they are socialised. Finally, the chapter points to some alternatives and antitheses to outcomes-orientation. It does so by drawing from the works of Gert Biesta (n.b. *The Beautiful Rist of Education*), who argued for an approach to teaching that does not let measurability dictate the entirety of the learning process.

5.1. Whose Outcomes? Neoliberalism and Outcomes-Orientation

Ideally, a comprehensive elaboration of how outcomes-orientation reflects neoliberal ideals would be preceded by a lengthy and detailed definition of neoliberalist capitalism itself. Unfortunately, contemporary discourse on the subject and perhaps its very (*adaptive*) nature eludes any such attempt that could be satisfied in the scope of a single chapter (or at

all): Not only is there a plethora of different and sometimes conflicting definitions of neoliberalism, but the term itself also has become a political and academic key- and buzzword. It is oftentimes used to describe the overall condition(s) of late capitalism and seems impossible to describe in a manner that would do justice to all its facets. However, it seems feasible and necessary to at least attempt to highlight some of its crucial features.

5.1.1. Characterising Neoliberalism

Thus, to nonetheless arrive at such a working definition of neoliberalism for our scope, we can draw on the relatively concise definition of the term given in Pau Bori's 2018 publication *Language Textbooks in the era of Neoliberalism.* There, the author provides a threefold definition of what exactly neoliberalism is: Quoting the works of Harvey, he first defines it as an approach to *economy* that is characterised by the assumption that human prosperity is best achieved "*within* an institutional framework" (Harvey 2; qtd in Bori 6ff.; emphasis added) that values private property and economic freedom. Contrary to radical libertarianism, it is thus not interested in fully abandoning the state's influence. Instead, it insists on its necessity "for the operation of ostensibly free markets and to deal with the consequences of 'market failure'" (Price 569; qtd. in Bori 8). In other words, neoliberalism relies on governments for the proliferation and sustainment of its agenda and aims but generally rejects other intrusions by such bodies (also cf. Vallier online).

Second, Bori also highlights the *ideological* dimension of neoliberalism (8ff.): In an argumentative attempt that (at least in this basic form) resembles circular argumentation, neoliberalism argues that because economic liberty is the best approach for the achievement of prosperity, the logic of the free market is inherently moral (also cf. Springer, Birch, MacLeavy 3, qtd. in Bori 9) or even 'natural' (also cf. Holborow 34; qtd. in Bori 9). The centrality of this insistence on ostensive freedom allows the approach to be enormously flexible: As long as this prerequisite is met and, if necessary, defended by the state, everything else will just 'fall in place': The market will regulate itself and any act of such regulation is deemed moral. Obviously, this ideological snapshot of neoliberalism is an oversimplification. However, it nonetheless highlights its central demand for superficially free consumers and producers.

In relation to this ideological component of neoliberalism, Bori concludes its currently *hegemonic* dimension and argues that

> "neoliberalism has also involved a sharp reversal in the ways we conduct ourselves in our public and private lives, in the sense that competition and entrepreneurial mindsets now govern the behaviour of many people and institutions" (9ff.)

By referring to the Gramscian idea of hegemony and Foucault's understanding of reciprocal coercion and domination, Bori argues that the neoliberal understanding of the individual as economically competitive has become an omnipresent factor of 21st century living (10ff.). Similarly, English cultural theorist and philosopher Mark Fisher has also coined the term 'capitalist realism' to refer to the overall condition (also) brough about by neoliberal policies. He highlights that contemporary capitalism (i.e. capitalist realism), a condition that is prominently propelled through neoliberalism's agenda, is characterised by a 'presentation-as-self-evident'. In 2009, he summarised this stance in his highly acclaimed long-form paper *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?*. There, he pinpoints precisely this attribute of capitalist realism that is fostered by neoliberalism by providing the following central simile:

> "It [capitalist realism as also fostered by neoliberal capitalism] is more like a pervasive atmosphere, conditioning not only the production of culture, but also the regulation of work and education, and acting as a kind of invisible barrier constraining thought and action." (Fisher 16).

We can thus pinpoint the following central dimensions of neoliberalism for further elaborations: First, neoliberalism is, despite its scepticism towards them, ultimately reliant on governmental bodies for its own proliferation and defence. Second, its ideology is fundamentally characterised by a need for ostensibly 'freely acting' consumers and producers. Third, these individuals are incentivised to view themselves as being in perpetual economic competition. Let us now compare these attributes against those of outcomes-based education.

5.1.2. The Neoliberalism of CEFR

In this comparison, it soon becomes obvious that some of the most important characteristics of outcomes-based education reflect the attributes of neoliberalism. For example, CEFR's agenda is implemented through top-down institutionalisation (cf. chapter 2.1.1.). This means that the document relies on governmental and supra-governmental institutions for its own enforcement. In this context, it is necessary to point out that the PISA-examination results

