¥JALT CEFR & LP SIG

Newsletter No. 32 – August 2021

Dear members of the CEFR & LP SIG,

The summer heat has gained in strength and the end of the semester is approaching. We hope that the challenges in the last months worked out for you so far. This newsletter edition provides some news and ideas for you to consider and new projects to engage in. Hopefully, you will find something that catches your interest.

On Friday August 20th, 2021 (2 pm to 5:15 pm) we will hold a special event on Action Research with Anne Burns as invited speaker. She will give a lecture on "Action research: A powerful way to engage yourself in professional development", followed by a workshop on Action Research and the CEFR, which will give insights and discuss some exemplary projects under way. This will be a perfect occasion to get involved.

We want to renew the **Call for Collaborators** related to the **ongoing Kaken project.** We would be happy if you could consider taking part in it. For more details see in this Newsletter (or online at https://cefrjapan.net/kaken-5).

In June we started a new type of event, "Share your CEFR Tool", which is intended as a hands-on, peer-to-peer event. These tools will be made available on the Toolkit pages of the SIG's website (https://cefrjapan.net/toolkit). Looking forward to suggestions from the members!

Our member Shaun Allen shared with us a tool for getting acquainted with CEFR descriptors. He agreed to write **a featured articl**e for this newsletter on **Exploring CEFR Scales Using a Popular Mnemonic Platform**.

JALT 2021 International Conference is planning to hold the conference as two parallel events this year: on November 12th to 15th, 2021 at Shizuoka, Grandship, as a face-to-face event; and on November 19th to 21st, 2021 as an online event. See https://jalt.org/ and https://jalt.org/node/4301 for details.
CEFR & LP SIG will hold a SIG Forum and the AGM Online on November 21st, 2021.
The CEFR & LP SIG Forum has the theme *First steps for action research*.

The **CEFR Journal – Practice and Research** Volume 4 is under way and will be published soon. The Call for Submissions for Volume 5 is open until November 30th, 2021.
We will get a DOI for the CEFR Journal. See more https://cefrjapan.net/journal

If you would like to organize a joint event with the CEFR&LP SIG, please contact one of our officers. We ask all our members to become involved with organizing meetings and mini-conferences and by contributing to our newsletter. We'd love your cooperation to make this happen.

Thank you for being a member of JALT CEFR&LP SIG!
宜しくお願い致します。
Gabriela Schmidt
Your coordinator on behalf of all officers.

Contents of Newsletter 32 – August 2021

Please stay tuned to the updates of our events: **https://cefrjapan.net/events**

A CEFR-focused Action Research Lecture and Workshop

August 20th, 2021 (Friday)
2 pm – 5:15 pm

The workshop aims at helping busy teaching professionals conduct research putting CEFR educational principles into practice using an action research approach, which ensures organized, systematic, and rigorous conduct of research. The workshop consists of three parts.

In Part I, Dr. Anne Burns will talk about the essentials of Action Research: concepts, approaches, and processes, which will be followed by questions and answers.

Anne Burns

Action research: A powerful way to engage yourself in professional development

Bio:

Professor Anne Burns is an internationally renowned TESOL educator and scholar. She is Professor of TESOL at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia, a Professor Emerita at Aston University, Birmingham (UK), an Honorary Professor at the University of Sydney and an Honorary Professor of The Education University of Hong Kong. Her research interests include language teacher education, language teacher cognition, applications of genre theory to language teaching, curriculum development and change, literacy, and written and spoken discourse analysis. She is best known for her work in the theory and practice of action research, and particularly for her book *Doing Action Research in English Language Teaching: A Guide for Practitioners* (Routledge, 2010) which is a foundational text on action research in second and foreign language education. The English Australia-Cambridge English Action Research Program she has conducted since 2010 with the English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) sector in Australia won an award in 2013 for Innovation-Best Practice. She is an academic adviser, with Diane Larsen-Freeman, for OUP's *Applied Linguistics Series* and is series editor, with Jill Hadfield, of *Research and Resources in Language Teaching* (published by Routledge). Several books in this series have been shortlisted for The British Council ELTons Awards. Her book in this series, *Sustainability in Action Research* (with Emily Edwards and Neville Ellis) will be published in 2022.

アン・バーンズ博士

国際的に著名な TESOL 教育者・研究者の一人。アン・バーンズ博士は、オーストラリアのシドニーにあるニューサウスウェールズ大学の TESOL 教授、イギリスバーミンガムにあるアストン大学の名誉教授、香港の教育大学の名誉教授、シドニー大学の名誉教授です。バーンズ教授は、言語教育におけるアクション・リサーチについて幅広く執筆しており、オーストラリアや海外で大規模なアクション・リサーチ・プロジェクトを主導してきました。教授の著書 *Doing Action Research in the Language Classroom: A Guide for Practitioners* は、第二言語・外国語教育におけるアクション・リサーチの基礎的なテキストです。

Program

Friday, August 20th, 2021 from 2:00 p.m. - 5.15 p.m.

