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Introduction to Assessment during Courses of Polish Sign Language Taught as a Foreign Language

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Table of contents

1. Assessment in the teaching process.....	4
1.1. The CEFR Perspective.....	5
1.2. Why do we assess.....	6
1.2.1. Modern approach to assessment.....	7
1.3. Feedback.....	8
1.4. Checking language skills – the CEFR Approach	8
1.5. How often should we assess?	10
2. Different methods of assessment adapted to the needs and objectives	12
2.1 Objectivity	12
2.2 Assessment according to different criteria.	15
2.3. Assessment in a group.....	18
2.4. Assessment versus syllabuses	18
2.5. Assessment and language activities of the learner.....	20
2.5.1. Language skills and competences	20
2.6. Using different ways of assessment - examples.....	21
2.6.1. What do I want to assess?.....	21
2.6.2. Why do I want to assess it?	22
2.6.3 How do I want to assess it? <i>and</i> How often do I want to assess?.....	23
3. The assessment process from the learner's and teacher's perspective.....	25
3.1. Assessment as part of the educational process	25
3.1.1. Assessment in the relationship between the teacher and the learner.....	26
3.2. Learner’s subjectivity (autonomy) in the learning process	26
3.2.1. Teacher’s perspective.....	27
3.2.2. Learner’s perspective	28
3.3. Benefits provided by the assessment.....	28
3.3.1. Benefits to the teacher.....	28
3.3.2. Benefits to the learner	29
3.3.3. Benefits to educational institutions	30
4. How to assess using a test.....	30
4.1. Characteristics of a good test.....	30
4.1.1. Relevance	31

4.3.2. Reliability	32
4.3.3. Practicality	33
4.4. Test evaluation	33
5. Technical and ethical guidelines.....	36
5.1. Technical guidelines	36
5.1.1. Preparing videos (instructions and content)	36
5.1.2. Preparation of photos, illustrations and videos (without statements in sign language). ...	37
5.2. Ethical guidelines.....	39
5.2.1. Copyright	39
6. Overview of the types of tasks used in assessing competences in sign language	42
6.1. Stimuli.....	42
6.2. Other columns in the table.....	43
Production. Sustained monologue: describing experience and feelings.....	47
Signing competences. Linguistic competences.....	47
Signing competences. Diagrammatical accuracy.....	48
Signing competences. Diagrammatical accuracy.....	49
Signing competences. Linguistic competences.....	49
Signing competences. Diagrammatical accuracy.....	51
Can express a sequence of events that are in a cause and effect relationship (e.g. THAT IS WHY).....	51
Signing competences. Diagrammatical accuracy.....	51
Communicative linguistic competences. Lexical accuracy	55

1. Assessment in the teaching process

The teaching process always includes the time when we need to check whether the process is going well and whether we can follow the next steps in our syllabus or curriculum (learning plan or programme). Learners need to attain one level of a course to progress to more advanced topics thus we need to be sure that our objectives have been sufficiently met. This is when we apply tools for monitoring language progress, achievements or the level our learners have attained. In this context we mean the process of **evaluation**, and of assessment in particular, in which we focus on the learner.

Commonly, grading/assessment is perceived equivalent to learner testing. The learners perceive it as a series of uncomfortable situations when they have to provide a written or spoken answer to a specific question on a language issue, usually grammatical, which is then assessed for correctness. This situation is associated with school context, where testing is the fastest and most economical form of testing knowledge in specific subjects, including foreign language. Educational institutions seek to ensure that the verification process is standardised, produces reliable results regardless of the group of tested learners, and that the assessment, at least in theory, represents a reliable state of knowledge of learners from different backgrounds and regions. Hence, test results and specific assessments are often preferred to a complex assessment process involving many theoretical and methodological issues.

School education is associated with a specific form of assessment expressed in grades/scores, which determines, according to selected criteria, the level of learners' knowledge, i.e. the extent to which they have learnt, mainly by memory, the intended portion of the material. This model works well for foreign language learning where the main goal for learners is to learn a specific portion of knowledge: a list of vocabulary, verb conjugation in all tenses, plural forms, and exceptions. However, with regard to the philosophy of language teaching included in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), assessment of these elements will not provide the basis to determine the learner's level of language proficiency. The fact that someone has learnt a list of words and a system of inflection is not sufficient to claim that he/she is fluent in a foreign language.

This 'school' approach to language proficiency testing very often obscures the real meaning of the whole assessment process, which should be seen as an indispensable

part of learning. Assessment is a much more complex process and should not be limited to testing. It refers to a series of decisions made by the teacher in terms of selecting skills for assessment, reasons why a particular material will be assessed, how it will be tested, procedures to be followed, frequency of interaction between him/her and the learners.

We therefore define assessment as various planned activities that are delivered to verify the level of language proficiency and monitor progress of the learning process itself. These activities may include various methods of testing knowledge and skills, such as general tests, examinations, class tests as well as learner's work during classes, which represent classic school methods. The learner's work also includes presentations, projects, group work, interviews and discussions, feedback and self-assessment. We can say that any language activity by learners can be a source of assessment.

1.1. The CEFR Perspective

The CEFR documents, despite some openness to the use of different glottodidactic methods in foreign language teaching practice, tend to foster the idea that the use of language in interpersonal communication is accomplished through language activities. However, language proficiency is not something that can be assessed based on a single act of communication, and we usually aim to have enough data to be able, firstly, to relate it to selected descriptors for a specific level of proficiency and, secondly, to be able to generalise about the learner's language competence.

We can assume that within a given assessment process we construct a form of competence testing that can be applied to selected descriptors (e.g. in the field of production) or only to specific language tasks (e.g. ordering a coffee in a café). The CEFR document proposes three ways of using language proficiency descriptors in the assessment process:

- Developing a scale composed of a set of selected descriptors of proficiency for different categories,
- Lists of the categories (*checklists*),
- Rating (grading) scale.

They can be used as part of specific assessment methods presented in Chapter 2.

1.2. Why do we assess

In the previous section we have mentioned general reasons for planning assessment as part of educational process. The requirements set by specific educational bodies or institutions regarding reasons, frequency and forms of examinations are imposed, nevertheless, we develop original curricula and sign language courses therefore we have major impact on the final form of assessment used during our classes. "Why do we want to assess our learners?" is one of the key questions we should ask ourselves when designing a teaching plan incorporating a conscious assessment processes.

The traditional view of teaching assumes that assessment is the final stage after the learning period has ended to verify learners' knowledge and possibly check effectiveness of the tools applied. In this context, evaluation is a separate process that only serves evaluative purposes and checks progress achieved. This situation also means that **feedback provided to the learner after** learning has been completed does not give him/her a chance to review mistakes, and improve. The time between learning and assessment is often too long for feedback to facilitate referring to the material and improvement as next topics have to be taught. In school environment, this type of assessment is commonly used due to its effectiveness for the purpose of learner qualification and ranking. It is also a faster form of assessment to use in case of very time-demanding teaching plans and extended core curricula.

Assessment separated from the teaching process offers numerous advantages from the non-school perspective (promotion to the next grade, certification independent of individual training or educational facilities, final and entrance examinations, etc.) as well as from the diagnostic one (teaching process quality control, effectiveness of programmes and teachers). This tool is extremely effective for large groups of learners and provides quick results, facilitating comparisons of results, preparation of statistics and rankings. Moreover, tests assessing competence in the foreign language are also drafted to check general level of language proficiency (unrelated with a specific course). It also aims at planning and adapting the course to the language level of learners coming from different backgrounds and checking their potential language deficits. In the literature on sign language teaching, there are language proficiency assessment tests both for native speakers and learners of sign language as a foreign language. They include, inter alia, grammatical competence tests (e.g. *Aachen Test* for German Sign

Language, DGS), tests on vocabulary, language proficiency interview (American Sign Language, ASL, *Sign Language Proficiency Interview* in. SLPI), language proficiency of adults (ASL, *American Sign Language Discrimination Test*, ASL-DT). There are also language proficiency special tests developed specifically for research purposes (sign language structure analysis: syntax, morphology, phonology, e.g. *The American Sign Language Sentence Reproduction Test*, ASL-SRT; *The Nonsense Sign Repetition Task for BSL*, British Sign Language). In Poland there is one language competence test for PSL for children (Kotowicz et al., 2020), which is an adaptation of a tool for BSL: *British Sign Language Receptive Skills*. Development of tests themselves as well as their language adaptation is labour-intensive and can take several years, hence the number of tools we can use is relatively small.

1.2.1. Modern approach to assessment

Despite numerous advantages offered by the traditional approach to assessment, clearly there are situations during foreign language learning in which this mode of assessment is insufficient or inadequate. Moreover, nowadays we have observed a change in the approach to the relationship between the teacher and the learner, and to the teaching process itself. Increasingly, assessment is perceived as an integral part of the whole process rather than something completely independent of what takes place in the classroom/course. From this perspective, assessment is understood as an interaction (a dynamic relationship) between the teacher giving guidance and feedback, and the learner, who should be supported by the assessment of his/her answers, statements or any other activity to better understand an issue or mistake he/she has made. Assessment is not perceived here as a primary tool for rewarding or penalising learners but is intended to help them to obtain more knowledge, become better as well as make the whole process beneficial to them from the perspective of their progress, and not just to receive a grade. Giving the learner a chance for self-reflection and improvement as well as an opportunity to express his/her opinion on a specific topic or give feedback on the teaching process or methods used is an important element in this interaction.

1.3. Feedback

Verification of the foreign language learners' level of language proficiency is one of the key goals of assessment. However, it is more and more often emphasised that assessment can also support learners' progress if they receive appropriate feedback at the right time. This information can take different forms: indicating whether the answer is correct (possibly providing correct answer), drawing attention to the type of mistake made, providing brief or detailed information justifying the grade, and any form of interaction which gives learners feedback on their language performance. Proper feedback should be constructive, given soon after the task has been completed, and offer value. Constructive feedback should draw attention to the good and bad aspects of the learner's performance and highlight these elements that should be improved (and possibly instructions how this should be done). This approach also encourages learners to self-reflection and thinking about their learning process and consequently, may provide more satisfaction from being an active learner. Feedback should be given at the time that will allow to address topic presented on the ongoing basis, or at least before the learner moves on to next topics. It should also give the learner a chance to correct his/her mistakes to show that the feedback has been received and has had an impact on his/her level of skills and knowledge. When we say that we want to give valuable feedback to learners it means that we have to consciously comment only on what is being assessed at a given moment, and at the same time we should adapt our communication to the situational context: to the learner's needs, time requirements of the course (class work) or principles of clear communication.

Obviously, in the school context, giving full feedback to learners and interacting with them is very time-consuming. However, we should remember that different types of assessment can be used simultaneously depending on the form of the task (see Chapter *Different types of assessment adapted to the needs and objectives*).

1.4. Checking language skills – the CEFR Approach

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) documentation presents a view that people have various competences, including knowledge of language(s). It defines the competence as a set of skills, knowledge and attitudes that are acquired or learned during our lifetime.