from 2003 onwards (also cf. chapter 2) were a central incentive for this top-down implementation of outcomes-orientation in Europe and particularly in Austria. In turn, PISA's parent organisation is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD): An(other) inter-governmental institution devoted to the proliferation of economic growth (further critique of this relationship is offered in Krautz 63ff.). Referring back to Bori's (6ff.) *economic* dimension of neoliberalism, this relationship shows that both CEFR and neoliberalism rely on a governmental-institutional framework which carries and proliferates them. Additionally, CEFR's relationship with OECD heavily implies that its agenda may be influenced primarily by economic, rather than educational interests. This is also reflected in its fundamental, self-declared aims: Two of these three central aims (cf. chapter 2.1.2.) are directly relatable to either increasing the economic potential of individuals or to dismantling (promoted using much friendlier terms, such as 'convert') its "barrier[s]" (Council of Europe[1] 2ff.), most notably language diversity. Thus, through its aims, CEFR reflects Bori's *ideological* dimension (8ff.) of neoliberalism: It strives for ostensibly free individuals whose potential as consumers and producers should not be restricted by cultural or linguistic barriers and it depends on (supra-)governmental institutions to reach this end. Considering CEFR's aims under this light, it seems even less surprising that the document's treatment of literary texts is poor. Austrian scholar Monika Neuhofer has summarised this point as follows: "The problem is to be found less in literature itself, but in the question that is being asked. If one asks for the functionalist [cf. economic] net value of literature […] the answer is negative." (Neuhofer 98; own translation). Critique of this overly economic nature of outcomes-based approaches is neither new nor limited to CEFR or the European context: For example, in Australia, a nation that has since moved away from outcomes-oriented education, this economically driven paradigm has already been pointed out by scholars such as Smyth and Dow as well as Berlach (qtd. in Ruitenberg 266) in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Ultimately though, neoliberalism's ideological striving for individual 'freedom' is characterised by a very specific definition of the concept. Drawing from Pendenza and Lamattina, we can argue that "for the neoliberals, what must ultimately be guaranteed by the (neoliberal) State is essentially 'negative freedom.'" (103). In our context, this means that neoliberalism demands that state-implemented efforts towards freedom (such as CEFR) must first and foremost allow individuals to act *free from* barriers to their economic potential (i.e. *negative freedom*). In comparison, the *freedom to* act freely (i.e. *positive*

freedom), is assumed to be a condition that arises from this particular form of negative freedom. However:

> "[…] affirming, as the neoliberals do, that positive freedom derives from the market means maintaining that the individual is free to act always and only within economic contexts, *established by the market itself*. In our opinion, this means reducing the spectrum of signification of the concept of freedom, flattening it out on that of the market and, consequently, placing great limits on the development and diffusion of the principle of moral responsibility." (Pendenza & Lamattina 106; emphasis added).

This particular conception of freedom also unravels the at first glance antagonistic relationship between CEFR's simultaneous restrictive interest in predefined, measurable outcomes and its alleged campaign for freedom; in reality, it is interested only in a restricted definition of freedom that primarily aids economic interests. In this context, the central credo put forth by Gert Biesta encapsulates this understanding:

> "It is what policy makers, politicians, the popular press, 'the public,' and organizations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank increasingly seem to be expecting if not demanding from education. They want education to be strong, secure, and predictable, and want it to be risk-free at all levels. This is why the task of schooling is more and more being constructed as the *effective production* of pre-defined 'learning outcomes' in a small number of subjects or with regard to a *limited set* of identities such as that of the good citizen or the effective lifelong learner [cf. interest in negative freedom]." (1ff; emphasis added)

These aspects of the neoliberal conception of freedom and Biesta's highlighting of outcomes-based education's "effective production […] with regard to a limited set of identities" (ibid. 1ff.) also point towards Bori's (9ff.) *hegemonic* dimension of neoliberalism: In the following we shall elaborate on just how outcomes-based CEFR naturalises individuals' identities as inherently economic.

5.2. Co-Option – On the Difficulty of Arguing against Outcomes-Orientation

To this end, it is particularly worth to re-emphasise that CEFR's outcomes are prominently related to the accumulation of competences within individuals (n.b. chapters 2.1.3., 2.1.6., 3.2.2. and 3.3.): In light of Bori's (9ff.) *hegemonic* dimension of neoliberalism, it seems straightforward to conclude that this demand reflects a need for economically competitive individuals. This becomes particularly obvious when viewing competences as a form of social and cultural capital.

Of course, we have often highlighted that CEFR's logic imposes predefined benchmarks for competences. Thus, it does not seem truly interested in an *infinite* accumulation of sociocultural capital in its students. However, precisely this infinite demand is a common criticism raised against capitalist ideologies. At first glance, we thus seem to (again) have arrived at a somewhat antagonistic relationship between CEFR and neoliberalism. However, in this context the distinction between positive and negative freedom (cf. chapter 5.1.2.) again becomes relevant: CEFR and neoliberalism both seem interested in an ultimately *limited* conception of positive freedom that is brought about through (economic) negative freedom. In this light, it seems obvious that even their understanding of negative freedom must necessarily also have limits (cf. 'ends'); transcending this limitation would threaten neoliberalism's *ideological* dimension (cf. Bori 6ff.). Therefore, they are interested in a conception of *negative* freedom that primarily related to economic capabilities. As a consequence, CEFR's aims (and thus, its competences) primarily relate to lessening restraints from individuals' economic potential, which should be limited enough for them to effectively engage in competition and consumption. This way, CEFR paints the individual as inherently accumulative and competitive (cf. the notion of *homo economicus*), while simultaneously being able to co-opt the positively connotated narrative of individual freedom. At the same time, it ensures the continual survival of its logic, by limiting the actual implementation of the narrative to particular forms of positive and negative freedom.