JST, online. Time given here is JST

Schedule

2:00 p.m. – 2:10 p.m. Welcome and Introduction

2:10 p.m. - 3:25 p.m. Session 1 (75 min.): Lecture

Anne Burns

Action research:

A powerful way to engage yourself in professional development

and Q & A

In Part I, Dr. Anne Burns will talk about the essentials of Action Research: concepts, approaches, and processes, which will be followed by questions and answers.

Abstract: There is growing evidence that research conducted by teachers is seen by them as one of the most important and lasting means for professional development. This evidence is supported by the idea that, where teachers can carry out PD in their own contexts of work and investigate teaching and learning issues that are of central importance to them and their learners, this has a strong and positive impact on what can be achieved in the classroom, and more generally the school. In this session, I will provide an introduction to the key concepts and ongoing processes of action research (AR). I'll discuss where AR fits into the wide range of approaches that can be taken in research, and describe the main steps and cycles, and the kinds of outcomes teachers can consider. I'll also provide some illustrations of AR conducted by teachers I've worked with to give participants a sense of the kind of research that can be achieved. Participants in the session who are already involved in AR will have a chance to discuss their research, but the session will also be relevant to participants who may be thinking about AR (or even puzzled by it!) and want to know more.

CEFR-focused アクションリサーチワークショップ：
言語教育におけるアクションリサーチのスペシャリストとして国際的に著名な

Anne Burns 教授による招待講演及びアクションリサーチ取り組みへのアドバイス

8 月 20 日（金）2:00 - 5:15pm.
このワークショップは、多忙な教育者・研究者が、アクション・リサーチ・アプローチを用いて、CEFR 教育理念を実践するための研究を支援することを目的としています。アクション・リサーチ・アプローチは、組織的、体系的、かつ厳密な研究の実施を保証するものです。ワークショップは 3 部構成になっています。

第 1 部では、アン・バーンズ博士によるアクション・リサーチの要点（コンセプト、アプローチ、プロセス）についての講演があり、その後、質疑応答が行われます。

3:25 p.m. - 3:40 p.m. Break

3:40 p.m. - 5:10 p.m. Session 2 (90 min.): Workshop

In Part II, Dr. Burns will provide specific input and suggestions on four pre-recorded presentations which demonstrate topic/theme, reviewed literature, research questions, intervention plan, data collection and some preliminary findings.

第 2 部では、 アン・バーンズ博士が、テーマ、リサーチ・クエスチョン、介入計画、レビューされた文献、データ収集、いくつかの予備的な調査結果を示す 4 つの事前に録画されたプレゼンテーションについて、具体的な意見や提案を提供します。4 つのプレゼンテーションは以下の通りです。

The four presentations are:

1. *Applying CEFR Illustrative Descriptors in the Classroom* by Colin Rundle
2. *Using CEFR/CV Mediation Illustrators to navigate meaning in a CLIL classroom: First steps of action and reflection* by Rebecca Schmidt
3. *Using an online European Language Portfolio (e-ELP) to promote learner autonomy* by Gregory Birch
4. *CEFR-informed Textbook Selection* by Nicole Sonobe

* Workshop participants are asked to watch the pre-recorded video of these presentations before the actual workshop. A link to the videos will be provided upon registration.

* ワークショップ参加者の皆様は、これらのプレゼンテーションを録画したビデオを事前ご覧いただき、質問、コメントをお寄せいただけます。ビデオ、質問やコメント投稿へのリンクはお申し込み時にお知らせします。

In Part III, the group discussion we kindly ask all workshop participants to get involved in the mutual exchange among peer-colleagues, to share and learn from each other. All workshop* participants will be divided into smaller groups to discuss:

(1) what research you are interested in
(2) what kind of action you want to take
(3) what you plan to do
(4) what you learned at the event
(5) what is your take-away from the workshop
*One of the small group discussions will be conducted in Japanese.

第3部では、 グループディスカッションを行います。ワークショップ参加者全員が、小グループに分かれて以下の点などを議論します。
(1)どんな研究に興味があるのか
(2)どのようなアクションを起こしたいのか
(3) 何をしようとしているのか
(4) どのような障害に直面したか、直面する可能性があるか
(5) どのような支援が必要か
*スモールグループディスカッションのうち1つは日本語で行われます。

5:10 p.m.- 5:05 p.m. Wrap up

The pre-recorded videos (about 10 min. each) should be made available by August 10th, 2021.

To sign up for the event

Please sign up for the event using the following link

https://forms.gle/36agXb7yZRtgV3t18

or the QR code

For more details and updates to the event please see https://cefrjapan.net/events

If you have any questions, please contact the coordinator of the CEFR & LP SIG.

How to get involved

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AR and CEFR Kaken research project - Call for Collaboration renewed

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In April 2020, we were granted the third JSPS Grant-in-Aid research project (no. 20K00759) directly involving the SIG, and the fifth involving SIG members, on

Foreign Language Education Reform through Action Research
Putting CEFR educational principles into practice

「アクションリサーチの手法を用いた言語教育改善:CEFR の教育理念を参考にして」

The JALT CEFR & LP SIG is looking for researchers to participate in our latest KAKEN JSPS research project.
The aim of this project is to support numerous small-scale action research (AR) projects related to foreign language teaching in Japan and beyond, in which practitioners reflect on and find ways to improve their teaching practice using the CEFR as a reference tool.