The CEFR highlights the importance of several language activity skills: language competence (broadly defined as linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence), language activity competence and competence of using communicative strategies. For this reason, the language competences assessed in relation to the levels of language proficiency are always seen from a communicative and task-based perspective, and correct performance of specific language tasks/activities (and thus achievement of a goal) takes precedence over correctness of articulation, grammar and fluency of expression. It is also worth reminding how the CEFR authors understand the terms of *communicative task and language activity*. Communicative task (in a foreign language) always manifests itself through one of the three spheres of life: meeting daily needs through direct contact with other people, exchanging knowledge (opinions and expressing feelings) and interpersonal interaction as well as establishing contacts. Language activity is an act of producing a text, whether spoken, signed or written. For the authors of this document, language processing, i.e. listening comprehension, sign reading or reading comprehension of written text, also represents this activity. Language proficiency is also understood as a set of specific skills defined for a particular language level, abbreviated as A1, A2, B1, B2 C1 and C2. (see CEFR, 2003, pp. 31-32). In other words, language proficiency is expressed in the form of operative phrases: "Can do...", which allow both learners and teachers to assess language skills. The level of language proficiency in the CEFR documents is presented according to proficiency descriptors, which are detailed descriptions of the skills and knowledge needed to perform specific language tasks. Under specific levels of language proficiency, very general goals are set for learners to strive to attain them in the course of learning the foreign language. The CEFR very broadly defines the concept of communicative activity, encompassing both active use of language (speech) and passive use, involving reception and processing of linguistic messages. This perception of the activities is reflected in the internal division of the proficiency descriptors into different categories defining specific language competences at a given level. The key categories include reception, production, interaction and mediation.

The reception category covers listening comprehension (excluding the role of a dialogue participant), reading comprehension, audio-visual content comprehension and comprehension of text and language-related elements in a communicative context.

Production means the ability to produce written, signed and spoken language texts, including the ability to use texts and plan statements.

Interaction, on the other hand, refers to taking part in a conversation (dialogue) and includes various forms of spoken and written text, both face-to-face and through various media. Taking into account sociological and pragmatic context of human interaction, key functions of strategies for maintaining contact, ending a conversation and asking for clarification are also defined.

CEFR Companion Volume has introduced the latest category of mediation, i.e. text processing, which consists of a variety of skills relating to the analysis, explanation and communication of content (within one language or from one language to another, the so-called interlingual processing). This mode of communication includes production of texts both in written, signed and spoken form. Translation, notes concerning other texts, summaries, reviews and other are examples of mediation.

1.5. How often should we assess?

Frequency of assessment depends on a number of factors. We may conduct tests every day, once a week, after completing a particular topic or chapter in a textbook, or quite seldom, e.g. at the end of term or once a year. Frequency can also be viewed from the perspective of whether learners' work is assessed throughout the learning period as determined by the teacher, institutionally (i.e. **continuous assessment**), or only once (on a predetermined date announced months in advance) as a final or certification examination.

If we use the continuous assessment we need to be aware that its frequency depends on our assumptions as well as on learners' needs and other limitations. It is worth reflecting on this decision and knowingly plan such activities. We should consider external factors such as the school year organisation, language course duration, and pre-defined dates for external examinations or certification. These deadlines usually provide a timeframe for the learning process, which should provide learners with the necessary skills and knowledge to complete the curriculum and take the examinations. All these aspects need to be addressed in our learning plan. Pupils at school have to complete a certain educational stage with a grade therefore we assume that it will be based on their work in class or at home.

Other factors influencing frequency of assessment include the textbook we use during the course (which divides the material into chapters in advance and offers tests after each chapter or topic), the level of difficulty of the topics covered, completion of additional tasks by the learner and his/her overall workload. Frequent testing allows to give component grades and check learners' progress but can also create extra burden both for the teacher (test development, many of papers to check) and the learner.

In extracurricular language courses, assessment does not always result in a grade, it is usually our goal as teachers that the participants complete the course having reached a certain level of language proficiency. Some courses end with an examination or a certification test in which learners must demonstrate knowledge and skills, therefore partial grades are of a secondary importance. However, it is worth stressing that assessment, even if it takes the form of school grades, is an extremely motivating tool throughout the learning process and facilitates feedback.

The decision on the frequency of assessments therefore depends on a number of external factors: the type of classes, the type of group you work with and individual decisions made by the teacher when developing his/her teaching plan.

The curricula we develop should vary according to whether they are intended for children, adults, a specific professional group, or learners. We need to remember that (in line with the CEFR philosophy) the curriculum and tools used should be adapted to the characteristics of the group. It is worth remembering that younger children need more monitoring (and feedback) during learning due to the fact that they need more support, often do not have well-developed learning habits and methods, and need different forms of motivation. Adults, especially if they choose to take an external language course which they pay for with their own funds and have specific goals in mind, are very often experienced in the methods they use (including self-study) and are usually very motivated, however, they may not have enough time to study at home due to work or personal commitments.

Frequent assessment facilitates feedback at a time close to the test itself; it provides an opportunity to monitor progress, can motivate learners to learn regularly (vocabulary or grammar in particular), use a variety of forms of competence testing, not only tests, but also group work, discussions, homework, creative tasks, posters, presentations, etc. However, due to the labour-intensive nature of frequent assessment, this represents a challenge for the teacher and can also become difficult for the

learner (if we do not clearly define which classroom activities are to be assessed or discuss the rules with them). It is also important to note that learning a foreign language is not the same as learning other school subjects as a certain level of language proficiency is not limited to memorised vocabulary and grammar rules.

The assessment which we plan to deliver rarely during a specific educational process, especially for adults, offers certain freedom to decide (e.g. about the time and frequency of self-study). Assessments scheduled after a certain portion of material has been covered provide an opportunity for review and summary as well as for self-assessment by learners. However, it is important to remember that rare assessments can make it difficult to monitor progress and thus limit feedback. Very infrequent assessment of children does not usually work well - it usually works well with well-organised learners with a high level of autonomy and self-control.

2. Different methods of assessment adapted to the needs and objectives

CEFR document lists a variety of assessments that can (and sometimes must) be incorporated into your work in terms of curriculum design and your actions as a teacher. Some of them relate to the degree of objectivity or frequency, others to the criteria used as a basis for the assessment leading to giving a specific grade (e.g. assessment of single tasks, overall assessment, etc.). The following part is a summary of the selected assessment approaches presented in this document, depending on teachers' objectives and needs.

2.1 Objectivity

Objectivity in assessment is a very important aspect and, as it may seem, it is not limited to defining the attitude of the teacher as an impartial assessor. In this context, we should also consider quality of the tools used (reliable and credible), intended plans of results (e.g. selected descriptors adapted to the curriculum, group specificity, and educational goals).

From the CEFR perspective, objective assessment involves creating a certain idealisation by removing the subjective perspective of the teacher/assessor (in external

examinations these roles are very often mutually exclusive). Hence, the preference for this type of assessment is for standardised tests using an answer key, typically with only one correct answer. This approach minimises the influence of any other factors on the grade - what the learner has written is of the utmost importance. Each answer is assessed against the same criteria thus the process is fair and consistent for each learner. Tests using answer keys facilitate assessment of bigger groups of learners (e.g. in the external examination process). They are considered to be a good tool for assessing the level of knowledge.

If we introduce single-choice tests in our language course, our objectivity as evaluating teachers is easy to maintain - we count up the points for the correct answers and give a grade. However, we need to remember that for sign languages in particular, developing such tests with reference to selected descriptors is often more time-consuming than a written test typically applied in standard language examinations (this topic is further discussed in the following parts of this publication). This type of test must be very well structured so as not to allow the possibility of giving an answer that does not fit in with the key. The test limits language activities that learners can perform (e.g. production of sustained monologues), hence it is rather difficult to assess group work, discussion, presentation on a given topic, an invented story, self-presentation, description of a city, etc. using such tools. Most importantly, in the case of language production (e.g. monologues, discussions), **objective assessment** usually does not work. It is impossible to assess in this way language competences that are beyond the knowledge of vocabulary, word inflection or building correct sentences.

Language proficiency assessment in certain situations requires the teacher to move away from standardised tools and use assessment methods that are not always fully objective. We can say that in foreign language teaching the assessor is always between extreme objectivity and extreme subjectivity.

In school environment, it is common to base assessment on the teacher's subjective impression and judgement as to whether a learner has answered correctly and achieved specific curriculum requirements of the teaching plan. This obviously gives freedom and opportunity to assess non-standard activities, e.g. thematic presentation in a foreign language, sustained speech, etc., however it should be stressed that subjective assessment applied inconsistently or non-transparently can give learners a

sense of unfair assessment (if they are unfamiliar with the assessment criteria), favouritism or unclear feedback. An additional difficulty in using this kind of assessment is that our impressions change over time, influenced by a variety of factors, not only content-related, but also by the context of interaction with our learners, their behaviour, class team, and often external factors such as the weather or our mood. We should choose this type of assessment knowingly and adapt it to the type of language activities of our learners. It is also important to remember that learners' self-assessment of their progress is always subjective and based on their impressions of their own language activities, skills and knowledge.

Guided assessment (judgement) is a form of assessment that lies between objectivity and subjectivity. The guidelines define how the teacher's impressions will be translated into a specific assessment, within predefined rules. They are mainly for the planned procedure for the assessor how to approach the assessment and formalise subjective impressions, i.e. translating them into a specific system of assessment, applying criteria agreed during the process, and preparing all assessors to give grades based on consistent rules. You can use any system of assessment depending on needs and goals; it can be defined as a scale showing how well a learner has learnt a skill, refer directly to language proficiency descriptors or be a general description of a range of knowledge or skills. The agreed criteria, on the other hand, use assumptions of different assessment methods that relate to detailed assumptions (e.g. what the assessment covers, which content is covered, etc.). More details on criteria applied in assessment are presented in further parts of this publication.

It is worth emphasising that the guided assessment must, above all, be developed in a great detail at the level of the assessor's preparation. Anyone using the guidelines should understand what is behind them, what it means to use a particular criterion and master a particular competence (e.g. so that everyone has the same understanding of achieving competence level 2 on a scale of 0-3), and how they should be applied to the learner's language activities. If the teacher is unprepared to use the guidelines, objectivity of the whole procedure is blurred. The research available in the literature additionally indicates that in the process of examining a group of learners tested by several examiners having different approaches to the guidelines, the grades can be practically random and completely non-standardised. The impressions of the examiners depend on very subjective opinions concerning categorisation of mistakes,

and at the same time the attitude of the examiner himself/herself is important (whether he/she is lenient or firm in correcting different types of errors, whether considers articulation errors to be of lesser importance than grammatical ones, etc.). All these aspects should be clearly explained to ensure that each examiner applies the criteria in the same way when assessing the same task completed by different learners.

2.2 Assessment according to different criteria.

The use of a set of criteria provides a framework of reference for objective assessment of content expressed by each learner, at the same time allowing for subjective evaluation of individual activities. Criteria can be expressed as a list, scoring, topic, or numerical or descriptive scale. A list of skills that learners should learn at a certain stage of teaching, e.g. PSL spelling, is an example of such a set. To illustrate this method of assessment, let us consider descriptors for dactylography competence at A1 and A2 level. It assumes that A1 level learner can spell names and terms, but with noticeable pauses between specific hand gestures and thinking. The recipient understands the message with some effort and concentration.

Within A2 level the assumption is that the learner has mastered spelling to the extent that he/she can spell technical names and terms fluently using fingerspelling alphabet. In this context, assessment guidelines for these descriptors may assume that some learners have mastered all handshapes and perform them correctly, some seldom make mistakes, while others make them often. This competence also covers the impression of fluency, which involves the skill of controlling movement from one shape to the next without thinking and pausing. These guidelines can be presented in the form of the following Table for A2 level:

Correctness of handshapes	No mistakes	Single mistakes	Frequent mistakes in handshapes
Fluency	Fluent dactylography within the word, without breaks	Single breaks between certain handshapes within a word	Breaks between individual handshapes, and hesitation.

Such gradationally structured skills also allow for cross grade levels: learner can make correct handshapes, but also can make breaks between them as well as numerous mistakes within the same shapes.