What is also particularly reflective of Bori's (9ff.) *hegemonic* dimension of neoliberalism is CEFR's adaptability (cf. chapter 4.4.). As long as its demand for measurability (cf. neoliberalism's demand for a particular conception of negative freedom) is met, it seems very easy for CEFR to make its own logic omnipresent: It deals with the inherently social field of language, which is abundantly present in everyday life. To elaborate, it helps to draw on the contributions of Swiss educational philosopher Roland Reichenbach's critical commentary on a closely related matter: In a 2008 publication, he discusses the (then-) contemporary discourse on soft skills and competences (34ff.). Even though his comments sometimes seem polemic and hyperbolic, he nonetheless points out important shortcomings and tautologies that are still applicable to this day. In light of chapter 4.4., his discussion of the inherent adaptiveness of competence-models, 'their' ideology and morals are particularly relevant to show how CEFR represents Bori's (9ff.) *hegemonic* dimension of neoliberalism:

> "There are hundreds of examples [for situations in which soft skills may be useful] and for many of them it is true that soft skills [cf. competences] can be understood as '*positively connotated strategies for successful interpersonal interactions*'. And because successful strategies of interpersonal interaction were always deemed desirable, they […] so readily mate with any virtue doctrine […]: Politics? Ethics? Religion? No matter for soft skills, which are always ready to apply themselves whenever the matter is personal, interpersonal or social (which is often the case)." (Reichenbach 36; own translation; no emphasis added)

Later in the same paper (ibid.: 43ff.), Reichenbach draws on the work of British sociologist Basil Bernstein, who not only provided a concise summary of the genesis of competence-concepts, but also discussed their underlying 'social logic' (55ff.). In Reichenbach's interpretation, many of the main aspects of this logic can be related to their individualist-constructivist ethos. At the time of their conception in the 1960s and 1970s, this made them particularly effective at capturing the scholastic zeitgeist of the period (cf. Reichenbach 43). Considering this thesis' preceding chapters (n.b. chapter 3.1.2.), it now seems clear that neoliberalism and outcomes-based approaches have co-opted such constructivist understandings to serve the proliferation of their *hegemony* (Bori 9ff.).

However, Reichenbach's criticism does not end here, as he also points out how the adaptability of competences is not limited to their abundant applications in everyday life (i.e. 'everybody needs competences'). Additionally, they imply an inherent capability of any individual to accumulate them in the first place (i.e. 'everybody can develop competencies'; cf. Reichenbach 44ff.). We can thus argue that suggesting such inherent equality of individual potentials allows both neoliberalism and CEFR manage to present themselves as democratic, an attribute with strong, positive connotations in many (western) discourses. In relation to this, Reichenbach concludes that "it is not easy to argue *against* democracy, creativity and self-regulation and the improvement-ethos which is connected to [cf. co-opted by] theories and models of competences" (ibid. 45; no emphasis added).

In summary, we can thus state that neoliberalism and CEFR share an understanding of humanity's position in the world as economically driven. Further, their *hegemonic* dimension (Bori 9ff.) naturalises this stance: They present themselves as universally relevant and are adaptable (cf. chapter 4.4.) enough to co-opt narratives and scholastic elaborations to (at least superficially) reaffirm their paradigms. Again referring to Fisher's understanding of capitalist realism, we could describe CEFR as a "plastic entity, capable of metabolising

anything with which it comes into contact" (Fisher 6). Particularly in light of our exemplary discussions of literature, we could go even further: Merging the issues discussed in chapter 3 with a statement often attributed to Slavoj Žižek or Fredric Jameson,[13] we can claim that CEFR has made it 'easier to imagine an end to the hermeneutic process than an end to outcomes-orientation'. What remains is the question of the effects of this condition on education as a whole and the individuals subjected to it.

5.3. Repercussions for Education

Let us begin by considering the implications of an unchecked primacy of outcomes-oriented approaches on education as a whole. In this context, virtually all critique of outcomes-orientation also seems relevant for the teaching and learning of literature as suggested by CEFR and vice versa. Consequently, we can draw on the preceding chapters of this thesis, where we have highlighted CEFR's understanding of input-agent as comparatively closed and finite in nature; an understanding that does not do full justice to the actual complexity of the hermeneutic process. While we can argue that this relationship is most representatively poignant when considering *literary* hermeneutics according to reception theory, CEFR and outcomes-orientation also impose their constraints on any other form of learning process. This is, of course, because hermeneutic-philosophic conceptions can without much trouble also inform virtually any other human interaction with the external world (cf. chapter 3.2.1.). This means that many of the discrepancies between outcomes-orientation and hermeneutics also have considerable impacts on education as whole.

