

Innovation in Language Learning— 15th edition, 10 and 11 November 2022

***AM I AWARE OF MY LEVEL IN ENGLISH? — COMPARING STUDENTS’
PERCEPTION OF CEFR LEVELS AND DIAGNOSTIC TEST RESULTS***

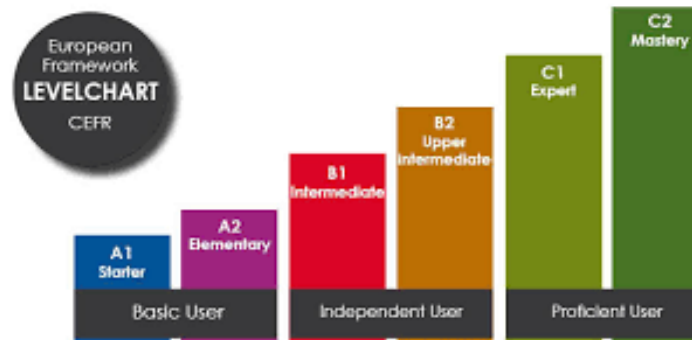
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What is the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)?



The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is an international standard for describing language ability. It describes language ability on a six-point scale, from A1 for beginners, up to C2 for those who have mastered a language. This makes it easy for anyone involved in language teaching and testing, such as **teachers** or **learners**, to see the level of different qualifications. It also means that **employers** and **educational institutions** can easily compare our qualifications to other exams in their country.



The CEFR was written with three main aims:

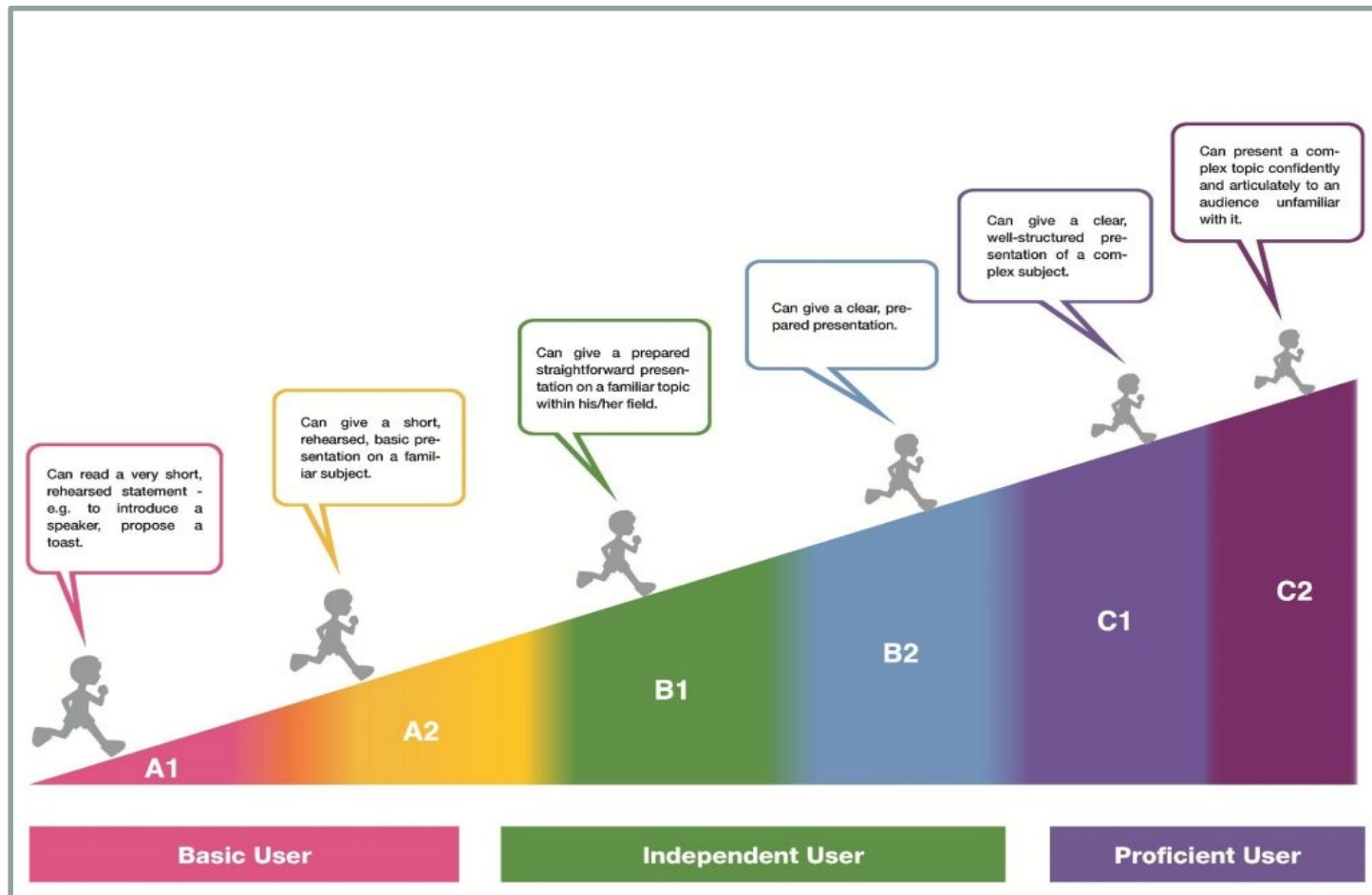
- To establish a **metalanguage** common across educational sectors, national and linguistic boundaries that could be used to talk about objectives and language levels. It was hoped that this would make it easier for practitioners to tell each other and their clientele, what they wish to help learners to achieve and how they attempt to do so.
- To encourage practitioners in the language field to **reflect** on their current practice, particularly in relation to learners' practical language learning **needs**, the setting of suitable **objectives** and the tracking of learner **progress**.
- To agree common reference points based on the work on objectives that had taken place in the Council of Europe's Modern Languages projects since the 1970.

