

# CONCLUSIONS

*Constructing valid language tests and examinations based on the CEFR and its Companion Volume*

RELANG Workshop, Serbia  
September 2020

# Aims

- To get better acquainted with the CEFR and its Companion Volume and learn how to exploit them as a tool in language teaching and assessment.
- To get practical advice on how to define and/or revise learning outcomes and construct tasks for testing speaking, listening, reading and writing.

# Workshop outcomes

- Participants will gain a deeper insight into CEFR descriptors for practical purposes.
- In assessment and language instruction in general, teachers will focus more on how students can actually perform in real-life situations.
- Teachers will be able to construct tests in line with the CEFR that can better assess such performance.

## Relations Outcomes – CEFR

- Outcomes need to be CEFR-based
- Limited number of Serbian descriptors
- Serbian descriptors may be linked to various levels
- Serbian descriptors are not always specific enough
- Mediation is included in outcomes

# CEFR-level based tests

Focus on one level only in a test because:

- A sufficient number of tasks at a specific level is needed for valid and reliable assessment;
- A score in itself is not an indication of a CEFR-level;
- A low score does not therefore indicate a CEFR-level below the intended tests level
  - Exceptions: speaking and possibly writing tests

# Issues for the future: test content

- Skills / subskills to be tested:
  - Listening
  - Reading
  - Speaking
  - Writing
- Number of items per skill?
- Themes, contexts, situations (Table 5 in CEFR):
  - Suitable for teenagers
  - Subjects and texts to be avoided

# Reading/Listening

- Choice of texts
- Test length (20-30 items per skill and per level)
- Distribution MCh – open-ended
- Use of T/F
- Example needed
- Test materials and equipment needed for listening
- Involvement of pre-service and in-service training

# Writing

- Recognizable formats (e-mail/blogs)
- E-test to imitate real-life formats
- Minimal requirements per task
- Minimum number of words
- Use of visuals (to avoid copying?)
- Appealing content



# Speaking

- Production AND Interaction to be tested
- Use of visuals (clear enough?)
- Scoring absence of responses
- Appealing content
- Role of interlocutor
- Two students tested at the same time?
- Motivation test takers

## Issues for the future: procedures

- Assessment criteria for writing/speaking:
  - Reviewing the distribution of scores per criterion
  - Conversion of marks into grades
- Introduce benchmarking
- Introduce standard setting

# Professionals involved

- A written instruction for item writers needed.
- A construction team of a larger group of item writers
- A screening panel consisting of at least three experts
- A qualified native speaker checking all texts and tasks.
- Communication with the teaching community.
- Communication with the teacher trainers:
  - Preservice
  - In-service

## Lastly

- Implementing the principles of good testing practice and the CEFR is a never-ending process.
- The end of the workshop should be viewed as a new beginning for the local testing community.
- Team work and cooperation, transparent procedures and group decisions are some of the pre-requisites for success.