

THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE FOR LANGUAGES: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

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The article presents the results of seventeen years (2001 – 2018) study of professors' familiarity with the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment" (CEFR), including the related publications, and the academicians' ability to use the developed common reference levels of language proficiency, illustrative descriptors and scales in their practice. As known, the CEFR has been recognised as one of the Council of Europe key publications in the field of learning and teaching foreign languages in European countries, including Ukraine. The main achievements in the use of the developed guidances presented in the publication are analysed. A brief description of other Council of Europe publications, directly related to the CEFR, is given. The theoretical analysis of the publications is supported by surveys of professors from 18 countries about their awareness of the mentioned printed works contents and the ability to use the recommendations which are formulated. As a result of surveys, it has been concluded that the practical implementation of the Council of Europe scientific developments requires improvement, which in its turn demands special academicians' training. Moreover, some practical references have been proposed in the aspect of the enhanced version of the CEFR publication "CEFR. Companion Volume with New Descriptors": on development foreign language curricula, programmes and exams.

Keywords: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages; CEFR; Council of Europe publication; curriculum; exam; levels of language proficiency; illustrative descriptors and scales; higher education institution; programme.

Introduction

The "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment" (CEFR) was first published by the Council of Europe in 2001 (Council of Europe [CE], 2001). From that time until today, European scientists and practitioners are still working in two fundamentally important directions: the improvement of illustrative descriptors for each of the common reference levels of language proficiency and the implementation of the received results in the language teaching practice. A significant number of publications has been devoted to this problem. It is clear that they cannot be analysed in one article. Let us name for example several articles in order to confirm the urgency of the problem over the last decade: "Embedding the CEFR in the academic domain: Assessment of language tasks" (Lowiea, Hainesa & Jansmaa, 2010), "English Profile Studies 1. Criterial Features in L2 English: Specifying the Reference Levels of the Common European Framework. English Profile Studies 2. Language Functions Revisited: Theoretical and Empirical Bases for Language Construct Definition across the Ability Range" (Swan, 2014), "Proficiency" (Harsch, 2017). The scientists have done a lot in this area, but some problems have been left out of their sight. In 2018, a publication the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. Companion Volume with New Descriptors" (CE, 2018) appeared, which has not yet been adequately reflected in the university practice. We believe that in order to improve the quality of teaching foreign languages (FL), it is important to analyse the achievements in this field and outline the ways of its implementation in educational institutions in future.

The aim of this paper is to present the results of the 17-year study of professors' familiarity with the CEFR and related publications and their ability to use the developed common reference levels of language proficiency, illustrative descriptors and scales in their practice; to highlight five surveys results of the academicians from 18 European countries, including Ukraine; to specify the achievements and shortcomings in implementing the relevant FL teaching recommendations in Ukraine and other European countries in the past (2001 – 2017), in the present (2018) and outline some recommendations for the future on development FL curricula, programmes and exams (2019 and further).

Theoretical framework and methodology

For the purpose of research, we have taken into account various scientific resources. Primarily, the Council of Europe findings in the FL studies area have been analysed. First of all, it is the key publication "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment" (CE, 2001) and other publications on this issue, which are discussed in this article. We have also analysed the domestic achievements in the CEFR implementation in the FL teaching process at universities. We deliberately have

not dealt with publications on the European Language Portfolio, since this is a separate, though interconnected, serious problem.

Special attention has been paid to the questioning of professors from different countries in order to study their awareness of the Council of Europe publications on the CEFR and the experience of their use. The surveys were realised five times during 17 years (2001 – 2018).

So, we processed the accumulated data via the methods of analysis and synthesis, searching and interpretation, deduction and induction, individualisation, generalisation and systematisation, observation of the educational process and reflection, data collection, monitoring of the universities official sites and presented our findings within the scope of this paper.

Results and discussion

In accordance with the purpose of our research, we studied the main of the Council of Europe publications on development and improvement of the illustrative descriptors of the common reference levels of language proficiency and the results of its use in higher education institutions from 2001 to 2018. The analysis made it possible to distinguish three stages in the study of the problem.

Stage 1. The past: 2001 (the date of the CEFR publication) – 2017 (the date of the Council of Europe completion of the new CEFR version).

