Uncovering Trends in CEFR-Focused Educational Research: A Comprehensive Descriptive and Bibliometric Study

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Abstract

A worldwide standard for assessing and instructing students in language competence across linguistic and cultural contexts is the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The scope, development, and scholarly influence of CEFR research from 2011 to 2024 are examined in the study. Trends in publishing growth, prominent authors, journals, institutions, countries, interdisciplinary connections, and emerging research gaps and topics were the primary aims. Utilizing bibliometric approaches in VOS viewer, the researcher mapped co-authorship networks, citation trends, and keyword co-occurrence pattern using data from Taylor and Francis. Indicative of its growing impact on language policy, education, and assessment, the number of publications pertaining to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is on the rise. Academic interest in CEFR's theoretical and practical applications was shown by the surge in publication after 2014, which peaked in 2023. The global reach and pedagogical implications of the CEFR framework have been brought to light by research on intercultural competencies in CEFR-based curricula. The interdisciplinary nature of CEFR research is demonstrated by its major publications in journal such as Frontier of Psychology, Language Testing in Asia, Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences. To show how CEFR may adapt to modern education, a keyword analysis highlights the importance of communication competence, intercultural awareness, and innovative assessment practices. In order to make CEFR more accessible and accurate, the study suggests that researchers look at how it works with digital testing, adaptive feedback systems and artificial intelligence-based learning analytics.

Keywords: *Trends and gaps in CEFR, Bibliometric Mapping, Descriptive analysis*

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1. Introduction

Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for languages has been a tool for developing language courses, establishing evaluation criteria, and defining the pedagogical implications and assessment over the past 20 years (Council of Europe, 2020; Piccardo, 2020). Despite this extensive use, new bibliometric studies indicate that our understanding of CEFR-based research is severely lacking. In perspective of large-scale survey, there has been a notable increase in publication output; however, a lack of collaboration across regions and uneven coverage of themes persists (Sahib & Stapa, 2022).

The CEFR is a practical reference tool and has been helpful for teachers and learners to appreciate achievement at all levels of second language acquisition (North, 2014). Indeed, it is used only as the framework and is meant for reference only; it is for this reason that it is not language specific. This means that the CEFR should operate more as a framework, which offers prescriptions that every European country does not necessarily have to follow. The CEFR enables comparison of competences in two or more languages in the hope of identifying a set of standards. The CEFR is a system which was designed especially for learning, teaching and partly for assessment. The CEFR is based on two very closely connected ideas; intensity and quality.

Aziz et al. (2023) and Runnels and Runnels (2019) pointed out that while many CEFR studies concentrate on teacher perceptions and student levels, very few create a comprehensive map of the worldwide research trends, top authors, institutions, dominant themes, and, most importantly, research gaps that are relevant to practitioners' needs. Despite the extensive use of the CEFR framework in practice, there has been a lack of academic research mapping its impact, development, clustering of themes, and knowledge gaps.

This research focuses on the low adoption and integration of the CEFR in this region, and to assess its effectiveness of language education quality and prospect of extending it in future to match the international standards. Reflected on the linguistic diversity, the study focuses on the extend to explore which educational context embrace CEFR principles; these principles help to achieve better language proficiency. Yet, the implementation of CEFR, which targets multilingual environment and various language requirements, in scare. In observing the gap to address this need, this study employed a descriptive and bibliometric mapping technique to examine current trends and gaps in CEFR research.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The objectives for the study include to;
1. analyze publication growth patterns in CEFR research from 2011 to 2024.

2. identify leading authors, institutions, and countries contributing to CEFR studies.
3. map interdisciplinary linkages and collaboration networks within CEFR research.
4. examine keyword co-occurrence to reveal dominant research themes and trends.
5. evaluate citation impact and scholarly influence of CEFR-related publications.
6. detect gaps in CEFR research by comparing thematic clusters with practitioner identified needs.

1.2 Significance of the Study

As structured, quantified and implementable investigation of the development, dissemination, and impact of CEFR research may shed light on the field's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement. The current research is notable for a number of reasons. An essential part is that it fills a need in the literature by doing an extensive bibliometric analysis of research pertaining to CEFR.

This analysis also presents the first in-depth mapping of authorship networks, institutional contributions, topic trajectories, and citation impact within this field. Second, by highlighting the leading researchers, geographical hubs, and topical fronts in CEFR research, the results will help language teachers, curriculum developers, and evaluation agencies by directing future partnerships and areas of research emphasis (Hamid et al., 2025). Third, the study bridges the theory-practice divide by providing policymakers and educational stakeholders with information on under-researched topics that deserve attention, identifying gaps between research themes and practitioner requirements.

It also gives practical directions for further inquiry. This study advances the area of language education framework scholarship by enhancing our knowledge of Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) through the use of systematic, data-driven bibliometric mapping and gap analysis, rather than just descriptive commentary.

2. Literature Review

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which was developed in 2001, aims to meet the needs of language learners as well as academicians and other professionals involved in language assessment, teaching and learning. It also prescribes global standards for learning in a foreign language. Similarly, Uri and Abd Aziz (2019) opined that CEFR is an international system which is more of a framework than a measure of ability. Therefore, there is a reading, listening, speaking and writing proficiency scale for every individual (Uri

& Abd Aziz, 2019). While the CEFR offers a conceptual map showing what language learners need to know to be able to use it in practice in a foreign language. Consequently, it provides a starting point for language learning within curricula or guidelines, textbooks, teaching aids and syllabi.

CEFR significantly influence the different contexts of learning through implementation. In other linguistic and cultural setting, CEFR has a very significant function in the assessment of language, curriculum advance development and policy making (Savski, 2021). Researchers have discussed its application in language assessment and testing, curriculum content, and planning, and its application revealed its applicability in different linguistic and cultural contexts. Through bibliometric evaluation of existing bibliographic databases containing records related to CEFR, important trends and patterns in research disciplines are identified, which indicate the framework's global impact on language education. Consequently, this study about CEFR related literature as its primary focus for analysis, while aiming to present a descriptive and bibliometric picture of the evolution of the research themes associated with CEFR, the geographical distribution of the studies done and the effect of CEFR on language education. It does more than help in knowing the CEFR's past and present, thus providing comprehension of its time-honored and modern roles, in addition to envisioning its position in the future of language education (Zhang, 2024).

