

Karin Vogt / Bassey Edem Antia (eds.)

Multilingual Assessment – Finding the Nexus?



PETER LANG

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A persistent monolingual paradigm still pervades teaching and assessment practices in different educational contexts. How is this paradigm being responded to across regions and (sub)disciplines of language study? In answering this question, the volume draws on insights from the project MULTILA – Multilingual and multimodal assessment, jointly coordinated by the University of Education, Heidelberg, Germany, and the University of the Western Cape, South Africa. This volume is an opportunity to understand practices in both environments and to identify commonalities and differences. While European contributors to the dialogue come from a language education and assessment background, their South African interlocutors approach the subject from a largely applied linguistics perspective. The outcome is an account in ten chapters of multilingual assessment from perspectives that are both disciplinary and regional.

Karin Vogt is Professor of Teaching English as a Foreign Language at the University of Education in Heidelberg, Germany. Among her research interests are classroom-based language assessment and multilingual language assessment.

Bassey Edem Antia is Professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa. His interests span terminology, language policy, multilingual teaching and assessment, and decolonial approaches to language and text analysis.

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Peter Lang GmbH, Berlin, Deutschland
info@peterlang.com <http://www.peterlang.com/>

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Introduction

Karin Vogt, University of Education Heidelberg, Germany

Bassey Edem Antia, University of the Western Cape, South Africa

Multilingual assessment – Finding the nexus?

In recent decades, the world has seen unprecedented levels of mobility, resulting from globalization of information, people, organizations and capital. Societies have become more and more diverse around the world, linguistic diversity included. These developments have had a significant impact on education, both general education and language education, and they necessitate reviewing curricular paradigms, approaches and practices in many contexts, albeit for different reasons. However, the pressure to rethink educational arrangements in non-Western contexts has come less from mobility and more from a critique of the hegemony of Western modernity.

What the various educational contexts and geographical settings have in common is their need to be critically assessed and re-examined in order to account for multilingual realities both in society and in the (language) classroom. Revised epistemologies have to address these realities that also exist in education on various levels and in diverse educational contexts.

The paradigm associated with the extensive body of work on educational assessment has largely been illustrated by a monolingual database (Schissel et al., 2019; Shohamy, 2011), whereas a significant part of the research corpus on multilingual education articulates around teaching and learning, and has only infrequently foregrounded formal, non-spontaneous assessment. The foregoing seems to be a reality both for language pedagogy as for content teaching.

There is no unanimous definition of multilingualism as a widely used term. Definitions highlight the social dimension of the term (e.g., Conteh & Meier, 2014) or a more individual perspective, e.g., Herdina and Jessner (2002, p. 52) who see multilingualism as “(...) the command and / or use of two or more languages by the respective speaker”. In many recent conceptualizations of multilingualism, the aspect of challenging language separation ideals is inherent as well as a perspective on language use in which speakers activate their entire linguistic (and non-linguistic) resources in order to communicate (e.g., Angolevska, 2022; Cenoz & Gorter, 2014; Krulatz et al., 2022; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007; Mohanty, 2018).

Research on multilingualism and conceptualizations of multilingualism are heterogeneous and diverse, so much so that Heugh et al. (2016, p. 4) prefer the

term “multilingualism(s)”. They argue that multilingualism depends on the setting and the context, making it multidimensional and multi-scaled. In fact, the dynamic nature of research in the field of multilingualism has resulted in new terminology, spanning from heteroglossia (Bailey, 2012; Bakhtin, 1981), plurilingualism (Council of Europe, 2020; Hélot & Cavalli, 2017; Seed, 2020), polylingualism (Jørgensen, 2008), to translanguaging (García, 2009; Li & García, 2021; Orteguy et al., 2015), all of which, according to Ibrahim (2022, p. 39), deconstruct and de-dichotomize monolingual terminology and discourse.

Retaining the term “multilingualism” as a generic term for our conversation, the multiple definitions of the term entail different dimensions which can be seen as a continuum in order to express its complexity and the various concepts involved (Cenoz, 2013a). Coming from a European perspective, Cenoz identifies the individual vs. social dimension, the proficiency vs. use dimension, and the bilingualism vs. multilingualism dimension (pp. 5–7).

In some, mainly post-colonial settings, the layered hierarchies of languages play a significant role, and Heugh et al. (2016) underline that inequalities are structured through these hierarchies of local, regional, national and/or international languages. In these contexts, the social indexicalities of languages, following the experience of colonialism, politicize languages and foreground issues of social (in)justice and (in)equity correlating with particular language arrangements (Antia, 2017, 2021).

In numerous educational contexts, linguistic realities and lifeworlds of many learners are not always taken into consideration (Angolevska, 2022; Ouane et al., 2011; Van Avermaet et al., 2018), due to a monolingual paradigm being deeply rooted in teaching and learning and in language learning as well (Cummins, 2019; Greenier et al., 2023). This is also true for assessment.

Institutional learning environments have to consider linguistic lifeworlds in education and in assessment. In the present volume, we would like to focus on two educational settings. These are content instruction and assessment, with Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as a specific, mostly European-based type of content instruction. Content is either taught in a language of instruction that is the majority language or a language that is the prestigious language of schooling, depending on the context, with learners bringing in their linguistic repertoire to access the content more easily (Antia, 2017; Duarte et al., 2021). Content instruction itself might be multilingual, using several languages in a formal instructional context, and based on a more holistic or heteroglossic conceptualization of language (Banda, 2018; De Angelis, 2021). The second focus of this volume is language instruction encompassing the language of instruction, a second language, or an additional language or foreign language

that represents both content and means of communication in the classroom. The aim of multilingual approaches in these educational contexts is to scaffold language learning and enhance its outcome by enabling learners to use their multilingual repertoires to access the languages and enhance communication in different languages, the target language(s) included, thus softening the boundaries between languages to the benefit of the language(s) in question (Cenoz & Gorter, 2013a; Weideman et al., 2021). Terms like additional language teaching (Kopečková & Poarch, 2022; Prilutskaya et al., 2022), L3 teaching (Travers, 2022) or foreign language teaching (e.g., Falk & Lindquist, 2022; Mayr, 2022; Yamada, 2022) are used. The terminology used depends on the context and on the degree to which the paradigm shift of the multilingual turn, the dynamic turn (Flores, 2017) or the post-multilingual turn (Li Wei, 2016) have been completed. Foreign language instruction has to be seen as a special case of language instruction, particularly in European and North American contexts, and against the background of linguistic ideologies and paradigms that are only slowly changing.

If we take a learning-oriented assessment approach as a basis (e.g., Jones & Saville, 2016; Turner & Purpura, 2016; Saville, 2019), how is assessment shaped while underscoring its alignment to both teaching and learning?

In its widest sense, multilingual assessment can be understood as incorporating multilingual elements into assessments, whether they are content-related or language-related. In our view, a distinction has to be made between the multilingual assessment of content, multilingual assessment of a language repertoire and multilingual assessment of (named) languages. This distinction is in line with Seed (2020), who suggests a similar classification for assessment in plurilingual situations. In the language testing field, calls to embrace multilingual approaches in language testing are voiced by scholars like Shohamy (2011) or OrtheGuy et al. (2018). They attempt to have tests include learners' multilingual repertoires in their constructs to reflect multilingual lifeworlds and the paradigmatic shift to multilingual languaging (Schissel et al., 2019). In the South African context, the needs of multilingual students in assessment have begun to be recognized (Antia, 2021; Weideman et al., 2020). From a social justice perspective, discrimination of multilingual practices as well as marginalization of (certain) multilingual speakers are to be contested by multilingual assessment. This demand resonates with the multilingual realities in South African higher education institutions as depicted in Susan Coetzee-van Roy's (this volume) study of the diverse language repertoire of a South African student body. The call for these realities to be recognized and adequately translated into assessment practices is intended to promote educational equity. There are scholars like Schissel et al. (2019) for whom the idea of languages being separate entities within an individual speaker

is no longer adequate, neither conceptually nor operationally. They recognize the challenges that this conceptual shift entails for language testing and particularly for defining multilingual constructs for assessment, and, even more demanding, for language testing. Shohamy and Pennycook (2019) take a step further and voice the necessity for tests that are multimodal and multisensorial (p. 36) so as to elicit information on the entire array of semiotic resources used by learners to communicate. This resonates with the philosophy of the action oriented approach in language teaching as advocated in the Companion Volume to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020).

Against the background of a holistic, dynamic view of multilingualism and multilingual assessment, approaches to multilingual assessment so far concern multilingual approaches to comprehension in assessment (e.g., presenting content in the student's own language rather than in a majority language in an achievement test), multilingual scoring (e.g., multilingual rubrics), test accommodations (e.g., including multiple languages in response options or bilingual assessment forms), translanguaging approaches in assessment, and formative assessment (Antia, 2017, 2021; Antia et al., 2021; Gorter & Cenoz, 2017; Schissel et al., 2018, 2019; Wang & East, 2023). The need to integrate a broader model of language use into (language) assessment (Toohey, 2019) on the one hand and the aim of aligning learning, teaching and assessment e.g., in learning-oriented assessment on the other hand could be catered for by formative assessment procedures and the deployment of cross-linguistic mediation.

The present volume arose from the project MULTILA – Multilingual and multimodal assessment, jointly carried out by the University of Education, Heidelberg, Germany, and the University of the Western Cape, South Africa. Funded by the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Science, Research and Art, the project sought to examine multilingual education, multilingual assessment and multilingual annotation from a comparative German – South African perspective. It was an opportunity to understand practices in both environments and to surface commonalities and any differences, as a way of initiating a transnational dialogue. Like all else at the time, the project was adversely affected by COVID and original plans had to be modified and the contributor team reconfigured. Happily, this reconfiguration meant, on the European side, broadening the case studies to include Sweden, Austria, UK, Ukraine and Norway in addition to the original Germany. As editors, we are grateful to our authors as well as to the several other colleagues who had made important contributions at two symposia organized as part of the process of developing this volume.

Roughly speaking, the European contributors come from a language education and assessment background, while the South African contributors come at

the subject of multilingual assessment from a largely applied linguistics perspective. The outcome, then, is an account in ten chapters of multilingual assessment offered from perspectives that are at the very least both disciplinary and regional.

Bassey Edem Antia and Karin Vogt contribute to the conceptual groundwork of multilingual assessment from their respective contexts.

Bassey Edem Antia offers some conceptual ground-clearing, focusing on how applied linguistics and especially experiences and aspirations in the Global South appear to shape understandings, practices and priorities of multilingual assessment in these Southern environments. He elaborates on constructs and uses of the term multilingual assessment, then describes how the language, literacy and knowledge landscape in the Global South together shape multilingual assessment in these environments. From this account, ten conceptual guardrails are proposed for understanding and implementing multilingual assessment in the Global South. The theses are exemplified with data, practices and scholarship from India, Australia and Africa, and are operationalized as a set of criteria against which traditions of, or approaches to, multilingual assessment can be mapped.

Karin Vogt takes a language-related perspective and considers the case of English as a foreign (EFL) or additional language in multilingual contexts. With a focus on plurilingual approaches to English as a Foreign Language teaching and assessment in multilingual contexts in Europe, she discusses the question of how to implement a plurilingual approach to EFL teaching and assessment in a balanced way. Considering the specific role of English existing within multilingualism (Jakisch, 2018) and serving as a gateway to languages (Schröder, 2009), she analyzes the ambivalences stakeholder groups like teachers express regarding plurilingual approaches to EFL. Taking stock of current multilingual assessment constructs and practices, she provides an example from the EFL classroom that assesses multilingual elements in an EFL classroom in a balanced way.

The contributions by Susan Coetzee-van Roy, Eleni Meletiadou, Siphokazi Magadla and colleagues as well as Sebolai and Mutakwa can be grouped under multilingual assessment, belonging and social justice.

Susan Coetzee-van Roy draws attention to the important question of language choice in multilingual assessment. All too often assumptions are made concerning what languages to teach or assess in on the basis of ethnicity or nationality, in apparent ignorance of the fact that there is no 1:1 correlation between ethnicity and language proficiency or in total disregard of possible contradictions in the elements of attitude, viz. knowledge, emotion and readiness for action. Given the social justice implications of language and assessment in a South African context, and her university's commitment to multilingual assessment, Coetzee-van Roy poses the question: what languages should the institution consider in

implementing multilingual assessment given the extreme linguistic diversity of the student body? She draws on three data sets to paint a picture of language choice for multilingual assessment at the particular institution. Her data sources are a Language Repertoire Survey project, a Language Portrait project and the University's Language Audit Surveys. While for informal assessment in the classroom the full multilingual repertoire of the students can be activated, a bilingual constellation (including the home language and English) commends itself for formal assessment.

Eleni Meletiadou looks at the British higher education context, which is essentially monolingual and tends not to integrate the multilingual resources of its diverse student body. In her mixed-methods explanatory intervention study with a quasi-experimental design, she investigates the impact of multilingual tasks which allow for the students' mobilization of multilingual resources on their writing achievement in English. Using translanguaging approaches and taking an English as a Lingua Franca-based perspective to the language of instruction, she also explores the students' views on their implementation. She finds that the experimental groups clearly outperformed the control groups, but the students' comments yielded a diverse picture, with some learners appreciating the possibility to contribute with their full linguistic repertoires and others having reservations, seeing challenges for transitioning from a monolingual to a multilingual approach to text production in the target language. From her results, it follows that research on the nature of suitable multilingual tasks in monolingual higher education contexts such as Britain is needed, as well as an expansion of the theoretical base with regard to multilingual tasks to foster the formative assessment of written language performance.

Siphokazi Magadla, Zikho Dana and Dion Nkomo examine the language policy framework of a previously white-English South African university whose commitment to multilingualism in teaching and learning has been more *de jure* than *de facto*. In an excellent illustration of how institutional actors can occupy the implementation spaces for multilingual teaching and assessment opened up by otherwise vague, non-specific or unimplemented policies, the authors report on an initiative in which material for the teaching and learning of Political and International Studies at their institution is made available in isiXhosa, and assessments also offered in this language. The analysis of the initiative leads to the conclusion that mainstreaming of multilingual academic practices helps students gain epistemic access, besides supporting fluid interpretations of concepts and facilitating students' activation of content knowledge. They regard mainstreaming multilingualism as an important part of decolonizing the academy.

The study by **Kabelo Sebolai and Darlington Mutakwa** broaches the subject of assessment and multilingualism from an interesting perspective, namely, that of the positive predictive value and negative predictive value of an assessment of academic literacy for how well students admitted into university would perform by the end of their first year. These are students with different home language backgrounds (isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English) writing this assessment in English. While it is regrettably being used for unintended purposes (e.g., admission decisions), this National Benchmark test for academic literacy was originally intended for a different classificatory purpose, i.e., to determine whether support and of what kind needed to be provided to which students upon admission into university. The question that Kabelo Sebolai and Darlington Mutakwa seek answers to is: “Does the English version of the National Benchmark Test in academic literacy (NBT AL) classify students from English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa language backgrounds fairly as those that will pass or fail their first year of study at university?” The assessment principle of fairness serves to discuss their findings comparing the Benchmark test scores and the students’ performance at the end of their first year of study.

The chapters by Gudrun Erickson, Maria Stathopoulou and colleagues, Carmen Konzett-Firth and colleagues and Viktoriya Osidak and Maryana Natsiuk as well as the interview with Dina Tzagari are characterized by their focus on multilingual assessment of (foreign) languages. They explore multilingual assessment in light of innovation and pedagogical effectiveness, mainly from a European perspective.

Addressing the challenges that multilingualism presents in traditionally monolingual school systems in Europe, **Gudrun Erickson** focuses on language assessment in another multilingual context, namely Sweden. Despite the different endeavours to enhance multilingualism in various types of language education, she addresses the shortcomings of assessment-related requirements in Sweden’s multilingual society. These concern e.g., multilingual students’ lower results at school compared to learners with a monolingual Swedish-speaking background, indicating a discrepancy between the need to accommodate multilingual learners in language assessment and the prevalence of a monolingual Swedish norm. These tensions regarding underlying conceptualizations of multilingual assessment are also brought about by conflicting beliefs and practices of how languages are learned, taught and assessed, and might entail validity and fairness issues.

Maria Stathopoulou, Magdalini Liontou, Phyllisienne Gauci and Silvia Melo-Pfeifer investigate mediation as a means of developing plurilingualism in the foreign language classroom. Mediation is understood as a way to make sense

of the heteroglossic nature of communication in diverse multilingual societies. The person who mediates acts as a go-between who gives access to meaning that interlocutors have no or only partial access to. Basing their deliberations on the multilingual realities in Europe, they refer to the concept of cross-linguistic (teacher) mediation in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages / Companion Volume (CEFR / CV) and suggest ways to assess it. Stathopoulou and colleagues posit that assessing cross-linguistic mediation caters for the need for authentic communicative assessment tasks that reflect the multilingual communication situations and communication needs of modern European societies. Considering key aspects such as the localization of language assessment, the authenticity of cross-linguistic mediation tasks along with their inclusive character, the need for CEFR / CV alignment of these tasks and their implementation in alternative and formative assessment practices, they present an account of their project METLA (funded by the ECML). They outline the aims and principles of assessing cross-linguistic mediation assessment tasks designed in the framework of the METLA project.

Viktoriia Osidak and Maryana Natsiuk investigate the language policies in the multilingual context of Ukraine. They provide an analysis of multilingualism in this specific context from various perspectives, deploring the dearth of multilingual approaches in language assessment, which currently is conducted largely within a monolingual paradigm. In a country that is reviewing its language policy as an independent state and against the background of Russian aggression, they characterize Ukraine as a geographical area that is multilingual and that bears linguistic and cultural diversity. On the legislative level, Ukrainian state policy places a focus on Ukrainian as a state language in order to enhance identification of its citizens with Ukraine while at the same time safeguarding the rights of minority speakers to access education in their language, in an attempt to preserve minority languages. On a pedagogical level, they identify and discuss core characteristics of multilingual approaches for the Ukrainian context that are in line with Ukrainian linguistic policy. Despite first experiences with multilingual approaches, e.g., CLIL methodologies in higher education contexts, they see a theory-practice gap with monolingual approaches to language learning and assessment currently being more common in instructional practice.

Carmen Konzett-Firth, Anastasia Drackert, Wolfgang Stadler and Judith Visser investigated the professional development needs of teachers of Romance languages in the Austrian and German contexts, both of which are known to mostly adhere to a monolingual paradigm in language teaching. Conducting a questionnaire survey with 613 teachers at secondary schools, they found that teachers had received some training in language testing and assessment during

their (initial) teacher education, mostly pertaining to designing and marking tests, error correction and assessing productive skills, with some differences depending on the language taught. The respondents in the study wish for a wide range of aspects to be covered in professional development activities in language testing and assessment, among them “designing speaking test tasks and assessment of oral production” and “designing good quality test items”, again with slight differences in priorities depending on the foreign language taught. The respondents seem to be aware of the complexity of language testing and assessment and the importance of developing their language assessment literacy (LAL) as they tend to rate all professional development topics as relevant to their professionalization, yet there seem to be inconsistencies in their answers. Also, contextual factors such as the language taught, resources available for teaching and assessing this language seem to have an impact on the self-reported training needs of the language teachers in the study. Teachers in the study wish for a theory-praxis transfer in the assessment-related professional development activities which reflect the educational reforms in foreign language classrooms that seem to embrace standardized testing more. The authors conclude that teachers’ professional development in language testing and assessment has to be tailored to their specific educational contexts (cf. Vogt et al., 2020) which result in specific needs for LAL-related professional development. The results indicate that language teachers are very dependent on their contexts. Even teachers of related languages do not seem to see the multilingual potential of their learners. The results imply that multilingual approaches to language assessment need to make multilingual connections, starting from formative assessment in classroom-based contexts or task-based assessment. These environments which include multilingual elements would be a first step to soften the boundaries between languages, also in assessment.

In the final chapter, **Dina Tsagari** is in conversation with Karin Vogt about foreign language learning, teaching and assessment in multilingual contexts. The interview ranges over a number of the issues in especially the second section of the book. Dina Tsagari analyzes the challenges and opportunities language teachers face when teaching and assessing English as an additional language in multilingual contexts. She emphasizes the potential of Assessment for Learning (AfL) for multilingual student groups, on the precondition that co-constructive approaches to AfL can take place, e.g., when learners use a common L1 or use English as a Lingua Franca to help each other access the target language together. Teacher roles are consequently changing, and she observes that theory is at times lagging behind practice in terms of attitudes towards multilingual assessment. She identifies as challenges the monolingual paradigm in language teaching

which is visible in the debate about the role of English in Norwegian contexts while teachers on the ground have moved on to find practical solutions for language assessment in European multilingual contexts. They use multimodal, multilingual resources which they adapt to their purposes in the sense of an individualized multilingual assessment (Saville & Seed, 2021) but act without formal professional development. Dina Tsagari urges teacher educators and researchers to act on this need for more language assessment literacy that is individualized and contextualized in order to empower language teachers.

Taken together, then, the ten chapters of this book give the reader a sense of how multilingual assessment as a topic is being tackled across subdisciplines of language and across world regions. The tool proposed in Antia's chapter is helpful in mapping facets of the approaches and traditions represented in this collection.

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Conceptions of multilingual assessment

Bassey E. Antia

University of the Western Cape, South Africa

Multilingual assessment: The Global South as locus of enunciation

Abstract: As an interdiscipline, multilingual assessment is increasingly the focus of numerous (special issues of) journals, curricular initiatives, conferences, and Special Interest Groups within disciplinary formations. On a global scale, however, it remains a fragmented interdiscipline, beset by sometimes unnoticed conceptual differences that impede global community-building. This chapter adopts the Global South and Applied Linguistics as loci of enunciation to provide some conceptual ground-clearing that is intended to draw attention to different understandings and traditions of multilingual assessment. The chapter describes the language, literacy and knowledge landscape in the Global South and uses this backdrop to propose ten conceptual guardrails for understanding and implementing multilingual assessment in the Global South. These ten theses are then operationalized as a set of criteria against which traditions of, or approaches to, multilingual assessment can be mapped. Such an undertaking is important for animating South-North conversations on the topic and, ultimately, for community-building on a global scale.

Keywords: Rationales, constructs, concepts of validity, language ideology, cultural responsiveness.

1. Introduction

Educational assessment generates evidence that allows inferences to be drawn and judgments to be made about a learner's knowledge, skills or abilities (Tsagari et al., 2018). As a summative exercise especially, assessment has been described "as a communicative device between the world of education and that of the wider society," yielding data that is used "as a publicly acceptable code for quality" (Broadfoot & Black, 2004, p. 9) – a use that has incidentally been critiqued (Shohamy, 2022).

This public consumption of assessment is underscored in Foucault's work on surveillance and social control. For Foucault (1991), knowledge derived from specific kinds of gaze is the basis for the exercise of power that is intended to effect social control (e.g., who is in or out, who is branded how and to what strategic effect). Foucault highlights the role of *examinations* in all kinds of social contexts – prison, medical, educational – as a tool for quantifying, classifying

and punishing, obviously on the basis of the normative judgments of the powerful (Foucault, 1991; Antia, 2021). In the design and social use of assessments, the obvious questions are: whose gaze counts, whose contributions count in the construction of the norm, who is disproportionately (dis)privileged, and to what ends?

On this view, assessments assume perhaps even greater prominence within the social reproduction script of sociologists of education for whom pedagogical practices reproduce social class differences (Bourdieu, 1984; Hoadley, 2006; Piller, 2016). Assessments, especially of the high-stakes kind, easily become a means through which “social hierarchies become converted into academic hierarchies” (Antia et al., 2021, p. 53). What role does language play in all of this?

Language (of teaching, learning and assessment) occupies an important place in cultural approaches to the study of how the educational system is complicit in the reproduction of social inequality. For instance, the view has been expressed that for Bourdieu “the linguistic background of the family influences the student’s ability to deal with both the content and form of scholastic language [and that] there is an implied interest in perpetuating the misunderstanding as it shores up social selectivity” (Grenfell, 2004, p. 55). Bourdieu himself observes how pedagogical practices, including assessments, are underpinned by specific orientations to language:

for example, the very nature of the tests set ..., the type of rhetorical and linguistic qualities required and the value attached to these qualities, the relative importance given to written papers and oral examinations, and the qualities required in both instances, tend to encourage a certain attitude towards the use of language. (Bourdieu, 1971, p. 201)

Turning to a personal biblio-biography, it was concern over forms of orientation to language in assessment as well as over assessment practices shoring up social selectivity that sparked my interest in implementing, researching and writing about, advocating, and developing resources¹ for multilingual assessment from my epistemic location in South Africa.

1 In 2013, I initiated classroom action research with my colleague Charlyn Dyers which involved providing multilingual lecture material for a 3rd year Linguistics course at the University of the Western Cape. This culminated in experimenting with multilingual assessments from which a number of publications have arisen. I have also written on multilingual assessment in the high school context and taught a course on multilingual assessment (Heidelberg). With my students, I have developed digital resources raising awareness of multilingual assessment. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVjdVsrL5sceFhDTwZaM_Yw. This chapter is based on invited talks on multilingual assessment which I have given in Cape Town, Belfast, Bergen, Athens and State

As it sometimes happens, years into some of these lines of activity, opportunities presented themselves for collaboration with colleagues from other backgrounds. No sooner had I embraced one or the other opportunity than I was reminded of how commonly used terminology may hide important conceptual differences and hinder global conversation – a subject I had in fact written about some twenty years earlier in the context of parliamentary discourses in English (Antia, 2001). On the eve of what would be a major initiative on multilingual assessment, I sat in a hotel room in Berlin reflecting on correspondence I had exchanged with colleagues. The more I reviewed the trail of email correspondence, the more my fears were confirmed. My colleagues had a different understanding of multilingual assessment than I did. “How long would I hold out as an impostor?” I asked myself, no doubt because my mind had momentarily ceded the power to co-define and co-frame the agenda.

In this chapter, I provide some conceptual ground-clearing that is intended to draw attention to understandings of multilingual assessment as well as to different traditions of practice and engagement with it. In doing so, the chapter simultaneously provides an initial framework for multilingual assessment in environments of the Global South. Such an undertaking is important for animating South-North conversations on the topic and, ultimately, for community-building on a global scale. Following this introduction, the chapter successively maps understandings of multilingual assessment; sketches experiences of society and education in parts of the Global South; derives imperatives from this sketch for multilingual assessment in the Global South; offers some data and insights from practices of multilingual assessment in the Global South; and finally proposes a tool or criteria set for identifying different approaches to multilingual assessment.

2. Multilingual assessment: A cartography of understandings

To pick up on the impostor story, I began to model for myself acceptations of the term *multilingual assessment* (*plurilingual assessment* for many European colleagues). It was such relief to find that some of my intuitions had in fact appeared in print at about the same time I was grappling with these conceptual issues.

College. For support of some of these initiatives, the Senate Research Committee of the University of the Western Cape is thanked, as are the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) for a Guest Professorship tenable at the Heidelberg University of Education, and the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Science, Research and Art for funding the MULTILA project on Multilingual and multimodal assessment.

Seed (2020) had published a piece, “What is plurilingualism and what does it mean for language assessment?” which appeared in the near eponymously titled issue of *Cambridge Assessment English. Research Notes* he edited. I wondered if the emphasis on language assessment in both titles merely reflected the priorities of the *Research Notes*. At any rate, Seed points to different constructs that are targeted in situations of assessment that somehow involve several languages.

There is, first, the construct of *plurilingual/multilingual ability*, in which an individual’s multilingualism/plurilingualism is assessed. Thus, a task may be designed to have me prove my ability in Bambara, Soninke and Maninkakan, implying that success on the task is hinged on me drawing on my knowledge of all three languages. Typically, the motivation here is to promote individual multilingualism in order to evolve a more cohesive society. Second, there is the construct of *ability in a target language being learned* (e.g., isiXhosa), in which case the *instruction, input* and/or *response* required for a point on isiXhosa grammar may be expressed in English and isiZulu, or blends of both. I might term as ecological validity the motivation for this construct, i.e., the point that multilingualism is increasingly appreciated as the norm in authentic language use situations in the particular region.

Third, there is the construct of *attitude*, understood as a general positive disposition to linguistic diversity, a willingness to draw on knowledge of existing languages and on general metalinguistic awareness to make meaning in relatively unfamiliar languages. This may well reflect assumptions of the cognate nature of the languages in question. A motivation here could be an assessor’s “competence in making sense of unfamiliar linguistic and/or cultural features, refusing to accept (communicative or learning) failure, using all the resources available, especially those based on intercomprehension” (Candelier et al., 2012, p. 23). Fourth, there is the construct of *content area knowledge*, in which the focus is on the use of several languages to elicit or to prove subject knowledge (e.g., addition in arithmetic). Fairness is a prime motivation here, as the idea is to ensure that language is no impediment to understanding tasks or demonstrating knowledge.

It is perhaps worth observing that, in some environments of the Global South to be described subsequently, multilingual assessment may be understood and used in other ways, for instance to refer to assessment being offered in a specific home language (e.g., Xitsonga) or in several languages (Efik and Igbo), without the intention being for information to be processed across the different language versions of a question paper. Thus, an assessment in physical oceanography administered in Xitsonga can easily be termed multilingual, as would an

assessment provided in two language versions (Akan and Swahili) requiring the test-taker to choose or to have previously chosen a preferred language version.

To return to Seed (2020), with his useful account I had found validation under the multilingual assessment sun for my interests in content knowledge. But how was I going to convince my interlocutors that what I had figured out was not a case of a solution looking for a problem – in other words, that a problem in fact existed? Enter Dendrinios, who had at about the same time also published a position paper for the European Civil Society Platform for Multilingualism (ECSPM).

Dendrinios (2019, p. 1) lamented that “a common discourse” of testing and assessment was yet to be developed in spite of “the ‘multilingual turn’ in (language) education.” She decried the “inadequate substantial dialogue between researchers [which had resulted] in multilingual testing and assessment being a fragmented and somewhat incohesive disciplinary area” (Dendrinios, 2019, p. 1). Parsing every word, I again noticed what seemed to be an instructive emphasis on language education. While the general claim of insufficient dialogue among actors was comforting, I wondered if there was perhaps another sense in which I was being an imposter: as an Applied Linguist, did I have to confine my interest in multilingual assessment to the assessment of language?

Positionality of all kinds is a key issue in trying to build a global discourse community. Clearly, then, our cartography of understandings of multilingual assessment would have to be teased out in other directions. Are the orientations to multilingual assessment different according to one’s location in Applied Linguistics, Language Education, Testing and Measurement, Geography, Economics or other content knowledge areas? Are approaches to multilingual assessment shaped by “the geo-political and body-political location” from which one speaks? This characterization is how Grosfoguel (2008, p. 3) defines *locus of enunciation*.

3. The Global South and Applied Linguistics as loci of enunciation for multilingual assessment

Two notions that signpost my locus of enunciation need to be clarified. First, there is Applied Linguistics, which I understand as the study of language in relation to broader real-world problems, rather than specifically as second and foreign language teaching and learning. In its critical orientation as espoused by Pennycook, Applied Linguistics in the former sense is unsurprisingly “marked by breadth of coverage, interdisciplinarity” (Pennycook, 2001, p. 3) as well as by its inflection towards “questions of power and inequality,” or “political critiques of

social relations” (p. 4), which is not to say these impulses have not been brought to bear on the scholarship on (foreign) language pedagogy (Macedo, 2019).

Second, in contexts of Decolonial Applied Linguistics scholarship (Antia & Makoni, 2023; Pennycook & Makoni, 2020), the Global South refers less to geography and more to phenomenology, specifically to the experience of marginality linked to structural violence. Constitutive of the Global South are “social groups that have systematically suffered injustice, oppression, and destruction caused by capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy” both in their historical forms and modern reincarnations (de Sousa Santos, 2018, p. 1). On this reading, then, the Global South might be apt as designation for a majority of the subalternized peoples of Africa, Latin America and Oceania, but it is arguably just as apt for the experiences of residents of the 10th district in Paris, Rinkeby in Stockholm, or inner cities in the US. Precarity of socio-economic conditions is a common thread.

In these environments of socioeconomic precarity, it is ethically and morally most repugnant for arrangements in educational provisioning (including the role of language in assessment practices) to be underpinned by a hidden curriculum that basically seeks to reproduce social inequalities. It is in these environments that Messick’s politicization of tests, highlighting the interpretation and social uses of test scores, has deep resonance (Messick, 1990, 1994). Whether known by educators or not, the hidden agenda may reside in a set of language, literacy and related knowledge issues through which disarticulations are condoned, if not promoted, between the ethos/practices associated with educational provisioning by the state and the lived realities of specific student demographics. Let’s provide a thumb nail sketch of the sociolinguistics of environments of the Global South as a basis for attending to possible implications for multilingual assessment in the next section.

On the language score, and specifically the home or community language, the student’s experience in the Global South – whether diasporic (e.g., as a result of enslavement) or in the homeland (due to neocolonialism) – is one in which several of the following may apply. The home or community language may be different in kind from the school language (e.g., Bambara vs. French); it may be different in degree from the school language on a dialectal level. Where this home language is in fact used at school, the school variety may just as well be a foreign, non-intuitive language that has to be significantly learnt – no thanks to the colonial and other circumstances of its codification or invention (Makoni, 1998). This is over and above the acknowledgment that scholastic or academic language, following Bourdieu and Passeron (1994, p. 8), “is no one’s mother tongue” – which is not to say there are no degrees of cognitive proximity to

scholastic language that are socioeconomically motivated. The home or community language may be an eclectic variety that reflects the spontaneous orders of discourse associated with urban hustlers or *débrouillards*, and therefore defies unitary constructs of language (Makoni, 2018).

More broadly, on the language score, multilingualism in Southern environments has traditionally been claimed to differ from its Global Northern manifestations. Admittedly changes may be taking place and the picture is quite nuanced (e.g., at individual, family versus societal/official levels), but some 10-odd years ago my colleague, Felix Banda (2009, p. 5), offered an account of differences between Western and African multilingualisms. See Table 1.

Table 1: Sample differences between Western and African multilingualisms

1. The daily use of several languages in conversations and in a non-compartmentalized fashion has traditionally been more commonly reported in Africa than it has been in the West.	4. Not infrequently, Western scholarship on multilingual education has as its focus immigrant/migrant families and the imperative of assimilating these families into the host cultures. Transnationalism has not traditionally been a key driver of African scholarship on multilingualism.
2. In Africa, multilingualism is more likely to also refer to multidialectalism, whereas this has not traditionally been the case in the West.	5. Whereas multilingualism in environments of the European Global North is more likely to take for granted a culture of writing of each of the languages involved, African multilingualism typically still tends to be more skewed towards speech.
3. Whereas bi/multi-lingualism in the West has traditionally been the outcome of language learning, in Africa the more relevant process is language acquisition.	6. Not infrequently, in the European Global North, the named language used at home is the same one used at school, whereas it is doubtful that there is anyone in Africa who has completed primary, secondary and tertiary education only in an autochthonous African language.

Mohanty's account of his upbringing in India is revealing of multilingualism in many environments of the Global South:

I grew up in a beautifully multilingual world, moving naturally and spontaneously between people and languages, unconcerned by any boundaries and infringement. I did not have to bother about my own inadequacies in the languages I encountered, nor did I have to count the languages I knew or did not know. Levels of my competence in languages around me did not have to be judged. The binaries between knowing or not

knowing the language and the borders between them did not matter. What mattered is that I could move between the languages without any self-consciousness, and at the same time, with a sense of transient completeness. (Mohanty, 2018, p. 1)

These are not exactly the kinds of conditions for a local language learning industry to thrive. Besides, and interestingly, in many African school environments, the use of multiple African languages in local language pedagogy is not as widespread as might have been expected. In fact, a concern in such environments is how to discard a tradition of (the exclusive) use of European languages in teaching and assessing African languages.

On the literacy score, because the home/community language may possess little or no written corpus, there is usually little or no culture of reading in it, and its users may tend to be more of oral producers and aural consumers of information in it (Antia & Dyers, 2016). There may be few knowledgeable others in the home to model the kinds of literacy behaviours that are valued by the school context. In any case, there are precarious socio-economic conditions that limit the affordability of, and access to, reading material in the home. Children with print-poor and oral-dominant upbringing are more likely to experience a range of literacy disadvantages only because of the ethos underpinning school language use and other practices (Pretorius, 2008). As has been correctly pointed out, “students who have been socialized into a set of literacy practices that are not privileged in school settings (e.g., oral storytelling practices that differ from school-based practices in terms of chronology and focus) may appear to not know enough about literacy, when, in reality, they know a lot about different kinds of literacy practices that are not recognized as valid in school” (Frankel et al., 2016, p. 9). Bourdieu (1971) had hinted at disadvantages related to the rhetorical and linguistic qualities required by tests. One could speak of disadvantages related to the genre knowledge needed in educational assessment contexts for both receptive and productive purposes.

Issues of language, literacy and socio-economic precarity such as sketched above, obviously have repercussions on the knowledge base which educational institutions and their pedagogical practices assume students possess. To hark back to earlier posers in connection with Foucault’s idea of specific forms of observation being the basis for knowledge through which *examinations* have social controlling effects, the obvious question in the current and educational context might be: whose knowledge base, language profile and literacy exposure are taken into account in the development of those standardized national tests that require similar answers to the same questions, and whose results are

used for purposes (e.g., selection, badge of quality, etc.) they were said not to be designed for (Shohamy, 2022, p. 1446)?

4. Global Southern imperatives for multilingual assessment practices

I propose an initial set of ten considerations which, in their different ways, help to align (multilingual) assessment with what is arguably the sociolinguistics, aspirations and psychology of communities in the Global South. In the section after this, I offer some data to illustrate several of these.

Firstly, in terms of rationale, there are conceivably many motivations for multilingual assessment, almost irrespective of construct. Thus, a motivation such as identity *cum* integration may apply as much to an assessment of target language ability in a refugee camp as to an assessment of knowledge of Chemistry in a setting such as the following: Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in an international, upmarket school chain (e.g., the “European School” brand) that sees itself as forging professional and transnational European identities.

Besides identity, social justice is another rationale. Social justice has to do with arrangements that are made to ensure equal/equitable participation, recognition and resource distribution within a society (Fraser, 2003). For many an Applied Linguist in the Global South, multilingual assessment would be motivated by social justice considerations such as performance disparities between groups of students and implications for unequal access to life chances. Also, preoccupation with social justice would pivot around not just the cultural parity pillar in Fraser’s account of social justice (Fraser, 2003), but it would also strongly invoke either one or both of the other two pillars, namely, economic parity (e.g., redistributing or rethinking access to economic opportunity) and participatory parity (in decision-making processes). While identity, as an aspect of cultural recognition, is obviously important, vigilance is required to determine whether integration *cum* identity that is promoted through multilingual assessment is simultaneously an invitation to submit to social control mechanisms of assimilation and identity loss.

Secondly, there is the construct assessed in multilingual assessment (Seed, 2020). Content knowledge would seem to be a priority construct in the Global South. In the knowledge economy of an unequal world, disciplinary knowledge is arguably the substratum on which (inter)cultural competence is built to enable access to economic opportunity and to guarantee a seat at the table. It is, after all, the case that many experts in the developed world who are today leveraging opportunities in the developing world to ply their trade were taught and assessed

in their national languages and only later (where applicable) did they learn the language of their target destinations. With intergenerational lives of economic vulnerability being a hallmark of many experiences in the Global South, there must be something to be said for teaching, learning and assessing content knowledge in ways that prevent language from being an obstacle. The prioritization of content knowledge in assessment (in other words, the multilingual assessment of Data Science, Chemistry, etc.) holds out promise for realizing Fraser's three kinds of parity – economic, participatory and cultural.

But even when language is the construct, Shohamy has shown with her Critical Language Testing (CLT) framework that the focus can transcend narrow pedagogical pursuits to underscore the misuses of tests – which resonates with the questions of power and social inequality in Southern contexts especially. This makes the CLT framework transferable to content knowledge areas. Easily redesignated Critical Approach to Testing (CAT), CLT is unabashed in acknowledging its ideological, political, social, cultural and other inflections; it sees tests as embedded within contexts of ideological struggle and refuses to “separate language testing from the many contexts in which it operates;” it considers test-takers as “political subjects within a political context;” it challenges the knowledge that tests are based upon, and advocates a democratic representation of the multiple groups of society; it asks questions about which and whose agendas tests serve (Shohamy, 1998, p. 332, 333; 2017). A test is not simply a test, and many of its design features, uses and consequences need to be constantly scrutinized.

Thirdly, principles of assessment (Brown, 2003; Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010) will have to continue to be reinterpreted or developed from Southern perspectives in order to, among others, accentuate social justice. The principle of assessment validity traditionally requires a test to measure nothing else but what was intended, which could be an ability (*construct validity*) or the scope (*content validity*), etc. Validity is flouted when something else is measured. The case is easily made that withholding multilingual assessment from students can negatively affect construct validity. Let's illustrate with the construct of addition as an arithmetic operation. Imagine Figure 1 appearing on a textbook page, and an accompanying question purportedly testing the construct of addition (and nothing else) and asking students how many mice there are on the page.



How many mice are there?

Figure 1: Construct validity and language

Just how fair is it to penalize a child who gives “three” as answer? While ostensibly assessing the operation of addition, this task is simultaneously (or in disguise) assessing the number system (singular and plural) of English grammar. The child who answers “four” with justifiable confidence knows that mice is the plural of mouse (and does not fall for the shade distractor suggesting perhaps that mouse is a particular type of “mice”). There is differential construct validity here as the child who is not familiar with the English number system may answer “three.” None of these construct validity concerns arise if the labelling and the question are both in English and isiXhosa (the child’s familiar language) or exclusively in the latter, as seen in Textbox 1.

Textbox 1 Multilingual version of construct validity task

iimpuku ezintathu

three mice

impuku enye

one mouse

Zingaphi iimpuku eziphaya?

How many mice are there?

We find in this confirmation for the view that “any test that employs language is, at least in part, a measure of language skills” (Stansfield, 2008, p. 1), and for the imperative of mitigating the effect of expression through linguistic diversification.

A Southern take on assessment is also consistent with some extended notions of validity as well as justified by a number of other assessment principles. Messick’s notion of *consequential validity* allows us to question the appropriateness of a test whose results are skewed in favour of test-takers of certain profiles, and are (mis)used to classify, exclude, label, etc. (J. D. Brown, 2000; Frey, 2015; Messick, 1994). The related notion of differential validity refers to an assessment that is “accurate and fair for some groups, but not for others” (Frey, 2015, p. 23).

Authenticity as an assessment principle requires a task to reflect real-world situations. In language terms, this is easily construed as the ordinariness and quotidian nature of multilingualing. In terms of content, this means making the *input* for the assessment relevant, rather than it being drawn from possibly alienating (e.g., unfamiliar middle-class) domains of experience. Reliability, specifically student-related reliability, means that a student’s performance is consistent across iterations of the test because performance-shaping variables (e.g., anxiety) are kept under control (Zeidner, 1998). The language and literacy requirements of a task may be sources of anxiety that contribute to inaccurate test scores (Antia et al., 2021). Therefore, attending to these requirements in situationally appropriate ways is one means through which the principle of reliability contributes to fairness of assessments. If washback as a principle requires assessment practices to positively influence learning, then feedback as a source of learning and a modality of washback may be more effective if offered multilingually. In sum, taken together with a broadening of Shohamy’s critical framework beyond language testing, a re-reading of assessment principles provides some guardrails of relevance for initiatives on multilingual assessment in the Global South.

Fourthly, language use in assessment in the Global South necessarily has to be seen as occupying a broad ontological spectrum. In other words, Southern environments are traditionally associated with an expansive ideology of language, from apparent plural monolingualisms (Heller, 1999), through non-standardized languages and multi-dialectalism (Antia & Dyers, 2016) to a range of differently named heteroglossic practices in which verbal communication takes place without adherence to the social boundaries of named languages (Otheguy et al., 2015; Mohanty, 2018). Awareness of how the language of (high stakes) assessment can be pressed into a politics of societal engineering, to force uptake of a *de facto* language policy (Shohamy, 2006), problematizes the language and assessment interface. It does so not just in the choice of language for assessment, but also in the ideology underpinning language use in assessment (Antia, 2021). Heteroglossic-type

practices are the norm, and can even operate on a substratum of plural monolingualisms – such as when students make meaning by reading across different language versions of an assessment delivered in co-linguaging format (Antia, 2017).