Stage 2. The present: 2018 (the date of the "CEFR. Companion Volume with New Descriptors" publication and the beginning of its implementation).

Stage 3. The future: 2019 and further.

Next, we analyse each stage in detail.

Stage 1. The past.

As mentioned above, this stage began in 2001 with publication the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment" (CE, 2001). Recall that this study guide has been designed to provide a transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis for the elaboration of language syllabi and curricula guidelines, the design of teaching and learning materials, and the assessment of FL proficiency.

As known, the CEFR describes FL proficiency at six levels: A1 and A2, B1 and B2, C1 and C2. It also defines three 'plus' levels (A2+, B1+, B2+). This scheme makes it possible to compare tests and examinations across languages and national boundaries. It also provides a basis for recognising language qualifications and thus facilitating educational and occupational mobility. In addition, the proficiency scales are accompanied by a detailed analysis of communicative contexts, themes, tasks and purposes as well as scaled descriptions of the competences on which we draw when we communicate. According to the authors, the CEFR does not offer ready-made solutions but must always be adapted to the requirements of a particular context (CE, 2001, pp.1-2). The CEFR has been translated into many languages. In Ukraine, it was translated in 2003 (Nikolaeva, 2003). The publication has been studied and widely discussed by the Ukrainian educators. The proposed levels of language proficiency were the basis for determining the expected levels of FL students' proficiency: linguistic specialities – levels C1 and C2. This is recorded in the FL National Curriculum in English for students of linguistic specialities developed under the auspices of the British Council (Nikolaeva, 2001). Mostly in the Curriculum, such components have been clarified: the need for the National Curriculum, levels of FL proficiency, principles of the Curriculum, aims, contents rationale, objectives, areas and situations, functions and exponents, methodology, outcomes and assessment, materials course organisation, years one – five syllabi.

In accordance with the developed curricula, a scheme for drawing up a FL programme has been developed and proposed for use to all interested institutes and universities. 100 representatives of higher educational institutions participated in this work. Great assistance in solving this problem has been provided by the British Council. The focal points of the programme are: 1) topic areas and topics, tutorials/self-study hours, learning objectives; 2) skills in: listening, speaking, reading, writing; 3) functions, functional exponents, focus on (phonetics, grammar, vocabulary); 4) socio-cultural component, study skills, professional skills, self-study work; 5) assessment / self-assessment: listening, speaking, reading, writing; 6) language materials. FL programmes developed at many Ukrainian universities in accordance with the proposed scheme have been successfully used until 2018.

We consider it reasonable to state that in two years since the CEFR publication, much has been done both theoretically and practically. At the same time, as our survey showed, the number of professors who were insufficiently aware of this published work was significant. In 2003, within the international project "The programme for the Development of English in Universities and Institutes", conducted under the auspices of the British Council, we implemented a survey of 50 professors from 8 countries (Austria, Great

Britain, Germany, Denmark, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Ukraine). The self-report questionnaire contained 2 research questions (statements) which were answered on a three-point scale: 1) I know the CEFR contents (very well, relatively well, not well); 2) I can use the CEFR in the educational process (very well, relatively well, not well). The descriptive statistics are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Levels of participants' the CEFR knowledge and the ability to use it

| No | Research questions | Number of participants | Number of responses | | |
|----|---|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------|
| | | | very well | relatively well | not well |
| 1 | I know the CEFR contents | 50 | 11 (22%) | 19 (38%) | 20 (40%) |
| 2 | I can use the CEFR in the educational process | 50 | 6 (12%) | 11 (22%) | 33 (66%) |
| | Average | 50 | 8.5 (17%) | 15 (30%) | 26.5 (53%) |

The results indicate a relatively low level (53%) of the professors' CEFR knowledge and the ability to use it. The data obtained led to the conclusion about the need for more intensive familiarisation of academics from different countries with the CEFR and training them to use it in practice.