(North, 2006: 1)

Transparency

[...] *transparency*: inform learners about the objectives and involve them to some extent in the setting and monitoring achievement of them — even as far as self-assessment (North 2007: 26).

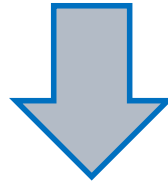
The CEFR recognises that people do not learn effectively unless they can personally engage with and shape what is being learnt, relating it to their needs and interests (North, 2020: 549).



Challenges and Opportunities Presented by the CEFR

- ✓ Mixed ability classes
- ✓ Lack of Streaming
- ✓ Students Proficiency

- ✓ National syllabi, materials and assessment are designed with reference to the framework levels
- ✓ *Cambridge English: Key for Schools*



University students knowledge about the CEFR levels and the perception of their level of English language proficiency is often vague and imprecise...

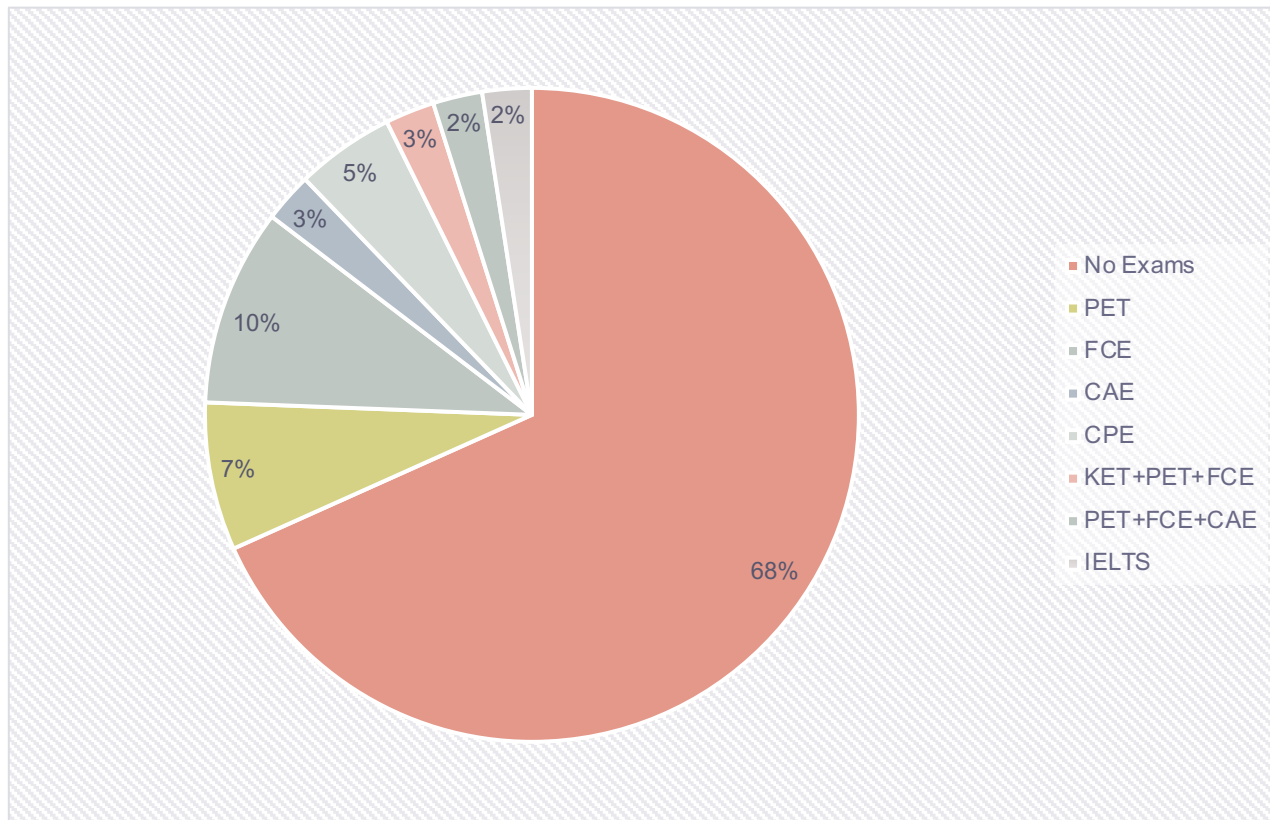
Research Questions

1. What is university students understanding of CEFR levels and what is the perception of their own level of English language proficiency compared with the results obtained by the teacher assessment?
2. Can improved knowledge of the CEFR levels and descriptors help students reflect on the process of language learning and enhance motivation to improve performance in the foreign language?