Fifthly, no less important in a Southern context, are the assessment situations and micro-contexts (or purposes) in which multilingualism is deployed. The social justice rationale requires that multilingual assessment in these environments transcend (or be not confined to) informal assessment situations during teaching, and extend to formal, summative assessments whose results tend to be seen and used as the “publicly acceptable code for quality” that Broadfoot and Black (2004, p. 9) referred to. There is no disputing the benefit of classroom episodes of informal, dynamic assessment, but it needs to be recognized also that the language in which high-stakes assessment is administered “adds to the prestige of that language” (Schissel, 2010, p. 17). A hierarchy of languages is reinscribed when local languages only appear as lexical support or in instructions, helpful as these may be, but excluded from other parts of an assessment such as: *input* (information/data supplied for consideration), *response* (how answer is provided), *feedback* (comments on performance/expectations), *feed forward* (evaluation grid made available before task is completed), etc. Exclusions may be indexical, indicating what value is attached to specific languages.

Sixthly, for precisely the reasons adduced in the fifth point above, policy warrants are required for multilingual assessment. It is, in other words, important to have language policy provisions that institutionalize practices of multilingual assessment. For too long, educational language policies have avoided making explicit provisions for assessment. The almost nefarious uses of assessment in certain contexts, or even the unintended negative consequences of assessment, are such that clear policy guardrails are required in the Global South for multilingual assessment. An important import of such policy guardrail is the alignment of teaching-learning with assessment in terms of language, as argued further in the ninth point below.

Seventhly, in the same way as the notion of learning styles has established itself in many a teaching context, written language and its dominant prosaic genre need to be reconsidered as the central “modes” of assessment. Today, in teaching, it is acknowledged that some learners are more visual, or more auditory or more kinesthetic – to take a few styles that challenge the prevailing orthodoxy. In the context of assessment, a plea has been made “for the use of multiple methods or tasks and multiple indicators of learning to ensure the accuracy, fairness, reliability, and validity of professional judgment about student performance” (Koh, 2017, p. 10). Different semiotic modes of assessment are arguably a corollary of the principle underpinning the pleas for multiple methods of assessment. There

is, therefore, no reason why the semiotic modes associated with assessment in the Global South should further exacerbate the structural violence experienced in these environments. In a world order where the culture of recitation at *madrassa* schools were the dominant mode of proving one's knowledge, learners with backgrounds in written literacy would obviously be on the back foot.

Attention to multiple semiotic modes for assessment would simply be consistent with widespread recognition of the multimodality of communication. A consideration of multimodal options, or what has been called *transmodality* in assessment (Steele et al., 2022), might see the written instructions (with their rhetoric qualities) being complemented by speech genres such as scripted and pre-recorded oral translation, sight (and spontaneous) translation done by an interpreter, among others (Stansfield, 2008), and depending on the specific circumstances. While being multilingual, input can where feasible also be made more multimodal in order to reduce the information load associated with processing written scenarios, cases, data, etc. As response mode, contextually suitable options (multilingual, multimodal, multi-genre) should also be considered.

Eighthly, assessment practices in the Global South, consistently with a critical approach to testing, need to be alert to the cultural substratum on which they are based. The culture underpinning the task, its instruction and input, as well as the approach expected in relation to the expected response, needs careful consideration to ensure some alignment with the universe of the test-takers. On this view, then, culture as a potential source of assessment invalidity is not found only in foreign language comprehension tasks or in the humanities and social sciences, or even in the assumptions made in tasks in civil engineering or anaesthesiology. In a much broader sense, and consistently with the above point on learning styles, cultural assumptions can also be found in what has been called thinking styles. To bring about culturally responsive assessment practices, Nayir et al. (2019, p. 42) encourage test developers to be aware of two main styles of thinking while developing assessments: "Style A (Analytically logical, Abstract, Objective, Dialectic and Doubting) and Style B (Holistic, Metaphorical, Subjective, Integrative, Believing)."

While one must guard against essentialization, it amounts to cultural non-responsiveness for a task to make much of female-male distinction in some societies as basis for grammatical gender for test-takers for whom these distinctions do not exist (traditionally); or for a task to require students from cultural backgrounds characterized by high power distance (*sensu* Hofstede, 1986) to naturally display a doubting thinking style; etc. I am reminded of several North American television DIY (do-it-yourself) shows where two participants compete for a prize (e.g., the homes they are renovating). A cue from the moderator such as "go into your assigned house, find your toolbox, then bring it over here to

start making your furniture” appears simple enough. However, when a participant spends about 20 minutes looking for a toolbox in all the wrong places, it immediately becomes apparent how relevant to task performance the following is: cultural knowledge of where tools are kept in a middle-class western home.

Ninthly, although there are a variety of ways in which language diversity addresses validity concerns in assessment and perhaps introduces fresh concerns (Antia, 2017), it is important not to overestimate the importance of language as a means of understanding and demonstrating knowledge. To do so would betray a facile understanding of the relationship between language/knowledge for general purposes and specialized knowledge/language. Multilingual assessment needs to be implemented as part of a broader pedagogical ecosystem of practices, and it cannot be a substitute for teaching multilingually. In some Southern communities or for certain constructs of assessment, it would amount to precious little for teaching to be in one language, and for the assessment to be administered in languages that were not part of the formal teaching. There is no guarantee that terminology used in (or created for) question stems would be understood if such terminology had not previously been encountered in teaching and learning, or if it varied from the one used in teaching and learning (Antia & Kamai, 2016). The situation could easily lead to construct invalidity.

Tenthly, in environments of the Global South, the offer of multi-lingual (-modal, -generic) assessment may not be taken up, or only be taken up with suspicion, because the social indexicalities of other arrangements in education and in society are seen as negating, or at least as incompatible with, the avowed intentions of assessment “accommodation.” The issue here is not one of diversity or even inclusion but of belonging, of being at home rather than being a stranger. This is how a South African university student recently put it while contrasting multilingual (hence putatively “accommodating”) education with the ubiquitous campus symbols of marginalization and oppression of Black students. The issue is one of a problematization of the offeror–offeree relations, applicable in homeland and diasporic contexts of the Southern experience. These relations are again problematized in another South African context. In a documentary film, *Luister*,² produced at the time of the #RhodesMustFall movement of 2015/2016 by some staff and students of Stellenbosch University in South Africa, a student asks what right a minority has to accommodate a majority.

Much of the literature on assessment accommodation is directed at categories which many in Southern environments (especially but not exclusively in

2 See URL for *Luister*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sF3rTBQTQk4>

homelands) do not see themselves as fitting into: immigrants or people with a migration background, ethnic minorities, X-language learners, speakers of heritage languages, emergent bilinguals, etc. Not infrequently, the offer of accommodations reflects a view of “accommodations as a tool that levels the playing field for ELLs’ [English language learners] and students with disabilities’ test performances vis-à-vis populations for whom the tests were originally designed” (Schissel, 2010, p. 18, describing US policies). Such views elicit offeree objections to a re-inscription of difference and power asymmetry. From the standpoint of the student in the *Luister* documentary, the question would be: why does an assessment need to be originally designed for the minority, such that measures are subsequently needed for the majority to be accommodated? To push the argument further, why can’t the principles of universal design underpin the development of assessment tasks such that power asymmetries are mitigated, and labelling is dispensed with?

5. Multilingual assessment: Some experiences in the Global South

Let’s now consider some practices of multilingual assessment in the Global South, especially in light of the considerations in the previous section. We draw on examples from India, the Northern Territory of Australia and South Africa.

India has decades of experience of multilingual assessment in a number of contexts, including university entrance examinations as well as in such public entities as the Railways. The undergraduate version of the Indian National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) is a standardized test taken by students seeking admission into medical and dental degree courses.³ It is administered multilingually. Test-takers choose in advance the language in which they wish to write the test, from the languages on offer for the particular examination year. In part, the multilingual NEET was motivated by an acknowledgment that test-takers are not limited to speakers of the national official languages of English and Hindi, but that there are also test-takers who speak Gujarati, Bengali, Kannada, Assamese, Marathi, Odiya, Urdu, Telegu and Tamil among hundreds of other languages. The social justice idea of the language of one’s home or state not being the basis of undue (dis)advantage and regional disparities is evident here, as is presumably concern to prevent language from affecting construct validity. The attention to knowledge content areas is evident.

Similar rationales and emphases are evident in a more recent initiative. In 2019, the Indian government took a decision announced by the instructively named

3 <https://shorturl.at/GLW36>

Ministry of Human Resource Development that it was committing to administering the Joint Engineering Examinations (JEE Main) in 8 additional languages, thus increasing the number to 11. The languages are: Hindi, Gujarati, English, Bengali, Kannada, Assamese, Marathi, Odiya, Urdu, Telegu and Tamil. The JEE is “an engineering entrance examination conducted by NTA [National Testing Agency] across the nation for admission into Engineering colleges it is an objective-based exam.”⁴ Figure 2 is a sample page from a Physics question paper.

SET - 10	ENGLISH	PHYSICS	SET - 10	HINDI	PHYSICS
	<p>Set - 10</p> <p>PART A – PHYSICS ALL THE GRAPHS/DIAGRAMS GIVEN ARE SCHEMATIC AND NOT DRAWN TO SCALE.</p> <p>1. The percentage errors in quantities P, Q, R and S are 0.5%, 1%, 3% and 1.5% respectively in the measurement of a physical quantity $A = \frac{P^3 Q^2}{\sqrt{R} S}$. The maximum percentage error in the value of A will be:</p> <p>(1) 6.0% (2) 7.5% (3) 8.5% (4) 6.5%</p> <p>2. Let $\vec{A} = (\hat{i} + \hat{j})$ and $\vec{B} = (2\hat{i} - \hat{j})$. The magnitude of a coplanar vector \vec{C} such that $\vec{A} \cdot \vec{C} = \vec{B} \cdot \vec{C} = \vec{A} \cdot \vec{B}$, is given by:</p> <p>(1) $\sqrt{\frac{10}{9}}$ (2) $\sqrt{\frac{5}{9}}$ (3) $\sqrt{\frac{20}{9}}$ (4) $\sqrt{\frac{9}{12}}$</p>			<p>भाग A – भौतिक विज्ञान दिए गये सभी ग्राफ/रेखाकृतियाँ आरेखीय हैं और स्केल के अनुसार रेखांकित नहीं हैं।</p> <p>1. एक भौतिक राशि $A = \frac{P^3 Q^2}{\sqrt{R} S}$ के मापन के लिये, P, Q, R तथा S के मापन में प्रतिशत त्रुटियाँ क्रमशः 0.5%, 1%, 3% और 1.5% हैं। A के मान में अधिकतम प्रतिशत त्रुटि होगी :</p> <p>(1) 6.0% (2) 7.5% (3) 8.5% (4) 6.5%</p> <p>2. माना कि $\vec{A} = (\hat{i} + \hat{j})$ एवं $\vec{B} = (2\hat{i} - \hat{j})$ है। एक समतल वेक्टर \vec{C} इस प्रकार है कि $\vec{A} \cdot \vec{C} = \vec{B} \cdot \vec{C} = \vec{A} \cdot \vec{B}$, तो \vec{C} का परिमाण होगा :</p> <p>(1) $\sqrt{\frac{10}{9}}$ (2) $\sqrt{\frac{5}{9}}$ (3) $\sqrt{\frac{20}{9}}$ (4) $\sqrt{\frac{9}{12}}$</p>	

Figure 2: Sample bilingual JEE Physics question paper⁵

4 <https://testbook.com/blog/jee-main-exam-multiple-languages/>

5 <https://market.edugorilla.com/product/jee-main-question-paper-with-answers-key-2018-3/>

While in the above two cases (NEET and JEE) the ontology of language used in assessment is one of parallel monolingualisms, in the next example the situation is one of litigation over a case that might have qualified as a more heteroglossic ontology. In the case, RAM RATAN & ORS. V. UNION OF INDIA & ORS, the court was asked to consider if the decision of Indian Railways in cancelling promotion/selection tests was correct. The decision of the Railways was consequent upon representation by two groups of test-takers who complained, among others, that “the question paper for examination was not made bilingual as required by the letter of the Railway Board dated 8.7.1992;” in other words, “that the question paper was not bilingual; that it was only in Hindi.”⁶ As an Applied linguist reading the facts of the case and the text of the judgment delivered, what I see in the original representation to Indian Railways are test-takers complaining that they normally access knowledge or gain understanding heteroglossically, and not just in Hindi with which one might have assumed some of the complainants at least would have much affinity. English was also important to their knowledge processing. If the intention of the Railways circular was that the assessment would be administered in a co-langaging format, then the original representation to the Railways was, even beyond the promise in the circular, asserting the right of the complainants to process the instructions bilingually, across Hindi and English. The court in its wisdom saw the matter differently.

In the Indian experience, it is not only in content areas or for instruction and input that multilingualism is incorporated into assessment. In an English Second Language context, Mahapatra (2018) reports on bilingual assessment rubrics (English-Odia) as a feedback tool and on its impact in enhancing the English writing skills of learners in three schools in Odisha State. See Table 2 for the ontology of language evident in the rubrics.

6 <https://www.casemine.com/judgement/in/56b4957a607dba348f012f66>

Table 2: Bilingual Odia-English assessment rubric

Levels	Task Achievement and Organization (ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶନାମାନୁସାରେ ବୈକଳ୍ପିକ ବିଷୟାବଳୀରୁ topic ଉପରେ ସଠିକ ଭାବରେ ଲେଖା ପୂଜା କରିବାକୁ ଶକ୍ତତା)	Sentence Formation and Vocabulary (ବାକ୍ୟ ଏବଂ ଶବ୍ଦ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିବାର ଶକ୍ତତା)	Mechanics (ability to spell correctly, use capitalization and dictionary) (ବେକାଇବା, ବ୍ୟବହାରୀ ଲେକର, ଚିହ୍ନଟିକା ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିବାର ଶକ୍ତତା)
B1 (Good)	<p>He/she can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ applications, formal letters, post cards, short news reports, etc. ଲେଖିବା ବେଳେ କୁସାଧାରଣତା format follow କରିପାରିବି ➢ କିଛି ବି ଲେଖିବାକୁ ବେଳେ teacherଙ୍କର ଅତି ଦେଖା support ବିନା complete କରିପାରିବି ➢ ଉପାହାସ ବିଷୟ ଉପରେ paragraphs ଲେଖିପାରିବି ➢ post cards, very short news reports and letters ଲେଖିପାରିବି ➢ କେବଳ ଶେଷରେ information and ideas ଠିକ ଭାବରେ ସଜାଡି ବା organized manner ରେ present କରିପାରିବି ➢ ଯଦି teacherଙ୍କ ସହ କିଛି writing discuss karanti and ତାଙ୍କର advice follow karanti, ତାଙ୍କର ଭଲ ଲେଖି ପାରିବି 	<p>He/she can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ past, present and futureର ଉପରେ simple and short sentences ଲେଖି ପାରିବି ➢ ଲେଖିବା ବେଳେ singular and plural forms ଭିତରେ difference ରୁ sentenceରେ ଠିକ ଭାବରେ use କରିପାରିବି ➢ 'and' and 'but' ଭଳି words କୁ ଅଭାଗରେ use କରିପାରିବି sentenceରେ ➢ ଲେଖିବା ବେଳେ ଲେଖିବା ବେଳେ proper vocabulary use କରିପାରିବି ➢ 'on', 'in', 'over', 'under', 'outside', 'inside', etc. ଭଳି prepositions କୁ sentenceରେ use କରିପାରିବି ➢ ଦୈନିକ ପତ୍ରିକା books and newspapersରେ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରାଯାଉଥିବା sentences କୁ closely ନିରୀକ୍ଷଣ କରିବି, ତାଙ୍କର ଭଲ writing improve କରିପାରିବି 	<p>He/she can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ ପ୍ରାୟ simple wordsର correct spelling କରିବି ➢ capital letter ଯୋଗ କାରିବାକୁ necessary, ଦୋରାଣି ବିନା problemsରେ use କରିପାରିବି ➢ proper କାରିବାରେ full stop କୁ confidently use କରିପାରିବି and comma କୁ କିଛି ଭାବରେ properly use କରିପାରିବି ➢ ଦରକାର ବେଳେ support ପାଇଁ dictionary use କରିବା କରିବି ➢ ନିଜର spelling or capital letter related mistakes କୁ ସୁଧି ପାରିବି

Based on levels and descriptors of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, the rubric shows Odia and English being blended. Using rubrics of this kind over a 6-month period, teachers provided feedback to learners on the latter’s essays. The very first sentence of Mahapatra’s report highlights socially just pedagogy as rationale for the initiative: “In rural ESL contexts, teachers have to deal with large classes and it is difficult for them to offer feedback to every learner, especially in writing classes” (Mahapatra, 2018, p. 32).

Learners’ portfolios were analysed after 6 months, using three criteria, namely, task achievement and organization, sentence formation and vocabulary, and mechanics. Each criterion was weighted in terms of the following: major progress, some progress and no or insignificant progress. A conclusion was that the bilingual rubric had the most visible positive effect on task achievement and organization, but that it was least effective with mechanics.

Let’s now turn to another context, that of Aboriginal students in the Northern Territory of Australia. Work in this context, as reported notably by Piller (2016) and by Steele et al. (2022), underscores the need for assessment that is both multi-dialectal or – lingual and culturally sensitive. There was concern that students in the Northern Territory of Australia, which is home to a majority of the country’s Aboriginal students, underperformed significantly on a standardized test, the National Assessment Programme – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). This concern saw the government of the Territory do two things: eradicate a

pre-existing bilingual education program that had included Aboriginal languages (e.g., Creole-based English) and increase the number of hours spent teaching Standard Australian English, or SAE (Steele et al., 2022). It would seem all to no avail, considering that there was not much improvement in subsequent NAPLAN test scores.

Piller (2016, p. 119) cites an interesting example of how NAPLAN test designers erroneously imagined the closeness of the grammars of SAE and Creole to be, and how this in turn led to unintended constructs being assessed in the tests. In a task item, “We *jumpt* on the trampoline,” the intended construct was spelling, i.e., correcting the spelling of the past tense form of the verb. As it turns out, for speakers of Aboriginal Creoles, the test had grammatical competence as construct, rather than just spelling. These indigenous students produced an answer that reflected the formation of the past tense of “jump” in their language (“bin jump”), that is, “We bin jump on trampoline,” and were marked wrong. Construct validity may have been achieved by instruction in Creole, making it clear that what was required was (1) identifying from a SAE perspective the error in the spelling of “jumpt”, and (2) correcting this spelling error from a SAE standpoint.

Regarding cultural non-responsive assessments, Piller notes further that “students in remote Northern Territory locations are further disadvantaged by the fact that the reading passages in the NAPLAN test are littered with cultural concepts quite alien to the experience of children in remote Australia” (Piller, 2016, p. 116). Examples include: parking meters, picket fences, paperboys, etc. But perhaps Piller’s most telling example of cultural bias in assessment comes from elsewhere. It is the story of a child in a refugee camp, who had recently arrived in the US, and was new to English and lacked the background knowledge of his American peers. Oscar’s Grade 5 class had to read a passage on Neil Armstrong’s landing on the moon, and one of the questions was whether the account was fact or fiction. Oscar’s answer below shows that although he knew the difference between fact and fiction (the construct assessed), he failed because “his knowledge of the world was quite different from that of the middle-class native-born ‘standard’ child the test designers seem to have had in mind” (Piller, 2016, p. 117):

“Oh, Mrs. Irvine, man don’t go on the moon, man don’t go on the back of eagles, this is not true.”

The presumably undetected biases we see above, of linguistic structure and of cultural knowledge, underscore the need for test development to take place in teams which, beyond the mere diversity of its members, have received training in, and are extremely sensitive to, potential sources of bias. This is important

because, as Steele et al. (2022, p. 5) observe, the “social, cultural and political contexts in which assessments are embedded advantage some groups in society and disadvantage others and these biases are inherently unfair and, therefore, threaten the validity of the assessment.”

To get to our final context: in Africa, it is striking that in spite of the over 2000 languages said to exist on the continent, until perhaps recently, only 9 were used as official media of instruction at secondary school level, and 5 of these (all exogenous to Africa) were used in the high stakes end-of-high-school examinations (Antia, 2021). A lot of the current thinking underpinning the practice of, experimentation with, and research into, multilingual assessment at basic and tertiary levels of education is linked to imperatives to decolonize an educational system that is yet to wean itself from self-defeating aspects of its colonial heritage (Antia & Dyers, 2019; Kellaghan & Greaney, 2003; Verspoor et al., 2008) and to address performance disparities and their broader social (justice) implications (Antia, 2021; Antia et al., 2021; Brock-Utne, 2008; Heugh, 2011; October, 2000; Ouane & Glanz, 2011). In the high-stakes end-of-high school examinations in South Africa, a sociolinguistic structuring of performance in a province (the Western Cape) has been observed, in which the top performers are White while the least performers are Black (October, 2000). Regarding the same high-stakes assessment, but nationally, it was observed a decade later that of “those who do pass, and who pass well, are those who have mother-tongue education throughout the education system. They are first language speakers of English and Afrikaans” (Heugh, 2011, p. 261).

Within South African Higher Education in particular, a range of multilingual initiatives (in teaching, learning and assessment) may be seen as addressing now evident shortcomings in the very design of the system, acknowledged as follows by the country’s think-tank in Higher Education, the Council on Higher Education (CHE): “the structure and assumptions of the core degrees were set many decades ago, [and were] predicated on a largely homogeneous intake with middle-class cultural capital and mother tongue as the language of instruction” (CHE, 2013, p. 63). Obviously, such assumptions are no longer tenable, given that the doors of learning are in principle open to all demographics but performance disparities continue to be observed.

Language policies that institutionalize multilingualism are one means through which this rejigging is taking place. South African universities are required by law to formulate language policies outlining plans for diversifying the languages used within domains of institutional activity. Consider two examples. Having recognized Setswana, Sesotho, English and Afrikaans as the main institutional languages, North-West University’s Language Policy of 2022 provides for

functional multilingualism or situational decision-making (by campuses, faculties, etc.) regarding languages to be used for “teaching-learning and assessment” (North-West University, 2022, p. 3). As far back as two decades ago, the 2003 language policy of the University of the Western Cape (UWC) had the following provision in the equally instructively titled section on “languages of teaching, learning and assessment”:

Regarding the languages used in the setting of tasks, assignments, tests and examinations, English, Afrikaans and Xhosa should be used wherever it is practicable to do so. (UWC, 2003, p. 1)

In addition to the language of instructions in assessment, the UWC language policy separately provides for language of response. English is the default language that can, however, be substituted by another upon negotiation by class and lecturer.

The following is obvious thus far: in these African contexts, the critique is largely of pedagogical practices designed for the minority rather than for the majority; multilingual assessment in these contexts is significantly about content knowledge areas; it is seen as part of a broader ecology that also includes teaching and learning activities.

With respect to the ontology of language use, from recall and simulated studies conducted in South Africa (Antia, 2017, 2021; Antia & Dyers, 2016, 2017, 2019), test-takers at both university and high school levels report translanguaging with beneficial effect, on the basis of question papers delivered in co-languaging format. Figure 3 is a sample of the South African end-of-high school examinations which have traditionally been administered in Afrikaans and English (with ongoing piloting of selected African languages).

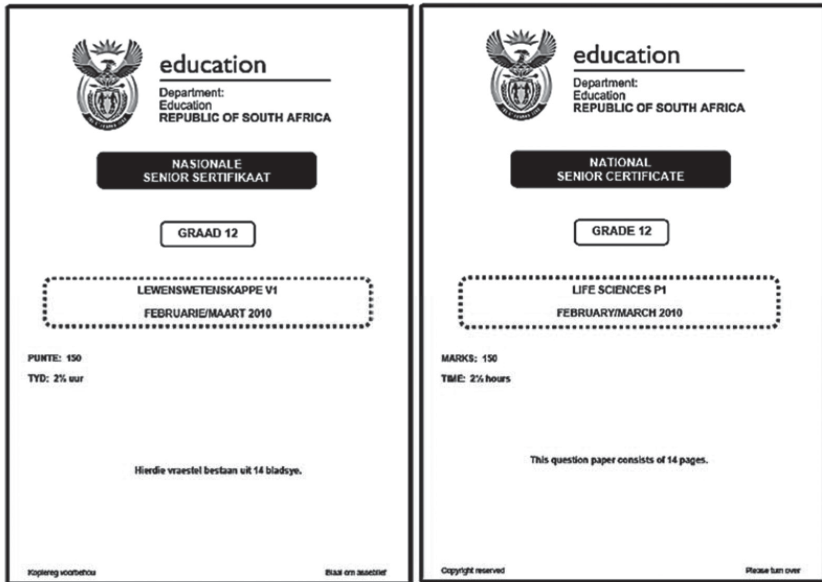


Figure 3: Bilingual administration of South Africa's end-of-high school examinations

This co-linguaging format applies only to content knowledge subjects, and not to language assessments. In studies (Antia, 2017, 2021) in which university students recalled how they had accessed the different language versions of the end-of-high school examinations or in which they participated in a computer-based simulation allowing access to different language versions, participants leveraged the ontology of parallel monolingualisms in the question papers to make meaning heteroglossically or via translanguaging. See Table 3.

Table 3: Reported patterns and benefits of consulting alternate language matrix

Language profiles of respondents	Respondents' language behaviour...		Benefits	
	consulted alternate L (%)	never consulted alternate L (%)	Benefits reported from consultation (%)	no/hardly any benefit reported from consultation (%)
1. HL speakers of LL (typically isiXhosa) other than English and Afrikaans writing matrix in English (n = 43)	19	81	14	86
2. HL speakers of Afrikaans writing matrix in Afrikaans (n = 40)	75	25	69	31
3. HL speakers of English writing the matrix in English (n = 36)	41	59	42	58

Key: L = language; LL = Languages; L1 = home language

In Table 3, we see how respondents who were home language speakers of English (or Afrikaans) and had registered to write the examination in their home language, consulted the alternate language – Afrikaans (or English), and reported substantial benefits (Antia, 2017).

In Table 4, a computer simulation of the same exit-level examination using screen-tracking software (Antia, 2021), we see how a Kaaps-speaking student again leverages the different language versions of the examination in tourism to make meaning heteroglossically.

Table 4: Dynamics and benefits of translanguaging in data from a Kaaps-speaking participant

Question	Languages consulted (according to sequence) and time spent per language consultation			Answer and correctness	Motivation provided by student
	Afrikaans	English	Afrikaans		
1	40 seconds (sec) 70 milliseconds (mill)	–	–	C ✓	Not a problem. I did not need to consult English.
2	43 sec 90 mill	60 sec 20 mill	–	A ✓	The word <i>beleidsraamwerk</i> wasn't clear to me. The English term <i>policy framework</i> was easier to understand.
3	17 sec 80 mill	11 sec 70 mill	–	D ✓	I knew that the <i>sho't left</i> campaign was about promoting tourism within South Africa but I couldn't decide between the options C (<i>Kultuur- en-erfenisontwikkeling</i>) and D (<i>Binnelandse Toerismegroei</i>). When going to the English text, the answer became clear as soon as I saw the word <i>domestic</i> .
4	8 sec 40 mill	–	–	B ✓	Understood easily.
5	1 min 6 sec 20 mill	13 sec 20 mill	–	C X	Not useful [as] abbreviations were the same.
6	1 min 14 sec 50 mill	8 sec	3 sec 6 mill	C ✓	By looking at the options given in Afrikaans, I couldn't really distinguish between the options given. By looking at the English text, the answer was clear and the options were clear as well.
7	1 min 4 sec 80 mill	16 sec	–	C ✓	I could not make sense of the options when I looked at the Afrikaans version, yet I knew exactly what the answer was in English. The connection between the English question and answer was clearer.

In Table 4, paradoxically, we see that a student one might have expected to find the Afrikaans version sufficient for their needs, repeatedly draws on the English, thus lending some credence to the argument made with respect to the Indian Railway workers.

This question of some freedom of language choice is also underscored in a study reporting on an advanced certificate course for teachers offered by the University of the Western Cape, in collaboration with the Western Cape Education Department, that was intended to enable these subject teachers to teach bilingually in isiXhosa and English: “It is worth pointing out, however, that teachers felt it was important to have options. People appreciated the chance of exercising a choice in the matter of the language of assessment” (Plüddemann et al., 2010, p. 86)

Similar patterns of language use and benefits have been reported in the multilingual teaching and assessment initiative with which I have been associated at the same institution (University of the Western Cape, UWC). In (content) assessment for the course in question, students receive the instructions multilingually and are able to write multilingually, as provided for in the institution’s language policy referred to previously. See Textbox 2 for a sample task.

Textbox 2 Multilingual task instructions in a course on multilingualism at UWC

LCS 311 (MULTILINGUALISM)

SEMESTER TEST: 22 APRIL 2016

Write an essay entitled ‘The Inadequacies of a Monolingual Policy in a Multilingual Country’.

Your essay should discuss the three major disadvantages of such a policy: exclusion, marginalization and ignorance.

Afrikaans translation of question 1:

Skryf ‘n opstel met die titel ‘Die Tekortkominge van ‘n Eentalige Beleid in ‘n Veeltalige Land’. Jou opstel moet die drie hoof-nadele van so ‘n beleid bespreek: uitsluiting, marginalisering en onkunde.

isiXhosa translation of question 1:

Bhala isincoko esinesihloko esithi ‘Ukunganeli koMgaqo-Nkqubo woLwimi olu-Nye kwiLizwe elineelwimi eziNinzi’. Isincoko sakho masixoxe ngezinto ezintathu ezizezona zingeloncedo kuMgaqo-Nkqubo ololo hlobo: ukukhuphela ngaphandle, ukubekela bucala kunye nokungazi.

The following excerpts are representative of views by students polled in a survey in which they reported how they had experienced the multilingual assessment initiative in the course. The sample responses are grouped into three assessment stages: input, processing and output. At the input stage of understanding the instructions:

- *I have found it **useful** to have some of the test questions translated into isiXhosa. To see the questions in isiXhosa **lessened the levels of anxiety** I have I was **less anxious** because I was able to read the question both in English and isiXhosa.*
- *I like the fact that in exams the English as well as the Afrikaans language is being used as it **bettors my understanding** of certain questions.*

At the processing stage of interpreting and figuring out an answer:

- *What also made me **happy** was the fact that I had more time to interpret things **carefully** because the fact that I naturally think in isiXhosa was accompanied by isiXhosa notes. This made me **understand concepts clearer without the hassle** of translating my isiXhosa thoughts to English [...].*

At the output stage of writing down an answer:

- *I was also given a chance to respond using any language for the test. I must say it was **great exercise**, on this module I was permitted to engage in translanguaging and that has **enhanced my performance**, I used isiXhosa and English to respond to questions and I obtained **more than 70 %** on the term test. I am one of the black South African who has a poor English proficiency therefore these arrangements have **boosted my confidence** and my academic performance.*

The fact that students used expressions of appraisal like “useful,” “less anxious,” “bettors my understanding,” “happy,” and “carefully” shows the almost cathartic sense of release experienced by these students who are no longer trapped in a monolingual frame, but can draw on a wider pool of their linguistic resources. The sense of being in a safe space owing to the presence of home languages can be related to what Mbembe (2016, pp. 29–30) calls the democratization of access at South African universities: “the possibility to inhabit a space to the extent that one can say, ‘This is my home. I am not a foreigner. I belong here.’” However, the multidimensional nature of the input that was required for the notion of belonging to become real for a student, most probably explains the rather low uptake by students of our offer in the above course for them to respond multilingually in examinations. The conjecture now would have to be that the offer was viewed

with some element of suspicion, as there were other elements of the system's design that were experienced as alienating.

6. Implications for building a global discourse community

To return to the story with which I began this chapter, it is obvious that identifying different interpretations of multilingual assessment and linking several of these to epistemic locations, without this amounting to essentialization, is important for developing a global discourse community. Recall the gauntlet dropped by Dendrinios (2019), who decries the fragmentary nature of the sub-discipline of multilingual assessment, the absence of “a common discourse” as well as the dearth of consequential dialogue between researchers of presumably different backgrounds. In response, I propose to operationalize the considerations put forward in this chapter as a tool that allows for mapping practices and traditions of multilingual assessment onto a set of criteria, which may sometimes signpost epistemic positions from which accounts are offered. The tool is presented as Figure 4.

Modelling multilingual assessment

Describe your context of multilingual assessment.
Where on the axis associated with each criterion below do you place multilingual assessment practices in your context? Indicate with an asterisk.

	Low	High
1. Rationale		
Pedagogy	_____	
Cultural politics	_____	
Social justice	_____	
2. Construct		
Mainly language	_____	
Mainly content	_____	
3. Concepts of validity		
Construct mainly	_____	
Consequential (also)	_____	
4. Language ideology		
Plural monolingualisms	_____	
Heteroglossia	_____	
5. Microcontexts		
Informal	_____	
Instruction	_____	
Instruction-response-feedback	_____	
6. Enabling policy context	_____	
7. Transmodality	_____	
8. Cultural responsiveness	_____	
9. Assessment within an ecology of pedagogy	_____	
10. Accommodating a minority mindset	_____	

Figure 4: Modelling multilingual assessment

As the reader would have noticed, the tool takes the ten considerations presented earlier in Section 4, and invites the user to determine how strongly weighted a given case of assessment practice or tradition is on each applicable criterion. To exemplify, it is assumed that across contexts there will be one or several rationales for assessment. Some practitioners may formulate their rationale for multilingual assessment strongly or mainly in pedagogical terms (e.g., washback, evidence of learning), with little or no concern for the soft power

dimension or cultural politics of assessment (e.g., identity, means of assimilation, covert messaging on what language to prioritize) nor for social justice issues (e.g., skewed patterns of performance).

Similarly, traditions and practices of multilingual assessment may be distinguished in terms of the construct underlying the assessments: is the construct mainly language or mainly subject content? Thus, a reader may process the chapters in this volume to identify the orientation of the construct in each, and on that basis to perhaps explore what any observed pattern says of the disciplinary and other backgrounds of the authors, without however essentializing any patterns observed.

The tool also allows for exploring the implications of various kinds of contexts in which multilingual assessment takes place, and how priorities and claims may be shaped by these different contexts. Multilingual assessment offered under the radar and informally in the classroom, without an enabling policy and addressed to a group considered as minority and handicapped, will presumably differ in emphasis, strategies and priorities from one which is backed up by policy and openly acknowledged, and designed to be inclusive of a broad spectrum of test-takers.

Without essentializing, the Southern environment of practice may be interpreted as suggesting that, on the rationale criterion, social justice might be rated more highly than cultural politics; that content construct would be rated higher than language construct; consequential validity could be as high as construct validity; heteroglossia would be quite high on language ideology; the aspiration with respect to micro-context and enabling policy would, respectively, be high on instruction-response-feedback as well as on the existence of a policy. The concerns around literacy exposure would suggest a heavy weighting of transmodality; etc.

In effect, the tool provides a set of coordinates for interpreting accounts of multilingual assessment practices. It provides parameters against which comparisons along multiple dimensions may be made: e.g., Global South versus Global North, disciplinary orientations, etc. The tool possibly also has an agenda-setting dimension, inviting traditions to take on board or rethink certain practices, besides enhancing multilingual assessment literacies more generally. All of the above would seem to be useful ingredients for building a global discourse community in which differently positioned segments of the community appreciate commonalities and differences that exist across traditions.

7. Conclusion

Models are simplifications of complex and messy realities, but the exceptions there are to the claims of a model do not, *ipso facto*, make the model bereft of epistemological meaning and value. Models give us a good handle on situations, and reduce some of the indeterminacies that hinder communication and collaboration. Models make differences transparent rather than seek to erase differences.

In modelling multilingual assessment, this chapter has gone beyond identifying the different constructs underpinning assessment that somehow involve multiple languages. It has shown how differences in our understanding and interpretation of multilingual assessment may be concealed in the following: rationale, approach to multilingualism, attention to the social ramifications of assessment, the parts of assessment in which multilingualism is incorporated, the existence or otherwise of policy warrants for multilingual assessment, consideration of the literacy exposure of test-takers in specific languages, the degree of attention to the cultural substratum of assessments, alignment of language choice in assessment to language arrangements in teaching and learning, and the labelling or categorization of beneficiaries of multilingual assessment.

In this chapter, I have unpacked each of these dimensions from the perspective of Applied Linguistics and especially the Global South, while simultaneously showing how the dimensions frame, without essentialization, some of the agenda for multilingual assessment, given the account given of the sociolinguistics, psychology and aspirations of communities of this epistemic location.

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Karin Vogt, University of Education Heidelberg, Germany

Teaching and assessing (foreign) languages in multilingual contexts – A European contextualization

Abstract: Multilingual realities brought about by factors like globalized geographical and digital mobility have further increased language contact in Europe, the so-called Global North and elsewhere. Individual and/or societal multilingualism as a norm in modern societies are reflected in the multilingual repertoires of its members. However, plurilingual approaches to (foreign) language learning and assessment have not been mainstreamed in European classrooms which tend to perpetuate monolingual ideologies. With a focus on plurilingual approaches to English as a Foreign Language teaching and assessment in multilingual contexts in Europe, the question of how to implement a plurilingual approach to EFL teaching and assessment in a balanced way will be broached and illustrated by way of examples for the EFL classroom.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language, plurilingualism, multilingual assessment, formative assessment, classroom-based language assessment

1. Introduction: Multilingual realities

Multilingualism is a complex phenomenon, prevailing in numerous contexts around the globe. Jessner (2006) points out that the majority of people around the world live in multilingual societies. Multilingualism is driven by globalized geographical mobility across all social strata, albeit for different reasons, and by digital mobility facilitated by internet applications, encompassing various types of digital communication. In Europe, multilingualism is not a new phenomenon either; however, the situation of multilingualism has evolved in recent years and on various levels. In a society in which many languages are in contact, making it diverse on a linguistic and cultural level, multilingualism has increased as a result of mobility of Europeans within Europe and of migration (Bolton, 2018). In line with Bakhtin (1981), heteroglossic people are the norm rather than the exception.

In terms of European language policy, multilingualism in the sense of additive multilingualism has been an objective for the European population since the White Paper of 1995 (Commission of the European Communities, 1995) which

aimed for every European citizen to “develop proficiency in three European languages” (p. I). This mother tongue plus two agenda (Saville, 2019) aimed at additive multilingualism and, according to Saville, has continued to promote a perspective of languages as separate identities both in language education and within an individual speaker.

The recognition of language learners as emergent multilinguals who make use of their linguistic repertoires is part of a multilingual perspective (Krulatz et al., 2022) and has meanwhile been embraced by European language policy on the macro-level as well (e.g., Piccardo & North, 2019). Actually, this paradigmatic shift is reflected in terminology used in the CEFR and the Companion Volume in particular (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020).

The paradigmatic shift in language education has famously been termed the “multilingual turn” (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2019), and it is defined e.g., by Krulatz et al. (2022, p. 19) as “[having been] characterized by replacing the notion of an ideal, monolingual native speaker with that of a competent, multilingual user, and by softening the boundaries between languages instead of strict language separation”. The multilingual turn is reflected in language policy documents in several ways. The notion of the native speaker has been contested (e.g., Slavkov et al., 2022), and the terms “multilingualism” and “plurilingualism” are contrasted. Multilingualism signifies the coexistence of several languages (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 30) while the term “plurilingualism” denotes an individual’s idiosyncratic use of several languages with diverging competence levels. Users’ competence profile is based on a single language repertoire that they make use of when they accomplish tasks. These tasks involve both linguistic and non-linguistic activities. The focus on accomplishing tasks is connected to the action-oriented approach in language pedagogy (Piccardo, 2014). Plurilingual individuals or language users thus “have a single, interrelated, repertoire that they combine with their general competences and various strategies in order to accomplish tasks” (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 30). It is this interrelated repertoire that users activate for access to content in different languages as well as language itself, hence the term “plurilingualism” will be used in the present chapter. The focus of the chapter lies on the European educational context and, more specifically, on the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, despite acknowledging the more general term “multilingualism”. The term “foreign language” will be used whenever contextually suited for reasons of referential accuracy.

There are a number of conflicts and ambiguities around the field of linguistic repertoires and their use in (language) education. They can be identified on

the policy level, the curriculum level, the societal reality and the concrete classroom level.

On the policy level, the Eurocentric L1 plus 2 (European languages) agenda seems to promote additive multilingualism at school with languages being learned as separate entities in European educational settings. In second language contexts, plurilingual activities like for example translanguaging are mainly directed at refugees or minority students who are to learn the majority language or the language of schooling, and not at the majority of the population (Wang & East, 2023, p. 7), against the background of a monolingual habitus (Gogolin, 1994). While language policy on the macro-level is plurilingual, this does not seem to be the case for the realities on the mesolevel of the curriculum and the microlevel of the classroom.

In addition, the plurilingual realities of European societies need to be taken into account with multilingual environments in learners' homes, in communities and in other places outside of school. Informal learning through gaming, social media etc. contributes to emergent multilinguals' linguistic repertoires as well, without any instructional framework.

The promotion of multilingualism from a curricular perspective that is visible in institutional contexts and the realities of plurilingualism in environments outside of school are often seen separately, particularly with regard to foreign language teaching. These separate spheres result in potential conflict between a monolingual approach to plurilingualism based on a view of languages as separate entities and plurilingual realities not just outside of the classroom, but in the foreign language classroom as well. In many contexts in Europe, it is common practice to (tacitly) employ multilingual classroom practices in the foreign language classroom, e.g., code-switching or translanguaging for quick translations of abstract vocabulary, a metalinguistic discussion of a language learning strategy or a concise explanation of a syntactic structure. The plurilingual micro-practices in the foreign language classroom often result in a feeling of guilt on the part of the teachers, who were trained to make maximum use of the target language and avoid other languages at all cost (Greenier et al., 2023).

On the other hand, the multilingual realities beyond the language of schooling tend not to be reflected in (foreign) language pedagogy, neither on a curricular level nor on the level of teaching and assessment practices. The macro-level ambitions of policy makers are not in accordance with micro-level realities of language use in societies (Saville, 2019, p. 467) but they are also ambivalent in terms of classroom practice in foreign language classrooms. While language pedagogy has to reflect these realities on various levels, there is also a point for

the teaching and assessment of foreign languages, albeit by considering the multilingual realities in classrooms.

In language classrooms, foreign language classrooms included, learners need to be given the opportunity to productively use their linguistic potential, more specifically their plurilingual repertoires. They need to be able to do so in order to access a new linguistic system and to learn how to integrate this language into their linguistic repertoires.

Plurilingualism in foreign language education has not been mainstreamed in European classrooms (e.g., Mayr, 2022), and the reasons for this range from ideological barriers, ambivalent views of teachers and learners (e.g., Meletiadiou, this volume), conflicting values of stakeholders, a lack of resources (Hopp & Jakisch, 2020), particularly in language teacher education and professional development of language teachers, to a debate about the lack of a pedagogical framework for multilingual language pedagogy (Kubota, 2020). Indeed, for the practice of (foreign) language teaching using plurilingual resources, objectives etc., many questions remain unanswered. Some of these questions include:

- How is a plurilingual approach operationalized in foreign language pedagogy? For assessment purposes, what construct(s) does plurilingualism involve?
- What are successful plurilingual strategies for foreign language teaching and (classroom-based) language assessment?
- How can exposure to the target language and plurilingual approaches to foreign language teaching and assessment be combined?

The overarching question is how plurilingual and (foreign) language teaching and assessment approaches can be combined in such a way that the development of proficiency in the target language can be facilitated by plurilingual approaches. The chapter focuses on a European perspective and seeks to address and balance the current ambivalences prevalent in the discussion on plurilingual approaches and (EFL) learning, teaching and assessment. The purpose of the chapter is to review methodological approaches to plurilingualism with a view to the foreign language classroom that are linked to the macro-level of language policy but that can be implemented locally, on a microlevel, as Saville (2019) suggests.

Starting from the alignment of learning, teaching and assessment as a basic principle of language pedagogy, the focus of the chapter will be on plurilingual approaches to EFL teaching and assessment in multilingual contexts in Europe. It argues for a balancing of the current ambivalences of a plurilingual language policy against the background of monolingual paradigms and their consequences. The question of how plurilingual approaches to English Language Teaching (ELT) can be implemented will be discussed. Seed's (2020) framework

of assessment in plurilingual situations and the tenets of task-based language assessment will serve as a theoretical framework for this type of multilingual assessment of EFL in a European educational context. The question of how to implement a plurilingual approach to EFL teaching and assessment in a balanced way will be broached and illustrated by way of examples for the EFL classroom.

