

Working principles of the General English Proficiency and English-for-Teaching Proficiency Frameworks

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British Council and TEFLIN National Symposium on English Language Assessment, 16 November 2021

Overview

- ▶ The CEFR as a Short-Gap Measure
- ▶ National frameworks on English proficiency and their working principles
- ▶ Conclusion

The CEFR as a short gap measure

Recommendation to use the CEFR

- *“There is a pressing need to establish a national framework of English language proficiency so that appropriate standards can be established for students and teachers at all educational levels.”* (Renandya, Hamied, & Nurkamto, 2018, p. 625)
- TOEFL and IELTS are not appropriate measures for language teaching proficiency. The Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) has been suggested as replacement. A minimum standard based on the CEFR is necessary. A **B2 level** is deemed “sensible” .

Learning from other ASEAN countries

- ▶ *By learning from the experience of our neighbouring countries, we could potentially avoid making preventable and costly mistakes at the policy and implementation levels”* (Renandya, Hamied, & Nurkamto, 2018, p. 625)
- ▶ Three countries use the CEFR: Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam
- ▶ **Malaysia** requires a level of C1 for English teachers at any levels.
- ▶ **Thailand** requires a B1 (primary) and a B2 (secondary) of the CEFR.
- ▶ **Vietnam** requires a B2 (primary and lower secondary) and a C1 (upper secondary) of the CEFR.
- ▶ (Zein, In Press-a)

Problems with the CEFR and CEFR-based policies in ASEAN

- **There is lack of empirical evidence.** SLA based criticisms abound (see Hulstijn, 2007, 2011)
- **Does not cater for translanguaging** (flexible use of features of different “languages” as one linguistic repertoire)
- E.g. “Buset dah, gua kagak ngarti dah *what you’re talking about*. Bicara yang mudah dimengerti saja *lah*.”
- **Does not accommodate English as a lingua franca (ELF)**
- **Unrealistic expectations:** Thailand and Vietnam: prescribed CEFR levels may be too high; Malaysia: limited time allocated to students’ learning hours.
- (Zein, In Press-a)

Voices from Thailand and Vietnam

- Thailand: *“Results of nationwide testing of qualified English teachers also indicated a general lack of proficiency - A1 or A2 on the CEFR were the most common results.” (Thai-3)*

- Vietnam: *“For the pre-service English teachers in education in Vietnam, many of the programs haven’t... the graduates’ English proficiency haven’t reached C1 level yet. That’s the problem.” (Viet-3)*

(Zein, In Press-a)

Problems with the CEFR and CEFR-based policies in ASEAN

- **Does not cater for plurilingualism:** in Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam, the CEFR makes no room for plurilingualism.
- **Curriculum misrepresentation:** Malaysia: Mismatches between curricular contents and the CEFR descriptors.
- **Misalignment with assessment and learning transition:** Malaysia (assessment mismatches descriptors, unsupportive to learning transition) and Vietnam (The CEFR makes little difference to assessment).
- **Does not cater for the South East Asian Teachers Competency Framework (SEA-TCF)**
- **Does not measure one's ability and skills to use the language to teach:** most pronounced in Vietnam.

➤ (Zein, In Press-a)

Even a C1 level of the CEFR is not enough for teaching.

- ▶ *“... to be honest... the English that they [teachers] could use in their daily life and the English they should use in the classroom are very different... I normally give them two tests, **the first one is their English in general**, just to make sure that, for example, they do not have any problem with pronunciation, because for me, pronunciation is the first contact between teachers and students when they need to use English, especially at the tertiary level. **And the second one is their ability to use English in the classroom.** And sometimes, I’m invited to some panels to recruit teachers at high school levels, and I always care about these two kinds of English as well. Unfortunately, as I can see for most situations, **people just care about the former and do not pay enough attention to their ability to use simple, or facilitate their use of English inside the classroom.**” (Viet-2)*

- ▶ It is best to use the CEFR as a **short gap measure** while efforts are made to develop contextually relevant national frameworks.

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National frameworks on English proficiency and their working principles

Contextually relevant national frameworks

- ▶ **General English Proficiency Framework (GEPF):** intended for students and teachers.
- ▶ **English-for-Teaching Proficiency Framework (EfTPF):** intended exclusively for teachers.

General English Proficiency Framework: Working Principles

- ▶ Elaborates on the use of English for general purposes other than teaching in different domains (i.e. personal, social, educational, occupational, spiritual)
- ▶ Distinguishes language activities (i.e. reception, production, interaction, and mediation)

- ▶ Embraces new perspectives in applied linguistics (i.e, plurilingualism, ELF and pluricentric English)
- ▶ Includes parameters shaping language use (situational context, text type, theme, conditions and constraints)
- ▶ Encompasses dimensions of language use (Intelligibility, Fluency, Complexity, Appropriacy, Capacity)

- Includes different competences (general, existential, communicative)
- Aligns language proficiency, syllabus, curriculum, language tests, and textbooks

English-for-Teaching Proficiency Framework: Working Principles

- ▶ Reflects understanding of syllabus, curriculum, assessments, and textbooks.
- ▶ Includes translanguaging
- ▶ Includes scaffolding (in terms of language, teaching cycle)
- ▶ Incorporates SEA-TCF

Includes language for teaching aspects

- Elicitation (e.g., inviting participation, offering cues)
- Providing rich language input
- Providing appropriate language models
- Repair (e.g., direct feedback, indirect feedback)
- Providing accurate and thorough explanation
- Ability to improvise

