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)
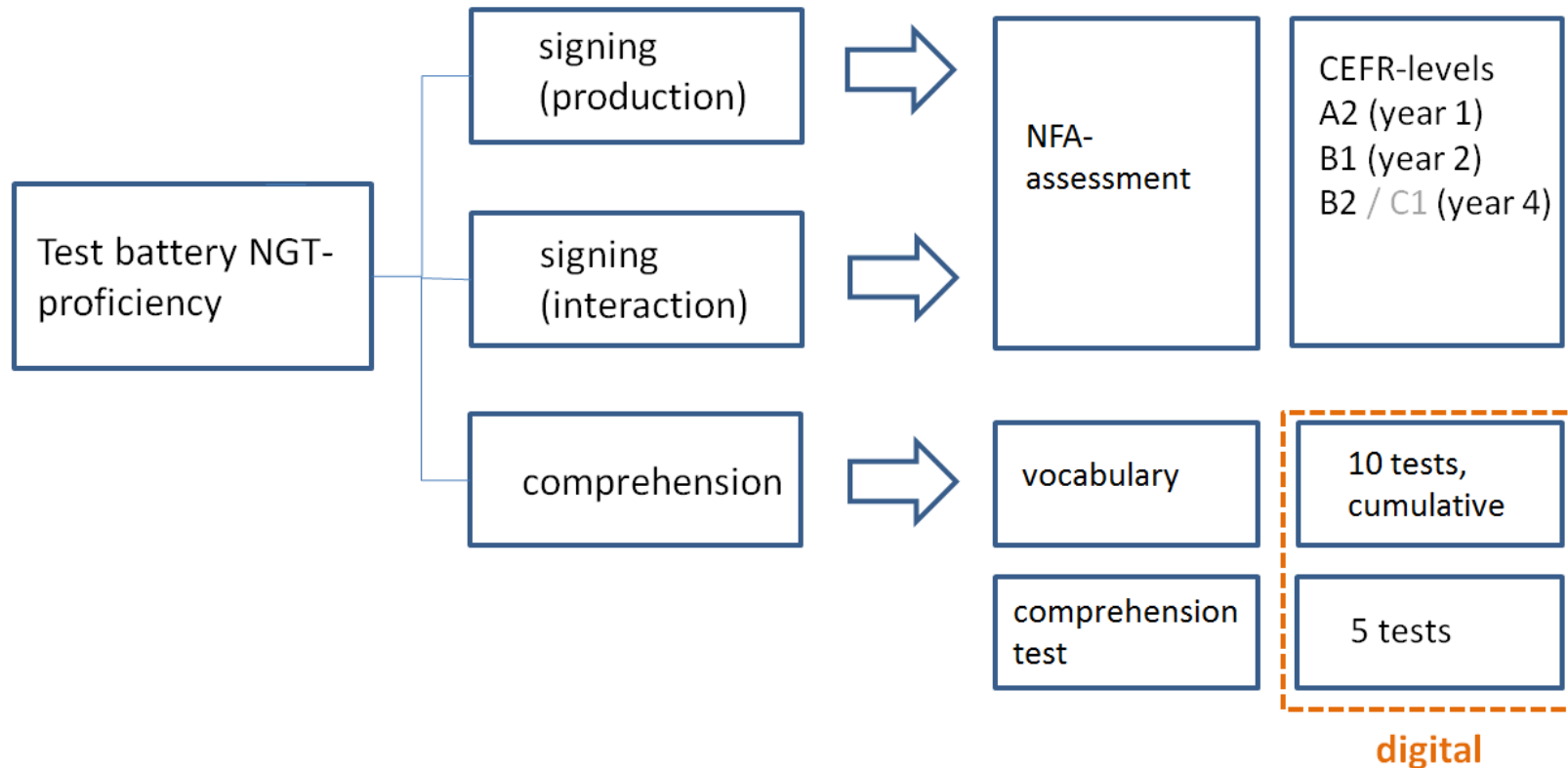- Functional descriptors, no language specific formal desription, just global indicators