Consequently, we can argue that outcomes-orientation disregards considerable elements of *all* educational learning processes. This has been most concisely pointed out by Fu-Lai in 2016, who states that ultimately, this is related to the approach's paradigm of measurability (321ff.; also cf. chapter 4.4.): Wherever an educational system revolves primarily around measurable outcomes, any other form on non-measurable learning process is devalued in comparison. Scholars such as Krautz suggest that this is a serious loss for education, because it is precisely those unmeasurable and unquantifiable elements of (school) learning that make up the bulk of what is traditionally considered the core of the concept (n.b. Krautz 64). This stance is also supported by Ruitenberg, who stated that the traditionally "intrinsic goods

[13] This quote is attributed to these scholars by Fisher (cf. 2), though it remains unclear who actually and initially conceived it. Originally, it goes: '*It is easier to imagine an end to the world than it is to imagine the end of capitalism*'.

of education" (ibid. 267) by their very definition elude attempts at (external) measurement as easily definable "exit behaviour" (ibid. 267). Thus, outcomes-orientation not only disregards considerable elements of those learning processes that are abundant in schools, but it also abandons traditional conceptions of what 'education' means altogether: In the logic of outcomes-orientation an 'educated' individual is defined primarily by their ability to sufficiently meet externally set standards (outcomes). Moreover, outcomes-orientation's demand for measurability is such a fundamental aspect of it that it seems impossible to have it account for more traditional conceptions: Quite simply, outcomes-based education is incompatible with such traditional conceptions of education (also cf. Waghid).

Of course, an easily applied criticism against these stances is pointing out that even these 'traditional' conceptions of education usually grade their students. It could be argued that thus, they too impose 'ends' onto the hermetic process and consequentially devalue unmeasurable elements of education. The problem with this criticism is twofold: On the one hand, non-outcomes-based approaches to education are not generally characterised by *external* benchmarks; in their learning process, teachers are not pushed to adhere to benchmarks that were defined independently of the particular individuals taught by them. Ideally, this allows them to judge the process they ultimately grade on a case-to-case basis and enables them to leave more room for non-measurable learning. While this does indeed increase the potential for nepotistic abuse, its restrictions of hermeneutics seem far less drastic. On the other hand, the fact alone that even 'traditional' conceptions of education judge the process by grading it, is a moot point, as Gert Biesta reminds us:

> "[T]he question, after all, is not whether education should achieve something or not, or whether educational spaces should be safe or not, but what education should achieve and to what extent this can be pre-specified, and what kind of safety is desirable and at which point the desire for safety becomes uneducational […]." (2)

Instead of leaving room for these 'immeasurable' goods of education, outcomes-orientation rigorously replaces them with paradigms of predictability and efficiency. This too reflects its "transfer of innovation from [the] corporate to the educational world" (Sahlberg 178). While aiding an economic logic (cf. chapter 5.1.2.), this shift causes serious issues for the moral-philosophical aspirations of education: Through the primacy of outcomes (cf. chapter 2.1.6.), outcomes-based education not only comes without any explicit demand for engagements with literary works, but also without any intrinsic demand for *particular* input

at all (also cf. Fu-Lai 320ff.). Without any such reference to *particular* content, Krautz argues, there can also be no transfer of *particular* knowledge (cf. 66). This means that outcomes-based education also sets no demands for any explicit *particular* moral instructions, leaving only the passive propagation of the implicitly omnipresent logic of neoliberalism. In this understanding, outcomes-based approaches are no longer motivated by education's former humanist ideals (also cf. Szulevicz et. al. 452): By themselves, they do not provide their subjects with any form of moral compass that goes beyond the accumulation of personal gain or its ostensive, superficial appropriations of democracy and freedom.

A different angle on the philosophical shortcomings of this issue have also been provided by Claudia Ruitenberg: She highlights that outcomes-based education completely neglects the traditional duty of education that is (or *was*) introducing young people into long-standing and complex histories of societal values or perhaps still unsolved socio-political issues (also cf. Elliot, qtd. in Ruitenberg 267). Further, Ruitenberg argues that it is precisely this ignorance towards education's historical, socio-instructional duties that makes outcomes-based education clearly 'inhospitable' with regards to Jaques Derrida's ethics of hospitality: She explains that a 'good host' in Derrida's sense is characterised by unconditionally offering their guests a nurturing space to freely roam. Comparing this to outcomes-based education, Ruitenberg shows that this conception of education does not leave its 'guests' (students) the freedom to unfold themselves indeterminately by merely 'offering' them nurturing content. Instead, it attempts to precisely control them; it 'demands' determinate performances from them. Simply put, she concludes, outcomes-orientation is unethical by Derrida's standards of hospitality (n.b. Ruitenberg 270). Of course, educational systems that were in place before the rise of outcomes-orientation were unable to be a truly 'good host' in this sense; they too demanded from their students. Accounting for such criticism, Ruitenberg admits that even Derrida himself

> "emphasises throughout his work the ethical decisions of forgiveness and hospitality, both of which are aporetic in the sense that they are responses to impossible, impassable ethical demands." (ibid. 268).

However, she argues by quoting the philosopher himself, "that a politics that does not maintain a reference to this principle of unconditional hospitality is a politics that loses its

reference to justice." (Derrida 2002; qtd. in Ruitenberg 2016); a condition that is not currently fulfilled by outcomes-orientation.