Each AR team will be provided with support and guidance to ensure that their research is conducted in a systematic way in relation to the AR literature and reflective of CEFR principles. The teams will be grouped thematically around five central themes:
- Designing a curriculum and / or course
- Materials Development
- Assessment
- Learner autonomy and the European Language Portfolio
- Classroom Implementation.

These categories roughly follow the chapters of the CEFR & LP SIG's latest publication, ***CEFR-informed Learning, Teaching and Assessment: A Practical Guide*** (Nagai et al. 2020). The book authors and SIG officers will offer support and guidance in their respective areas of expertise while undertaking their own research projects. Each team will also be provided with a succinct review of the AR literature, and an action research framework to guide their research efforts. Ultimately, we plan to publish these case studies in either an edited volume or our in-house journal: *CEFR JOURNAL - Research and Practice.*

Schedule of the research project:
2020: Work with CEFR & LP SIG members to identify research foci and to plan AR projects.
2021: Carry out action research / Collect and analyze data.
2022: Reflect on AR projects and write research up for publication.

This project is related to the JSPS Kaken project no. 20K00759 「アクションリサーチの手法を用いた言語教育改善: CEFR の教育理念を参考にして」. Taking part in it, presenting and/ or publishing will be acknowledged by including your name in the yearly reports and in the final report of the Kaken as research collaborators (研究協力者) during the research period (2020 - 2022). The names of research collaborators will appear in the final report of the ongoing Kaken project, as shown in the previous Kaken project report (see Kaken database

https://kaken.nii.ac.jp/en/grant/KAKENHI-PROJECT-16K02835/).
JALT and the CEFR & LP SIG are included explicitly in the research proposal. Being a member is favorable but not mandatory for taking part in the project. As this is a JSPS Kaken project, the outcome aims to contribute substantially to foreign language education (English or other languages) in Japan. The language for presentations and publications should be either English or Japanese. If you are interested in participating, please contact the research team.

For more details, see the special project homepage: https://cefrjapan.net/kaken-5
Contact: jalt.cefrlp.sig {admark} gmail.com

The proposal reads in Japanese as follows:
「本研究では、本申請研究代表者と分担者が所属する全国語学教育学会(これ以降、JALT)の CEFR-LP 研究会（CEFR&LP SIG）の会員と協働し、アクションリサーチの手法を用い、CEFR の教育理念に基づいた言語教育改善を支援する持続可能なシステムと体制を構築する。その ために、以下のことを行う。
1) CEFR の教育理念に照らして、現在多くの教員が抱える課題を調査し、特定する。
2) アクションリサーチの手法を明確にした上で、(1)で明らかになる課題を解決するための 複数のアクションリサーチを行う。
3) アクションリサーチの手法を用いた、CEFR の理念を柱とした言語教育改善を支援する 持続可能なシステムと体制を整える。」

* * * * * * *

Planning a New Working Group on Language Portfolio

Recently there has been a rising interest in using Language Portfolio in classrooms. CEFR & LP SIG is planning to build a working group on Language Portfolio to gather educators who already use this tool or are planning to use it. This aims for an exchange and peer support among practitioners.

1) How do you use Portfolio in your classroom teaching?

2) What kind of Language Portfolio do you use?

3) How is the Language Portfolio perceived by students?

4) How does the Language Portfolio support self-directed learning?

5) What kind of support and professional development would be helpful for practitioners?

6) What kind of Language Portfolios are in use and how is the European Language Portfolio perceived?

If you are interested, please contact the coordinator or officers of CEFR & LP SIG.

* * * * * * *

Share your CEFR Tool

Featured Article

Exploring CEFR Scales
Using a Popular Mnemonic Platform

Shaun Allen

要約

講演者は、人気の高いオンオライン学習ツールである「Quizlet」を用いて、自習用にいくつかの練習問題を用意した。練習活動は、ある CEFR 評価尺度を構成する各能力記述文を、「A1」～「C2」のレベルに合わせること。一人で学習している個人のユーザーは、どの CEFR 尺度についても、自分の実践的な理解度をテストすることが可能。不正解等がある場合、ユーザーがその詳細をメモとして記録することも可能。

　これまでは、『2001 年の「共通枠組み」からの「全体的な尺度」』という 1 個、『2018 年の「CEFR Companion Volume with New Descriptors」からの評価尺度』という 106 個の合計 107 個の尺度毎に対する Quizlet 学習セットがある。今のところ、これらの Quizlet 学習セットへのリンクはパスワードで保護された 2 つの個人のブログ記事に存在する。このブログ記事には、「基本の案内」、「一次資料の PDF 版へのリンク」、「学習セットの PDF 版へのリンク」も含まれる。

　この講演では、「Quizlet 学習セット」は勉強の補助であって、勉強そのものではないことが強調された。勉強の方法としては、手書きの「日記」等というメモ体制をつけることなどが考える。このような活動は、研究への道を開くことも可能。

　実践的なデモンストレーションの後、ディスカッション・質疑応答を行った。多くの課題が提起され、その中には後の議論のテーマとなるものや、研究課題の基礎となるものもあった。

Background

With the rollout of CEFR-based programmes around the world, many involved in language education have expressed concerns about the additional workload they face and a want of support. On the morning of Sunday 13 June, the SIG held an informal Zoom gathering to discuss the topic of creating and exchanging resources to help new and prospective users of the CEFR explore and make sense of this public resource.

