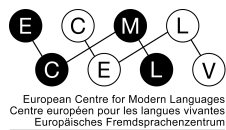


CEFR for Sign Languages: A1-B2

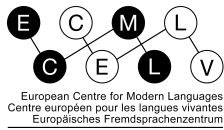
Lorraine Leeson & Christian Rathmann

PRO-Sign II Conference, Hamburg

University, 24-26 September 2014



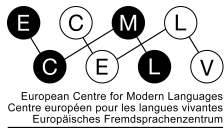
GLOBAL SCALES



What is CEFR?

- The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is a system for mapping curricula and assessment to learning outcomes along 6 stages of skill development from A1 (beginner) to C2 (highly educated speaker):

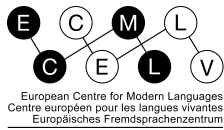
A Basic User	B Independent User	C Proficient User
A1-A2	B1-B2	C1-C2
70% Receptive 30% Productive	50% Receptive 50% Productive	30% Receptive 70% Productive



PROSIGN

CEFR: Taxonomic approach

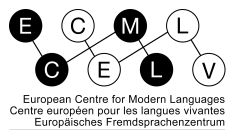
- Global scale (A1-C2)
 - We might add an A0 level - modality awareness??? (or not!)
- Self-assessment grid, divided into five skill areas for spoken languages:
 - (i) language production, (ii) language reception, (iii) reading,
 - (iv) writing, (v) interaction
- For sign languages, we are currently looking at three skill areas
 - (i) language production,
 - (ii) language reception and
 - (iii) interaction.



PROSIGN

CEFR: Taxonomic Approach (2)

- Each of the 5 overall proficiency descriptors (e.g. Overall Production (or in our case, Overall Production)) is broken down into a range of illustrative scales from A1-C2, e.g.
 - Sustained Monologue (describing experience)
 - Sustained Monologue (putting a case, e.g. in a debate)
 - Public announcements
 - Addressing audiences
- These themes apply across languages and language modalities



SAMPLE GLOBAL SCALES

A0 or ongoing (?) - Preparing to Learn a SL

Understanding / perception
I can visually perceive, distinguish and understand different handshapes and movement patterns as well as facial expressions.
I can identify and understand gestures which refer to objects within the signing space as well as gestures which describe objects in the signing space.
I can recognise the iconicity of signs.
I can classify different simple manual, mimic and mouth gestural expressions correctly.
I know that a differentiated visual perception is the basic for sign language understanding.

A1- Basic User

- Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.
- Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details, such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has.
- Can interact in a simple way provided the other person communicates slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

A1 – more specific (language production) descriptors:

- Overall production: Can produce simple mainly isolated phrases about people and places.
- Sustained monologues: Can describe him/herself, what he/she does and where he/she lives.
- Addressing audiences: Can deliver a very short, rehearsed statement – e.g. to introduce a presenter, propose a toast.

A2- Basic User

- Can understand sentences and frequently-used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment).
- Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.
- Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

B1- Independent User

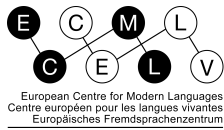
- Can understand the main points when clear, standard language [which for sign language users may be a locally used variation] is used and the topics are familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.
- Can deal with most situations likely to arise where the sign language is used.
- Can produce simple connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest.
- Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

B2-Independent User

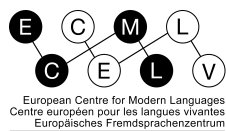
- Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation.
- Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native/proficient signers quite possible without strain for either party.
- Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

OVERALL PRODUCTION

C2	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing well-structured [signed] text with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
C1	Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on complex subjects, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion. Can give clear, systematically developed descriptions and presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail.
B2	Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to his/her field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples.
B1	Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within his/her field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.
A2	Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list.
A1	Can produce simple mainly isolated phrases about people and places.