On a societal level, outcomes-orientation's agenda of simplifying education to a measurable, standardisable, and comparable process also comes at a high cost: By valuing pre-determined outcomes over inputs and by promoting a view of education that ranks the importance of predictable performance over that of indefinitely applicable knowledge, the educational process is reduced to little more than an 'investment' into human capital (also cf. Krautz 65). Considering this, outcomes-orientation's desire for keeping this investment as risk-free as possible becomes even less surprising. However, it is precisely this demand for predictability that also increasingly promotes the likelihood that "students' learning will become mechanical and passive" (Fu-Lai 322). This almost pathologic aversion to risks is strongly opposed to any real form of non-formulaic 'outside-the-box' thinking. Thus, it renders the possibility of fostering truly innovative approaches of nonconformist problem-solving in students less likely. Simultaneously, this also reduces the likelihood that the prescribed paradigm of efficiency is ever seriously challenged: The development of counter-discourses or alternative approaches to tasks are marginalised in favour of a linear (Sahlberg 179) understanding of learning. Ultimately, all this suggests that outcomes-orientation runs the risk of reducing education to little more than a tool for policymakers. This development also comes with real, serious risks for the well-being of the students subjected to it, as we shall elaborate now.

5.4. Repercussions for Individuals

The decision to discuss outcomes-orientation's repercussions for individuals separately from its impact on education in more general terms seems somewhat arbitrary. It is obvious that these two spheres are interwoven; they influence and stipulate one another. However, the teaching profession itself is significantly characterised by the ambivalence of this duality: Educators are required to function as active conduits of larger-scale socio-political development while simultaneously dealing with their students as individuals at a comparatively concrete level (and while being individuals themselves).

This complex situation also implies that we need to view the issue from at least two different, yet connected angles: First, we should consider the effects of outcomes-

orientation on individual teachers. In relation to this, it can be stated that the prescriptive nature of the approach de-professionalises educators. Again, the issue is related to predetermining the outcomes of teachers' efforts: Similar to how outcomes-based education no longer revolves around students' engagements with *particular* inputs, it also no longer expects knowledge of *particular* inputs from teachers. The resulting conundrum has also been touched on by Fu-Lai, who, referencing an earlier 2003 publication by Lee, related the highly *determinate* nature of outcomes-orientation to a *decrease* of teacher's total skills (Lee, qtd. in Fu-Lai 322): Teaching towards specified outcomes demands highly specialized procedural skills from educators; however, it simultaneously narrows the overall breadth of the sum of their skills. As in many other professions revolving around information processing, outcomes-orientation needs teachers to become highly specialized executives rather than universal scholars; it demands trainers rather than educators, because it *is* training rather than education. This, as is also argued by Sahlberg, alienates "teachers from the moral purposes of their profession" (180). What is left is a competitional marketplace in which educators are pushed to prove their effectiveness in teaching by chasing student outcomes; a development that, at the very least, "may demoralize teachers and may jeopardize [the] attractiveness of the teaching profession" (ibid. 180).

The influences of outcomes-based education on students are similar, though arguably more drastic. This is particularly true because institutional education is a commonplace factor in the developmental years of recent generations. Simply put, young people oftentimes have little choice in their subjection to its principles and its shortcomings. Again, many of the subsequential problems can be linked to outcomes-orientation's logic.

To explain this, it seems helpful to also draw on the seminal elaborations of John Dewey. Informed by his thoughts on interaction (n.b. 25ff.), we can argue the following: Because outcomes-based education highlights predefined, individual gain over interaction, and because direct experience is interaction, outcomes-orientation often disregards the importance of direct experience (for similar argumentations also cf. Ruitenberg 266ff. or Blau 42). The potential pitfalls of this are vast: The simultaneous neglect of direct experience, paired with a nonetheless primarily individualistic focus puts students in the space of a paradoxical ethic. They are painted as the ultimate prism for the development of competences while *simultaneously* being frequently discouraged from having (direct

learning) experiences outside of strictly set boundaries. Outcomes-based education runs the risk of placing students in a space that, as Ruitenberg concisely phrases it, “does not give place“ (271) – an educational non-place. Subjecting a developing individual to the conditions of such a non-place may have drastic effects: For example, outcomes-orientations rejection of first-hand experience in favour of the indirect, leaves them, as Blau has put it, with “no knowledge except a fraudulent knowledge that can be expressed in regurgitated formulations” (45).

The fact that outcomes-based education disregards *particular* moral inputs (cf. chapter 5.3.) also is problematic for its students. This should not be taken as advocating for an authoritarian approach to education, where students are inducted into the tightly knit morals of preceding generations. Instead, it helps to remember the stances of Peters or Oakeshott, who both highlighted education’s role in introducing young people into a (moral and philosophic) landscape shaped by those who previously trod in it (Peters qtd. in Elliot 564; Oakeshott 48) and best tended to or even remade by individuals who understand it. Outcomes-orientation on the other hand, exists without the desire for any such explicit instructions; finding the pathways through *its* moral landscape needs no knowledge, understanding or careful mapping, for they have all been paved, leaving only the fastest and most efficient way from start to finish. All that is left for students (and teachers) to do is to follow this ‘superhighway’ of competences, giving in to the passive logic of accumulation so pervasively advertised on its sidelines. What is often disregarded on this road, however, is where it leads; its only certainties are its continually more loosely set speed limits (an acceleratory logic that seems eerily reminiscent of transhumanism) and – of course – its lack of exits.