Attendees who had developed study materials of their own were invited to share them at the gathering. The SIG member Shaun Allen agreed to set the process in motion.

1. Description

In 2019 and 2020 the speaker created some exercises for his own study using the popular mnemonic platform Quizlet.

A typical activity involved sorting the descriptors of a given CEFR scale by level: 'A1' or 'pre-A1' to 'C2'. Working individually, users would test their practical understanding of any or all CEFR scales while noting any mismatches or other problems that arose.

So far, there were links to study sets for 107 scales:

- eighty-five (85) more detailed, **illustrative scales** from the *Companion Volume* of 2018 (CoE, 2018: 54–144, 157–162), and
- twenty-two (22) more basic scales for the **Common Reference Levels**, comprising
  - the Global Scale from the original *Framework* of 2001 (CoE, 2001: 24) and
  - twenty-one (21) key scales from the *Companion Volume* of 2018 (CoE, 2018: 167–174), including a revised, extended Self-Assessment Grid.

For now, these links existed in two password-protected personal blog posts, which also contained guidance, links to PDF versions of the primary sources, and links to PDF versions of the study sets.

From the first blog: 'Intended to supplement the discussion and tables provided in the *Companion Volume*, the study sets afford opportunities for self-testing and review, personal note-making and discussion, as the readers progress through the scales.'

Relevant study strategies included keeping a handwritten journal or equivalent and following a routine such as REAP: 'read, encode, annotate, ponder'. Such activities would also serve as pathways to research.
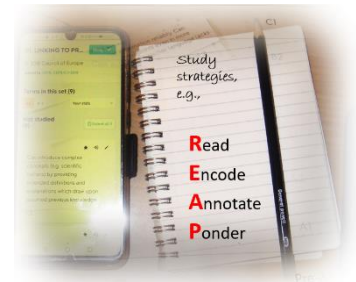
Links to the exercises

For now, these are organized in two blog posts; the current password for both is 'cefrcv'.

[Exploring eighty-five illustrative scales of the CEFR Companion Volume 2018](https://deixis1102.wordpress.com/2020/10/29/exploring-eighty-five-illustrative-scales-of-the-cefr-companion-volume-2018/)

Links to study sets for eighty-five (85) more detailed 'illustrative' scales of 2018: activities and strategies for the four modes; language competences; plurilingual competences.

https://deixis1102.wordpress.com/2020/10/29/exploring-eighty-five-illustrative-scales-of-the-cefr-companion-volume-2018/

[Introducing twenty-two key descriptor scales of the CEFR and CEFR CV 2018](https://deixis1102.wordpress.com/2020/10/14/introducing-some-key-descriptor-scales-of-the-cefr-and-cefr-cv/)

Links to study sets for twenty-two (22) more basic scales for the Common Reference Levels, including the Global Scale of 2001 and the revised, extended Self-Assessment Grid of 2018.

https://deixis1102.wordpress.com/2020/10/14/introducing-some-key-descriptor-scales-of-the-cefr-and-cefr-cv/

Resources used

All the resources used were available free of charge given an Internet connection: the Council of Europe PDF documents the *Framework* of 2001 and the *Companion Volume* of 2018, which served as the primary sources (coe.int); the online study platform Quizlet (quizlet.com); and the blogging space Wordpress (wordpress.com).

References

Council of Europe (2001). *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
Council of Europe (2018). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. Companion volume with new descriptors*. February 2018.
https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989
    (Retrieved: 2019-06-23)

Suggested further reading

Nagai, Noriko et al. (2020). *CEFR-informed learning, teaching and assessment*. Singapore: Springer.

2. Demonstration

The talk moved on to browser views of the two blog posts, navigating through the information on display: paragraphs of guidance, with links to PDF versions of the primary sources; links to study sets for scales, arranged by category in the same order as in the primary sources; links to printable PDF versions of the study sets; and closing paragraphs of discussion.

The speaker made several observations: about the hazards presented by exercises of this kind, especially if imposed from above as standalone drills; the importance of accompanying guidance and linking back to the supporting discussion in the sources; the need for versions in the users' existing language(s) of reading proficiency, with no loss of detail or depth of meaning; and the desirability or otherwise of preparing simplified versions of descriptors, to serve as 'message-driven input' in the target language(s) of use.

