

ENGLISH AND GERMAN LEARNERS' LEVEL OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN WRITING AND SPEAKING

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Summary - Recent research on communicative competence of foreign language learners has indicated that learners of different foreign languages attain different levels of communicative competence despite having learnt the target language for the same period of time. The main purpose of this study is to compare English and German language learners' level of communicative competence in writing and speaking in Croatia. The results show no significant differences in either the level of communicative competence in writing and speaking or in the attainment level of the majority of communicative competence components between primary school English and German learners at A2 level (4-5 years of learning the target language). However, secondary school English and German language learners at B1 level (8-9 years of learning the target language) show significant differences in both their overall level of communicative competence in writing and speaking and level of their attainment in almost all components of communicative competence. The reasons for these differences between learners of English and learners of German and their relevance for the teaching and learning of these languages are addressed in the discussion.

Key words: *communicative competence, components of communicative competence, foreign language, learners of English, learners of German, primary school, secondary school*

1. INTRODUCTION

In research into the nature of communicative competence in the past few decades (e.g. Sang *et al.*, 1986; Milanovic, 1988 u Skehan, 1988; Harley *et al.*, 1990; Cummins *et al.*, 1990; Fouly *et al.*, 1990; Hoffman-Hicks, 1992; Ginther and Stevens, 1998 etc.) there has been a thorough examination of the learners' overall level of communicative competence as well as the level of communicative com-

petence components in a particular language. The results of this research indicate that the learners' communicative competence does not develop at the same rate in all language areas (cf. e.g. Perkins and Gass, 1996 in Alderson and Banjeree, 2002; Thompson, 1996). Furthermore, this research has found that the process of development of single components of communicative competence and their attainment level is greatly influenced by many factors: instruction, school and out-of-school context of learning and/or acquiring a particular foreign or second language (cf. e.g. Ingram, 1985; Ginther and Stevens, 1998), a foreign or second language itself etc. As to the latter, Thompson (1996) investigated for a different number of years of study the communicative competence of American students of Russian in speaking, reading, listening and writing and compared their level of communicative competence with the level of communicative competence of students of other foreign languages (e.g. German, French, Spanish and Japanese). In her study evidence was found to suggest that in different foreign languages learners reach different levels of language acquisition after the same length of language learning that took place in practically the same context of learning.

Inspired by the results of this research, especially by the findings of Thompsom, within the project "English Language in Croatia" we decided to explore the communicative competence of Croatian primary and secondary learners of English and German as a foreign language in writing and speaking. According to CEF proficiency levels, the primary English and German learners are assigned A2 (basic) level, and secondary B1 (intermediate) level.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main purpose of the present study was to compare the levels of communicative competence of learners of English and learners of German as a foreign language in writing and speaking.

The following questions were considered:

1. What is the level of learners' communicative competence in writing and speaking in English and German as a foreign language after approximately 4-5 (A2 level) and 8-9 (B1 level) years of study? Is the communicative competence level of English learners in writing and speaking different from the communicative competence level of German learners in the same language activities?
2. What are the attainment levels of communicative competence components in writing and speaking in English and German as a foreign language after approximately 4-5 (A2 level) and 8-9 (B1 level) years of study? Are the levels of attainment of individual components of communicative competence of English learners in writing and speaking different from that of German learners?

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Participants

A total of 220 students were involved in the study, including 107 grade 8 students from 15 primary schools and 113 grade 4 students from 10 secondary (high and vocational) schools from the Osijek region in Croatia. These two sample groups – participants from primary schools (I) and participants from secondary schools (II) are further divided in two smaller samples. The first one (I) consists of 54 English learning primary school students (I.E) and 53 German learning primary school students (I.G), whereas the second one (II) is made up of 56 English learning secondary school students (II.E) and 57 German learning secondary school students (II.G).

At the time of testing, the primary school students had been learning a foreign language for 4-5 years, and secondary school students for 8-9.

Since the participants were chosen randomly, it was expected that the sample(s) would be relatively inhomogeneous with respect to the average grade in a foreign language. Thus, the average grade in the sample I.E was 4.09, and in the sample I.G it was 4.45. In the sample II.E the average grade was 4.18, while in the sample II.G it was 3.89.

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1. Tests

Since this study was carried out as part of the project “English Language in Croatia”,

tests used as a measure of communicative competence of primary and secondary school students in the English and German language are the same as those used in the project (for details see the article on methodology for research in the project). Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the tests in English and in German at the basic and intermediate level are compatible in both form and content.

