Study purpose: adapt CEF scales to job-related situations: CEF-based language competence profiles as an outcome

Methodology

Provisional CEF-based scales

Qualitative validation by users and VOLL teachers

Recommendations for FL teaching in the upper grades of lower secondary

Preliminary descriptors matched to CEF descriptors

30 interviews with users, workshops with 142 teachers

Syllabi, house curricula, materials development, INSET

Research question: What kind of tasks do secondary school leavers need to perform in the FL to meet their future job requirements?
Selected results from the pilot study

Interviews: „Can make him/herself understood in an interview and communicate ideas and information on familiar relevant topics.“

Goal-oriented co-operation, complaints: „Can discuss what to do next, making and responding to suggestions.“

Frequency distribution for 21 raters in the pilot study
Results from the pilot study

- Median for individual descriptors: median level = preliminary level in 58% of cases; mean value for all descriptors regarding range: 1.91

- Correlation between preliminarily assigned levels and actual attributions for an individual descriptor for all raters: Spearman's Rho coefficient (.98), Aiken coefficient (.45)

Qualitative validation of scales

- 30 interviews
  45 to 90 mins.
  - focus: categories of professional use
  - transcription / analysis

- 2 experts in both fields commented, final revision of scales and Descriptors

- One-day workshops at vocational schools; INSET on the CEF, then teachers sorted descriptors into piles (A1-B2)

- Analysis of results and final revision of scales and descriptors; outcome: competence profiles
Main study – data from workshops are currently analysed

How much experience do teachers have with the CEF?

Results from the questionnaire distributed in workshops at vocational schools (n=142)

I have heard about the CEF

- 10%
- 90%

Experience on the job

- < 5 years: 1%
- 5 - 9 years: 37%
- 10 - 15 years: 14%
- > 15 years: 17%
- No: 31%
Uses reported by subjects:
- testing (8)
- syllabus design (2)
Bridging the gap between theory and practice in Europe: LEONARDO project CEF Professional

Participants

Universities of Applied Sciences in Helsinki and Jyväskylä, Central Osthrobotnian Polytechnic / FIN, University of Education Karlsruhe / DE, Warsaw University / PL, Plovdiv University / BG, EAPLA / NL, Rakom Consultants / HU, Tampere College / FIN

Aims and objectives

Professional CEF-based profiles in business, law, technology, health care as an empirical basis for curriculum planning and tailor-made VOLL / ESP language courses

Profiles  Guidelines  Pilot courses  Teacher training
Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice: CEF-based Competence Profiles

Prof. Dr. Karin Vogt, University of Education Karlsruhe / Germany

1. The setting

- General foreign language education does not seem to be geared to learners’ future professional lives; one (but not the only) aim of foreign language teaching: prepare learners for their professional lives
- Purpose of the study: create CEF-based competence profiles for the foreign language as a basis for needs analysis for three jobs that secondary school leavers tend to learn at the end of their schooling (hotel staff, assistants in export sales, office workers)
- The study was funded by the Universities of Education Heidelberg and Karlsruhe.

2. Research questions and methodology

- Research questions:
  - What kind of tasks do secondary school leavers need to perform in the foreign language to meet their future job requirements?
  - Does (general) foreign language tuition in the upper grades of lower secondary appropriately prepare learners for these requirements? Which measures can be taken to prepare learners better for professional life?

- Methodology

The study consists of three phases, the outcome of which are competence profiles adapted from the CEF (levels A1 to B2) and related to job-specific communication situations in the foreign language that typically occur in the three jobs mentioned above.

Phase 1: Preliminary scales and descriptors were created.

- based on descriptions of communicative activities from curricula, job descriptions, textbook materials etc.
- descriptions formulated as (preliminary) can do-statements
- matched to CEF descriptors and adapted

Example for an adapted descriptor for hotel staff, Correspondence:
Can write personal letters describing experiences, feelings and events in some detail. (Council of Europe, 2001: 83).

Adaptation:
Kann routinemäßige Arten von Rechnungen (z.B. Gastrechnungen, Abrechnungen mit Reisebüros und Veranstaltern) schreiben und Sachverhalte deutlich machen.
[Can write routine invoices (e.g. for guests, payments from travel agencies and tour operators) and can make issues explicit.] (approximate translation KV.)
Phase 2: Qualitative validation of the scales in a two-step procedure

- 30 interviews were conducted in 2005 with professionals in the respective fields (duration: 45 to 90 min.); focus: categories of professional language use
- coding procedure: broad transcription – analysis of interviews – table with relevant passages from interview and researcher’s comments – generalised analysis (focus: typical activities), shared in a team of researchers – revision of scales and descriptors
- two experts in both the CEF and the vocational sector commented on the preliminary profiles
- final revision of the profiles
- 2006: one-day workshops at vocational schools (142 participants) throughout Germany; thorough discussion of the CEF (levels, criticism, applications for VOLL teachers), then teachers sorted the adapted descriptors (cut into strips) into piles and assigned levels from A1 to B2 (adapted from Smith & Kendall (1963) and North (1996/2000))

Phase 3: Implications for language teaching

- Recommendations for (house) curricula at lower secondary schools, teacher training and materials
- Competence profiles may also give insights to English teachers at vocational schools

3. Selected results from the pilot study

- One intensive interview with a professional was conducted; subsequently 21 undergraduate students functioned as raters for preliminary profiles for hotel staff
- Frequency distribution, computation of range for the dispersion of values, median as a location parameter and several types of correlation (Spearman’s Rho, Aiken coefficients; see also Kaftandjieva & Takala 2002)
- Median for individual descriptors: median level = preliminary level in 58% of cases; mean value for all descriptors regarding range: 1.91
- Correlation between preliminarily assigned levels and actual attributions for an individual descriptor for all raters: Spearman’s Rho coefficient (.98), Aiken coefficient (.45)
Examples for frequency distribution for two descriptors:

Interviews (I 16): „Can make him/herself understood in an interview and communicate ideas and information on familiar relevant topics.“

Goal-oriented co-operation, complaints (ZR 40): „Can discuss what to do next, making and responding to suggestions.“

4. First results from the main study

The data from the workshops, which took place in February and March 2006, are currently analysed. A questionnaire was distributed among the 142 participants that was designed to get an idea of the participants’ experience on the job and their prior knowledge about the CEF.

Experience on the job (n=142)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&lt; 5 years</th>
<th>5-10 years</th>
<th>10-15 years</th>
<th>&gt;15 years</th>
<th>n/a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Experience with the CEF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have heard about the CEF.</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have read the CEF.</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have participated in an INSET about the CEF.</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have used the CEF.</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Bridging theory and practice on a European level: the LEONARDO DA VINCI project CEF Professional

**Participants:** Universities of Applied Sciences in Helsinki and Jyväskylä, Central Ostrobotnian Polytechnic / FIN, University of Education Karlsruhe / DE, Warsaw University / PL, Plovdiv University / BG, EAPLA / NL, Rakom Consultants / HU, Tampere College / FIN

**Aims and objectives:**

Professional CEF-based profiles in business, law, technology, health care as an empirical basis for curriculum planning and tailor-made VOLL / ESP language courses

**Procedure:**

Profiles, generated by interviews => guidelines on the basis of the profiles => courses are designed and piloted => VOLL / ESP teachers are trained on how to use the guideline for designing tailor-made language courses (for more details on the procedure see Huhta, forthcoming)

**More information:** www.cop.fi/cefpro

6. References


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