Links to study sets arranged by category

Despite their quickly assembled and provisional character, the blog posts highlighted the utility of a common web portal for projects of this kind: efforts at sharing resources could be coordinated, content improved, and new resources added over time. Ease of navigating was also vital to the declared purpose: *to help others explore the CEFR scales.*

Of the two blog posts, the second promised a gentler introduction to sorting descriptors by level: the 22 scales for the Common Reference Levels included the Global Scale and the Self-Assessment Grid. Recognizing that users of these popular scales might require some means of testing their practical understanding of them, the speaker left open the question of whether the sorting exercises were an effective way of achieving this.

For a selection of the other topics raised, see the Discussion in the next section.

Having guided the auditors through the displayed content and introduced some key questions and topics, the speaker then gave a brief demonstration of a study set, selecting from among the 85 illustrative scales in the first blog post.

(1) Browse a category, such as 'Pragmatic Competence' (CoE, 2018: 138–144), and then click on a scale within it, such as 'Propositional Precision' (CoE, 2018: 143).

(2) Open the study set and select a study mode, such as 'Test', reviewing as needed the 'Options' settings for generating questions within it. (For example, select 'answer with definition only' to restrict written input to the level tags 'A1' or 'pre-A1' to 'C2'. Alternatively, unselect written questions, making do with true–false and multiple choice.)

Selecting a study mode

(3) Complete the activity by answering all the questions, obtaining a score as feedback, here expressed as a percentage.

(4) Perform any necessary follow-up, such as 'starring' cards marked as 'incorrect' to prioritize them in the next activity. Users might decide against revisiting descriptors already 'mastered'.

(5) Persistent mismatches would require investigating. Apply personal study routines or schedule them as needed, bearing in mind that not all problems can be solved on the day.
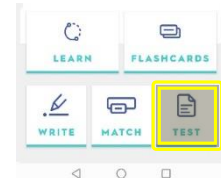
Where no swift resolution was possible, recording and reformulating the problem in a handwritten journal or equivalent space might prove a more fruitful use of time than labouring towards 'a perfect score' in the sorting exercise, with excessive reliance on cues in wording, and little certainty of adequate comprehension. Practical understanding might require connexions between ideas to emerge through reading, note-making, and reflection.
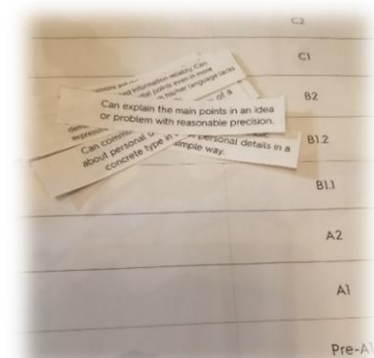
3. Discussion

Among the topics raised were the following, some of which might form discussion points for later gatherings or serve as the basis of research questions.

Why sort descriptors by level?

The speaker confessed to initial scepticism towards the exercises: such activities would rip the descriptor scales from the supporting discussion in their source texts while disrupting with a 'text jigsaw' routine the orderly progression of the descriptors, the full and precise meaning of which subsumes implicitly the capabilities described in the 'Can Do' statements of preceding levels (CoE, 2001: 36-7). Why not leave the descriptor scales intact and read them in their prescribed context, in the primary sources, while taking notes and allowing connexions to emerge?

Reconstructing the scale for PROPOSITIONAL PRECISION using a PDF printout

Despite these misgivings, the speaker identified several ways in which the exercises might confer limited but real benefits:

▪ **as a spur to exploring**, to familiarize users with the many scales for which descriptors were now available as well as with the content of the descriptors for each scale, making the descriptors more visible;

- **as a concept-checking aid for use while navigating**, to focus attention on how each descriptor related to its level on the scale, to the other descriptors on the scale, and to other scales;
- **as a diagnostic tool**, to allow participants working alone to identify any points where mismatch occurred or was likely to do so, prompting the scrutiny and parsing of descriptors identified as 'difficult' or 'interesting';
- **as a spur to closer reading, note-making, and investigating, during repair or otherwise,** to aid reflection and open pathways to research, beginning with the autoethnographic; and
- **as a research tool**, for gathering data on how *n* users negotiate the CEFR scales and detecting patterns otherwise difficult to observe.

Possible research applications included supporting community-led orientation and anticipating problems in the rollout of CEFR-derived programmes.

A personal journal of incidents and impressions might yield 'rich' material of value in planning surveys for many respondents. Anonymized versions of such records might help others, including those whose learning styles were different.

Testing practical understanding of popular scales

As already stated, the exercises linked to in the second blog post promised a gentler introduction to sorting descriptors by level: the 22 scales for the Common Reference Levels included the Global Scale and a revised and extended version of the Self-Assessment Grid.

It seemed reasonable to afford users of such popular scales as the Self-Assessment Grid, including language learners and teachers new to the descriptor scales, some means of testing their own practical understanding of the tools they were using, especially since these same tools had recently grown in complexity.

Nonetheless, to what extent these or similar exercises might achieve this aim, and how they might need to be adapted, required further study. The speaker doubted that sorting exercises alone would suffice.