2. Language education in multilingual contexts in Europe

The principle of aligning language teaching and assessment as a conceptual starting point is reflected in approaches to language assessment like learning-oriented language assessment (Jones & Saville, 2016; Turner & Purpura, 2016). Based on this principle, plurilingual approaches in foreign language teaching will be taken into consideration with a focus on ELT because of its specific role as a lingua franca and a first foreign language to be learned in the majority of educational systems in Europe.

When taking stock of the European situation, it is obvious that language education in general and ELT in particular are characterized by a number of ambivalences concerning language teaching in plurilingual contexts. The plurilingual paradigm shift in language pedagogy as promoted by policy documents like the Companion Volume to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020) or the Council of Europe's Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures (FREPA, Candelier et al., 2013) is underpinned conceptually by the notion of interrelated, or single language repertoires. The concept of plurilingual competence, which is closely related to pluricultural competence, has been expanded to accommodate holistic language repertoires. It has been embraced by numerous European scholars, reflecting epistemological developments in psycholinguistics and teaching (e.g., Duarte, 2020; Franceschini, 2011; Lotherington, 2013, Lüdi, 2021). Despite the promotion of the paradigmatic shift towards plurilingualism on the micropolicy level and a vivid academic interest in applied linguistics, a monolingual perspective persists, connected to the status of languages (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020), which is also reflected in language assessment. The monolingual perspective is connected to a hierarchy of languages, with English taking a prominent role due to its function as a lingua franca (ELF, Jenkins et al., 2017; Seidlhofer, 2011). This leads to a hierarchy of named languages which often correspond to the foreign languages taught at school as part of the national curriculum, reflecting ideological influences of prestigious languages often connected to a competitive edge from an economic point of view, access to career paths and upward social mobility. Despite the potential of ELF as a "prime example of multilingual communication" (Leung & Jenkins, 2020) to

accommodate more recent epistemological developments in plurilingualism for (foreign) language education, ELF approaches are only gradually embraced in ground level practices in EFL classrooms, particularly in secondary educational contexts, also because they do not routinely form a part of language teacher education (Dewey & Patsko, 2018; Soruç & Griffiths, 2021).

The coexistence of two contradictory paradigms in language education results in conflicting tendencies and ambivalent views which are revealed in various studies involving (language) teachers in multilingual contexts. While teachers report positive attitudes to plurilingualism and even plurilingual approaches to language teaching (Haukås, 2016; Portolés & Marti, 2020; Sevinç et al., 2022), they are often unsure how to implement them in their classroom practices. Both pre-service teachers and in-service teachers do not feel sufficiently prepared to implement plurilingual approaches in their foreign language classrooms (Krulatz et al., 2022; Reinhardt & Sauer, 2021), let alone assessing them. At the same time teachers play a crucial role in implementing the multilingual turn, but they require help and professional development for this (Flognfeldt et al., 2020). Pitkänen-Huhta and Mäntylä (2021), in their study of seven Finland-based EFL teachers' views on multilingual learners in the EFL classroom and on their role in supporting these learners, found that they held ambivalent views on their plurilingual learners, highlighting their better developed language awareness on the one hand but resorting to a deficit view of their learners' plurilingualism on the other hand. Likewise, the practices the teachers reported they used to support them were indicative of a monolingual view of ELT. Despite using some plurilingual activities such as language comparison, they lacked a systematic methodological repertoire to support their plurilingual learners effectively. The ambivalence is caused by conflicting paradigms that might result in or favour contradictory practices (Greenier et al., 2023).

On the level of practices, the notion of a single language repertoire as a conceptual starting point determines plurilingual practices in the language classroom. Saville (2019) posits that all learners of additional or "foreign" languages become (emergent) multilinguals, which should be recognized by formal education. Cenoz and Gorter (2014, 2020, p. 365) see learners' multilingual repertoires as a resource and maintain that plurilingual practices in ELT enable teachers to take other languages in learners' plurilingual repertoire, other languages in use in society and diverse language practices into consideration without hard boundaries between languages. Having said that, the organization of school curricula and the organization of language instruction with the concept of languages as bounded entities has had a long tradition in many European educational contexts, in teaching and certainly in assessment. Having been trained in

monolingual approaches to foreign language teaching (Kramsch & Huffmaster, 2015), teachers might feel ambivalent when resorting to plurilingual practices like translanguaging in classroom situations (Greenier et al., 2023). Littlewood and Yu (2011) observe that teachers make use of other languages, mostly the language of schooling (“L1”, Littlewood & Yu, 2011) despite the view that teachers should make maximum use of the target language. The contradiction of monolingual training and actual multilingual, probably not plurilingual, practices seems to represent a dilemma for teachers.

In this connection, Krulatz et al. (2022, p. 18) maintain that while maximum exposure to the target language can be seen as a “necessary condition in language learning”, excluding learners’ other languages prevents them from making good use of their linguistic repertoires as a valuable learning resource. Particularly in foreign language education, English language education included, it is necessary to strike a balance between plurilingual approaches that consider and value learners’ full linguistic repertoires and foreign language teaching that enables substantial engagement with and exposure to the target language in question.

On the microlevel of the language classroom, translanguaging is seen as a pedagogical strategy in multilingual contexts (e.g., Li, 2021). Translanguaging can make use of a speaker’s plurilingual repertoire for concurrent language use. OrtheGuy et al. (2015, p. 283) define translanguaging as “the deployment of a speaker’s full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named languages”. Applied to institutional contexts and language instruction, pedagogical translanguaging is defined by Cenoz and Gorter (2020, p. 301) as “the use of planned instruction strategies from the learner’s repertoire to develop language awareness and metalinguistic awareness”. Neokleous (2022), in line with e.g., García and Kleyn (2016) or Pitkänen-Huhta and Mäntylä (2021), has identified various strategies used for translanguaging, namely translations, grouping students based on their home languages and integrating multilingual and multimodal resources like e.g., co-constructing a multilingual story while deploying multilingual repertoires, English included (Neokleous, 2022). Cutrim Schmid (2021) applies a plurilingual approach to tasks in the EFL classroom.

While Camillieri Grima (2022) observes that translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy frequently uses e.g., migrant languages as resources, a number of scholars see the emotional, social and cultural advantages of translanguaging for all students (Duarte, 2019; Falk & Lindquist, 2022; Li & Lin, 2019). This perspective on pedagogical translanguaging contrasts with the position that exclusive use of the target language in question (e.g., Sampson, 2012) is necessary in order to provide maximum exposure to the target language and thus foster target

language proficiency efficiently. Leung and Valdez (2019, p. 365), for example, contend that the concept(s) of translanguaging can be difficult to reconcile with the development of language-specific proficiency. In a similar vein, García and OrtheGuy (2020) concede that learners need to have access to named languages while considering it vital that translanguaging practices be accepted in school settings. However, García and OrtheGuy do not specify that this is also true for language learning and teaching. Systematic pedagogical translanguaging is still the exception in foreign language teaching, English language teaching included, in Europe (Mayr, 2022), as it might clash with curricular objectives teachers have to adhere to (Wang & East, 2023). Against the background of an alignment of learning, teaching and assessing language(s), it might pose a challenge for assessment (e.g., Cenoz et al., 2013; Gorter & Cenoz, 2017; Schissel et al., 2019).

On a more general level, institutional (mandates and) expectations have to be taken into account for language education and a review of instructional and curricular practices needs to be undertaken as these might work against the objectives of a plurilingual framework as advocated by the Council of Europe (2020). Stakeholders', especially teachers', reservations and concerns must be taken seriously rather than dismissed in a theoretical debate, all the more so because teachers are rightly identified by Krulatz et al. (2022) as agents of change. Flognfeldt et al. (2020) see a potential for deeper language learning if plurilingualism is acknowledged and made use of as a facilitative factor, but teachers need help with challenging monolingual paradigms, especially so on the microlevel of classroom foreign language teaching, with EFL as a special case in point. Integrating plurilingual elements in EFL teaching in a balanced manner can be identified as a way forward.

3. Multilingual assessment and assessing English as a Foreign Language in multilingual contexts

Much scholarly attention has been devoted to plurilingual and multilingual approaches to language education, but assessment as an important part of language teaching tends to be neglected (Gorter & Cenoz, 2017). Having said that, if holistic approaches to plurilingualism and multilingualism in language teaching are championed, they consequently need to be reflected in language assessment as well (Chalhoub-Deville, 2019; Gorter & Cenoz, 2017; Toohey, 2019). Based on language contact concepts of multilingualism, scholars like Shohamy (2011), OrtheGuy and colleagues (2015) and Schissel and colleagues (2019) voice the need to embrace multilingual approaches in language testing and assessment. Schissel et al. (2019, p. 374), for example, posit that the idea of languages as

separate entities within an individual speaker can no longer be adequate from a conceptual and operational perspective. They identify the need to “move away from tests that are (...) built on constructs that ignore speakers’ dynamic multilingualism” (p. 374). The field, however, has been slow to embrace multilingual approaches to assessment (e.g., De Angelis, 2021; Seed, 2020).

Heugh et al. (2016) take a different perspective and connect the necessity of multilingual assessment to reasons of social justice. Heugh et al. (2016, p. 2) argue that multilingual assessment is viable and can reduce inequity even as large-scale assessment. With a focus on the South African context, they contend that it is possible to accommodate learners’ deployment of their whole linguistic repertoire in large-scale (content) assessment, as they demonstrate in their design of multilingual test items in mathematics and a trilingual language task with grade 8 students in the Western Cape region. The trilingual task was administered for evidence in the home language as subject and in language across the curriculum (p. 13) while the mathematics test used trilingual mathematics items (e.g., English, isiXhosa, Afrikaans as the major home languages). The study found that multilingual students made use of translanguaging during system-wide (content) assessment, and those who did use it found it beneficial. The authors conclude that although it did not achieve full equity, multilingual assessments did reduce linguistic inequity in post-colonial contexts to some extent (p. 14).

For assessing content, De Backer et al. (2020) connect the social justice and fairness argument with validity concerns when they contend that linguistic complexity of a (content) assessment can be regarded as a construct-irrelevant barrier inherent in a test and can disadvantage multilingual learners with lower proficiency in the language of schooling.

The question, then, is what approaches to constructing a definition adequately capture expanded notions of plurilingualism and plurilingual repertoires.. Various suggestions have been put forward for assessment in plurilingual situations. As multilingualism and language teaching in multilingual contexts are highly contextual, multilingual assessment is no exception (ALTE, 2020; Dendrinos, 2019; Heugh et al., 2016). Multilingual assessment has diverse underlying constructs which have to be identified as a first step.

Seed (2020) has suggested a useful framework that takes stock of assessment in plurilingual situations, addressing Dendrino’s (2019) concern that multilingual assessment is still a fragmented area that would merit more epistemological cohesion. In Seed’s framework, individuals can demonstrate their proficiency in plurilingual situations in four different ways, depending on the underlying construct of the assessment. All four of them can be subsumed under the umbrella

term “multilingual assessment” although the examinees draw on their plurilingual repertoire in different situations.

The purposes put forward by Seed (2020) share a common objective, namely implementing the multilingual turn in assessment by giving the “plurilingual, pluricontextual language learner” (ALTE, 2020) the opportunity to demonstrate relevant skills using a relevant and authentic task that integrates appropriate feedback (Seed, 2020, p. 9). They have different underlying constructs related to their purposes (Figure 1).

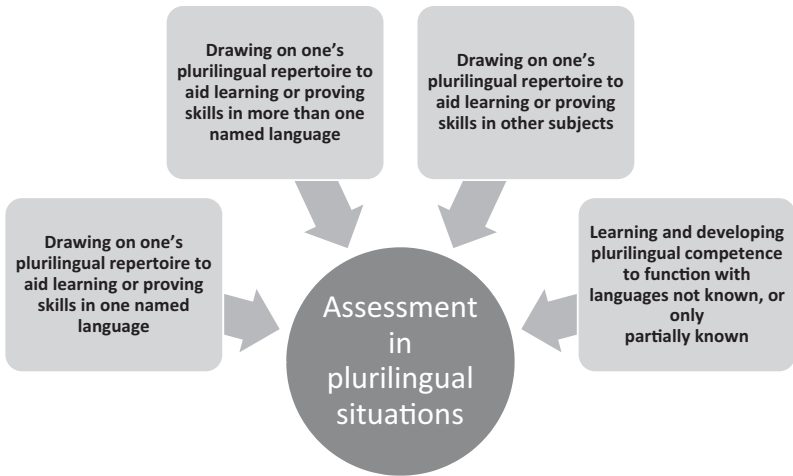


Figure 1: Framework of assessment in plurilingual situations based on Seed (2020)

When drawing on one’s own plurilingual repertoire to aid learning or proving skills in one named language (Seed, 2020, p. 10), the learner uses their whole plurilingual repertoire to help them communicate in English. The test or assessment is done in one named language with both input and output of the test in that language, and the underlying construct therefore is language proficiency in one named language such as English. Seed (2020) contends that language tests, even if they are monolingual, must be seen as a part of a multilingual profile of language learning (Seed, 2020, p. 10; Saville & Seed, 2021) in which named languages and plurilingual repertoires coexist. This underlying construct with a related perspective on language learning and teaching as well as assessing additional languages holds potential for the EFL classroom in general and classroom-based language assessment in particular.

Drawing on one's own plurilingual repertoire to aid learning or proving skills in more than one named language (Seed, 2020, p. 11) means that the learner demonstrates proficiency in various named languages as part of their plurilingual repertoire by taking various (standardized) tests of named languages, e.g., English, Russian. The underlying construct of this series of tests would be the mastering of plurilingual communication situations, e.g., writing or oral mediation competence. While it would be theoretically possible to devise a test that could replicate authentic multilingual situations in the test takers' respective contexts to document and assess their plurilingual profiles, this would be unrealistic (Seed, 2020, p. 11), except for mediation. With cross-linguistic mediation, tests would be able to include two or more languages. In the Council of Europe's (2020) concept of cross-linguistic mediation, the learner or user "acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning (...) from one language to another" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 90). It is striking, though, that the concept of named languages is still prevalent in the CEFR and that it does not capture dynamic plurilingualism in its mediation concept (Jenkins & Leung, 2019). With an underlying construct of mastering plurilingual communication situations (e.g., writing, Seed, 2020), the learner who uses cross-linguistic mediation in assessment demonstrates their ability to make use of their plurilingual repertoire to navigate cross-linguistic authentic communication situations that reflect the language-diverse nature of today's societies (e.g., Karavas & Mitsikopoulou, 2019, for the Greek national foreign exam system; Krombach, 2022, and Kolb, 2015, for the German Sprachmittlung concept; Stathopoulou, 2015, 2020). In this volume, Stathopoulou et al. suggest key principles of assessing mediation, namely the localization of assessment, the authenticity and purposefulness of the assessment, an alignment of mediation assessment tasks to the CEFR and a focal point on alternative assessment practices. Their METLA project for developing cross-linguistic assessment tasks aims at minimizing language barriers between speakers and users who do not share the same language, asking learners to draw on their entire linguistic repertoires and make use of transfer of information across languages (Stathopoulou et al., this volume). To this end, the test taker selects information from a source text in one language and relays the information in another language. This type of mediation has become part of the assessment task repertoire in foreign language teaching and assessment in some European contexts, e.g., Germany or Greece (Dendrinou, 2006; Reimann, 2019) but has remained marginalized in others (for an overview, cf. Katelhön & Marečkova, 2022). Unlike Seed (2020), who seems to put a focus on the demonstration of (plurilingual) linguistic proficiency, scholars like Stathopoulou et al. (this volume) take a more holistic stance on pluralistic approaches to language

teaching and assessment as they include intercultural competence as a vital component of cross-linguistic mediation, in line with e.g., the Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures (FREPA, Candelier et al. (2013)). Thus, they alter the construct a little, which necessitates formative and alternative forms of language assessment due to the complex character of the construct.

De Angelis' (2021) study provides another example of how learners can demonstrate proficiency in more than one language with a focus of the languages of instruction in a multilingual context in South Tyrol. She designed an integrated multilingual test that combined different types of information, test writers, examiners and educators (p. 27). She assessed multilingual narratives with various multilingual groups and collected oral narrative samples in the three languages of instruction as a multilingual-by-design test, namely English, German and Ladin (p. 100), with narrative abilities as the underlying construct and object of evaluation.

The third part of Seed's (2020, p. 12) framework focuses on drawing on one's plurilingual repertoire to aid learning or proving skills in non-linguistic subjects, with an underlying construct that is content-related. According to Dendrino (2019), most research projects on multilingual assessment can be classified in this category, with subject content being assessed using two or more languages. Subjects range from science (De Backer et al., 2019; Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014), geography (De Backer et al., 2020) in secondary school contexts to various subject content in Higher Education courses (e.g., Antia et al., 2021). Assessments are given in more than two languages, namely multilingual-by-translation tests as monolingual tests translated into another language and multilingual-by-design tests that provide instructions, content and / or scoring criteria in more than one language (De Angelis, 2021, p. 24). This procedure is to give learners with plurilingual repertoires the chance to access content and perform well in content-related exams despite a lack of proficiency in the language of schooling. As such, fairness is a particularly important aspect with this type of multilingual assessment (Heugh, 2015; Heugh et al., 2016).

The CEFR notion of competence profiles (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 157; Vogt, 2011) is at the centre of the fourth element of Seed's (2020) framework. Plurilingual competence also consists of languages only partially known, and learners who use languages that they do not know (e.g., by deploying transfer strategies as plurilingual strategies) or only partially know, develop their plurilingual competences in a more general way, namely in and across languages, with the intention of using familiar languages in order to access new languages. As Piccardo (2017) conceptualizes plurilingualism both as an ability and an

attitude, Seed (2020) deduces that the type of assessment related to this element of his framework comes from learning and feeds into further learning (p. 12). The underlying construct concerns assessment of attitudes and behaviours and is therefore more holistic than the constructs in the other elements of the framework. Frameworks like FREPA (Candelier et al., 2013) are based on pluralistic approaches to language learning and teaching. They champion a broader epistemology which has to be reflected in language assessment approaches that take non-linguistic, general competences like plurilingual competence into consideration. More holistic formative approaches to language assessment that feature alternative forms of assessment are more suitable for this type of construct.

For English language teaching, the first, second and fourth elements of the framework are relevant, which will be expanded on in section 4 of this chapter.

De Angelis (2021) identifies several multilingual assessment practices in education. They are bilingual or multilingual scoring rubrics, test instructions and answers in multiple languages, testing accommodations and the use of learners' L1, and grouping test takers by language background and community languages (Figure 2). These will be discussed with a focus on assessing EFL learners in multilingual European contexts.

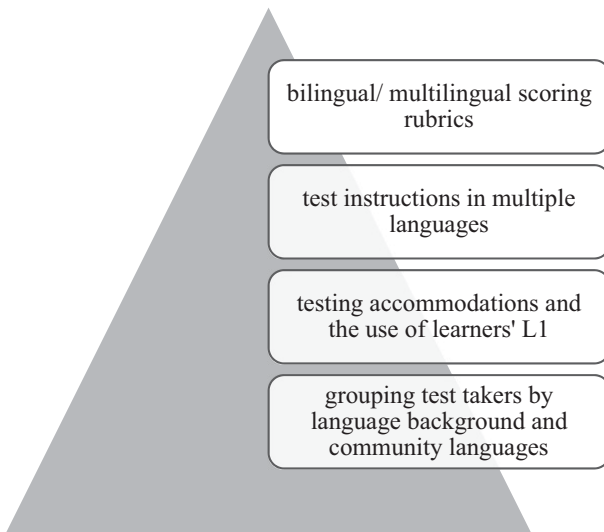


Figure 2: Multilingual assessment practices in education adapted from De Angelis (2021)

Bilingual scoring rubrics are predominantly known from the US and typically score performance e.g., in writing in two languages, often English and Spanish (e.g., De Jong, 2011; Escamilla et al., 2018). Both languages are scored simultaneously in a single rubric, on the basis of assessment criteria like content, mechanics or range of vocabulary. The same scoring rubrics can be used for several languages which are usually scored separately and then e.g., compared by adding the different scores in individual languages (e.g., Cenoz et al., 2013). De Angelis (2021) maintains that multilingual scoring rubrics can provide additional information to monolingual scoring rubrics e.g., when comparing the performance of speakers with different L1 backgrounds. Depending on the assessment task at hand, multilingual scoring has the potential to value the plurilingual repertoire of learners. When applying Seed's (2020) framework, multilingual scoring could be used for learners to draw on their plurilingual repertoire in more than one named language (p. 11) or they could be used to demonstrate learners' development of plurilingual competences as languages only partially known, the latter as part of formative language assessment procedures.

In the case of EFL, the target language would be English but the learners' plurilingual repertoire could be valued by integrating it. In practice, De Angelis (2021) cautions us because multilingual scoring rubrics cannot be implemented in EFL classrooms with many different L1 backgrounds. They are a practical solution in multilingual contexts in which learners share languages, e.g., local languages in postcolonial contexts.

Test instructions and answers in multiple languages help those learners with a poor command of the language of testing to perform to their full potential in the content that is assessed. Providing answers in an L1 that is not the target language would not work in an EFL classroom assessment as it would represent a severe validity problem. However, providing test instructions in an EFL assessment in the target language as well as the language of schooling is not uncommon, particularly with low proficiency or beginning learners of EFL or as a sort of test accommodation (Schissel et al., 2018). The problem of potentially disadvantaging those learners with low proficiency in the language of schooling, e.g., newly arrived immigrants, would not be solved with this procedure. It is, however, not practical to provide learners with test instructions in many languages in heterogeneous classrooms with various L1 backgrounds, as the cost incurred for translations might be unreasonable for schools in particular (De Angelis, 2021). However, technological advances and the increasing availability and quality of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered translation tools might make multilingual test instructions become more realistic. Inconsistencies that an (automated)

translation might yield must be taken into account as they might represent a reliability issue, particularly in large-scale testing.

Test accommodations are defined by Fairbairn and Spiby (2019, p. 239) as “changes made to the test specifically to allow accessibility to one or more candidates with similar characteristics”. In multilingual assessment, they refer e.g., to the simplification of language as part of test content, and translations of test content in the learners’ L1 in areas with large and homogenous groups of speakers of local or minority languages. Most of these accommodations with the exception of extended time are relevant for content assessment and less so for EFL as a named language. Extended time as an accommodation in language assessment is often used with learners with special educational needs like e.g., dyslexia and not for plurilingual learners. Plurilingual learners are unlikely to profit from extended time only.

What has been identified e.g., by Pitkänen-Huhta (2021) as an effective instructional strategy in multilingual contexts, can also be transferred to multilingual assessment. De Angelis (2021) considers grouping learners by language background and community languages (p. 62) as an equitable practice in multilingual assessment and as a way of managing the heterogeneity of the student population (see also Gathercole et al., 2013). Learners using their plurilingual repertoire to help them communicate in English (Seed, 2020) would likely profit from being grouped by their L1 background. Learners who share an L1 background because they are from the same minority group or use the same heritage language might cooperate in order to access the language more effectively and to enhance their communication in English. While this is common practice in some ESL teaching contexts (e.g., Ntelioglou et al., 2014), grouping learners on the basis of their L1 is likely more feasible in formative language assessment scenarios. In addition, there does not seem to be any empirical basis for this kind of plurilingual assessment strategy for the EFL classroom.

In conclusion, most multilingual assessment practices seem to target assessments or tests of content (Dendrinou, 2019; Schissel et al., 2019). Some of the multilingual assessment practices can be applied to EFL assessment in multilingual contexts, either for the underlying constructs of proficiency in one named language (namely EFL), proficiency in more than one named language (e.g., cross-linguistic mediation) or developing plurilingual competence. The attempt to apply multilingual assessment practices to EFL assessment has also shown that multilingual assessment of EFL in European multilingual contexts is different from multilingual assessment of content and thus necessitates different approaches adapted to this particular instructional situation. Nevertheless, some

work has already been done in the field of assessing EFL or a named language in multilingual contexts, which will be outlined in the next section.

4. EFL assessment in multilingual contexts

Multilingual and pluralistic approaches to language teaching are only beginning to be accepted for EFL, EAL or additional languages in general (Krulatz et al., 2022) and multilingual approaches to language testing and assessment are slow to be embraced, let alone implemented, in mainstream language education (Myklevold, 2022). As seen previously, assessing EFL or English as an Additional Language (EAL) in multilingual contexts is a specific case of multilingual assessment. This might account for the fact that previous studies on assessing EFL in multilingual contexts are scarce. Studies that do make use of multilingual assessment often take place in an ESL context (Lopez et al., 2017), or in a context in which English as an official language is supplemented by a minority or local language (e.g., Gathercole et al. (2013) with Welsh and English in Wales for the European context). In De Angelis' (2021) study, English is not assessed as an additional language but as a language of instruction together with Ladin and German as further languages of instruction.

The scarce evidence base on multilingual assessment in English language classrooms suggests that teachers seem to have positive attitudes towards plurilingual approaches to multilingual assessment, and they also use a variety of formative assessment options in the EFL classroom in multilingual contexts. For example, Flognfeldt et al. (2020) observed three teachers in the EFL classroom in the Norwegian context and found that the teachers were aware of different language backgrounds of the learners in their classroom and acknowledged their challenges regarding Norwegian language proficiency. However, they were not able to exploit the learners' plurilingual repertoires for English learning and formative assessment due to the prevailing language of schooling, Norwegian, which was given precedence. Teachers were shown to display feelings of doubt, worry or resistance when resorting to plurilingual approaches to assessment (Greenier et al., 2023), which illustrates the conflictuous nature of multilingual assessment in some EFL classroom contexts. It also laid open their conflict between the potential of letting learners use their full linguistic repertoire and the bid for maximum use of the target language. Investigating the informants' attitudes towards translanguaging in the multilingual context of Mexico, Schissel and colleagues found a similar tension expressed by language teachers (e.g., Reinhardt & Sauer, 2021), namely the discrepancy between positive attitudes in general and differing ideas about the role of translanguaging. At the same time,

teachers seem to lack instructional strategies and routines in order to be able to integrate and make the learners' plurilingual repertoires conducive to learning both in teaching and in assessment contexts (Flognfeldt et al., 2020). Rather than dismissing teachers' concerns and ignoring the conflicts that institutional constraints can put on them, they should be taken seriously and supportive strategies should be offered to them that help to implement a plurilingual approach to EFL assessment.

Stathopoulou (2020) identifies test localization as a possible route to multilingual assessment. She adapted descriptors from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and its companion volume (CV) to written cross-lingual mediation and evaluated them in terms of clarity of language, usefulness for language assessment purposes and their relevance to the respective educational context. She concluded that a possible route towards multilingual assessment in an attempt to overcome the "compartmentalization of languages" (Shohamy, 2011) is "test localization" (Stathopoulou, 2020, p. 61). Test localization involves adapting CEFR/CV descriptors to the cultural, linguistic etc. needs of the local educational context and designing mediation tasks that integrate several languages (Stathopoulou et al., 2023, Stathopoulou et al., this volume).

Pedagogical translanguaging as an umbrella term is used in the EFL classroom (e.g., Krulatz et al., 2022) in teaching, but not so much in assessment. Greenier et al. (2023) consider pedagogical translanguaging as a co-constructive instructional strategy that systematically makes use of teachers' and learners' full linguistic repertoire in order to enhance communication and student engagement, improve the teacher-learner relationship and facilitate access to concepts or knowledge, and increase comprehension of texts or teacher instructions (e.g., Daniel et al., 2019; Fang & Liu, 2020; Zhang & Chan, 2021). They identify three different types of pedagogical translanguaging that would characterize teachers' translanguaging practices in EFL assessment, namely translanguaging for meaning-making, translanguaging for collaboration and translanguaging for empowerment. In their study of EFL teachers located in China, all three were judged to potentially enable or facilitate various procedures of formative assessment. However, integrating translanguaging practices in formative language assessment necessitates professional development for teachers that focuses this aspect of Language Assessment Literacy (Greenier et al., 2023).

As another route to multilingual assessment, Wang and East (2023) advocate a learner-centred approach. In line with Greenier et al. (2023), they consider it important to include creative approaches in language assessment. In a New Zealand Chinese as a Foreign Language context, they contend that with a learner-centred approach, the integration of translanguaging into language assessment

as a creative approach to formative assessment “might unleash the transformative potential of translanguaging in L2 teaching and assessment designs” (Wang & East, 2023, p. 3). The integration of translanguaging strategies in the assessment design, e.g., replacing unknown words with English but not using other languages, gave learners an expanded opportunity for optimized task completion (p. 16), unlocking a messy creativity that empowered them to activate their linguistic resources in an experimental, playful way. Wang and East emphasize that translanguaging as a creative strategy was well received by the learners in the study as a practical, zero-cost strategy that can be easily implemented. Learners’ linguistic repertoires can be made productive use of while exploiting their creative potential. Wang and East (2023) favour an extension or redefinition of the constructs of interest in an assessment, in line with e.g., Toohey (2019) or Shohamy (2011), enabling test developers to assess more holistic linguistic repertoires in a broader way, enabling learners to show what they know. However, the diverse linguistic backgrounds of the learners were not taken into consideration as only the majority language, English, was used for translanguaging. In other multilingual contexts with various home languages the learners bring to the foreign language classroom, affordances and challenges would be different.

Language teachers have to be empowered to use multilingual assessment strategies within their respective, possibly monoglossic, paradigm. Schissel and colleagues (2018), for example, adopted a co-constructive approach to translanguaging in a multilingual EFL context in Mexico. They found instances of translanguaging in assessment that would reflect the multilingual lifeworlds of (foreign) language learners in that context. Possible strategies in multilingual assessment included the use of translanguaging for test instructions (De Angelis, 2021), which is indicative of its peripheral, but acknowledged role that rests within the monoglossic paradigm in a given educational context. Schissel and colleagues also found instances of translanguaging to validate learners’ diverse communicative repertoires (p. 10), e.g., by including translanguaging as an assessment criterion in rubrics for assessing foreign language writing or by integrating translanguaging in the test design so that translanguaging elements were to comprise e.g., 30 % of the learners’ total score (p. 11). Teachers co-created assessments that would elicit translanguaging e.g., in the production of narrative texts. However, the question whether translanguaging should be rewarded (by awarding points) rather than punished was reported as debatable among the participating teachers.

In spite of changing perspectives that foreign language teachers might have about translanguaging as an element of multilingual assessment, the language politics and ensuing mandates for language teachers represent a stumbling block

for multilingual assessment, along with established power dynamics. Language teachers bear the brunt of those conflicting factors and therefore, their concerns have to be taken seriously. They need support with expanding and extending their language pedagogies to embrace plurilingual approaches to language assessment that are appropriate to their respective educational contexts and assessment cultures. To diversify their instructional repertoire in multilingual assessment, they necessitate professional development initiatives that treat multilingual assessment as a part of Language Assessment Literacy (cf. Flognfeldt et al., 2020). These professional development initiatives need to implement the following elements. They need to build an awareness for multilingual ideologies but at the same time acknowledge and take into consideration the inhibiting factors that have been discussed before. Professional development activities need to build a knowledge base for plurilingual approaches to teaching languages and language assessment, as Basturkmen (2012) observes that teachers' knowledge base guides the instructional choices they make in the classroom. In order for teachers to develop instructional routines for multilingual assessment, professional development activities have to include formative assessment approaches (De Backer et al., 2020), with teachers and ideally researchers co-constructing context-sensitive and individual formative assessment formats, as well as empower language teachers to use them.

Just like (language) assessment in general, multilingual assessment practices are highly contextual and highly individual. Depending on the context, the difference between individual and societal multilingualism is reflected in language assessment. De Angelis (2021), for example, differentiates between designing multilingual tests and assessing multilingual individuals. Assessing multilingual individuals has to do with managing individual variability, different sociolinguistic contexts by combining the individual and the social dimensions, e.g., multilinguals' individual language background and the languages spoken in the communities where they live. For EFL assessment in multilingual contexts, the focus is on assessing multilingual individuals but with a focus on the underlying constructs of EFL as one named language, in more than one named language, EFL being one of them, and developing plurilingual competence with English as a bridging language that functions as a gateway to other languages (prospective multilingualism, e.g., Schröder, 2009).

In addition, EFL learners' plurilingual repertoire is a resource which is highly individual (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020; Saville & Seed, 2022), which calls for individualized, context-sensitive and real-life approaches to language assessment.

Potential approaches are grounded in classroom-based and / or formative types of language assessment as they are flexible enough to make space for

plurilingual strategies for foreign language teaching **and** assessment. Likewise, learning-oriented assessment (Chalhoub-Deville, 2019; Saville, 2019), in connection with functional multilingual learning (De Backer, 2020; Sieres & van Avermaet, 2014) as well as task-based assessment (Norris & East, 2021; Wang & East, 2023) all share their formative character and are suitable for the same reason.

The following example illustrates the way in which EFL learners' exposure to the target language and plurilingual approaches to language learning and teaching can be balanced out, both in teaching and assessment (based on Vogt, 2023). The task is embedded in multilingual linguistic landscapes of London as a place that forms part of the target culture(s) in an EFL classroom in a European context and which is present in numerous EFL curricula. On the basis of a task-based approach to language learning (TBLL, Nunan, 2004), the learners, approximately on B1 level, explore multilingual linguistic landscapes in London online and devise a miniguide on the respective communities in London with their linguistic and cultural realities within one of the biggest English-speaking cities in the world. Starting with a multilingual sign that e.g., allows entry to a casino to overage customers only, they try to locate the sign in a multilingual part of London and explore it virtually by researching and presenting activities off the beaten track in this part of London, e.g., Chinatown, Brick Lane, Turnpike Lane etc. Learners choose other, unexplored parts of the city starting with bilingual or multilingual signs. Depending on the language(s) used, learners deploy their plurilingual repertoires to decode the multilingual signs, pooling their linguistic expertise and helping each other in the process. This step values the linguistic repertoires of the learners. They research more information on the parts of the city and the linguistic communities for their mini guide and present each other a draft version of their mini guide sections in English. On the basis of key words of finalized parts of the miniguides, which constitutes the target task, learners negotiate and vote for an itinerary with places and communities that they themselves would like to visit and learn more about. They use the target language for this step. The assessment of this complex task consists of two parts. The first part is formulated in the target language English and concerns the presentation of a selected multilingual part of London, the communities that live there and activities to do for visitors – off the beaten track. The product is assessed on the basis of assessment criteria or language (e.g., linguistic range, genre features, accuracy) and content (e.g., accuracy of content, degree of novelty, consideration of linguistic and cultural identities of the inhabitants, etc.). Additionally, the second, process-based part of the assessment is a reflection concerning the multilingual aspect of the task. Learners reflect on the ways that they perceived

the multilingual linguistic landscapes in London and what strategies they used to decode them (e.g., I looked at the English text and then tried to make meaning of the other texts / I used my language competence from other languages and applied them to make meaning of the texts / I asked a fellow student who knows the language(s) and they helped me / I used a dictionary or translation app; Vogt, 2023, p. 13). The reflection is part of the rubrics and represents a part of the overall result. With such an approach to multilingual assessment, the target language is given appropriate room and other languages as well as the plurilingual repertoires of the learners in the classroom are not only valued but instrumental to enhance reflection and awareness in all learners. Strategies to decode multilingual texts are also developed and explicitly reflected on. In this way, balancing the target language and supporting plurilingual approaches to assessment can be found, extending plurilingual pedagogies into plurilingual assessment.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss how plurilingual and (foreign) language assessment approaches can be combined in a balanced way in an institutionalized European school context. The chapter has addressed the ambivalences that are visible in the discussion, arguing that stakeholders' especially teachers' reservations and concerns about practical implications of the multilingual turn (Conteh & Meier, 2014) must be taken seriously rather than dismissed, particularly in school contexts in which it is difficult to break the boundaries between different school subjects and to co-ordinate and integrate school curricula (Gorter & Cenoz, 2017). This is particularly true for plurilingual approaches to language assessment in English as a Foreign Language that might not only work against established systems but whose constructs are developed by the testing and assessment field. Nevertheless, the question as to how plurilingual assessment approaches can be implemented in foreign language pedagogy has been answered by discussing constructs and existing multilingual assessment practices for EFL pedagogy.

The chapter has also presented and discussed approaches to construct definition that might be able to capture expanded notions of plurilingualism and plurilingual repertoires in one specific context, namely Europe, and how these can be related to and integrated in EFL education and assessment. For English language teaching, proficiency in one named language (English), mastering plurilingual communication situations with EFL as one of them, and attitudes and behaviours towards unknown or partially known languages (against the background of EFL

as a further partially known language) would be relevant constructs in multilingual assessment, based on Seed's (2020) framework.

In an attempt to apply multilingual assessment practices (e.g., De Angelis, 2021; Schissel et al., 2018) to a European teaching context, current multilingual assessment practices evoked by De Angelis (2021) were discussed with regard to EFL. While test instructions might be conducive for learners accessing the assignments in a test or assessment, thus potentially enhancing validity and reliability of the EFL assessment, the use of multilingual test instructions and multilingual scoring rubrics would have to be provided in many different (home) languages. The cost incurred and effort mustered could be reduced by carefully monitored AI-supported translations. Other assessment practices such as grouping learners by language background, enabling to use higher-order critical thinking skills sooner (Cummins, 2009), with the peer group functioning as a support group (Pikänen-Huhta & Mäntylä, 2021), have been used in some ESL teaching contexts, but lack an empirical basis for multilingual assessment in EFL to date.

When it comes to successful plurilingual strategies for foreign language assessment and classroom-based language assessment in particular, plurilingual mediation and translanguaging have been investigated for foreign languages. These can be successfully combined with approaches to learning-oriented assessment like task-based language learning and assessment, as these might account for higher authenticity and higher content validity as quality criteria of assessment.

What has to be considered when designing or adapting multilingual assessment tasks for foreign languages is their highly contextual and individual nature. In EFL, the focus is on assessing multilingual individuals as a macro-context. However, numerous other contextual factors like learners' individual linguistic repertoires, the acceptance of multilingual / plurilingual approaches to foreign language pedagogy, teachers' institutional mandates, assessment cultures etc. come into play, contributing to the ambiguities that stakeholders like teachers' experience. To address these ambiguities and to take stakeholders' concerns seriously, the contextual and individualized nature of plurilingual language assessment can be used in a constructive way that is conducive to the goals of plurilingual approaches to language teaching and assessment. Exposure to the target language and plurilingual approaches to foreign language teaching and assessment can be flexibly combined in classroom-based, formative settings that would be able to align plurilingual approaches with foreign language teaching and assessment (similar arguments in Kunnan & Saville, 2021). They would be able to respond to the need to keep the target language in focus in a language subject and thus comply with potential institutional mandates and belief systems. At the same time, they would gradually change monolingual paradigms,

giving teachers as agents of change and learners the possibility to experiment with different formats and procedures, as has been demonstrated in our example. Similarly, Schissel et al. (2018) have shown the way forward for future research particularly in multilingual classroom-based assessment contexts.

The development towards softer boundaries in language teaching and assessment (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020) implies a need for a transformative shift which scholars in the field of language assessment have been arguing for (e.g., Saville, 2019), adopting multilingualism agendas that reflect evolving linguistic realities, thus representing a retrospective perspective on multilingualism. These aim at changing behaviours towards language learning and assessment, EFL included. The specific role of English as a gateway to learning further languages and adopting a lifelong multilingual attitude in a prospective, future-oriented perspective needs to be highlighted at the same time. The transformative shift has to be accompanied by developing stakeholders', teachers' included, awareness and a knowledge base that would lead to reflected multilingual assessment practices relevant to their own contexts. Therefore, multilingual assessment approaches can be seen as another facet of Language Assessment Literacy, not only for teachers, and emerging good practices (e.g., Cutrim Schmid, 2021; Jakisch, 2015) in plurilingual approaches to EFL teaching need to be taken up and expanded for multilingual (formative) assessment, with the goal of valuing learners' plurilingual repertoires in school languages like EFL and facilitating their access to languages.

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Assessment, belonging and social justice

Susan Coetzee-Van Rooy, North-West University, South Africa

Students' multilingual repertoires at a South African university: Implications for conceptualizing multilingualism in assessment

Abstract: Language-in-education policy scholars argue that successful policies should be built on a comprehensive understanding of the nature of the linguistic realities of the learners that these policies aim to serve. The same applies to the conceptualization of multilingualism in assessment. Multilingual assessment plans for South African students should take the nature of the language repertoires of multilingual students into consideration. This contribution shares descriptive empirical data gathered from the students of one South African University via (a) language repertoire surveys (2010, 2015, 2020), (b) language portraits (2020) and (c) questions about languages for assessment from language audits (2018, 2021). The aim is to work out implications for the conceptualization of multilingualism in assessment at the particular institution. The main finding is that there seems to be a dominant language constellation (the home language and English) for literacy within the multilingual repertoires of the participating students. The main implications are to activate the full multilingual repertoire for classroom pedagogies (involving informal assessment) and the bilingual constellation (including the home language and English) for formal assessment.

Keywords: multilingual, assessment, South Africa, university, dominant language constellations

1. Introduction

There is a stream of thought that argues that the success of the implementation of language-in-education policies depends on how the policies take into account the repertoires of the students whose behaviour is to be influenced. This line of thinking is embedded in a broader, more situated approach to language policy that highlights the importance of bridging “the gap between macro institutions and forces on the one hand and individuals’ daily linguistic practices on the other” (Tollefson, 2015, p. 188). In the specific context of reflection on the state of school language-in-education policy in post-Apartheid South Africa, Plüddemann (2015, p. 196), for example, states that “[a] fuller picture is needed

of children's linguistic repertoire, including multimodal and other multiple discursive or translanguaging practices that go beyond codeswitching" to overcome the gridlock between official multilingual policies that are not implemented effectively and the continuing preference for the use of English in education.

In this chapter, three sets of data (from language repertoire surveys, language portraits and language audit surveys) gathered from students at a South African university are used to construct an understanding of the nature of their multilingual repertoires. This "fuller picture" of the language repertoires of the participating students is used to conceptualize multilingualism in assessment for these participants, including recommendations for language-in-education policy that aim to advance multilingual assessment in this context.

2. Contextualization

South Africa is well-known as a context where there is widespread multilingualism at the societal and individual levels. In Census 2011 (Census 2021/2022 data not yet published) there are three groups of home languages reported by South Africans that provide an indication of the multilingual complexity of the sociolinguistic environment. There is a group of languages with six million and more home language speakers (isiZulu with 11,587,374, isiXhosa with 8,154,257 and Afrikaans with 6,855,082). A second group of languages are reported to have close to four or five million home language speakers (English with 4,892,623, Sesotho sa Leboa with 4,618,577, Setswana with 4,067,248 and Sesotho with 3,849,562). A third group of languages have between one million and two million speakers (Xitsonga with 2,277,148, Siswati with 1,297,048, Tshivenda with 1,209,388 and isiNdebele with 1,090,223). At the individual level, South Africans are multilingual, often reported to know an average of three or four languages (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2012; Mesthrie, 2006, 2021).

Language-in-education policies in South Africa took the multilingualism of its citizens into consideration in different ways across different periods in the country's history. Du Plessis (2003, 2006, 2020) and Webb (2002, 2003, Webb et al., 2010) published comprehensive summaries of the language-in-education policy history of South African schools and universities. In the recent past (2010 onwards), there is an overt drive towards the implementation of multilingualism, freshly promulgated in the "Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education Institutions" by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) (2020). According to this policy framework, all public higher education institutions should have a multilingual language policy in which they commit to the development of at least two indigenous South African languages as languages

of learning and teaching (LoLT). Higher education institutions should submit annual reports to the DHET in which they report on the implementation of their language policies. This policy framework (especially the annual monitoring part) and continued conversations and support to advocate for the usefulness of multilingualism in higher education by several scholars (Antia & Dyers, 2016; Du Plessis, 2006; Hibbert & Van der Walt, 2014; Madiba, 2010, 2013, 2018; Makalela, 2016, 2022; Maseko & Kaschula, 2009; Maseko, 2014; Nomlomo & Katiya, 2018; Palfreyman & van der Walt, 2017; Van der Walt, 2013, 2017; Webb, 2008, 2012; Wildsmith-Cromarty & Turner, 2018; Wildsmith-Cromarty et al., 2022) have resulted in the surprising situation where the implementation of multilingualism in higher education seems to be thriving at the moment (mid-2010s onwards).

