

A Synopsis of the Development of a Framework of Reference for English Language Education in Thailand (FRELE-TH)

Kunchalee Lekpetch¹, Joseph Foley²

¹Ph.D. Candidate, English Language Teaching, Graduate School of Human Sciences,
Assumption University, Thailand,
Email: kunchalee.lek@gmail.com

²Assoc. Prof. Dr., Graduate School of Human Sciences,
Assumption University, Thailand,
Email: jfoley@au.edu <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7293-0506>

Received: 11 May 2022

Revised: 24 June 2022

Accepted: 7 July 2022

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to address the need for a Framework of Reference for English Language Education in Thailand (FRELE-TH 2017) based on the Common Europe Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2001 2018) which was first introduced and practiced among the European countries. CEFR framework has been adopted into language education systems of the majority of Asian countries as well as other parts of the world. As English is the working language of the ASEAN Economic Community people can cross borders to fulfil their social, economic and educational needs. However many Thais do not have the proficiency in English to compete in terms of English, thus hindering their mobility within the ASEAN context. By looking at the basic principles that would benefit the English language teaching and learning in Thailand using FRELE-TH and understanding the difficulties when adopting and modifying CEFR 'CAN Do' approach might be a more realistic solution to improving the standard of English in the Thai education system.

Keywords: CEFR, English language teaching and learning, assessment, FRELE-TH, Thailand education

Introduction

The basic principles of a Socio-cultural Theory and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

Historically, Vygotsky's 'Thought and Language' (1962) and later 'The Collective Works Vols 1-2' (1992) outlined the basic principles of a 'Socio-cultural Theory' seeing 'social tools' (people, family, teachers, friends, language, and other semiotic systems) as a 'mediation' in learning. This theory proposed that because cognitive construction cannot be separated from the social context, new learning takes place in a "Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) of the learner. Each developing step is a stage between 'actual' (the capabilities that the child/learner possesses) and potential' (the next step that the child/learner is capable of completing) can be bridged by 'mediation' such as formal or informal instruction, teachers, parents, peer groups (Foley, 2013). ZPD can lead to a life-long learning process since the social context plays an important part at any age. In other words, the learning process moves from the inter-psychological (between the mind and actions of people) to the intra psychological stage, (within the individual's mind and actions that follow).