After the CEFR publication in 2001, the scientists continued to explore the possibilities of the developed scales and descriptors applying for different training purposes. One of the main publications of the time we consider the Keith Morrow's book "Insights from the Common European Framework". The purpose of the book according to the author is: to explain the background to the Framework, to clarify its contents, to explore some of its possible implications, to provide concrete examples of ways in which it has been used. It has contributions from practitioners in a range of contexts, all of whom draw on their own experience in working with the Framework (Morrow, 2004, p.1). For higher education institutions of particular interest are recommendations in the field of course design and teacher education, syllabus and material development. Theoreticians and practitioners in the field of FL teaching have made extensive use of the published recommendations. Simultaneously in different countries, various teaching materials have been developed. For example, tools for curricula reference level descriptions (RLDs) developed for Croatian, Czech, English, French, Georgian, German and some other languages. Developments posted on the Council of Europe website <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/reference-level-descriptions>; the CEFR in the classroom (Council of Europe Tools for Language Teaching: Common European Framework of Reference and Portfolios; CEFR-level estimation grid for teachers and others). The materials can be found on the website <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/cefr-in-the-classroom>; assessment in the classroom (descriptors and video clips illustrating learner performances in order to guide teachers and learners in their assessment of learning progress; pathways through assessing, learning and teaching in the CEFR. Additional information is available on the website <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/learning-teaching-assessment>.

In Ukraine, during that period of time, three National curricula were developed: for students of linguistic specialities (Borisko, 2004) and non-linguistic specialities. National curricula for students of non-linguistic specialities in English and German have been developed with the assistance of the British Council (BC) and Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (2005) and the Goethe Institute in Ukraine (GIU) (2006). The expected level of the FL students' proficiency for non-linguistic specialities has been determined as B2.

It is fair to say that, at the same time, additional analysis of the CEFR continued, some weak points were identified and the ways to eliminate them were suggested. For example, let's call the publications "The CEFR and the need for more research" (Alderson, 2007), "The Common European Framework of Reference" (Byrnes, 2007), "The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the development of language policies: Challenges and responsibilities" (CE, 2007). In Ukraine, the updated recommendations have been also taken into account, but not very widely. Basically, several universities and institutes have used them in the development of instructional and methodological materials.

As a result of studying the above publications, it is reasonable to conclude that the most significant research problem during this period was professors' qualification in usage the CEFR for course, syllabus and materials design. It became the subject of our survey in 2008 actualised within the international projects "The programme for the Development of English in Universities and Institutes" and "ESP Curriculum for Ukrainian Universities", conducted under the auspices of the British Council. It was a computer questioning of 50 professors from 9 countries (Germany, Great Britain, Denmark, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Spain,

Sweden, Ukraine). The self-report questionnaire contained 2 research questions (statements) which were answered on a three-point scale (refer to the table). The descriptive statistics are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Levels of knowledge / skills of participants about/in the CEFR use in course, syllabus and materials design

| No | Research questions | Number of participants | Number of responses | | |
|----|---|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------|
| | | | very well | relatively well | not well |
| 1 | I know how to use the CEFR in course, syllabus and materials design | 50 | 9 (18%) | 15 (30%) | 26 (52%) |
| 2 | I can use the CEFR in the CEFR in course, syllabus and materials design | 50 | 4 (8%) | 11 (22%) | 35 (70%) |
| | Average | 50 | 6.5 (13 %) | 13 (26 %) | 30.5 (61%) |

The survey realised allows us to state that a number of academics with a low level of knowledge in course, syllabus and materials design in the CEFR aspect is considerable –52%. As for skills, this figure is even higher – 70% (the average is 61%). This state of affairs indicates a serious gap between the improvement of the CEFR at the theoretical level and the practical implementation of new ideas.

The next cornerstone in the CEFR applying was the publication in 2009 "Relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR). A Manual". As the authors state, the primary aim of this manual is to help the providers of examinations to develop, apply and report transparent, practical procedures in a cumulative process of continuing improvement in order to situate their examination(s) in relation to the CEFR. Institutions wishing to make claims about the relationship of their examinations to the levels of the CEFR may find the procedures helpful to demonstrate the validity of those claims. The approach developed in the Manual offers guidance to users to describe the examination coverage, administration and analysis procedures; relate results reported from the examination to the CEFR Common Reference Levels; provide supporting evidence that reports the procedures followed to do so (CE, 2009a, p.13).