There is a growing body of work (see the list above) that includes a focus on multilingual policies and pedagogies for higher education in South Africa. Work on multilingual assessment in higher education is emerging slowly. Webb et al. (2010, p. 287) list as a future goal for education, "Promoting the use of the Bantu languages (usage development) in all teaching, for example for classroom discussions, writing assignments and assessment in general". Du Plessis and Du Plessis (2015, p. 209), note that, "insufficient attention is being devoted to the standard of teaching and assessment of the school language subjects [with specific reference to African home language subjects], placing them in a weak position for use in linguistically challenging (higher register) domains". In my view, using African languages as languages of assessment in higher education would constitute a linguistically challenging and higher register domain. Antia et al. (2021) and Van Rooy and Coetzee-Van Rooy (2015) argue that LoLT influence the academic success of South African students. Antia et al. (2021, pp. 51–52) confirm that the language issue in South African higher education, specifically related to multilingual assessment, has not yet received due consideration. The focus of this chapter is to contribute findings from the North-West University (NWU) in South Africa that consider the nature of the multilingual repertoires of participants, including their perceptions on multilingual assessment, to conceptualize multilingual assessment at this institution.

The NWU in South Africa came into existence as a merger between the former Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (PUCHE) and the University of the North-West (UNW) in 2004 (Pretorius, 2017, p. 28). The former PUCHE had strong religious roots (it developed from a theological seminary in 1869) and was known for its deep commitment to the development of Afrikaans as LoLT (in opposition to Dutch and later on English) and its support for nationalist values in the pre-1994 South African context (Pretorius, 2017, p. 40). The PUCHE was one of the so-called "historically Afrikaans-medium

universities” that was “established from the outset as [a] single-medium Dutch/Afrikaans-medium” institution (Du Plessis, 2006, p. 88). The former UNW was established in 1979 and was built with funds donated by the Setswana communities in the broader Mahikeng region (Pretorius, 2017, p. 63). The UNW had a vision since its start as an independent, anti-apartheid African university that wanted to foster values of non-discrimination (Pretorius, 2017, p. 63). The UNW had a cosmopolitan character right from the start due to the appointment of international staff and it was generally considered to be “an English-speaking university” (Pretorius, 2017, p. 82).

The NWU currently has 55,690 students and 1,590 permanent academic staff members. The NWU has three campuses in Mahikeng (with 14,949 students), Potchefstroom (with 32,595 students) and in Vanderbijlpark (with 8,146 students). The distance between the Mahikeng and Potchefstroom campuses is 220 kilometres; the distance between the Potchefstroom and Vanderbijlpark campuses is 110 kilometres; and it is 330 kilometres from the Vanderbijlpark to the Mahikeng campus (Pretorius, 2017, p. 18).

From the inception of the merged institution (the NWU) in 2004, it accepted a multilingual language policy which initially used English, Afrikaans, Setswana and Sesotho in a functional multilingual dispensation. As the merger matured, the multilingual language policy expanded to include an increasingly widening multilingual pedagogies perspective as well as deepening multilingual practices in the domains of administration and student life. Currently, the NWU hosts a short learning programme in multilingual pedagogies in higher education, as well as language acquisition courses in Afrikaans, Setswana and Sesotho for students and staff. The institution also hosts an annual “Language Awareness Week” (LAW) in which faculties take the lead in creating activities for staff and students that would enhance the experiences and understanding of the benefits of multilingualism at the NWU. In addition, all faculties at the NWU implement multilingual language plans which demonstrate a rich set of approaches used. All faculties provide an annual report in which they document their incremental deepening of the implementation of the multilingual language policy of the NWU. The NWU also hosts a well-resourced Language Directorate (lead by Dr Kea Sheshoka) to support staff with the implementation of the multilingual language policy of the NWU. In the NWUs Language Policy Implementation Annual Report (2022, previous reports are also available online), the Deputy-Vice Chancellor for Teaching and Learning, Professor Robert Balfour, highlights the importance of languages in the multilingual language policy of the institution as an “affirmation of what this University stands for as a place of learning and ‘learning to become’, in which our languages matter as a means of access and

inclusion, and as key resources for enhanced academic success” (NWU, 2022, pp. 91–92).

The issue of multilingual assessment is also discussed at various levels at the NWU. The former PUCHE had a longstanding history in the offering of bilingual examination papers (in Afrikaans and English). The issue of multilingual assessment in the current dispensation is on the agenda of the Senate Committee for Language Planning and Advisory Services (SCLPAS). The approach followed is one of doing a comprehensive survey of the available knowledge about multilingual assessment with a view to devise an implementation plan towards more multilingual assessment in the near future. This chapter hopes to contribute in some way to support the thinking of the NWU on this important matter. The research questions in the chapter are: (a) what is the nature of the language repertoires of students at the NWU; (b) what are the perceptions of the NWU students towards multilingual assessment; and (c) how can multilingual assessment be conceptualized by taking the nature of the language repertoires and the perceptions of the students towards multilingual assessment into account?

3. Brief introduction to the different empirical projects and participants

At the NWU, there is a research focus on understanding the nature of the multilingual language repertoires of its students. The continuous engagement at the NWU with the multilingual repertoires of students resulted in a fair number of research projects conducted over time to investigate this phenomenon. The researcher conducted several of these projects at the NWU herself and was involved as a member of the research team in several others. In this chapter, relevant findings from previous research projects about language matters conducted at the NWU and additional findings not yet reported elsewhere would be used to consider a set of new research questions. The empirical projects that are re-considered for the purpose of this chapter resulted in vast data sets that have not yet all been published. For the chapter, some of the data from previous research projects, as well as pieces of new findings not yet reported elsewhere, will be used to answer the research questions relevant to the chapter: what are the implications of the findings related to the language repertoires of the NWU student participants and their perceptions towards multilingual assessment, for the conceptualization of the implementation of multilingual assessment at the institution in future? In this chapter, data from a Language Repertoire Survey project (conducted by the researcher in 2010, 2015 and 2020), a Language Portrait project (conducted by the researcher in 2020) and the NWUs Language Audit

Surveys (conducted by the SCLPAS research team that included the researcher in 2018 and in 2021) would be revisited to answer the new research questions posed in the chapter. The approach taken in the chapter therefore results in the use of previously published and newly analysed data from different types of projects (surveys and language portraits) in the form of an “after the fact” mixed method design. The limitations of the approach include the acknowledgement that not all data from the projects are relevant to the specific research questions posed in the chapter. A selection of data is therefore reported. The benefits of the approach include the potential to triangulate the relevant findings from the different research projects across different research methods. In the rest of this section, the participants in each research project reported on and the data gathering contexts will be described briefly.

3.1. Language repertoire surveys (2010, 2015, 2020)

Some findings from the Language Repertoire Surveys were reported elsewhere (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2018). All the participants in the Language Repertoire Survey were first year students at the NWU’s Vanderbijlpark campus in 2010, 2015 or 2020. A total of 2 069¹ students participated in the survey across the three survey periods (N in 2010=883, N in 2015=906, N in 2020=280).

Table 1a: Demographic details of Language Repertoire Survey participants from the NWU (2010, 2015, 2020) [Gender, Population Group, Number of languages in the repertoire]

Year	Gender			Population group						Number of Languages in Repertoire			
	Female	Male	Other	Black African	Coloured	Indian / Asian	White	Other	Valid N	Mean	Min	Max	SD
2010	572	311	0	0	0	0	0	0	879	3.58	1	17	1.76
2015	580	318	0	698	20	12	166	6	902	4.01	1	20	1.75
2020	168	98	1	237	2	2	33	6	279	3.95	1	10	1.63
Total	1320	727	1	935	22	14	199	12	2060				

1 The total number of responses at some items is sometimes less than 2 069 because not all participants answered all questions.

Table 1b: Demographic details of Language Repertoire Survey participants from the NWU (2010, 2015, 2020) [Reported home languages]

Year	Home Languages										
	Sesotho	Afrikaans	isiZulu	Setswana	English	Sepedi	Other African	Other European	Bi / Multilingual	Chinese	Other
2010	283	240	94	81	86	38	56	3	0	1	0
2015	324	149	134	64	67	60	93	2	7	0	1
2020	97	30	65	25	9	25	26	0	2	0	0
Total	704	419	293	170	162	123	175	5	9	1	1

The data were gathered from the participants when they were first year students that attended the NWUs Reception and Welcoming programme in 2010, 2015 and 2020 on the Vanderbijlpark campus. The programme is presented annually in January and February. So the data in 2020 were gathered face-to-face before the lock downs due to Covid-19 restrictions came into effect at the end of March 2020.

3.2. Language portraits (2020)

A language portrait is a drawing created by a participant where they reflect on the languages² that they know and use, or aspire to know and use. They choose a colour to represent each of these languages in their repertoires and select a place on the drawing of a human silhouette where they represent each language. Usually an interview is held where participants explain their language portraits to researchers. Language portrait work reported in this chapter uses a template for written explanations (see Peters & Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2020; see Appendix B for example of written notes used in the analysis). Language portraits have been used by more South African scholars to study the language repertoires of students in higher education (Botsis & Bradbury, 2018; Bristowe et al., 2014; Mashazi & Oostendorp, 2022; Oostendorp & Mashazi, 2022). Some findings from the Language Portrait study where a selection of portraits were analysed were reported elsewhere (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2021; Coetzee-Van Rooy & Peters,

2 Languages refer to any form of linguistic semiotic resources such as dialects, varieties, sub-cultural languages etc.

2021; Peters & Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2020). A comprehensive analysis of the total of number of language portraits received ($N = 1,962$) is underway. For the purpose of this chapter, 30 language portraits were used for analysis. The demographic details of the 30 language portrait participants are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic details of Language Portrait participants from the NWU (2020)

Home languages	Gender		Age	Population Group			Number of Languages Reported in the Repertoires					
	Female	Male	19–24 years	Black	African	White	2 languages	3 languages	4 languages	5 languages	6 languages	7 languages
Afrikaans	8	1	10	0	10	10	8	1	0	0	0	0
Sesotho	3	6	9	10	0	0	0	1	3	4	1	1
isiZulu	5	5	10	10	0	0	3	5	1	0	0	1
Total	16	12	29	20	10	10	11	7	4	4	1	2

Twenty-nine out of the 30 participants study on the Potchefstroom campus (1 participant studies on the Vanderbijlpark campus) and the majority of the participants are enrolled in the faculties of Engineering ($N = 15$) and Humanities ($N = 10$). The Language Portraits were gathered in person as part of a session of the NWUs Reception and Welcoming programme for first year students on the Mahikeng, Potchefstroom and Vanderbijlpark campuses (in January and February 2020 before the lock downs for Covid-19 came into effect in South Africa at the end of March 2020). For the purpose of this chapter, 30 of the portraits were analysed: the first 10 portraits in the captured data of home language users of Afrikaans, Sesotho and isiZulu were included in the analysis. Language portrait participants with other home languages (e.g., English) were not included in the analysis for this chapter but will be included in the analysis of the complete data set.

3.3. NWU Language Audit survey (2018, 2021)

The NWU in South Africa has a history of doing language audits to inform its language policies. The governance framework of the university also requires regular revision of all its policies, including its language policy. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) promulgated a “Language Policy

Framework for Public Higher Education" (2020) and annual monitoring of implementation plans forms part of the policy. In the recent past, the NWU conducted language audits as part of its institutional and national mandates in 2018 and in 2021. There were a total of 19,882 participants (of which 11,864 were students and the rest of the participants were staff) in the NWU Language Audit in 2018 and 4 601 participants (of which 3,487 were students and the rest of the participants were staff) in the 2021 audit.

Table 3a: Demographic details of Language Audit participants from the NWU (2018, 2020) [Gender, Age, year]

Year	Gender				Age								
	Male	Female	Other	Not say	18–20	21–22	23–24	25–26	26–35	36–45	46–55	56–65	65+
2018	9271	11528	65		9888	6249	2097	638	1010				
2021	1631	2908	27	37	1162	1176	405	194	712	361	311	210	24

Table 3b: Demographic details of Language Audit participants from the NWU (2018, 2020) [Reported home languages]

Year	Home Languages											
	Afrikaans	English	isiNdebele	isiXhosa	isiZulu	Sesotho	Sepedi	Setswana	Siswati	Tshivenda	Xitsonga	Other
2018	10534	3636	121	703	1164	1886	756	3974	277	167	245	311
2020	2365	1650	41	244	452	502	256	946	75	57	111	105

In the 2018 NWU Language Audit survey, 3,361 students (28.3 %) were from the Mahikeng campus, 6,071 (51.2 %) were from the Potchefstroom campus and 2,432 (20.5 %) were from the Vanderbijlpark campus. In the 2021 NWU language Audit survey, 677 students (19.4 %) were from the Mahikeng campus, 2,351 (67.4 %) were from the Potchefstroom campus, and 459 (13.2 %) were from the Vanderbijlpark campus. Both surveys were conducted online via platforms created by the NWU.

3.4. Summary

The findings related to the research questions that are relevant to the chapter therefore emanate from six research projects focused in different ways on language matters among NWU students (staff data not reported in the chapter) conducted between the periods of 2010 and 2021. The research methods used across the six projects include two different surveys (the Language Repertoire Survey designed by Coetzee-Van Rooy; and the NWU Language Audit survey designed by a team of NWU members responsible for the monitoring of the language policy implementation at the institution); as well as a Language Portrait project. The Language Repertoire Survey data were only gathered among NWU first year students on the Vanderbijlpark campus across three periods. The Language Portrait data were gathered among NWU first year students on all three campuses, but the selection of portraits for the analysis are from Potchefstroom campus students. The NWU Language Audit surveys include students from across all three campuses. Across the data sets from the six projects, information about the nature of the language repertoires, as well as perceptions towards multilingual assessment, were gathered from students on all three campuses of the NWU. The findings are reported in the next section.

4. Findings

There are two research questions posed in the chapter: what is the nature of the language repertoires of the participating NWU students and what perceptions do the students hold towards the idea of multilingual assessment. The findings from the six empirical projects that relate to these research questions are reported in this section.

4.1. Nature of the language repertoires of the participating NWU students

4.1.1. Findings from the Language Repertoire Surveys

From the Language Repertoire Survey data (2010, 2015, 2020), information about the nature of the language repertoires of the participating NWU students can be inferred from 3 sets of items in the survey. First of all, participants were asked to report their home language. The home language was defined as “the ONE language which you used at HOME most of the time” [formatting used in survey] (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2012, p. 116). It is accepted that South Africans usually use more than one language at home (Posel et al., 2022), but for the purpose

of the survey participants were asked to identify one of the languages used in the home most of the time. As one can see in Table 1 above, the most prominent self-reported home languages were Sesotho, Afrikaans and isiZulu. The home languages reported by the NWU student participants were representative of the self-reported home language distribution for people in the Vanderbijlpark region as reported in Census 2011 where 46.06 % of the residents reported Sesotho as home language, 15.74 % reported isiZulu as home language and 14.94 % reported Afrikaans as home language. The information about the nature of the language repertoires of the students participating in the Language Repertoire survey on the NWU's Vanderbijlpark campus therefore is that the most prominent home languages reported by the participants reflect the home language distribution of the region as evidenced by the Census 2011 data.

The second item on the Language Repertoire Survey that provided information about the nature of the language repertoires of the NWU participants, was a question about the number of languages that participants report to have in their language repertoires. The survey item asked participants to indicate "ALL the languages that they know" [formatting used in survey] (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2012, p. 116). "Knowing a language" was defined as follows: "People who know more than one language do not know them all at the same level of proficiency and they use them for different communication functions. They either use the languages they know to: **listen** and **understand** when people use the language; and / or they are able to **speak** the language; and/or they are able to **read** the language; and / or they are able to **write** the language" [formatting used in survey] (XX). The Sesotho (N = 484, Mean = 4.24, Minimum = 1, Maximum = 10, Standard Deviation = 1.479) and isiZulu (N = 217, Mean = 4.35, Minimum = 2, Maximum = 10, Standard Deviation = 1.56) participants across the survey periods know an average of 3–4 languages, while the Afrikaans (n = 384, Mean = 2.09, Minimum = 2, Maximum = 5, Standard Deviation = 0.33) participants report knowing mainly two languages (Afrikaans and English). There was no statistically significant difference between the number of languages reported by the Sesotho ($p = 0.28$), isiZulu ($p = 0.35$) or Afrikaans ($p = 0.81$) home language participants in 2010, 2015, 2020 based on Pearson Chi-square tests. The information about the nature of the language repertoires of the students that participated in the Language Repertoire survey on the NWU's Vanderbijlpark campus therefore is that the Sesotho and isiZulu home language participants are multilingual and the Afrikaans home language participants are mostly bilingual; and that these language repertoires did not change across the three survey periods if the self-reported number of languages in the repertoires is taken as an indicator of repertoire change.

The third set of questions from the Language Repertoire survey that provides information about the nature of the language repertoires of the NWU student participants, is a set of questions related to the participants' perceptions of their skills in reading and writing their strongest, second strongest and third strongest languages³; and the role of reading and the school or education as factor that contributed to their learning and their current use of their strongest, second strongest and third languages.

In the survey, participants were asked to identify their "strongest" language that was defined as "the language with which I express myself the easiest and people who understand my strongest language understand what I want to communicate the best. Your second strongest language is the language which you feel you can use with the second most ease and it is the language you feel second most proficiency in etc." (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2012, p. 90). For each of the strongest languages identified by the survey participants, they were asked the same set of questions. Relevant to the research questions in this chapter, were the survey questions about the participants' perceptions towards their proficiency in reading and writing their strongest languages and if reading and the school or education contributed to their learning and current use of their strongest languages. If we understand the perceptions about languages and education in the repertoires (as reflected as responses to the selected survey items) better, we would have useful information that could contribute to the conceptualization of multilingual assessment for these participants and provide better aligned recommendations about multilingual assessment for the language-in-education policy of the participating students' institution.

The perceived strongest, second strongest and third strongest languages of the participants are reported in Tables 4a, b and c.

3 Information about the five strongest languages were gathered, but for the purpose of this chapter, the first three strongest languages are taken into consideration, because the Sesotho and isiZulu home language participants reported to know an average of between 3 and 4 languages.

Table 4a: Perceptions of strongest languages of Language Repertoire Survey participants from the NWU (2010, 2015, 2020) included in the analysis

Home Language	Perceived Strongest Language									Total
	Afrikaans	English	Sepedi	Sesotho	Setswana	isiXhosa	isiZulu	Bilingual	Other	
Sesotho	7	191	5	487	3	1	4	2	0	700
isiZulu	1	59	1	10	1	1	218	0	1	292
Afrikaans	384	34	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	419

Table 4b: Perceptions of second strongest languages of Language Repertoire Survey participants from the NWU (2010, 2015, 2020) included in the analysis

Home Languages	Perceived Strongest Languages									Total
	Afrikaans	English	Sepedi	Sesotho	Setswana	isiXhosa	isiZulu	Other European	Other African	
Sesotho	20	389	18	135	13	4	52	2	3	636
isiZulu	7	144	4	41	2	9	45	1	14	267
Afrikaans	27	350	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	378

Table 4c: Perceptions of third strongest languages of Language Repertoire Survey participants from the NWU (2010, 2015, 2020) included in the analysis

Home Languages	Perceived Third Strongest Languages												Total
	Afrikaans	English	Sepedi	Sesotho	Setswana	isiXhosa	isiZulu	Siswati	isiNdebele	Other European	Other African	Other	
Sesotho	108	62	23	25	65	33	162	0	1	1	3	0	483
isiZulu	22	44	8	60	6	33	16	10	7	1	4	0	211
Afrikaans	0	0	1	6	0	2	2	0	0	16	0	1	28

From Tables 4a, b, and c it is apparent that the majority of the Sesotho, isiZulu and Afrikaans home language participants in the Language Repertoire survey

regarded their home languages as their strongest languages. English is the most prominent perceived second strongest language of all the participants, irrespective of perceived home language. The Sesotho and isiZulu home language participants report perceived third strongest languages: isiZulu for the Sesotho participants and Sesotho for the isiZulu participants. Very few of the Afrikaans home language participants report a third strongest language and there are not prominent perceived third strongest languages in this group. In the rest of the analysis, findings for the strongest languages will be reported for Sesotho, isiZulu and Afrikaans home language participants; findings for English as second strongest language will be reported; and for the Sesotho home language participants, findings related to isiZulu perceived as third strongest language and for the isiZulu participants, findings related to Sesotho perceived as third strongest language will be reported. For the Afrikaans home language participants, no findings for third strongest languages will be reported in the rest of the section.

The descriptive statistics (means) for the selected survey items that provide information about the Sesotho, isiZulu and Afrikaans participants' perceptions of their proficiency in reading and writing, as well as their perceptions about the contribution made by reading and the school or education in the learning and acquisition and current use of their strongest, second strongest and third strongest languages are presented in Appendix A. A summary of the main findings from the language repertoire survey for the selected items is presented in Table 5 below. Table 5 represents the information in Appendix A by using a simple system to highlight the findings that indicate perceptions by the participants that relate to potential benefits in using the relevant languages as languages of reading, writing and in general in the school or education context. This analysis would identify which languages should be considered in a context that conceptualizes multilingual assessment. The symbols (+ and -) used in Table 5 is the result of the implementation of specific cut-off points for the interpretation of the findings in Appendix A. The + on Table 5 indicates that the mean on the scale achieved the cut-off point determined by the researcher. For example, on the scales of 1 to 4, the cut-off point for the indication of using a + was 3; on the scales of 1 to 7, the cut-off point for a + was 5; and for the scales of 1 to 10, the cut-off point for a + was 8. The - on Table 5 indicates that the means achieved for the survey items were below the cut-off points described above.

Table 5: Summary of main findings related to survey items relevant to the research questions in the chapter for home language participants of Sesotho, isiZulu and Afrikaans (2010, 2015, 2020)

HL	Languages in repertoire	Reading	Writing	Reading → Learning	School / Education → Learning	Reading → Current Use	School / Education → Current Use
Sesotho				2010			
	Sesotho SL	+	+	+	+	-	-
	English 2 nd SL	+	+	+	+	+	+
	isiZulu 3 rd SL	-	-	-	-	-	-
isiZulu	isiZulu SL	+	+	+	+	-	-
	English 2 nd SL	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Sesotho 3 rd SL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Afrikaans	Afrikaans SL	+	+	+	+	+	+
	English 2 nd SL	+	+	+	+	+	+
Sesotho				2015			
	Sesotho SL	+	+	+	-	(+)	-
	English 2 nd SL	+	+	+	+	+	+
	isiZulu 3 rd SL	-	-	-	-	-	-
isiZulu	isiZulu SL	+	+	+	-	-	-
	English 2 nd SL	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Sesotho 3 rd SL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Afrikaans	Afrikaans SL	+	+	+	+	+	+
	English 2 nd SL	+	(+)	+	+	+	+
Sesotho				2020			
	Sesotho SL	+	+	+	+	+	+
	English 2 nd SL	+	+	+	+	+	+
	isiZulu 3 rd SL	-	-	-	-	-	-
isiZulu	isiZulu SL	+	+	+	+	+	-
	English 2 nd SL	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Sesotho 3 rd SL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Afrikaans	Afrikaans SL	+	+	+	+	+	+
	English 2 nd SL	+	+	+	+	+	+

Note: HL=home language, SL=strongest language, 2nd SL=second strongest language, 3rd SL=third strongest language, →=contribute to, (+/-)=rounded up complies with cut-off point, +=complies with cut-off point on scale, -=does not comply with cut-off point on scale

In summary, in the case of the Sesotho and isiZulu home language participants in the language repertoire surveys across the survey periods, it is notable from the findings reported in Table 5 (and Appendix A) that the home languages

(Sesotho and isiZulu in this case) and the second strongest language (English in this case) are perceived as being useful for reading, writing and for general school or education purposes. This is also the case for the Afrikaans home language participants: they also perceive their home language and English as useful for reading, writing and general use in school and education. In the case of the Sesotho and isiZulu home language participants' perceptions, it is evident that these participants use third languages; but that the perceived third strongest languages (isiZulu in the case of the Sesotho home language participants and Sesotho in the case of the isiZulu home language participants) are not perceived as languages in which the participants are highly proficient in reading and writing, and the participants do not believe that reading or use in school or education contributed to their learning and current use of their third strongest languages.

4.1.2. Findings from the Language Portrait study

The findings from the language portrait data will be structured in a very specific way to make clear: (a) the roles that the languages play in the repertoires of the participants; (b) the relationships between the roles that the languages play and the place and colour used to depict the languages on the human silhouette; and (c) the relationships between the roles that the languages play and the functions performed in the repertoires. The main aim of the analysis would be to get to an understanding of the language repertoires of the participants and to conceptualize the idea of multilingual assessment based on the nature of these repertoires.

Places

If one considers the co-occurrence of the roles of languages coded on the portraits and the placement of languages on the portrait, one can infer an impression about the importance of languages in the repertoires of the participants. In Table 6, the frequencies for the languages represented on the portraits and their roles are reported.

Table 6: Frequencies for roles of languages related to specific languages on the language portraits

Languages on portrait	Afrikaans	English	French	German	isiXhosa	isiZulu	Korean	isiNdebele	Sepedi	Sesotho	Setswana	Siswati	Tshivenda	Xitsonga	Total
Additional language	7	54	0	0	9	9	0	4	6	6	10	2	2	2	111
Desired language	6	0	4	2	2	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	19
Heritage language	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Home language	21	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	2	15	2	0	0	0	60
Total	35	54	4	2	11	29	2	4	8	23	13	2	2	2	191

A brief note on the coding of the roles of languages (as reported in Table 6) is important for clarity. The participants indicated their perceived home languages as part of a brief set of biographical questions that were included as part of the language portrait stimulus material; and they often categorize their home languages overtly in the written notes on their portraits. The home languages reported in Table 6 were therefore coded by using the information from the biographical questions, as well as direct references by the participants in the written notes to the languages represented on the portraits (see quotations 13–16 as example). All languages represented on the portraits that were not indicated as home languages, desired or heritage languages, were coded as additional languages in Table 6. One can see that English and Setswana are indicated as prominent additional languages in this data set. Readers are reminded that no portraits created by home language speakers of English were included in the analysis for the chapter.

Desired and heritage languages are not discussed further in the chapter, mainly because these languages do not logically play an important role in the conceptualization of multilingual assessment, as participants' proficiencies in these languages are by definition not strong enough to be used as languages of assessment. However, desired languages and heritage languages are indicated quite visibly by participants in the language portrait notes. For example, Participant 1 (a female Afrikaans home language participant) in the bigger language portrait study says the following about isiZulu which she does not yet know: "I want to understand

the language aswell⁴ as it's vast history". Participant 28 (a female Afrikaans home language participant) in the bigger portrait study, for example, says the following about German as a heritage language: "I know a little bit German. The country I come from was a German place so its rich in German history. The blue makes me remember it".

Table 7a: Co-occurrences of roles of languages and places on portraits: Central places

Role of Languages	Central Places								
	Body	Head/ Brain	Ears	Mouth	Face	Hair	Heart	Torso/ Chest	Stomach
Additional language	1	16	3	2	3	1	4	3	4
Desired language	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	0
Heritage language	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Home language	4	9	2	1	0	0	10	6	0
Total 1	5	26	6	5	4	1	16	10	4
Total 2					76				

Table 7b: Co-occurrence of roles of languages and places on portraits: Peripheral places

Role of Languages	Peripheral Places				
	Hands	Arms	Legs	Feet	Total
Additional language	16	3	14	2	72
Desired language	0	1	4	1	12
Heritage language	0	0	0	0	0
Home language	4	5	3	2	46
Total 1	20	9	21	5	131
Total 2			55		

4 The written notes of the participants are presented verbatim in the chapter. No editing or corrections are made to also provide some indication to the readers about the proficiency levels of the participants in the languages that they write in.

In Tables 7a and b, the co-occurrence of the roles and places of languages on the portraits are presented. From these findings, one can see that the most prominent places for the placing of additional languages are the head/brain, hands and legs. English is the most prominent additional language in this data set (see Table 6). The discussion of additional languages would therefore focus on English. English is often placed in the head or brain by the language portrait participants included in this analysis (see extracts 1–3). The participants perceive English as the language used in the cognition or education domain.

- [1] This language is my main language of reasoning and comprehension. [Participant 309, male, isiZulu home language, referring to English as additional language]⁵
- [2] I have to use the language most often in any environment, work place, academic usage. [Participant 203, male, Sesotho home language, referring to English as additional language]
- [3] English is the language that everyone (mostly) in the world can understand and we can understand it because of our brains. [Participant 165, female, isiZulu home language, referring to English as additional language]

There are two main themes related to the participants' perceptions about English as an additional language and placement in the hands on the human silhouette: hands are used for writing at school and hands are tools, just like English is a tool for communication (see extracts 4–8).

- [4] On hands because I started learning it at school so the teacher gave it to me. [Participant 52, male, isiZulu home language, referring to English as additional language]
- [5] I placed the language on my right hand and right leg as it shows I first learnt to write English using my right hand when I was still in primary school and

5 The extracts are direct quotations from the written notes made by the language portrait participants about each language represented on the portraits. The extracts or quotations therefore do not always include a reference to the name of the language that the participant is referring to, because the written notes have a specific space to indicate the language on the portrait that the participant is reflecting on. The language and the written notes referring to it are captured rigorously in Excel for analysis in Atlas.ti. Please see Appendix B for an example of the written notes that were captured for analysis in the chapter. For each of quotation provided in an extract in the chapter, brief information about the language and the role it plays as coded for analysis is included in square brackets for readers.

wore my re-coloured uniform. [Participant 151, female, Sesotho home language, referring to English as additional language]

- [6] Since hands are basically my tools I then chose this place because I use English as a tool of communication. [Participant 236, male, Sesotho home language, referring to English as additional language]
- [7] Because I use my hands for almost everything and English is used for communication in this country (Helps me reach out for the world). [Participant 95, female, isiZulu home language, referring to English as additional language]
- [8] English is the most used language in the world, so I placed it by the hands because its what joins us as the world “holding hands” – unity or coming together. [Participant 220, female, isiZulu home language, referring to English as additional language]

English is not the additional language placed in the legs by the participants (see extracts 9–12). The main themes communicated by placing additional languages in the legs are “keeping one grounded or upright” and “going places”.

- [9] It kept me on my feet when I was learning that language so that I could communicate better with my former high school classmates. [Participant 151, female, Sesotho home language, referring to Sepedi as additional language]
- [10] The human legs are the closest parts to the ground, so Zulu deserve this place because in my view they are very down to earth. [Participant 197, male, Sesotho home language, referring to isiZulu as additional language]
- [11] I only know the language to get around or when in an environment where it is needed. [Participant 220, female, isiZulu home language, referring to Setswana as additional language]
- [12] legs are for going to places and Afrikaans got me to places [Participant 290, female, isiZulu home language, referring to Afrikaans as additional language]

There are two broad themes expressed by the participants who place the home language in the head or brain. With the placement of the home language in the head or brain, the participants communicate the importance and omnipresence of the home language in their lives (see extracts 17–18). The second theme relates to the fact that they use the home language for cognitive or education functions and that it is the language that they know the best of all their languages (see extracts 19–20).

- [17] The head is the most important piece of the body and I think your home language should also be I can read, understand and write the language. It fills my whole life. [Participant 2, female, Afrikaans home language, about Afrikaans]
- [18] That's the language I will never forget it will always be on my mind and that that's the language I know since from birth (mother tongue) [Participant 418, male, Sesotho home language, about Sesotho]
- [19] Huistaal/Moeder taal. Verstaan, lees, skryf. Dis my hoof taal wat ek by die huis praat. Die taal waarin ek drome droom en leef. [*Home language / Mother tongue. Understand, read, write. It is the main language that I speak at home. It is the language in which I dream and live.*] [Participant 4, female, Afrikaans home language, about Afrikaans]
- [20] (Head) It is the language I know best, I grew up in Durban here so many people speak it [Participant 52, female, isiZulu home language, about isiZulu]

In addition to extracts 17–20 that elucidate the participants' motivations for placing the home language in the head or brain, the following description of Participant 165 [female, isiZulu home language] about the importance of isiZulu as language of cognition or education illustrates that not only English is perceived as useful for this function:

- [37] On my chest: It's the language that is closest to my heart, it runs in my veins, it's easier for me to stand my ground speaking this language (feet) and I can speak it fluently by the snap of my fingers and *it's easier for me to understand something when i hear it in Zulu.* [*My emphasis.*]

Colours

It is difficult to analyse colour in language portraits because colour has such an individual and subjective meaning for people. The approach taken in this analysis is to code references to colour in terms of the type of attitude related to the colours used. The three attitudes coded in this analysis are positive, negative and neutral. As is apparent from Table 8, colours are mostly referred to with positive attitudes by the participants.

Table 8: Co-occurrence of roles of languages and places on portraits

Role of Language	Colour Positive	Colour Negative	Colour Neutral
Additional language	22	3	2
Desired language	4	0	0
Heritage language	0	0	0
Home language	16	0	1
Total	42	3	3

In the context of additional languages, there are 3 themes that emerge from the colours allocated by the participants: growth (mainly referring to English, see extracts 25–26), brightness (see extracts 27–28) and harmony (see extracts 29–30).

- [25] Green is a bright colour and therefore english is th way for a better future, most things in nature that are green grows, and also the same thing as English it is a language that is growing [Participant 13, female, Setswana home language, about green associated with English as an additional language]
- [26] green means wealth. English is the only language that will take me to the greener side of the world. [Participant 246, female, isiZulu home language, about green associated with English as additional language]
- [27] My english is bright, it makes me bright it is a beautiful language after all. [Participant 279, male, isiZulu home language, about yellow associated with English as an additional language]
- [28] Bright and fun. Commands attention without being overpowering [Participant 290, female, isiZulu home language, about orange associated with isiXhosa as additional language]
- [29] Green, green is a colour that symbolises harmony and nature, thus English provides people with the ability to live in harmony because they understand one another. [Participant 165, female, isiZulu home language, about green associated with English as additional language]
- [30] Since English is our language in which we all can communicate in SA red represents love and I love SA. [Participant 290, female, isiZulu home language, about red association with English as additional language]

Functions

In Table 9, it is notable that additional languages are related most prominently with the function of cognition or education for the participants in this analysis.

In extracts 1–4 above, some of these associations between English as an additional language and as the main language used for cognition or education have been presented. In addition to extracts 1–4, extracts 31–33 also provide examples of the link made by the participants between English as an additional language and the cognition or education function. Some references make the link between English and reading, writing and understanding.

- [31] Ek kan dit lees, skryf, praat en verstaan [*I can read, write, speak and understand it*] [Participant 6, female, Afrikaans home language, about English as additional language]
- [32] Because I can write in English [Participant 5, no gender indicated, Afrikaans home language, about English as additional language]
- [33] it attracts attention to the fact that I understand and learn more in English [Participant 10, female, Afrikaans home language, about English as additional language]

Some of the references link additional languages to the school, also in its function as broader language of communication (see extracts 34–36).

- [34] Represents all the teachers who have been on my side, taught me to write and read [Participant 151, female, Sesotho home language, about Setswana as additional language]
- [35] Represents the colour of the skin of the pen I mostly write with. [Participant 238, male, Sesotho home language, about English as additional language]
- [36] it is the language I use to communicate with other people of different race and of different language therefore it is the language used for school [Participant 193, male, isiZulu home language, about English as additional language]

Table 9: Co-occurrence of roles of languages and functions in repertoires

Role of language	Identity	Communication	Cognition / Education	Total
Additional language	13	36	20	69
Desired language	3	7	1	11
Heritage language	1	0	0	1
Home language	36	7	5	48
Total	53	50	26	129

In summary, the data from the Language Portraits contribute the following information about the nature of the language repertoires of the participants:

- The additional language English is mainly represented in the head on the human silhouette. The additional language English is related to cognition and education via its placement in the head and the motivations provided by the participants for this placement. English as additional language is related to concepts like growth, brightness and harmony in the portraits, mainly through the descriptions of colours selected to represent English.
- The Home Languages are also represented in the head on the human silhouette.

4.1.3. *Language audit question about language preferences for assessment (2018, 2021)*

The findings from the language audit questions about language preferences for assessment are straight forward.

Item 2.4.1 in the Language Audit survey asked respondents to provide an answer to the following question: Which language do you use to answer test and examination papers (excluding in language modules)? From the findings in Table 10 it is evident that of the two language choices reported by the participants in 2018 and 2020: English is used the most, but Afrikaans is also used by a sizable group (about 20 %) of the participants.

Table 10: NWU undergraduate and honours participants' reported use of Afrikaans or English to answer test and examination papers

Language	2018	2021
Afrikaans	702 (20.5 %)	690 (21.2 %)
English	2721 (79.5 %)	2571 (78.8 %)
Total	3423	3261

Following this question in the Language Audit, participants were also asked: Would you prefer to use another language for exam purposes? If so, which language(s)? (You may choose more than one.) From the findings in Table 11 it is apparent that about 30 % of the participants would prefer to use Setswana; and about 15 % of the participants would prefer to use Sesotho and isiZulu for examination purposes.

Table 11: NWU undergraduate and honours participants' reported language preferences for language to answer test and examination papers

Language	2018	2021
Setswana	468 (31.6 %)	436 (31.2 %)
Other	268 (18.1 %)	258 (18.5 %)
Sesotho	219 (14.7 %)	206 (14.7 %)
isiZulu	201 (13.5 %)	193 (13.8 %)
Sepedi	109 (7.3 %)	105 (7.5 %)
isiXhosa	82 (5.5 %)	79 (5.6 %)
Siswati	44 (2.9 %)	39 (2.7 %)
Xitsonga	46 (3.1 %)	39 (2.7 %)
Tshivenda	29 (1.9 %)	25 (1.7 %)
isiNdebele	14 (0.9 %)	14 (1 %)
Total	1480	1394

Item 2.5.1 in the Language Audit survey asked: In what language do you submit your assignments? From the findings in Table 12 it is apparent that the majority of the participants use English to submit their assignments. However, a sizable portion of the participants (about 17 %) also use Afrikaans to submit assignments.

Table 12: NWU undergraduate and honours participants' reported use of Afrikaans or English to submit assignments

Language	2018	2021
Afrikaans	592 (17.29 %)	579 (17.75 %)
English	2831 (82.68 %)	2682 (82.24 %)
Total	3423	3261

Following on this question, participants were asked: Would you prefer to use another language for assignment purposes? If so, which language(s)? (You may choose more than one.) From the findings in Table 13 it is notable that about 32 % of the participants would prefer to use Setswana; and about 15 % of the participants would prefer to use Sesotho and isiZulu for the submission of assignments.

Table 13: NWU undergraduate and honours participants' reported language preferences for languages to submit assignments

Language	2018	2021
Setswana	435 (31.73 %)	408 (32.74 %)
Other	262 (19.11 %)	207 (16.61 %)
Sesotho	204 (14.88 %)	189 (15.17 %)
isiZulu	186 (13.57 %)	179 (14.37 %)
Sepedi	98 (7.15 %)	92 (7.38 %)
isiXhosa	74 (5.40 %)	71 (5.70 %)
Siswati	35 (2.55 %)	33 (2.65 %)
Xitsonga	39 (2.84 %)	33 (2.65 %)
Tshivenda	27 (1.97 %)	23 (1.85 %)
isiNdebele	11 (0.80 %)	11 (0.88 %)
Total	1371	1246

In summary, the participants in the 2018 and 2021 NWU Language Audit surveys indicated that they mainly used English for examinations, tests and submission of assignments; Afrikaans was used by a sizable group of the participants. Many participants would have preferred to also use Setswana, Sesotho and isiZulu for examinations, tests and submission of assignments.

5. Discussion

The aim of this chapter is to present a summative description of the nature of the multilingual repertoires of the participating students (based on the Language Repertoire survey and the Language Portrait data), to reflect on the participants' perceptions of the languages to use for assessment (based on the NWU Language Audit survey data) and then to consider the implications of the description for the conceptualization of multilingualism in assessment for these students. This could be considered as a way to triangulate the conclusions or if they offered contrasting results.

There are two main findings that define the nature of the multilingual repertoires of the participating students that warrant discussion. First of all, it is evident that the participants are multilingual. This finding was confirmed across all the data sets used in the chapter. The extent of the multilingual repertoires of the participants vary. The Sesotho and isiZulu home language participants know an average of 3–4 languages, while the Afrikaans home language participants are mainly bilingual. This is not a new finding as these are typical South African

student repertoires reported on by various scholars (Antia & Dyers, 2016; Antia et al., 2021; Nomlomo & Katiya, 2018). Secondly, one needs to note that not all the languages in the repertoires of the participants are used in all domains. From the language survey data, it is apparent that the Sesotho and isiZulu participants, for example, self-report that they are very proficient in reading and writing in Sesotho and English, but that they are not proficient at reading and writing in their third strongest languages (isiZulu for the Sesotho home language speakers and Sesotho for the isiZulu home language speakers). The Afrikaans home language participants report that they are very proficient at reading in their home language and English. This finding corresponds to the language portrait data from which it is notable that the home languages and English are represented in the brain or head and are reported to be useful in education. In other words, there is a bilingual constellation of languages reported for use in the education domain. This idea of bilingual literacy within the multilingual repertoires of South African students have been noted by other scholars as well (Plüddemann, 2015; Posel & Zeller, 2016).

The findings related to the NWU Language Audit items inquiring about the languages used and preferred for use in assessment, indicate the prominence of English and Afrikaans as languages of assessment in the current NWU context. However, the responses to the question about language preferences for assessment indicate that the participants also express a desire to use Setswana, Sesotho and isiZulu as languages in assessment as well (see Tables 11 and 13; English and Afrikaans were removed from these options in the questionnaire). In other words, the participants currently use mainly English and Afrikaans for assessment, but they indicate that they would prefer to use languages like Setswana, Sesotho and isiZulu as well for assessment. The findings in the Language Audit data confirm the results reported in the Language Repertoire surveys (where literacy is evidence in the home language and English) and in the Language Portrait results where the home language and English were represented in the brain or head and were linked to education and cognitive work.

Overall, the findings related to the nature of the language repertoires of the participants included in the analysis for the chapter, indicate similar conclusions across the three types of data sets (the Language Repertoire Survey, Language Portraits and the NWU Language Audit Survey). There is evidence from all three research approaches that the participants display multilingual language repertoires in which the home language and English play specific roles in the education domain or with reference to cognitive work (thinking for example). There seems to be evidence that the home language and English will be useful in

multilingual assessment and that the third additional language might not bring a benefit.

What are the implications of this idea that emerges from the description of the multilingual repertoires of these students for multilingual assessment? In general, from the NWU Language Audit Survey data, it is evident that the participants reported on in this chapter support the notion of using more South African languages for assignments and examinations. In addition to this general support for the use of more languages in assignments and assessment, the participants are aware of their advanced reading and writing proficiencies in their home languages and English, when compared to the lack of reading and writing proficiencies in their third strongest languages. The conceptualization of multilingualism in assessment for these participants could therefore benefit from a specific distinction in using different forms of multilingualism in teaching and learning and in informal and formal assessment. Data from this chapter indicate that the multilingual communicative abilities of the participants is a strong feature of the nature of their multilingual repertoires. This multilingual feature, the ability to communicate in many languages, is very useful in the context of generating multilingual pedagogies. In other words, using all the languages in the repertoires of the participants in a multilingual pedagogy would be very effective. This would include using as many languages as possible in the context of informal formative assessment (e.g., reflective questions at the end of contact session to provide feedback to the learners and lecturer of the level of understanding of the students on the topic that was discussed).

More importantly, when formal formative and summative assessment is conceptualized, it seems imperative following from the data reported in this chapter, that the identified bilingual language constellations of the home language and English should form the starting point for multilingual assessment. If an institution could use the knowledge of these bilingual constellations in which students report very good reading and writing proficiencies to make available multilingual formal formative and summative assessment, it would align the current linguistic repertoires of the students well with an appropriate form of multilingual assessment. This approach, conceptualizing multilingual assessment at the institution to enable appropriate bilingual assessment for a variety of bilingual language constellations, could go a long way in using a deeper understanding of the nature of the multilingual repertoires of the participants to foster more effective multilingual assessment conditions.

