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Linking the TestDaF to the CEFR: The Case of Writing Proficiency

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TestDaF Institut

Objectives

- TestDaF – CEFR:
  Validating the claim of link through an empirical approach
- Following the methodological steps as outlined in the Manual (Council of Europe, 2003)
- Linking 4 TestDaF subtests (2 receptive skills and 2 productive skills)
- Here: the case of TestDaF Written Production

TestDaF Levels and the CEFR

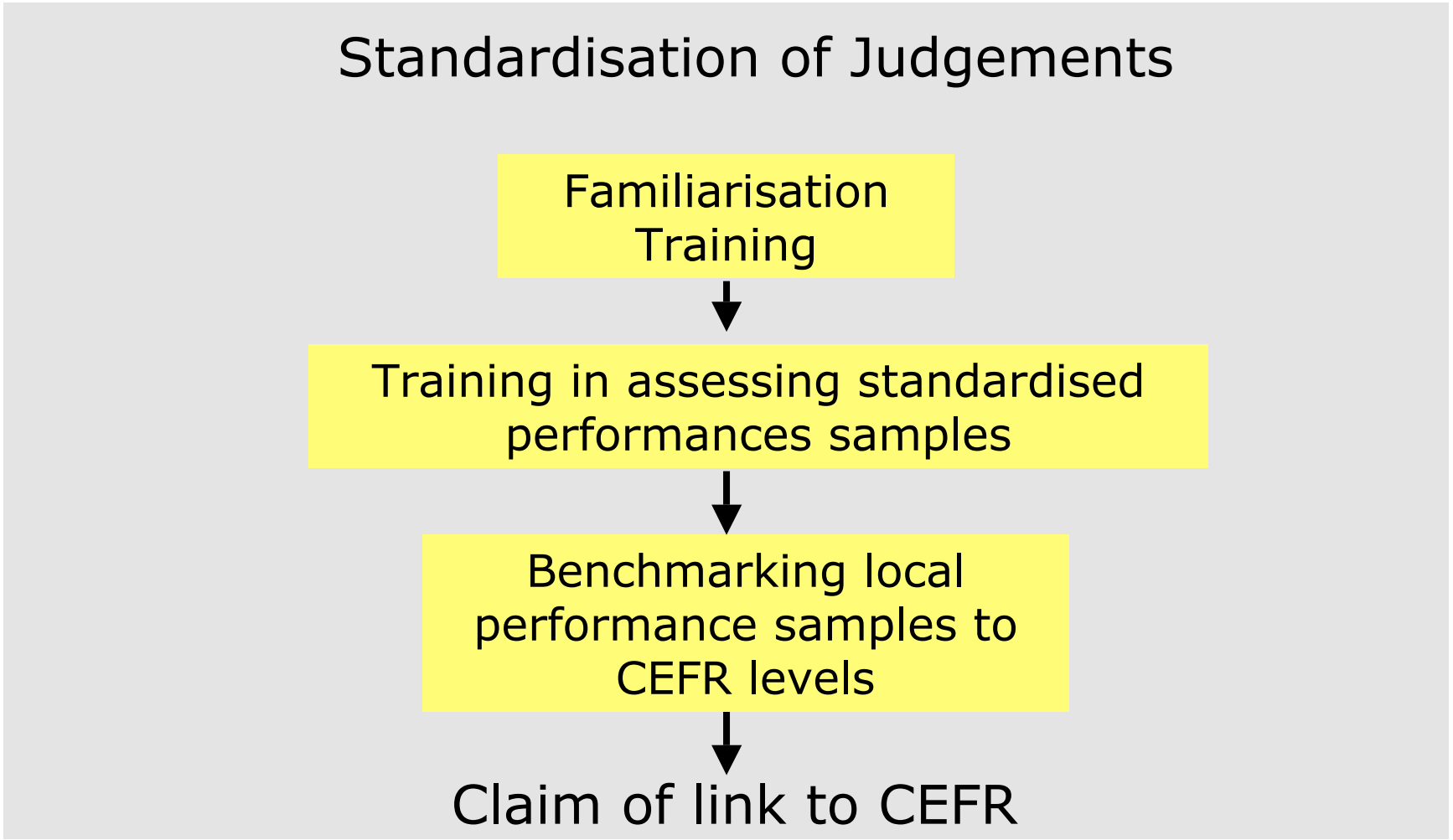
Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)					
A Basic User		B Independent User		C Proficient User	
A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2