Tests in both languages are designed to measure the following main components of communicative competence¹ - language and strategic competence.

The conclusions about the attained level of language competence are based on the assessment of the following subcomponents:

¹ Since the test developers did not base the construct on a particular theoretical concept of communicative competence (personal communication with Marianne Nikolov who was a member of the Hungarian team that developed the original tests, autumn 2004), we described it independently of any theoretical concept. However, the terminology used to describe the construct is essentially the same as in Bachman's concept of communicative language ability.

1. Grammatical competence (Gram), several independent competences such as knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax and phonology/graphology. These knowledge types are included in the process of recognition and production of accurate and appropriate words and sentences as well as in the process of their comprehension.
2. Textual competence (Text), knowledge of, and ability to use, conventions for combining sentences/utterances into written or spoken texts, i.e. the knowledge of cohesion and rhetorical and conversational organisation.
3. Functional competence (Func), knowledge of, and ability to use, pragmatic conventions for interpreting and expressing acceptable language functions.
4. Sociolinguistic competence (Solin), knowledge of, and ability to use, sociolinguistic conventions for creating and interpreting language utterances that are appropriate to a specific language use setting.

Strategic competence (Strat) refers to knowledge of verbal communication strategies (e.g. paraphrase, circumlocution, repetition, hesitation, avoidance of words, phrases, themes, message modifications etc.) that are used to compensate a lack in competence in one or more components of communicative competence. In our study, this competence, however, is not thoroughly measured. Namely, according to some theoreticians (e.g. Buck, 2001), in research of communicative competence of foreign language learners, it is more meaningful to place emphasis on assessment of language competence. The reason being that foreign language learners, especially those whose cognitive abilities have already been developed and are stable, normally differ in language competence that changes in the process of foreign language learning.

All the competences mentioned above are measured and assessed either integrative or isolated, depending on the methodology used, namely the language tasks.

3.1.1. Rating scales

Analytic rating scales developed for assessing writing and speaking tasks in the project were slightly changed in the present study (see the description of rating scales used in the project in the article on methodology). In this respect, the number of criteria and score points in both the rating scale for assessing writing tasks and the rating scale for assessing speaking tasks were increased. For instance, the criterion “spelling” was added to the criteria in the rating scale for writing, and “fluency” to the criteria in the rating scale for speaking. These changes were introduced in order to make the measurement of individual components of communicative competence more transparent.

Before turning to rating scales for assessing writing and speaking tasks, it is necessary to point out the following:

1. Since tasks in English writing and speaking tests are compatible to tasks in German writing and speaking tests, rating scales for assessing these tasks are the same for both languages, which enabled the comparison of the results that students of English and students of German achieved on writing and speaking tests.
2. The criteria labels, but not (necessarily) their descriptors, are the same in both the rating scale for assessing writing ability of primary school students (level A2) and the rating scale for assessing writing ability of secondary school students (level B1). The same goes for criteria labels in rating scales for assessing speaking at two levels.
3. Rating scales are divided into five levels with score points ranging from 1-10 (rating scales for writing) and 1-5 (rating scale for speaking). If the task was not achieved, i.e. if the student did not produce a written or spoken text at all or if the produced text was not comprehensible, the student was given 0 points. The maximum score points on the writing test was 50, and on the speaking test 75.

The rating scale for assessing writing ability of English and German students at A2 level (Appendix 1) and the rating scale for assessing writing ability of English and German students at B1 level (Appendix 2) addresses the following aspects of writing: relevance and appropriateness, organisation and cohesion, vocabulary, grammar and spelling. The first aspect reflects pragmatic competence, that is, functional and sociolinguistic/sociocultural competence, while the other aspects refer to organisational competence, i.e. to two of its components – grammatical and textual competence.

1. Relevance and appropriateness (W-r&a) is a complex criterion which refers to the extent to which form and content of a produced text is in accordance with task requirements as well as to the extent to which content and form of a text and language expression are socially appropriate and natural/authentic with respect to the situational and contextual variables such as theme, social roles of communication partners, purpose and place of communication etc.
2. Organisation and cohesion (W-o&c) stands for the extent to which the utterances are logically linked to form a coherent text as well as for the use of cohesive devices.
3. Vocabulary (W-voc). This criterion is used to assess the range of words and expressions a student knows and uses. More precisely, under this criterion we assessed the lexical variation (to what extent a student uses different words) and the lexical sophistication (to what extent a student uses words that do not appear in vocabulary of other students, i.e. words that are characteristic for advanced levels)² as well as degree of appropriateness of vocabulary use in a particular context.