Observing learner's activities during the spelling and relating them to the descriptor-based criteria can also indicate whether he/she has mastered a given skill at the selected proficiency level. We can also relate everything to a scale, e.g. the level of mastery of skills in the scale of 0-3, where 0 means that the learner has not obtained the competence and 3 that he/she is fully competent in the selected skill.

By applying the criteria-based method in the assessment process we may use different ways to refer to predefined assumptions. We can use:

- Assessment based on criteria related to individual responses of the learner,
- An assessment based on a list of elements that need checking (to be mastered by the learner),
- Assessment according to the achievement of a specific objective or in relation to a specific range of skills.

Criteria-based assessment primarily means that we need to draft a set of descriptors for each proficiency level (to standardize assessment for all participants of the assessment process) which relate to relevant topics (related to a specific course or textbook). These criteria are always related to the skills of an individual learner; the skill level of other learners in the group is not taken into account. It is also very important that a minimum range of skills ('pass mark') which qualifies the learner to pass the examination is set.

The list of elements that need checking is based on the list of skills and knowledge that each learner must have in order to decide that he/she has accomplished a given level of competence (this list often refers to a specific course or textbook). During the assessment, the teacher can mark on the list the competences that the learner has achieved or not (which the teacher always evaluates based only on a number of performances and generalizes his/her opinion) or mark them on a scale (numeric 0-3; verbal, e.g.: competence not mastered, poorly mastered, fully mastered). In

this context there should also be a strong emphasis on defining the degrees of each scale to ensure that each response can be evaluated in the same way.

The list of these elements covers the range of material that provides the basis for the grade. However, it may take the form of the so-called disposition. The dispositions are usually very general in nature (e.g. they may take the form of a procedure for conduct during the examination) and give the examiner relative freedom in the assessment of performance. However, the examiner must know the dispositions in advance and be able to refer to them quickly (from memory) during the course of the learner's performance to be able to conclude, for example, that a particular assumption has been delivered. Above all, dispositions work well with simulations and interviews (testing of knowledge) - learners have an opportunity to demonstrate that they know a certain issue, but do not necessarily have to try to use expressions identical with the answer key. The examiner can use a specific range of material that the learner should know, presented, for instance, as a list (sometimes with a more detailed description of the issue). An example of a disposition chart for a free directed interview is presented below:

I Description of the purpose of the interview

II Interview framework

III Specific Dispositions - Learner:

1. Knows names and distinguishes 3 types of verbs in PSL. Gives examples of them.
2. Understands the concept of directionality, can describe it based on any directional verb.
3. Knows the definition of a classifier. Understands differences between different groups of classifiers such as: SASS, motion.
4. Understands the differences between the MCL [SJM *in Polish*] and Polish Sign Language. (Relevant aspects of the response: noting the relationship between Polish language and MCL, and distinctiveness of the PSL as a natural language system).

Suggested sample questions are sometimes provided, however they are not obligatory, and the examiner has freedom in formulating questions.

Each answer of the learner (regardless of how often it is assessed and whether the assessment covers language or knowledge) can be evaluated according to the criterion of achievement of a particular goal or range of skills. The criterion of achievement of the particular goal means that we must, as assessors, set a single passing threshold for each syllabus item or competence descriptor – the learner gives an answer and the criterion indicates whether it meets the goals or not (without grade gradation). The second method specifies a method that involves assessing learner's answer and then relating it to a predetermined range of skills, which is represented by a scale/level (grade gradation). It is worth quoting CEFR: *We should not confuse criteria-based assessment with checking achievement of a specific threshold or standard; Criteria-based assessment is not intended to evaluate syllabus or performance.*

In addition, we can provide a rating for individual learners, attempting to place their performance only on the scale of language skills (expressed in proficiency descriptors). The criterion for the final grade will therefore show how high on the scale we place the specific learner's performance.

2.3. Assessment in a group

These methods of assessment were based on the assessment of individual language used by the learner referencing it to the criteria. However, we can place the learner's final performance in the context of performance of other learners. In this case, we can use statistical rankings and compilations. Such lists compile results of all learners and show them in relation to the group as a whole, thus allow to reference all learners to a predefined standard (in this case - e.g. proficiency levels), rank them based on, for instance, specific scoring obtained and defining the minimum scoring necessary to pass the assessment (e.g. in a specific group 50 learners entered the competition, during the examination it was possible to obtain maximum 100 points, but only 25% of the learners with the highest score will advance to the next stage).

2.4. Assessment versus syllabuses

The key aspects of this assessment, i.e. achievement and language competence, are the main distinguishing elements. Therefore the achievement assessment is understood as

the level of the learner's attainment of selected predetermined learning objectives specific to a particular syllabus, course or textbook. It is always an assessment performed from an external perspective, i.e. from the perspective of whether the learner knows/understands what the syllabus/course designer has assumed. Obviously, each course or syllabus will require developing a different achievement assessment.

Language proficiency assessment is a way of testing what a learner knows/understands when using a foreign language. This assessment is not (and cannot be) referenced to a specific syllabus or course, as by definition it is designed to test language competence in the real world (or in a simulated world, e.g. in role plays).

2.5. Assessment and language activities of the learner

We can use a variety of methods to consider the learner's activity when delivering an assessment. We can assess how the task was completed, i.e. how the learner used language to achieve the objective. This type of assessment focuses on the learner's use of language, hence we take into account all their linguistic expressions in different forms: filling in gaps in the text, giving a correct equivalent, participating in a discussion, or presenting results of group work.

We can also consider what the learner knows about the language and assess his/her knowledge. This refers mainly to the so-called meta-level, i.e. what the user knows about the language system, grammar and other rules he/she should know and apply during communication. Being aware of these rules and knowing them is also evidence of having reached a certain level of language proficiency.

This division of assessment methods also translates into other types of assessment, in this case into direct and indirect assessment. Direct assessment is based on the analysis of actual language activities, which only apply to the learner's own communication (**monologue**) and their activity during interaction. Indirect assessment, on the other hand, focuses on the answers given in tests which may check both the learner's ability to use the language and what he/she knows about the language. Hence the distribution of these 4 assessment methods is not 1:1 ratio, it is assumed that language proficiency within production competence cannot be tested by indirect methods, while language comprehension can only be tested indirectly, by answering questions included in the text.

2.5.1. Language skills and competences

The design of the tests themselves, which, as a result of using inappropriate measures, may test competences other than those intended by the teacher, is a particularly important problem in planning the whole assessment process for sign languages. The CEFR clearly separates language competences of production, comprehension and mediation (text processing and translation). It is worth keeping this distinction in mind when assessing learners' language activities and planning test-related tasks. There is a fundamental difference between tasks that involve signing specific signs for presented pictures (referred to as stimuli; more details can be found in further part of this publication) and tasks that ask the learner to list sign equivalents for written Polish words.

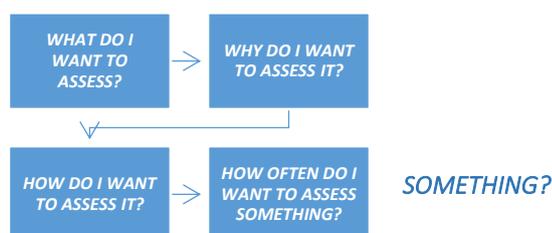
In the first case the teacher asks to produce specific language elements, limiting the influence of linguistic factors (Polish) on the learner's speech. In the other, the teacher is actually checking if the learner knows what equivalence between Polish words and sign language is and refers directly to the mediation descriptors.

2.6. Using different ways of assessment - examples

Selected assessment methods proposed in the CEFR documents are described above. In this section, based on a sample decision-making diagram, we would like to present possible applications of the individual methods.

In order to apply the individual assessment methods we suggest that you should answer some basic questions:

- *WHAT DO I WANT TO ASSESS?*
WHY DO I WANT TO ASSESS IT?
- *HOW DO I WANT TO ASSESS IT?*
- *HOW OFTEN DO I WANT TO ASSESS*



2.6.1. What do I want to assess?

The first question addresses conscious identification of what will actually be assessed in a specific test/examination. This is a very important stage in the process of designing the rules of assessment. Thus, we choose a specific range of material or a section/part of the course syllabus or selected proficiency level descriptors. You can find more information in Chapter 1.4.

The specific exercise, the form of questions and the aids used should relate directly to the subject of the assessment.

Example:

Situation 1: The teacher presents to the class a video containing a short story in PSL. It is about learners' trip to the mountains. After the video ends, he/she asks the learners about the place and time of the events, the characters and the main elements of the plot.

Situation 2. The teacher presents pictures of selected mountain regions, a map with trails, sample pictures of equipment for tents, rucksacks, provisions, and clothes.

He/she divides the learners into groups and asks each group to draft a plan for their trip to the mountains, describing items they will need (depending on the duration of the trip, destination, etc.).

Situation 3. In the next lesson, after developing the topic "A trip to the mountains", the teacher presents the learners with pictures of sample snacks and food to bring to the mountains. He/she asks them to sign names of the different items.

All these situations involve a different range of learners' language skills, therefore we need to be aware of how the design of the instruction reflects our intentions as to what is being assessed. In Situation 1, our aim is to assess whether the learners have understood this text in PSL, and by using auxiliary questions we can check to what extent the text has been understood. In the second case we ask the learners to prepare a longer speech based on the prepared materials and illustrations. We will then check e.g. vocabulary they should acquire during the lesson, their ability to construct longer statements using expressions of time sequence, describing spatial relations on a topographic plane, etc. Situation 3 primarily tests the learners' knowledge (vocabulary) and secondarily their articulatory correctness.

2.6.2. Why do I want to assess it?

A more detailed answer to this question can be found in Chapter 1.2. At this point, we can briefly summarise these considerations. Assessment may be needed due to requirements of the institution for which we work (our learners need to receive interim/final grades), we may have pre-scheduled tests at the completion of certain stages of syllabus/course. We also assess because we want to check whether our methods are effective, whether our learners really learn what we have planned to teach. We may also wish to use assessment to some extent as a tool to motivate them to learn systematically, e.g. to learn vocabulary regularly.

Example:

Situation 4.

The teacher is planning to deliver a test to a group learning A1 level course after the first term.

Situation 5.

When the class begins, the teacher chooses a learner and asks him/her to sign cardinal numbers from 1 to 20.

Situation 5 does not cause major difficulties - the teacher wants to test the learner's knowledge of numerals (which, for instance, were discussed in the previous lesson). Situation 4, however, depends on many factors, including what is contained in the syllabus of that course. A longer test may consist of exercises on reading comprehension in PSL, language production and vocabulary, or specific grammatical or culture-related issues. It is important that the test designer knows its purpose, e.g. he/she wishes to assess proficiency in the selected competences, or provide a periodic appraisal, or check attainment level of the teaching programme.

2.6.3 How do I want to assess it? *and* How often do I want to assess?

You will find answers to these questions in Chapter 2, where you can choose from different assessment methods depending on your needs and objectives.

The proposed methods are summarised in the following table:

Objectivity of the assessor

Subjective assessment

Assessment based on impression

Objective assessment

Guided (judgement) assessment

Referencing to criteria or a scale

Norm referencing

Assessment according to a criterion of achieving a specific objective

Assessment based on a checklist of items to be learnt

Criterion referencing

Assessment according to criteria for a specific range of skills

Assessment based on reaching a specific level on a scale

Reference to learner activity

Achievement assessment

Direct assessment

Performance assessment

Proficiency assessment

Indirect assessment

Knowledge assessment

Frequency of assessment

Continuous assessment

Fixed point assessment

Assessment throughout the full learning period One-time assessment

Source of feedback

Assessment by others

Self-assessment

For the situations described in sections 1 to 3, we can use the selected assessment methods.