Includes language for classroom management:

- Dividing tasks, units of lessons, assignments
- Assigning role of students
- Controlling interaction
- Giving order, prohibition, encouragement, etc.
- ▶ (Garcia & Wei, 2014; Freeman, 2017; Freeman, et al. 2015; Gibbons, 2009; Richards, et al. 2014; Young, et al. 2014; Walsh, 2006, 2011, 2013)

Includes intercultural language teaching

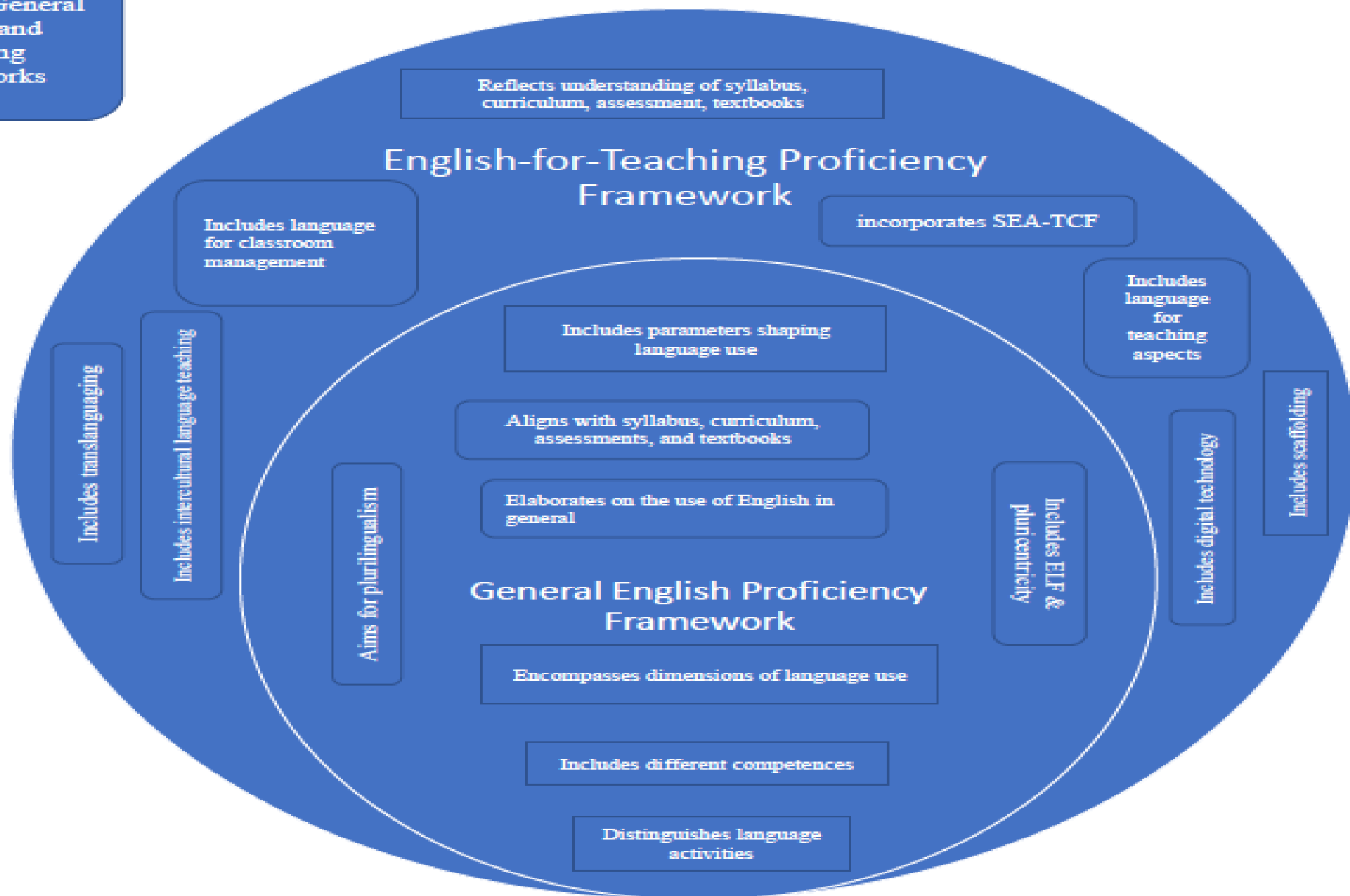
- ▶ Creating context for intercultural learning
- ▶ Noticing and questioning intercultural differences
- ▶ Comparing and contrasting intercultural differences
- ▶ Drawing connections between cultures
- ▶ Translating and interpreting intercultural points

▶ (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013)

Includes digital technology

- ▶ Mediating synchronous computer mediated communication (CMC)
- ▶ Mediating asynchronous CMC
- ▶ Setting up tasks and activities using digital resources
- ▶ Assigning students to utilize digital resources for learning purposes
- ▶ Conducting assessments using digital resources

Working Principles of General English Proficiency and English-for Teaching Proficiency Frameworks



Conclusion

- ▶ Use the CEFR temporarily as a short gap measure
- ▶ Develop the national frameworks on General English proficiency and English-for-Teaching proficiency for future use
- ▶ Collaborate in the development of descriptors of the frameworks' working principles

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▶ Thank you!

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