In the future, CEFR in English language education will be developed a little more detailed and suitable from now on. More and more authors are devoting their efforts to exploring materials and technologies compatible with CEFR levels because of the rising significance of online language learning platforms (Ghitri, 2025). There is also a development towards more plurilingualism and interculturality, aspects which the CEFR has only recently included in its reference frameworks (Council of Europe, 2020). CEFR research is also being taken to areas outside Europe, especially to the Asia and Latin American countries where English is rapidly becoming significant as the key to social and economic prosperity. The bibliometric analysis of such research may yield useful information on how different regions apply the framework and the impacts noted.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is a familiar model for the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages description of the foreign language learner outcomes in Europe and worldwide. It sets a common base for curriculum and instruction as well as tests and learning and teaching resources. With regard to language learning achievements, the CEFR alerts to such concepts as Integrated Skills, which indeed means that two or more skills, like listening, speaking, reading, and writing, are implemented in one and the same activity or environment (Rehner et al., 2021).

The CEFR supports an all-skills development approach regarding language learning to enable the learners to operate in real-life communicative contexts within which many skills are employed.

In terms of listening comprehension, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is used to evaluate or advance the ability of language learners along a continuum from A1 (beginner) to C2 (mastery) augmented with descriptors of what a learner can understand at each level. These descriptors are further to do with the comprehensibility of spoken language in diverse environments, such as the understanding of familiar phrases, employment of common speech, and maintain comprehension of an academic or occupational arguments (Rankin, 1926). CEFR assists teachers in development of listening practice that are optimized to challenge the learners while at the same time providing them with means to listen to the language which is slightly beyond their level – this aspect is essential for language acquisition.

The use of CEFR makes an effective scheme to develop listening skills because it is thorough and organized. Essential aspects regarding listening comprehension – gist, specific details, and implied meanings – are assisted by goals and outcomes of each CEFR proficiency level for learners and educators to follow. This structured progression guarantees the listeners can add in their listening capacity in a consistent manner that is so crucial for language learning. Also, the CEFR is popular in Europe and worldwide and in fact provides a universal way to discuss and compare the progress and achievement in listening comprehension (Li et al., 2024).

Using the CEFR is highly beneficial when addressing speaking skills for the same reason; because it encompasses a framework of clear and concise markers that describe what learners are able to achieve at different levels of learning such as A1, B1, C2 etc. These descriptors touch on features of speaking thus including, communicating, knowledge and capacity to say something, the mode of use for speaking, interpersonal communication and interaction. To achieve this, the CEFR outlines abilities that learners ought to be able to perform at different proficiency levels Then, when planning for speaking activities, teachers know the specific abilities the learners are expected to possess in the next level and thus they can plan speaking activities that will help the learners master those abilities (Ni'mah et al, 2025).

The extent to which CEFR facilitates development of speaking skills can therefore be explained by it being goal direct, focused and unambiguous. For instance, the student at A1 will be expected to give a brief introduction and ask simple questions while the student at B2 level is expected to engage in debate and substantiate a point of view. To the same extent that the policy of organization is

structured, learners are able to attain their speaking skills in incremental manner, thus, providing them a firm ground from which they are constantly building. Also, the CEFR motivates the connection between speaking with the other skills in the language, such as listening and interaction, which is very important in real life (Askar et al., 2025). Therefore, when using the CEFR guidelines, it is possible for educators to design the learning environment that not only targets fluency and accuracy but also enables the learner to communicate appropriately in different milieus making the CEFR an effective tool of developing speaking achievements. When it comes to the development and assessment of the reading skills within the framework of the CEFR, the advantage is taken of clear and detailed descriptors which indicate what a learner is able and cannot do at one or another level within the range going from A1 to C2. These descriptors span from reading simple texts, acquire global information, interpret detailed content, and engaging in critical evaluation of complex material. The essence of the CEFR's approach to grounding the reading skill in specific, measurable outcomes is that teachers can create reading activities which are commensurate with the learners' abilities, and gradually build up the learners' repertoire of the skills which are required to read fluently and with understanding (Diem & Ramadhia, 2025).

With reference to CEFR for an improvement in the reading skills, it is evidenced by its structural nature of developing a system that is slow but sure. For instance, the text taken at A1 level must enable learners to read simple signs or short texts, if at C1 or C2 level learners should be able to understand and analyses literary or academic texts, respectively. Evaluative progress is important for systematic development of the skills of a learner to comprehend what is read from basic to higher level of analysis. Also, because the CEFR is based on an approach which recognizes that to read is to comprehend, the cultural and theoretical umbrella of the CEFR has the effect of also embracing related skills, such as the lexical acquisition of words and inferential processing. Implementing the aspects of CEFR, the literary Curriculum can focus on extending the learners' opportunities in developing the adequate understanding of the texts in order to both decode and interpret them but also advance the learners' study experience and hints at reading at a consistently higher level of difficulty.

In fact, for writing skill, CEFR is efficient to train and evaluate, since it presents a clear scale that when divided presents concrete competencies at each level which range from A1 for beginners to C2 for proficient writers. These descriptors refer to comprehensibility, organization, tone, mechanical correctness, and capacity for precise conveyance of concepts in different settings. CEFR offers level-specific goals that allow a teacher to set achievable goals for the learner and plan meticulously to incrementally progress the learner from one level to another

(Wen & Yu, 2025). It is as a result that the structure of the CEFR makes it possible to increase the quality of writing over a period with gradual and consistent improvement in the complexity and accuracy of written work. For example, lower-level learners, those at the A1 level, may be required to write simple phrases or short sentences while learners at a higher level B2 should be able to write clear detailed texts on various topics, and show an ability to organize text as well as use coherence and cohesion. At the C1 and sometimes at the C2 level learners are also supposed to write well-structured essays, reports or a C2 level argumentative text accurately and with the appropriate style.