This publication is accompanied by a number of additional materials. Within this article, we are not able to analyse them in detail, despite their importance. On this basis, we call the major ones: "Reference Supplement to the Manual for Relating Language Examinations to the CEFR" (CE, 2009b). Its aim is to provide the users of the Manual with additional information which can help them in their efforts to relate their certificates and diplomas to the CEFR. It contains three main components: quantitative and qualitative considerations in relating certificates and diplomas to the CEFR and different approaches in standard setting. In the same year under the heading "Further Material" the following publications came: "Further Material on Maintaining Standards across Languages, Contexts and Administrations by exploiting Teacher Judgment and IRT Scaling", "Linking to the CEFR levels. Research perspectives", "Forms for detailed analysis of examinations or tests". The forms are tools to provide a detailed analysis of the examination or test in question and to relate that examination/test to the relevant subscales of the CEFR (CE, 2009c).

The analysis of the publications mentioned above convinces us that the modern FL teaching control system cannot be effective without taking into account the results of the studies performed. Unfortunately, the study of the FL control materials of 12 Ukrainian higher educational institutions allows us to state that a significant part of them does not correspond to the European standards. In addition, the academics are not always proficient in technology of Relating Language Examinations to the CEFR. Of the 67 university professors, interviewed in 2010, only 13 (19.4%) of them were aware of the publications mentioned and the European recommendations existed. This allows us to draw a conclusion about the necessity of improving the quality of university exam materials and training the targeted professors to situate their examinations in relation to the CEFR.

The next significant step in exploring ways of implementing the CEFR was the publication in 2011 "Relating language examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR). Highlights from the Manual" (CE, 2011a). In response to a growing need expressed by the users of the CEFR, the Language Policy Division developed a manual and a set of accompanying tools to be used to assist in linking local language examinations to the common reference levels of language proficiency. This publication seeks to complement these tools by providing a user-friendly introduction to the process, targeting professionals with a stake in quality language testing who are not necessarily experts in testing and assessment. According to the authors' view, which we adhere to, relating

an examination or test to the CEFR can best be seen as a process of "building an argument". The publication presents five inter-related sets of procedures that users are advised to follow in order to design a linking scheme in terms of self-contained, manageable activities.

Additional information on the CEFR use in order to assess the students achievements in the FL proficiency gives the publication in 2011 "Manual for language test development and examining – for use with the CEFR" produced by the Association of Language Testers of Europe (ALTE) on behalf of the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe (CE, 2011b). The Manual is designed to be complementary to the "Manual for Relating language examinations to the CEFR"; it focuses on aspects of test development and examining which were not covered in that Manual.

Of particular interest to our research is the publication "Guidelines for task-based university language testing" (Chouissa, Dugovičová & Fischer, 2011) This work provides: a comprehensive picture of university-level task-based tests of languages for specific purposes; samples of tests and assistance to teachers and testers in creating their own task-based tests by including checklists and forms for the development stage and also sample evaluation grids. Complements this publication the David Little's article "The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, the European Language Portfolio, and language learning in higher education" (Little, 2012). This article explains the relevance of the CEFR and the European Language Portfolio (ELP) to language learning in higher education, especially as regards the definition of aims and learning outcomes and the promotion of students' capacity to manage their own learning. It expounds the CEFR action-oriented approach, explores its conceptualisation of progression in language learning and its implications for language teaching, and suggests how it can be applied to the design, implementation and assessment of language learning programmes in higher education.

This indicates that during the specified period one problem was mostly investigated: control and evaluation. Considering the above we have devoted our survey to the study of academicians' readiness for the CEFR implementation in language test development and examining.

A survey of 47 professors from 9 Ukrainian universities realised by us in 2012 demonstrated the following; 6 professors were familiar with the procedure of linking local language examinations to the common reference levels of language proficiency; 4 professors studied the particular qualities of university-level task-based tests of FL for specific purposes; none of them took part in the development of the university FL tests, taking into account the recommendations of the Council of Europe. Additionally, at the end of 2012, within the international training course "Foreign language test development and examining", conducted under the auspices of the British Council, we implemented a computer questioning of 50 professors from 12 countries (Austria, Belarus, Germany, Great Britain, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Ukraine). The self-report questionnaire contained 2 research questions (statements) which were answered on a three-point scale (refer to the table). The descriptive statistics are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. Levels of knowledge / skills of participants about/in the CEFR use in language test development and examining

| No | Research questions | Number of participants | Number of responses | | |
|----|---|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------|
| | | | very well | relatively well | not well |
| 1 | I know how to use the CEFR in language test development and examining | 50 | 13 (26%) | 20 (40%) | 17 (34%) |
| 2 | I can use the CEFR in language test development and examining | 50 | 5 (10%) | 14 (28%) | 31 (62%) |
| | Average | 50 | 9 (18 %) | 17 (34%) | 24 (48%) |

The main conclusion of the survey: 48 % of the academics have not been trained enough for relating language examinations to the CEFR.