A final way in which knowledge of the multilingual repertoires of the participants could be used to conceptualize multilingual assessment, is to use the positive attitudes of the participants towards multilingual assessment (e.g., by

expressing a need to use more languages for assignments and examinations reported in the NWU Language Audit Survey data) to create even more awareness of the benefits of multilingual assessment. In other words, to use the knowledge of these positive perceptions of multilingual assessment to create opportunities and even more awareness would hopefully lead to more students making use of multilingual assessment opportunities in future, should they become available. An understanding of the nature of the multilingual repertoires of these participants should work in more than one way: on the one hand, aligning multilingual assessment better with the nature of the repertoires of the participants (mainly using the reported bilingual literacy to make bilingual assessment in various combinations available so that students could choose to receive their assessment in their home language and English if they prefer); and on the other hand, using the positive attitudes displayed towards multilingual assessment to assist students to re-imagine multilingual assessment in an even deeper and broader way.

6. Conclusion

Ultimately, one could ask why fostering climates that are conducive to multilingual assessment are important. The main reason remains to foster a climate conducive for multilingual assessment that would support epistemological fairness from a language perspective. Multilingual assessment ultimately contributes to the creation of epistemological access in a very high stakes domain in education. This point was made poignantly by a student in the Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences at the NWU when s/he participated in the Faculty's survey that asked feedback on the use of concept videos in Setswana and Sesotho. The student offered an answer to the following open question in the Faculty survey: WHY do you believe concept videos in Setswana and Sesotho would be useful or not useful? Her/his response was:

I think they [the concept videos in Setswana and Sesotho in the Faculty] will be useful because some students are from rural areas where English they do it as a subject, on other subjects teachers explain in their language to make sure that understand. Some students it's not like they are stupid the language is the problem. (NWU Language Directorate Annual report, 2020, p. 22)

Shame on us if we make our students feel "stupid" because their English is not yet strong enough. Multilingual assessment at various levels of the assessment framework could go a long way to open epistemological access and to contribute to academic success in higher education for these participants.

The importance of the implementation of multilingual assessment at the higher education level also warrants some reflection. In his book, "Thoughts on

a new South Africa”, Neville Alexander (2013, p. 83) highlights the importance of higher education in the battle for the implementation of multilingualism in South African education when he states, “we have to remember the backwash effects of the university on the hidden curriculum in the school system”. It is exciting to be part of the current higher education system in South Africa where multilingualism is finally being implemented at institutions nationally. If higher education in South Africa could get the mix of multilingual pedagogies and bilingual assessment in the home language and English correct, the backwash effect on language-in-education policies at schools could be positive.

In the spirit of the findings reported in this chapter from the NWU, the institution is poised to move even more firmly into the area of fostering multilingual pedagogies and working towards multilingual assessment. I dream of a formal assessment process where students register for their examinations at the NWU and as part of their registration process, they indicate the language/s in which they want to receive their examination papers. Completing this circle – working towards multilingual formal assessment in South African higher education – would truly open up a new, more equitable South African higher education system.

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Appendix A:

Descriptive statistics (means) for the selected items from the Language Repertoire Survey across the survey dates (2010, 2015, 2020)

Survey dates	Languages in the repertoire	Reading	Writing	Reading contribute learning	School / education contribute learning	Reading contribute current use	School / education contribute current use
2010	Sesotho SL (N = 158)	3.39	3.28	3.25	3.08	2.55	2.55
	English 2nd SL (N = 128)	3.77	3.5	3.87	3.87	3.57	3.71
	isiZuli 3rd SL (N = 33)	1.88	1.52	1.91	1.53	1.61	1.53
	isiZuli SL (N = 54)	3.3	3.31	3.31	3.09	2.54	2.42
	English 2nd SL (N = 37)	3.65	3.57	3.78	3.95	3.77	3.85
	Sesotho 3rd SL (N = 12)	2	1.58	1.42	1.82	1.73	2
	Afrikaans SL (N = 222)	3.72	3.55	3.41	3.79	3.21	3.71
	English 2nd SL (N = 187)	3.48	3.21	3.34	3.34	3.28	3.17
	2015	Sesotho SL (N = 239)	8.33	8.24	5.3	4.83	4.97
English 2nd SL (N = 188)		8.65	8.38	6.47	6.79	6.48	6.76
isiZuli 3rd SL (N = 72)		4.69	3.99	2.81	2.18	2.76	2.31
isiZuli SL (N = 105)		8.4	8.31	5.21	4.12	4.66	3.6
English 2nd SL (N = 71)		9.08	8.61	6.58	6.83	6.53	6.81
Sesotho 3rd SL (N = 26)		4.96	4.46	2.48	2.23	2.68	2.38
Afrikaans SL (N = 134)		9.01	8.7	5.9	6.68	5.81	6.36
English 2nd SL (N = 133)		8.29	7.89	5.8	5.56	5.8	5.79

Survey dates	Languages in the repertoire	Reading	Writing	Reading contribute learning	School / education contribute learning	Reading contribute current use	School / education contribute current use
2020	Sesotho SL (N = 80)	9.18	9.11	6.30	6.11	5.87	5.43
	English 2nd SL (N = 53)	8.91	8.45	6.62	6.77	6.68	6.79
	isiZuli 3rd SL (N = 23)	4.22	3.70	2.61	2.30	2.24	2.19
	isiZuli SL (N = 57)	8.84	8.93	6.00	5.67	5.26	4.70
	English 2nd SL (N = 29)	8.83	9.21	6.52	6.90	6.61	6.72
	Sesotho 3rd SL (N = 8)	4.50	4.13	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.88
	Afrikaans SL (N = 27)	9.26	9.07	5.93	6.48	5.48	5.74
	English 2nd SL (N = 27)	8.74	8.89	5.96	5.93	5.96	6.15

Note 1: 2010 scale: 1=not very good, 4=very good; 2015 & 2020 scales for reading & writing: 1=no proficiency, 10=very good proficiency; 2015 & 2020 scales for reading & school/education (learning & current use): 1=did not contribute at all, 7=contributed the most. *Note 2:* SL=strongest language

Appendix B:

Note: a reviewer was concerned that some of the extracts or quotations do not mention the name of the language that is referred to in the analysis directly. In this appendix I demonstrate how the written notes of the participants are linked to specific languages (see a); and how these written notes are captured in Excel (see b). For the purposes of reporting findings, I indicate the language that the quotation refers to in the square brackets with selected characteristics of the participant to assist readers with information to interpret the quotation. The language mentioned in the square brackets refers to the language mentioned for the specific quotations in (a – written notes by the participant) and (b – the language referred to by the participant captured in Excel) below.

- a) Scan of Language Portrait notes written by Participant 1 where they reflect on the inclusion of English on their portrait. In this case the participant did mention the language in their explanation of why this language is put in the brain on the portrait; they do not write down the name of the language where they explained the choice of colour for the language on the portrait.

Language: English Place: Brain Colour: Blue
 Why this place for this language on the figure? I am about 60% English and speak the language fluently. Because it is a universal language I feel the opportunities and advantages for the language is limitless.
 Why this colour for this language on the figure? Blue is an intellectual colour for me. It represents flexibility and variation.

- b) Scan of written Language Portrait notes by Participant 1 captured in Excel

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
	Part. Nr	3. Gender	4. Age	5. Pop	6. Home Language	Language	Place	Colour	Why place	Why colour	
1		1	1	1	4	1 English	Brain	Blue	I am about 60% English and speak the language fluently. Because it is a universal language I feel the opportunities and advantages for the language is limitless.	Blue is an intellectual colour for me. It represents flexibility and variation.	
2											
3											

Eleni Meletiadou, London Metropolitan University,
United Kingdom

Using translanguaging and English as a Lingua Franca to promote an inclusive multilingual approach towards comprehension in assessment in Higher Educational Institutions in the UK

Abstract: The multilingual approach towards comprehension in assessment and translanguaging has attracted considerable attention lately, challenging the monolingual tradition and the use of English as a medium for instruction in the Global North. The current study employed a mixed-methods approach using classroom observations, focus group discussions, students' pre- and post-tests and anonymous learning journals to explore the impact of translanguaging and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) on students' writing performance when a multilingual approach towards comprehension in assessment is used with learners in higher education in the UK. Findings indicated that students overall had a very positive attitude towards translanguaging and ELF in terms of a multilingual approach towards comprehension in assessment as they facilitated content and language learning and enhanced students' intercultural and multilingual awareness. Moreover, they had a significant impact on students' academic performance. Finally, the article argues that monolingual ideologies should be abandoned due to the increasing drive towards globalization in Higher Education.

Keywords: multilingualism, English as a Lingua Franca, inclusive assessment, translanguaging, Higher Education

1. Introduction

Taking into consideration changes in the linguistic ecology of the UK due to post-war migration (Edwards, 2012), the current chapter explores the use of new strategies which can cater for the needs of the numerous international and local multilingual students since internationalization has increased the numbers of multilingual students in Higher Education (HE) necessitating changes in learning, teaching, and assessment. In allowing multilingual and multicultural learners to retain their identity, we need to explore how universities can promote intercultural awareness and equal opportunities of success and academic

achievement for all learners, celebrating diversity and fostering inclusion and equity. These goals also promote other calls for widening participation, inclusive education, and assessment (DfES, 2003a), community cohesion, every child matters, every language matters (Ofsted, 2008) and learner voice (DfES, 2006), which have been important in the UK context.

Education is increasingly transitioning from monolingualism towards multilingualism (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011; May, 2014) which is defined as the modern tendency of societies, educational institutions and individuals to interact on a regular everyday basis using several languages. Translanguaging, which has recently emerged as a concept, encourages the use of an individual's own language when they are interacting in another language which is used as a medium for content learning (García & Wei, 2014). Multilingual learners can use their own native language as this is directly linked with students' cultural background and personal experiences. Translanguaging has been used to convey multilingual, multicultural, and multimodal strategies and techniques in various contexts including in international HE (Mbiri-Hungwe & McCabe, 2020). However, there is a scarcity of research on HE viewed from the lens of translanguaging English as a medium of instruction (EMI) (Paulsrud et al., 2021). First, the current language policy and classroom discourse practices in British HE are still dominated by the English language (Jenkins, 2017). Policy-makers, educators and learners promote the exclusive use of the English language discouraging students from bringing their languages and cultural backgrounds in the classroom. This fosters monotony, inequality, and exclusion taking into consideration the students' perspective. The current study is vital as it promotes an understanding of the association of languages with identity, power, and diversity. Second, the present study focused on the implementation of translanguaging in EMI classes in Management Education as in many universities in the UK, the English-only policy is strictly required in classes in various Business Schools which promote its sole use in academic settings and therefore urge students to leave their linguistic and cultural baggage aside (Fang, 2018). Consequently, it is important to examine how various stakeholders deal with the tension between the rigid English-only policy and the students' practical language, cultural and psychological needs as multilingual students in EMI HE classes.

2. Literature review

Several studies highlight the negative impact of the interference from the first language (L1) to the second language (L2) as this promotes translation which impedes writing fluency (Alzahrani, 2019). This has led many educators to

discourage or even prohibit their learners from using their mother tongue, forcing them to “think in English”. Nevertheless, other researchers highlight the importance of using L1 at the initial stages of generating ideas, brainstorming, planning, and organizing thoughts on a topic as well as understanding the instructions. This promotes “cognitive fluency” which refers to the subjective experience of the ease or difficulty of completing a mental task (Alhawary, 2018). Therefore, this study stems from previous research that claims that translanguaging is useful for advanced users in their second language. It focuses on examining the practices of tertiary level learners who speak English as their second language, their attitudes and usage of translanguaging and its influence on the quality of their writing.

While studying in the UK, students engage in various tasks which require them to use their mother tongue i.e., communicating with friends, explaining a term etc. Therefore, learners are often obliged to blend their native and target language to do a variety of tasks i.e., request information when they do not know specific words or phrases. However, in their everyday life as students in HE in the UK, learners are asked to use English only as a way of improving their command of the language, i.e., in interactive group work during the seminars. Therefore, the opportunity for students to use a variety of multilingual practices and form strategies to increase their academic achievement is lost. Although several studies in HE highlight the importance of students’ multilingual competence which enhances academic performance (Marshall & Moore, 2013) since students use their linguistic repertoire as a resource to communicate and perform a variety of educational tasks, very few studies present an implementation framework that can encourage more lecturers in HE to implement multilingual and multicultural pedagogical tasks that can harness learners’ multilingual practices (Pauwels, 2014). Most lecturers are challenged when they must address the need for a multilingual pedagogy which enhances students’ self-regulation and increases their academic achievements. The use of different languages is required to allow students to communicate freely, make more sense of the tasks as well as the ideas involved and better understand their lecturers’ expectations. Students often complain that they are unable to perform a certain task i.e., a written assignment, because they do not understand what they have to do or because they have not developed the right strategies, i.e., for editing their work effectively. In the current study, while students were encouraged to communicate while blending English with other languages, they were still asked to perform in the target language, that is English, in their final assignment aiming at fluency rather than accuracy.

The researcher used six pedagogical strategies which support the multilingual implementation framework used in terms of this study. First, all tasks the researcher used encouraged students to activate their linguistic repertoire (Busch, 2015) as they were asked to read information in the target language, e.g., English and discuss it in their own languages or even dialects, i.e., Welsh. The aim was to liberate learners from the discomfort of using one language to express their ideas. They were also encouraged to use translanguaging (Cenoz, 2017) as language mixing was promoted to help students understand the content and develop various writing strategies to achieve their learning goals. Moreover, learners were asked to compare their language with English and reflect on ways they could overcome language barriers and improve their performance. Intercultural encounters (Council of Europe, 2018) were also fostered to help students develop their intercultural awareness and realize the bias and prejudice they had in mind while interacting with students from various cultural backgrounds in HE. The researcher encouraged intercomprehension (Melo-Pfeifer, 2014), that is students were supported while they were trying to understand the target language, that is English, using information from the other languages they had mastered. This enabled them to communicate any ideas they had more successfully, overcome their fears of using English correctly and ultimately develop their fluency. Learners' multilingual and multicultural competence (Council of Europe, 2018) was also emphasized as students were guided to reflect on their ability to use their native language along with other languages while they strived to communicate with their peers. This allowed them to make better sense of the tasks and the language they were using to learn content.

The use of translanguaging allows writers to express their ideas clearly and communicate them to others fluently (García & Leiva, 2014). Learners are allowed to find common ground in their mother tongue and target language and make all the necessary connections which will improve their understanding and subsequently their academic performance. Students can thus develop both languages and improve their academic performance (Lust et al., 2016). Based on Cummins' (1979) Interdependence Theory, students' proficiency in L2 largely depends on their performance in L1 which indicates its connections with the translanguaging approach (García & Wei, 2014). Edelsky (1982), who explored Spanish-speaking children's writing in English, revealed that their knowledge in Spanish helped them in learning English as students wrote only in English despite using their Spanish sources (García & Wei, 2014). Those children used their own strategy, connecting what they knew in their home language to the target language, to produce a piece of writing.

Every year, Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in the UK welcome thousands of students from various countries who predominantly speak English as a second or foreign language. These learners often complain that they would have performed better in their exams and coursework if their lecturers had provided them with instructions for their tasks in their dominant language in addition to the target language (English). They frequently ask for permission to check the translation of the instructions in their assignments or to receive help and support from one of their peers who can speak or understand their native language. The multilingual approach towards comprehension in assessment focuses on the presumption that multilingual learners may face incredible challenges when they are assessed through the English language which is their second or even third language. De Backer et al. (2016) and Menken and Shohamy (2015) also stress the challenges of assessing content using exams with instructions in the target language. Shohamy (2011) reports a study in which students who received multilingual instructions achieved better scores than those who received instructions in the dominant language. Antia (2021) argues that a monolingual exoglossic language regime for examinations in multilingual sub-Saharan Africa is an aberration as it fosters social inequalities. Inbar-Lourie and Donitsa-Schmidt (2020) explored 465 students' expectations regarding desired EMI lecturers' qualities in Israeli higher education institutions. The findings revealed that desired EMI lecturers should be highly proficient in English subject matter experts, able to simulate an international learning experience, display effective teaching pedagogies in both content and second language, and be familiar with the students' local language and culture highlighting the significance of lecturers' intercultural and multilingual awareness.

As the internationalization of HE worldwide has broadened student diversity in HEI in the last decade (De Wit, 2011), educators have to ensure equity and inclusion for all learners to enhance their personal, social and academic growth. In the past few years, inclusive teaching, learning, and assessment have become a priority through major policy, institutional and instructional changes (Wray, 2013). However, HEI have encountered multiple challenges i.e., lack of professional training (Forlin, 2012), educators' skills, attitude, and willingness (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002), inadequate support and resources (Wilde & Avramidis, 2011) and compromises to academic standards while practicing inclusivity (Hockings et al., 2008). In spite of these challenges, British HEI should try to respond to the needs of these learners, adopt inclusive practices and use adequate material to cater for their needs taking into consideration their diversity in terms of i.e., culture, and preferences (Santoro, 2009). To avoid non-traditional, i.e., dyslexic, students' disengagement (Plaut et al., 2009) and

harming equity agendas (Ford et al., 2020) and to enhance diverse students' involvement, systemic changes at the policy and practice level are needed to promote inclusive multilingual and multicultural education (May & Bridger, 2010). The philosophy of inclusive pedagogy is grounded in protecting human rights, fostering respect and equality, and providing equal opportunity for participation to all students irrespective of their gender, race, ethnicity, language, or physical ability (Kaur et al., 2015).

This chapter aims to explore whether the use of an inclusive multilingual approach to comprehension in content assessment which encourages translanguaging and the use of ELF can enhance students' writing performance, professional skills, and attitudes towards learning in HE. The chapter will address the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of multilingual tasks, in terms of which students use an inclusive multilingual approach towards comprehension in assessment which fosters translanguaging and ELF, on students' academic writing achievement?
2. What are students' perceptions of the impact of multilingual tasks, in terms of which students use an inclusive multilingual approach towards comprehension in assessment which fosters translanguaging and ELF, on their academic performance?

3. Methodology

The current exploratory mixed-methods intervention study used a quasi-experimental design. Its aim was to employ a new framework to implement multilingual tasks in the EMI Business school classroom (Figure 1) which utilized translanguaging and English as a Lingua Franca to promote an inclusive multilingual approach towards comprehension in assessment.

3.1. Participants

The present study involved 100 students, aged 19–35, in using translanguaging, that is in using their native language (L1) along with the target language, English, in terms of carefully structured group activities for approximately 4 months (13 weeks in total) at London Metropolitan University. The participants formed 4 mixed-ability groups of local and international multilingual high-, medium- and low-achieving students (Table 1). The researcher examined the impact of multilingual tasks which aimed to facilitate comprehension in assessment on multilingual (either international or local) students' writing performance. Students attended an undergraduate module aiming to develop their personal

and professional academic skills focusing on how to write an academic essay. Students attended two 90-minute sessions per week. One of them was online due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the other one was face-to-face. Students had to write an essay by the end of the academic year. The lecturer asked students to provide anonymous feedback on the use of this new multilingual implementation framework, i.e., whether it helped them understand the instructions of the assignment, every 2–3 weeks using Mentimeter. They also conducted regular group discussions to identify any challenges that the students may be facing and provide the necessary support. Participation in the discussions and the provision of feedback was optional. The lecturer received research ethics approval from the University and informed written consent from the students to use their grades and feedback.

Table 1: Demographic details and characteristics of participating students

	Students	Frequency
Gender	Male	48
	Female	52
Academic Performance	High-achieving students (over 70 %)	8
	Medium-achieving students (40–69 %)	40
	Low-achieving students (0–39 %)	52

3.2. Instruments and procedure

Students were divided randomly in two control ($n = 50$) and two experimental groups ($n = 50$) due to access limitations. All students had to write a pre-test which was a reflective essay on the same topic. Students in the experimental groups were then involved in weekly multilingual tasks in terms of which they were encouraged to discuss their ideas using their native language and the target language (English). Students in the control groups followed the same procedure using the same material but were restricted from using their L1 in the respective tasks. They only used their target language as is the norm in HEI in the UK. Students of similar linguistic backgrounds formed groups, discussed their ideas, and provided feedback to each other in terms of their assignment.

Tasks were learner-centred, fostering students' collaboration and translanguaging while the lecturer also supervised the whole process closely. Given the diversity which is inherent in most HEI classes in the UK, students, both international and local, can greatly benefit from differentiation which fosters cultural inclusiveness in an attempt to initiate change by introducing multilingual tasks.

These also foster the use of ELF, emphasizing that the focus is on fluency rather than accuracy. The aim of the tasks was to experiment with ways in which learners could fully understand what they had to do in terms of their assignments and to share strategies and ideas regarding how they could complete their tasks effectively. In terms of each one of their weekly sessions, students were encouraged to reflect on their past linguistic and cultural experiences activating learners' schemata and allowing them to assume an active role as agents of their own learning (Galante et al., 2019). For example, when students were asked to work on the topic of mental health, they had to discuss their own experiences based on their cultural background using translanguaging where necessary to enhance their fluency in the target language while comparing their mother tongue with English and creating bridges which would help them express themselves freely both in writing and orally. These activities fostered cross-linguistic analysis and awareness-raising of both linguistic and social aspects of language use. The aim was to allow students to draw on their linguistic repertoire as they tried to address various issues in terms of their assignment. The lecturer thus fostered the use of more linguistically and culturally inclusive practices rather than an English-only pedagogy. The descriptors of multilingual and multicultural competence which were included in the recently published Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2018) should also be taken into consideration as lecturers try to develop multilingual tasks which cater for the needs of their increasingly multilingual and multicultural classes.

The implementation design of each one of these multilingual tasks can be seen in Figure 1. Students were asked to discuss and prepare a presentation on a different topic for three out of the 12 weeks of their academic semester. They had to do some research on various topics related to social issues, i.e., the legalization of drugs and media effects on young people. Students discussed the topic and how they were expected to work in order to write an academic essay, wrote a short essay (up to 500 words) and provided peer feedback to each other as they were reflecting on the various topics in order to choose the one they would write their final assignment on. They were encouraged to discuss their challenges on a weekly basis using their first and second language or even a third one. However, they had to write their assignment in English.

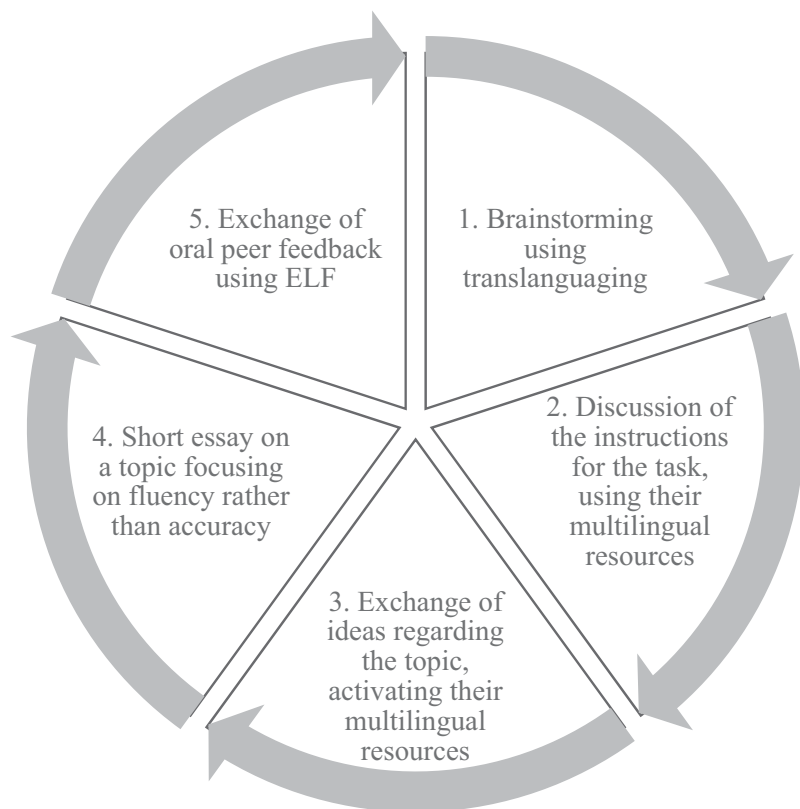


Figure 1: Multilingual implementation framework

3.3. Data instruments and analysis

In terms of exploring students' attitudes, data were collected from the lecturer's field notes from observations, students' semi-structured whole class discussions with their lecturer every three weeks and students' anonymous feedback through Mentimeter as students were asked to provide feedback regarding the process of the implementation every 2–3 weeks. The overall aim was to triangulate the data, identify and determine the themes, and establish the reliability of the data collected (Speyer et al., 2011).

Regarding student feedback, class discussions and the observation data, thematic analysis was used to analyse large blocks of text in the data. Data analysis included specifying the units of analysis, coding data, sorting codes, and

generating themes (Terry et al., 2017). To validate the findings, perspectives from students were further compared and contrasted with the lecturer's field notes. There was a second coder and intercoder reliability was established by comparing codes on 10 % of the data. Intercoder agreement was 96 %, which showed that coding was reliable in the current study (MacPhail et al., 2016). Therefore, the data eventually generated the knowledge from multiple perspectives and the researcher triangulated the findings so as to vividly portray students' development of writing skills. The lecturer marked all students' assignments, taking into consideration the same marking scheme which was prescribed and approved by the University.

The goal was to introduce learners to participating in multilingual tasks with the aim of enhancing their writing skills in English and overall academic performance. The two assignment topics of the current module were discussed in the face-to-face setting and online, and based on their discussions, the participants were asked to write an assignment (essay) of about 1,000 words at the end of the term. All these data were utilized to answer all research questions. Students were also encouraged to use an online forum to post any questions and interact with each other in terms of the current module.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1. Impact of multilingual tasks on undergraduate students' writing performance in English

The current study explored the impact of multilingual tasks which aimed to enhance students' comprehension in assessment on students' writing performance by comparing students post- versus pre-tests. Students had to write a reflective essay before and at the end of the implementation. The researcher scored all essays and a second assessor (experienced lecturer) blindly scored 20 % of all pre- and post-test essays using the same marking rubric after receiving rater training by the researcher. The interrater agreement was 92 % and any disagreements were discussed and resolved between the raters (Gingerich et al., 2017). The module leader provided the assessment rubric in terms of which lecturers had to provide a score (%). Students' essays marking criteria included organization, ideas/content, mechanics, application of theory, referencing. Findings regarding students' pre-test and post-test writing performance can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Students' writing performance pre- and post-test scores

		M	SD
Experimental groups	Pre-test	36.46	19.7
	Post-test	61.06	9.67
Control groups	Pre-test	35.06	21.78
	Post-test	41.16	17.34

A paired t-test was conducted to explore the progress of the experimental groups. This showed that there was a statistically significant difference between students' pre-test ($M = 36.46$, $SD = 19.7$, $n = 50$) and post-test ($M = 61.06$, $SD = 9.67$, $n = 50$) on writing performance ($t(49) = 13.01$, $p < .05$) (Cohen's d : 1.58). A similar test was performed for the control groups, and it showed that the difference between students' pre-test ($M = 35.06$, $SD = 21.78$, $n = 50$) and post-test ($M = 41.16$, $SD = 17.34$, $n = 50$) was not statistically significant ($t(49) = 5.16$, $p < .05$) (Cohen's d : 0.3). Cohen's effect size value ($d = 1.58$) suggested a "large" effect size and high practical significance for the experimental groups and a rather "small" effect size ($d = 0.3$) for the control groups.

An independent samples t-test was performed which indicated that students who were involved in the multilingual tasks scored higher than students who used only English during their sessions and that this difference in performance was statistically significant $t(99) = 37.93$, $p < 0.001$ (Table 2). Then, a Levene's test was performed, and the p value was $p < 0.001$ which indicated a violation of the assumption that the variance is equal across the control and experimental groups and showed that the difference between the variances was statistically significant. This also confirmed Nimmrichter and Hornberger's claim (2013) that the use of L1 is crucial for second language learners, who often face challenges while trying to understand content. Multilingual students in the experimental groups in the current study were able to improve their writing performance as they were allowed to clarify the instructions of the assignment and exchange information about content and strategies they could use to improve their writing performance in terms of the assignment they had to write for their module.

4.2. Perceived benefits of using multilingual tasks on students' writing skills

The current study indicated that students appreciated the fact that they could use their L1 as a last resort when they were unable to express their ideas in English. They felt relieved because they did not have to translate everything into English

and they enjoyed this opportunity of exchanging linguistic and cultural experiences. They were able to understand the requirement of the assignment and discuss potential strategies to overcome their challenges, i.e., editing/proofreading their work, as one student reports:

I love the fact that I can use my mother tongue and exchange ideas with people who speak my language and realise my challenges. I also try to understand other people and help them based on my experiences as a learner. We exchange simple strategies, i.e., read your work taking one aspect of writing into consideration at a time (e.g., punctuation). This was quite helpful as an idea as I cannot correct all my errors with one go. I have to go over my work several times to really improve it.

Students also welcomed the acceptance of their cultural background and of the “baggage” they brought as learners from a non-British context. They were thus able to compare strategies and techniques, refine their existing ones and devise new to address several issues in both their mother tongue and target language harnessing the benefits of a diverse group of people who are studying at a HE institution in the UK, as a student observes:

I love studying in the UK. I believe this is a life-changing experience for me, but I am also proud of my own linguistic and cultural background. I learnt a lot and I am using my experience in English. I am also helping some of my multilingual peers. Everybody needs insights into ways in which other people deal with challenges they encounter as they try to improve their writing skills. We can always support each other and learn from each other.

To sum up, the lecturer also highlighted the importance of students using all linguistic resources they had got to improve their writing performance as, according to previous research, the exclusive focus on one language from the students’ linguistic repertoires discloses only one aspect and “produces a distorted picture” (Sanchez et al., 2013, p. 160). The current study proposes a holistic view of multilingualism, as the development of writing skills in various languages is interrelated rather than independent and students draw on all their linguistic resources to develop their writing skills (Soltero-González et al., 2012).

4.3. Perceived challenges of using multilingual tasks on students’ writing skills

Students also identified a few challenges regarding the use of multilingual tasks as some learners seemed unwilling to participate actively in them and help their peers. Their previous educators had always insisted on them using only the English language even if communication was difficult for them at some point, as a student states:

It is a bit awkward. All my life my teachers used to tell me that I should use English only. This is the only way I could improve my performance in English. Now, things have changed. I am not sure this is going to help me. It seems to facilitate communication, but will it help me improve my writing skills in the long run?

Some other students also thought that this would interfere with their writing and felt rather confused. It seemed to them like taking a step back -as they would not focus on the use of the target language – as it would not improve their academic performance. Moreover, some students were unwilling to share personal information and communicate with their peers openly due to their cultural background. They believed lecturers should be extremely careful when putting students into groups, as a student stresses below:

I want to develop my writing skills, but I am not sure this is the right way to achieve my goal. Some people seem very reserved and are unwilling to share things. I cannot be the only one helping others. They have to help me and provide useful suggestions as well. I believe I should join another group. Maybe things will work better with other students. Maybe it is personal...

Educators should be very careful when using multilingual tasks and supervise the whole procedure very closely. This is a new ground and caution is needed when inviting inexperienced and frequently biased learners to use their L1 when interacting with their peers. Decades of fixation on using the target language and avoiding the use of the mother tongue cannot be erased overnight. It takes training, collaboration among learners and the lecturer, and open and frequent communication to overcome any challenges. Students' voices should be heard, and accommodation be made to ensure that all learners can benefit from multilingual tasks which allow learners to connect past knowledge to their current learning and improve their performance in various languages (Usanova & Schnoor, 2021). The implementation process should also be carefully designed and adapted each time it meets resistance to cater for all learners' needs, tastes, and learning styles.

5. Implications

There are a number of implications for lecturers when using a multilingual approach towards comprehension in assessment to enhance students' writing skills. First, educators should train students to work independently and reward them for their efforts. They should also devote time to explain to students why it is important to become involved in multilingual tasks and how this can help them later as they will be looking for a job. Lecturers should allow students to work on a variety of topics to avoid repetition and engage all learners. They need

to provide good and bad samples of multilingual tasks, meaningful feedback, and clear suggestions for improvement.

There are implications for researchers who wish to explore the use of ELF and translanguaging in terms of a multilingual approach towards comprehension in assessment even further. The current study has several limitations as it explored the use of multilingual tasks with a small number of students in a specific context for only one semester. Future research should be more thorough and examine the use of multilingual tasks at a large scale in undergraduate and even post-graduate education for a longer time frame and possibly exploring its impact on other skills, i.e., reading, or oral skills. There are also implications for universities as they should provide professional development courses to train their staff in using this approach combined with ELF and translanguaging. This will enable them to help students take responsibility for their own learning and develop a variety of skills necessary in the current highly competitive diverse world.

There are implications for learners who should be less timid and willing to engage in multilingual tasks challenging their past experience. They should be ready to embrace the challenges of working in multilingual teams in which all members contribute and help each other as they try to achieve their final goals. Another suggestion for improvement would be to try to increase the ways in which students engage in multilingual collaboration by designing more group activities. Lecturers can also foster ongoing interaction by using additional resources i.e., a group on Facebook, Instagram or X (formerly Twitter). This would enable more people to get involved in various discussions around topics, share useful strategies and contribute their ideas and experiences. In the long term, these exchanges of ideas could help students enrich their multilingual communication and expand their network.

Moreover, the implementation of multilingual tasks should be more structured –at least at the beginning – so that students could easily understand the rules and follow them. To address ethical issues, there should be frequent supervision of the procedure and open communication as well as severe penalties for academic offenders (i.e., plagiarism). Multilingual tasks allow students to have a voice and express their feelings, ideas, and concerns, share useful linguistic strategies, and reflect on their mistakes enhancing students' overall experience.

To sum up, the aim of this study was to explore undergraduate learners' perceptions of multilingual tasks when used to facilitate comprehension in assessment with the aim of improving their writing performance. Understanding their perspectives can lead to improvements in the implementation of multilingual tasks, further the University program's mission, and ultimately benefit all stakeholders. Our findings point to the role of a multilingual approach towards

comprehension in assessment as a facilitator to the development of writing skills and highlights the possibility of generating additional resources not only for writing skill development but also for learning in general. Our findings stress the need for fostering multilingual tasks in terms of language policies as well as integrating them into learning organizations, contents, and methods of teaching (Gogolin, 2018). Teaching and interacting in one of the languages may drive the development of writing skills in all languages in a multilingual repertoire improving students' writing skills (Schwarzer et al., 2003).

6. Conclusion and recommendations

The current study explored the use of multilingual tasks as a means of facilitating comprehension in assessment and improving undergraduate students' writing performance. The writers' development and growth were discernible in their final assignments and their feedback. However, lecturers should help their students develop a deeper understanding of what it is expected from them when they engage in multilingual tasks, enhance their critical thinking and assessment skills, and challenge their existing beliefs. Students should be encouraged to contribute in terms of interactive activities, negotiate meaning and form, identify problems and suggest solutions, provide suggestions for improvement of multilingual tasks, exchange points of view in a civilized and constructive way, and share ideas which will help them grow as multilingual writers.

Using multilingual tasks which promote translanguaging and ELF in terms of a multilingual approach towards comprehension in assessment has strengthened these learners' intercultural and multilingual awareness and helped them gradually improve their writing skills in so many ways, i.e., by increasing their understanding of ways in which they can improve their writing efficacy, enhancing their cross-linguistic abilities, improving their so called "soft skills", i.e., negotiation and collaboration, and managing to move from a fixed to a growth mindset.

This study is significant and will have an impact on multilingual students in HEI as incorporating multilingual tasks in their programs and acknowledging or even celebrating their multilingual identities is the only way forward if we want our graduates to harness the benefits of diversity and foster equity and inclusion in their workplace. Implementing multilingual tasks will also help lecturers enhance their students' skills and gradually guide them in detecting their weaknesses and improving their academic performance by engaging in critical reflection of their own work and that of others, taking into consideration their linguistic and cultural background. Currently, the benefits and challenges of developing multilingual tasks from the student perspective have been largely

ignored (Cummins et al., 2015). Educators need to understand what aspects of multilingual tasks promote learning (Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016) and facilitate comprehension of the assessment tasks. Therefore, more research i.e., into students' multilingual strategies, and educational projects that utilize a multilingual approach towards comprehension in assessment as a learning tool are needed to help practitioners have a clearer picture of its benefits in the long run as an innovative approach that promotes inclusive learning.

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Kabelo Sebolai, Cape Peninsula University of Technology,
South Africa

Darlington Mutakwa, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

A multilingual student population taking a test of academic literacy in English: Implications for test fairness

Abstract: For more than two decades to date, concerns have been raised about student completion rates in higher education across the world. South Africa's higher education sector has been no exception. This has led to the need for students to be assessed for their chances of academic success. Although the initial motive for this assessment was to help universities make post-admission decisions, some universities have used the results for making pre-admission decisions. It is important therefore that the fairness of this assessment is determined. This chapter is based on a study aimed at investigating the extent to which one such assessment administered in English was fair for students in a multilingual context. Scores obtained by a sample of 13,858 students on this test were used to determine this. The results revealed that the ability of the highest standard of performance on the test to classify these students correctly was not equivalent.

Keywords: Fairness, classification, language testing, academic success, National Benchmark Test in Academic Literacy

1. Introduction

In the last decade and a half, language policy has been a contentious subject in higher education in South Africa. Not only has it become unacceptable to many that English and Afrikaans have been the dominant languages of teaching and learning in the country, but strong sentiments have also been expressed for the promotion of indigenous languages as the media of instruction (see Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2023; Sefotho, 2022). This has happened against the background of the official status that the country's democratic constitution has accorded the 11 languages used locally. Language policy-driven transformation has therefore become an imperative, especially for higher education institutions which have had to admit large masses of students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds and to ensure that these students' access to and success in higher

education are supported and realized. The reality of the situation in South Africa is that English and Afrikaans are the only languages that have, since the advent of colonialism in Africa, enjoyed a long and privileged history of utility and consequent development as the languages of teaching and learning that they have become. Indigenous languages have unfortunately been ignored and marginalized by this history and will need the same state support, extent of use and length of time to develop enough to attain a status similar to that of English and Afrikaans.

This notwithstanding, the pressure on higher education institutions to start using these languages as media of instruction has been mounting and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Historically white universities where Afrikaans was the dominant language of teaching and learning in the past have had no choice but to resort to a monolingually offered education where English is the preferred language of instruction. There are two reasons for this. The first, which relates to the current unpopularity of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction, is that Afrikaans has always been intertwined with the politics of racial segregation in the country, and has for this reason always been rejected by the majority of black people. The second is that English is the most preferred – even more than indigenous languages – language for teaching and learning by the majority of blacks. This is because English was, in colonial times, seen as a weapon against this system and has as a result, enjoyed a high status among black communities.

One should also add, however, that the popularity of English among this population group in present times originates from and is a clear case of a manifestation of the phenomenon now commonly known as coloniality. Coloniality refers to a system that former colonialists put in place in their former colonies to ensure their continued remote and subtle political, economic and cultural control of such colonies, post-independence. In the words of Maldonado-Torres (2007, p. 243), coloniality is the “long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations”. Stroud and Kerfoot (2021 p. 22) have added their voice to this definition in the following words: “Coloniality’, which should not be confused with colonialism, refers to the patterns of power, control and hegemonic systems of knowledge that rationalized colonial domination. It has been kept alive in contemporary systems of oppression and dispossession, even after the demise of colonialism as a military or economic order”. Thus, coloniality is a “colonial matrix of power” that continues to exist even in the physical absence of the former colonial master, a phenomenon which McKinney (2020, p. 2) has summed

up as “that which survives colonialism”. Given the ubiquitous nature of language in and its essence to human life, it is impossible to imagine how coloniality can operate effectively without what Stroud and Kerfoot (2021) term the “the coloniality of language”, “the specific, linguistic instantiation of the more general phenomenon of ‘coloniality’” (p. 22).

It is impossible therefore, to explain the choice of colonial languages such as English for teaching and learning by those who were victims of colonialism and are resident in post-colonial countries like South Africa without implicating coloniality broadly and the coloniality of language, specifically. Indeed, Stroud and Kerfoot (2021, pp. 21–22) have argued that “both within and outside of universities worldwide, and South Africa in particular, languages and languaging practices continue to be ranked and regulated in ways that privilege communication and knowledge production through European languages – with insidious consequences such as educational failure.” It is by the very design of coloniality that the victims of this insidious experience continue to be unaware of the epistemic harm and oppression it inflicts on their being. As Grosfoguel (2011, p. 6) explains, “[t]he success of the modern/colonial world-system consists precisely in making subjects that are socially located on the oppressed side of the colonial difference think epistemically like the ones in dominant positions”. Similarly, Borelli (2020) adds that the colonial matrix of power thrives on the difficulty experienced by formerly colonized nations to perceive themselves “as immersed in this logic and, consequently, to think of alternatives that may transgress the imposed naturalized order” (p. 303).

Their preference for English as a language of teaching and learning notwithstanding, the majority of black people in South Africa speak English as an additional language, however, and the implications of this for their ability to learn and succeed in the language are obvious. This is further complicated by the fact that academic English is unique in both a generic and discipline-specific sense and therefore very different from conversational English (See Patterson & Weideman, 2013; Sebolai, 2016a; Van Dyk & Weideman, 2004). Just because one speaks it as a first language does not guarantee that one will not struggle to engage successfully with the challenges of higher education in English. Not only does this make it necessary that a conscious effort be made to teach English as an additional language to its non-native speakers, the majority of whom choose this language as a medium of instruction in South Africa, it is important also that it is taught to most students as a technical means of access to academic education.

As already implied above, not all students who enter higher education can be assumed to need support in academic English. Depending on their schooling background, some of these students are better equipped to cope with the

demands of academic English in higher education than others. In the South African context specifically, those who come from well-off families and could afford to attend English medium schools are likely to have an edge over those who come from poor socio-economic and historically disadvantaged schooling backgrounds with regard to levels of academic language ability. This edge is a function of the obvious overlap that should be there between academic English and English proficiency (see Sebolai, 2016a). In other words, students who have undergone English medium education at high school are more likely to be better equipped to process academic English than those who attended the majority of South African public schools (See Fleisch et al., 2015). This has made it necessary for the higher education sector to introduce pre-instruction assessment of the language ability required for acceptable performance at university as a way to sift those who might benefit from extra language support from those who might not (See CHE, 2015). Although this assessment is not mandatory and was originally intended to help universities take student placement decisions post admission, some universities have, as will again be pointed out below, used performance on it to take admissions decisions. In both these cases, however, the assessment is intended to be used alongside the school leaving results, the traditional mechanisms used for student admission at South African universities.

The shift in the universities' language policies referred to earlier means that this assessment has mainly been carried out in English. The question arising from this and which underpins the study carried out in this chapter is how fair this assessment has been in classifying students who do not necessarily speak English as their first language. The aim of the study was to respond to this question in the context of Stellenbosch University, where the current language policy is one of multilingualism and aims to cater for students coming from Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa mother-tongue backgrounds. These are the three languages mainly spoken in the Western Cape Province of South Africa, where this university is situated. More specifically, the study aimed to determine the extent to which the assessment of academic language ability in English that the university uses is fair in terms of classifying students who come from the three first language backgrounds referred to above. This assessment is administered in both English and Afrikaans and students have a choice to complete it in either of the two languages. It is the English version of this assessment, however, which is administered to the majority of students and is of particular interest to this chapter.

This is a valuable study to undertake at Stellenbosch University because several of the faculties at the university use this assessment for making student admissions and placement decisions. As a matter of fact, the faculties of Law and Medicine and Health Sciences use the scores on the assessment for admission,

while those of the Arts and Social Sciences, Theology, Agrisciences, Engineering and Economic and Management Sciences use them for additional information to place students onto Extended Degree Programmes. Both placement and admission decisions are an outcome of a classification process, the validity or truthfulness of which is crucial in the light of the medium to high stakes nature of such decisions in the context of Stellenbosch University. To be more specific, the concept of classification is, in the context of this chapter, an outcome of the type of validity known as criterion-related validity, both of which are the basis on which claims about test fairness or lack of it can be made. Seeing that the former concepts are so intertwined with fairness, it is logical that we first briefly explore their meaning and the nature of their ultimate interplay with language test fairness particularly.