Furthermore, the CEFR focuses on the integration of writing with the other language skills that include reading and speaking which are vital in acquisition of the full-fledged language competence. Utilizing the CEFR, educators can develop the writing activities to enhance the linguistic and communicative aspects of writing simultaneously, therefore the CEFR is a useful paradigm for the development of well-rounded academic, professional and personal writing skills. The research has focused on the application of the CEFR as a tool for evaluations and referencing of language proficiency (Abdullayeva & Abdurasulova, 2025). The CEFR, on the other hand, defines every level of ability well, making language skill assessment fair and more evident. Alderson (2007) noted that using the framework developed by CEFR, the descriptors might help raise the overall effectiveness of language competence tests and thus increase their reliability and validity indicators. Additionally, Hulstijn (2007) only explained that it is possible to employ the CEFR to coordinate various language assessments around the world to ensure compatibility regardless of nations or systems in place.

The common features of the European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) affect the notions of language teaching and learning globally (Eiadkaew et al., 2025). CEFR is a standardized system referring to the ability to use language and Travelwise numeracy based on six levels of language proficiency, ranging from A1 level as the lowest to C2 level of proficiency. A language education has benefited from this concept by providing specific, clear, and quantifiable standards of pedagogy, androgenesis, and evaluation. Some of these sources include the journal article 'CEFR and its Impact: Some of the Existing Theories', which will be used to underpin this section of the research, as the CEFR's most significant effects on language teaching and learning ideas are covered in this article (Bérešová, 2017).

Various bibliographic analyses have revealed that there has been a great increase in the utilization of CEFR not only across Europe but beyond (Runnels & Runnels, 2019). Analyzing the situation with reference to Little (2006), the given CEFR is widely adopted in the articles, which serves as a testimony of the great

importance and effectiveness of the CEFR in shaping language learning and the criteria for language proficiency discussions. Galaczi and Figueras (2022) conducted a bibliometric analysis and found that publications on the CEFR have risen sharply during the early 2000s, especially in the area of English language education. The CEFR gladly provides better English language education, especially in light of global tests such as IELTS with direct correlation to the CEFR levels and range, showing distinct standards to both learner and instructor (Jeon, 2022).

It has become even more important in the context of globalized communication and international education settings of the CEFR. According to Zheng and Sa (2017), CEFR has gained the capability to incorporate technology and online learning platforms due to digital media tools as well. The adoption of the CEFR in the digital learning apps means that the end learner gets a structured and measurable kind of interface, especially given the fact that learners are more and more utilizing digital interfaces to enhance their English. There are many language learning applications, such as Duolingo and Babbel, which confidently connect their courses with CEFR levels so that the users can compare their results to the universally recognized reference tool (Jeon, 2024).

In addition, the use of the CEFR framework is flexible, thus it can be implemented in various settings. As Byram and Parmenter argued (2012), it is also possible to modify CEFR descriptors for other languages for various other purposes, and this is why these frameworks proved to be especially useful for various professional and academic spheres, among which the spheres of business and the sphere of higher education in particular, as the requirement in English is rapidly growing.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Bibliometric analysis allows assessing the evolution of research themes along the time, studying collaboration networks, as well as forecasting probable orientations of future research. This data driven approach strengthens the rigor in literature assessments and creates the basis for future studies by providing an objective view of the intellectual ecosystem in which a particular study or research topic is taking place. Employing bibliometric technique, this enables us to discover the most influential studies, prolific authors and core journals that have contributed to shaping discourse on this domain from 2011 till 2024. A comprehensive bibliometric mapping and descriptive analysis is also done to investigate the CEFR trends.

3.2   Data Source

The Taylor & Francis database is the primary source of the study. Taylor & Francis plays an important role in academic research through providing access to many high quality, peer reviewed periodicals and books, from a wide variety of fields. But Taylor & Francis has a range of journals and articles on offer in many different disciplines, including education. First, the researchers begin with a systematic search strategy to collect the data from selected articles from the Taylor & Francis database. The research was conducted by using particular keywords in search engines such as "Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)", "Language proficiency", "language competencies" and "education".

3.3   Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the relevance and quality of the data, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were established, Articles selected for this study met the following criteria;

- Published in peer-reviewed journals within the Taylor & Francis database.
- It focuses on the proficiency skills across different levels in CEFR.
- Published between 2011 to 2024.
- Written in English.
- Studies that did not meet these criteria were excluded from the analysis.

3.4   Data Extraction

Data extraction was performed to gather the comprehensive information from selected articles. These extracted data included:

- Bibliometric details: authors, title, abstract, publication year, journal name and volume/ issue number.
- Key findings: main result related to CEFR trends
- Methodological details: data collection methods, analysis techniques and any identified limitations.
- The structured approach for data extraction ensures that all relevant information was gathered and sorted in a systematic way for further analysis.

The main focus of these researches is descriptive analysis because it explains the method of recording, interpreting, and presenting data based on the development, application, and impact of the CEFR. However, using descriptive analysis also allows to expand the scope of the study as it gives a clear picture of 'what exists'. The descriptive analysis allowed to identify the landscape of CEFR related research, standards and practices and provide readers with a knowing of the breadth and scope of the applicability of the CEFR in different contexts. It aids in Pattern and trend Identification. The research trend and pattern of the research of

CEFR is visualized by bibliometric mapping. To do this, the researchers utilized this technique that analyzed the metadata of the selected articles such as citation counts, co authorships networks and keywords. The key trends, influential authors and prevalent research themes were highlighted using bibliometric tool known as VOS viewer to generate visual representation of the data.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

In examining Bibliometric Analysis of Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for languages in Contemporary Era, a bibliometric approach was employed. This section discusses key findings derived from a systematic review of scholarly literature primarily sourced from the Taylor and Francis database, spanning the years 2014 to 2024. Finding the evolving landscape of CEFR in education is therefore provided fundamentally by bibliometric mapping. The Taylor and Francis database was systematically queried and analyzed (1648) research articles and the research manually added the abstract, year and Google scholar citations in the CSV file. In bibliometric analysis, the researcher used VOS viewer. The results showed that state-of-the-art CEFR's various effect on education are attracting attention. Bibliometric metrics like publishing trends and citation patterns revealed thematic grouping of study and the field's development trajectory. Over time, CEFR papers have increased, indicating its growing relevance in educational research. Textual data from 1648 articles was classified and analyzed in MS Excel, and study results were presented as visualized images from prevalent themes and theoretical frameworks. Additionally, descriptive analysis and identified CEFR approaches. These methodological findings emphasize CEFR's range of methods and their consequences for educational policy and practices.