NFA

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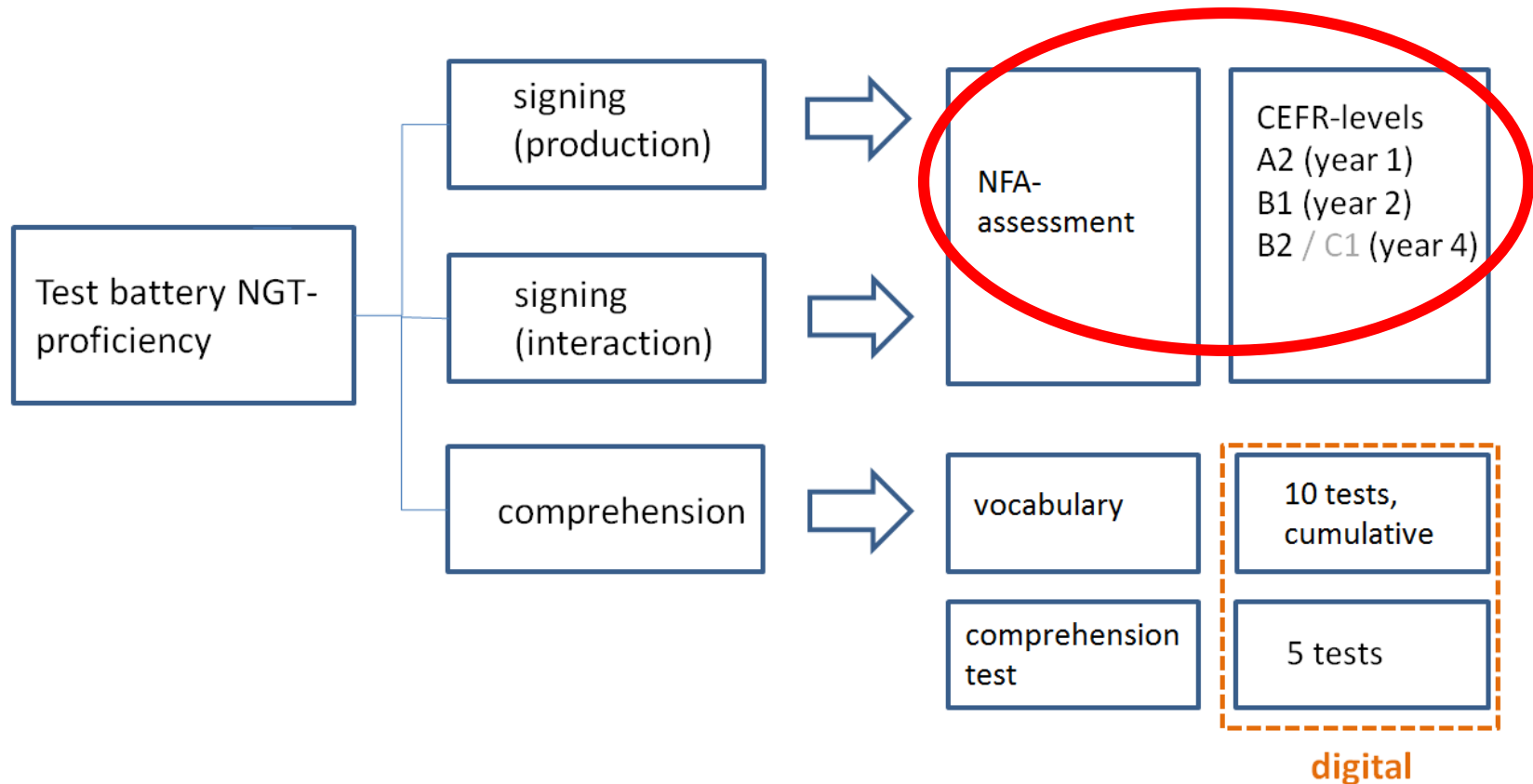
SLPI / NFA GOALS

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

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Test battery NGT-
proficiency
   ├── signing (production)      ⇒   NFA-assessment   │  CEFR-levels
   │                                                  │  A2 (year 1)
   ├── signing (interaction)     ⇒                    │  B1 (year 2)
   │                                                  │  B2 / C1 (year 4)
   └── comprehension             ⇒   vocabulary       │  10 tests, cumulative
                                     comprehension    │  5 tests
                                     test             │
                                                         digital
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Test battery NGT proficiency

Timeline adaptation and training

adaption SLPI => NFA | training 2011 | familiarization intern training | training 2012 | familiarization intern training | implementing NFA 2013-2014

Adaptation SLPI to NFA

SLPI: Levels of the SLPI Rating Scale	NFA: Levels Aligned With CEFR
Superior plus	C2
Superior	C1
Advanced plus	
Advanced	B2
Intermediate plus	
Intermediate	B1
Survival plus	
Survival	A2
Novice plus	
Novice	A1
No functional skills	No functional skills