2. Literature review

2.1. Validity and classification in language testing

As Xi (2010) has rightly observed, the crucial difference between the approaches to a definition of test fairness lies in how those who have researched it view its relationship with the concept of test validity. For this reason, the meaning of the concept of validity will first need to be explored in order to lay the foundation for how test fairness will be approached in this chapter. So much has been written about test validity (e.g., Messick, 1980, 1989; Newton & Shaw, 2014; Sebolai, 2018; Sireci, 2009; Weideman, 2019a, 2019b) that it is not necessary for us to delve too deeply into the details of that literature in this chapter. It suffices to point out that in language testing, two perspectives have so far been advanced on the meaning of this concept. The first is that validity is a property of a test, while the second relates this concept to test score interpretation and use. In other words, from the point of view of the proponents of the first perspective, tests are either valid or invalid, whereas the view of the proponents of the second perspective is that the interpretation and use of test scores is what is either valid or invalid. Furthermore, the first school of thought maintains that validity is of three types namely, construct, content and criterion-related, whereas the second does not regard the last two as types of validity. Rather, these are seen as sources of evidence for construct validity which, according to the latter school of thought, is the only real kind of validity (Borsboom et al., 2004; Davies & Elder, 2005; Van der Walt & Steyn, 2007; Weideman, 2012). The second theory is the most widely accepted currently, especially among language testing researchers in the Global North.

Whether one regards it as a type of validity or evidence for construct validity, the kind of criterion-related validity known as predictive validity is the basis for the way tests are used to classify students especially in the case of higher education in South Africa. As its name implies, predictive validity refers to a test's ability to predict a criterion to be assessed in some distant future (Bachman, 2004; Lynch, 2003; Messick, 1989; Stoyhoff & Chapelle, 2005). The outcome of this validity is to classify test takers into those who are likely to achieve the predicted criterion and those who are unlikely to do so. Thus, classification is the process of "sorting" the two groups of test takers according to the degree of their future predisposition towards the criterion of interest to the test user. As it applies to testing therefore, predictive validity is commonly assumed to be the basis for classification in higher education in South Africa. In the case of this chapter, the focus is on the extent to which a test of academic literacy is able to predict correctly that one group of students will pass their first year of academic study and that another group is unlikely to do so, as a function of their performance on this test. In the section below, we look at how research on test fairness has been approached and how predictive validity relates to our approach to test fairness, the main focus of this chapter.

2.2. The concept of fairness in language testing

As pointed out earlier in this chapter, the common purpose of testing is decision making. Some of the decisions taken on the basis of tests in educational settings particularly, include selecting students for admission to programs of study, placement into such programs post-admission, determining who passes or fail a course and ultimately, who graduates with certification and who does not. Given the potentially negative consequences of these decisions, fairness in assessment is, as a matter of logic, situated at the centre of all principles of design for especially medium to high stakes assessments. In simple terms, fairness is a test owner's ability to develop tests on which variance in test taker performance is a result of nothing else but different levels of their ability on the constructs of such tests. As Fan and Knoch (2019, p. 118) observe, "fairness is the perennial concern for language assessment research and practice, with considerable ramifications for test takers, test users, and other stakeholders such as teachers and parents. This is particularly the case when assessment results are used to make high-stakes decisions." This notwithstanding, just as it has been the case with validity, a consensus is yet to be reached on the best definition and framework for the analysis of language test fairness. It is for this reason that several definitions and frameworks exist. These definitions and frameworks cannot be covered

in detail within the limited spaces afforded by this chapter. They are therefore very briefly explored below.

The first effort to define fairness for the purpose of language testing was by Kunnan (2004). To him, fairness comprised aspects of test design that included validity, absence of bias, access, administration, and social consequences. All of these, in Kunnan's (2004) view, would have to be satisfied for any language test to be regarded as fair. In Kunnan's (2004) approach then, fairness was understood not only to be an overarching concept that subsumed validity, it was also viewed not to be wholly dependent on validity. Validity was, in other words, viewed as just one component of test fairness. To this end, Kunnan's (2004) framework was quite broad in that it catered for principles of sound test design other than validity. The second approach to test fairness also worth mentioning is Xi's (2010, p. 154) definition of fairness as "comparable validity for identifiable and relevant groups across all stages of assessment, from assessment conceptualization to the use of assessment results". What is evident from this definition is that in Xi's (2010) approach to fairness, validity is fundamentally the main consideration. Establishing test fairness from this perspective would mean therefore that evidence for all "types" of validity namely, construct, content, criterion-related and consequential validity would need to be produced. In Xi's (2010) thinking, failure to do this would provide the basis for rebutting any claim for fairness relating to a test. The last approach to fairness also worth mentioning in the context of this chapter was by McNamara and Ryan (2011). In congruence with Messick's (1989) theory of validity and their effort to define test fairness, McNamara and Ryan made a distinction between the concept of fairness and that of justice. They argued that fairness is a function of the internal technical aspects of a test whereas justice relates to the external consequences of testing. The technical qualities include the psychometric or statistical properties of a test such as levels of difficulty, discrimination, dimensionability and differential item functioning (Fan & Knoch, 2019), whereas its consequences are an outcome of both positive and negative decisions that are taken based on test performance. Clearly, McNamara and Ryan's (2011) approach places all aspects of the internal validity of a test at the centre of the meaning of fairness. Their position is, in other words, that fairness is an outcome of how test results are interpreted and used. The study carried out in this chapter is underpinned by this approach to the meaning of fairness in language assessment as well as that pursued by Xi (2010). In other words, predictive validity or evidence for construct validity, as Messick (1989) would prefer calling it, is the premise from which fairness has been conceptualized for this chapter. This kind of validity or evidence for construct validity

is realizable only if all other “types”, that is, construct, content, and concurrent validity are in place.

Thus, the way we approach the concept of fairness is that if a test such as the one we deal with in this chapter predicts correctly for two groups of students as those that will pass and those that will fail, the placement and access decisions taken on the basis of its scores would be fair. Put differently, the extent to which a test designed for a purpose similar to that of the one dealt with in this chapter can classify students correctly as those that will cope successfully with the discourse demands of higher education as opposed to those that will not, is proportional to the degree of the fairness of the decisions taken on the basis of the scores obtained on that test.

2.3. Previous studies on test bias and fairness

It should be clear by now that the ultimate focus of the present chapter is fairness in how language testing is used to determine levels of student ability to cope with the discourse demands of academic education. Two studies have already been carried out on this topic in the context of higher education in South Africa. These studies, however, mainly concerned themselves with fairness within the confines of test performance. In this case, fairness was viewed as a function of test bias, “a consistent and systematic failure by a test to provide a reliable and justifiable measurement of an ability a test was designed to measure, as a result of some factor that resides in the background of the test takers involved and that is unrelated to the construct underpinning the test” (Sebolai, 2016b, p. 56). The first of the two studies referred to above was carried out by Van der Slik (2009) on a South African test of academic literacy called the Test of Academic Literacy Levels (TALL) using a sample of undergraduate students at the Universities of Pretoria, Potchefstroom and Stellenbosch between the years 2005 and 2008. The study focused on gender bias and used the TiaPlus software to compute T-tests and Differential Item Functioning (DIF) analyses to accomplish its aim. Van der Slik (2009) found that both the English and Afrikaans versions of the test did not show any significant difference in performance as a result of the gender background of the test takers. Van der Slik (2009) did find, however, that there was a negligible degree of DIF between performance by males and females which he believed might have resulted from the probable differences in the cognition between the two genders and not the content of the test. This explanation was not informed by any finding from this study. It was probably drawn from sources outside what Van der Slik’s (2009) study focused on.

The second study was by Van der Slik and Weideman (2009), which looked at test bias in TALL as a function of home language background for speakers of African Languages, English and Afrikaans at the Universities of Pretoria, Stellenbosch and North West. In this case too, T-tests and DIF analyses were carried out and revealed that the difference in test performance by the three groups of students was negligible and that this was a probable result of the inability of less proficient students to complete the test within allocated time. This is how Van der Slik and Weideman (2009, p. 115) explain it:

The primary reason for the occurrence of DIF is not the biased content of the test items, but because they are situated at the end of the test, a test that students less capable of handling the demands of academic discourse at this level are less able to complete than those who can competently and fluently handle the demands of cognitive processing and language associated with tertiary education.

This means that in the view of Van der Slik and Weideman (2009), the negligible differential performance, as revealed by their study, was a result of nothing else but the test takers' standing on the construct assessed by the test as well as their ability to complete the whole test within the allocated time.

As pointed out earlier, these two studies confined their focus to test bias and ultimate fairness to performance at the level of the test involved. This makes them partly related but different from the study carried out in this chapter. As also pointed out earlier, the current chapter extends the focus on test fairness from performance on a test itself to a criterion underpinning that test. In the case of the test dealt with in this chapter, the criterion of interest is the ability to cope with the discourse demands of academic performance.

One study that is the most relevant to the one focused on in this chapter was the one carried out by Sebolai (2018). That study focused on the predictive bias in the test of academic literacy that was referred to as TALL in the foregoing paragraphs. More specifically, Sebolai's (2018) study sought to determine whether this test predicted first year academic performance differently for students from a Home Language (HL) and First Additional Language (FAL) school backgrounds. In Sebolai's (2018) view, the importance of this study lay in what it would reveal about how the test treated students who, by virtue of choosing any of the two levels of language offerings, were from different socio-economic backgrounds. In other words, in the context of South Africa where learners from poor socio-economic backgrounds tend to take English FAL and their well-off counterparts tend to take English HL at high school, the results of Sebolai's (2018) study would also determine whether socio-economic background was a factor in how TALL classified students for probable success at university study.

To accomplish the aim of his study, Sebolai (2018) applied a regression methodology on the performance the participants displayed on the three assessments namely, English HL, English FAL and end-of-first year average scores. The results showed that the test was fair in how it predicted first year performance for the two groups of students, overall. The conclusion warns, however, that these results should not be generalized to other settings, mainly because the sample for his study was from a university of technology. In South Africa, universities of technology mainly offer diplomas. These qualifications are deemed lower in status than degrees. The latter are mainly offered by traditional academic universities. The admission requirements for obtaining a diploma at a university of technology are lower than those required for obtaining a degree at university. The unique context of Sebolai's study referred to above was partly the reason for a study such as the current one to be carried out in the context of a traditional South African academic university. A brief description of this test will now follow in order to give some more contextual information.

3. The National Benchmark Test in Academic Literacy

The National Benchmark Test in Academic Literacy (NBT AL) is one component of a battery of tests known as the National Benchmark Tests (NBTs), the origin and nature of which were conceptualized around the year 2005. The idea behind these tests was originated by the then Higher Education South Africa (HESA), a union of the vice chancellors of 23 South African universities, now known as Universities South Africa (USAF). The project responsible for the development of the NBTs, the National Benchmark Tests Project (NBTP), came into being as an outcome of concerns about low graduation rates especially among historically disadvantaged students and the determination by the higher education sector to curb the low completion rates. To this end, these tests would help determine the extent to which students entering higher education were likely or unlikely to succeed in their studies. The tests were therefore meant to give information additional to that obtained from the school leaving examination, the only means used by universities to take admission decisions previously. As its name implies, the NBT AL was designed to assess the extent of the mismatch between high school and higher education with regard to the type of language ability now commonly known as academic literacy, which is required for success at university study. For the purpose of developing this test, a group of academics was assembled to provide input on what this language ability should be. The outcome of this engagement was a construct of academic literacy defined as the ability to do the following:

- negotiate meaning at word, sentence, paragraph and whole-text level;
- understand discourse and argument structure and the text “signals” that underlie this structure;
- extrapolate and draw inferences beyond what has been stated in text;
- separate essential from non-essential and super-ordinate from sub-ordinate information;
- understand and interpret visually encoded information, such as graphs, diagrams and flow-charts;
- understand and manipulate numerical information;
- understand the importance and authority of own voice;
- understand and encode the metaphorical, non-literal and idiomatic bases of language; and
- negotiate and analyse text genre.

(Cliff & Yeld, 2006, p. 20)

The NBT AL consist of 75 multiple-choice items which align to the construct outlined above. The items are based on texts that are typical of those that students will be required to process in an academic context (Cliff, 2015). The items require that students “choose the most inclusive or plausible or reasonable answer from four options, where distractors have been specifically designed to be indicative of reading reasoning misconceptions” (Cliff, 2015, p. 11).

For the purpose of helping policy makers take decisions regarding the extent to which first time entrants to higher education might need support, the NBTP uses three levels of performance to classify those who write its tests. These levels are Basic, Intermediate and Proficient. The test takers who perform within the Basic category comprise those who score the worst in the test and will need long term support. These are the prospective students who might, for example, benefit from attending Further Education and Training colleges prior to their future enrolment at traditional academic universities. Those classified as Intermediate include those who will need a one-year bridging programme before embarking on mainstream university studies. The last are those who are unlikely to experience difficulties with university education and can therefore be admitted straight into mainstream courses without any extra support. A detailed explanation of how these standards or levels of performance should be interpreted is captured in Table 1 below. The acronyms AL, QL and MAT stand for Academic Literacy, Quantitative Literacy and Mathematics, respectively.

Table 1: The performance Levels for the NBT AL

Proficient	100	<p>Test performance suggests that future academic performance will not be adversely affected (students may pass or fail at university, but this is highly unlikely to be attributable to strengths or weaknesses in the domains tested). If admitted, students may be placed into regular programmes of study.</p> <p>Degree: AL [64 %]; QL [70 %] MAT [68 %] Diploma/Certificate: AL [64 %]; QL [63 %] MAT [65 %]</p>
Intermediate		<p>The challenges identified are such that it is predicted that academic progress will be adversely affected. If admitted, students' educational needs should be met as deemed appropriate by the institution (e.g., extended or augmented programmes, special skills provision).</p> <p>Degree: AL [38 %]; QL [38 %]; MAT [35 %] Diploma/Certificate: AL [31 %]; QL [34 %] MAT [35 %]</p>
Basic	0	<p>Test performance reveals serious learning challenges: it is predicted that students will not cope with degree-level study without extensive and long-term support, perhaps best provided through bridging programmes (i.e., non-credit preparatory courses, special skills provision) or FET provision. Institutions admitting students performing at this level would need to provide such support themselves.</p>

(Higher Education South Africa, 2015)

The benchmarks or cut scores that are shown to demarcate these performance levels in Table 1 above are arrived at through a process of standard setting. "Standard setting is the methodology used to define *levels* of achievement or proficiency and the *cutscores* corresponding to those levels" (Bejar, 2008, p. 1). In the case of the NBTs, the Angoff Standard setting method is used to set these benchmarks. The method involves asking a panel of experts to judge the difficulty of each test item by predicting the proportion of borderline candidates that will answer that item correctly (Higher Education South Africa, 2015). An average score calculated from the predictions made by the panel is used to decide what a cut-off score for each level of performance for a test should be (Higher Education South Africa, 2015). For the NBT AL, standard setting is carried out once after every three years. One would expect therefore that these benchmarks or cut scores have been changing since the introduction of the NBTs more than fifteen years ago.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research questions and study design

The purpose of the study carried out in this chapter was to investigate the fairness of a test of academic literacy administered in English to a group of multilingual students at a South African university where English is the main language used for teaching and learning. Thus, the research question for this study was the following: Does the English version of the National Benchmark Test in academic literacy (NBT AL) classify students from English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa language backgrounds fairly as those that will pass or fail their first year of study at university?

The study underpinning the chapter adopted a quantitative research design. Quantitative research involves the collection and analysis of numerical data. It is an adoption of what came to be known as the “scientific method” which originated from the natural sciences in the nineteenth century (Dörnyei, 2007). The method “offered a tool to explore questions in an “objective” manner, trying to minimize the influence of any researcher bias or prejudice, thereby resulting in what scholars believed was an accurate and reliable description of the world” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 31). Thus, quantitative research enables the researcher to use statistical analysis that range from simple averages to complex formulas and mathematical models (Babbie, 2013, p. 25). Researchers can make more explicit observations since quantitative research allows them the possibility to aggregate, summarize and compare data (Babbie, 2013, p. 25). The numeral nature of the data collected for the study carried out in this chapter rendered a quantitative research design the most appropriate.

4.2. Sampling

The sample for this study was, in fact, the whole population that comprised a total of 13,858 students enrolled in nine faculties of Stellenbosch University from 2013 to 2015. These were the faculties of Agrisciences, Arts and Social Sciences, Economic and Management Sciences, Education, Engineering, Law, Medicine and Health Sciences, Science and Theology. The students were from English, Afrikaans and IsiXhosa mother tongue backgrounds. The Afrikaans ($n = 6\ 917$) and English ($n = 6\ 587$) groups were considerably larger than the IsiXhosa ($n = 355$) one. This was to be expected because Stellenbosch University is a historically white university which started admitting students from other races in larger numbers only in the current political dispensation.

4.3. Data collection

At the time the data for the study was collected, Stellenbosch University was, as pointed out earlier in this chapter, using the NBT AL for both the admission and

placement of students in different programmes of study. Thus, at the onset of the study, the university's Institutional Planning and Research department had a repository of all the data that was needed. We applied for and obtained both ethical clearance and institutional permission from this department. Both the clearance and permission were sought and granted before the data was collected and on condition that the students whose data were used would not be identified in any way and that the data would be kept confidential and used solely for our proposed research study. There was no need, according to the Institutional Planning and Research department, for students to complete consent forms. Also, most of the students would have graduated and left the institution at the onset of the research study. Collecting data in this way is in Dörnyei's (2007) view acceptable when it is absolutely necessary and the welfare of the participants is not compromised in any significant way.

4.4. Data analysis

In order to find the answer to the research question for this study, Sensitivity and Specificity statistics were computed. On the one hand, Sensitivity refers to "the number of true positives [...], the proportion (or percentage) of students above a cut-off point who pass their first year" (Steyn & Van der Walt, 2017, p. 109). On the other hand, "specificity [...]" involves the number of true negatives [...] the proportion (or percentage) of students below a cut-off point who fail their first year" (Steyn & Van Der Walt, 2017, p. 109). A combination of the Sensitivity and Specificity percentages gives rise to the overall proportion of cases that are classified as a Pass or Fail. This method was chosen over others for this chapter because not only does a Sensitivity and Specificity analysis help predict true positives and true negatives as explained above, it also gives a measure of how accurately this separation is done. This is revealed through what is known as the Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) curve, also an output of a Sensitivity and Specificity statistical analysis. In other words, from a Sensitivity and Specificity analysis, the ability to classify is one type of statistic and the degree of accuracy or correctness in which this happens is another.

More specifically, in the case of the study reported in this chapter, Sensitivity and Specificity statistics were computed on the Proficient scores obtained on the NBT AL by the participants and their end of first year average scores in their different academic programmes. The cut-off point for passing a course at Stellenbosch University is 50 %. This score was chosen as the outcome cut-off point for the current study. The end of first year average performance was chosen as the outcome variable in the light of the observation made in previous studies (e.g., Van Dyk, 2015; Yeld, 2001) that the relationship between the assessment

of the ability to cope with the discourse demands of academic education and actual academic performance is the strongest in the first year of study when compared to later years, when students have acculturated to the conventions of their disciplines. As was shown in Table 1 above, the Proficient level of performance on the NBT is supposed to separate test takers into those that are likely to pass (obtain 50 % and above on average) and those who are likely to fail (obtain 49 % and below). Furthermore, the largest proportion of Stellenbosch University's students typically perform within the Proficient as opposed to the other standards of performance set for the test. The size of the sample within this band would therefore allow for a quantitative study of the kind carried out in this chapter. A graphic presentation of this performance will precede that of the actual results of the study carried out in the chapter, in the section below.

5. Results

Figure 1 below is a graph capturing the typical performance of Stellenbosch University students on the NBT AL. As can be seen from the graph, and as pointed out earlier, the largest proportion of Stellenbosch University students consistently performed within the Proficient band from 2013 to 2015. This picture continued to hold in 2019.

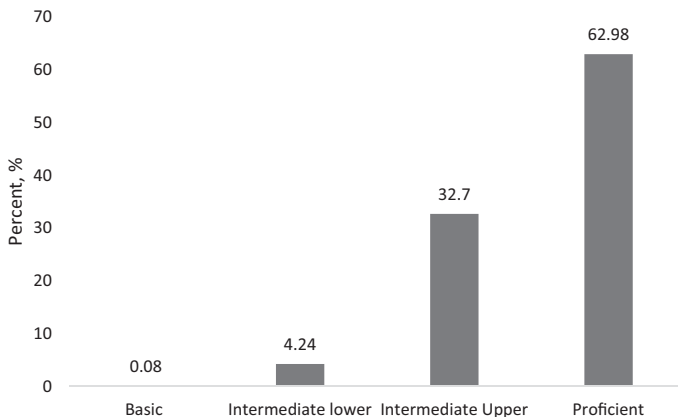


Figure 1: Typical performance of Stellenbosch University on the NBT AL

The performance graph presented above is followed by the results of the Sensitivity and Specificity analysis for the isiXhosa group in Table 3 below. These

are preceded by a frequency analysis of the groups' scores falling within the three levels of performance set for the NBT AL and the corresponding Pass and Fail (50–100 % and 0–49 %) categories of academic performance in Table 2.

Table 2: Frequency of scores within the NBT AL performance levels in relation to end of year average performance for the IsiXhosa mother tongue group (n = 355)

Year 1 average	Basic	Intermediate lower	Intermediate upper	Proficient	Total
0 – 49 %	0	41	55	33	129
50 – 100 %	1	38	93	94	226
Total	1	79	148	127	355

As can be seen in Table 2 above, a total of 33 out of 355 students from the isiXhosa mother tongue background who were classified by the NBT AL as being Proficient scored below the required average pass mark at the end of the year. It can also be seen that a total of 132 students who were classified as not being Proficient were able to obtain the required average mark to pass. One of these students was Basic, 38 were Intermediate Lower and 93 were Upper Intermediate.

Table 3: Detailed report for Sensitivity and Specificity for the IsiXhosa group (n = 355)

>= Cutpoint	Sensitivity	Specificity	Correctly classified	LR+	LR-
Basic	100.00 %	0.00 %	63.66 %	1.0000	
Intermediate upper	99.56 %	0.00 %	63.38 %	0.9956	
Intermediate lower	82.74 %	31.78 %	64.23 %	1.2129	0.5430
Proficient	41.59 %	74.42 %	53.52 %	1.6259	0.7848
Greater than proficient	0.00 %	100.00 %	36.34 %		1.0000
Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) Curve statistics					
Observations	ROC area	Standard error	Asymptotic normal 95 % confidence interval		
355	0.6080	0.0291	0.55092	0.66500	

From Table 3 above, it can be seen that the Sensitivity value of the Proficient band was lower (41.59 %) than its specificity counterpart (74.42 %) for the isiXhosa group. It can also be seen that the band's overall ability to classify this group of students as those that would pass and those that would fail was negligibly above average (53.52 %).

As indicated in the methodology section, the strength that a measurement variable such as the Proficient band possesses to classify test takers accurately is captured in the value of the area under the curve earlier referred to as the Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) curve. Put differently, the area under the ROC curve shows the extent of correctness in which the analysis has classified the cases in a sample. Steyn and Van Der Walt (2017, p. 113) have, for the specific purpose of a study such as the one carried out in this chapter, also described the area under the ROC curve as “a measure of the ability to discriminate between the distributions [...] of the scores of the P [Pass] and F [Fail] populations. Larger values of the AUC [Area Under the Curve] indicate greater discrimination ability”. The ROC curve together with its accompanying AUC value for the isiXhosa group are captured in Figure 2 below.

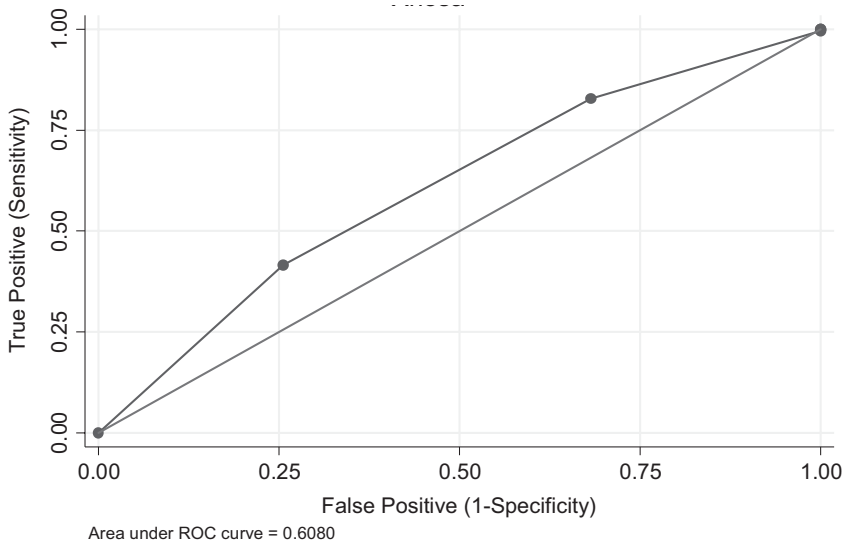


Figure 2: The Receiver Operating Characteristic curve for the IsiXhosa group (n = 355)

First year GPA and NBT AL Sensitivity and Specificity Analysis – IsiXhosa

As can be seen below this graph, the AUC value for this group amounted to 0.6080. The AUC value ranges from 0.5 to 1, where 0.5 is the minimum performance of a classifier variable and 1 is the maximum. A value of less than 0.5 shows that the variable involved has not effectively classified the cases. The higher the value of the AUC the better the classification result (Melo, 2013).

Thus, the AUC value for the isiXhosa group was acceptably higher than the minimum acceptable cut-off point. As pointed out already, this is a measure of the correctness with which the Proficient band could classify this group.

In Table 5 below, the results of a Sensitivity and Specificity analysis for the Afrikaans group are presented. This is also preceded by the frequency analysis of the scores obtained by this group falling within the three performance standards of the NBT AL and the corresponding Pass and Fail (50–100 % and 0–49 %) categories of academic performance in Table 4.

Table 4: Frequency of scores within the NBT AL performance levels in relation to end of year performance for the Afrikaans mother tongue group (n = 6,917)

Year 1 average	Basic	Intermediate lower	Intermediate upper	Proficient	Total
0 – 49 %	1	140	829	682	1652
50 – 100 %	3	189	2083	2990	5265
Total	4	329	2912	3672	6917

In Table 4 above, it can be seen that a total of 682 students from the Afrikaans mother tongue background were classified as being Proficient by the test and yet scored below the required mark to pass at the end of their first year. It can also be seen that a total of 2,275 students who performed below the Proficient mark in the test were able to obtain the pass mark and above on average at the end of their first year. Three of these students were Basic while 189 and 2,083 fell within the Lower and Upper Intermediate bands respectively.

Table 5: Detailed report for Sensitivity and Specificity for the Afrikaans group (n = 6,917)

>= Cutpoint	Sensitivity	Specificity	Correctly classified	LR+	LR-
Basic	100.00 %	0.00 %	76.12 %	1.0000	
Intermediate upper	99.94 %	0.00 %	76.09 %	1.0000	0.9413
Intermediate lower	96.35 %	8.54 %	75.38 %	1.0534	0.4273
Proficient	56.79 %	58.72 %	57.25 %	1.3756	0.7359
Greater than proficient	0.00 %	100.00 %	23.88 %		1.0000
Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) Curve statistics					
Observations	ROC area	Standard error	Asymptotic normal 95 % confidence interval		
6917	0.5853	0.0072	0.57111	0.59940	

As can be seen in Table 5 above, for the Afrikaans group, the Sensitivity value for the Proficient band equalled 56.79 % while the Specificity value was 58.72 %. It can also be seen on this table that the band's overall ability to classify this group as those that would score 50 % and above and 49 % and below amounted to 57.25 %. The ROC curve for these results is presented in Figure 3 below.

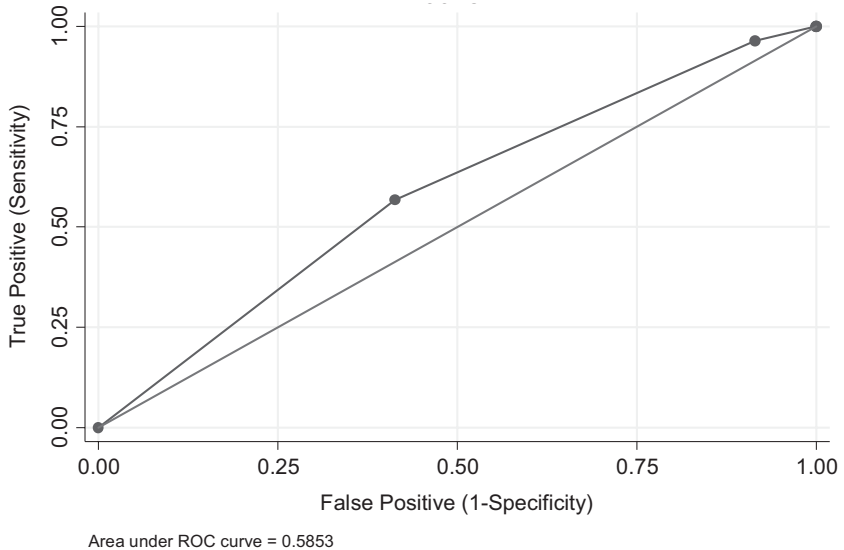


Figure 3: The Receiver Operating Characteristic curve for the Afrikaans group (n = 6,917)

First Year GPA & NBT AL Sensitivity and Specificity Analysis – Afrikaans

As can be seen from this graph, the value for the AUC equalled 0.5853. This value was therefore lower than the one reported for the IsiXhosa group earlier. Thus, while the Proficient band could classify the Afrikaans group slightly better than it could their isiXhosa counterpart, the band's accuracy to classify the isiXhosa group was slightly higher.

Lastly, the results of the Sensitivity and Specificity analysis for the English mother-tongue group are captured in Table 7 below. These are also preceded by those of a frequency analysis of this group's scores falling within the three performance levels of NBT AL and the corresponding Pass and Fail (50–100 % and 0–49 %) categories of academic performance in Table 6.

Table 6: Frequency of scores within the NBT AL performance levels in relation to end of year average performance for the English mother tongue group (n = 6,587)

Year 1 Average	Basic	Intermediate lower	Intermediate upper	Proficient	Total
0 – 49 %	1	48	487	1235	1771
50 – 100 %	1	55	938	3822	4816
Total	2	103	1425	5057	6587

As shown in Table 6 above, a total number of 1,235 in the English mother tongue group who were classified as being Proficient by the test scored below the required pass mark at the end of their first year of university study. It can also be seen that 994 students who scored below the Proficient band – one basic, 55 Lower Intermediate and 938 Intermediate Upper – were able to obtain the required average scores to pass their first year of study.

Table 7: Detailed report for Sensitivity and Specificity for the English group (n = 6,587)

>= Cutpoint	Sensitivity	Specificity	Correctly classified	LR+	LR-
Basic	100.00 %	0.00 %	73.11 %	1.0000	
Intermediate upper	99.98 %	0.06 %	73.11 %	1.0004	0.3678
Intermediate lower	98.84 %	2.77 %	73.01 %	1.0165	0.4203
Proficient	79.36 %	30.27 %	66.16 %	1.1380	0.6820
Greater than proficient	0.00 %	100.00 %	26.89 %		1.0000
Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) Curve statistics					
Observations	ROC area	Standard error	Asymptotic normal 95 % confidence interval		
6587	0.5492	0.0062	0.53702	0.56148	

In the case of this group, it is clear from this table that the Sensitivity and Specificity values of the Proficient band for them equalled 79.36 % and 30.27 % respectively. It can also be seen on this table that the band's ability to classify these students overall amounted to 66.16 %. The ROC curve accompanying these results is presented in Figure 4 below.

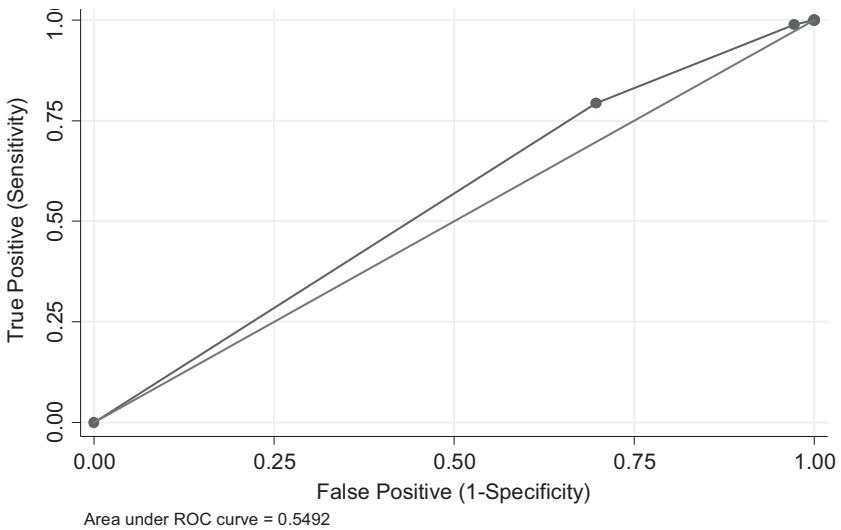


Figure 4: The ROC curve for the English group (n = 6,587)
 First Year GPA & NBT AL Sensitivity and Specificity Analysis – English

From the graph in Figure 4 above, one can see that the AUC value equalled 0.5492 and that it was slightly lower than the one reported for the Afrikaans mother tongue group earlier. Thus, although the Proficient band's ability to classify the English group was higher than that for both the isiXhosa and Afrikaans groups, the accuracy or correctness with which it did this was lower than that for the other two groups.

In sum, the NBT AL Proficient band's ability to classify the English group of students as those that would pass in their first year and those that would fail was higher as compared its ability to do so for the other two groups (English = 66.61 %, Afrikaans = 57.25 % and isiXhosa = 53.52 %). In terms of the accuracy or correctness of this classification, the isiXhosa group scored the highest and the two groups scored lower (isiXhosa = 0.6080, Afrikaans = 0.5853 and English = 0.5492). In the case of all these groups, the Proficient band's level of accuracy in classification was, albeit to different degrees, above the acceptable cut-off point which as indicated earlier is 0.50.

6. Discussion

The results presented above reveal a number of findings of importance to Stellenbosch University in particular and the South African higher education sector in general. The first is that the Proficient band of the NBT AL was better in classifying students from the isiXhosa mother tongue background as those who would fail than it was in classifying the group that would pass. This is a desirable result in so far as it means that the majority of students who might need support in academic literacy in English were classified and therefore identified as such. The Proficient level's ability to predict this result was above average for the group that was classified as those that would fail and below average for the one that was classified as those that would pass. In the context of South Africa, where the majority of non-white students such as those comprising the isiXhosa group in this chapter come from poor socio-economic and academic backgrounds (CHE, 2015), the importance of this finding cannot be over-emphasized. The more those students who are likely to fail their first year as a result of low academic language ability are identified by a test administered for the purpose of that of the NBT AL, the better for the higher education sector in particular and the whole country in general. Needless to say, knowing this makes it easier for the sector to accommodate students needing extra support in the language used for teaching and learning and ultimately to contribute towards mitigating the high failure rate (CHE, 2015) that is a concern to everybody. It is a source for concern, however, that the Proficient band's statistically combined ability to classify the two groups of students was merely slightly above average. This means that there might be a proportion of students who fall through the cracks as a result of being misclassified by the test as those who would pass as a function of their level of academic literacy, but who actually do not do so in the end. It is commendable, however, that the extent to which the Proficient band of the test being dealt with here discriminated between the Pass and Fail groups of students from an isiXhosa mother tongue was overall greater than it was in the case of the Afrikaans and English home language speaker groups. The probable reason for this is that in terms of exposure to English and as compared to their Afrikaans and English counterparts, this group is more diverse and heterogenous in the South African context, at least. As pointed out earlier, the political history of South Africa has ensured that students from African languages background are mostly the ones in need of extra academic support in English as a medium of instruction and therefore need to be identified as such with the highest degree of precision possible. One should be very careful not to generalize this result to other contexts, however. As was shown in the tables capturing the results for the isiXhosa group,

the sample size for this group was very small when compared to that of their English and Afrikaans home language counterparts.

Secondly, in the case of the Afrikaans group, the Proficient band's ability to classify students as those that would pass and those that would fail respectively was equally slightly above average. Also, the difference in the Sensitivity and Specificity values the band scored for this group was marginal, meaning that unlike in the case of the isiXhosa group, the band was less useful in identifying the students from an Afrikaans mother tongue background who were likely to struggle with academic discourse and needed to be identified as such. The probable reason for this is that this group is, unlike its isiXhosa counterpart, quite homogenous in terms of exposure to English in previous years. Lastly, the Proficient band's overall ability to classify the Pass and Fail for the Afrikaans home language group was reasonably better than it was for their isiXhosa counterparts. In this case, the isiXhosa group was therefore disadvantaged when compared to the Afrikaans group in terms of how the band could classify these two groups overall. This is also a cause for concern, because, given the typically disadvantaged school background of the isiXhosa group in the South African context, it is this particular group for whom a higher classification of those who are likely to succeed and those who are unlikely to do so is the most desirable.

Lastly, in the case of the English mother tongue group, the Proficient band's ability to classify students as those who would pass was significantly higher than it was for both the isiXhosa and the Afrikaans groups, while its ability to identify students as those who would fail was significantly lower than it was for the other two groups. This means that the band was more useful in helping the university identify students who were likely to pass than it was in identifying those who would fail. This is a cause for concern because, as pointed out earlier, one would prefer that a test designed for assessing levels of potential for academic success should rather be more effective in identifying students who might benefit from additional support than those who are unlikely to do so. Furthermore, the Proficient band's overall ability to classify students as those who would pass and those who would fail was, for the English mother tongue group, noticeably higher than it was in the case of the isiXhosa and Afrikaans groups. This means that overall, the Proficient band was a better predictor of first year performance for the English group than it was for the other two groups. This is also a cause for concern when one considers that the test being dealt with here was written in English and that this result suggests that it was biased against the two groups from the isiXhosa and Afrikaans mother tongue backgrounds in terms of how it predicted their performance. In line with how Xi (2010) and McNamara (2011) define test fairness, one is justified to view this as a case of assessment unfairness

for these two groups of students. Lastly, the results for the English mother tongue group show that the Proficient band's power or accuracy to discriminate between students who would pass and those who would fail in this group was marginally lower than it was for the Afrikaans group and even lower than it was for the isiXhosa group. Again, this can be explained in terms of the probable homogeneity of the English group with regard to their proficiency in English as their first language.

The group of students whose scores were used for the study underpinning this chapter took the English version of the NBT AL. One would, of course, expect that the English mother tongue group would be somewhat advantaged with regard to how they would perform on the test. In the context of South African higher education, most of these students come from socio-economic backgrounds that have enabled them to afford better educational resources as compared to their counterparts. This has probably been reflected in the performance reports that the owners of the NBT AL have compiled for and shared with the participating institutions in this project over the years. Performance on this test by students applying and gaining admission to historically white institutions such as Stellenbosch University and University of Cape Town, for example, has probably always reflected these students' privileged backgrounds. The largest proportion of the scores obtained by these students has, in all probability, always been in the Proficient level of performance, whereas those obtained by their counterparts at historically disadvantaged universities such as Walter Sisulu and Central University of Technology, for example, have probably always fallen largely within the lowest performance standard of the test. This is an obvious indictment of the test for its administration in the language in which the majority of the writers who come from a non-mother tongue English speaking background might not possess the cultural capital and predisposition required of students to function optimally in the language of this assessment (see Antia et al., 2021). Regrettably, as revealed by the analysis carried out in this chapter, this seems to be extended to the test's ability to predict performance for students from multilingual backgrounds at Stellenbosch University. This might mean that whereas the cultural capital and predisposition required for satisfactory performance in the test is congruent with that embodied in satisfactory academic performance, this might not be the case for the students from the Afrikaans and isiXhosa home language backgrounds. One gets tempted, as a matter of logic, to interpret this in the context of the light shed by the CHE (2015, p. 63) on the colonial foundation upon which the higher education system in South Africa continues to hinge: "the structure and assumption of the core degrees were set

many decades ago, ... predicated on a largely homogenous intake with middle-class cultural capital and mother tongue instruction”.

7. Implications and directions for future research

The focus of this chapter was to investigate if the National Benchmark Test in Academic Literacy was fair in classifying students from English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa mother tongue backgrounds at Stellenbosch University and the accuracy with which it did this. This is a test of academic literacy which, like other tests of potential for academic success, now widely used in South Africa, should continuously be investigated for the validity of the information it provides about students and, by extension, the fairness of the decisions taken on the basis of that information. Since the criterion underpinning tests of this kind is academic performance, it is mainly in relation to this criterion that these tests can be validated, and the fairness of their use established. In this chapter, the specific focus of the process to determine this fairness was on the degree to which the Proficient band of the NBT AL was able to indicate, prior to first year level instruction, whether students who come from three different mother tongue backgrounds would pass or fail at the end of their first year. The results showed that the extent to which the band was able to classify these students overall was biased in favour of the English mother tongue group and against the isiXhosa and Afrikaans mother tongue groups, to a greater and lesser extent.

A recommendation that we would like to make, as an imperative, is that alongside the national effort to develop indigenous languages into media of teaching and learning, the NBTP should seriously consider developing and administering the NBT AL and its Quantitative Literacy and Maths counterparts in other official indigenous languages. This will be in line with the current literature (e.g., Grosfoguel, 2011; Stroud & Kerfoot, 2021) for the decoloniality of language referred to earlier in this chapter. Considerable effort and resources will need be invested in the effort to produce the tests in these different languages, of course, all of which will need to be equated for psychometric soundness. This should not be a challenge to a project as old as the NBTP, the owners of which should certainly be aware of current models of test development, especially those encompassed by Item Response Theory (IRT) and that are a potentially useful resource towards achieving test equivalence. Unlike those of its predecessor known as Classical Test Theory (CTT), IRT models have made sample and test-independent test development possible. Once established for a group of test takers at a particular level of the language ability of interest through any of the IRT models, the psychometric qualities of a test will always be the same

for test takers at that level of ability, regardless of the population of test takers involved or version of the test used. Worth mentioning, in the context of the recommendation made above, is that it is through IRT models that bias in testing can be detected through an analysis of what was referred to as Differential Item Functioning in the literature review section of this chapter (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2010; Gregory, 2007). Not only will the development of indigenous languages versions of NBT AL help deal with its potential predictive validity unfairness to students coming from a background of a cultural capital that misaligns with that embodied in the language of the test, it should also help us glean answers for several questions relevant to academic literacies curriculum development and assessment, especially from predictive studies of the kind carried out in this chapter. Such questions, which should inform future research in our view, are the following: What is the degree of predictive fairness for the NBT AL in the context of historically black universities in South Africa? What cognitive processes are involved in approaching academic study in English as opposed to indigenous languages? How do these processes complement each other in learning? How do students draw from their knowledge of different languages to handle academic tasks? What are the implications for possibly integrating multiple languages into content in academic offerings across faculties? What are the implications for how developing indigenous languages as academic language should be approached?

As indicated in the early sections of this chapter, academic literacy assessment in South African came into being as result of the struggle that students from non-English speaking backgrounds face to graduate in scheduled time mainly because of the impediment that English, the language of teaching and learning, poses to them. It was also made clear that the idea behind this assessment was to help inform English literacy interventions for those who were found wanting on the assessment. We know now that this was never a fair practice, looking at it from the perspective of the theory of decoloniality. This is what informs our recommendation that not only should the focus be on the use of indigenous and historically marginalized languages for teaching and learning, this focus should also transfer to the type of assessment carried out through a test such as NBT AL. IRT models will, as pointed earlier, be very useful in terms of ensuring fairness in multilingual assessment. We make this recommendation with full awareness of the recent literature on how in their current state, indigenous languages are viewed as an “invention” of colonialism and therefore layered with coloniality in very complex ways. This means therefore that for them to be of genuine utility in teaching, learning and assessment, ways must continuously be sought to move these languages away from their colonial base.

