RELANG

Relating language examinations to the common European reference levels of language proficiency: *promoting quality assurance in education and facilitating mobility*

Standardization, Benchmarking & Standard setting

Linking Procedures in the Manual

- Familiarisation
- Specification
- Standardization and Benchmarking
- Standard setting
- Validation

Claims through Specification and Standardization

- Claimed link to CEFR is based on *specification* only
  - no indication of *score* required for CEFR-level in question
- Claims to be substantiated through *standardisation*
  - item-difficulties judged in relation to CEFR levels.

Steps in the standardization phase

1. Adequate familiarisation with the CEFR.
2. Training in rating productive skills
   - tables and scales in the CEFR or the Manual & scales or specific rating scales
3. Training in rating receptive tasks
   - tables in the Manual & specifications developed for the examinations or tests in question
4. Benchmarking performance samples
5. Standard setting of receptive tasks

Group Decisions

- ***Benchmarking*** and ***standard setting*** are procedures requiring group decisions
  - to be carefully prepared by appropriate training.

Benchmarking in Direct Tests

- In holistically rated tests, the judgment on the CEFR level is direct
    - Assistance needed for raters in giving valid judgments
    - Main tool used for this special type of standard setting: *benchmarking*
- Benchmarking: providing one (or more) typical sample(s) to illustrate performance at a given level

Standard Setting in Indirect Tests

- For tests with numerical score, performance standards to be set
  - Receptive skills (reading, listening)
  - Underlying competences (grammar, vocabulary)
- Performance standard
  - Boundary (cut-off score) between two levels on the scale
- Process to arrive at cut-off score: **standard setting**

How to arrive at Standards?

- Group decisions (panel)
- Group is familiar with CEFR
- Test content specified in terms of the CEFR
- Standard setting procedures formalized
- Careful selection and training of panel members

General Procedures

- Length: 2-3 days (including familiarization)
- 2-3 rounds with in-between
  - information on panel members' behaviour
  - information on candidate behaviour
- Effects of decisions
- Documentation needed to judge validity of procedure

Scores, Grades and Standards

- Decision if a person has reached a given CEFR level is based on grading, not on scoring (marking)
- Score must be transferred to a grading scale
- Transformation of scores to grades based on a cut-off score on a test
- Cut-off score
  - border between lowest acceptable score for relevant CEFR-level and highest score to fail that level