Over the following years, until the end of 2017, several significant publications on the problem under study also appeared. We consider it reasonable to single out the following of them. The first one is "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Developing illustrative descriptors of aspects of mediation for the CEFR". The paper reports on a sub-project of a Council of Europe initiative to provide an extended version of the CEFR illustrative descriptors, one of the main aims of which is to provide descriptors for communicative activities and strategies related to mediation. This work allows the author, as stated in the abstract, to address underdeveloped or underconceptualised aspects of language

teaching pedagogy and to take into consideration new perspectives that have been emerging in language education. Some of the areas covered are computer-mediated communication, plurilingual and inter/pluricultural interaction, a more agency-oriented relationship to literature and the strategic dimension of the mediation process itself (North & Piccardo, 2016, p.6). The second one – "Sign languages and the Common European Framework of References for Languages: Descriptors and approaches to assessment" (CE, 2016). This resource establishes European standards for sign languages for professional purposes in line with the CEFR and provides an overview of assessment descriptors and approaches. In Ukraine, in 2014, the National German language curriculum for students of non-linguistic specialities was updated (GIU, 2014).

This indicates that during the mentioned period various aspects of the problem were investigated. But the key one, from our point of view, is developing illustrative descriptors of aspects of mediation for the CEFR. That is why we have devoted a survey to the study of academics' qualification for the CEFR implementation in teaching mediation.

At the end of this stage of the research, in 2017, we implemented a computer questioning of 50 professors from 12 countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Great Britain, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, Ukraine). The self-report questionnaire contained 2 research questions (statements) which were answered on a three-point scale (refer to the table). The descriptive statistics are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4. Levels of knowledge / skills of participants about/in the CEFR use in teaching mediation

| No | Research questions | Number of participants | Number of responses | | |
|----|--|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| | | | very well | relatively well | not well |
| 1 | I know how to use the CEFR in teaching mediation | 50 | 4 (8%) | 13 (26%) | 33 (66%) |
| 2 | I can use the CEFR in teaching mediation | 50 | 2 (4%) | 7 (14%) | 41 (82%) |
| | Average | 50 | 3 (6 %) | 10 (20%) | 37 (74 %) |

The results indicate a lack of knowledge of the interviewed participants about the possibilities of the CEFR using in teaching mediation. The participants' skills in this domain are relatively low. This allows us to claim that academics (74%) in different countries needed a better understanding of the above-mentioned publications.

Stage 2. The present

2018 was marked by the publication of the revised version of the CEFR "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. Companion Volume with new descriptors". The Companion volume presents the extended version of the illustrative descriptors: newly developed illustrative descriptor scales are introduced alongside the existing ones; schematic tables are provided, which group scales belonging to the same category (communicative language activities or aspects of competence); a short rationale is presented for each scale, explaining the thinking behind the categorisation (CE, 2018, p. 23). In the context of this publication, the main professors' tasks are their familiarisation with it, awareness of the changes made and its inclusion in newly compiled FL curricula and programmes. At the end of 2018, we conducted a computer questioning of 40 professors from 15 countries (Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Germany, Great Britain, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldavia, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine). A self-report questionnaire contained 5 research questions (statements) which were answered on a three-point scale (refer to the table). The descriptive statistics are summarised in Table 5.

The results indicate a lack of knowledge of the interviewed participants (70%) about changes in the CEFR using for development FL curricula and programmes. The participants' skills in this domain cannot be considered satisfactory. The resulting digital data demonstrate the need for a deeper academicians' study of the changes made in "CEFR. Companion Volume with new descriptors".

