

Adapting CEFR for English Language Education in ASEAN, Japan and China

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Received 2019-05-29 / Revised 2019-07-06 / Accepted 2019-07-31

Abstract

This paper will first outline and discuss the revised version of the Common European Framework of Reference Languages: Learning, teaching and assessment (CEFR) [2018] together with the Frameworks of Reference for English Language Education in Thailand Malaysia, Vietnam, Japan and China which are based on the CEFR. The indications are of potentially several issues that need to be addressed, including the fact that the local versions of CEFR were mainly based on the 2001 framework and not the 2018 which came later. Other issues such as using the same proficiency scales as the basis for rating scale criteria may lead to perceived equivalence but does not necessarily lead to greater comparability of shared criteria. There are also indications from a number of studies that the perceived view that CEFR as being mainly an assessment tool rather than about language competency may result in a negative attitude from both teachers, students and stake-holders.

Keywords: CEFR 2001, CEFR 2018, English Language, Education, Competency, Thailand, Japan, Vietnam, Malaysia and China

Introduction

There has been and still is a major concern to establish standards for the user/learner of English within the ASEAN region, and countries in East Asia such as Japan, and China orchestrated in part by the general trend towards globalization. Mainly, focusing on countries within the ASEAN region as well as Japan and China that have implemented versions of CEFR in their education systems, this article will outline the Common European Framework of Reference as applied to users/learners of English in both the 2001 and 2018 versions. There have been a number of modifications made over the intervening years after critical comments were made concerning the 2001 version. Changes have been brought about in the 2018 version particularly in relation to the concept of ‘native-speakerism’, the importance of plurilingual and pluricultural repertoires of users/learners as well as a ‘can do’ approach to language competence. A number of these modifications in the CEFR 2001 version are reflected in the adapted versions used in the ASEAN region as well as Japan and China,