² See Laufer (1991) for more about these criteria.

4. Grammar (W-gr) refers to the degree of accuracy of morpho-syntactic structures and the degree of their complexity. Within this criterion, mistakes were graded according to the frequency of their occurrence.
5. Spelling³ (W-or) refers to the degree of accuracy in applying spelling and punctuation conventions.

The rating scale for assessing the speaking ability of English and German students at A2 level (Appendix 3) and the rating scale for assessing students' speaking ability of English and German at B1 level (Appendix 4) contain the following criteria: interaction, relevance and appropriateness, fluency, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation and intonation. The first criterion refers to pragmatic competence, i.e. to functional and sociolinguistic/sociocultural competence. The second includes functional and strategic competence. The other criteria refer to three dimensions of grammatical competence.

1. Interaction, relevance and appropriateness (S-ira) refers to the extent to which a student is able to fulfil the task and to vary content and form of a text as well as his/her language expression in a natural/authentic way to adapt them to the variation of situational and contextual variables such as theme, social roles of communication partners, purpose and place of communication etc. By this criterion, the ability of the student to initiate, maintain and close the interaction in different communicative situations was assessed as well.
2. Fluency⁴ (S-flu) was used to assess the cohesiveness and fluency of a student's speech, i.e. the occurrence of pauses, hesitations, false and/or inappropriate starts, repetition, self-correction etc., which might influence the cohesiveness and fluency of speech. The use of communication strategies was (in) directly assessed as part of this criterion.
3. Vocabulary (S-voc) (see the definition of this criterion in the rating scale for writing).
4. Grammar (S-gr) (see the definition of this criterion in the rating scale for writing).
5. Pronunciation and intonation (S-p&i) refers to the degree of comprehensiveness of a student's speech that is influenced by correct articulation of sounds, words and the correct use of prosodic features of language (stress, intonation, rhythm, melody etc.).

³ The reason for not including spelling as well as pronunciation and intonation in the criterion "grammar" is twofold: first, vocabulary is also a separate criterion, and secondly, some studies have indicated that spelling/pronunciation and intonation are weak predictors of grammaticality (cf. Canale, 1984).

⁴ Lennon gives a broad outline of definitions of fluency in both narrow and broad sense. In the latter definitions fluency involves the use of communication strategies as well. McNamara (1996) also pointed out that the line between functional and strategic competence is debatable.

3.3. Procedures

In this study, data were gathered in a period from 2002 to 2005.

37 test administrators took part in the data collection: ten of them for each language in secondary schools and eight of them for each language in primary schools as well as the author of the paper. Most of the test administrators were university students and teachers of English and/or German as a foreign language. All of them took part in a specific training session before going into schools.

As to the assessing of the writing and speaking tests, 12 trained raters were involved in the process of assessment. The raters were university students, university teachers and active teachers from secondary schools together with the author of the paper.

The gathered data were analysed using the programme SPSS *for Windows 11.2*. In the analysis, the following statistical procedures were carried out: descriptive statistics, internal consistency reliability estimates and independent-samples t-test.

Descriptive statistics were calculated to describe sample characteristics and performance of students on the two tests.

Internal consistency reliability estimates (Spearman Rank Order correlation coefficient (ρ) and coefficient alpha) were computed to determine the rater agreement. This analysis revealed that the agreement between raters who assessed writing tests (three raters per sample) was very high – in all cases coefficient alpha was above .96. For the raters of students' speaking tests (two raters per sample) there was also a relatively high and significant degree of agreement – both the correlation coefficient and the coefficient alpha were rather high ($r_s > .700$; $\alpha > .70$).

4. RESULTS

A close inspection of the results of descriptive statistics revealed that the mean scores for English learners were higher than mean scores for German learners in both samples and for almost all variables (components of communicative competence) in the language area of speaking and writing. This fact raised the following questions:

1. Is there a significant difference between the two groups of participants – learners of English and learners of German in each sample (I and II) in the level of their overall communicative competence in writing and speaking?
2. Is there a significant difference between the two groups of participants – learners of English and learners of German in each sample (I and II) in the mastery of single components of their communicative competence in writing and speaking?

The results of the independent-samples t-test provided answers to the above questions. However, before presenting results of this statistical analysis, it should be pointed out that neither the two groups of participants (English and German learners) from sample I nor the two groups of participants (English and German learners) from sample II differed significantly in terms of their average grade in a foreign language. In the former case $t = 1.788, p > .05$, and in the latter $t = 1.447, p > .05$.