TestDaF Levels	TDN 3	TDN 4	TDN 5

TDN – TestDaF-Niveaustufe

TestDaF Written Production

- One task to evaluate the candidate‘s proficiency at the levels TDN 3, 4, 5
- Examines writing skills that are relevant in an academic context like describing and arguing
- **Objective**: to write a coherent, well-structured text with reference to a topic, giving a clear description of statistical data in a graph or table and developing an argument systematically and comprehensibly

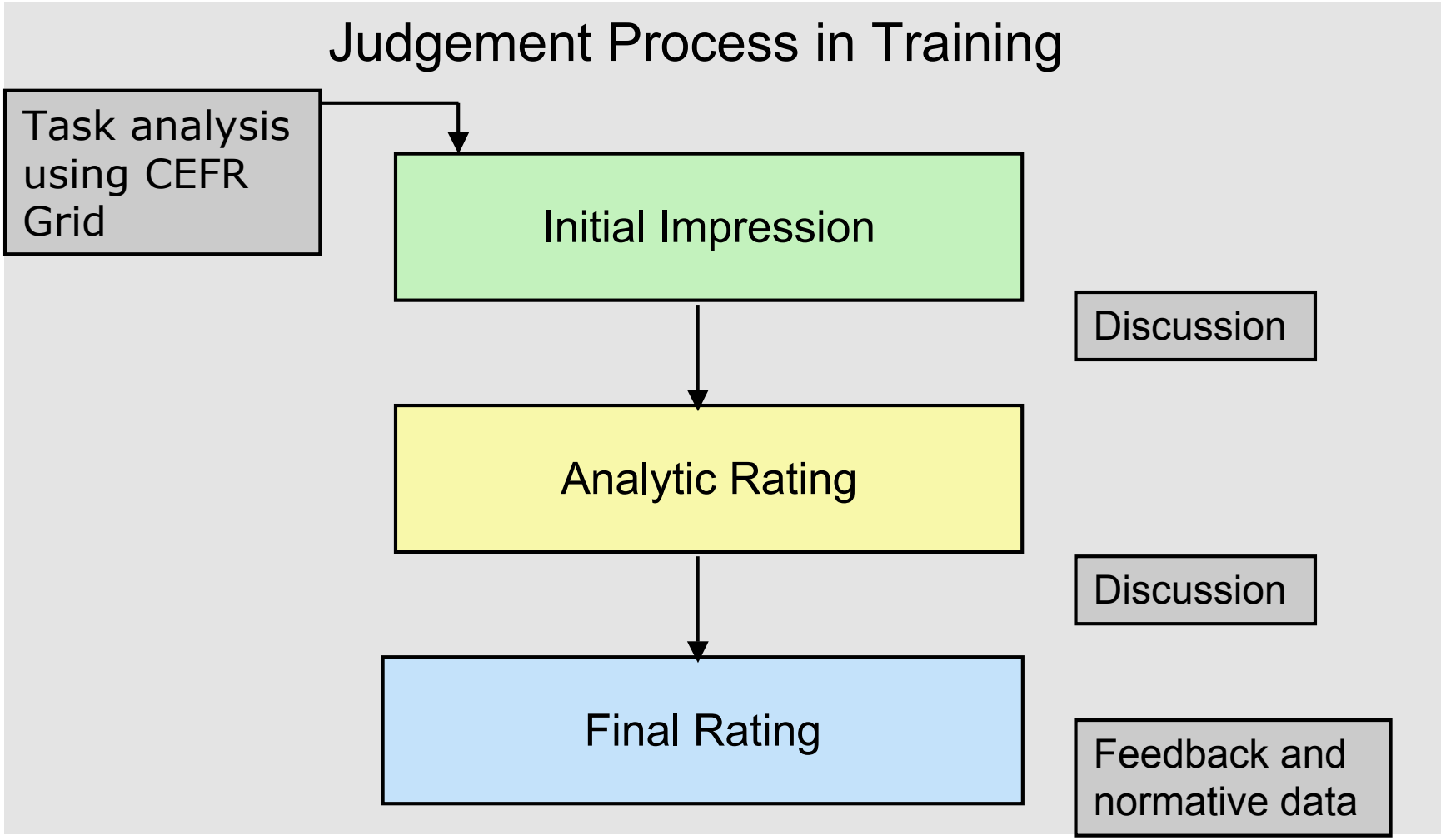


Standardisation of Judgements

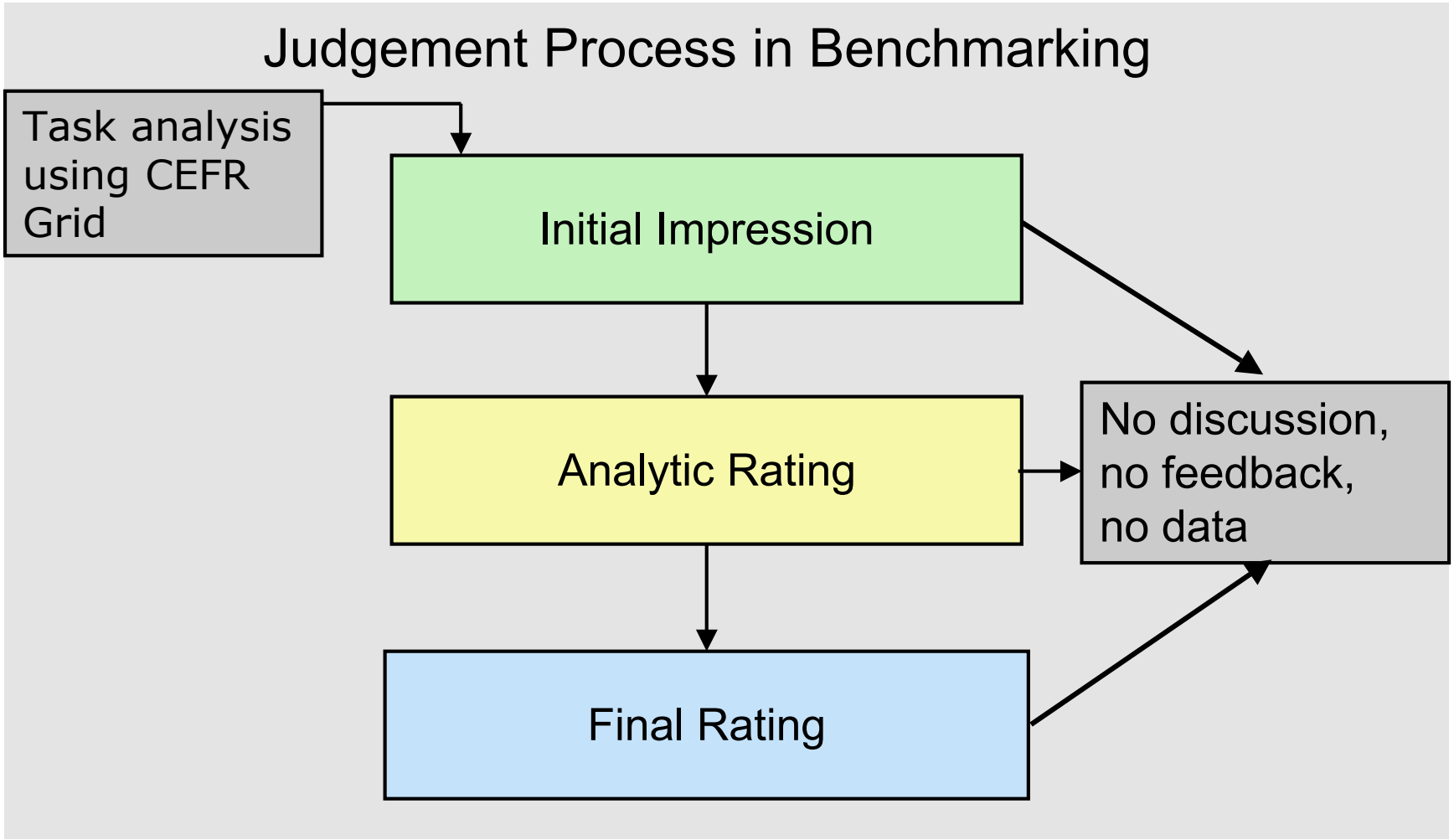
Benchmarking workshop: 2½ days, 14 judges