Study

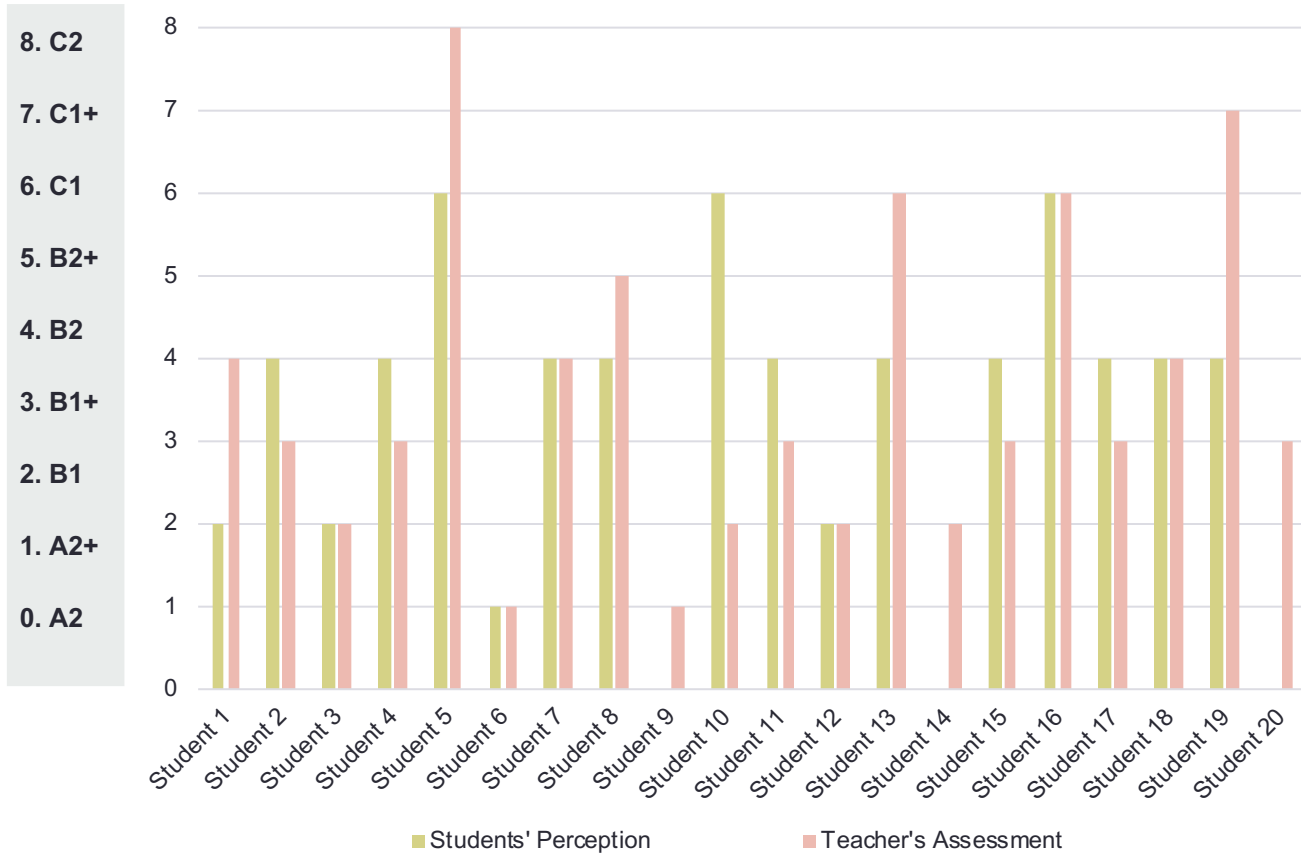
- ✓ action research/ case study method (Nunan, 1992)
- ✓ 41 Media Studies students
 - 20 — English I CEFR B1/ B2 (18/ 19 y.o.)
 - 21 — English III CEFR B2/ C1 (19/ 20 y.o.)
- ✓ Questionnaire + Global Scale Descriptors Chart
- ✓ Diagnostic Test
- ✓ Interview