Tables 1 and 2 show the results (means, standard deviations, t -values and p -values) of the independent-samples t-test for the two groups of participants (English vs. German learners) from each sample (I and II). In this analysis, the mean scores for each variable (the mean scores on the tasks/tests of speaking and writing, i.e. the mean scores for components of communicative competence measured as individual or joined components) are compared.

Table 1. Significance of means for a set of variables for compared groups I.E ($N=54$) and I.G ($N=53$)

Variable (component/s of communicative competence)	Compared groups	Mean	Std	t	Sig. (two-tailed)
W-Total (Gram, Text, Func, Solin)	I.E	31.494	10.722	1.788	.077
	I.G	27.333	13.236		
W-r&a (Func, Solin)	I.E	6.124	2.707	1.074	.285
	I.G	5.535	2.962		
W-o&c (Text)	I.E	5.679	2.237	.805	.422
	I.G	5.277	2.883		
W-voc (Gram)	I.E	6.142	2.254	1.950	.054
	I.G	5.189	2.780		
W-gr (Gram)	I.E	5.938	2.237	2.575	.011*
	I.G	4.748	2.536		
W-sp (Gram)	I.E	7.611	2.357	1.964	.052
	I.G	6.585	3.015		
S-Total (Gram, Teks, Func, Solin)	I.E	56.778	16.968	1.118	.266
	I.G	53.274	15.405		
S-task1-Total (Gram, Text, Func, Solin)	I.E	20.444	4.986	.132	.895
	I.G	20.330	3.885		
S-task2-Total (Gram, Text, Func, Solin)	I.E	18.519	5.906	1.672	.096
	I.G	16.689	5.350		
S-task3-Total (Gram, Text, Func, Solin)	I.E	17.815	6.428	1.173	.243
	I.G	16.255	7.304		

S-i&r&a (Funk, Solin)	I.E	11.778	3.555	1.445	.151
	I.G	10.793	3.497		
S-flu (Func, Strat)	I.E	11.130	3.481	1.756	.082
	I.G	9.943	3.508		
S-voc (Gram)	I.E	11.019	3.635	1.137	.258
	I.G	10.236	3.482		
S-gr (Gram)	I.E	10.685	3.504	.915	.362
	I.G	10.104	3.051		
S-p&i (Gram)	I.E	12.167	3.177	-.057	.955
	I.G	12.198	2.460		

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Table 1 shows that there was a significant difference at $p < .01$ between groups I.E and I.G only for the variable W-gr which stands for the morpho-syntactic aspect of communicative competence in writing.

Table 2. Significance of means for a set of variables for compared groups I.E ($N=56$) and I.G ($N=57$)

Variable (component/s of communicative competence)	Compared groups	Mean	Std	t	Sig. (two- tailed)
W-Total (Gram, Text, Func, Solin)	II.E	30.387	12.576	2.707	.008**
	II.G	23.614	13.972		
W-r&a (Func, Solin)	II.E	6.440	2.896	1.872	.064
	II.G	5.275	3.682		
W-o&c (Text)	II.E	5.833	2.476	2.513	.013*
	II.G	4.544	2.962		
W-voc (Gram)	II.E	5.911	2.466	3.591	.000**
	II.G	4.211	2.564		
W-gr (Gram)	II.E	5.500	2.692	2.522	.013*
	II.G	4.252	2.570		
W-sp (Gram)	II.E	6.702	2.677	2.535	.013*
	II.G	5.333	3.047		
S-Total (Gram, Teks, Func, Solin)	II.E	60.670	12.255	3.255	.002**
	II.G	49.939	21.600		
S-task1-Total (Gram, Text, Func, Solin)	II.E	21.000	3.815	2.858	.005**
	II.G	17.956	7.059		

S-task2-Total (Gram, Text, Func, Solin)	II.E	19.821	4.242	3.235	.002**
	II.G	16.158	7.291		
S-task3-Total (Gram, Text, Func, Solin)	II.E	19.848	4.453	3.493	.001**
	II.G	15.781	7.557		
S-i&r&a (Funk, Solin)	II.E	12.554	2.583	4.351	.000**
	II.G	9.518	4.579		
S-flu (Func, Strat)	II.E	12.080	2.760	3.515	.001**
	II.G	9.544	4.682		
S-voc (Gram)	II.E	11.705	2.616	3.358	.001**
	II.G	9.316	4.679		
S-gr (Gram)	II.E	11.321	2.708	2.915	.004**
	II.G	9.316	4.418		
S-p&i (Gram)	II.E	13.009	2.039	1.349	.181
	II.G	12.246	3.743		