- Half a day of familiarisation with the CEFR scales; introduction to the CoE project and to the purpose of the benchmarking procedure
- One day of training with standardised samples of the Council of Europe (1 per level available)
- One day of benchmarking TestDaF samples (3 samples per level)

Standardisation of Judgements



Standardisation of Judgements



Design Features

- Participants: 14 judges
  - Training stage: 5 standardised samples (CoE)
  - Benchmarking stage: 9 local samples (TestDaF)
- Initial impression, analytic rating, final rating
- Nine-point CEFR rating scale (A1, A2, A2+, etc.)

Data Analysis

Interrater reliability and agreement

Many-facet Rasch analysis

Interrater Reliability and Agreement

Index	Training
Pearson *r* (Mean)	.98
Kendall‘s *W*	.97
Cronbach‘s Alpha	.998
Rater Agreement Index (RAI)	.95
Within-Group Agreem. Index (r_{wg})	.97

Summary

- High degree of correctness in final level assignments
- Rater agreement indices consistently high

Conclusion:
Training stage was successful.

Interrater Reliability and Agreement

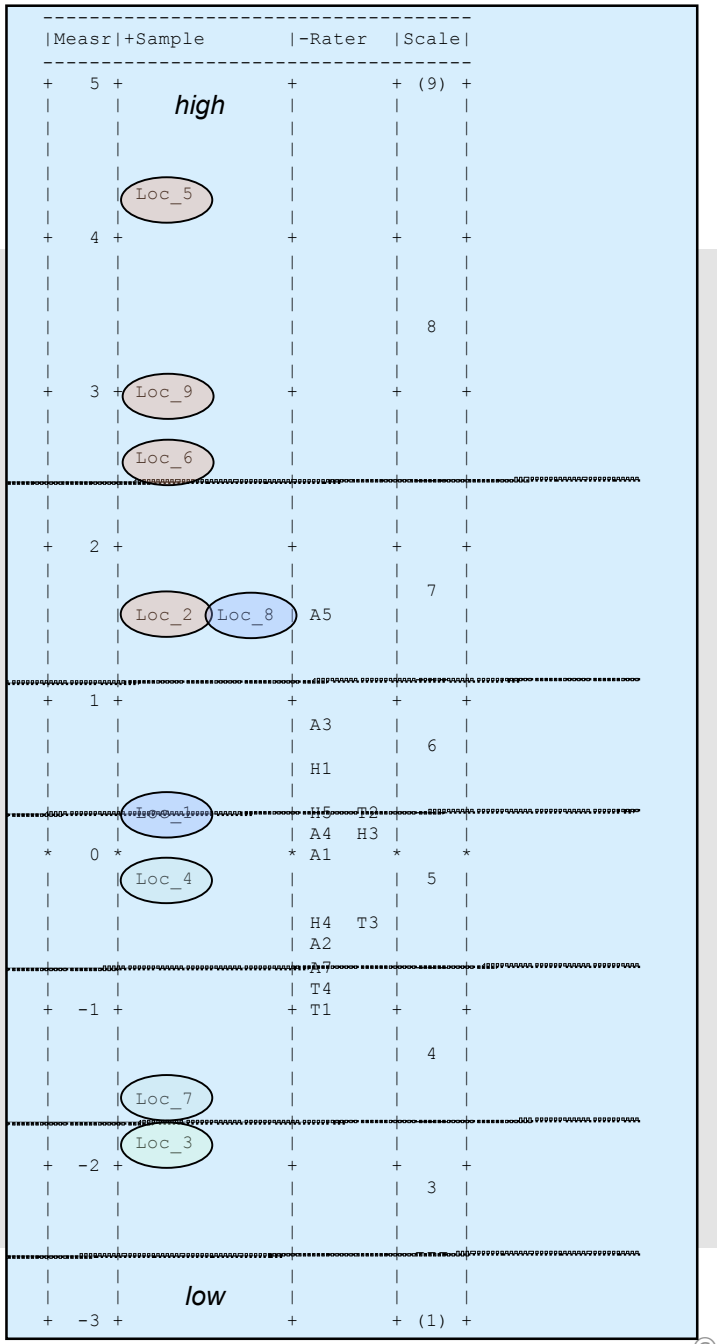
Index	Training	Benchm.
Pearson *r* (Mean)	.98	.81
Kendall‘s *W*	.97	.81
Cronbach‘s Alpha	.998	.980
Rater Agreement Index (RAI)	.95	.89
Within-Group Agreem. Index (r_{wg})	.97	.83