The latter of these properties has been most prominently elaborated on by Szulevicz et. al. in 2016: They discussed that in outcomes-orientation, failures of any student to adhere to its logic are attributed first and foremost to the student, rather than the system (ibid. 447ff.). In other words, outcomes-orientation not only views the reason for any form of non-conformist or disruptive behavior as negative, but it also paints it as student-inherent. Those who fail to conform to its logic are presented as “victims to themselves” (ibid. 448), effectively disallowing any consideration that the truly disruptive element may the system itself (cf. ibid. 448ff.). Drawing from Gert Biesta, this attribution

> "has resulted in the medicalization of education, where children are being made fit for the educational system, rather than that we ask where the causes of this misfit lie and who, therefore, needs treatment most: the child or society." (4)

Instead of asking these questions, the logic of outcomes-orientation leaves only one element to blame for this alleged 'shortcoming': The mental state of the very students who do not want to or cannot cope with its demands. In this line, Szulevicz et. al. argue that we are currently in the process of entering what they dub "a pathologising age in which human traits, characteristics and abilities that previously required no diagnostics or treatment are now formulated as conditions requiring treatment" (ibid. 459). A similar point has also been made by Reichenbach, who used the terms „individualisation and psychologization of social problems" (48; own translation). However, perhaps the most poignant commentary on the matter can again be found in Mark Fisher's thoughts on the matter:

> "By privatizing these problems – treating them as if they were caused only by chemical imbalances in the individual's neurology and/or by their family background – any question of social systemic causation is ruled out." (Fisher 21)

In summary, what outcomes-orientation leaves young people with is a 'non-place' both in philosophical as well as psychological terms: Adherence to it lacks moral guidance, deviation from it becomes pathologized; a condition that may very well foster a widespread development of philosophical nihilism as well as depressive and similar disorders in young people. What remains is the question of whether to accept these potential consequences or, despite all hindrances, to consider alternatives to it.

5.5. *Is there no alternative?*

Obviously, developing or formulating a fully coherent alternative in the scope a singular subchapter is beyond feasibility – if it were, there would be no issue to discuss. However, it does indeed seem feasible to present at least a few of the central attributes such an alternative approach to education should hold. As is true for the overall criticism presented throughout this entire thesis, we should think of these attributes as desirable for *all* of education, though they of would be particularly advantageous for the (re-)emergence of an approach to *literature* didactics that does indeed do justice to the depths of the hermeneutic process as described by reception theory. Given these aspirations, it is particularly the previously quoted argumentations of educational theoretician Gert Biesta, and his

pioneering 2013 publication titled *The Beautiful Risk of Education* that excellently reflect the resentments expressed and hopes implied throughout this thesis.

In essence, Biesta suggests an approach to education that is opposed to precisely those aspects of outcomes-orientation that are attempted to be described throughout this thesis: By summarising the 'duties' of education as the realms of qualification, socialization and subjectification, Biesta argues that educational trends such as outcomes-orientation particularly neglect the latter of these three aspects, which he sums up as "the possibility of the event of subjectivity" (139). Biesta argues that education that neglects or even openly works against the likelihood of such events by favouring predefined ends and formulaic guidelines for their achievement, is always also characterised by the huge risk of becoming a mere instrument for mechanical social reproduction (n.b. x).

Comparing this to our discussion of hermeneutics according to reception theory, it is very easy to draw parallels and arrive at a combined critique of outcomes-orientation; as chapters three and four point out, the principles of outcomes-orientation impose precisely those restraints mentioned by Biesta on the hermeneutic process. In doing so, they replace the continual (and, as per Iser, *dialogic*) nature of reading with an almost industrialised process that not only dictates to its subjects how they are supposed to engage with a text, but also what their takeaways from these engagements are to be. What remains is an empty husk that may superficially relate to its more philosophically-informed predecessors but also neglects the fact that education itself „has to be conceived as a process that is radically open and therefore always entails the risk that what it sets out to achieve will not be achieved" (ibid. 25). It is only through an *embracing* of this inherent risk that we may be able to do justice not only to the nature of the hermeneutic process, but also to the very nature of education itself: Neglecting to do so results in a view of learning that understands it as nothing more than a cognitive process that can be 'solved' and optimised (also cf. Biesta 69ff.). Instead, 'real' education according to Biesta is a process that is forever fundamentally characterized by being in *ongoing* negotiation on every one of its levels and is not afraid to bring its very own theoretical bases into the discussion as an object of criticism (cf. Biesta 139). It is a process of *continual* exchange and deconstruction. It consequently understands that democracy is neither a producible commodity, nor a skill to be learned, but a "mode of existence" (ibid. 140). Education, in this sense, quite simply is a fundamental aspect of the

human condition. We can find all these attributes of Biesta's understanding of education in our description of the hermeneutic process. Thus, we can finally and in unprecedented clarity argue that *any* educational approach that neglects the fundamental characteristics of hermeneutics is not *education* in Biesta's sense at all.