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

As shown in Table 2, the significant difference, mostly at $p < .01$, between the two groups of participants (II.E and II.G) was found for almost all variables which refer to the mastery of

1. overall communicative competence in writing and speaking, such as W-Total (total score on the writing test), S-Total (total score on the speaking test) and S-task1-Total, S-task2-Total, S-task3-Total, each of which stands for the total score on a particular task in the speaking test.
2. components of communicative competence. In the area of writing language activity these variables are: W-o&c, which stand for the mastery of the aspects of textual competence, and W-voc, W-gr and W-sp which point at the level of mastery of the aspects within grammatical competence. As to the speaking language activity, the significant difference was found for the variables S-i&r&a which embodies the functional and sociolinguistic competence; S-flu that refers to functional and, in part, to strategic competence, and the variables S-voc and S-gr which stand for two subcompetences of grammatical competence.

It is interesting that these two groups of participants (II.E and II.G) did not differ in the variable W-r&a (functional and sociolinguistic competence in writing) and the variable S-p&i (pronunciation and intonation as aspects of grammatical competence in speaking).

5. DISCUSSION

As has already been mentioned, the results of the descriptive statistics (see mean scores presented in Tables 1 and 2) showed that learners of English at both A2 and B1 level were more successful than German learners in accomplishing tasks according to which their communicative competence in writing and speaking was measured. However, not all differences in means were significant.

Interestingly enough, only on the writing test, primary English language learners (level A2) were significantly better than German language learners at the same level in the mastery of grammatical competence, particularly in the morpho-syntactic aspect of that competence. This finding could be explained by the difference in the morpho-syntactic structure of the two foreign languages. German has a richer derivational morphology than English. In addition, Croatian learners find German syntactic structures rather complex. Due to this and the insufficient exposure to the German language, which could facilitate the process of language acquisition, learners of German as a foreign language attain the ability of using grammatical structures accurately at that level with great difficulty. The fact that the difference between these two groups in the same aspect of grammatical competence on various speaking tasks was not significant could be explained by more possibilities of using avoidance strategies in speech, i.e. by using only those grammatical structures for which the students knew they could produce accurately. This is probably why the learners of German, though not significantly, were less successful in pragmatic subcomponents of communicative competence, that is, in functional and sociolinguistic competence in the language activity of speaking. Namely, due to the limited range of vocabulary and greater concentration on the accuracy of spoken utterances, learners of German were not able to fulfil many language functions appropriately. Though they attempted to apply certain verbal communication strategies (e.g. utterance modification, paraphrase, code switching) with the purpose of expressing particular language functions, the fact remains that they often realized even those basic ones like addressing, greeting, asking simple questions etc. sociolinguistically and socioculturally inappropriately. It is possible, though not very likely, that raters of learners' oral production were stricter in rating their pragmatic competence simply because they might have given this aspect more attention in the rating process. On the other hand, the raters of learners' written production, as is to be expected, might have paid greater attention to grammatical competence. Thus, due to some of these reasons, smaller or bigger differences might have been found between the two groups of language learners in sample I (level A2) in these components of communicative competence in speaking and writing. In addition to this, we have noticed that German language learners had more difficulties than English learners in narrative tasks. Namely, while rating their oral performance, it was more than obvious that they lacked knowledge in basic vocabulary at the level of production. They were also spending much time on thinking what article to use – definite or indefinite, and in what

case. These reflections influenced their fluency as well, not only in a narrative, but also in a role-play. Longer pauses, hesitations, false starts, repetitions, and especially self-corrections, were the speech features of many learners of German not only at A2 level, but at B1 level as well. These features were mostly present in the speech of German learners from vocational schools. Despite the differences in the mastery of some components of communicative competence between English and German learners at A2 level, it should not be forgotten that in the mastery of most components of communicative competence, a significant difference was not established between these two groups (see Table 1). Therefore, it could be concluded that to a certain beginning level of foreign language acquisition in a Croatian context of language learning, learners of German and learners of English master the components of communicative competence in both writing and speaking with more or less equal success.