Many-Facet Rasch Analysis

- **Final ratings (benchmarking stage)**
  - Most raters acting as independent experts
  - Rater separation reliability = .69
  - Homogeneity statistic: $\chi^2(13) = 46.1$ ($p < .01$)

Benchmarking

TestDaF Samples
Final ratings



TDN Level

TDN 5 TDN 4 TDN 3 b. TDN 3

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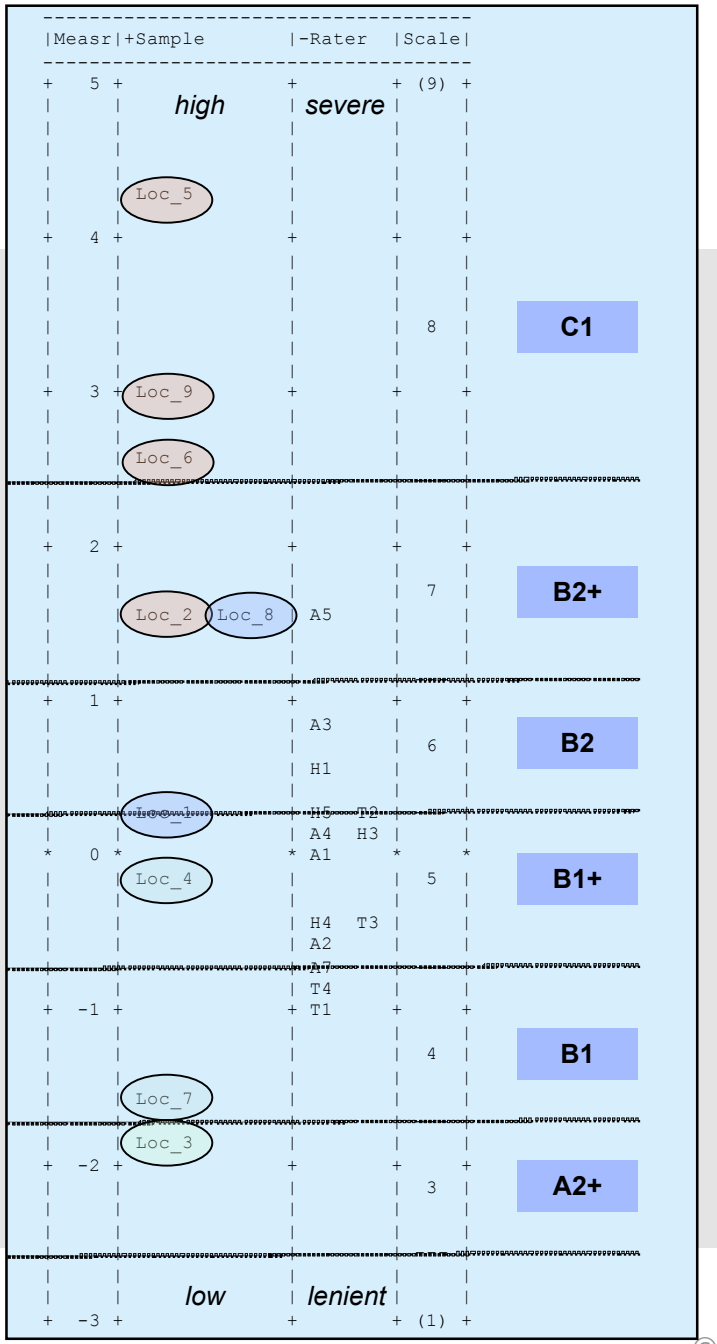
Benchmarking