Situation 1 - we can use indirect assessment (questions relating to the text) and language proficiency assessment (as part of reading comprehension). As this may be a non-graded classroom situation, we do not need to refer to any criteria or guidelines. Instead, we can use assessment based on general impressions and relate it to their place on the scale - identifying how each learner's answers compare to their peers on the comprehension scale. The learner does not have to receive a grade if it is, for example, a form of exercise during a lesson, however **feedback** can be planned.

Situation 2 – the use of **direct assessment** and **language proficiency assessment** will be most appropriate in this context. Depending on our objectives, we can assess individual presentations **subjectively** or **objectively**. We can also apply appropriate **criteria to a specific range of skills** or descriptors. In the context of group work presentations, we can ask the learners to **assess their peers' work** as well as for **self-assessment**.

Situation 3 – the most appropriate method of assessment in this situation will be objective (according to the answer key, there is only one correct answer), the assessment may relate to the criterion of achieving a certain objective (the learner either gives the correct answer or not) and relate the statement to the assessment of the learner's achievements (i.e. knowledge) within our syllabus.

3. The assessment process from the learner's and teacher's perspective

Assessment is most often associated with taking tests and giving grades, as it is done at school. As mentioned in the previous chapters, in the case of foreign language learning, assessment means much more. When learning any new skill, performance monitoring is essential for many reasons. It not only allows to determine the current level of proficiency, but also to measure the achieved progress. In the case of foreign language learning, all parties benefit - the learner, the teacher and the educational institution (school/foundation/company organising courses). In the following part of this chapter, assessment will be discussed from each of these perspectives.

3.1. Assessment as part of the educational process

Assessment is a complex concept, involving different activities performed by both the teacher and the learner. Evaluation can help in checking the level of language proficiency (diagnostic tests), but also in planning a course and making changes to materials during the course. It can also be used to conclude the whole learning period or to obtain a certificate.

There is a very popular belief that assessment takes place only at the end of the course as the final and concluding stage. In fact, it can also take place at the beginning or during the course.

It is difficult to imagine learning a foreign language without any form of assessment - this can take many different forms and be carried out in a variety of ways. The range of forms of assessment extends from self-assessment to certificate examinations conducted by specialised institutions. Educational process without assessment is incomplete and ineffective, therefore when planning their teaching, teachers should consider from the outset which assessment they will apply, what assessment tools they will use and for what purpose. To reiterate: assessment planning does not simply involve drafting test questions, but requires a broader view of the course. It is important that the decisions fit the specific situation to ensure that the selected method of assessment addresses the characteristics of the group and helps to meet the needs of the learners. Also, when we learn a language ourselves, we should pay special attention to the assessment of our language activities - not only as a necessary element to pass

the course, but also as a very valuable tool to help us master the foreign language better and faster.

3.1.1. Assessment in the relationship between the teacher and the learner

Recent literature on foreign language teaching stresses the importance of the relationship between learner and teacher. Successful learning depends to a large extent on the quality of communication and contact between the learner and teacher. If it is a transparent relationship with clear rules of cooperation, the learner will have a very good learning environment. However, we should remember that assessment is one of the elements that impacts this relationship. If the assessment, the approach to mistakes and feedback are inappropriate, the learner may feel frustrated, lose motivation and be afraid to take on further challenges. Appropriate assessment, on the other hand, helps the learner to develop language competences. Appropriate means taking into account the learner's characteristics, needs, learning style, motivation level, etc.

3.2. Learner's subjectivity (autonomy) in the learning process

Subjectivity (autonomy) of a learner is understood as his/her active attitude in the learning process. The learner himself/herself enters into relations with the teacher and the group, undertakes various activities, is able to influence the course of classes. The learners are aware of their situation – they know why they are learning, what their strengths and weaknesses are. They have the feeling of importance in the learning process, and are not just passive recipients of content. They are able to reflect on their learning process and change their attitude accordingly. We can say that in the subjective approach the learner is central to the learning process.

Unfortunately, the approach to the learners in schools is still traditional. Coercion and imposition are used, and the learner is not treated as a subject but rather as a passive participant without the possibility to express himself/herself and his/her needs. The learner's subjectivity is not built, and their autonomy and awareness of the learning process are not developed. The same attitude is often transferred to other, non-school forms of teaching. Also in courses and non-formal education teachers reproduce this pattern and learners are unaware that a different approach to them and teaching is possible. For foreign language classes, it is extremely important to build

learner autonomy, as this will translate directly into better results and greater satisfaction of both the teacher and the learner.

3.2.1. Teacher's perspective

The role of the teacher should be to support and stimulate learners' development. The best situation is when the learner is treated individually during the learning process, however, this requires the teacher to create appropriate conditions. The way of using assessment also influences development of the learner's autonomy. Providing feedback to the learners on how much they already know and which areas need further work should be the key function of assessment. You should consider your learners' needs and characteristics, e.g. whether they prefer to answer in front of the whole group, whether they are more comfortable with recorded speech, etc. It is equally important to respond appropriately when they make a mistake. The mistakes should provide the basis for guiding them which elements should be specifically addressed in their learning. They should not lead to embarrassment or loss of motivation. To a large extent it depends on the teacher's reaction how any language mistakes and errors will be perceived.

The teacher can use different forms of language testing and thus show learners that they are not limited to one repetitive method, e.g. a choice test. Introducing and discussing learning and knowledge consolidation strategies will be beneficial - the learners will be able to choose the way of learning that works best for them.

All this is possible only if the teacher cares about the right relationship with the group - addresses requests, is able to deviate from the plan, takes into account different personalities of the learners. In this way he/she makes them actively and willingly participate in the course, and at the completion they have adequate skills for their own learning.

The subjective approach is important regardless of the age of the audience. It does not matter whether the course is for children or for adults - supporting learner autonomy can take place in any situation.

3.2.2. Learner's perspective

Subjective treatment offers many benefits to the learner. The feeling of having a good relationship with the teacher creates a favourable learning environment, while addressing the requests and adaptation of assessments to the learner's needs makes him/her less afraid to take on challenges and new activities. They are able to learn new competences faster. Building learning awareness is an additional advantage of the autonomic approach. The learner is able to think critically about his/her language competence and his/her language learning process. He/she is also able to judge which forms of presentation and assessment are helpful to learn and which reduce motivation and are difficult to learn. The learner knows different learning strategies and can choose the best one depending on the situation. The biggest advantage of this approach is the development of the ability to independently increase language competence after the course. A learner who is treated as a subject will be able to assess his/her own level and plan further learning steps if he/she feels that they are needed. It is worth noting, however, that some learners may not be ready for such an active attitude, due to their school experience they will be used to being passive and disengaged in class - they will only react to what happens in class without contributing.

3.3. Benefits provided by the assessment

Assessment and feedback are crucial during the course. The most obvious purpose of assessment is to check learners' progress and level of competence, but a well-designed assessment offers additional advantages. It can engage learners in learning and improve their learning strategies. For teachers, assessment is an excellent tool to compare different course programmes and their delivery. The teacher can check in which course the learners' progress rating was higher and improve his/her classes based on this information. Monitoring of learners' performance is also useful for schools organising language courses.

3.3.1. Benefits to the teacher

For teachers, assessment is an essential quality assurance tool in the learning process. Without assessment teachers would not know whether learners are making progress.

The list of benefits to the teachers is very long. It is worth noting that the benefits to the teacher and the learner are interrelated. The division is therefore arbitrary, and the list of benefits is common for both parties.

Assessment allows the teacher to keep track of learners' progress and to adjust assignments so that they continue to improve their skills. The teacher can also change the programme, which will result in better learning outcomes. Feedback allows the teacher to set or update learning objectives. This ensures that the objectives are always adapted to the learners' abilities. They take on challenges that match their current competences.

Proper assessment allows the teacher to give appropriate feedback to learners. Everyone learns according to their level of proficiency and can change their approach to learn more effectively. This translates into greater learners satisfaction in class and better learning outcomes. The teacher can also increase their motivation and engagement in the course. If the assessment is well matched to the group, learners will be keener to participate in classes and various activities.

Assessment provides a lot of data that help the teacher to make decisions. He/she does not have to rely only on his/her intuition but can also use the information gathered from the analysis of learners' activities.

Assessment is also important for the teacher for formal reasons. All kinds of tests, assignments and evaluations provide evidence that the classes took place and the programme was implemented. This is important when our work is inspected by the course organising institution.

3.3.2. Benefits to the learner

Learners often associate assessment with stress and boring tests. However, if assessment is properly planned and delivered, they quickly see how much they can benefit from it.

Feedback helps to develop learners' capacity for self-assessment. This is very important in modern approach to language teaching. By reflecting, learners know their strengths and weaknesses and can plan their learning accordingly. Assessments also allow them to verify whether their self-assessment is accurate.

Encouragement to active learning is another benefit. When assessment is innovative and engaging, learners become more active. They know what and why they are learning, and can judge which things are most important to them.

Other competences can also be developed through assessment. For instance, peer and self-assessment improve a range of such skills as reflection, critical thinking and self-awareness.

3.3.3. Benefits to educational institutions

Assessment can also help institutions delivering the courses to improve learning environment. It can also provide a broader picture of learners' needs and achievements thus they help to identify directions of development of future courses.

Assessment can provide information about the knowledge and skills learners have when they start a course. The institution can then prepare a wider course offer with better defined learning levels, objectives and assumptions.

Evaluation also provides data on the results of specific syllabuses and teaching methods. This facilitates decisions on teaching methods and comparisons of different syllabuses and materials.

4. How to assess using a test

4.1. Characteristics of a good test

Tests are very popular among the available tools. A test is a way of testing learners' competence which is score-based and objective, i.e. it does not depend on the teacher's mood or attitude towards the learners. (Komorowska) There are different types of language tests depending on what exactly the teacher wants to check. It is worth noting that the testing itself can be done in different ways.

The purpose of the test usually is to assess whether learners have learnt the programme. In this case **achievement tests** are used, which are usually developed by the teacher teaching the course. In school environment, such tests are in the form of class tests and examinations. They provide feedback on whether the teaching process is going well and allow teachers to assess effectiveness of their teaching. Other types of tests include proficiency tests, predictive (prognostic) tests, placement tests and diagnostic tests.

Achievement tests may focus on particular subsystems of the language (e.g. vocabulary, grammar) or even single elements from these subsystems, thus there are tests on sign production in isolation, spatial agreement, sign language comprehension, etc.

Any test delivered should be as objective as possible, free from **measurement errors** that may affect the results. The teacher should plan the test to obtain such information that will enable him/her assess objectively the learner's mastery of the material (and, if necessary, to issue a grade based on the test). Tests should also inform learners what they have already learned and can do, and which parts of the material require further study.

The CEFR distinguishes three basic criteria for assessing the test. They include:

- relevance,
- reliability,
- practicality.

Using these three criteria, not only the test, but also individual tasks can be analysed and evaluated.

4.1.1. Relevance

Any test delivered should be relevant. Relevance means that the test actually checks the competences we wanted to assess. When developing instructions, the teacher should pay attention to whether the learner will know how to complete the task and whether more than one correct answer is possible. Even simple tests verifying knowledge of single signs can be irrelevant if the context is ambiguous and the learner can respond in multiple ways.

