



Relating language curricula, tests and examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference (RELANG)

Testing Listening

This initiative is carried out within the framework of the **Innovative Methodologies and Assessment in Language Learning** cooperation agreement between the European Centre for Modern Languages and the European Commission
www.ecml.at/ec-cooperation



The nature of listening

- Defining the construct
 - Text processing
 - Top-down vs(?) bottom-up
 - Five elements (Buck, 2001)
 - Input
 - Applying knowledge of language
 - Applying world knowledge
 - Context of communication
 - Building mental representations of meaning

Specifications

- Detailed description of test characteristics
 - Purpose of test
 - Targeted subskills
 - Level
 - CEFR
 - Syllabus
 - Text type
 - Candidates
 - Time

Specifications

- Format
 - Text played once or twice or ...?
 - Authenticity?
 - When are answers given?
 - Memory
 - Authenticity

Text selection

- Topic
 - Interesting
 - Not distressing
 - Not specialized (except for LSP)
 - Not on general knowledge
- Authenticity
 - Contributes to validity
- Source
 - Not easily accessible
- Sound quality

Text selection

- Background noise
 - Not too much
 - Can contribute to authenticity
- Dialect and accent
 - “Standard” ?
 - Only native varieties?
- Humor?
- Length
 - Not too long or short...

Text editing

- Text features may make it necessary
 - Noise
 - Volume
 - Unnecessary/unwanted sections
- Can be done with appropriate software
- Changing the text?
 - Semi-authentic texts
 - Re-recording

Item construction

- General considerations
 - Spacing out items
 - Items should not be answerable without text
 - Items should require relatively little reading/writing
 - Items should be sequenced according to sequence of information in text
 - Time for candidates to familiarize themselves with items

Test administration

- Appropriate physical environment
- Appropriate equipment
- Appropriate invigilator behavior

... and beyond

- Test construction is not complete with live test
 - Scoring
 - Analyses
 - Potential post hoc score correction
 - Feeding back to specifications