TestDaF Samples
Final ratings



TDN Level

TDN 5 TDN 4 TDN 3 b. TDN 3

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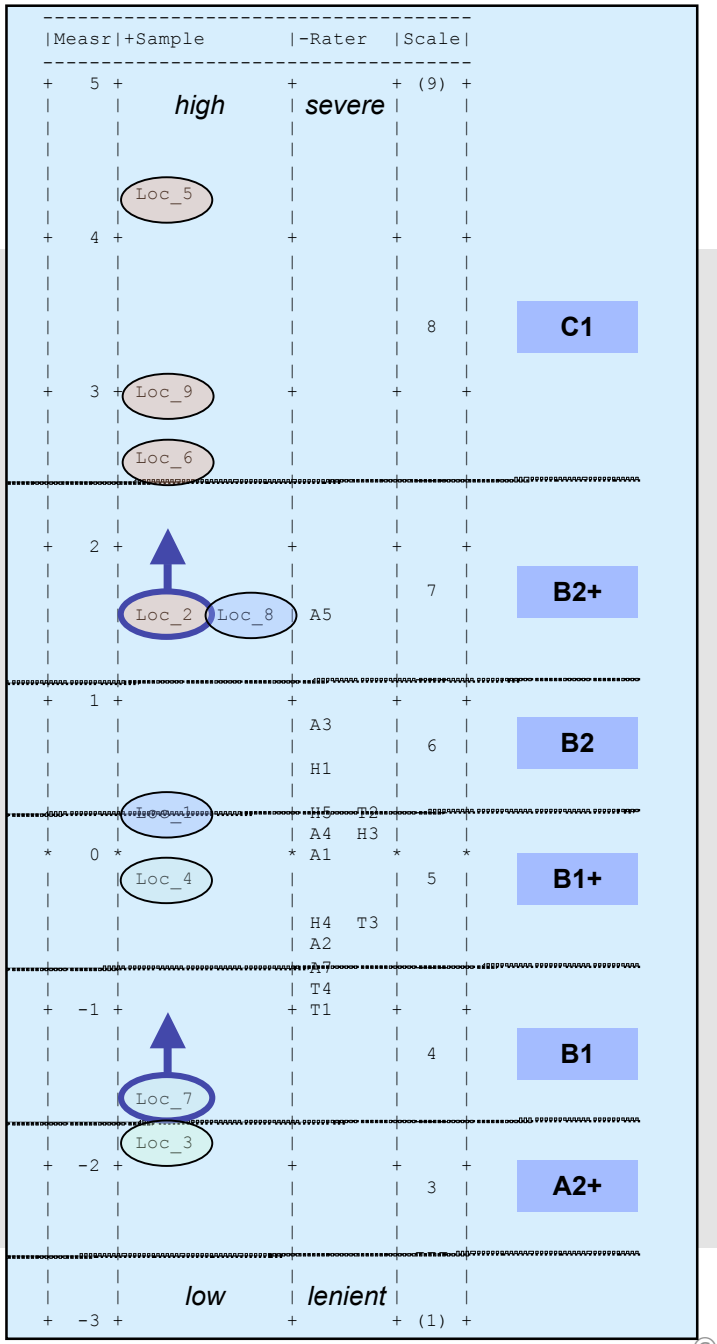
Benchmarking

TestDaF Samples
Final ratings



Placed too low – problem with accuracy criterion?

(Low level of accuracy in Samples 2 and 7)