At the same time, the above-described attributes that constitute education worthy of its title are neither outrageously idealistic nor otherworldly: They merely are, as can be stated by drawing from Mark Fisher's reiteration of the ideas of French philosopher Alain Badiou victims to modernization,

> "a strict and servile definition of the possible. These 'reforms' invariably aim at making impossible what used to be practicable (for the largest number), and making profitable […] what did not used to be so' (Badiou in Fisher 2009: 17)

Any opposition to this regime of truth (cf. Foucault) needs to be first and foremost interested in its subjects and their 'arrival into this world' not as passive objects but as freely acting and unique subjects (also cf. Biesta 141ff.). Thus, a perhaps small, but nonetheless hugely important first step away from the pitfalls of outcomes-orientation and towards the deconstruction of this regime must be made at this very subject-level. As Szulevicz et. al. have argued, it is precisely there that

> "neoliberal policies become counteracted - at the 'grass roots' level - where the shared interest is in what the pupil learns rather than what the card states [cf. than what policy and industry demand]" (455).

What education thus needs is a thorough re-thinking of teachers as more than governmentally sanctioned 'conduits of competences' and students as more than statistical products; a re-thinking of education as a whole as a confluence of *philosophic duties*, (true) *professionalism* and *public interests* (also cf. Hargreaves and Shirley 2009, qtd. in Sahlberg 2011: 71), rather than a mere reaction to the demands and interests of economy.

5.6. Conclusion for Chapter 5

Based on the conclusion of chapter four, this chapter has elaborated on how the significant adaptability of outcomes-based education reflects neoliberal attributes. In doing so, the scope of this thesis has finally broadened from the exemplary treatment of literature to a more general critique of outcomes-based education. This was done in an effort to answer the following underlying question: *Why and how does outcomes-orientation reflect a neoliberal agenda and what are the repercussions of this?*

In answering to this question, we first drew on Pau Bori's definition of neoliberalism, which we summed up as combination of three central attributes: First, neoliberalism is an *economic* approach (Bori 6ff.) that is reliant on governmental bodies for its own proliferation. Second, its *ideologic* dimension (ibid. 8ff.) demands 'free' consumers and producers. Third, its *hegemonic* dimension (ibid. 9ff.) necessitates that these individuals are in perpetual economic competition. Comparing these attributes against those of outcomes-based education as represented by CEFR, we found that the latter significantly shares many of these attributes: It too is closely connected to economic interests and relies on (supra-) governmental institutions for its own proliferation. Further, its aims are in line with those of neoliberalism, because CEFR too strives for a maximisation of individual (negative) freedoms, first and foremost with regards to their economic potential. Finally, CEFR and neoliberalism share a *hegemonic* dimension; both are highly adaptable as long as their central demands are met and can thus easily present themselves as universally relevant. Also referencing Fisher's understanding of capitalist realism, we concluded that the plasticity of neoliberalism and outcomes-based education allows both to easily co-opt virtually any narrative or topic.

Based on this explanation of the 'self-defence' and omnipresence of outcomes-based education, we discussed the potential pitfalls of an entirely unchecked primacy of outcomes-based education. We concluded that the approach has little consideration for educational ideals and instead reduces it to an 'investment' into human capital (also cf. Krautz 65) that needs to be kept as risk-free as possible. In doing so, we argued that outcomes-based education ultimately promotes the likelihood that "students' learning will become mechanical and passive" (Fu-Lai 322). This way, it further reduces the chance that its prescribed paradigm of efficiency is ever seriously challenged. We also touched on the effects of this logic on the individuals subjected to outcomes-based education and argued that it leaves its students in an educational 'non-place'. We concluded that the consequences of the resulting philosophical and psychological shortcomings terms may cause the spread of philosophical nihilism and psychological disorders in young people.

In a subsequential discussion of the argumentations of educational theoretician Gert Biesta, and his work *The Beautiful Risk of Education,* we finally suggested some characteristics an alternative approach to education should hold: In essence, we stated that central to such an approach would be a (re-)*embracing* of risk; an education that is not afraid of an *ongoing*

negotiation on every one of its levels and an understanding of its processes as *continual* exchange and deconstruction without any strictly to-be-met *ends*. Consequentially, we called for a re-focusing of education as a true *confluence* of philosophic duties, (true) professionalism and public interests (also cf. Hargreaves and Shirley 2009, qtd. in Sahlberg 2011: 71).

6. Conclusion

To say this thesis has attempted a lot is an understatement, and given its topic, this is unsurprising. After all, its discussions of the current position of literature in Austrian FL-education was used to formulate nothing short of a critique of the fundamental logics currently prevalent in international educational trends. Adopting and defending such a controversial position admittedly is no easy task and consequentially, this thesis set out to answer a plethora of questions. It is hoped that the answers given to these questions can do their part in promoting a critical questioning of outcomes-based education:

To begin with, we asked: *What is the underlying logic of input-student interactions applied by CEFR and what is its relevance for the role of literature in Austrian foreign language education?* Using literature's role in Austrian FL-education as an example, we thus investigated the logic represented in CEFR. From this analysis, we have concluded that outcomes-based education is characterised by a 'primacy of outcomes'. What results from this is an inherently individualistic logic that is prominently interested in the proliferation of economic paradigms in its students. To meet these aims, CEFR necessarily presents engagements within it an inherently finite process that has 'ideal' results. Further, we have highlighted the importance of CEFR by showing that its logic is significantly reproduced in Austrian curricula for FL-education.

