THE SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SLPI): DESCRIPTION AND USE WITH SIGN LANGUAGE OF THE NETHERLANDS

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Background

**SLPI**
- 20 min. interviews, 3 themes
- Functional and Formal analysis, scored at least by 2 independent scorers
- 10 language levels (novice to superior plus)

**CEFR**
- 6 language levels (L2) (A1-2, B1-2, C1-2)
- Functional descriptors, no language specific formal description, just global indicators

**NFA**
- Summative assessment (levels A2, B1, B2) in 4-year BA Teacher/Interpreter NGT training
SLPI / NFA GOALS

The goal of the SLPI is to assess the functional sign language skill of a person (referred to as a candidate): i.e., the candidate’s ability to communicate in the target sign language. The SLPI is not concerned with the candidate’s knowledge about vocabulary or grammar or any metalinguistic knowledge. Rather, the candidate is rated on the ability to express him or herself in sign language concerning topics relevant to his or her life, and the ability to understand sign language as presented by an interlocutor with native/near native sign skills.
Test battery NGT proficiency

- signing (production)
- signing (interaction)
- comprehension

NFA-assessment

CEFR-levels
- A2 (year 1)
- B1 (year 2)
- B2 / C1 (year 4)

10 tests, cumulative
5 tests
digital

vocabulary
comprehension test
Test battery NGT proficiency

- Signing (production)
- Signing (interaction)
- Comprehension

NFA-assessment

- CEFR-levels:
  - A2 (year 1)
  - B1 (year 2)
  - B2 / C1 (year 4)

Vocabulary

Comprehension test

10 tests, cumulative

5 tests (digital)
Timeline adaptation and training

- Adaptation SLPI => NFA
- Training 2011
- Familiarization intern training
- Training 2012
- Familiarization intern training
- Implementing NFA 2013-2014
## Adaptation SLPI to NFA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLPI: Levels of the SLPI Rating Scale</th>
<th>NFA: Levels Aligned With CEFR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superior plus</td>
<td>C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior</td>
<td>C1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced plus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate plus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survival plus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survival</td>
<td>A2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novice plus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novice</td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No functional skills</td>
<td>No functional skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NFA Rating procedures
## (Dis-)advantages NFA as summative assessment instrument

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Strenghts</strong></th>
<th><strong>Weaknesses</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Conversation</td>
<td>• Artificial situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No influence of written language</td>
<td>• Increase in students’ test experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student is pushed to highest level</td>
<td>• Quality of interviewer’s performance influences results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Two (or more) raters</td>
<td>• Does not cover all areas of language acquisition (e.g. comprehension)</td>
</tr>
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<td>• Raters and interviewers must be certificated</td>
<td>• Introvert persons in disadvantage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Positive (what <em>can</em> the student sign)</td>
<td>Other disadvantages:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other disadvantages:

• Intensive training interviewers and raters
• Time-consuming (but: we conduct less tests overall)
THANK YOU..