TDN Level

TDN 5 **TDN 4** **TDN 3** **b. TDN 3**

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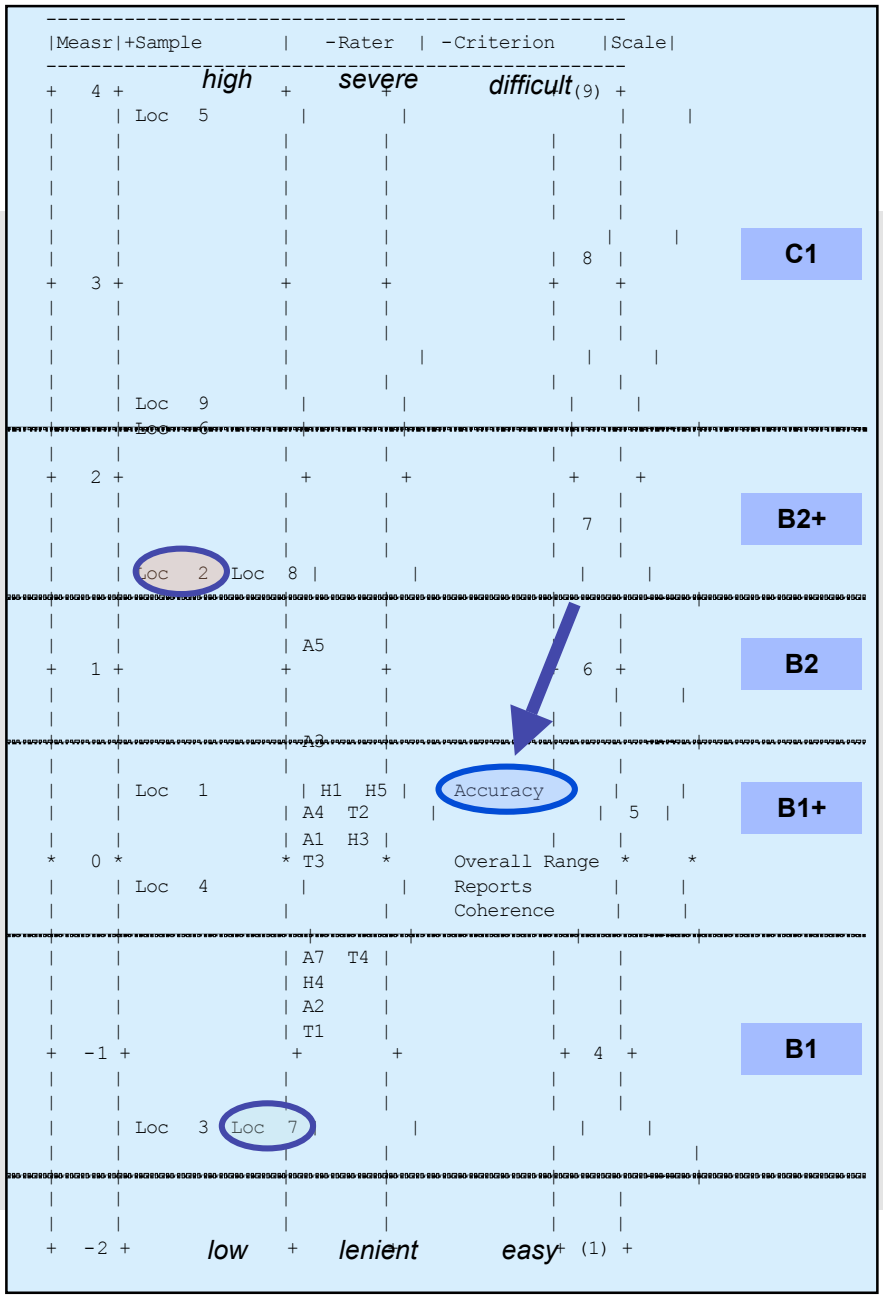
Benchmarking

TestDaF Samples
Analytical ratings

Grammatical Accuracy as the most difficult criterion



Summary

- **Rater Agreement Statistics**
  - Moderately high agreement in final level assignments
  - Sufficiently high rater agreement indices
- **Facets Analysis**
  - Raters acting as independent experts
  - Sufficient congruence between TDN and B2/C1 levels
  - Most difficult (and problematic) criterion: Grammatical Accuracy

Conclusion: Claim of link to the CEFR substantiated

Problematic issues

- **Lack of fit between standardised CoE samples and TestDaF samples**
  - Differences in test format
  - Differences in focus on accuracy criterion
- **Lack of fit between TestDaF construct and CEFR descriptors**
  - CEFR lacks a concept for task completion
  - CEFR lacks a descriptor for describing a graph or diagram
- **Different functions of plenary discussion at the Training and Benchmarking stages**

Thank you.

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