Recently, the CEFR has evolved to reflect changes in language instruction and education. Its current duties include promoting communication competence, encompassing language, pragmatic, socio-linguistic, and strategic skills. These wider views about language capacity align with current classroom practice, which emphasizes language usage above grammar and vocabulary. The CEFR has also been applied to casual language learning. Flexible internet platforms, and classroom instruction.

The CEFR for languages has shaped language learning, teaching, and evaluation in recent decades. Its increased function has extended beyond Europe and developed the impact of the Council of Europe, created in the 1990s, on language education policy and practice worldwide. The CEFR is a framework for describing language skill from A1 (beginning) through C2 (proficient) in many different languages and is each level is clear and measurable. As a result, this standardization has become critical for coordinating curriculum, for publishing

textbooks, and for creating evaluation systems. This simplification of students, professionals and educators' mobility, especially in the European Union, has consequently reduced the acceptance of a standardized, internationally recognized competency scale.

Using bibliometric analysis, the researchers systematically map the scholarly output on CEFR from 2005 to 2024, identifying key themes, important publications, and professorial researchers in this field. A descriptive analysis of the selected studies examines, in more depth, a particular aspect of CEFR that has been stressed, the methods used and the results reported. The fundamental insights drawn from these analyses combine to provide a solid foundation for scholars interested in international language education from both research and policy development perspectives, and point to the trends in future research and policy development.

Table 1

Year wise publications in Taylor & Francis database

Year	No. of Publications
2011	12
2012	24
2013	26
2014	64
2015	59
2016	63
2017	81
2018	94
2019	127
2020	172
2021	236
2022	262
2023	279
2024	127

Table 1 shows the published article frequency on CEFR research indexed in the Taylor & Francis database from 2011 to 2024 and it is also depicted in following figure 1. During the investigated period, the statistics show a consistent and substantial increase in publishing output, reflecting the growing academic interest in research related to CEFR. After a slow start (with only 12 articles in 2011), there was a steady increase from 2013 to 2014, followed by a sudden spike. The number of studies that used the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) increased threefold between 2014 and 2018, showing that researchers are becoming increasingly interested in the CEFR and its uses are becoming more

diverse in terms of the languages and educational settings in which they are used. Between 2019 and 2023, CEFR had the most significant rise, reaching a peak of 279 articles in 2023. This suggests that the CEFR has become a central topic of discussion in language teaching worldwide. A sharp drop to 127 articles in 2024, though, would indicate either data gaps or a short-lived stability of research output following the epidemic. Taken as a whole, the table and figure indicate that the CEFR is gaining increasing use in academia, which is great news for its growing significance, the rate of scholarly dissemination, and the forward momentum of research in language evaluation and instruction.

Figure 1

*Frequency of publication (year-wise)*
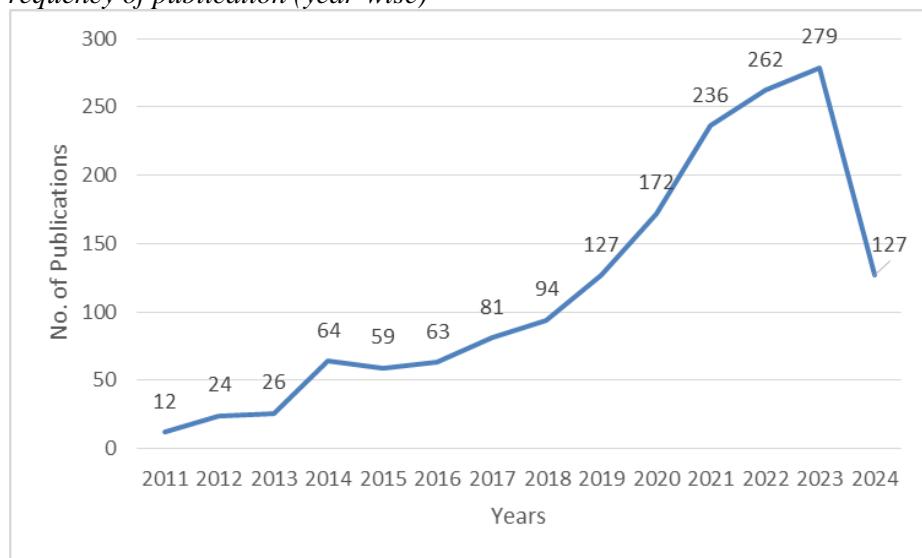
Table 2

Top cited paper, author and country (2011-2024)

Rank	Title	GS citation	Authors	Country
1	Intercultural Skills in the Newly Developed Elementary and the Revised Secondary French Curricula in Relation to Common European Framework of Reference for Languages	4453	AÄŸÄ±ldere, et al. (2013)	Turkey
2	Lesson Plan Needs for Arabic Essay Writing (Kitabah Hurrah) Using Common European Framework of Reference for Language	4446	Bin Abdul Hakim, et al. (2021)	Brunei; Indonesia

3	Language competencies, achievements and qualifications in the common European framework of reference for languages	4445	BogdanoviÄ‡, Dragana (2014)	Serbia
4	Factors of reduction in efficiency of teaching foreign languages and ways to avoid them	3834	Fedorov, Ilya E. (2022)	Russia
5	The importance of affect in language learning	3435	Arnold, Jane (2019)	Spain
6	The pragmatics of interlanguage	884	Perna, Cristina Becker Lopes; O'Keffe, Anne (2017)	Brazil; Ireland
7	Particularities of teaching English for professional purposes to future lawyers	816	Zaitseva, I.V.; Vysotchenko, S.V. (2023)	Russia
8	Exploring the contribution of master English language education program on teacher professional learning	715	Dewi, Henda Harmantia; Triastuti, Anita (2024)	Indonesia
9	Revealing the Secrets of the English Teacher Excellent Proficiency	693	Atmojo, Arief Eko Priyo (2022)	Indonesia
10	The Secondary Education Students and Teachers Perspectives on EMI	402	Setoningsih, Dian Asmi (2022)	Indonesia

Table 2 presents the top-cited publications, authors, and countries in CEFR-related research from 2011 to 2024, highlighting the global and multidisciplinary nature of this field. The most cited article, "Intercultural Skills in the Newly Developed Elementary and the Revised Secondary French Curricula in Relation to CEFR" by Ağıİdere et al. (2013) from Turkey, with 4,453 citations, indicates a significant influence. These findings demonstrate CEFR studies' early and large impact on intercultural competencies and curriculum design. Bin Abdul Hakim et al. (2021) form Brunei and Bogdanovic (2014) from Serbia are commonly acknowledged for their adaptation of the CEFR to diverse linguistic and cultural environment, notably in non-European educational systems.