Cambridge Exams



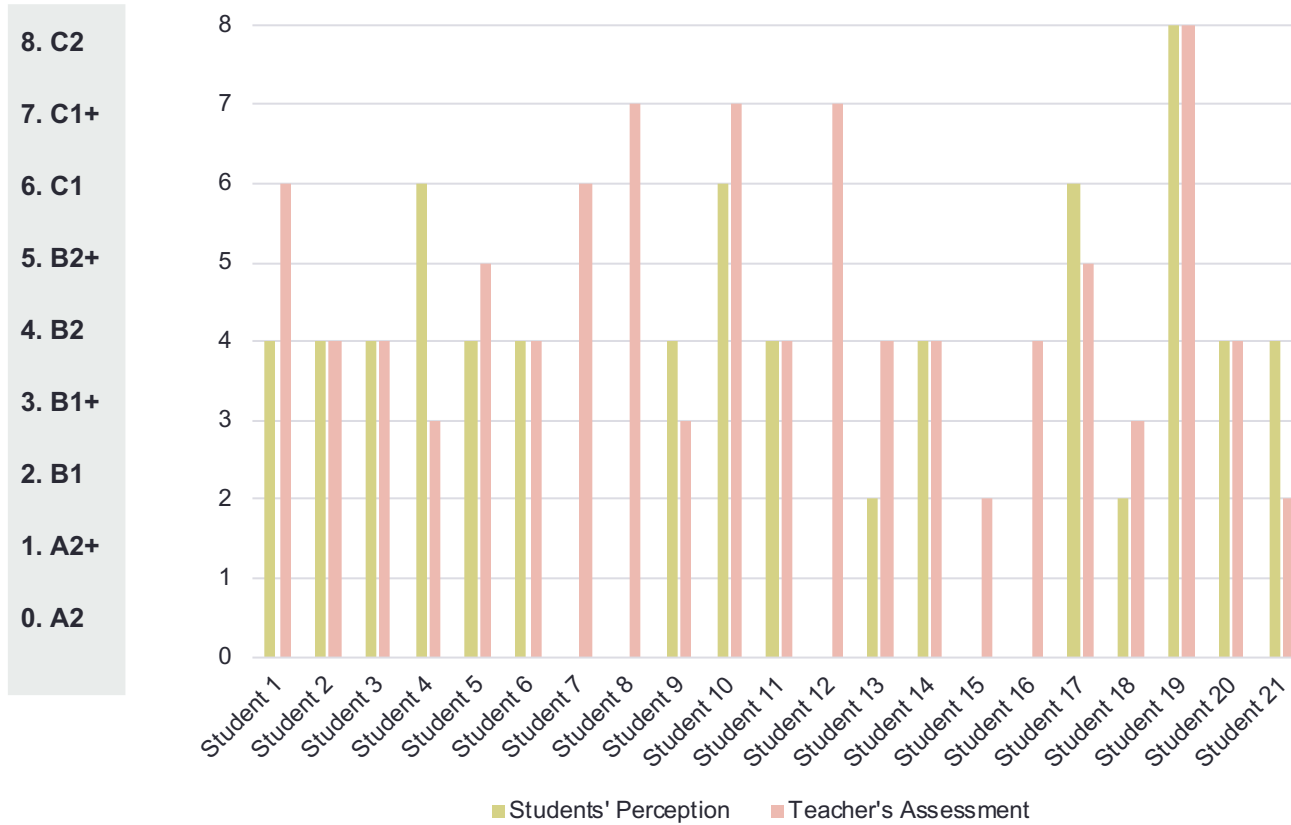
Results

English I — CEFR Levels



Results

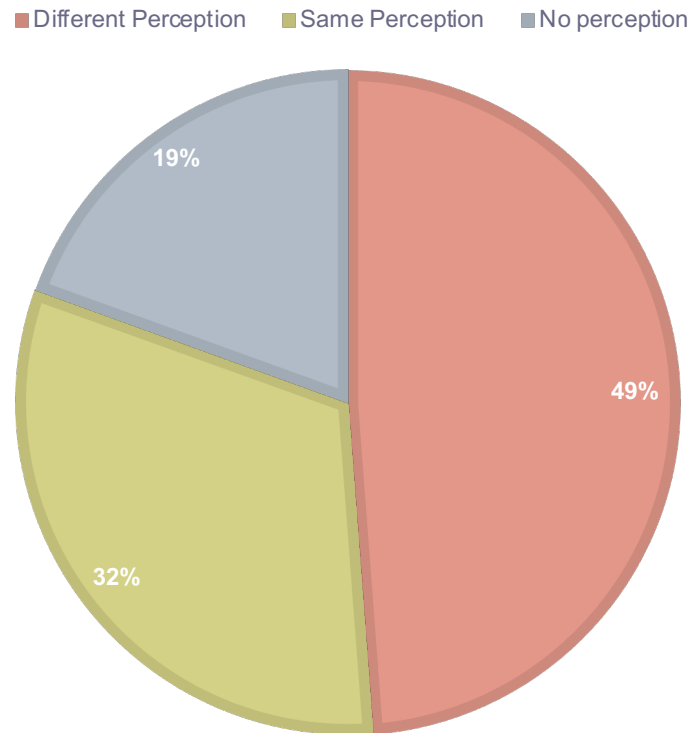
ENGLISH III—CEFR LEVELS



Differences Between English I and English III Classes

- Lower percentage of students whose answers differ from the teacher's assessment results is lower, around 43%.
- Number of students who replied "I don't know" was higher in the English III class.

Overall Results



- 48,8% of students' perceptions of CEFR levels differed from the teacher's assessment results
- 31,7% of students' perception of English proficiency matched the teachers evaluation results
- 19,5% of the number of students had no perception of their CEFR at all.

Final thoughts...

1. Did students' perception of their level of English proficiency match the results obtained by the teacher assessment?

➡ The majority of students had no precise knowledge of their CEFR level, however, during the interviews, most students showed interest in getting more input about the framework and knowing their exact level of English proficiency.

2. Will students' analysis and reflection about their CEFR levels help the process of language learning and enhance motivation to improve performance in the foreign language?

➡ Further research is needed to understand if reflection and analysis of CEFR levels and descriptors actually helps students to monitor progress and establish learning objectives.

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