Unlike English learners at level B1 (sample II), the learners of German at this level demonstrated moderate mastery of the majority of components of communicative competence. What is more important, the two groups differ significantly in the mastery of these components (see Table 2). There were no significant differences only in the mastery of two components, in the pragmatic, which is, a combination of the functional and the sociolinguistic component of communicative competence in writing, and in the grammatical, that is, phonological competence in speaking. The latter confirms the validity of the opinion often expressed by native speakers of English and German that Croatian learners do not really show many problems in communication caused by difficulties in articulation of certain sounds, in intonation or other prosodic features of these languages. However, in the mastery of overall communicative competence in writing and speaking, German learners at level B1 were significantly poorer than English learning students. This result allows the following conclusion: learners of German and learners of English as a foreign language in the Croatian learning context do not reach the same level of communicative competence after 8-9 years of learning these languages. This finding is consistent with the findings Thompson (1996) reported in the USA. Possible reasons for these differences in the level of acquisition of English and German in Croatia might lie in different characteristics of the school and out-of-school context of teaching and learning these languages. Closely related to this is also the considerable fluctuation of motivation that was noticed in learners of German when they were learning that language for a longer period of time (cf. Bagarić, 2004, 2007). The fact that these differences between German and English learners at B1 level exist raises the following questions: Which level of communicative competence can Croatian learners of German attain after 8-9 of learning that language – B1 or B1-? More precisely, which level of communicative competence can Croatian learners of English reach after 8-9 years of learning that language – B1 or, perhaps, B2? It would be interesting to determine at what year of language learning, learners of German experience a slowing down or even decline in the mastery of all or just some of the components of communicative

competence. If the latter is the case, then it would be useful to find out in what components the decline occurs and what might be the reasons. The future research will have to provide answers to these questions.

6. CONCLUSION

The findings in this study allow the following conclusions.

- Unlike learners of English and learners of German at A2 level (primary school), these two groups of language learners at B1 level (secondary school) differ significantly in the mastery of their overall communicative competence in writing and speaking.
- While there are almost no significant differences between English and German language learners at A2 level (primary school) in their mastery of individual components of communicative competence, English and German learners at B1 level (secondary school) differ significantly in the mastery of almost all components of communicative competence.

Based on these two conclusions the following general conclusion can be drawn: learners of German who have been learning this language for 8-9 years have less developed communicative competence in writing and speaking than learners of English.

As has already been pointed out, the different level of communicative competence in these two languages is probably connected to the differences in the school and out-of-school context of learning and/or acquiring these languages in Croatia. Therefore, future research into features of this context and its influence on the nature of communicative competence of English and German learners at a particular level of learning these languages is recommended. In addition, it would be useful to investigate the following in greater detail:

- The strategic competence of learners of these two languages, and in a broader sense their ability to use the language knowledge not only in the process of learning but also in the process of testing.
- The learners' degree of mastery of communicative competence and its components after a certain number years of learning English and/or German in a Croatian context, the motivation for learning these languages, that is, the fluctuation of motivation and the reasons for it.

In order to obtain relevant implications for the theory and practice of language learning and teaching, this research should be longitudinal, and include a greater number of participants. However, it should also concentrate on the individual learners/language users that have different general, educational, cognitive, psychological etc. characteristics in order not to neglect individual differences in the nature and structure of communicative competence.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Assessment Criteria for the Writing Task: 4-5 Years of Learning English/German (Level A2)

	Relevance & appropriateness	Organisation & cohesion	Vocabulary	Grammar	Spelling
9-10	The text is thoroughly relevant to 9-10 things and appropriate for pictures A & B. The text is extensive and it is about both pictures.	Text organisation is very clear and appropriate to task. Sentences are logically connected. A good variety of appropriate cohesive devices.	A rich scale, and always or almost always a good choice of vocabulary, appropriate to task.	A few grammar mistakes occur. A good variety of grammatical structures.	A few spelling mistakes occur.
7-8	The text is thoroughly relevant to 7-8 things and appropriate for pictures, or partly relevant to 9-10 things and appropriate for pictures. The text is about both A and B, and it is rather extensive.	Text organisation is rather clear and appropriate to task. Sentences are mostly logically connected. A good, or mostly good, variety of appropriate cohesive devices.	A wide scale and mostly a good choice of vocabulary, appropriate to task.	Some grammar mistakes occur. A good or mostly good variety of structures.	Some spelling mistakes occur.
5-6	The text is thoroughly relevant to 5-6 things and appropriate for pictures, or partly relevant to 7-8 things and appropriate for pictures. The text is about both A and B, and it is extensive enough.	The text consists of sequences of simple sentences. However, there is awareness of appropriate organisation of text. Simple, mostly the same cohesive devices are used.	A good scale and choice of vocabulary, mostly appropriate to task.	Several mistakes occur. Mostly the same, simple structures are used. Most of the text is comprehensible.	Several spelling mistakes occur. The whole text is still comprehensible.
3-4	The text is thoroughly relevant to 4 things and appropriate for pictures, or, only partly relevant on more and appropriate. The text is about both A and B, or on just one of them, and it is short.	Little awareness of appropriate and meaningful text organisation. Almost no use of simple cohesive devices.	A limited scale and choice of vocabulary, often inappropriate to task.	Many mistakes occur. Only the same, simple structures are used. Only part of the text is comprehensible.	Many spelling mistakes. The text is only partly comprehensible.
1-2	The text is thoroughly relevant to 2-3 things and appropriate for pictures, or partly relevant on more, and appropriate. Text is about both A and B, or on just one of them, and it is very short.	Very disjointed text with minimal organisation.	A very limited scale and very often inadequate choice and inappropriate use of vocabulary.	Very many mistakes occur. The text is almost incomprehensible.	Very many spelling mistakes. The text is almost incomprehensible.
0	There is no text in English/German, or the text is completely incomprehensible, or the text is irrelevant for the pictures.				