Turkish, Indonesian, Russian, and Serbian demonstrate the framework's global language education reform. Russian Fedorove (2022) and Spanish Arnold (2019) also cited well and addressed pedagogical efficiency and affective language learning, which match with CEFR's communicative and learner-centered ideals. Dewi and Triastuti (2024) and Atmojo (2022) demonstrate Indonesia's expanding academic contribution to CEFR-based teacher education and English competence improvement. The CEFR-based citations scholarship reveals the theme diversity

and regional growth, whereas, the most referenced studies emphasize curricular alignment, teacher professional development, and intercultural competency, highlighting the framework's increasing importance in multilingual education. The prevalence of Asian and Eastern European authors suggests that CEFR has become a global benchmark for language policy, teaching, and competency evaluation.

Table 3

Co-authorship: Organizations' documents, citations and total link strength

Id	Organization	Documents	Citations	Total link strength
876	University of Groningen	9	131	1
473	National University of Malaysia	33	124	0
882	University of Hradec Králové	13	97	1
856	University of Cádiz	9	91	1
612	Shanghai Jiao Tong University	7	78	3
907	University of Macau	12	65	1
374	Lancaster University	5	54	1
796	Universitat Politècnica de València	17	54	2
259	Indonesia University of Education	9	40	0
212	Guangdong University of Foreign studies	6	39	1

Table 3 depicts the leading research organizations collaborated on CEFR-related research publications. The National University of Malaysia leads CEFR with 33 documents despite no co-authorship networks, individual research rather than inter-institutional collaboration may be suggested. Second, Hradec Kralove (13 documents, 97 citations) and Groningen (9 documents, 131 citations) have average publication and citation numbers, indicating ongoing scholarly presence in the literature. Furthermore, Shanghai Jio Tong University has the greatest total connection strength (3), highlight its importance in CEFR intellectual research partnership.

The University of Cádiz, the University of Macau, and the Universitat Politècnica de València publish substantially but have low co-authorship, indicating locally focused research. While both of the universities, Lancaster University and Guangdong University of Foreign Studies prior quality over quantity, with fewer but significant contributions. CEFR research is expanding beyond Europe to Southeast Asia, with universities in the region, including the Indonesian University of Education. As seen in Table 3, the same is revealed in

figure 2, CEFR scholarship is scattered but growing, with a few universities leading research and others contributing peripherally. This trend indicates an increase in inter-organizational collaboration to enhance information exchange, innovation, and the implementation of CEFR, as well as pedagogical discourse.

Figure 2

Network visualization of co-authorship of organization in the data

Table 4

Citation: Source documents, citation and total link strength

Id	Source	Documents	Citations	Total link strength
195	Frontiers in Psychology	95	795	12
480	Procedia - social and behavioral sciences	64	306	9
385	Language Testing in Asia	33	244	8
470	Plos one	9	210	4
258	International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (IJET)	13	180	2
573	Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching	19	177	1
203	Heliyon	15	95	3
100	Creative Education	26	93	7
125	Education Sciences	15	78	4
534	Sage Open	11	66	9

Table 4 presents the distribution of citations and the intensity of links in the source documents, with a focus on the leading journals that cover CEFR from 2011 to 2024. With 95 papers published, 795 citations, and 12 links, Frontiers in Psychology is the leading CEFR research field. The significance of this finding highlights the interdisciplinary nature of CEFR research, which is expanding to encompass educational, psychological, and cognitive components. Their involvement in language testing that is in line with the CEFR and in education reform is supported by the fact that they are closely followed by Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences (306 citations) and Language Testing in Asia (244

citations), respectively. In technology-mediated and data-driven language acquisition, iJET and PLOS ONE are influential. Their rising citation effects and weak link strength demonstrate it. Heliyon and Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching provide methodological diversity, although their lower citation counts reflect a focus on specialized or recent literature. Open-access publication helps Creative Education, Education Sciences, and SAGE Open distribute their work and promote multidisciplinary interaction. Citations show additional publication channels and international collaboration. The CEFR's specialized and diverse publications illustrate its progress from a European framework to a worldwide research environment. The bibliometric data show that CEFR research has evolved into a robust, interdisciplinary field with robust academic networks and a growing scholarly reputation in many educational settings.

Figure 3

Network visualization of citation source in the data

Table **5**

Citation: Organization documents, citations and total link strength

Id	Organization	Documents	Citations	Total link strength
901	University of Leeds	4	152	0
876	University of Groningen	9	131	1
473	National University of Malaysia	33	124	4
954	University of Potsdam	4	112	0
882	University of Hradec Králové	13	97	0
856	University of Cádiz	9	91	1
612	Shanghai Jiao Tong University	7	78	1
907	University of Macau	12	65	3
374	Lancaster University	5	54	1

| 796 | Universitat Politècnica de València | 17 | 54 | 5 |

The citation network in Table 5 and Figure 4 shows how a few colleges promote CEFR research, but their output and collaboration patterns differ. Leeds University had the most citations (152), despite just four articles. This suggests a few innovative papers rather than constant productivity. Potsdam has four research projects with 112 citations, despite both universities having a total link strength (TLS) of zero, suggesting inadequate collaborative network integration. With 33 articles and 124 citations, the National University of Malaysia has the largest portfolio. Southeast Asian scholarship's higher TLS of 4 indicates a more connected research profile, highlight its growing importance in CEFR studies.

