

Report of Study Group 3

STANAG 6001 and the Common European Framework

Participants:

Ann Beck (GER), Ray Clifford (USA), Dariusz Cwierzona (PL), Melita Djuric (SVN), Nadine Hermans (GER/NATO), Milan Jakubec (SK), Risto Kuokkanen (FI), Ortansia Lykoudi (GR), Gerhard Matthey (GER/MoD), Erik Moeller Mathiessen (DK), Marta Nabradi (HU), Ausra Narbutiene (LT), Helen Noble (RO), Laura de Odorico (GER/NATO), Lis Paaske (DK), Elias Papadopoulos (GR), Gerard Seinhorst (NL), Cristiana Vaduva (RO), Ilona Varnai (HU), Alice Verweyen (GER), Wolfgang Zecha (AT)

Monday, June 6th

The participants worked in four groups, two using the STANAG descriptors for reading and two using the CEF descriptors, and evaluated up to four different reading texts with a total of six MC items. Several interesting reading test items from the Danish delegation were distributed, but could not be discussed in the time available. The levels the groups assigned to the Bundessprachenamt reading texts and items, while in no way scientifically conclusive, indicate that the members of the study group gave close rankings on three of the four sample texts, varying by only a plus on the STANAG scale (1/1+, 2+/3) or one step (A2/B1, B2/B1) on the CEF. The exercise underscored the necessity of relating descriptors to test items.

Comments from raters/group:

- text raters appear fairly well-harmonized in terms of recognition of STANAG levels.
- This sort of exercise might provide a good starting point for later calibration with CEF

Concerns/Questions:

- Study group members noticed some inconsistencies within CEF scales for overall reading comprehension.
- Though rating with STANAG was relatively harmonized, it's not perfect and the group's use of plus levels shows that some members of BILC perceive a need for greater differentiation within the proficiency levels.
- Inexperienced raters still run the risk of misallocation of test items to STANAG levels.
- The exercise shows overlap between the two scales; a necessary further step would be to establish where on the CEF reading comprehension scale a STANAG base level starts or finishes.
- Where does a specific professional language dimension fit in?

Tuesday, June 7

S.W.O.T. Analysis on Formally Equating CEF and STANAG

S: Strengths	W: Weaknesses
<p>Customer-orientation; prepares students to take other tests they need</p>	<p>Who can do it? (time, money, personnel) How many steps needed to relate two sets of descriptors?</p>
<p>Lots of documentation available (“can-do” statements are appealing)</p>	<p>Inadequate job-orientation of CEF</p>
<p>“outside world” can understand CEF better than STANAG</p>	<p>CEF not familiar to us (we know STANAG); Can-do statements not consistent for different levels</p>
O: Opportunities	T: Threats
<p>International cooperation</p>	<p>Awareness of professional needs of our “customers” higher in STANAG context than in CEF context?</p>
<p>Common understanding of CEF in terms of STANAG throughout NATO</p>	

(Inter)national recognition of STANAG

Certification?

Fill in the gaps in the CEF “can-do” statements

Less international coordination of BILC members’ tests if individual nations benchmark their tests with national CEF authorities

Recommendations of Study Group 3:

1. The permanent BILC Working Group on Testing and Assessment should be asked to:
 - look at existing attempts to equate STANAG descriptors with CEF descriptors, such as the comparative analysis of STANAG 6001 and CEF done by the UK Ministry of Defence and University of Westminster Languages Examinations Board for the Linguaeurope Core Partners Meeting in April, 2005.
 - assign CEF descriptors to STANAG levels (descriptors) to approximately equate the two scales and/or recommend adoption by BILC of an analysis which has already been carried out.
2. Study group 3 strongly supports development of a benchmark testing capability; BILC should continue to pursue benchmarking within the STANAG so that all members clearly know what the levels mean.
3. Study group participants see a need for further professional cooperation within BILC to exchange teaching and testing materials and coordinate validation of the various national tests, ensuring that standardization is achieved.