Appendix 2

Assessment Criteria for the Writing Task: 8-9 Years of Learning English/German (Level B1)

	Relevance & appropriateness	Organisation & cohesion	Vocabulary	Grammar	Spelling
9-10	The text is thoroughly relevant to 5 points and appropriate to task. The text is extensive.	Text organisation is very clear and appropriate to task. Sentences are logically connected. A good variety of appropriate cohesive devices.	A rich scale, and always or almost always a good choice of vocabulary, appropriate to task.	A few grammar mistakes occur. A good variety and complexity of grammatical structures.	A few spelling mistakes occur.
7-8	The text is thoroughly relevant on 4 points and appropriate to task, or partly relevant on more and appropriate. The text is rather extensive.	Text organisation is rather clear and appropriate to task. Sentences are mostly logically connected. A good, or mostly good, variety of appropriate cohesive devices.	A wide scale and mostly a good choice of vocabulary, appropriate to task.	Some grammar mistakes occur. A good or mostly good variety and complexity of structures.	Some spelling mistakes occur.
5-6	The text is thoroughly relevant on 3 points and appropriate to task, or partly relevant on more and appropriate. The text is extensive enough.	Although text is partly well organized, there is some awareness of appropriate organisation of text. In most cases sentences are logically linked. Simple, mostly the same cohesive devices are used.	A good scale and choice of vocabulary, mostly appropriate to task.	Several mistakes occur. Small variety and low complexity of structures. Most of the text is comprehensible.	Several spelling mistakes occur. The whole text is still comprehensible.
3-4	The text is thoroughly relevant on 2 points and appropriate to task, or partly relevant on more and appropriate. The text is short.	Little awareness of appropriate and meaningful text organisation. Very limited use of cohesive devices.	A limited scale and choice of vocabulary, often inappropriate to task.	Many mistakes occur. Only the same, simple structures are used. Only part of the text is comprehensible.	Many spelling mistakes. The text is only partly comprehensible.
1-2	The text is thoroughly relevant on 1 point and appropriate to task, or partly relevant on more and appropriate. The text is very short.	Very disjointed text with minimal organisation.	A very limited scale and very often inadequate choice and inappropriate use of vocabulary.	Very many mistakes occur. The text is almost incomprehensible.	Very many spelling mistakes. The text is almost incomprehensible.
0	There is no text in English/German, or the text is completely incomprehensible, or the text is irrelevant to the task.				

Appendix 3

Assessment Criteria for Speaking Tasks: 4-5 Years of Learning English/German (Level A2)