Mid-range contributors like the University of Groningen and the University of Hradec Kralove have 9 and 13 articles and 131 and 97 citations. Due of their low connection strength of 1 and 0, they might collaborate more. Universitat Politecnica de Valencia is a possible CEFR research network center with a high link strength (5), more publications (17), and moderate citations (54). Lancaster University, Cadiz University, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, and Macau University add geographical variety and connections to the network. However, these colleges publish and obtain fewer citations. The data shows that high-impact institutions are not necessarily at the heart of the co-citation network. European universities like Leeds, Groningen, Potsdam dominate, although Malaysia does well. Cooperation between less-connected but more cited institutions and those with many citations but few connections may promote CEFR research and information exchange.

Figure 4

Network visualization of citation Organization in the data

Table 6

Co-citation: Cited references, citation and total link strength

Id	Cited reference	Citations	Total link strength
1339 5	North, B, et al. (2016). Language Teaching, *49*(3), 455-459	21	21
3138	Canale, M, et al. (1980). Applied Linguistics, *1*(1), 1-47	18	11

8161	Horwitz, EK, et al. (1991). Modern Language Journal, *75*(1), 130	18	14
428	Alderson, JC (2007). Modern Language Journal, *91*(4), 659-663	17	27
887	Anonymous (2006).	15	10
950	Anonymous (2013).	15	7
1826	Bates, D, et al. (2015). Journal of Statistical Software, 67(1),	15	8
8366	Hulstijn, jh (2007). Modern Language Journal, 91(4), 663-667	15	32
8417	Hutchinson, T, et al. (1987).	15	2
11065	Little, D (2007). Modern Language Journal, *91*(4), 645-655	15	32

Table 6 illustrates CEFR co-citation analysis (figure 5). Using citation frequencies and link strength, the table identifies influential references. It emphasizes CEFR studies' cornerstone publications. Nother et al. (2016) are among the top-cited authors for their 21 links and 21 citations, providing crucial contributions to language assessment and teaching framework theory and practice. High citation counts (18 each) of Canale and Swain (1980) and Horwitz et al. (1991) demonstrate their persistent impact on Communicative competence and learner anxiety, two key CEFR principles.

As shown by co-citation analysis patterns, classical and modern studies are closely related. According to Alderson (2007), Hulstijn (2007), and Little (2007), strong linkages (27, 32, 32) contributed to CEFR knowledge. CLC, assessment validity, and learner autonomy are affected. Statistical modeling and software tools are increasingly used in CEFR bibliometric studies, according to Bates et al. (2015). A shift toward data-driven analysis is suggested.

The co-citation networks show multiple tightly clustered nodes, suggesting linkages between important concepts and empirical research (Figure 5). The CEFR studies combines traditional communication competency theories with new computational and evaluative approaches. The coherent and multidisciplinary character of CEFR studies is affirmed by the co-citation results, which show a balanced synthesis of empirical, theoretical, and methodological grounds.

Figure 5

*Network visualization of co-citation cited reference in the data*
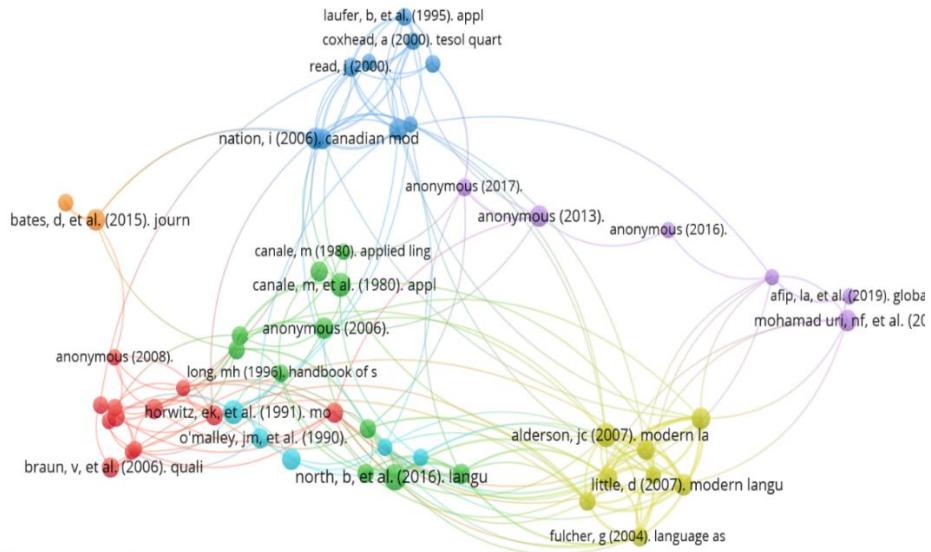
Table 7

Co-citation: Cited sources, citation and total link strength

Id	Source	Citations	Total link strength
2753	Language Testing	497	6782
2724	Language Learning	466	8631
4129	System	459	8359
3020	Modern Language Journal	453	6239
4204	TESOL Quarterly	433	6937
333	Applied Linguistics	401	6660
4100	Studies in Second Language Acquisition	307	6319
2751	Language Teaching Research	270	4484
1434	Frontiers in Psychology	262	4895
1132	ELT Journal	260	2398

Table 7 and Figure 6 provide a list of the most cited books that influence academic debates over the CEFR. With the greatest citation count (497) and total link strength (6782) among CEFR-related studies, Language Testing stands out in the areas of assessment validation and test construction. The two most popular

venues for publishing theoretical and empirical studies on language teaching and learning are Language Learning and System, with link strengths of 8,631 and 8,359, respectively, and citation rates of 466 and 459, respectively.

TESOL Quarterly and Modern Language Journal both contribute significantly to the field of teacher development and CEFR-integrated communicative language teaching (433 and 453 citations, respectively). Multidisciplinary research that connects theoretical frameworks with classroom implementations is made possible by the strong overall connection strengths of these articles (6239 and 6937). The studies in Second Language Acquisition (307 citations) and Applied Linguistics (401 citations) also provide the theoretical underpinnings of the CEFR, particularly in cognitive and psycholinguistic aspects of language competency.