A poorly designed test may test something different than we have planned. A test designed according to the teaching methodology will be more relevant than a test designed without a plan. The teacher can ensure test relevance by following specific steps. They include (Komorowska):

- drafting a list of the skills we want to test,
- drafting a list of the language material (signs, grammatical items) we want to test in the context of these skills,
- ensuring that all the skills are tested by tasks clearly focused on these skills, and that all the tasks test only the skills contained in our list,

- developing test tasks,
- ensuring that the key skills are addressed in most of the tasks (the most important material and less important material should have different rank in the test),
- checking whether the tasks do not simultaneously test several skills (and if so, whether the other skills are not more difficult than the skill we want to test),
- checking that the test does not introduce additional material, which is not included in our list and/or is too difficult for the learners.

4.3.2. Reliability

A well-prepared test should be reliable. Reliability means that if we were to repeat the test, the best learners would still achieve the best results and the weakest would remain the weakest. In other words, even if the test is repeated, the results will not change. In unreliable tests, with each repetition, learners will score differently and will be ranked differently. In unreliable tests, for certain reasons, results are largely random.

Reliability can also apply to the assessment of test results. No matter who checks the test or whose test is checked, the scores should be the same. The same assessor re-checking the same test should award the same score. If a test is checked by two different people, their scores should also be the same. There should therefore be no random factor that influences the number of points when the task is reassessed.

A reliable test must be objective. Unreliability may result from subjectivity, content being too short, or unclear instructions. In order to ensure the test reliability the teacher should (Komorowska):

- remove all ambiguities from the test tasks,
- shorten instructions and make sure they are clear and comprehensible,
- check that the test is not too short,
- check whether all tasks can be objectively scored and remove those that do not meet this condition,
- list assessment criteria,
- introduce appropriate scoring for the tasks (e.g. 0, 1 point or 0, 1/2, 1 point),
- finally check the proportions of the test to determine the scoring (e.g. how many points are awarded for grammar and how many for vocabulary).

4.3.3. Practicality

Practicality is the third key feature of a good test. The test from the teacher's perspective should be convenient and easy to deliver. It should not be too long. When testing sign language skills, technical issues are important: does the test require viewing projected material, will the learners be recorded, does the assessor have access to the appropriate equipment or software and know how to use them, can the test be delivered in any room or a special room is needed? These aspects can often significantly affect the test and its results.

4.4. Test evaluation

Test evaluation is to verify whether a test is 'good' (relevant/reliable/practical) and whether it works in practice, i.e. evaluates the specific group that is taking the course. The evaluation can cover the whole test, but also individual tasks. The following list presents questions that should be considered when developing or evaluating a test. You do not always have to use all the questions - it depends on the needs, the situation and the type of test (Lipińska).

A LIST OF ISSUES TO EVALUATE A TEST (Gaszyńska-Magiera)

Test relevance

What is the purpose of the test?

Does the test content correspond with the intended purpose?

Is the test relevant?

Who will be tested?

Has the test been adapted to the abilities and skills of the tested population?

Was it tested on a smaller group which is similar to the future tested population?

Test complexity

Who will be tested?

Has the test been adapted to their abilities and skills?

Has it been tested on a smaller sample of individuals which is similar to the future tested population?

Test reliability

Are test results reliable, and can they provide the basis to take binding decisions?
Is the test reliable?

Test adequacy

Do the test format and features fit the situation in which the test will be delivered?
Are the tested familiar with the test format?
Won't the test format or features favour or discriminate against the tested population?

Test usefulness

To what extent will the test be useful for the tested population?
To what extent does the test content resemble the sample used in the testing?

Test reproducibility

How easy is it to prepare parallel or adjusted forms of the original test?

Interpretation of test results

Is it easy to amend the test, compile results and provide interpretation?
Does this work require extensive training?

Cost effectiveness of the test

How much does it cost to prepare, deliver and correct the test?

Availability of the test

Is the test easily available?

Recognition of the test

Is the test recognised by society and various institutions?
Is it recognised by teachers, parents, and the tested population?

Iceland 
Liechtenstein
Norway grants

5. Technical and ethical guidelines

5.1. Technical guidelines

Technical development of the test, drafting or selecting the already existing relevant instructions in PSL, task content and illustrations represent the final stage of test preparation. We can also focus on the aesthetic form of the test, the choice of background, colours or other navigation elements.

Tests can take a variety of forms and can be delivered face-to-face in the classroom, examination room or online through various platforms, using different formats and programmes. Above all, it is important to ensure that in the test aimed at practising sign language competences not only the task content is signed in PSL, but also instructions. If we do not assess skills related to translation between phonic language (in a written form) and PSL, we should also avoid written Polish in the tests.

The section containing multimedia elements is the most important component of the test. They can include videos, photos, illustrations or, less often, computer animations. The following examples show how to choose appropriate materials.

5.1.1. Preparing videos (instructions and content)

Lighting and colours

Tailor the video to your purposes and needs. Pay attention to quality of the recordings and elements that potentially may affect the level of understanding. Care should be taken to ensure that, throughout the test, videos with instructions (and where possible content) are consistent in terms of white balance and colour sharpness. It is also worth paying attention to the background behind the signer - it is recommended to use neutral and subdued colours so as not to distract the viewer's attention. The signer's appearance is also very important - he/she should not blend in with the background, and multi-colour and patterns should be avoided. Depending on the context, you should remember to limit factors that may distract viewer's attention: large and shiny jewellery, props that may obscure the signer's hands. Sometimes it is also worth paying attention to make-up, hairstyle or nail colour - bright colours can distract an early learner.

Quality of videos

Remember that good quality videos are very important. It is best to record them in high resolution and take care to ensure appropriate resolution parameters and sharpness. You should also remember that the better the quality of the film, the more disk space the file will take up, which can become an issue when you will need to design more tests. It will also be a challenge to include such large files in the online form, and in such cases you will probably need to change the format in specifically designed editing programmes.

Framing and signing rate

Depending on the type of text and topic, one, two or more persons may appear in the frame. When recording a single signer, remember that the frame usually includes an upright figure standing in front of the camera and at the bottom covers the space slightly below the waist and above the head. This frame may of course be modified depending on the subject of the text, the context and other factors, e.g. sometimes dialogues are easier to record in a sitting position, especially if there is a significant difference in the signers' height.

Pay special attention so that the hands stay within the frame for each sign (in such cases the frame should be enlarged accordingly). You should also control the angle at which hands are shaped, during spelling in particular - poor hand orientation can make some handshapes invisible or difficult to recognise. The last element to pay attention to is the signing rate. Typically, we should sign more slowly on a recording than during live communication, making sure that the video is free of motion blur. It is particularly important to slow down the signing rate when addressing children learners.

When recording learners' answers, it is important to ensure that the camera angle does not affect their signing and that signs and non-manual elements are visible.

5.1.2. Preparation of photos, illustrations and videos (without statements in sign language).

Quality and colour of photos and illustrations

Photos and illustrations included in the test must be of good quality and clear. If we prepare our own materials and photos, we should avoid blurred, distorted or badly

framed images. A very important aspect of the whole process is the selection of photographs or drawings for the test making sure that they are stylistically consistent and do not contrast in terms of development method, colours or the style of drawing. An inappropriate choice of materials may distract the learners who consequently may not pay attention to the elements of the pictures we would like them to focus on (or they may even misunderstand our intentions). We should also remember that low resolution photos or drawings displayed using a projector will be blurred or pixelated.

When selecting videos or fragments of video clips, we should try to ensure best possible quality, however it can be beyond our control. Nevertheless, it is often worthwhile to search longer for specific material than to opt for readily available but of poor quality.

Selection of photos and videos

It is important to ensure that the selected photos, drawings and videos are appropriate. Apart from aesthetic and technical aspects, particular attention should be paid to their suitability for a specific audience (taking into account their age and cognitive abilities).

We usually choose different drawings depending whether they will be used in a test for children or for adults. We may select photos/drawings that remind a comic or are realistic, or if they are for adult audience, we can look for images that are symbolic or follow a specific style.

A special difficulty in terms of the selection process is that for the "name the object" task the drawings and photos should be unambiguous for the recipient and not elicit different responses than those we expect to receive. That is why it is always worth following the rule that simpler, non-artistic and not always aesthetically stunning materials are often better than multi-coloured and technically advanced ones. We should always rank the relevance of the image above its aesthetic value. The fewer distracting elements the material has, the safer it is for achieving a specific goal in the assessment process.

The choice of video must correspond to our educational objectives and should be adapted to the skill level of our learners. Exciting stories with many characters, plots and adventures sometimes are inappropriate for inclusion in the materials as the number of new lexical items, layout of the space can significantly exceed our learners' skills. This can be difficult and frustrating for the learner who will not have enough knowledge to e.g. complete a particular task.

This does not mean that such a video cannot be included in the test, but it is useful to give learners clear instructions on what they should pay attention to. In addition, with this type of material (including long narrative statements in PSL), it is worth remembering that the test questions should focus on understanding the main events and characters, rather than details of individual elements (colour of the house, elements in the background, etc.). Moreover, narratively developed stories are sometimes difficult to digest in a classroom context, so it is then worth considering splitting the video into parts. The final aspect to consider in the selection of multimedia material for the test is to take into account various cultural factors that may affect its reception. Material on controversial topics and sensitive issues (taking into account the age, gender or background of the learners) should always be selected after careful consideration and planning to prevent possible consequences for the teacher and the learner.

5.2. Ethical guidelines

5.2.1. Copyright

When using drawings or videos in your tests, you should always pay attention to whether you have the right to use them. The teacher in the educational process may use the right of public use, which means that any material available to the public may be used free of charge. In exercising this right, we are required to acknowledge the source and the author of any photos, drawings or videos used. For the sharing of videos the law is more specific, we may share with learners our own copy of an extract from a video rather than the whole work. Obviously, works available in the public domain or which allow the use of material under a specific Creative Commons Licence are not subject to this right.

Recording materials in PSL

Most often, when developing materials for classes or tests, the teacher records all the necessary elements himself/herself. In such circumstances there is no problem with copyrights and image sharing. You can also ask other people to participate in the recordings and agree with them terms and conditions of this collaboration (usually free of charge and pursuant to an oral agreement). You should remember that even such an informal agreement concluded between individuals does not deprive the person recorded of the right to dispose of their image - at any time this person has the right to

request that the recordings with their image should be withheld (this rule should always apply when recording third parties and providing access to their image with their consent).

It should also be stressed that an unwritten rule, which however is part of good practice, is always to involve native speakers of sign language in the recording of language materials (always if the teacher himself is not a native speaker of PSL). This will provide us, on the one hand, with more "natural" linguistic data and may be an opportunity to confront our own communicative and lexical habits (related to the **idiolect**) on the other.

It may also be the case that we will record answers of the tested learners in the course of their examination. This may be due to the rules of the institution, the documentation policy of the whole process or the teacher's plan for archiving learners' answers. In this case, it is imperative, unless offered by our institution, to ask the learners not only for the so-called GDPR-related consent, but also for their consent to have their image recorded and retained in the archives for a specific period of time. Therefore, the teacher or his/her employer is obliged to archive the recordings and secure them in such a way to prevent access thereto by third parties.

Protecting tests and making materials available

Make sure that the examinations and tests you have developed are properly protected to prevent access thereto by people who potentially could participate in the course or examination. This also applies to sharing test materials between different groups. In this case, the best solution is to change the content of the tasks to which learners may have had access. This also includes the rule that tasks taken directly from the test should not be practiced in class - they should differ in content and individual multimedia materials.

We all know that developing a test or an examination verifying language competence as well as developing specific video materials in sign language is time-consuming. The resources available through public access are very scarce. It is not common in the context of PSL teaching, but the language teaching community is generally willing to share classroom materials.