Further, we asked: *Is the logic applied by CEFR reconcilable with that of hermeneutics according to reception theory?* As an answer, we have compared outcomes-based education's logic as represented by CEFR with hermeneutics according to reader response theory. Our analysis was particularly informed by the works of Wolfgang Iser, Hans Robert Jauß and Hans Georg Gadamer. In our comparison, we concluded structural similarities between the two understandings that are paired with fundamental discrepancies when it comes to the limitations and restraints that are applied to these structures. In particular, we highlighted that according to reception theory, the act of reading cannot possibly be defined as a finite process with 'ideal' results that can be described independent of the respective engagement between literature and reader.

Informed by this discrepant, yet (structurally) similar relationship, we discussed a potential 'missing link' in the form of a concept of emotional intelligence in order to answer the

question: *Does the ability model of emotional intelligence present a potential remedy to the discrepant relationship between outcomes-orientation and reception theory?* In particular, we elaborated on the superficial compatibility of the ability model with the principles of outcomes-orientation *and* the interests of reception theory. By showing that ultimately, the ability model is fundamentally outcomes-based and thus, it too imposes predefined ends to the interactions it describes, we concluded a further attribute of outcomes-based approaches: Their significant (structural) adaptability, paired with an absolute resolution in their fundamental demands for predefined, measurable outcomes.

By highlighting that this attribute reflects attributes of neoliberal capitalism, we finally arrived at the formulation of a more generally applicable critique of outcomes-based approaches and attempted to answer our final question: *Why and how does outcomes-orientation reflect a neoliberal agenda and what are the repercussions of this?* In our elaborations, we concluded that outcomes-based education shares many attributes with neoliberalism, most importantly because both are highly adaptable as long as their central and thoroughly related demand(s) are met. We argued that an unchecked hegemony of outcomes-based approaches may have serious consequences for education in general, as well as for the individuals subjected to it. Finally, we suggested that education worth of its title should set out to (re-)*embrace* risks by moving away from strict adherence to predefined outcomes.

It is hoped that through attempting to answer all these questions, this thesis has helped to redirect some attention to an understanding of education that is less mechanical than the principles of outcomes-based education; an understanding that strays away from our ongoing quest for rationalisation and instead leaves more room for a free unfolding of that which lies at its core: its students.

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Abstracts

English:

This thesis aims to formulate a critique of outcomes-based approaches to education by exemplarily discussing the role of literature in CEFR. It explains that CEFR is characterised by an individualistic and economically motivated understanding of student-input interactions. Subsequentially, it compares this model with reception theory's understanding of reader-literature interactions. This comparison shows that contrary to CEFR, hermeneutic models such as reception theory characterise the act of reading as an infinite process that eludes externally imposed benchmarks. To exemplify why the two approaches cannot be reconciled, this thesis considers the ability model of emotional intelligence as potentially compatible with the principles of CEFR *and* the interests of reception theory. Ultimately though, it concludes that like CEFR, the ability model is an inherently outcomes-based approach and consequentially, it too imposes predefined ends to the interactions it describes. Based on these analyses of CEFR, this thesis concludes that outcomes-based approaches to education reflect attributes of neoliberal capitalism and discusses the implications of their unchecked primacy on education in general as well as its individual students and teachers. It concludes by adopting the stance of Gert Biesta's *The Beautiful Risk of Education* and highlights that education needs to (re-)embrace risk as an inherent attribute.

German:

Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es, eine Kritik an ergebnisorientierten (engl. ‚outcomes-based') Bildungsansätzen zu formulieren. Dazu wird die Rolle der Literatur im GERS exemplarisch diskutiert. Im Zuge dessen wird betont, dass der GERS von einem individualistischen und ökonomisch motivierten Verständnis von Schüler*innen-Input-Interaktionen gekennzeichnet ist. Anschließend wird dieses Modell mit dem rezeptionsästhetischen Verständnis von Leser*innen-Literatur-Interaktionen verglichen. Im Gegensatz zum GERS charakterisieren derartige hermeneutische Modelle den Akt des Lesens als einen *unendlichen* Prozess, der sich *äußerlich* auferlegten Maßstäben entzieht. Um zu verdeutlichen, warum die beiden Ansätze nicht miteinander kompatibel sind, wird das Ability-Modell (engl. ‚ability model') der emotionalen Intelligenz betrachtet, da es potenziell vereinbar mit den Prinzipien des GERS *und* den Interessen der Rezeptionsästhetik scheint. Letztlich wird jedoch aufgezeigt, dass auch das Ability-Modell ein inhärent ergebnisorientierter Ansatz ist. Folglich werden auch den hier beschriebenen Interaktionen vordefinierte Ziele auferlegt. Auf der Grundlage dieser Analysen des GERS kommt diese Arbeit zu dem Schluss, dass ergebnisorientierte Bildungsansätze Attribute des neoliberalen Kapitalismus widerspiegeln. In der Folge werden die möglichen Auswirkungen ihrer unkontrollierten Vorrangstellung auf das Bildungskonzept im Allgemeinen, aber auch auf die einzelnen Schüler*innen und Lehrer*innen diskutiert. Die Arbeit schließt mit einer Betonung der von Gert Biesta in *The Beautiful Risk of Education* eingenommenen Standpunkte und hebt hervor, dass Bildung *Risiken* als inhärente Attribute (wieder) annehmen muss.