Recent papers in Language Teaching Research (270 citations, link strength 4,484) and Frontiers in Psychology (262 citations, link strength 4,895) show that CEFR-oriented research is becoming psychological and empirical. The ELT Journal (260 citations) shows how the framework is used in English language instruction. Figure 6 shows a complex web of interrelated sources, indicating a developing and integrated research setting. With the help of co-citation mapping, it can observe how the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) bridges the gap between classical linguistic theory and modern multidisciplinary research in the domains of applied linguistics and language education.

Figure 6

*Network visualization of co-citation cited sources in the data*
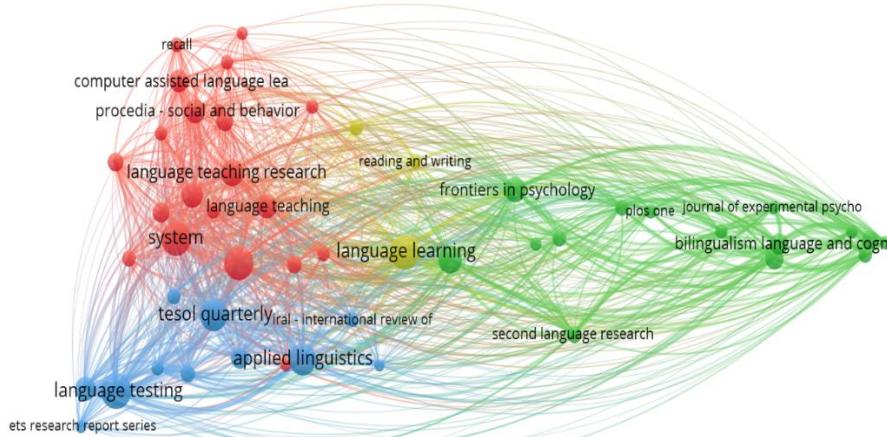
Table 8

Map based on text data from bibliographic database (Title field)

Id	Term	Occurrences	Relevance score
1	Common European Framework	53	0.1522
2	Comprehension	31	1.8038
3	EFL Learner	35	1.7584
4	Foreign Language Teaching	17	2.0649
5	Indonesia	15	0.0317
6	Languages	18	0.034
7	Reference	56	0.1517
8	Relationship	20	1.7584
9	Second Language Acquisition	10	0
10	Translation	16	2.2448

Table 8 and Figure 7 outline the primary research subjects and terminology used by the CEFR, based on text data extracted from the bibliographic database's title field. Two conceptually significant terms in CEFR discourse, "Reference" (56) and "Common European Framework" (53), are highlighted in the analysis as being crucial. The use of geographical and contextual terms, such as "Indonesia" (15 times), shows that the CEFR is flexible and widely used, and also implies that there has been more academic involvement from non-European contexts.

The fact that "EFL learner" and "comprehension" appear 35 and 31 times, respectively, with relevance scores of 1.7584 and 1.8038, further suggests that the CEFR is a highly relevant subject in EFL classrooms. This example shows how CEFR concepts may improve students' cross-language communication and understanding. With a relevance score of 2.0649 for 'foreign language teaching,' the framework is in great demand for language assessment and program development globally.

Figure 7 demonstrates how these concepts form theme zones based on CEFR frameworks, demonstrating theoretical coherence and growing research diversity. The mapping shows the CEFR's evolution from a European standard to a global language education and evaluation system.

Figure 7

Map based on text data from bibliographic database (Title field)

Table 9

Map based on text data from bibliographic database (abstract field)

Id	Term	Occurrences	Relevance score
8	Reference	309	0.4046
1	Common European Framework	301	0.4039
7	Languages	173	0.2358
4	Effect	169	1.0995
9	Score	134	0.3651
5	Europe	82	0.3953
10	Significant Difference	72	1.1721
3	Council	64	0.4119
2	Control Group	56	2.7969
6	Experimental Group	56	2.7147

The bibliometric dataset's abstract field keywords in table 9 and figure 8 show CEFR research' conceptual and methodological orientations. In teaching language and assessment studies, 'Reference' (309 occurrences, relevance score 0.4046) and 'Common European Framework'(301 occurrences, relevance score 0.4039) emphasize the CEFR's theoretical and practical value. They think academics explain, apply and critique language and educational standard. The frequency of 'Language' (173 occurrences) and 'Effect' (169 occurrence, relevance score 1.0995) for language learning outcomes) stresses multilingual context and CEFR-based therapies. Statistical studies suggest that the CEFR improves learner performance. The phrases 'Score' (134 occurrence) and 'Significant Difference' (72 occurrence, relevance score 1.1721) illustrate this.

Experimental and quasi-experimental methods for assessing the CEFR's educational effect are common in a 'control group' (56 occurrences, relevance score 2.7969) and a 'experimental group' (56 occurrences, relevance score 2.7174). The phrase Council (64) and Europe (82), explained the CEFR's origin in the Council of Europe and its worldwide educational gains in the field. Figure 8

also shows the CEFR study's conceptual, methodological, contextual, and occurrence mapping theme clusters. Key connections discussed the theory-practice balance that promotes discipline progress. The results prove the CEFR is a widely recognized, evidence-based language evaluation and instruction method.

Figure 8

Map based on text data from bibliographic database (abstract field)
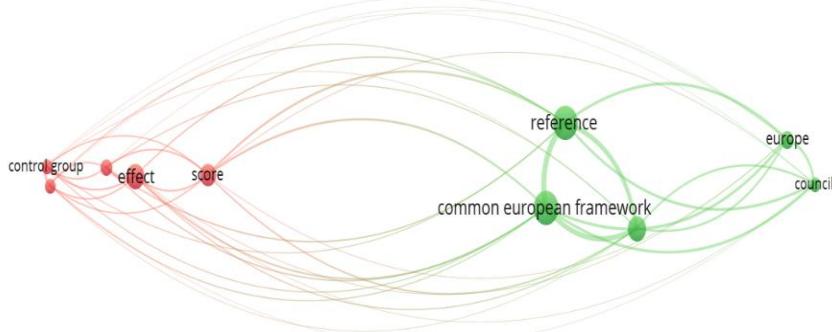
5. Discussion and Conclusion

Bibliometric mapping revealed the academic advancement of CEFR-based research for the duration of 2011 to 2024 and explored the influential authors, intellectual variety, and geographical growth. Findings of the study explored that the CEFR has been the subject of an increasing number of papers, which is indicative of the growing level of academic interest and collaboration in this field. Table 1 shows that between 2011 and 2023, the number of published research articles increased significantly, going from 12 to 279. As CEFR is being more and more integrated into educational institutions throughout the world, its upward trajectory reflects the increasing interest in it all over the world. In spite of this, a sign of diminished academic interest, the small drop in 2024 may be due to insufficient data or post-pandemic stability. As a pedagogical and research framework, the CEFR is gaining increasing importance, as evidenced by its growing publication output.