In the context of tests sharing, thematic and content-related differences of sign language courses represent the main factor that limits the sharing practice. Not all teachers need or want to teach with reference to the CEFR or any other guidelines. It

may be pointless to apply tests designed for a specific group in a specific educational context for other groups. Poorly adapted tests may not test the skills we have intended to teach or may go beyond our teaching plan. This does not mean that teachers cannot share tests, however it is important to consider all the factors that might make a test inappropriate or unreliable for your group.

Sharing tests or examinations also implies responsibility on the part of any person involved in the assessment process to communicate, in addition to the materials, the rules on marking and guidelines relating to the answer keys. In guided assessment it is also important to train examiners so that they are competent and their work is reproducible.

Test/examination delivery

Depending on the form of the test/examination, remember to follow basic rules: ensure that the examination room is adequately lit, and arrange the room furnishings and equipment so that they do not interfere with delivery of the assessment.

Always ensure that the equipment the examiner is using is in good working order (e.g. computer, projector, interactive whiteboard and other). In the case of examinations delivered to large groups, it is a good idea to appoint someone responsible for technical matters. If the examiner is going to use a new and unfamiliar computer equipment, it is his/her responsibility to make sure that all videos, photos and drawings are displayed correctly.

The tested learners should always know the purpose and conditions of the test, and these may vary from teacher to teacher. The examiner should explain clearly how the test will be delivered (whether longer statements will be repeated or not) how to answer the questions, the type of tasks included in the test (single-choice, multiple-choice, open-ended, etc.) and the scoring policy (e.g. whether penalty points will be given if a learner does not provide any answer or provides an incorrect answer).

The test instructions should be clear and should prevent the situation where a learner misunderstands the exercise.

If we deliver a one-choice test (ABC) we can ask learners to write their answers on a piece of paper, however we also need to make sure that each learner finishes writing their answer before the next question is asked (or give a predetermined time limit for answering).

If the examination involves recording learners' answers, the recording equipment must be prepared and set up in advance. You should also make sure that it is working properly and has enough disk space to record each answer.

6. Overview of the types of tasks used in assessing competences in sign language

When selecting any kind of language assessment, we must take into account that the choice and form of the questions may determine the linguistic data we receive from the assessed learners. We can plan our examination as a test and then we should follow specific assumptions that will help us to develop an appropriate test (Chapter 4). We still need to be careful how we phrase individual questions so that we get content-controlled responses (i.e. that learners' answers mostly include these structures and signs we want to assess, and consequently translate into test accuracy). It is also important for sign language assessment to control and limit the influence of phonic language during the examination or to use it deliberately and consciously in tasks of a specific type, e.g. translation).

We can plan various ways of testing learners' knowledge or skills, not only in the form of traditional test questions, which sometimes do not work well for sign languages (especially wrongly applied written tests based on instructions in Polish and the principle of providing equivalents).

We propose different types of tasks that can be assessed in the context of sign language learning as a list of exemplary exercises and questions using certain non-linguistic and linguistic stimuli. This list does not exhaust all the possibilities; moreover, it provides only a small indication of the possibilities of mixing different types of stimuli (for which there are practically no limits except for the inventiveness of the task designer).

6.1. Stimuli

The table is based on a classification of materials (referred to as stimuli) that can be used in the process of developing specific tasks. These are divided into four groups:

non-linguistic, linguistic, interactive and mixed stimuli. The use of a specific stimulus means that the task is based on specific drawing, video, language or other material to which the learner reacts as part of his/her answer. His/her response is an actual linguistic action to be assessed, and the learner names objects, describes scenes, videos, and answers specific questions, etc.

Non-linguistic stimuli refer to all kinds of drawings, photos, illustrations, picture stories, videos (animated, silent - without language elements). We divide them into static stimuli (drawings) and dynamic stimuli (videos and animations).

Language stimuli can occur in two forms: as material in sign language (videos with signs in PSL, narratives and stories or interviews) or in another foreign language: in this particular case in Polish (written texts, audio files or feature films). Each of these types of materials relates to a different set of proficiency descriptors.

Selected interactive stimuli have also been proposed, and they refer to different types of tools that engage the tested learner to perform an action (manipulating an object, actually playing a game or interacting with other involved participants). Such stimuli are often applied as games (e.g. card games, board games), which may facilitate creative use of the language or be based on direct interaction between learners (role play, assuming a specific role, etc.). An important aspect of the interactive stimuli is that the form of play very often obscures the actual linguistic purpose of the task for the learner and is perceived as something enjoyable and different from the textbook style of providing information. The game called Dobble is a good example. It is a game of comparing two cards and finding one symbol that they have in common. Each pair of cards has only one symbol in common. After finding the picture, the learner should name it and say it out loud (in our context: sign it). The original pictures can be changed for animals, or clothes (or any other semantic group of words) to facilitate learning their names during playing the game.

6.2. Other columns in the table

For each type of stimulus, we have proposed sample tasks, which can be carried out during a test, an examination or in class, e.g.: naming pictures, analysing temporal charts (with a timeline), or making a sign (production). They also include specific instructions. These instructions do not exhaust all the possibilities, they only provide guidance for the teacher. They are provided in the form of Polish translations, but the

top-down principle of all the proposed tasks is to always give instructions in sign language (if the level of the group allows it).

The template also includes selected proficiency descriptors for levels A1 and A2 (up to two descriptors from each level that correspond with the subject of assessment).

Each proposal is also accompanied by a commentary, which includes remarks on specific guidelines, possible advantages and disadvantages of using particular stimuli, common mistakes made when using specific materials.

Overview of the types of tasks used in sign testing – Table

No.	Type of stimulus	Task name	Examples of instructions (for the learner)	What does the task check? (selection/examples)	Examples of descriptors	Comments and remarks
1.	non-linguistic, static	Naming persons, objects, animals, etc. in pictures, illustrations and photos	1. Name what you see in the picture. 2. What do you see in the picture? 3. What is it?	- knowledge of lexis - accuracy of articulation of signs in isolation	<p>Communicative language competences. Vocabulary range</p> <p>Has sufficient (conventionalized) vocabulary to express basic communicative needs in everyday life.</p> <p>Communicative language competence. Lexical accuracy</p> <p>Can use a limited range of vocabulary related to specific needs in daily life.</p>	<p>In English literature this task is often referred to as the <i>picture naming task</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photos/pictures must be unambiguous, of good quality and recipients' age-appropriate (realistic picture vs. symbol). • The materials used should be stylistically consistent throughout the test (e.g. all black and white, in a specific format). • It is recommended that in traditional object naming tasks pictures should be without phonic captions. • One of the disadvantages of using this type of task is that it is designed to elicit answers relating only to simple concepts and single objects. It is very difficult, and sometimes impossible to develop a task that accurately relates to abstract concepts and complex expressions. • When selecting materials, particular attention should be paid to cultural aspects or possible controversial topics.

2.	non-linguistic, static	Describing pictures	<p>1. Describe a picture.</p> <p>2. Tell us what is happening in the picture.</p> <p>3. What are people in this illustration doing?</p> <p>4. What's wrong with this picture?</p>	<p>- knowledge of lexis</p> <p>- grammatical elements (e.g. topographic space, classifiers, incorporation, directional verbs, indicatives)</p>	<p>Communicative language competences. Vocabulary range Has sufficient (conventionalized) vocabulary to express basic communicative needs in everyday life.</p> <p>Signing competences. Diagrammatical accuracy Can use classifiers correctly in simple sentences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photos/pictures must be unambiguous, of good quality and recipients' age-appropriate. • The materials used should be stylistically consistent throughout the test (e.g. all black and white, in a specific format). • It is recommended that in this type of tasks pictures should be without phonic captions. • Depending on the level of proficiency, the number of details in the picture should be controlled - a picture that is too detailed may interfere with our assessment goal, while giving learners too broad a context in which to answer. • Pictures should be selected according to the following principle: educational purpose is more important than aesthetic values.
3.	non-linguistic, static	Comparing pictures	<p>1. Tell the differences between the pictures.</p> <p>2. How do these pictures differ?</p>	<p>- knowledge of lexis</p> <p>- grammatical elements (e.g. topographic space, classifiers, incorporation, directional verbs, indicatives, comparative constructions)</p>	<p>Signing competences. Range of sign language skills Can clearly distinguish between things by making comparisons and listing characteristics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both pictures should be of good quality (so that details can be seen for comparison), but not overfilled with details (learners must not waste time "looking for" differences). • Photos/pictures must be unambiguous and recipients' age-appropriate and stylistically consistent.

					<p>Production. Sustained monologue: describing experience and feelings</p> <p>Can use simple descriptive language to make brief statements and to compare objects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended that in this type of tasks pictures should be without phonic captions. • Pictures should be selected according to the following principle: educational purpose is more important than aesthetic values.
4.	non-linguistic, static	contextual statement (motivated by a picture)	<p>1. What do you associate this picture with?</p> <p>2) What do you think these signs/pictures/symbols mean?</p> <p>3) What do you think about the situation depicted in the picture?</p>	<p>- knowledge of lexis</p> <p>- constructions for expressing opinions/preferences</p> <p>- grammatical elements (e.g. topographic space, classifiers, incorporation, directional verbs, indicatives)</p>	<p>Signing competences. Linguistic competences</p> <p>Is able to express an opinion.</p> <p>Production. Sustained monologue: putting a case</p> <p>Can present an opinion in simple terms, if the recipients are patient.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photos/pictures must be unambiguous, of good quality and recipients' age-appropriate (realistic picture vs. symbol). • The materials used should be stylistically consistent throughout the test (e.g. all black and white, in a specific format). • It is recommended that in this type of task pictures should appear without phonic captions. • Depending on the level of proficiency, the number of details in the picture should be controlled - a picture that is too detailed may interfere with our assessment goal, while giving learners too broad a context in which to answer.

						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pictures should be selected according to the following principle: the educational purpose is more important than aesthetic values. • Assessment is subjective, no single answer key can vary greatly from one learner to another. • With tasks of this type we require some creativity from the learner and we should remember that the task tests a broader set of competences than just linguistic ones. • Used in class, this is a good task to start a discussion
5.	non-linguistic, static	describing a multi-element picture story (e.g. a comic strip)	<p>1. What happened?</p> <p>2 Look at what the boy has been doing all day. Tell me about his day.</p> <p>3. See the girl's story. Why did she break her leg?</p>	<p>- expressions describing temporal dependence of events and cause and effect relationships</p> <p>- THAT IS WHY constructions</p> <p>- temporal expressions</p> <p>-constructing a short monologue</p>	<p>Signing competences. Diagrammatical accuracy</p> <p>Can express a sequence of events which are in a cause-effect relationship (e.g. THAT IS WHY).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible modifications to this task could be based on instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - questions to explain reasons for events, relationships, - completing the story - arranging the story in the right order, etc. • Make sure that learner understands the relationships between the pictures and sees them as one story. • Photos/pictures must be unambiguous, of good quality and recipients' age-appropriate.