	Interaction; relevance & appropriateness	Fluency	Vocabulary	Grammar	Pronunciation & intonation
5	A student gives appropriate answers to all questions. He/she describes the picture almost independently and in great detail. In role-plays, he/she initiates, maintains and closes conversation (almost) always appropriately.	His/her speech is spontaneous, fluent and effortless.	A rich scale, and always or almost always a good choice and appropriate use of vocabulary.	A very good variety of grammatical structures used appropriately and mostly correctly.	Very good pronunciation and intonation. Speech is easy to comprehend.
4	A student gives appropriate answers to most of the questions. He/she describes the picture mostly independently and in detail. In role-plays he/she initiates, maintains and closes conversation mostly appropriately.	His/her speech is mostly fluent.	A wide scale and mostly a good choice and appropriate use of vocabulary.	A good variety of grammatical structures used (mostly) appropriately. Some grammatical mistakes occur.	Rather good pronunciation and intonation. Some mistakes do not hinder comprehension.
3	A student gives appropriate answers to half of the questions. He/she describes the picture with help of additional questions and only sometimes in detail. In role-plays, he/she sometimes initiates and with some difficulties maintains and closes conversation in an appropriate way.	He/she makes many short pauses in his/her speech.	Mostly the same words/expressions are repeated. Mostly appropriate use of vocabulary.	Mostly the same grammatical structures are used with a number of mistakes. Speech is still comprehensible.	Good pronunciation and intonation. Mistakes sometimes hinder comprehension.
2	A student gives appropriate answers to less than half of the questions. With help of additional questions, he/she gives a short description of a picture. In role-plays, he/she very rarely initiates and with difficulty maintains and closes conversation in an appropriate way.	He/she speaks slowly, with much effort.	A limited scale of vocabulary. Quite inappropriate use of words and expressions.	The same, basic grammatical structures are used. Many mistakes occur which hinder comprehension.	Many mistakes in pronunciation and intonation which often interfere with comprehension.
1	A student gives appropriate answers to very few questions. With help of many additional questions, he/she gives a very short description of a picture. In role-plays, he/she never initiates and because of great difficulties in understanding hardly maintains and closes conversation.	He/she speaks very slowly.	A very limited scale of vocabulary. Quite inappropriate use of words and expressions.	Very many grammatical mistakes occur. Speech is mostly incomprehensible.	Very many mistakes in pronunciation and bad intonation. Mostly incomprehensible speech.
0	Student says nothing or only a few words in English/German, or speech is completely incomprehensible or inappropriate to tasks.				

Appendix 4

Assessment Criteria for Speaking Tasks: 8-9 Years of Learning English/German (Level B1)

	Interaction; relevance & appropriateness	Fluency	Vocabulary	Grammar	Pronunciation & intonation
5	A student gives appropriate answers to all questions. He/she describes the picture and tells a story independently and in great detail. He/she gives 4 or more arguments for or against statements and elaborates on them appropriately and extensively.	His/her speech is spontaneous, fluent and effortless.	A rich scale, and always or almost always a good choice and appropriate use of vocabulary.	Very good variety of grammatical structures used appropriately and mostly correctly.	Very good pronunciation and intonation. Speech is easy to comprehend.
4	A student gives appropriate answers to most of the questions. He/she describes the picture and tells a story mostly independently and in detail. He/she gives 3 or more arguments for or against statements and elaborates on them appropriately and extensively.	His/her speech is mostly fluent.	A wide scale and mostly a good choice and appropriate use of vocabulary.	Good variety of grammatical structures used mostly appropriately. Some grammatical mistakes occur.	Rather good pronunciation and intonation. Some mistakes do not hinder comprehension.
3	A student gives appropriate answers to half of the questions. He/she describes the picture and tells a story with help of questions and not very extensively and coherently. He/she gives 2-3 or more arguments for or against statements and elaborates on them briefly but still appropriately.	He/she makes many short pauses in his/her speech.	Mostly the same words/expressions are repeated. Mostly appropriate use of vocabulary.	Mostly the same grammatical structures are used with a number of mistakes. Speech is still comprehensible.	Good pronunciation and intonation. Mistakes sometimes hinder comprehension.
2	A student gives appropriate answers to less than half of the questions. He/she gives a short description of the picture and tells a short story with help of quite many questions. He/she gives 1-2 arguments for and against statements and elaborates on them briefly and mostly appropriately.	He/she speaks slowly, with much effort.	A limited scale of vocabulary. Quite inappropriate use of words and expressions.	The same, basic grammatical structures are used. Many mistakes occur which hinder comprehension.	Many mistakes in pronunciation and intonation which often interfere with comprehension.
1	A student gives appropriate answers to few questions. He/she gives a short description of the picture with help of many questions. He/she does not tell a story, or tells it with many difficulties. He/she presents barely a single argument for and against statements and elaborates on it briefly and mostly inappropriately.	He/she speaks very slowly.	A very limited scale of vocabulary. Quite inappropriate use of words and expressions.	Very many grammatical mistakes occur. Speech is mostly incomprehensible.	Very many mistakes in pronunciation, bad intonation. Mostly incomprehensible speech.
0	A student says nothing or only a few words in English/German or what is said is incomprehensible or inappropriate.				