Language versions and adaptations

Unfortunately, the study sets linked to on the blog posts were in English only and followed the 2018 version of the Companion Volume, not the more recent 2020 version.

Users would require access to the descriptors in their language(s) of reading proficiency, in a version that sacrificed no precision and depth of meaning.

They would also require access to the supporting discussion in the source texts or equivalent help.

In some cases, simplified versions of descriptors might serve as rough guides for intermediate learners, affording message-driven input in the target language of use.

Preferring to use original constructs and specific scenarios where possible, the speaker left open the question of 'level-appropriate' adaptation in the target language.

Choice of platform
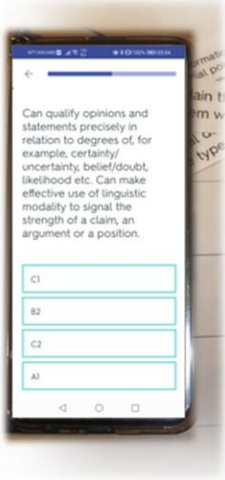
Why Quizlet?

First, it was familiar to many, who, like the speaker, also wished to limit the number of applications downloaded on personal devices.

Second, it was a popular online platform with a friendly interface. It offered different study modes and could be configured to generate questions of a particular type. No account was required to access study sets by browser, and a basic account was free of charge, though it did carry advertising.

The speaker highlighted the ease with which study sets for descriptor scales could be imported from and exported to Office applications, where they were best edited and arranged; as well as the ease with which study sets could be created, distributed, copied, and adapted ('customized').

Third, it could serve as a data collection tool, convenient for personal study, research, and online classes.

Data structure

As with a paper flash card, Quizlet's electronic flash card had only two sides to flip: *term* and *definition*, corresponding to front and back. In these exercises, the term was a descriptor comprising one or more 'Can Do' statements; the definition, a level tag in the range 'Pre-A1' or 'A1' to 'C2'.

From the edit view of a Quizlet study set

This arrangement would suffice for retrieving two-column vertical CEFR scales, one at a time.

By contrast, Anki, free and open-source software using spaced repetition, offered three or more data fields — useful for representing a conceptual grid such as the CEFR, with its many dimensions (CoE, 2001: 16).

Privacy

A proprietary online platform with therefore limited public accountability, Quizlet carried advertising in its free version; could gather data on many users; and offered tests, games, competitive rankings ('leaderboards'), and opportunities for 'social learning'.

The talk made no mention of risks that such platforms might present to users' academic, professional, and personal privacy. Any programmes of training and research that incorporated the platform might require the written consent of participants and institutions, though whether such consent could be truly 'informed' remained unclear.

What could possibly go wrong?

Like the CEFR itself, the exercises were vulnerable to inappropriate use, misuse, and abuse, which would also require attention in CEFR-related research. For convenience, the speaker divided hazards into the pedagogical and the ethical.

Pedagogical hazards
The speaker mentioned the following pedagogical hazards.

Suited to private study, unsuited to group work
People do not always perform at their best around others. More complex scales would combine the stress of interpersonal dealings with the risk of cognitive overload, and points of difficulty would vary from person to person. Accordingly, the exercises were intended primarily for individual use.

   On the other hand, reconstructing scales as a guided whole-class sorting could work well as orientation, and group discussions could precede and follow the sorting efforts of individuals.

   *It appears that in the quantitative validation of the *Companion Volume* descriptors, which used Rasch Model analysis, participants worked *individually* to assign descriptors to levels following orientation and discussion. See Appendix 5 (CoE, 2018: 179).

Temptation to memorize, not conceptualize?
As already mentioned, the pressure to obtain a perfect score might induce users to over-rely on cues in the wording of more challenging descriptors, rather than negotiating their meaning as texts that, according to the theory, owed their full force to their location within 'a conceptual grid' (CoE, 2001: 21). For this reason, a perfect score was no guarantee of progress in comprehension. Mismatch, on the other hand, pointed to a real problem.

   To assist journal-keeping and other personal efforts in study and research, it might be useful to prepare additional resources. Some attendees at the gathering, observing how the explicit content of CEFR descriptors, which was deliberately underspecified, could sometimes seem frustratingly general, proposed that the SIG should maintain a bank of CEFR-aligned 'local' constructs to which many could contribute. This arrangement would afford more vivid, memorable examples of how each scale progressed from level to level.
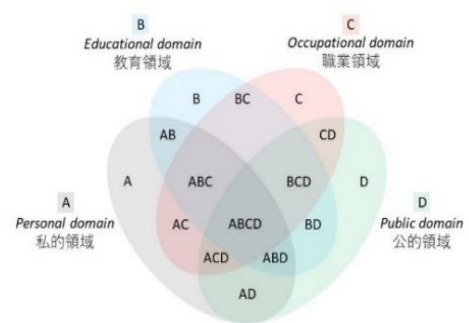
Excessive focus on vertical scales
Participants agreed that 'level' was essential but hardly sufficient for determining 'needs' (CoE, 2001: 17). Also decisive were the social domains of language use, the main four of which, the **personal**, the **educational**, the **occupational**, the **public**, and their intersections (CoE, 2001: 14, 45), the CEFR treated as reliably present across industrial civilization. Here, tasks involving language activities were generated: *Could you perform the tasks in Language A that scenario 'X' would require of you?*

'Big four' social domains of language use and their intersections

   Nor was progress just a matter of raising performance in discrete 'vertical' categories, one at a time: rather, it also involved 'broadening', moving laterally across categories to extend the range of capabilities; and 'deepening', consolidating skills and knowledge within categories (CoE, 2001: 17–18).