			4 Watch the video and answer the questions.		<p>Signing competences. Diagrammatical accuracy</p> <p>Can express a sequence of events that are not in a cause and effect relationship (e.g. LATER, NEXT).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The materials used should be stylistically consistent throughout the test (e.g. all black and white, in a particular format). Stories that are simple (3-5 elements) and concrete provide a better basis for description than those that are very elaborate and full of details.
6.	non-linguistic, static	analysing temporal diagrams (with timeline)	<p>1. Tell the story using the timeline diagram.</p> <p>2 Describe the story of the Titanic disaster as shown in the diagram.</p> <p>3. Look at the diagram. Tell us how Gallaudet University came about?</p> <p>4. The most important events of Fr J. Falkowski's life are presented on a</p>	<p>- expressions describing the temporal dependence of events and cause and effect</p> <p>- temporal expressions</p> <p>- time-incorporated numerals</p> <p>- sustained monologue production</p>	<p>Production. Sustained monologue: giving information</p> <p>Can give simple directions to get from one place to another, using simple expressions such as: 'turn right', 'go straight' and expressions for the time sequence of actions, such as: 'first', 'then', 'next'.</p> <p>Signing competences. Linguistic competences</p> <p>Can express the quantity/number of something.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be combined with knowledge of another source: film, book - but the task/question itself must be based on illustrations, without text. The task must be age-appropriate. Learners should not be required to have factual knowledge, this is not the purpose of this exercise. All information should be given to them so that they can construct a statement based on it. Can also be carried out as a group assignment - project.

			timeline. Tell us about his life.			
7.	non-linguistic, static	analysing and explaining charts, diagrams live	<p>1. Which day of the month was the coldest/hottest?</p> <p>2. The chart shows the results of the sign language competition. Which grades were the most common, which were the least?</p> <p>3. Watch the marathon results from <i>Deaf-lympics</i>. Tell us about them.</p>	<p>- cardinal, ordinal, incorporated numerals</p> <p>- comparative constructions</p> <p>- comparison of adjectives</p>	<p>Mediation. Skills</p> <p>Explaining data (e.g. charts, diagrams) in live communication</p> <p>Can interpret and describe in PSL simple illustrative material on familiar topics (e.g. a weather map, or a basic flowchart) even if he/she has to stop signing, tries another approach and reformulates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher should find out whether learners are able to interpret data on graphs and diagrams. • The teacher should ensure that the graphs are methodologically correct (e.g. visible and labelled x and y axes, sum of sub-elements giving 100%) and technically correct - clearly presented data, contrasting colours, large font. • The task can be a good introduction to discussion or subsequent exercises (e.g. Olympic results in the context of sports or discrimination against women). • The exercise provides an opportunity to use authentic data, but also to prepare (transform, invent) them. • Make sure that the topics covered are not controversial and will not make the audience feel uncomfortable.

8.	non-linguistic, dynamic	telling story based on a film you have seen	<p>Tell us what happened in the film.</p> <p>Watch the film and answer the questions.</p> <p>What was the plot of the latest film you have seen?</p>	<p>- expressions describing temporal dependence of events and cause and effect relationships</p> <p>- THAT IS WHY constructions</p> <p>- temporal expressions</p> <p>- creating a short monologue</p>	<p>Signing competences. Diagrammatical accuracy</p> <p>Can express a sequence of events that are in a cause and effect relationship (e.g. THAT IS WHY).</p> <p>Signing competences. Diagrammatical accuracy</p> <p>Can express a sequence of events which are not in a cause-effect relationship (e.g. LATER, NEXT).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate film selection - adapting to the group (age and cognitive abilities) culture and current sign language proficiency. • Copyright. • It may be useful to divide a longer film into parts, spreading it over several classes. • Questions should be more about understanding the film (storyline) than about details of single elements (e.g. what colour was the house). • The instructions must be in PSL only. • Consider whether to choose a silent (or language-free) film or one in Polish. • Possibility to record learners' performance in scenes.
9.	non-linguistic, dynamic	expressing reactions to stories presented using non-linguistic stimuli (e.g. film, comics)	1. Did you like the film? What was most interesting about it? Explain why you liked it.	<p>- lexis related to emotions, expressing feelings, preferences</p> <p>- expressing agreement/disagreement</p>	<p>Signing competences. Range of sign language skills</p> <p>Can express his/her opinion.</p> <p>Sustained monologue: describing experience and feelings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptation of the film to the group, culture etc. also prompting discussion. • Discussing rules to be followed during a discussion (we don't take offence). • Presentation of constructions useful for review/discussion (less commonly used). • Possibility of public discussion.

			<p>2. Talk to a friend about the film you have seen.</p> <p>3. Was the film good/interesting? Why?</p>	<p>with another person's opinion</p> <p>- expressing an opinion</p> <p>- argumentation</p> <p>- comparison</p>	<p>Can explain why they like or dislike something.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group work and preparation of arguments for discussion.
10.	non-linguistic, interactive	Games and playing	<p>1. Familiarise yourself with the rules of the game. Play with a friend/group.</p>	<p>- each language element depending on the game,</p>	<p>- Depending on the selected game e.g.</p> <p>Communicative language competences. Vocabulary range</p> <p>Has a (conventionalized) sufficient vocabulary to express basic communicative needs in everyday life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sample games to use in class: Dobble, Dixit, Story cubes, Memo, Bingo, Picture Sudoku, Guess who. The task offers the possibility of using educational games for children (without language elements) or language games for phonic languages available on the market (possibly after modification). Approach games including a competitive element with caution - not everyone likes to compete, and people who are result-oriented are often preoccupied with winning and can miss other aspects of the game. Depending on the games, we can divide groups into teams. You can invent your own games or modify existing ones.

						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid very complex games with long instructions or games that take a long time to complete. • Note for self-made game modifications - you can make them yourself, the game rules are not subject to copyright (they can be reproduced), while the graphic elements are.
11.	non-linguistic, interactive	role playing, scenes, dramas	<p>1. Read the description of the situation. You are character X. Together with your friend, act out the scene.</p> <p>2. Do your best to get into character.</p>	- each element of language depending on the situation	<p>Production. Conversation Can interact in short conversations in routine situations on topics related to learner's interests.</p> <p>Production. Conversation Can generally understand clear standard speech in sign language on familiar topics provided it is possible to ask for repetition or paraphrasing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is worth remembering that not all learners like this kind of activity - the tasks require other competences than linguistic ones, e.g. acting skills. Not every learner is willing to perform in front of the whole group, to play roles they do not identify themselves with. • Be careful with controversial topics of the scenes; cultural and world-view issues should be taken into account. • Learner performances are always difficult to assess - we rely only on subjective assessment. The assessment can be affected by the learner's temperament, creativity and acting ability. • The task is a good starting point for further discussion.

						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher has to plan the scenes properly in order to get the right linguistic effect. During the task the teacher has to act as a facilitator - to control the time and the course of the scene. The teacher can take part in the scene as one of the characters (e.g. during an examination).
12.	non-linguistic, interactive	making an object and telling about it and/or the process of its creation	<p>1. Build a house of blocks. Talk about what your house looks like. / Tell us about the stages of your work.</p> <p>2. Draw a treasure map. Tell your classmate where the treasure is and how to get there.</p> <p>3. Make a family of aliens out of plasticine. Describe it.</p>	<p>elements for describing objects and people (shape, size, colours, etc.)</p> <p>- constructions expressing temporal relationships (e.g. time line, first, then, etc.)</p> <p>- producing sustained monologue</p>	<p>Production. Sustained monologue: describing experience and feelings</p> <p>Can describe people, places and possessions using simple means of expression.</p> <p>Production. Sustained monologue: giving information</p> <p>Can give simple directions to get from place to place, using simple expressions such as: 'turn right', 'go straight' and expressions for the temporal succession of actions, such as: 'first', 'then', 'next'.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This type of tasks works very well with children. The tasks can be time consuming to complete. The tasks are attractive and provide an interesting change and variety to the class (also de-stressing the learners). The specific type of task can be linked to the learners' interests. It is important to note that from the learner's perspective, the completion of an artistic work may become more important than the language objective. The task can be completed as homework or as a project.

13.	non-linguistic, interactive	responding with the whole body to the teacher's instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Open the window. 2. Go to the wall and turn off the light. 3. Sort the objects by colour. 4. Arrange other learners from the shortest to the tallest. 	- only receptive competences - understanding linguistic messages.	<p>Comprehension. General description of skills Can understand enough to respond to specific communication needs provided the speaker speaks clearly and slowly.</p> <p>Comprehension. Understanding a conversation between native speakers In general, follows short and simple social exchanges (e.g. asking for help or a favour, borrowing something) communicated slowly and clearly.</p>	<p>Related to the Total Body Response method.</p> <p>This type of tasks works very well with children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For learners at the beginning of their learning, it helps them to get used to the language. • Adult learners may find the exercise too childish. • The task can be used to test understanding of different sign language styles, e.g. when a group is taught by several teachers.
14.	Linguistic	Make a sign (production)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sign the synonym (antonym) to the sign X. 2. Sign a character that matches other signs. 3. Signs A and B relate to each other like signs C and.... 	- lexis and sign production in isolation	<p>Communicative linguistic competences. Lexical accuracy Can use a limited range of vocabulary related to specific daily needs.</p> <p>Communicative linguistic competences. Vocabulary range Has sufficient (conventionalized) vocabulary to express</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are very many variations of this task. This is not a complete list. You can invent your own instructions and tasks that require making a sign. • Instructions and signs must be given in PSL, not in written Polish. • Fingerspelling should be avoided in these tasks. • A good opportunity to assess the level of knowledge of regional variants. For phonic languages this type of task is very common and easy to complete in a written form. For sign languages

			<p>Sign the appropriate sign.</p> <p>4. Sign the missing sign (gap-filling).</p> <p>5. Give signs with a given handshape, in a given localisation</p> <p>6. Repeat the sign(s) you have seen.</p> <p>7. Watch the sign, what does it mean? Do you know any other signs to describe this concept?</p>		<p>basic communicative needs in everyday life.</p>	<p>it is a demanding task for technical reasons, and all instructions have to be recorded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be careful - tasks should be unambiguous (an option of preparing an answer key).
15.	linguistic	Sign a sentence (production)	<p>1. Sign the sentence with the opposite meaning.</p> <p>2. Change future tense sentences to past tense sentences.</p>	<p>- syntactic constructions</p> <p>- non-manual elements</p> <p>- exponents of time, etc.</p>	<p>Signing competences. Diagrammatical accuracy Can construct a simple sentence using lexical signs and appropriate facial expressions.</p> <p>Signing competences. Diagrammatical accuracy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are very many variations of this task. This is not a complete list. This activity gives you an opportunity to invent your own instructions and exercises that require signing a particular sign or sentence. • Instructions and all sentences presented to the learner must be signed in PSL.

			<p>3. Which sentences are missing from the dialogue?</p> <p>4. Look at the beginning of this sentence. Complete it.</p> <p>5. Repeat the sentences you have seen.</p> <p>6. Change declarative sentences into interrogative sentences.</p>	<p>- social-linguistic elements</p> <p>- exercises in correct articulation</p>	<p>Can conjugate different types of verbs consistently with agreement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For phonics languages this type of task is very common and easy to complete in written form. For sign languages it is a demanding task for technical reasons. • Some types of exercises can be difficult to assess, such as completing a dialogue. You can record your learners' answers.
16.	linguistic	retelling (retelling a story watched)	<p>1. Watch the film in PSL. Retell the story you have watched.</p>	<p>- syntactic constructions</p> <p>- non-manual elements</p> <p>- exercises in correct articulation</p> <p>- lists and buoys</p>	<p>Communicative linguistic competences. Developing a topic Can tell or describe something in a form of a simple list of items/points.</p> <p>Mediation. Processing live text Can summarise in PSL the main ideas of simple, signed and short, informative texts on familiar topics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The choice of film should be adapted to the learners' perceptual abilities and age - the task may require to memorise many elements. • For learners at low proficiency levels, teacher-made videos related to a specific language course work best (we should avoid potential problems when our learners do not know many lexical items, syntactic constructions). • Instructions and all presented content must be signed in PSL.