In general, the research shows that the gap between the Council of Europe theoretical developments on the improvement of the CEFR and their practical implementation is significant. Surveys of professors from 15 countries indicate the need for their next training to use the updated version of the CEFR and other related materials.

Table 5. Levels of knowledge / skills of participants about/in the "CEFR. Companion Volume with new descriptors"

| No | Research questions | Number of participants | Number of responses | | |
|----|---|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------|
| | | | very well | relatively well | not well |
| 1 | I know the changes to A1–C1 descriptors | 40 | 7 (17.5%) | 12 (30%) | 21 (52.5%) |
| 2 | I know the changes to C2 descriptors | 40 | 5 (12.5%) | 8 (20%) | 27 (67.5%) |
| 3 | I know the changes to plus levels descriptors (B1+; B1.2) | 40 | 5 (12.5%) | 11 (27.5%) | 24 (60%) |
| 4 | I know new scales | 40 | 3 (7.5%) | 5 (12.5) | 32 (80%) |
| 5 | I can use the revised CEFR in FL curricula and programmes development | 40 | 1 (2.5%) | 3 (7.5%) | 36 (90%) |
| | Average | 40 | 4.2 (10.5%) | 7.8 (19.5%) | 28 (70%) |

Stage 3. The future

Based on the results of the described above seventeen years investigation, the exploration of the British Council (BC, 2017) and our many years experience in using the CEFR, we consider it reasonable to formulate some recommendations for the future. Note that they relate to different countries in different degrees, but in general they are identical. And yet, first of all, they relate to higher education institutions of Ukraine.

Some FL curricula design guidelines

Curricula require updating in accordance with the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. Companion Volume with new descriptors" (CE, 2018). They should be improved for different FL, for students of linguistic and non-linguistic specialities. Curricula should be differentiated for bachelor and master programmes. It is rationally to differentiate the Curricula for students of linguistic specialities for the preparation of future linguists, translators, FL teachers and FL professors. All of them should be professionally oriented. Curricula for students of non-linguistic specialities should be differed for technical and humanitarian ones. In addition, it is important to take into account various models of the FL educational process organisation: one year, two years, three or four years. To each curriculum, the every academic year syllabus should be developed.

Some FL programmes design guidelines.

The academic year syllabi are to be accompanied by programmes. A scheme for drawing up an FL programme requires updating to reflect changes made to the CEFR. First of all, these are the changes made to A1 – C1 and C2 descriptors; plus levels descriptors (B1+; B1.2); phonological control scale, prosodic features; scales for mediating concepts and for mediating communication; mediation strategies.

Some guidelines for relating FL examinations to the CEFR.

Currently, this problem seems to be the least studied. In-depth training is required for providers of examinations. They should be able to develop, apply and report transparent, practical procedures in order to situate the FL examinations in relation to the CEFR.

In general, it is necessary to raise the level of awareness of international standards of FL proficiency by the administration of higher education institutions, professors and students.

Conclusions

Over the past decades, numerous studies were actualised by the Council of Europe in the field of education in general and in teaching FL in particular. The publication of the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment"(CE, 2001) is rightly considered to be the main achievement. The authors of the work have developed a transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses and curriculum guidelines, the design of teaching and learning materials, and the assessment of FL proficiency. For many years, this publication has become a kind of compass in teaching FL in different countries. Gradually, it has been supplemented by other significant works, from which fundamentally important are "Relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. A Manual" (CE, 2009a)

and "Manual for language test development and examining – for use with the CEFR" (CE, 2011b). It is impossible not to mention the Council of Europe analysis in the field of mediation the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Developing illustrative descriptors of aspects of mediation for the CEFR" (CE, 2016).

In terms of our seventeen years research, we have analysed the familiarisation of academicians from 18 countries with the publications mentioned above and their abilities to use them practically. The results of the academicians' surveys indicate a lack of their recommendations awareness proposed in the manuals. In addition, we have designated the achievements of the Ukrainian academicians in the Council of Europe recommendations use: the developed curricula and programmes in English and German for students of linguistic and non-linguistic specialities.

The significant event is the publication of the CEFR second version the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. Companion Volume with new descriptors" (CE, 2018). The study of this issue allows us to state that updating requires: the FL curricula, the FL syllabi, the FL programmes, FL exam materials and procedures, which provides for special professors' training.

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