   Of special relevance to 'horizontal' progress were the **strategies**, the vital link between competences and activities, which supported adaptation to tasks involving the less familiar situation, the less practised skill, the less 'automatized' routine (CoE, 2001: 15, 25).

   With their sustained, exclusive focus on the vertical across many discrete categories of performance, the sorting exercises could easily reinforce a narrow conception of needs and a false understanding of progress.

Exploring the CEFR required additional tools that focused clearly on the domains, the different dimensions in which real progress occurred, and the strategies. Such resources should aim to assist users in their personal study and research.

Ethical hazards
The talk mentioned covert psychometry, coercive testing, mass monitoring without informed consent, and unscrupulous employment practices under the sign of 'professional development'. (The speaker's misgivings caused him to delay sharing the study sets by about one year.)

Prevailing ideology, such as the cultus of 'human capital', could drive the Procrustean abuse of CEFR-derived standards, which would become a tool for managing vulnerable populations.

To counter such dismal trends, it was first needed to acknowledge the scope for abuses of the CEFR, promote awareness of this reality, and include such concerns in discussion and research. Resource-sharing initiatives such as this gathering could help to build more informed communities of teachers and learners who would insist on higher standards.

Why CEFR?
As an independent user of the CEFR, giving instruction in corporate and university settings, the speaker had come to value the original *Framework* of 2001. It helped him in pursuing his autonomous practice as an instructor and developer of content while also providing a means by which to describe, explain, or justify this practice to a wider community.

Status of the CEFR
The speaker argued that, both legally and practically, the CEFR was an open protocol for professional workers and a public resource for citizens: if it had not already existed, it would have been necessary to invent it.

Furthermore, the *Framework of Reference* was precisely that: neither 'settled science' nor ready-to-go implementation, nor a substitute for either, it offered a set of concepts and categories informed by research and amenable to scrutiny, a heuristic tool to assist daily practice and a protocol to facilitate exchange, through which more settled science might emerge.

Difficulty of the CEFR exaggerated?
While agreeing that many teachers and learners, already fully occupied, might struggle to absorb the concepts and categories of the CEFR, especially as new descriptors became available, the speaker observed that the complexity and bulk of the original *Framework of Reference* of 2001 had often been curiously exaggerated: such was the impression gained from listening to colleagues and even to the occasional presenter at a JALT event. Perhaps a tendency existed to merge the CEFR with its considerable secondary literature. Yet the core document offered lucid, clearly signposted discussion, with ease of navigation and in fewer than 200 pages of body matter. Each re-reading afforded new discoveries.

Alleged threats to the autonomy of teachers and learners
Though some would dismiss these concerns as exaggerated, the speaker and other participants agreed that such fears had a rational basis: as the industrializing of education intensified worldwide, institutional pressures combined with human frailty to make the CEFR and similar projects vulnerable to inappropriate uses.

As with the automation of mental labour, key questions were those of ownership, agency (control), and benefit. Fortunately, a compelling argument existed that the CEFR was already a public resource.

Developing a public resource as a public good

The rollout of CEFR-based programmes challenged informed communities of teachers and learners to assume control of the CEFR ensemble as a public resource and develop it as a public good.

Resource-sharing initiatives such as this gathering could assist the process. As a first step, it was agreed that all the links to existing study sets for 107 scales should be available directly on the SIG website.

Suggestions

Here are some suggestions with which to close. Others are invited to add their own.

1. Needed were additional tools for exploring the social domains of language use (CoE, 2001: 14, 45), the different dimensions in which real progress occurred (CoE, 2001: 17–18), and the strategies (CoE, 2001: 15, 25).
2. Include pedagogical and ethical hazards in future research. Where necessary, include these concerns in routine guidance, teacher training, and the labelling of resources.
3. Draw attention to the clarity and ease of navigation in the core CEFR documents. Emphasize their status as a public resource, not esoteric lore.
4. Understanding the CEFR was also a matter of process, not just access. It required reading, note-making, and reflection. Highlight the importance of study strategies, including journal-keeping and personal research, offering support where needed.
5. Emphasize that the CEFR is not the triumphant end of inquiry but rather its instrument, a heuristic tool intended to help communities of users explore reality.
6. CEFR descriptors were categories in search of instances. Useful would be a common bank of equivalent local constructs, to which many could contribute.