						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recorded story can be focused on checking a specific language issue, e.g. <i>body shift</i>, directional questions, etc.. This task can be modified to present the same story told by different signers - the learners learn different signing styles.
17.	linguistic	Short monologue	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Tell us about yourself. Describe your family. Describe your day. What do you do in your spare time? What do you prefer: coffee or tea? Why? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - syntactic constructions -non-manual elements -expression of preferences - means of producing a multi-sentence speech (linking and organising the text, etc.) 	<p>Interaction. Information exchange Can give information about himself/herself and ask others for similar information.</p> <p>Production. Sustained monologue: describing experience and feelings Can describe his/her family, living conditions, education, current and former work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only subjective or guided assessment is possible. The learner may have an opportunity to prepare his/her speech in advance. The teacher should give the minimum/maximum length of the speech or demonstrate a sample speech in order to direct the learner to the elements which should appear in his/her speech. Speech topics should relate to descriptors for a specific level (topics adapted to the course level). The learner's speech may be recorded and assessed later.
18..	linguistic	Sustained monologue	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Make up a story about adventures of an alien on Earth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - syntactic constructions 	<p>Production. Creative signing Can record a simple story (e.g. about events during a holiday,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only subjective and/or guided assessment is possible. The learners may have an opportunity to prepare their speech in advance.

			<p>2. Give a detailed account of your week.</p> <p>3. Tell us about your holiday.</p> <p>4. How will people live in 100 years? What will school, city and the world look like then?</p>	<p>- non-manual elements</p> <p>- means of producing a longer speech (linking and organising the text, etc.)</p>	<p>about life, about the near future), taking care to ensure clarity of recording, adequate lighting and limiting the influence of distractors.</p> <p>Can produce a recording of connected sentences about everyday issues occurring in his/her environment, e.g. people, places, work and studies.</p> <p>Can draft very brief, simple descriptions of present and past events and personal experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher should give the minimum/maximum length of the speech or demonstrate a sample speech in order to point out the elements which should appear in the speech. • Speech topics should relate to descriptors for a specific level (topics adapted to the course level). • The learner's speech may be recorded and assessed later.
19.	linguistic, mediated	Translating between Polish and Polish Sign Language (and vice versa)	<p>1. Give the sign equivalents of the written words.</p> <p>2. Translate sentences from Polish into PSL.</p> <p>3. Write translation of a text in PSL.</p>	<p>- all competences depending on the source text and mediation in terms of translation between texts</p>	<p>Mediation. Live text translation</p> <p>Can translate in sign language in a simple and approximate way (from phonic language) repetitive/routine information on familiar, everyday topics, written in simple sentences (e.g. private messages, short stories, directions, notes or instructions).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible assessment with an answer key (especially for isolated words/sign). Sustained speech or ambiguous signs cannot be assessed using the key. • Difficulty of the text must be adapted to the specific group of learners. • Paying special attention to interlinguistic interference (impacts). • Using original texts or preparing your own.

					<p>Can translate in sign language in a simple, approximate way (from phonic language) written short, simple texts (e.g. notes on familiar topics); translation captures the main ideas of the source text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher should watch out for grammatical elements that are absent in the second language. Learners in sign language may try to reproduce every element of Polish very accurately, which will result in unnatural sentences in PSL. • The teacher has to be careful about the ambiguity of signs and text. • Learners' responses may vary significantly depending on their understanding of the task. • The tasks require translation competences (e.g. translation strategies) which are difficult to master at lower levels of proficiency.
20.	linguistic	assessment of the accuracy of signs, sentences	<p>1. Can you sign CAT RUN?</p> <p>2. Look at the sentences. Do you think they are correct?</p> <p>3. Find errors in the sentences.</p>	<p>- receptive competences</p> <p>- knowledge on language</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to significant differences in PSL (regional varieties, dispersion of PSL users, ambiguity of signs, productive signs), this type of task is very demanding and depends largely on the teacher and the content of the course. • Some grammatical elements should not be assessed due to lack of PSL standardisation.

						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of exceptions and signs variants adapted to the level of the group. Compared to Polish in PSL it is more difficult to say which versions of signs/sentences are definitely wrong. The task may consolidate the incorrect versions of signs/sentences. A good task for testing rare constructions. The task should include sentences related to everyday situations. Correctness of sentences should be possible to assess without context (e.g. certain sentences may be acceptable in fairy tales, e.g. <i>Stones speak</i>).
21.	linguistic, mediated	expressing emotions, preferences (likes)	1. Watch the video on cochlear implants in PSL. How do you feel after watching this film? What impressions did you have while watching it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - expressing preferences - constructions for assessment, description - vocabulary relating to emotions 	<p>Text mediation. Expressing response to a creative text (including literature)</p> <p>Can select simple fragments of artistic signing that he/she particularly likes and use them as a quotation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It can be difficult to find a text appropriate to the level of the group. Learners should be able to express their opinions without assessment or criticism from the teacher or other learners. There may be modifications of signs in the artistic texts - learners' attention should be drawn to this.

			<p>2. Did you like the sign poem? Why?</p> <p>3. Which part of the short story in PSL did you like best? Sign it.</p>	<p>- comprehension of a creative text</p> <p>- non-manual elements</p> <p>- productive signs</p>	<p>Can say in a simple language whether he/she likes a particular signing artistic text and give reasons.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good task to introduce cultural signs and themes related to the Deaf community. • Some texts may be controversial for learners. • Task difficult to assess, only subjective assessment without key.
22.	linguistic, mediated	analysis and criticism of the creative text, discussion	<p>1. Watch a story in PSL. What is its plot? Who are the main characters?</p> <p>2 Watch the signed poem. Who is the main character? What is the main topic addressed in the poem.</p> <p>3. Watch two stories in PSL of people who wear implants. What does each person talk about? Prepare arguments for each position. Have a discussion.</p>	<p>- constructions for expressing arguments and discussions</p> <p>- vocabulary related to the structure of the text (e.g. character, plot, ending)</p> <p>- productive signs</p> <p>- lists, enumeration, buoys</p> <p>- non-manual elements</p>	<p>Text mediation. Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature) Can identify and briefly describe the main themes and characters in short, simple stories on familiar situations using everyday language and the most common vocabulary.</p> <p>Interaction. Formal discussion and taking part in meetings Can say what he/she thinks about a certain subject when asked directly in a formal meeting, provided that he/she can ask for repeating the main points.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It can be difficult to find a text appropriate to the level of the group. • Learners should be able to express their opinions without assessment or criticism from the teacher or other learners. • Task appropriate to introduce cultural signs and topics related to the Deaf community. • Some texts may be controversial for learners. • This task is difficult to assess, only subjective assessment without a key. • This task can be delivered as a formal discussion led by a facilitator, based on discussion rules, and with invited guests, etc.

23.	linguistic, mediative (Mediation)	Text transformation: finding information, summary, making a list, etc.	<p>1. Watch the text in PSL. Sign its summary.</p> <p>2. Watch an ad about a PSL performance. Answer the following questions: Where will the show be? When will it take place? How much does a ticket cost?</p> <p>3. Watch a story in PSL. List all the characters met by the main character. Briefly describe them.</p>	<p>- buoys, lists</p> <p>- vocabulary to organise the text (<i>at the beginning..., first...</i>)</p> <p>- receptive competences</p> <p>- non-manual elements</p>	<p>Mediation. Live communication of specific information Can communicate in PSL a series of short instructions in simple terms if the initial text is signed clearly and slowly.</p> <p>Can convey in PSL the main idea of simple and brief messages, instructions and announcements if they are signed slowly and clearly in simple language.</p> <p>Can communicate in PSL the main idea of a clear, well-argued announcement on familiar, everyday topics, even though the text will need to be simplified and searched for needed words</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All instructions must be signed in PSL. • The choice of texts must be adapted to the group. • The task can be carried out as homework - the learner can prepare the speech. • This type of task is very good for testing the learner's understanding of a text. • You can select texts which are too difficult to make the learners practise receptive linguistic strategies, e.g. guessing the meaning from the context.
24.	linguistic, creative	signing creative texts	1. Invent and record an ABC poem.	All competences depending on text type	<p>Production. Recorded speech Can record vlogs describing activities (e.g. daily routines, outdoor activities sports, hobbies),</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only subjective and/or guided assessment is possible.

			<p>2. Watch a vlog. Prepare a similar vlog on a topic that interests you.</p> <p>3. Make up and sign a story about Gallaudet's journey across Europe.</p>		<p>people and places, using basic and concrete vocabulary and simple expressions of relationships between sentences through space or signs.</p> <p>Can write very brief, simple descriptions of present and past events and personal experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The learner must be provided with an option to prepare their speech in advance. • The teacher should give the minimum/maximum length of the speech or demonstrate an example of the speech in order to direct which elements should be included. • Texts should relate to the descriptors for the specific level (the type of text must be adapted to the level of the course). • The learner's speech can be recorded. • This is an appropriate task for practising cultural signs and topics related to the Deaf community. • With some types of texts, such as ABC poetry, learners may need more support from the teacher. • The assessment must take into account the individual artistic abilities of the learner, but should primarily focus on the linguistic side of the text.
25.	mixed	selecting signs for illustration (and vice versa)	1. Match a photo to each sign.	All receptive competences	<p>Reception. Viewing messages and instructions</p> <p>Understands instructions addressed to him/her articulated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photos/pictures must be unambiguous, of good quality and age-appropriate (realistic picture vs. symbol).

			<p>2. Look at the four signs. Which one of them matches the picture?</p> <p>3. Watch three stories in PSL. Which story does the picture match?</p> <p>4. Watch a story in PSL. Arrange the pictures according to the film.</p>		<p>carefully and slowly and is able to follow short and simple directions.</p> <p>Reception. Watching TV programs and recordings</p> <p>Understands the main elements in the story and can follow the plot if the story is told slowly and clearly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The materials used should be stylistically consistent throughout the test (e.g. all black and white, in a particular format). • It is recommended that in the traditional picture naming tasks pictures appear without phonics captions. • One of the disadvantages of using this type of task is that it is designed to elicit responses that refer only to simple concepts and single objects. It is very difficult and sometimes impossible to create a task that accurately relates to abstract concepts and complex expressions.
26.	linguistic	watching monologues, instructions, and short stories	<p>1. Select correct answers (e.g. ABC type) based on the film you have watched in PSL;</p> <p>2. Watch a few short descriptions of the storyline - connect the films in the PSL</p>	All receptive competences	<p>Reception. Viewing messages and instructions</p> <p>Understands instructions addressed to him/her articulated carefully and slowly and is able to follow short and simple directions</p> <p>Reception. Watching TV programs and recordings</p> <p>Understands the main elements of the story and can follow the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receptive competences can only be tested indirectly, through content-related questions. • In this type of task the learner does not create linguistic text, he/she performs actions based on the degree of understanding of the text. • The choice of the video should be adapted to the learners' perceptual abilities and age - this activity may

			<p>based on a cause and effect relationship.</p> <p>3. Watch the films in PSL, put them in the correct chronological order.</p>		<p>plot if the story is told slowly and clearly.</p>	<p>require to memorise many elements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For learners with low proficiency levels, teacher-made videos related to a specific language course are best (avoiding potential problems with the lack of knowledge of many lexical items, syntactic constructions. • Instructions and all presented content must be signed in PSL. • The recorded story can be focused on checking a specific language issue, e.g. <i>body shift</i>, directional questions, etc. • Modification of this activity is to present the same story told by different signers - the learners learn different signing styles. • Difficult texts can be selected on purpose so that the learners need to practise receptive and linguistic strategies, e.g. guess meaning from the context.
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