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Siphokazi Magadla, Rhodes University, South Africa

Zikho Dana, Rhodes University, South Africa

Dion Nkomo, Rhodes University, South Africa

Multilingual teaching and assessment: Towards an endogenous Political and International Studies at a South African university

Abstract: While South African universities express an intention and a commitment to multilingualism, assessment appears to be a sacred terrain where English monolingualism appears to be regarded as the vanguard of the principles of validity, consistency and transparency. This chapter presents an innovative and transformative use of multilingualism in a Political and International Studies course that provides for assessment of tutorials, essays and examinations in isiXhosa. The multilingual repertoires illuminated in this case study show that multilingual assessment can move beyond the current emphasis on speaking and reading in African languages for understanding. This case shows that students have the capacities to speak, read, listen and write academically in fields such as international relations in isiXhosa and other African languages such as isiZulu. Importantly, the use of isiXhosa raises new questions about the meaning of key disciplinary terms that are epistemically significant towards an endogenous discipline that centers the world sense of the students.

Keywords: multilingualism in Political and International Studies, IsiXhosa, multilingual assessment, endogeneity.

1. Introduction

The neglect of African languages in discussions and debates about the transformation and decolonization of political and international studies represents a striking paradox. Whether it is political instability, elections, or national state of disaster periods such as under the COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of South Africans access their radio and television news mostly through indigenous languages. The South African online newspaper, News24, reports that the isiXhosa news bulletin is “the most-watched TV news bulletin in South Africa” and that its audience grew from “1.2 million viewers ... to 6.215 million” (News24 Report, 2020) during South Africa’s national state of disaster under the Coronavirus COVID-19 lockdown. None of the various English news bulletins at the SABC

and independent twenty-four hours news stations have an audience higher than 1.5 million (News24 Report, 2020). Rhodes University's awarding of a Doctor of Letters (D Litt.) (honoris causa) to veteran isiXhosa newsreader, Noxolo Grootboom, for her "uncanny ability to connect with her audience through the powerful medium of her language and drawing from her culture... as the face and voice of the nation during historic national events such as elections" (Rhodes University Communique, 21 October 2021), is evidence of the intersection between language, culture and the political imagination.

While South Africa provides a vibrant public culture where every day political events and debates happen in African languages, Political and International Studies departments in the country are yet to catch up with this empirical and intellectual reality. While the 2015 and 2016 #RhodesMustFall, #FeesMustfall, #RUReferencelist, #PatriarchyMustFall student protests across South African universities, which are "collectively referred to as the Fallist movement" (Hendricks, 2018, p. 17) have spurred a vibrant debate about transformation and decolonization of the discipline (see Hendricks, 2018; Matthews, 2018; Mngomezulu & Hadebe, 2018; Pillay, 2018; Zondi, 2018), multilingual pedagogies and methodologies that centre indigenous languages have not formed part of the search for an endogenous political studies in South Africa.

This chapter describes and analyses a multilingual pedagogical initiative that entails the translation of course outlines, developing a glossary and, more importantly introducing multilingual assessments in first-year studies in political and international studies since 2017 at Rhodes University. The chapter shows that while this university's language policy commits to the development of isiXhosa as an academic language, it maintains English as the default language of teaching and learning. The university's commitment to create conditions for the promotion of multilingualism does not transcend encouraging the use of translanguaging in tutorials. While it might be argued that the language policy does not prohibit formal multilingual assessment, as it does not explicitly declare English as the sole language for assessment, the university's assessment policy remains silent on the language question. Assessment appears to be a sacred terrain where multilingualism appears to be regarded as a threat to the principles of validity, consistency and transparency.

The chapter makes three important findings: Firstly, multilingual assessment in political and international studies at Rhodes University shows that there is a link between teaching the discipline in isiXhosa and student's understanding of the course content, and their willingness to submit assessments in a language other than English. Secondly, a remarkable outcome of this project is that when students are offered opportunities, they submit work in isiXhosa, be it

tutorials, term essays or examinations, which is contrary to widely held beliefs that African languages are not fit for higher education or that translanguaging is the only possible assessment outcome, where students rely on both isiXhosa/isiZulu and English. As the chapter shows, students that have submitted assessments in isiZulu, also do so fully in isiZulu, without mixing languages in their writings. This outcome importantly shows that African languages can be used across the language domains beyond an emphasis on speaking and the mixing of African languages with English in academic writing. Thirdly, the project shows that the use of isiXhosa in political and international studies raises new questions about the meaning of key disciplinary terms that illuminate the collective memories, a “sea of Xhosa ontological narratives” (Adesina, 2006, p. 145) that are epistemically significant beyond simply doing political studies in the vernacular towards an endogenous discipline that begins from the world sense of the students (Adesina, 2002, 2010; Magadla et al., 2021; Magoqwana & Adesina, 2020; Oyèwùmí, 1997).

2. “Language is land, land is language”: Monolingual assessment within conservative SA higher education policies

South African universities’ conservative approach towards multilingualism is a case of coloniality that perpetuates one of the critical legacies of colonization. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2019, p. 229) identifies the first casualty of colonialism as “the ‘mother tongue’ of African people that were replaced with colonial languages”. Accordingly, the prominence of the language question in the work of early African intellectuals, to whom Ndlovu-Gatsheni attributes the origins of decolonial thought, is not surprising. The following statements from the works of Edward Samuel Krune Mqhayi, an iconic and prolific organic isiXhosa intellectual, author and poet who started publishing in isiXhosa newspapers such as *Umteteli wa Bantu* and *Abantu Batho* in the late 1800s, illustrate this point.

Xa unokulahlekelwa lulwimi lwakho, yeyiphi enye into eya kulahleka? (Mqhayi 1923, p. 7). Kukunceda ntoni ukunconyelwa ukulusoma ulwimi lolunye uhlanga, kodwa ungumdlungu kolwakho, uyafana nje nomduka ongenasizinda (Mqhayi, 1927, p. 8). Ulwimi ngumhlaba, umhlaba lulwimi, xa uziphuciwe ezi zikrweqe, uba likhoboka lengqondo unaphakade (Mqhayi, 1933, p. 7). Isizwe esingenazo iincwadi ezibhalwe ngolwimi lwaso ngababhali baso siyadelelwa zezinye kwaye ithimbeka lula ingqiqo yaso, singaze sihambele phambili, singazithembi (Mqhayi, 1939, p. ii).

If you lose your language, what else is going to be lost? How does it help you to be complimented for being articulate in a foreign language and yet you are

inarticulate in your own? You are just like a vagrant who has no base. Language is land, land is language, when you have been robbed of these resources you become mentally enslaved eternally. A nation without books written in its language by its authors is undermined by other nations and its intellectual faculty is vulnerable, it may never prosper and will never be confident of itself.

These strong sentiments may be considered as foundational to critical scholarship on the nexus between language and colonialism later produced, for example by wa Thiong'o (1986) who finds epistemic and economic freedom inconceivable without the resolution of the language question. The nexus between language and assessment practices in South African higher education may be framed within relevant national-level and institutional policies that seek to break away from a colonial and apartheid past.

Higher education language policies and initiatives in the post-apartheid attempt to promote issues of transformation and social justice specifically related to inclusive access and success. Teaching and learning policies, including policies on assessment, also seek to address the same issues. However, the issue of language and assessment is rarely addressed in a specific way. Multilingualism, which undergirds language policies and gets recognition from teaching and learning policies, is not sharply articulated when it comes to higher education assessment. Accordingly, assessment practices in South African higher education, as it will be demonstrated with respect to Rhodes University, have remained conservative of a monolingual culture that valorizes English as a measure of educational success. It is only in the traditional Afrikaans institutions where a language other than English has been recognized as legitimate for assessment, even though a monolingualism assessment ideology prevails. In a linguistically diverse South Africa, African languages are unfortunately not legitimized for assessment, which undermines the transformation imperatives of higher education. However, the Rhodes University multilingual pedagogical initiative discussed in this chapter highlights that within the conservative legislative framework exist opportunities for implementation of multilingual assessment which bear pedagogically transformative opportunities for higher education. With the agency of academics and students, such opportunities make multilingual assessment and its transformative potential a reality.

The *Language Policy for Higher Education* (LPHE), adopted in 2002, remains historic as it represented, for the "first time, a genuine attempt ... to ensure that all ... official languages are accorded parity of esteem" (Ministry of Education, 2002, p. 9) in the corridors of knowledge production. Whereas English and Afrikaans had hitherto been the only officially recognized languages of higher education, the LPHE required all institutions to formulate their own language

policies which identified specific African languages and commit to develop and use together with English and/or Afrikaans. Its priority was articulated as ensuring “the simultaneous development of a multilingual environment in which all our languages are developed as academic/scientific languages, while at the same time ensuring that the existing languages of instruction do not serve as a barrier to access and success”. Accordingly, the work of the 2003 *Ministerial Committee on the Development of Indigenous Languages for Use as Mediums of Instruction* became a complementary government initiative of exploring and outlining practical procedures of attaining a fully multilingual higher education system in which African languages were to be developed and used as fully-fledged academic languages (Ministerial Committee, 2003). Such an intention would be assumed to also apply to assessment, the language of which is not explicitly addressed by the LPHE.

However, while universities generally responded positively to the imperative of formulating institutional language policies, they remained either non-committal or sluggish regarding the implementation of a multilingual higher education that valorizes African languages. The positive spirit prevails in most institutional language policies as they recognize the need to transform institutional cultures and the academy in line with the transformed student populations, which now include mother-tongue speakers of African languages. For example, in the latest iteration of its language policy, i.e., the 2019 version, Rhodes University affirmed its social justice commitment to create “an environment where language is not a barrier to equity of access, opportunity and success” (Rhodes University, 2019b, p. 2) by aiming for the “development of academic languages and literacies of the languages of South Africa”. Specifically, the policy recognizes English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans as its official languages. However, a declaration that the default “language of learning and teaching is English” (Rhodes University, 2019b, p. 2), and that the other languages would be used “where necessary and practicable” (Rhodes University, 2019b, p. 2) undermines the aspiration for a multilingual higher education that is premised on the principles of social justice, transformation and inclusive epistemological access. Universities seem to have capitalized on the LPHE recommendation that it would “*be necessary to work within the confines of the status quo* (original emphasis) until such time as other South African languages have been developed to a level where they may be used in all higher education functions” (Ministry of Education, 2002, p. 10).

In the legislative framework outlined above, assessment in its broad terms is not explicitly mentioned in the LPHE and the Rhodes University Language Policy, as if language is not a factor in arguably the most vitally important aspect of teaching and learning. Conversely, policies on assessment of student learning

in most South African universities are either silent on language or refer to it anecdotally, for instance, in terms of clarity and accessibility but not in terms of options from institutional language policies. Some, such as Rhodes University, recognize the need to be cognizant of “cultural, social and linguistic diversity” and that “assessment has the potential both to challenge and maintain social structures” (Rhodes University, 2019a, p. 1). However, there is not policy guideline in terms of how assessment practices should respond to linguistic diversity. Emphasis is placed on the need “to ensure that assessment is valid and consistent [and] that assessment practices are transparent” (Rhodes University, 2019a, p. 1) without considering the implications of language in the attainment of those vital assessment principles. This example highlights a generally conservative approach towards multilingualism in South African higher education.

In the light of the above, English monolingualism still dominates higher education teaching and learning and, even more so, assessment. At Rhodes University, English is the language of assessment except in the study of other languages offered in the School of Languages and Literatures. In terms of practice, the provision of dictionaries for use during examinations has been one notable effort of showing linguistic sensitivity in relation to language and assessment (Nkomo, 2017). Apart from that, the evident internal contradictions in the LPHE itself, as well as a lack of sync between language policies and teaching/learning policies have made it difficult for African languages to thrive. Thus, the innovative practices in the International Relations course reported in this chapter demonstrates individual agency to decolonize curriculum and pedagogy through language rather than an institutional drive or a case of enabling policy environment for a multilingual pedagogy in this historically white English university. However, one hopes that efforts to implement the *Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education Institutions* (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2020) would further enhance the opportunities and practice of multilingual assessment in South African universities.

3. “Colonialism rhymes with monolingualism”: Political Studies in South Africa

We are surrounded by a sea of Xhosa ontological narratives; isn't it time we started treating these as potential source codes for our scholarship? (Adesina, 2006, p. 145)

Apart from a conservative higher education policy framework outlined above with respect to language and assessment, there are fundamental aspects about

political science that are consistent with the ideology of monolingualism, thereby posing as impediments to the incorporation of African languages in teaching, learning and assessment. The discipline of Political and International Studies generally introduces students to various fields such as “political theory and the history of political ideas, the political system of one’s country, public administration and policy analysis, political economy, political sociology, comparative politics, International Relations (IR) and methodology” (Gouws et al., 2013, p. 394). Matthews (2018) draws direct links between the foundations of the discipline of political science in Africa with the European colonial occupation of African states. For Nkiwane (2001, p. 280), “colonialism and imperialism in Africa existed parallel to the development of the canon of IR”, while Zondi (2018, p. 20) affirms that,

it is not hard to find evidence to support the suggestion that IR is dominated and controlled by men from Western Europe and other parts of the European diaspora...It evolved through the development of its key schools of thought that have white men as fathers.

Candidly, he adds, “there are no mothers and sisters in a discipline born out of an imperialist patriarchal world system” (Zondi, 2018, p. 20). Accordingly, Pillay (2018, p. 32) regards discussions about decolonization as precisely “a proxy for calling into question, and responding to the problem of Eurocentrism”, as illustrated by the 2015/2016 “Fallist movement” (Hendricks, 2018, p. 17). As Hendricks (2018, p. 17) explains,

the problem is that universities are modelled and essentially seek to replicate and align with those institutions of higher learning that emerged from the West, and therefore they have also cultivated hierarchies, racial and gendered power relations, epistemologies, and ethnocentric constructions of what constitutes knowledge, and in which bodies and geographies it is supposedly located and enunciated.

Major debates about decolonial transformation of the Political and International Studies curriculum thus acknowledge its colonial foundations and the challenges of transcending the “colonial library” (Matthews, 2018). In an article entitled, “Sociology and Yoruba Studies: epistemic intervention or doing sociology in the ‘vernacular’?”, Adesina (2002, p. 1) indicates that while sociologists in post-colonial Africa have critiqued the “racist historiography” of their discipline, they “did not overcome the epistemic framework of western scholarship that they sought to displace”. Despite their critical awareness, Adesina (2010, p. 3) describes scholarship of such sociologists as a “scholarship-as-regurgitation [that] imposes received categories (concepts, theories, and paradigms) on local conditions”. A key site of discussions about decolonizing political and

international studies has focused on transforming the curriculum and the demographic profile of its academics. For example, in their reflection of the state of the discipline at historically white South African universities, Gouws et al. (2013, p. 402) identified the following priorities:

- (1) strength of research, teaching challenges and quality at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels, (2) the need for both staff transformation and transformation of the discipline with regard to both teaching and learning, (3) research focus to promote a more postcolonial and South-focused agenda and (4) a need to find more of a balance between IR and traditional Political Science.

Language is unfortunately not a major priority for them as they mention it anecdotally, namely in terms of the challenges facing historically Afrikaans medium universities that were expected to increase the supply of English material resources for a changing student demographic. They proceed to note that “the language issue in South Africa as a multilingual country remains a political issue that has an impact on lecturer’s productivity” (Gouws et al., 2013, p. 395). However, they do not identify the role and importance of African languages in the scholarship of the discipline. In *The Struggles over African Languages* (Maseko & Vale, 2016), noted IR scholar, Peter Vale, interviews language expert, Pamela Maseko, about the ruptures and continuities in the use of African languages in higher education in the apartheid and post-apartheid years, and specifically the role that Maseko has played in the intellectualization of African languages at Rhodes University. The interview offers no insight into what Vale considers to be the possibilities of multilingualism in his own discipline.

Similarly, despite making an important finding that “the texts prescribed to students studying undergraduate politics in South Africa are indeed mostly by white men, mostly written by white people and mostly written by authors based in Europe and North America” Matthews (2020, p. 331), offers no consideration of multilingual explication of the course materials in her critical review of 61 undergraduate course outlines from seven Political and International Relations studies departments in South Africa. The same applies to Mngomezulu and Hadebe (2018), who do not reflect on language as a (potential) resource for curriculum Africanization and decolonization in the East African universities that constituted the Federal University of East Africa (1963 – 1970), given that their countries share a powerful African language, Kiswahili.

A serious consideration of language use in all works reviewed here might have appreciated the potential of African languages in catalysing curriculum transformation and decolonization in order to enhance epistemic access for a demographically diverse student population. Adesina (2010, p. 4) considers the work

of anthropologist, Ifi Amadiume, and sociologist, Oyèrónké Oyèwùmí, which use Igbo and Yoruba languages to challenge historically dominant understanding of Western gender classification, as examples of “ventures in endogeneity which produced epistemic rupture in gender scholarship”. Adesina (2010, p.4) explains that “endogeneity requires that we treat local ethnographic data not simply as items of scholarly narratives but explore the extent to which they instigate distinct epistemic insights or lead to epistemic rupture”. He sees this as “scholarship as formulation” and “scholarship as affirmative” which “takes its locale seriously enough to challenge received paradigms” (Adesina, 2006: 138).

In a 2021 special issue of the *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, which marks the thirtieth anniversary of the publication of Amadiume’s book, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society* (1987), Magadla, Magoqwana and Motsemme (2021, p. 528) write,

By establishing that “in subject pronouns, no distinctions is made between male and female” in the Igbo language “unlike the English gender construction, which distinguishes male and female as ‘he’ and ‘she’”, Amadiume (1987, pp. 89–90) was able to argue that this absence of “rigid associations between certain adjectives or attributes to gender subjects” made it “possible to conceptualize certain social roles as separate from sex and gender, hence the possibility of either sex to fill the role”.

Magadla, Magoqwana and Motsemme (2021) show that Southern African languages, such as isiXhosa, possess a similar gender fluidity as Igbo and Yoruba, which may open up fresh questions about the intersection of gender and power.

Magoqwana and Adesina (2020, p. 16; also see Magoqwana, 2018) argue that *uMakhulu* (grandmother in isiXhosa) “provides foundations of sociological imagination” through “*iintsomi* (folktales) and *amabali* (storytelling)... and teaching around *iziduko* (clan names)”. As they explain, for the discipline of sociology to “acknowledge *uMakhulu* as an institution of knowledge is to start looking at the history curriculum differently along with its methodologies” (Magoqwana & Adesina, 2020, p. 17). Doing so would begin to move the discipline “towards a woman-centred endogenous sociology in South Africa” (Magoqwana & Adesina, 2020, p. 4). That is to mean a sociology that acknowledges and celebrates the institutions that shape students’ ways of knowing, such as *uMakhulu*.

If a serious engagement with language in sociology and anthropology has led to “epistemic rupture” in the works of scholars such Amadiume and Oyèwùmí (Adesina, 2010; Magadla et al., 2021), what are the possibilities of taking language seriously in Political and International Relations studies? What ontological

narratives might be surfaced about how students come to think of the world and the international arena?

The practical initiative that uses language as a vehicle for epistemic access, as described in the next section, goes a long way in supporting students to understand the everyday, personal legacies of ideas to their lives and society beyond the colonial foundations of the discipline and “scholarship-as-regurgitation” (Adesina, 2010, p. 3). Thus, a decolonial epistemic freedom can never be monolingual, especially in a colonial language.

4. Multilingual pedagogies in Politics and International Studies at Rhodes University

The multilingual project in the Department of Political and International Studies is one of the success stories of implementing multilingual teaching and learning outside the School of Languages and Literatures where several languages are taught and used for teaching and assessment. Since its modest inception in 2017, the initiative has opened the academic space for the use isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho and Afrikaans, in addition to English, to varying levels.

It started with the translation of the outline of the first-year International Relations (IR) course, which is taught by the first author. This was accompanied by multilingual tutorials, where tutors’ abilities to conduct academic discussions in languages other than English were first assessed and students were then encouraged to submit written work in indigenous languages. From 2017, students were allowed and encouraged to submit their term essays and examinations in African languages.

From 2018 till present, the course outlines of two other first year courses in first year, Introduction to Political Studies and Introduction Comparative Politics, were also translated into isiXhosa. This commitment has been maintained even when some courses, such as introduction to comparative politics, are now being taught by newly appointed colleagues. To date, three out of the four first-year course outlines are translated into isiXhosa; the department tutor interview process includes questions about multilingual pedagogies, students are allowed to submit written tutorials, essays and examinations in isiXhosa and other African languages.

In 2019, two students that had submitted tutorials, term essays and exams in isiZulu, agreed to collaborate to translate the IR and introduction to political studies course outlines into isiZulu. Linked to the lecturer’s lack of proficiency in the SeSotho language group, it has not yet been possible to expand the translations beyond isiXhosa and isiZulu. Since February 2020, the second

author collaborated with a fourth-year student who was part of the 2017 first-year student cohort that participated in this project. That student has worked closely with the second author to translate the course outlines, lecture notes for the introduction to political studies course and PowerPoint slides presentations for the IR course in 2021. As of 2023, the project has progressed to include assessment tasks and the development of isiXhosa concept videos.

4.1. Project motivations

From its initiation, the project was triggered by a set of immediate institutional motivations which relate to the national and disciplinary imperatives related to the infusion of multilingualism and curriculum decolonization as described in the previous sections. A key feature of the Rhodes University student body transformation is the fact that National Student Financial Aid Scheme is a South Africa (NSFAS) funded students from the Eastern Cape account for the majority of the student body. Unlike in the university's 119 history, the majority of the students in political and international studies come from public schools in the Eastern Cape. A 2022 department analysis of the first-year results conducted by Sally Matthews showed that of the 276 students in first year political and international studies, 135 came from the Eastern Cape. These students from the Eastern Cape performed poorer than those from Gauteng and Western Cape.

Over the years, the first year political and international studies pass rate has decreased from 91 % in 2018 (310 students) to 75 % in 2019 (335 students), a pre-Covid year, and understandably dramatically dropped to 59 % in 2020 (398 students). Since 2021 (286 students), with student's return to campus and a full return to face-to-face teaching in 2022 (276 students), the pass rate is at 75 %.

The Rhodes University humanities faculty is currently having formal conversations about ways to support students because in June 2023, 38 % (349 out of 929) first year students failed half or more of their subjects. This current reality of concern and even panic about first year student experience is reflective of Rhodes University's transition from a university dominated by middle class students, to being a university that has to respond to the realities of its majority black working-class students. The legacies of the Covid-pandemic lockdown measures and structural challenges in basic school education in South Africa means that first year students come into the higher education context less and less prepared. There is broad agreement across the Rhodes University's five faculties that there is a greater need for targeted interventions that introduce students to basic academic literacy. Multilingual case studies from psychology, pharmacy, economics, The Institute for the Study of the Englishes of Africa, cell

biology, drama and the political and international studies department at the 21–22 July 2022 Colloquium on Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education Institutions at Rhodes University, shows that multilingual pedagogies are acknowledged by individual academics as an important part of academic literacies.

In terms of a chronological background to the multilingual project in political studies, in April 2017, Hleze Kunju graduated with a PhD in African Language Studies having written the first doctoral dissertation in isiXhosa at Rhodes University. This milestone, which was achieved several years after the institution approved the proposal for post-graduate theses to be written in languages other than English, made national news. It inspired the first author to consider the necessary support that would make it possible to have cohorts of undergraduate and postgraduate political and international studies students writing academically in African languages. She approached the second author, then a third-year student majoring in political and international studies and isiXhosa, to translate the first-year course outline into isiXhosa

Secondly, the translation of the IR course outline had a practical imperative of clarifying course objectives and tutorial questions. The first and second author are past tutors of the course in 2007 and 2017, respectively. Their experience attests that some first-language isiXhosa and isiZulu speaking students often struggle to understand the academic language of the discipline. The challenges are as obvious as observing that students do not understand tutorial questions. If they do not understand them, they are not likely to respond to them appropriately. This is similar to what language experts in African Languages at Rhodes University had done when they translated material for courses in journalism and education. As Maseko explains, the idea is to explain the concepts in isiXhosa so that “when students see the concepts in English, they can go into isiXhosa and understand what they mean” (Maseko & Vale, 2016, p. 89).

Thirdly, African-language speaking tutors in the course have shared anecdotally that students tend to understand better when a tutor uses isiXhosa or another African language to explain questions and concepts. While some first-year students in political and international studies went to English medium schools, most of them come from basic education backgrounds where teachers and learners navigated the curriculum through creative and functional multilingualism, whether formally or informally. This is why it was unsurprising that tutors intuitively drew from their multilingual repertoires to informally facilitate tutorial discussions. In her experience of having taught the course since 2011, the first author was used to the practice of explaining concepts in isiXhosa to students that approached her after the lecture or those that came to her to consult.

Heugh et al. (2017, p. 206) call this “code switching” and a case of “functional multilingualism” at work. As they explain, this is common practice in multilingual classrooms because “both teachers and students have had to use code-switching as a practical, but covert spoken strategy to navigate and mediate a curriculum in English” (Heugh et al., 2017, p. 206). Ramani et al. (2007, p. 208) argue that, when used systematically, consistently and creatively, “the use of two languages not only develops students into bilingual specialists but also allows these two languages to be resources for each other”. While generally endorsing the practice, scholars such as Creese and Blackledge (2015) and García et al. (2017), among others, prefer the term *translanguaging*. From their perspective, translanguaging pedagogy optimizes meaning making as it permits students to use their full linguistic repertoires (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020; Creese & Blackledge, 2015; García et al. 2017). Coetzee-van Rooy (2012, p. 89) defines a language repertoire as “the range of languages known from which multilingual people draw the resources they need to communicate in multilingual societies”. The tutor survey, discussed below, showed the extent to which tutors in the department can proficiently communicate in a number of languages, most speaking a minimum four languages, which reflects their rich language repertoires.

The translation of the course outline and the promotion of multilingual tutorial discussion and formal assessments was to mainstream a well-known marginalized practice that bilingual/multilingual tutors used to assist and support students who are multilingual. The section below discusses the intersection of the translation and assessment processes.

4.2. Recruitment and capacity development

4.2.1. Translation of materials

The first-year political and international studies course outline at Rhodes University has been translated by the second author from 2017 until present. The translation has been financially supported through the third author’s research projects, lately including the research chair for Intellectualization of African languages, Multilingualism and Education, established under the National Research Foundation’s South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI). A core objective of translating the course outline was to make sure that students understood the short summary of themes that were used to guide their thematic and conceptual understanding of the course. It was also to assist students understand the tutorial questions easily. Although they would respond in English, some would have a better chance of responding appropriately to tutorial questions after understanding them in their own languages. Mawonga’s (2015) Master’s

thesis demonstrates that the use of a bilingual glossary providing isiXhosa and English definitions of key terms and concepts in a first-year Political Philosophy course in Political and International Studies at Rhodes University enhanced students' understanding although English remained the formal medium of teaching and assessment. The study was conducted with students who require academic scaffolding in the Extended Studies programme before admission into the mainstream. IsiXhosa, and not English, is the mother tongue of these students.

The translation of the course outline posed some challenges, among them is the rendition of key terms such as *theory*, *sovereignty*, *statism*, *power*, *anarchy*, *self-help*, *autonomy*, *equality*, *democracy*, and *security*, key terms that form core tenets of various IR theories, such as political realism, liberalism, social constructivism and feminism. A colleague in African Language Studies also shared a glossary of terms in English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans that had been developed at Stellenbosch University for political science students. This made decisions of some terms easier. Some of the terms are listed below with their commonly used isiXhosa equivalents:

- theory – inkcazo-bungcali
- power – amandla
- self-help – ukuzinceda
- autonomy – ukuzilawula
- sovereignty – ukuzimela
- equality – ukulingana
- democracy – intando yesininzi

While isiXhosa equivalents for some of these terms can be found in translation aids such as dictionaries and glossaries, the translator needs to be aware of the contextual nuances that characterize the language used in specialized disciplines. Some translation aids may fail to capture those nuances, especially when they define the terms outside their context. For example, *autonomy* and *sovereignty* could potentially be rendered using the same term in isiXhosa as if they are interchangeable, yet their English senses are different. Hence, their distinction by means of different isiXhosa equivalents, i.e., *ukuzilawula* and *ukuzimela* respectively. Colleagues in African Language Studies, who are mostly isiXhosa-language speakers, assisted with the verification of certain isiXhosa terms. The benefit of this process was avoiding literal translations that barely captured the relevant concepts.

The image of the course description below is from 2023. From the onset, we decided that it is important for English and isiXhosa course description to be side by side, instead of providing the isiXhosa translation in a different

document. This would allow students to see the transferability of concepts from one language to another. Importantly, placing the languages side by side allowed students to see that this was not a process of direct translation. They would be able to see it when the translator drew on common idioms to explicate the meaning of a particular term.

Text Box 1 The first three pages of the 2023 Introduction to International Relations course outline.



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

The Personal is the International **Ubudlelwane Behlabathi**

Associate Professor/Umfundisi ntsapho – Prof. Siphokazi Magadla – s.magadla@ru.ac.za

IsiXhosa translators/ Abaguquli-lwimi wesiXhosa – Zikho Dana – zikho.dana@ru.ac.za

Introduction	Intshayeledo
<p>Historically the study of <i>International Relations</i> (IR) has been pre-occupied with questions of war and peace, especially wars that happen between countries. The first department of IR was founded after World War I in 1919 at the University of Wales. The students and scholars who were studying IR at the time were concerned and committed to finding solutions that would prevent another world war. Since then, the study of IR focuses on various issues that affect global governance and the lives of people across countries and regions. We now understand that there are few issues that happen in one country without affecting others.</p>	<p>Imbali isibonisa ukuba izifundo zoBudlelwane Behlabathi (IR) bezisoloko zithe phithi ngemibuzo engeemfazwe nocwangco, kwaye undoqo ugxile kubudlelwane phakathi kwamazwe. Isebe lokuqala lweIR lasekwa emva kweMfazwe Yehlabathi yokuqala ngonyaka wama 1919, kwiUnivesithi yaseWales. Abafundi neemfundimani ezazifunda iIR ngelo xesha zazixakekile kwaye zizimisele ukufumana izisombululo ezazizakuthintela enye imfazwe yehlabathi. Emva koko, isifundo seIR sigxile kwimiba eyahlukeneyo echaphazela urhulumento nolawulo lwehlabathi neempilo zabantu emazweni nakwiingingqi zehlabathi. Ngoku siyaqonda ukuba zimbaleka iziganeko ezenzeka kwilizwe elinye ezingachaphazeli amanye amazwe.</p>
<p>The global impact of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) has made it clear that the local is international, and more intimately that the “<i>personal is the international</i>”. In January 2020, it was unimaginable that a virus that started in the city of Wuhan, China, would spread swiftly across the world. By April 2020, over 100 countries were either in a full or partial national lockdown, as a strategy to stop the movement of people and goods in order to curb the spread of the virus.</p>	<p>Iziphumo kwihlabathi zobhubhane wentsholongwane iCorona (iCovid-19) zikwenze kwacaca ukuba izinto ezenzeka ekuhlaleni ziyafana nezehlabathi, “okuchaphazela isiqu kuyakuchaphazela okwehlabathi”. Kwinyanga yoMqungu wama-2020, khang kubekho mntu obeka wacinga ukuba intsholongwane eyaqala kwidolophu iWuhan, eChina, ibinganwena okomlilo wamadlelo kwihlabathi jikielele. Kwinyanga kaTshazimpuzi wama-2020, amazwe angaphaya kwe-100 ebevale amazibuko kuzwelonke ngokupheleleyo okanye ngokungaphelelanga, njengecebo lokuthintela ukuzulazula kwabantu nezinto ngenjongo yokunqanda ukunwena kwentsholongwane.</p>
<p>The year 2021 marked the 20th anniversary of the 11 September 2001 attacks in the United States, known as 9/11. As a response, the United States launched its global war on terrorism with the invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001 and Iraq in March 2003. Combined these two wars have become the United States’ longest wars, longer than World War I and II.</p>	

In February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine, in doing so disregarding sovereign equality, which is the core principle that governs how nation states relate to each other. On 17 March 2023, the International Criminal Court (ICC) released a warrant of arrest for Russian President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, for war crimes in Ukraine. South Africa is obliged to arrest Putin and surrender him to the ICC if he attends the BRICS Summit in August 2023 in South Africa. All of these raise fresh questions about how lasting peace can be achieved in the international order.

The course will show that while the discipline used to emphasise the distinction between domestic and international issues, presently this distinction is blurred. The course will show that almost all areas of our lives are shaped by ideas, events and practices that take place in international relations and processes of global governance. Therefore, the course aims to show that *The Personal is the International*.

Unyaka wama-2021 uphawula iminyaka engama-20 kusukela uhlaselo olwehla ngomhla we-11 kweyoMsintsi kowama-2001 eMelika olwaziwa ngokuba yi-9/11. Ngendlela yokuziphendulela kolu hlaselo, iMelika yaqalisa imfazwe yehlabathi ukukhusela ubungangamsha bayo kuhlaselo lwe-Afghanistan kweyeDwarha 2001 naseIraq kweyeKwindla 2003. Xa zidibene zombini ezi mfazwe ziye zaba zezona mfazwe zinde kakhulu zeMelika, zinde ukodlula Imfazwe yeHlabathi yoku-I neye-II. KweyoMdumba 2022, iRussia ihlasele iUkraine, ikwenze oku ingathatheli ngqalelo ukuzimela ngokulinganayo, osisiseko sendlela amazwe aqobisana ngayo. Ngomhla we-17 KweyoKwindla 2023, Inkundla Yolwaphulomthetho Yehlabathi (ICC) yakhupha isigunyaziso sokubamba umongameli weRussia uVladimir Vladimirovich Putin, samatyala emfazwe eUkraine. UMzantsi Afrika unyanzelekile ukuba umbambe uPutin unikezele ngaye kwi-ICC ukuba uzakuza kwiNgqungquthela yeBRICS KweyeMsintsi 2023 eMzantsi Africa. Yonke le miba iphakamisa imibuzo mayelana nokuba uxolo lwanaphakade lungazuzeka na kuzinzo lwehlabathi.

Le khosi iza kubonisa ukuba njengokuba esi sifundo besiqhele ukugxininisa umahluko phakathi kwemiba yangaphakathi neyehlabathi, okwangoku lomahluko umfiliba. Le khosi izakubonisa ukuba phantse onke amanqanaba obom bethu abunjwe ziingcamango, iziganeko nezenzo ezenzeka kubudlelwane behlabathi kunye neenqubo zorhulumento lwehlabathi. Ngoko ke, le khosi inenjongo yokubonisa ukuba *okuchaphazela umntu esisiqu kuyakuchaphazela okwenzeka ehlabathini*

What I hope you will achieve from this course:

- An ability to demonstrate an understanding of the traditional demarcation between “domestic” and “international” relations
- Demonstrate that you understand what is meant by an international society and international order
- Understand why the concept of sovereignty governs relations between states
- Understand the different theoretical approaches used to understand IR;
- Ability to use IR theories to understand and explain real life events.
- An ability to think critically about IR and speak confidently about this field of study.

Endithemba ukuba nizakukwazi ukuphumelela kule khosi:

- Isakhono sokubonakalisa ulwazi nokuqonda umahluko wamandulo phakathi kwemida yemveli kunye nemida yangaphakathi’ nobudlelane “behlabathi”
- Ubonakalise ukuba uyaqonda ukuba kuthethwa ukuthini xa kuthethwa ngoluntu lwehlabathi nenkqubo yehlabathi
- Uqonde ukuba kutheni ingcamango yenkululeko nokuzimela ilawula ubudlelane phakathi kwamazwe
- Uqonde umahluko phakathi kweendidi zeenkcazo bungcali ekuqondwa ngayo izifundo zeIR;
- Isakhono sokusebenzisa iinkcazo-bungcali zeIR ukuqonda nokucacisa iziganeko zobom benyani.
- Isakhono sokucinga nzulu ngeIR nokuthetha ngokuzithemba ngesi sifundo.

Text Box 2 The presentation of course themes, 2021 (Magadla, S, Dana, Z. (2021). The Personal is the International course outline. Political and International Studies department, Rhodes University, South Africa.)

Theme 1 (13 – 17 September 2021)	<i>Sovereignty and the International System</i>
Theme 2 (20 – 23 September 2021)	<i>Theories of IR: Realism and Liberalism</i>
Theme 3 (27 – September – 1 October 2021)	<i>Theories of IR: Constructivism and Feminism</i>
Theme 4 (4 – 8 October 2021)	<i>The ticking time bomb terrorist: International Institutions and International law</i>
Theme 5 (11 – 15 October 2021)	<i>Africa in International Relations: the good and bad news about Africa’s borders:</i>
Theme 6 (18 – 22 October 2021)	<i>South Africa in International Relations: Cold Politics, Hot Economics?</i>
Week 7 – 25 – 28 October 2021	<i>Essay preparation and submission</i>

Umxholo wokuqala (13–17 KweyoMsintsi 2021)	<i>Isiseko Senkululeko, ukuzilawula neNkqubo yeHlabathi</i>
Umxholo wesibini (20–23 KeyoMsintsi 2021)	<i>Iinkcazo-bungcali zeIR: iRealism neoliberalism</i>
Umxholo weisthathu (27 KweyoMsintsi-01 KweyeThupha 2021)	<i>Iinkcazo-bungcali zeIR: iConstructivism, neFeminism</i>
Umxholo wesine (04–08 EyeDwarha 2021)	<i>Isiqhushumbisi esingaqhushumba nanini sobunqolobi: Amaziko eHlabathi noMthetho weHlabathi</i>
Umxholo wesihlanu (11–15 EyeDwarha 2021)	<i>iAfrika kuBudlelane Behlabathi: Iindaba ezimnandinezimbi ngenida yeAfrika</i>
Umxholo wesithandathu (18–22 EyeDwarha 2021)	<i>Iipolitiki ezibandayo, Uqoqosho olushushu?: UMzantsi Afrika kuBudlelane Behlabathi</i>
Iveki yesi-7 (25–28 eyeDwarha 2021)	Ukulungiselela nokungenisa isincoko.

4.2.2. Recruitment of multilingual tutors

In 2017, the first author conducted a survey to assess the multilingual repertoires of its tutors. Tutors were asked if they felt proficient enough to conduct an academic discussion in a language other than English, and if they would be able to assess tutorial submissions written in isiXhosa and other African languages. Besides English, the questionnaire revealed that tutors were academically proficient in eight languages. From 2018, the tutor appointment process in the department includes questions about multilingual strategies. The question that is asked in the interview process is:

Multilingualism: Would you be comfortable with facilitating a tutorial session in any language other than English? Or would you be willing to incorporate any other language in your tutoring sessions?

How would you deal with a situation where a student is not well versed or confident in English but may prefer to use their mother tongue?

Through the interview process, it is easy to keep a record of how many languages tutors speak and are able to use in an academic context. We have found that most students, especially those that come from linguistically diverse environments such as Gauteng and Limpopo provinces, claim to be proficient in a minimum of four languages. In 2021, one prospective tutor claimed that they were proficient in ten of the eleven South African languages! All this challenge the logic

of monolingual pedagogical practices, including monolingual assessments, in a language that most students lack strength in.

With that said, most tutors are not comfortable marking multilingual assessments. While most of them are confident about facilitating a verbal discussion, they are not confident to assess in a language other than English. What this has meant over the years is that certain tutors are sent non-English tutorials in exchange of English ones according to their language competencies. Over the years, the lack of tutors with the language skills has meant that some tutorials are marked by the course lecturer. This highlights a need for multilingual tutor training in South African universities in order to support the implementation of multilingual pedagogies.

5. Multilingual assessments

5.1. Tutorials – Multilingualism for all the domains of academic language

While students expressed enthusiasm about the possibilities of submitting their work in isiXhosa in the first-year introduction to international relations course, most of them expressed that they felt that their basic education did not prepare them for multilingual assessment. In 2017, only three students (two in isiXhosa) and one in isiZulu submitted written tutorials in isiZulu. What was striking about the student responses is the fact that they responded fully in isiXhosa and isiZulu, instead of code-switching or using translanguaging strategies in their writing. The isiXhosa and isiZulu tutorials followed similar structure to those submitted in English. The student first summarizes by way of paraphrasing the argument of the author whose view they are asked about. They then demonstrate their understand of the argument by providing real life examples of the everyday relevance of the question that is being asked. The isiXhosa and English tutorials examples below follow the same structure:

The tutorial question: According to Dunne and Schmidt (2014), what is “anarchy” and why is it an important concept in International Relations? The student response in English:

Text Box 3 Example of a tutorial response in English, 2022. Political and International Studies department, Rhodes University, South Africa.

Anarchy, within the context of international relations, means that there is no supreme authority that is higher than the assembly of sovereign states (Dunne and Schmidt, 2014:101). Within realism, anarchy is used to highlight how the international world of politics is set apart by there not being a supreme authority over the assembly of sovereign states (Dunne and Schmidt, 2014:101). This concept holds significant importance in international relations because it creates a clear-cut outline of what makes the difference between domestic politics and international politics, with anarchy being considered as the basic structure of international politics where sovereign states respect their own highest authorities and does not acknowledge an authority that is greater than them on an international level (Dunne and Schmidt, 2014:101). Since realists interpret that international politics operates under anarchy, they argue that state leaders should only look out for the interests of their own states, as state leaders cannot be certain that their state will survive or be secured under anarchy (Dunne and Schmidt, 2014:101).

This is a similar format that is used in the isiXhosa written tutorial¹:

Tutorial question: According to Mandela (1993), what are the core principles that inform South African foreign policy?

Text Box 4 IsiXhosa tutorial submission 2017.

Political and International Studies department, Rhodes University, South Africa. Ngokuka Mandela (1993:89) uveza uMzantsi Afrika ukuba linoxanduva [unoxanduva] lokuba ngumkhomba ndlela kwilizwekazi le Afrika nehlabathi lilonke apho lizakuphonononga [luzakuphonononga] liphakamise intando yesininzi. Lenxaxheba [Lenxaxheba] ithi ke funeka (kufuneka) inwenwe nakumazwe aseMzantsi kwelizwekazi le Afrika. Into ethi ibonakale kule mbono sifumaniseka uMzantsi Afrika ezingomba isifuba ku mazwe [kumazwe] e SADC apho umongameli u Jacob Zuma ekwazile ukukhokhela eliqumrhu [eli qumrhu] lamazwe [la mazwe] akuMzantsi Afrika. Oyena ndoqo usematheni koka Mandela (1993:91) kukuba kuyafuneka kubekho unaniselwano kwezo qoqosho, ukwakha ubuhlobo, phakathi koMzantsi Afrika nalamazwe. Eyona nxaxheba yorhulumentu loMzantsi Afrika kukutsolisa phambili ubudlelwane nezehlabathi kwakunye nokuphakamisa amalungelo oluntu kwihlabathi liphela. Lento ithi ngokuka Mandela (1993:97) kuyanyanzeleka futhi ukuba uMzantsi Afrika ukhokhele amaphulo akhuthaza inzolo nocwangco kubudlelwane kwezehlabathi. Lento iye iveze umnqa – nemibuzo ukuba kulembono [kule mbono] ka Mandela ingaba uMzantsi Afrika usesekhondweni na? Sibona uMzantsi Afrika ekwazile ukukhokhela kwizinto

1 Samples of student's work has been kept as it was. Where the wording is incorrect or two words are combined, the authors have provided the correct wording in parenthesis.

ezininzi ezifana African Union, G20, G7 nezinye izihlalo ezifana ne UN apho afumene isitulo ezingavotiyo (ANC:2017). I ANC iveza amanqaku asixhenxe akholelwa kuyo nethi angundoqo kumthetho siseko obumba umgaqo nkqubo [umgaqo-nkqubo] woMzantsi Afrika kumazwe angaphandle, elokuqala – inkolelo ekukhuseleni amalungelo oluntu kwihlabathi liphela, ekuhlaleni, nakwezoqoqosho – elesibini – ukukhokhela phambili ngentando yesininzi – Elesithathu, ukukholelwa kumthetho nangemigaqo yezehlabathi liphela – Elesine uxolo nenzolo kwilizwe liphela – elesihlanu – uMgaqo nkqubo [uMgaqo-nkqubo] woMzantsi Afrika mawu khokhele [mawukhokhele] iimfuno zelizwekazi I Afrika – Elesithandathu – ukukhula kwezoqoqosho, – elokugqibela kukuba ubudlelwane boMzantsi Afrika malube sisipili sempatho yesininzi.

Text Box 5 Dana, Z. (2023) English translation of the tutorial submission. Political and International Studies department, Rhodes University, South Africa.