NFA Rating procedures

interview

rating process

determine level
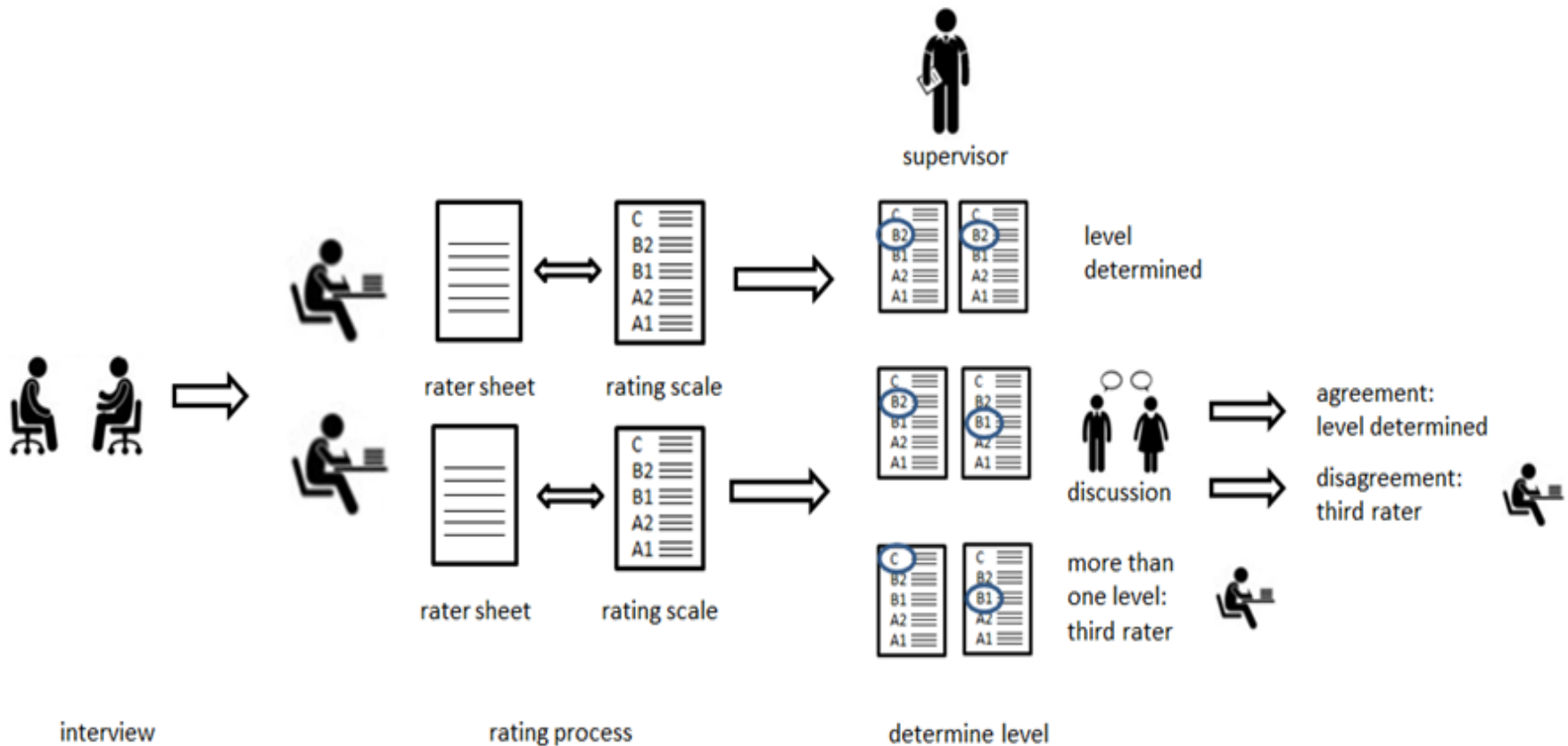
(Dis-)advantages NFA as summative assessment instrument

Strenghts

- Conversation
- No influence of written language
- Student is pushed to highest level
- Two (or more) raters
- Raters and interviewers must be certificated
- Positive (what *can* the student sign)

Weaknesses

- Artificial situation
- Increase in students' test experience
- Quality of interviewer's performance influences results
- Does not cover all areas of language acquisition (e.g. comprehension)
- Introvert persons in disadvantage

Other disadvantages:

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