Bio

Shaun Allen is an occasional reader of the CEFR source texts, of which he makes independent use. Of the original *Framework* of 2001, he claims that every re-reading affords some new discovery. In recent years he has taught company classes and university classes as a part-time instructor in Tokyo. His interests include, but are not limited to, CALL, CEFR, and CLIL.

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JALT 2021 International Conference Online

JALT 2021 International Conference is actually planned to be held

☆ **Face to face on November 12th to 14th, 2021 in Shizuoka, Granship and**

☆ **ONLINE on November 19th to 21st, 2021.**

Please see the updated information and more details at https://jalt.org/

CEFR & LP SIG Forum and AGM is scheduled to be held online on November 21st, 2021

The title for the CEFR&LP SIG Forum at JALT 2021 is

A CEFR-informed Action Research Model: Reflecting on the AR Cycle

CEFR & LP SIG Forum held on November 21st, 2021 online

The CEFR & LP SIG Forum will present an ongoing collaborative Kaken research project entitled "Language Education reform using action research: Putting the CEFR's educational principles into practice". Project participants will reflect on the research plans they implemented using a CEFR-informed Action Research Model (CARM) developed by the SIG, and on the first and second year workshops before discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the CARM model and the goals for the third year of the KAKEN project.

Maria Gabriela Schmidt, Noriko Nagai, Gregory Birch, Jack Bower, Naoyuki Naganuma

CEFR & LP SIG Annual General Meeting (AGM)

All members of JALT CEFR & LP SIG are kindly invited to the Annual General Meeting to be held online on November 21st, 2021.

Each member will individually receive an invitation to the AGM with the agenda and the report on SIG activities including a report of all officers.

Maria Gabriela Schmidt (coordinator), Alexander Imig (treasurer), Noriko Nagai (member ship), Gregory Birch (program), Jack Bower (publications), Naoyuki Naganuma (research), Mark DeBoer (CEFR & CLIL)

CEFR Journal – Research and Practice

The CEFR Journal launched in May 2019 is developing well with steady progress. We launched the first issue in May 2019 and now Volume 4 is to be published in September 2021 with Fergus O'Dwyer as the editor in chief. We have a range of articles spanning around the globe. Thanks to substantial submissions and an international reviewer and proofreading team, we try to provide substantial peer-support to authors. The next volumes are already envisioned. We are looking forward to Volume 5 with a Call for Proposals and accept proposals by November 30th, 2021.

We are growing fast, and we are looking for JALT and CEFR & LP SIG members to get involved in

<div align="center">

reviewing

and

proof-reading.

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By doing so, you will be included in the editing and proofreading team of the journal!

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Join in!

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The journal is available here: https://cefrjapan.net/journal.

The editorial team
Maria Gabriela Schmidt, Morten Hunke, Alexander Imig, Fergus O'Dwyer,

"The CEFR and the international CEFR-movement represent an achievement of the emerging world society. Built on a foundation of long-range language policy by the Council of Europe, the CEFR was a European project first. But since then, the project has turned out to be a success story beyond Europe as well, as the volume of Byram and Parmenter (2012) impressively demonstrated. The perspective of their book is, however, in two respects rather narrow: 1) The case studies of countries offer only a brief outline for these particular countries which of course cannot be avoided in a mere single volume. 2) The role of networks of teachers and researchers is only touched upon. A systematic analysis of networks could not be carried out within the limited framework of the book. Inquiring into both aspects is in fact the 'raison d'être' of the CEFR Journal. The first and second volumes of this Journal illustrate amply that practitioners in the field of language learning, teaching, and assessment also successfully act as researchers and offer valuable insights into approaches utilizing the CEFR in different organizations."

Read more in Volume 4 coming soon!

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Calls, planning, and events in 2021 and further on - At a glance

Date	Event	Notes
August 15th - 20th	AILA	Online
August 20th	**Action Research Workshop with Anne Burns**	**Online**
November 12th – 14th	**JALT 2021 in Shizuoka**	See details on https://jalt.org/
November 19th - 21st	**JALT 2021 Online**	
November 21st	**CEFR & LP SIG Forum & AGM** at JALT 2021 conference	
	2022	
July 8th – 10th, 2022	**JALT PanSIG 2022**	Nagano
November 2022	**JALT 2022**	Fukuoka
May 2023	**JALT PanSIG 2023**	Fukui

Kaken research project - Call for research collaborators continues

Call for submission: CEFR Journal – Research and Practice Volume 5
by November 30th, 2021

Call for submission CEFR & LP SIG Newsletter no. 33
by September 30th, 2021

For the most updated version of the events, please
https://cefrjapan.net/events
or
https://sites.google.com/site/flpsig/home/even

Links
CEFR & LP SIG: https://cefrjapan.net
CEFR Journal: https://cefrjapan.net/journal
CEFR events: https://cefrjapan.net/events
JALT: https://jalt.org/
Language Portfolio for Japanese University, bilingual (English/Japanese): https://sites.google.com/site/flpsig/flp-sig-home/language-portfolio-for-japanese-university
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The next NEWSLETTER #33 is planned for October 2021
* * * * * Call for submissions by September 30th! * * * * *