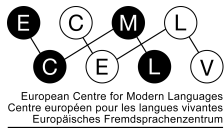


GOAL? “HANDS ON” EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WITH CEFR



PROSIGN

I prefer a
hands-on
experience



Task

- We will show you an example of a signer using International Sign.
- In groups – you have to discuss proficiency levels (A1, A2, B1, B2).

Example 1



Congratulations from the
World Federation of the Deaf

Here's a message from Colin Allen

Is this pitched at....

B1	Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided sign is clearly articulated in a generally familiar variant.
	Can understand the main points of clear standard sign on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure etc., including short narratives.
A2	Can understand enough to be able to meet needs of a concrete type provided sign is clearly and slowly articulated.
	Can understand phrases and expressions related to areas of most immediate priority (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment) provided sign is clearly and slowly articulated.
A1	Can follow sign which is very slow and carefully articulated, with long pauses for him/her to assimilate meaning.

C2	Has no difficulty in understanding any kind of sign language, whether live or broadcast, delivered at fast native speed.
C1	Can understand enough to follow extended texts on abstract and complex topics beyond his/her own field, though he/she may need to confirm occasional details, especially if the variant is unfamiliar. Can recognise a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating register shifts. Can follow extended texts even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly.
B2	Can understand standard sign language, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic or vocational life. Only extreme background [visual or auditory] noise, inadequate discourse structure and/or idiomatic usage influences the ability to understand.
	Can understand the main ideas of propositionally and linguistically complex texts on both concrete and abstract topics delivered in a standard dialect, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can follow extended text and complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar, and the direction of the talk is sign-posted by explicit markers.

PROSIGN

Example 2

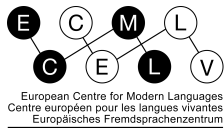


UNDERSTANDING CONVERSATION BETWEEN NATIVE SIGNERS

C2	As C1
C1	Can easily follow complex interactions between third parties in group discussion and debate, even on abstract, complex unfamiliar topics.
B2	Can keep up with an animated conversation between native signers.
	Can with some effort catch much of what is signed around him/her, but may find it difficult to participate effectively in discussion with several native signers who do not modify their language in any way.
B1	Can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her, provided sign is clearly articulated in standard dialect.
A2	Can generally identify the topic of discussion around him/her, when it is conducted slowly and clearly.

Comprehension while a member of a live audience

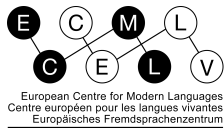
C2	Can follow specialised lectures and presentations employing a high degree of colloquialism, regional usage or unfamiliar terminology.
C1	Can follow most lectures, discussions and debates with relative ease.
B2	Can follow the essentials of lectures, talks and reports and other forms of academic/professional presentation which are propositionally and linguistically complex.
B1	Can follow a lecture or talk within his/her own field, provided the subject matter is familiar and the presentation straightforward and clearly structured.
	Can follow in outline straightforward short talks on familiar topics provided these are delivered in clearly articulated standard sign.
A2	No descriptor available
A1	No descriptor available



YOUR GROUP'S FEEDBACK & COMMENTS

Summary

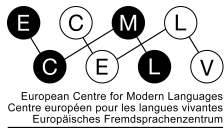
- B2
 - Productive/Receptive (50:50)
 - Understanding topics relevant to own field of work (extended – more than B1!)
 - Can interact without strain
 - Can produce re: wide range of issues that are topical
- C1
 - Focus on Productive (70:30)
 - Understanding a broad range of topics & signers (speed)
 - Can switch topics fast (speed)
 - Can inference
 - Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes



LETS TAKE A PEEK AT C-LEVEL

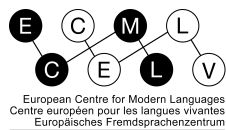
- Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning.
- Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions.
- Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes.
- Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

- Can understand with ease virtually all [signed] texts.
- Can summarise information from different sources and reconstruct arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation.
- Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating nuances of meaning even in more complex situations.



Acknowledgements

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PROSIGN

