

# **Linking the GEPT Writing Subtest (Part 1) to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)**

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## **Abstract**

Previous research has aligned the GEPT reading, listening and writing (Part 2) subtests to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (Brunfaut & Harding, 2014; Green, Inoue, & Nakatsuhara, 2017; Knoch & Frost, 2016; Wu & Wu, 2010). No attempt, however, has been made to link Part 1 of the GEPT writing subtest (Chinese-English translation) to the CEFR levels. In view of the recent publication of the illustrative descriptors for mediation in the companion volume to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2018), this study aimed at linking Part 1 of the GEPT writing subtest at the intermediate and high-intermediate level to the CEFR, following the four stages of familiarisation, specification, standardisation, and validation set out in the CEFR manual (Council of Europe, 2009). Twelve panellists participated in this alignment study, with eight test ‘insiders’ based in Taipei and four test ‘outsiders’ based in Melbourne. Two examinee-centred standard-setting methods (i.e. the ‘Contrasting Groups’ and ‘Borderline Group’ methods) were used in combination in the alignment process. In addition to aligning the GEPT translation tasks to the CEFR, this study also explored, through a think-aloud study, the processes through which the panellists linked the GEPT translation scripts to the CEFR levels. In their study aiming to link Part 2 of the GEPT writing subtest (i.e. guided writing) to the CEFR, Knoch and Frost (2016) recommended that the pass scores of the intermediate and high intermediate level be lowered by one point based on their linking results. The findings of this project are generally consistent with Knoch and Frost (2016), suggesting that the cut scores for both levels be lowered from 4 to 3.5, if half point scores could be used in the GEPT score reports. Based on our experiences while undertaking this study, we also provide a few recommendations for future researchers linking translation tasks in language tests to the CEFR.