



Univerzita Karlova v Praze

Ústav jazykové a odborné přípravy

Vratislavova 10, 128 00 Praha 2 Česká republika

REPORT ON WORKSHOP ON “RELATING LANGUAGE EXAMINATIONS TO LEVELS OF THE CEFR” Poděbrady, Czech Republic, 18th June 2012

1. Organising the workshop

As a result of the 3,000 US dollar grant generously received from the International Language Testing Association (ILTA) in 2011, the Research and Test Centre of the Institute for Language and Preparatory Studies (ILPS), Charles University in Prague, was able to organise a workshop on *Relating Language Examinations to the Levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* on 18th June 2012. The workshop took place in one of the ILPS study centres, namely in the building of the castle in Poděbrady.

The workshop took place before a two-day international seminar on *Teaching and testing foreign languages in the context of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)* so that participants of the seminar could attend both the events. Accommodation was offered upon request. Those interested in taking part in the workshop could register online. Since the workshop was held in Czech and was aimed at Czech teachers and testers and at teachers of Czech for foreigners, the registration was in Czech only, at <http://ujop.cuni.cz/konference>:

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Zkoušky

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Grantové projekty

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Konference



Konference a semináře

- [Výuka a testování cizích jazyků v kontextu Společného evropského referenčního rámce \(SERR\)](#)
- [Workshop Přiřazení jazykových zkoušek k úrovním podle SERR](#)

Workshop Přiřazení jazykových zkoušek k úrovním podle SERR

V roce 2012 nabízíme workshop Přiřazení jazykových zkoušek k úrovním podle SERR. Počet míst na workshopu je omezen na 30. Pokud se workshop naplní, mohou se další zájemci budou přihlásit jako náhradníci na vtc@ujop.cuni.cz. Workshop je zdarma, stravu si účastníci workshopu zajišťují sami.

[Program ke stažení](#) (PDF: 440 KB)

[ONLINE PŘIHLÁŠKA](#)



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2. The participants

The participants represented a number of institutions in addition to the ILPS study centres; these included, for instance, Palacký University in Olomouc and Masaryk University in Brno. The workshop was also attended by colleagues outside the Czech Republic and by private language teachers, testers, and researchers. Although a few students were present, most participants came from universities and colleges.

The following is a list of our workshop participants:

Jan Bednář, ILPS, study centre Poděbrady

Hana Círová, ILPS, study centre Mariánské Lázně

Vlastislava Čiperová, ILPS, study centre Poděbrady

Dana Havlíková, ILPS, study centre Hloubětín

Petra Honzáková, individual

Martina Hulešová, individual

Jana Hupáková, ILPS, study centre Krystal

Petra Chvojková, Palacký University

Eva Levorová, individual

Jana Macurová, individual

Laura Mikulová, ILPS, study centre Hloubětín

Maria Možná, Masaryk University

Jana Nováková, ILPS, Research and Test Centre

Pavel Pečený, ILPS, Research and Test Centre

Teresa Piotrowska-Małek, Warsaw University

Marie Poláčková, ILPS, study centre Albertov

Ivana Rešková, Masaryk University

Ivana Šálená, individual

Daniel Švec, ILPS, study centre Mariánské Lázně

Tereza Švecová, ILPS, study centre Mariánské Lázně

Martina Švrčinová, ILPS, study centre Albertov

Richard Vacula, ILPS, study centre Albertov



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Zuzana Vlasáková, ILPS, study centre Poděbrady

Milena Vonková, ILPS, study centre Hloubětín

Veronika Záhorová, ILPS, study centre Poděbrady

3. The programme of the workshop and the workshop leaders

The workshop keynote speaker was **Dr. Eva Složilová**, a specialist in language testing and a lecturer at the Language Centre of Masaryk University, Brno. In the morning she held the collective part of the workshop, which introduced the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR), explained the need to relate the examinations to the CEFR and its levels, and led the familiarisation with the CEFR descriptors for writing.