Alignment of research demonstrating CEFR's increasing impact on curriculum design and assessment innovation, as well as its expanding pedagogical relevance and worldwide popularity, is reflected in the trend of increasing publication numbers (Galaczi & Taylor, 2018; Little, 2020). It is more probable that the modest decrease in 2024 is due to incomplete indexing than to a decrease in academic involvement.

CEFR research is multicultural and worldwide; highly cited publications from Turkey and Brunei demonstrate CEFR versatility outside Europe. The growing number of research in Eastern Europe and Asia shows that the framework is being used in many contexts, including those with various languages and cultures. Citations on emotional learning, intercultural competencies, and teacher development demonstrate the CEFR's influence on communicative pedagogy and curricular change.

New CEFR research hubs emerge via institutional collaboration; the 33 National University of Malaysia articles and the University of Leeds' 152 citation impact show a growing scientific nexus between Europe and Asia. Despite many institutions' limited connections, this dispersion suggests growing international collaboration. Their rising interinstitutional interactions make Universitat Politecnica de Valencia and Shanghai Jiao Tong University leaders in the field.

Research conducted in Turkey and Brunei demonstrates that CEFR is applicable outside the borders of Europe, and its widespread adoption demonstrates its adaptability. Similarly, North (2014) and O'Dwyer (2020) discovered that multicultural contexts are increasingly utilizing the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to construct communicative curricula and to train teachers. Little (2020) and Galaczi and Weir (2013) discussed that the emerging centers, such as the Universitat Politècnica de València and Shanghai Jiao Tong University, are driving interinstitutional impact. On the other hand, institutional networks such as the National University of Malaysia and the University of Leeds reflect evidence that cross-regional collaboration strengthens CEFR scholarship.

Sources of CEFR indicate its multidisciplinary character; Frontiers of Psychology and its 795 citations demonstrate the confluence of linguistics, psychological, and educational paradigms, making it the premier journal. Language Learning, System, and TESOL Quarterly have strong links between theoretical research and classroom practice. Collaboration across sectors shows how the CEFR has grown from a linguistic description to a model that includes emotional, social, and cognitive development—a robust theoretical framework for CEFR research, reinforced by co-citation patterns. In connection with the influential authors in CEFR, the traditional communicative competency theories, to current data-driven methodologies, North (2016), Canale and Swaine (1980), and Little (2007) remain influential. The CEFR's blending of conventional language theory with new empirical methodologies has kept it robust and adaptive.

Textual translations from bibliometric databases help explain new research paths. 'Foreign language teaching,' 'EFL learners,' and 'comprehension' are prominent words that emphasize pedagogy, whereas 'experimental group,'

'significant difference,' and 'effect' emphasize evidence-based evaluation. By referring to education that is based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), Indonesia is referring to its global reach and widespread use outside of European educational systems. The results of this study demonstrate that the research environment is consistent, data-driven, and pedagogically intensive. The purpose of this study was to identify gaps, analyze trends, and evaluate the effect of citations.

The growing influence of high-impact journals like Frontiers in Psychology on transdisciplinary CEFR research shows how educational, psychological, and linguistic paradigms are coming together to form frameworks for language acquisition and evidence-based pedagogy (Hulstijn, 2015). The Language Learning System, TESOL, and Strong Connections support demands for integrated instructional approaches that improve students' communicative ability and performance in a variety of circumstances. This highlighted the practical application of theoretical underpinnings (Larsen-Freeman, 2018).

Collaboration patterns across industries demonstrate that the CEFR has progressed from a linguistic concept to a holistic model including emotional, social, and cognitive elements. Research that follows socio-cognitive theory and focuses on language development often finds this shift to be consistent (Atkinson, 2014). Critical works that have shaped and will continue to shape contemporary empirical methods that combine data-driven assessment with communicative ability include North (2016), Canale and Swain (1980), and Little (2007) (McNamara, 2013). The strong theoretical foundation of CEFR is supported by its co-citation patterns.

The use of pedagogy-driven research paths is highlighted by linguistic terms like "EFL learners," "comprehension," and "foreign language teaching" by their frequency. The use of words like "effect" and "experimental group" shows that the field is moving toward more scientific and quantitative forms of evaluation (Norris & Ortega, 2012). The increased prevalence of the word "Indonesia" in articles on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) shows how this framework is being used to change curricula and establish language competency standards in education systems outside of Europe (Widodo, 2018). Taguchi and Roever (2017) found that the research environment is coherent, diversified in methods, and rich in pedagogy. This supports the study's goals of mapping trends, assessing the effect of citations, and identifying gaps that might shape future educational research agendas that are consistent with the CEFR-based education.

The study concluded that between 2011 and 2024, CEFR research evolved from European-centered to integrative and interdisciplinary, and the results verify

the objectives by indicating theme importance, collaborative networks, and key contributors. Modern CEFR uses include technology, psycholinguistics, and multilingual education, but its conceptual underpinning remains strong. Bibliometric mapping shows strength like a sound theoretical foundation and quick publishing development and shortcomings like a lack of representation in particular subject and interdisciplinary connections. To improve language teaching fairness, uniformity, and contextual flexibility, CEFR-based research must progress.

6. Recommendations

The study suggests the following recommendations;

1. The study recommends that to promote a worldwide awareness of multilingual educational practices, CEFR-related research in underrepresented countries, including Africa, South America, and the Middle East, is needed.
2. Researchers may examine how the CEFR might be combined with AI-driven learning analytics, digital assessment tools, and adaptive feedback systems to improve language instruction accuracy, customization, and accessibility.

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