In the afternoon, the participants were divided into two groups. Both groups attended the same workshops in a different order. The first one was held by Dr. Eva Složilová and concerned benchmarking, the second one was held by **Dr. Kateřina Vodičková** and introduced standard setting and its methods. Both afternoon workshops were practice-oriented and took 2.5 hours each. To ensure that the participants were able to take an active role in the workshop, they were asked to study particular pages from the CEFR.

The workshop started at 10 a.m. so that all participants could reach the town of Poděbrady in time and ended at 7 p.m. with comments, questions, and feedback.

4. Discussion

After each session, there was a vivid discussion.

When assessing sample performances, one of the groups attending the workshop on benchmarking discussed how to define an error. Some participants also raised the question whether the raters should be familiar with the student's L1 and if so, how this should be taken into account. The relationship between the Czech Reference Level Descriptions and the CEFR was questioned and it was discussed whether the RLDs should be considered as for e.g. vocabulary. It was also pointed out that some tasks may be difficult to compare, for instance, narration and reflection.

Both groups attending the Standard Setting afternoon workshop discussed which methods, if any, are used at their institutions and their advantages and disadvantages. In the group where members familiar with the recently introduced national school-leaving examination were present, a debate on the cut-off scores arose and the role of political decisions in education was questioned. It was also interesting to compare the situation and practice across countries, which was possible thanks to the participant from Warsaw and thanks to the attendees'



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experience from other countries and/or international examinations in other languages than Czech.

5. Feedback

Twenty-five feedback forms were returned, i.e. 100 %, and generally, the feedback on the workshop was very positive.

5.1. Unambiguity, clarity

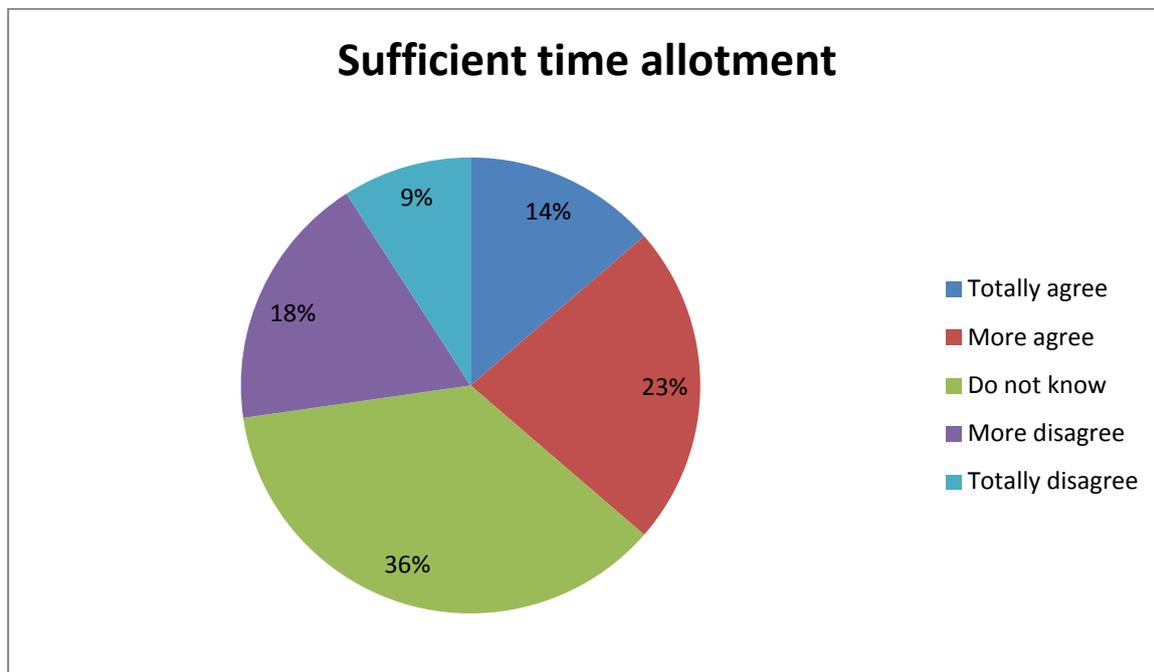
All 25 participants agreed that the content of the seminar/workshop was presented in an unambiguous way and 24 participants totally agreed and one more agreed (rather than disagreed) that the content of the seminar was presented in a clear way. Some of the participants' comments follow:

- Not enough time was left for benchmarking all the calibrated texts.
- I appreciate the effort of both workshop leaders to make us familiar with the issue.

5.2. Time allotment

Three participants totally agreed, five more agreed, eight did not know, four disagreed and two totally disagreed that the time allotted for the seminar/workshop was sufficient. The comments were:

- I would appreciate further workshops.
- The topic would deserve a two-day or even longer seminar. But it was very effective.
- I would like to attend seminars dealing with each CEFR level separately.
- More time would be welcome. Min. one week. Too little time.



5.3. Practicality

As for practicality, 20 participants totally agreed and two mostly agreed that the individual activities were practical. Their comments were, for instance:

- Very useful for practice.
- Especially the discussions!

5.4. Suitability of the form

As far as the suitability of the form (conference, seminar, workshop...) was concerned, 23 participants totally agreed and two mostly agreed that the form of the seminar was suitable and matched its content. One of the – rather few, in this case – comments says: Perfect!

5.5. What the participants appreciated

What the participants appreciated (only a representative sample of comments quoted):

- Both workshops were wonderful! More time!
- I appreciate the workshop leaders' approach. It is useful to take part in the workshop concerning further work.
- Professional and useful for practice.
- Another workshop as soon as possible. Perfectly practical and prepared!



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- Professional approach of the presenters. I would like to have a two-day workshop.
- More time for practical samples.
- I did not miss anything.
- Thank you, I was satisfied!
- Everything achieved, more seminars!
- Discussions, well-chosen samples for rating.
- To be continued soon! More requirements as for homework.

5.6. What the participants missed

Among the things that the participants missed, the following comments could be found:

- Nothing.
- Maybe calibrating samples at other levels, but I understand there was no time for it.
- Maybe a brief introduction of who the presenters are – their specialization.
- More time – the topic is huge.
- More samples.
- More details on how to set the cut off score.
- Clear delimitation B1/B2... But this is not the issue of the seminar.
- More time to try the methods out and discuss things.
- Ground floor. (KV comment: the workshop had to take place on the 2nd floor in the castle because of the equipment we needed but there is no lift.)

5.7. Possible topics for future workshops

Suggested topics for another workshop involved:

- Assessing writing samples from the ILPS mid-course and end-of-course exams.
- Assessing speaking.
- Similar information on A1/A2, how to prepare teaching materials at A1/A2, B1/B2.
- Assessing C1.
- Practising skills.
- The same or similar topic in more depth.
- Something to preparing the assessment criteria.
- Similar.
- Testing or more on this topic.



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5.8. Other ideas

Further comments were, for example, as follows:

- Thanks, I liked the whole workshop.
- Everything was fine – thank you.
- Thanks a lot. Both the presenters for well-prepared workshop and the findings.
- Thanks a lot.
- I thank both the presenters, the seminar was highly useful for me, I understand the importance of dealing with these issues.
- Organize it more often and make it longer.

6. Summary

As seen from the interest in taking part in the workshop and from the feedback forms, the topic belongs amongst those which are current, attractive and widely discussed in the Czech Republic. Quite a number of participants would welcome further workshops on related topics and/or extending the topic given. We plan to follow up on this professional development in future by organising similar workshops for the ILPS teachers and testers and, hopefully, also for the general public.





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A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Kateřina Vodičková".

Signed in Poděbrady, 20th September 2012

Kateřina Vodičková
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