According to Mandela (1993:89), South Africa has a responsibility to pave a way for Africa and the world as a whole where it has to examine and uphold democracy. This role has to expand to other southern African countries. What is clear about this vision and worth boasting for South Africa, is that President Jacob Zuma successfully led the SADC regional body of southern African countries. What is most significant according to Mandela (1993:91) is the need for economic interdependence and networking, in order to build co-operation between South Africa and these countries. The most important responsibility for the South African government is to spearhead international corporation and upholding of human rights in the world. This means that according to Mandela (1993:97) it is imperative that South Africa leads initiatives that encourage order and peace in international relations. This reveals a puzzle and questions of whether is South Africa still in line with Mandela's vision? We have seen South Africa lead in several organisations such as the African Union, G20, G7 and other positions it has held such as in the UN where it attained a non-veto seat (ANC:2017). The ANC lists seven pillars that it believes are significant to the foundation of the South Africa foreign policy, the first one is- the belief in the protection of human rights in the world, in society and in the economy- the second one is- to lead through democratic means- the third one leading through the rule of the law and in conjunction with international law and treaties. The fourth one is peace and order in the world- the fifth one is- the South African Constitution must lead according to the needs of Africa. The sixth one is- economic growth- the last one is that the South African conduct must reflect the majority.

In the isiXhosa response, the student is able to articulate the principles that guided post-apartheid South African foreign policy, such as the new government's commitment to promoting democracy in Africa and across the world, human rights, the promotion of economic cooperation that is in line with ideas of liberal peace and liberal institutionalism. They point to South Africa's participation within the Southern African Development Community, African, G20, G7 countries and the United Nations. Compared to the English response, the

isiXhosa tutorial offers more real-life examples of South Africa's foreign policy practice. To emphasise South Africa's standpoint, the student uses the isiXhosa expression "*ukuzingomba isifuba*" (direct translation is to beat one's chest) which is to proudly stand for a specific position or action. The response also aptly captures the view of South Africa as a "conflict resolver; mediator; standard-bearer for the poor and dispossessed in international society; defender of human rights; [and] regional leader" (Spence, 2007: 342). This view is in line with South Africa's identity as a norm entrepreneur. A country that brings ideas about strategic ways to achieve peace in the world and political and economic cooperation in a liberal international order.

Another 2017 tutorial submission also showed the student's ability to fully answer this tutorial question in isiZulu. The question dealt with the theme of Africa's place in international relations. It challenges the students to think about the historic and contemporary reasons why African states are considered "weak" in international relations.

Tutorial question: "According to Schoeman (1999), why are African states sometimes called "weak" or "quasi" states?"

Text Box 6 Tutorial submission in isiZulu and an English translation by Dana, Z. (2023). Political and International Studies department, Rhodes University, South Africa.

Isizwe singabhekwa njengezindawo ezinomphakathi wezombangazwe ohleliwe ngaphansi kohulumeni oyedwa. Umbono wesizwe wasungulwa eWestphalia, wawumele ukubopha abantu abafanayo ngaphansi kohulumeni oyedwa ukuze bayeke ukuphikisana futhi benze ukuphila nokuphathwa kubengcono eYurophu. Ngo-1884 eNgqungqutheleni yaseBerlin, ukuhlaselwa kwe-Afrika kwaqala (Schoeman 1999: 241). Kwakukhona kule ngqungquthela ukuthi kunqunywe ukuthi i-Afrika kufanele ibe nemingcele yombuso. Ngokuqhubekayo, kule ngqungquthela kwaqunya ngamazwe aseEurope ukuthi ngubani ozothola muphi umngcele kwi-Afrika. Umzekelo walokhu ngukuthi i-Ningizimu Afrika yaba ngaphansi kwekhloni yase-Britian. Ngokungafani ne-European, lokhu kwakhiwa kwemingcele yase-Afrika, kwenziwa ngenkani kanti futhi kwacekelela imibuso yamandla eyayikhona. Imingcele yadalwa futhi ingacabangi "umlando wezizwe, izinhlalakahle, ezomnotho noma ezombusazwe" (Schoeman 1999: 241). Imindeni kanye nezizwe ezazisetshenziswa ukuhlanganyela emzaneni ofanayo, manje zithola zihlukanisiwe umngcele. Yilo mlando oxhunyiwe ekudalweni kwemingcele ethi iZambia, iDemocratic Republic of Congo neCote d'Ivoire ngezinye izikhathi kubhekwa ngokuthi "buthaka" noma "quasi states". Lokhu buthakathaka kuqhathaniswa nezizwe 'eziseNyakatho naseNtshonalanga lapho imingcele engasongelwa khona kalula (Schoeman 1999: 242). Izizwe nazo zenziwa buthakathaka kulokho ngokuhlukaniswa kwemibuso yase-Afrika ekhona kakade,

amanye amazwe athola okuningi kunezinye lapho ngaphambi kokuba lezo zinsiza zabelwane.

A nation can be seen as a place that has a planned political community under one government. The vision of a nation that was formed in Westphalia is one that was designed to tie similar people to a single government in order to put an end to their conflicts and that they can make life and governance better in Europe. In 1884 in the Berlin Conference the attack on Africa began (Schoeman 1999:241). It was in this Conference that a decision was taken that Africa had to have colonial/political borders. In this Conference, it was decided by European countries on who was going to get which borders in Africa. An example of this is that South Africa was going to be a British colony. Unlike Europe, the construction of these African borders was forcefully imposed on Africans and this was done by undermining and disintegrating the established African political order. These borders were also constructed without the consideration of the “national history, wellbeing, the economy or political organisation of the Africans” (Schoeman 1999:241). Families and nations that used to be one were now separated by a border. It is against this background that has led to the formation of borders separating countries such as Zambia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Cote d’Ivoire and other countries that are considered to be “weak” or “quasi states”. This weakness is affiliated to countries in the “Central and West Africa where borders are not easily differentiated” (Schoeman 1999:242). Countries are weakened by the separation of the established political order in Africa, some countries have received more than other countries which was not previously the case.

In the response, the student provides a historical understanding of how the borders that delineate African states were colonially imposed. They point out that it is these borders that make countries such as Zambia, Democratic Republic of Congo and Côte d’Ivoire to be at times considered “weak” or “quasi states”. They point out that these countries are labelled as weak in comparison to countries in the North, who are the ones that imposed these borders. Like the isiXhosa written tutorial, this submission illuminates the student’s understanding of the impact of colonially imposed borders based on the required Schoeman (1999) reading. They then go on to provide real life examples of the legacy of colonialism on African statehood in international relations.

Both examples show that African languages are not only good enough as a gateway for students to understand concepts in their own language and then write them in English. Speaking and reading are emphasized in the code-switching discourse. These examples show that students have the capacities to speak, read, listen and write academically in fields such as international relations.

5.2. Essays and exams – Conceptual reformulation towards endogeneity

The highest number of essay submissions in isiXhosa, isiZulu and isiSwati that have been submitted was eight in 2017 (five isiXhosa, two isiZulu and one isiSwati) and five exams (three in isiXhosa and two in isiZulu). In 2020, one student wrote one exam question in English and another in isiXhosa. In 2021, two students consistently submitted their course work in isiXhosa and one in isiZulu. In 2022, eight students submitted essays in a language other than English (six isiXhosa and two in Afrikaans).

We focus the analyses of the essay and exam submissions on the conceptual possibilities of using African languages. Adesina (2006; 2010) argues that when African scholars take their locales seriously, it offers an opportunity for them to reformulate foundational concepts in their disciplines instead of merely translating them and imposing them in their context. As noted above regarding the contributions of scholars such as Amadiume (1987) and Oyèwùmí (1997), taking one's context allows for a complex understanding of concepts such as gender over time as these do not have a universal meaning. The responses below reveal student's understanding of what women and gender means from their context and how she then understands feminism theory in international relations. The second essay example goes even further by drawing from academic material from a first-year introduction to African politics course which allows the student to reference the works of scholars such as Amadiume (1997) to illuminate the ways in which colonialism reconfigured gender relations in Africa. Both examples show that when the curriculum enables the student to encounter historically informed theorization about the evolution of the state, gender and power, for example, it allows them to identify continuities and ruptures in the meanings of these concepts in their own contexts and elsewhere.

Essay question: Using the United States invasion of Afghanistan (October 2001 – August 2021) as an example, why is the myth that wars are fought to protect women and children problematic from a feminist perspective? What are the feminist approaches to security?

IsiXhosa response:

Text Box 7 IsiXhosa term-essay submission, 2021.

Political and International Studies department, Rhodes University, South Africa.
 Umbuzo 2: Kungani inkolelo ethi iimfazwe zilwelwa ukukhusela abantu basetyhini nabantwana iyinxaki kwinkcazo-bungcali iFeminism? Zithini iindlela eziyivelela ngayo eli dabi lamalungelo abasetyhini kukhuseleko?

INTSHAYELELO

Amampunge ekudala ekho okuba iimfazwe ziqhutyelwa ukukhusela abasetyhini kunye nabantwana kubathobele ukhuseleko abafazi. Le ntsomi isetyenziselwe ukufihla imigaqo-nkqubo yase mkhosini enobundlongondlongo, ubundlongondlongo bamajoni ngexesha lemfazwe, kunye nendima eyenziwa luninzi saba bafazi [labafazi] ngexesha lemfazwe. Abafazi bathathe imbono eyahlukileyo kunale, bethetha ngeendlela zoomama njengeendlela zokhuseleko zokufumana uzinzo kula mazwe. Esi sincoko sizahlulahlulwe sibe ngamacandelo amabini. Icandelo lokuqala lixoxa ukuba kutheni intsomi ithi “iimfazwe zilwelwa ukukhusela abantu basetyhini nabantwana yingxaki ngokwembono yabasetyhini,” ngelixa icandelo lesibini lichaza kwaye livavanya ngokunzulu iindlela zobufazi kukhuseleko nokusebenza kwazo.

Text Box 8 Dana, Z. (2023). English translation of the IsiXhosa term-essay submission, 2021. Political and International Studies department, Rhodes University, South Africa.

Question 2: Why is the myth that wars are fought to protect women and children problematic from a Feminist perspective? What are the feminist approaches to women's rights in security?

INTRODUCTION

The myths that have existed for a long time that wars are fought to protect women and children lower women's safety. This myth is used to hide violent military strategies, soldiers' violence during war, and the role of most women during war. Women have adopted different approaches to this, they talk about maternal approaches to security as ways to make peace in these countries. This essay is divided into two sections. The first section discusses why the myth that “wars are fought to protect women and children problematic from a Feminist perspective,” while the second section explains and deeply interrogates maternal peace and how it works.

The student's response about why feminist scholars in IR challenge the view that wars are fought to protect women and children, reveals an interesting interpretation of what feminism is in isiXhosa. While the translators left the name of the theory as “iFeminism”, the student interprets feminism as the theory of “*abafazi*” [women, married or not]. Their use is in line with the fluidity of the use of the term “woman/women” in isiXhosa. What is known as “Women's Day” [9 August 1956] in South Africa is interchangeably referred to as “*imini/usuku loomama*” [the day of women/mothers] or “*usuku lwamanina*” [the day of the women]. Without a contextual understanding of the fluidity of terms, one may assume that the student is referring to a specific strand of feminism, which is womanism, in their interpretation of feminist theory of IR. In the second example about Africa's place in international relations, the student points out that one of the legacies of colonialism is the loss of the matricentric principle that defined African social life before colonialism (see Amadiume, 1987; Nzegwu, 2006). Even if the student does not state explicitly, a curriculum that illuminates Africa's

matrifocal histories makes it possible to understand how the student interprets feminism as a theory of women, in the specific ways that women and gender are understood in her context.

Text Box 9 Essay submission in isiXhosa, 2022. Political and International Studies department, Rhodes University, South Africa.

Colonialism [Ikholoniyalism] itshintshe zinto [izinto] ezininzi eAfrika ngokokuhlala, ngokwe Politiki nangokwe zezimali. Kwiminyaka eliqela edlulileyo eAfrika abantu basetyhini [basetyhini] babehloniphekile ekuhlaleni. e Western [eNtshona] Afrika ngokokuhlala kwaku matriarchal apho ekuhlaleli kwakulawula abasetyhini (Amadiume, 1997, p. 101). Lonto yayisebenza kakuhle ekuhlaleni kuba babesebenzisana abantu abangomama kakuhle, ukungceda [ukunceda] impilo yabo ekuhlaleni (Amadiume, 1997, p. 102). Kuthe kokufika [kwakufika] iColonialism yafika yayitshintsha lonto [loo nto] ukuba abantu basetyhini [basetyhini] bangaphathi ekuhlaleni kwaye kungalawuli bona, bafika bafika [bafaka] eyabo indlela yokuba kuphathe abantu abangamadoda [Patriachal] (Amadiume, 1997). Colonialism [Ikholoniyalism] yenze abantu abamnyama bazicingele bona ukuba bangobani bangamcingeli omnye umntu, ekuhlaleni ibohlulile abantu ngokwezigaba zobutyebi, kubekho abantu abahluphekayo bodwa, kubekho abantu abangahluphekiyo bodwa. Ekuhlaleni umntana [umntwana] kusapho oluthile omncinci isiduko sakhe besitsalwa kumnombo ka Mamakhe [mama wakhe] hayi oka Tatakhe [tata wakhe], kodwa emva kwe Colonialism [kweKholoniyalism] lonto [loo nto] iye yaphela umntana [umntwana] umnombo wakhe watsalwa kuTata wakhe (Ndlovu, 2019,97). Yenze ukuba indima yabantu abangomama [abangoomama] ingabonakali kakhuhle [kakhuhle] ekuhlaleni.

Text Box 10 English translation of isiXhosa essay submission, 2022 by Dana, Z. (2023). Political and International Studies department, Rhodes University, South Africa.

Colonialism changed several things in Africa such as the social, political, and economic. A while ago in Africa women were respected in society. In West Africa socially their society was matriarchal (Amadiume, 1997, 102). This worked well in society because women worked well together, to help their lives in society (Amadiume, 1997, 102). When colonialism was introduced in these societies it changed that so that women do not lead in society, this imposed their (colonizers) ways of living where men were the leaders (patriarchy) (Amadiume, 1997). Colonialism made black people self-centered and did not consider the next person. Society was divided according to class positions, there was a division between the poor and the rich. In certain societies in the family a young child's lineage was traced from their mother's clan (clan name) instead of the father's clan (clan name), but after colonialism all of that came to end as a person's lineage was traced from the father's clan (Ndlovu, 2019,97). That led to the erosion (blurring) of women's role in society.

The last example of an exam submission in isiZulu also shows that multilingual assessment allows students to interpret concepts as grounded by their context. In this example, the student provides their own interpretation of key international relations terms such as “system”, “sovereignty” and “power”.

Exam question: “According to Bull (1977), how and why is the Westphalian state system organised around the concept of sovereignty? If sovereignty is guided by the principle of non-intervention, did the World Health Organisation have real powers to force the Chinese government to take preventative actions to avoid the spread of Covid-19?”

The examination paper did not provide a translation, but the student provided their own interpretation of the essay question in the answer script:

NgokukaBull (1977), kanjani futhi kungani uhlelo lombuso wase-Westphalia luhlelwe mayelana nomqondo wobukhosi? Uma ubukhosi buqondiswa umgomo wokungangeneleli, ingabe iWorld Health Organisation ibe namandla angempela okuphoqa uhulumeni waseChina ukuthi athathe izinyathelo zokuvikela ukugwema ukusabalala kweCovid-19?

Text Box 11 IsiZulu Exam submission, 2021. Political and International Studies department, Rhodes University, South Africa.

Umbuzo 1: NgokukaBull (1977), kanjani futhi kungani uhlelo lombuso wase-Westphalia luhlelwe mayelana nomqondo wobukhosi? Uma ubukhosi buqondiswa umgomo wokungangeneleli, ingabe iWorld Health Organisation ibe namandla angempela okuphoqa uhulumeni waseChina ukuthi athathe izinyathelo zokuvikela ukugwema ukusabalala kweCovid-19?

Isingeniso

Ukusabalala kobhubhane ukhuvethe olwaluqhubuke ezweni laseChina kwidolobha iWuhan, kwenze izakhamuzi kanye nosolwazi ukuthi bangabaze futhi bazibuze ngamandle enhlangano yezempilo emhlabeni wonke jikelele. Lemibuzo nokukhathazeka uqhutshulwa into yokuthi izikhungo ezilwelwa nezengamele amazwe omhlaba makuza kwezomthetho kanye nokuhwebelana zona ziyaye zenze okufanele lapho amazwe engenzanga kahle njengokuthi izala labo balithethe ngokuthi bakhokhe inhlawulo nokunye okucishe kufane nalokho. Lendaba izoxoxa ngohlelo lombuso waseWestphalia nanokuthi lelitemi lasunguleka kanjani, kuchazwe itemu lobukhosi lihlotshaniswa nohlelo lwaseWestphalia. Kuze kuphindwe kuhlolwe amandla enhlangano iWHO ebinawo noma enawo makuza kudaba lokubhebhethaka kombulalazwe ngenxa yokuthi izwe laseChina alizange likhiphe isazisi mayelana nalombulalazwe kusanekhathi.

Text Box 12 Dana, Z. English translation of the IsiZulu Exam submission, 2021. Political and International Studies department, Rhodes University, South Africa.

Question 1: According to Bull (1977) how and why is the Westphalian state system organized around sovereignty? If sovereignty is guided by the principle of non-interference where did the World Health Organization (WHO) derive its powers to force the Chinese government to take preventative actions to prevent the spread of Covid-19?

The spread of the Covid-19 pandemic which originated from the Chinese town Wuhan, made citizens and scientists doubt and question the power of the World Health Organization. These questions and concerns arise because institutions that fight for and oversee inter-state relations when it comes to international law and trade, will strive to do the right thing in instances where states may have erred, such as discussing their case and deciding on a correct punitive measure such as being subjected to a fine, or some other similar punitive measures. This essay will discuss the Westphalia state system and how it came into existence. It will discuss the concept of monarchy and how it relates to the Westphalian state system. This essay will also interrogate the powers of the WHO or the powers it had particularly when it came to the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic because the Chinese government did not immediately raise the alarm about the pandemic in time.

The student interprets sovereignty to mean royal authority and power. IsiZulu is not only the most spoken language in South Africa, but the Zulu royalty is the most visible traditional authority in South Africa. Coming from such a context, it makes sense that the student connects sovereign authority to an embodied system of traditional governance in South Africa that reflects African concepts of governance and power. One may conclude that the use of isiZulu in this instance allows the students to bring their own experience and identity into the university curriculum, which is difficult to do in an additional language.

Again, this shows how advanced the multilingual repertoires of this student are. Beyond that and most importantly for decolonial scholarship, multilingual teaching and assessment opens the possibility of acknowledging and drawing from the sea of narratives (Adesina, 2006) that students come from, which is informed by their cultures and languages. Student's multilingual repertoires, which carry with them the collective memories of their people and culture, represent a possibility for students to encounter disciplines from their world sense. It allows us to avoid the form of erasure "in which the non-western collective memories that such students bring to the university are declared as non-knowledge" (Adesina, 2006, p. 144).

6. Conclusion

This chapter has shown that while South African universities claim to support multilingualism in higher education, this is limited to academic practices that do not require a fundamental reconfiguring of teaching and learning practices. The use of isiXhosa in political and international studies in multilingual assessment of tutorials, term essays and exams show that African languages can be used fully for teaching, reading and writing. This productively moves us beyond the current emphases on using African languages to support students to understand material written in English in their own language. While this project also started with that practical intent, the multilingual assessments illuminate the vast written multilingual repertoires of students. This seven-year project shows concretely that assessment can be conducted fully in African languages.

Importantly for the debate about decolonization in international studies, the chapter shows that multilingual assessment opens up opportunities for students to centre their ontological narratives in their engagement with course material. This allows students in political and international studies to encounter the discipline from a position of affirmation (Adesina, 2006) instead of treating their context, its histories and cultures as non-knowledge. The opening of the seas of African ontologies through language is not an exercise in translation or political and international studies in the vernacular. It is a project about endogeneity that allows students to encounter the world and ideas about world-making from their world sense. This project can be replicated in other disciplines.

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Multilingual assessment, innovation and pedagogical effectiveness

Gudrun Erickson, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Assessing languages in a multilingual context – Reflections from a Swedish perspective

Abstract: Sweden is a multilingual country with around 20 % of its total population born outside Sweden and around 200 different languages spoken in society. This is reflected in the national curricula, where separate subject syllabuses are provided for eight languages or groups of languages. Thus, learning and teaching of multiple languages are explicitly supported at the national level. Regarding assessment, however, the situation is different. The extensive national assessment system, covering several subjects and comprising formative as well as summative materials, is not generally adapted for a multilingual society. Furthermore, issues of assessment from a multilingual perspective are rarely discussed in this context. This chapter aims to contribute to such a discussion by giving a brief descriptive and reflective account of the situation at large. In this, the need for careful analyses of basic issues regarding assessment and relationships between them are emphasized, as is validity in a broad sense.

Keywords: multilingualism, language assessment, Swedish context, assessment practices, validity

1. Introduction

The aim of the current chapter is to describe and briefly reflect on aspects of [language] assessment in a multilingual context, exemplified with the Swedish educational system and focusing mainly on compulsory school. In this, conceptual as well as contextual factors will be touched upon, as will implications at the individual, pedagogical and structural levels. In the last part of the text, aspects of multilingualism in relation to language assessment are focused upon and discussed from an expanded validity perspective.

2. Concepts and definitions

The theme of this book and its different chapters is assessment in relation to multilingualism. These are two prominent concepts in educational discourse and research that can be perceived and approached from a number of angles, something which is also reflected in the current volume. To clarify the starting point of this chapter, some brief definitions and comments seem called for.

Multilingualism is a much-studied, interdisciplinary concept referring to situations – be they individual, collective, or societal – where several languages co-exist and interact with each other, more or less (Cenoz, 2013). According to the *Common European Framework of References: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (Council of Europe, 2001), and its *Companion Volume* (Council of Europe, 2020), multilingualism is defined as “the knowledge of a number of languages, or the co-existence of different languages in a given society” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 4). A distinction is made between this and plurilingualism, which is characterized as “the dynamic and developing linguistic repertoire of an individual user/learner” (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 30). In the current chapter, the word multilingualism is used in an inclusive and pragmatic sense to refer to the multitude of languages existing in society as well as to the number of languages that individuals may possess and use for various purposes at different levels.

Educational assessment is a wide concept, in the current context closely related to learning and teaching and referring to a multitude of contexts and techniques used to elicit and evaluate levels of competence at individual and collective levels. A number of possible aims can be identified, among which the formative and summative dimensions are frequently discussed. This chapter takes a holistic perspective, defining assessment as a powerful tool to enhance learning as well as equity, i.e., having both a pedagogical and a societal function. In this, it is emphasized that all types of assessment should be based on a set of common principles, of which transparency, validity, reliability and respect are regarded as cornerstones (Erickson, 2020).

Conceptually, assessment rests on an expanded view of validity focusing on use and consequences in a broad sense, with individual, pedagogical and societal implications (Cronbach, 1971; Kane, 2013; Messick, 1989). Furthermore, a strong emphasis on ethics is interwoven in the definition of the concept, which is made explicit in what Kunnan (2004, p. 33) refers to as two general principles of justice and beneficence, where justice means that “a test ought to be fair to all test takers; that is, there is a presumption of treating every person with equal respect”, and beneficence that “a test ought to bring about good in society; that is, it should not be harmful or detrimental to society”. Examples of research and researchers consistently and effectively focusing on ethical aspects and responsibilities in the handling of language assessment are McNamara (2006) and Shohamy (2001).

To approach the concept of assessment, a number of fundamental questions may serve a clarifying and concretizing purpose, namely *why?*, *what?*, *how?*, *who?* and last, but definitely not least, *and...?* Consequently, these questions focus on assessment regarding aims, constructs, methods, agency and use, including consequences (Takala et al., 2016) and may be used to enhance the quality of

processes as well as products. Further, when focusing on assessment and multilingualism, they can help in clarifying relationships and possible gaps between different concepts and procedures, for example between aims and methods.

3. The Swedish language context

In the following, the Swedish multilingual context focused upon in the chapter is briefly described, from three perspectives: society at large, language education, and assessment.

3.1. Society at large

With a population of approximately 10.3 million people, Sweden can be characterized as a multilingual country with around 25 % of its total population either born outside Sweden or with both parents born in another country, and around 200 different languages spoken in society (Institutet för språk och folkminnen, 2022). This may seem a large number, however, according to Parkvall (2019), Sweden is a more linguistically homogenous country than most countries in the world. Besides Swedish as the majority language, there are five officially recognized national minority languages, namely Finnish, Meänkieli¹, Yiddish, Roma, and Sami. What distinguishes national minority languages from other minority languages is that they have been spoken in Sweden for a long time and are therefore considered part of the cultural heritage. The speakers of these five languages also have special rights to use and develop their languages in Sweden. In addition, Swedish sign language has a special role in the Language Act, albeit not as an official minority language. As for the languages of more recently arrived migrants, the five most frequent are Arabic, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian/Montenegrin, Kurdish, Polish, and Spanish (Institutet för språk och folkminnen, 2022).

3.2. [Language] education

After pre-school, available for children from the age of one, the Swedish educational system comprises 10 years (1+9) of compulsory school, the first year being a preschool class, normally starting at the age of six. After these ten years, approx. 98 % of all students continue to 3-year upper secondary level. However, around 13 % of them are not formally qualified for a national study program (a set combination of subjects with a specific profile) and therefore start by

1 Meänkieli is a Finno-Ugric language emanating from Tornedalen, an area in the north, on the border between Sweden and Finland.

attending an introductory program. Apart from this, upper secondary school offers 18 vocational and university preparatory programs (12 + 6), the former also including the possibility of apprenticeship training. Far from all students finish upper secondary education with a full certificate, though; recent statistics show that after five years, only about 74 % of those who started have completed their education (for further information, see Ekonomifakta, 2022).

The multilingual situation in Sweden is reflected in the national curricula, including subject syllabuses for compulsory and upper secondary school, with separate subject syllabuses for eight [living] languages or groups of languages², the latter comprising modern languages, sometimes referred to as second foreign languages, and mother tongue tuition. English is a compulsory subject throughout the school system, studied from early years, with the starting point no later than school year 3. Students in Sweden usually do very well in English, as shown in international studies (European Commission, 2012). Second foreign languages (or “modern languages”), the most common ones being Spanish, German and French in that order of frequency, start no later than in school year 6 in compulsory school. Here, the situation is quite different as compared to English, with the 2011 European study demonstrating very low Swedish results for Spanish (European Commission, 2012). A much-debated, long-term issue is whether a second foreign language should be made obligatory in lower secondary school (having this status in some of the university preparatory, upper secondary programs). A clear increase in number of teachers advocating a mandatory second foreign language for young learners can be noticed, although around 30 % are still negative or express strong doubts, often for reasons related to workload and/or assumed capacity and motivation of individual students (Erickson et al., 2022b).

Mother tongue tuition (MTT) has a long tradition in the Swedish school system and was made compulsory for schools to provide in 1977, in conjunction with the so-called home-language reform (Institutet för språk och folkminnen, 2022). Since the launching of the 1980 national curriculum, it has its own national syllabus, and grades are awarded at the end of school years 6 and 9 in compulsory school and after three courses in upper secondary school. The subject is taught in school but often also outside school hours, and shortage of certified teachers is an often-discussed issue. MTT is optional for students, with the latest available

2 Swedish, Swedish as a second language, Mother tongue tuition, Sami, and Swedish Sign language for the Hearing. In addition, three syllabuses are provided for so-called foreign languages, namely English, Modern languages and Chinese.

statistics showing that approx. 59 % of those eligible in compulsory school actually attend (Skolverket, 2022a). In school year 2021/2022, 183 different mother tongues were taught in Swedish compulsory school (Skolverket, 2022b).

MTT is sometimes politically questioned, with worries expressed, not least regarding focus and time taken from learning Swedish, thus claimed to affect integration in a negative way. However, research gives ample support for the value of keeping and developing one's mother tongue for the benefit of individuals, schools and society at large (Bylund et al., 2012; Cummins, 1979; Ganuza & Hedman, 2015; Little & Kirwan, 2019).

3.3. [Language] assessment

There is a long tradition of national assessment in Sweden. Final exams and external examiners were abolished in the 1960s and were followed by systems in which teachers' continuous assessments were – and still are – emphasized, and the role of the national tests is advisory rather than decisive. In the mid 1990s, a criterion referenced grading system was introduced, replacing the former norm-referenced, group-related system, accompanied by a considerably expanded national assessment program with formative and summative materials and comprising a number of subjects (Gustafsson & Erickson, 2018; Skolverket, 2022c). Since then, the national tests have been explicitly targeted at the individual student level. Different universities in the country are commissioned by the National Agency for Education to be in charge of test development, for example the University of Gothenburg for foreign languages. The different tests are developed in a multifaceted and collaborative process, with active participation of a number of stakeholders, students and teachers having a central role (Erickson et al., 2022a; Nafs project, 2022).

The language used in the subject-specific, national tests—instructions, tasks, expected responses—is basically Swedish. Versions translated into English are offered for international schools. However, for reasons of standardization, translation into other languages is not accepted, but some oral assistance by mother tongue teachers is allowed when considered necessary for students to be able to understand and carry out the different tasks. An exception to the dominance of Swedish is the national tests and assessment materials for foreign languages that are monolingual, which means that only the target language is used. There are several reasons for this, related both to the construct and to aspects of equity (Erickson, 2018), which will be commented on in the last part of this chapter.

Finally, in 2016, a national so-called “Kartläggningmaterial” was introduced, namely an extensive mapping material for the assessment of newly arrived

students' competences, aimed to facilitate placement at adequate educational levels, based on considerations of maturity and language as well as subject knowledge. The material is divided into three main parts with different focal points:

- Individual students' languages and experiences
- Individual students' competences within the essential domains of literacy and numeracy
- Individual students' competences within different subjects (sixteen in total)

The first two parts are compulsory for schools to use and should be administered in individual students' "strongest language", often by, or with the assistance of an interpreter (MT teacher or other), whereas the third, subject-related part is optional (Skolverket, 2022d).

4. Studies of multilingualism and assessment

In the following, some observations and studies focusing on assessment in relation to multilingualism in the Swedish society will be briefly touched upon, all highlighting the need to recognize, analyze and utilize students' multilingual resources in the most beneficial way.

Systematically collected data published by the national authorities give different types of information related to the whole population as well as to subgroups of students (Skolverket, 2022a). As seen in Table 1, national statistics (Skolverket, 2022e) show a general pattern of lower grades for students defined as having a foreign background, both the ones born in Sweden with parents born in another country and those themselves born outside Sweden.

Table 1: Grades for students with different language backgrounds; school year 9 (2015, 2018, 2021)

Result	Swedish background 2015 / 2018 / 2021 (n = 74,637 / 81,616 / 85,621)	Foreign back- ground; born in Sweden 2015 / 2018 / 2021 (n = 9,458 / 10,295 / 12,073)	Foreign back- ground; born outside Sweden 2015 / 2018 / 2021 (n = 12,493 / 16,919/ 17,874)
Pass all subjects %	83 / 83 / 82	71 / 73 / 71	50 / 47 / 53
Pass for vocational programs %	91 / 91 / 91	84 / 86 / 86	61 / 58 / 66
Average merit points (max 340)	233 / 240 / 241	222 / 229 / 229	183 / 183 / 196

Several additional parameters are obviously essential when evaluating educational results, such as amount of time spent in Sweden, mother tongue and, not least, parents' educational background, including various interactions between these factors. However, at a general level, it is clear that multilingual students, in particular those not born in Sweden, leave compulsory school with lower grades than their peers with a more homogenous, Swedish background. One reason for this is most likely of a temporal character, another related to socio-economic circumstances, including educational traditions. However, an aspect not to be neglected can be found in the schooling provided in Sweden, including not only ways of organizing learning and teaching, but also methods for assessing all students' competences in valid and reliable ways. In all this, aspects of language, not least multilingualism, is a self-evident factor, affecting the whole educational process and including all agents.

There are several studies of educational outcomes for students with a multilingual background, albeit sparse regarding aspects of assessment. However, one exception is Reierstam's (2020) multi-method PhD thesis which comprises two separate investigations of teachers' assessment beliefs and reported practices in Swedish schools, both with the overarching theme of multilingualism. The first study focuses on assessment in a context of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) in upper secondary school (years 10–12), hence a situation where subject instruction is given in a foreign language, in this case English. The second study is situated in lower and upper secondary schools (years 7–12) with a large proportion of newly arrived migrant students³ and has the aim of exploring teaching practices used with these students. One of the uniting factors for the two studies, conducted in widely differing contexts, where CLIL instruction is regarded as an aspect of multilingual education, is that “the students in the subject matter courses in question are all language learners and are taught and assessed in a non-native language—an L2” (Reierstam, 2020, p. 205). Given this, aspects of assessment become essential in order to better understand the wide areas of educational practices and equity and to “draw attention to the consequences varying language policies and pedagogies may have on fairness in access opportunities and validity in assessment outcomes” (abstract). The results of both studies indicate that teachers are well aware of the importance of language in assessment, although subject matter is the focal point and language not an

3 A “newly arrived student” is defined as a student born in another country, having started school after the age of seven, and having been enrolled in Swedish school for a maximum of four years (Swedish Education Act; SFS 2010:800, Ch.3, §12a).

explicit part of the construct. Most teachers in the second study also referred to a monolingual Swedish norm. In her conclusions, spelled out in a condensed form in the abstract, the author underlines the need for “a shared language policy and pedagogy across subjects and school contexts”, obviously including assessment, and even further emphasized in multilingual contexts.

Another study dealing with writing in English in a multilingual perspective (Gunnarsson, 2021) has a bearing on issues of assessment, however in a more indirect way. The focal point is how multilingual students living in Sweden and taking part in MMT instruction use their language repertoire for thinking when writing in English. Using a multi-method approach, including a questionnaire and think-aloud protocols, the author arrives at results showing that Swedish and English were by far the most common languages in students’ thinking while writing, whereas other languages, for example students’ L1s, were sparse. The tentative conclusions drawn were that students should be encouraged – individually as well as with peers – to use their whole language repertoire when planning their writing.

Finally, an unpublished study regarding a test of foreign languages from the EU-funded project EBAFSLS (*Building a European Bank of Anchor Items for Foreign Language Skills*), coordinated by CITO (<https://www.cito.com/>) focused on the issue of mono- or bilingual test rubrics, i.e., instructions, questions and responses, in a test of French reading comprehension for upper secondary school in Scotland and Sweden. The two countries were chosen based on their widely different traditions and approaches, with Swedish tests at the national level using target language only (in this case French), and the tests given in Scotland using the majority language (English) for all instructions, questions and open-ended responses. In the study, one monolingual and one bilingual version of the test was given to a total of 962 students aged 17–18 in each country. Results showed no consistent differences in level of difficulty related to the language of rubric, some hesitation, but no strong reactions, among students to the version they were not accustomed to, and generally quite positive attitudes among teachers also to the more “unusual” version of the test in each country (van Krieken & Erickson, 2012).

The three studies briefly touched upon are notably different, however all focusing on subject instruction, including assessment. In this, they all emphasize the importance of a context where students’ language(s) should not hinder but instead enhance both learning and possibilities to actually show what you know and can do.

5. The role of beliefs and established practices in [foreign] language teaching and assessment

At least two things – presumably inter-related – can be said about assessment in relation to multilingualism: it is a huge topic and it is not very frequently studied. Firstly, a number of definitions and distinctions need to be made, not least between different topics and different types of assessment; secondly, the role of context and tradition needs to be taken into account, and thirdly, the aspect of use and consequences, i.e., fundamental validity concerns, strongly related to ethics, must always be included. Furthermore, it is – again – essential to establish the underlying definitions of the concepts of multilingualism and assessment. In this, the strong interrelationship and mutual dependency between the concepts and phenomena of learning, teaching and assessment have to be emphasized as done, for example, in the work by the Council of Europe (2001, 2020). Also, we need to recognize that individual or collective beliefs about how languages are learnt and should be taught may have considerable impact on interpretations of and decisions about assessment. One example of this is the basic belief that language is best learnt through that language, i.e., with consistent exposure to and use of the target language, or, the other way around: language development benefits from learning about the language, via systematic practice of elements and structures prior to using the language actively, often with reference to, and translation into and from, the [majority] L1 as a central component. The difference between these different beliefs can be expressed in different ways, for example by referring to inductive and deductive learning, acquisition versus learning, or function- versus form-focused language learning and teaching. Although reality is seldom dichotomous and teaching often displays a mix of influences, it is usually clear what beliefs dominate the pedagogical choices made, also demonstrated through ways of assessing and rating students' competences. In this, attitudes to errors are often indicators of basic beliefs and conclusions.

A central question concerns the issue of languages involved in assessment – be it subject matter related or focusing on language – or more precisely, the role of individual students' first language(s), the majority language in the country, and the target language. What needs to be discussed is whether, and to what extent, each student gets the chance to show what (s)he actually knows or can do with the knowledge/competence in focus, or if the language used or required in different tasks actually limits what can be demonstrated. This is obviously a question of validity in its most fundamental form: do we assess what we are really interested in finding out, or something else, namely not necessarily what the students know but what they can express in a way that is comprehensible in the

context, i.e., by the teachers/assessors at hand? In this case, it is not primarily a question of the type of assessment in focus, but rather the principles behind the procedures used. Practically, however, there are several differences at different levels to take into account, many of them related to sheer practicalities, for example number of MT teachers available, but also to matters of principle, like degree of standardization needed in relation to the intended use of the results obtained. Here, differences are often emphasized between large-scale testing and classroom assessment, the first aiming for standardization, the second directed more towards continued learning. Returning to the fundamental questions regarding assessment defined at the beginning of this text, in particular the relationship between the aim and the methods—the *whys* and the *hows*—need to be carefully analyzed and allow for, and inspire, different methodological decisions.

A specific example of relevance to the discussion is the language used in language teaching and assessment. The following should definitely not be misunderstood as neglect of the value of students using their whole repertoire of languages in processing and learning at a general level, but rather a pragmatic focusing on effects of different practices. An essential factor here is also what type of language we are focusing on: The majority language in society, where the possibility for input and exposure is very large, or almost inevitable, or of “foreign” language studied in school, often with very limited chances of extramural exposure or learning. In the latter case, the lesson time may literally be the only time when the language is actively used, at the receptive as well as the productive and interactive levels. Thus, the role of the teacher in this case is – if possible – even more crucial than otherwise. In this case, many teachers feel that the target language needs to be used as much as at all possible, by themselves and by the students. It also needs to be pointed out that teachers’ possibility to help students in the process of learning the target language is clearly limited, if students refer to and use their respective L1s during class. In the worst of cases, this may negatively affect the aspect of equity in language classrooms. The whole issue also coincides with beliefs regarding the value of intense exposure and active language use: learning through language rather than about language. In the case of national assessment of foreign languages in Sweden, decisions rest on principles of “monolingualism”. i.e., target language only. This is an issue that has been, and probably always will be, intensely discussed, locally, nationally and internationally, and where the best strategy certainly seems to be to collect as much experience and data as possible *and* to listen respectfully to each other, recognizing similarities and differences, conceptually as well as contextually. Importantly, as always, students’ perceptions should never be neglected.

6. Concluding remark

The Swedish educational system may come across as somewhat uneven, even contradictory, regarding multilingualism. On the one hand, there is a long tradition of mother tongue instruction, with its own national syllabus, on the other hand, the aspect of assessment in relation to students' language profiles is largely neglected. Another aspect that needs to be highlighted is the role of languages in language education, where underlying assumptions of learning play an essential role, not least the role of students first language(s) in learning a new language. Further, the relationship between basic issues regarding assessment – the *whys*, *whats*, *hows*, *whos* and *ands*... – needs full attention and requires informed flexibility regarding decisions made and actions taken.

As is often the case, and to conclude this brief reflection from a Swedish perspective, I would like to quote one of the teenage students taking part in the study of rubrics previously mentioned (van Krieken & Erickson, 2012). In commenting on the tests of French using and requiring French only, (s)he also touches on an aspect of validity essential to the whole issue of multilingualism and assessment:

Of course it's a good thing that the whole test was in French, because otherwise it would have been a test of Swedish too, since you have to know Swedish to do well. That is, a Frenchman would fail a test like that.

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Maria Stathopoulou, Hellenic Open University, Greece

Magdalini Liontou, University of Oulu, Finland

Phyllisienne Gauci, University of Malta, Malta

Silvia Melo-Pfeifer, University of Hamburg, Germany

Assessing cross-linguistic mediation: Insights from the METLA project

Abstract: Despite growing interest and renewed calls to embrace a multilingual turn in education, particularly in terms of development and implementation of plurilingual pedagogies, a pervasive monolingual mindset is still observable in the field of assessment. In this contribution, we present the main characteristics of cross-linguistic mediation as an ability to be considered in the foreign/second/heritage language classroom and discuss why and how it is particularly appropriate to renew assessment practices anchored in a monolingual tradition. The point of departure for our reflections is the *Mediation in Teaching, Learning and Assessment* (METLA) project within the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML), which sees cross-linguistic mediation as part of an individual's plurilingual repertoire. At the heart of the project is the view that alternative assessment tasks, which allow for the use of different languages, are useful in evaluating learners' performance in mediation as well as in developing learners' mediation skills as learners are encouraged to reflect on the entire mediation process.

Keywords: cross-linguistic mediation, CEFR Companion Volume, multilingual assessment, METLA

1. Introduction

The research field of multilingual assessment has gained momentum in light of developments in relation to the complexification of the linguistic and cultural issues of modern societies, due to global exchanges and mobilities. Such changes are reflected in studies on the dynamics of being and becoming plurilingual (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015), multilingual pedagogies (Kirsch & Duarte, 2020) and pedagogical translanguaging (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021) in order to cope with linguistic diversity in the classroom. Nevertheless, a persistent “monolingual habitus” (Gogolin, 1994) still pervades teaching and assessment practices (Melo-Pfeifer & Thölkes, 2022). This means that, despite positive attitudes towards linguistic diversity and the different repertoires of their students (Haukäs, 2016;

Heyder & Schädlich, 2014; Portolés & Martí, 2018), many teachers even today adopt the monolingual paradigm in teaching and assessment (Camenzuli et al., 2022; Melo-Pfeifer & Thölkes, 2022). The reasons put forward can be related to lack of training, preparation and self-confidence, lack of adequate materials, and the persistent belief that evaluation in a specific target language has to be kept monolingual. As asserted by Dendrinou, “language teachers and testers do not know how to assess language skills or content knowledge using languages in combination” (2019, p. 3) while international proficiency testing also remains monolingual (Dendrinou, 2013). It, therefore, comes as no surprise that tasks involving more than one language, such as the cross-linguistic mediation tasks discussed in this contribution, are sometimes looked at sceptically (Melo-Pfeifer & Helmchen, 2022). The same can be said regarding assessment practices that make use of more than just the target language or the full repertoire of the students to access their content knowledge. Unfortunately, disregarding students’ resources to make proof of their knowledge leads to linguistic and cognitive inequality in education (Ascenzi-Moreno et al., 2023).

The relationship between multilingualism and assessment can be analyzed from two different angles (Melo-Pfeifer & Ollivier, 2023). First is the assessment of students’ plurilingual competence, meaning their abilities to cope with linguistic diversity in specific situations. Second is the assessment of plurilingual students, meaning the evaluation of their content knowledge in different school subjects, through more “fair and equitable forms of evaluation for all students, regardless of prior language background, educational context and geographical location” (De Angelis, 2021, p. 1). While the former is more common in the context of foreign language learning, the latter more specifically relates to the multiple subjects the student is expected to learn at school. In this case, testing accommodations (De Backer et al., 2017; Shohamy & Menken, 2015) can be planned, for instance, by providing students with more time to answer, reducing the number of questions or allowing students to use external resources, such as dictionaries. Other strategies might include the use of their home languages and other semiotic resources besides the language(s) of the school to accomplish the evaluation tasks. In either case, multilingual testing and assessment are still rare and even when the aforementioned accommodation strategies are used, assessment of plurilingual students and their competences remains predominantly guided by a monolingual paradigm. The reason may lie in the fact that multilingual assessment is a challenging task, as stated by López et al. (2017, p. 100):

the constructs to be measured in multilingual assessments must be clearly defined. Empirical and operational assessment development work should examine the extent to

which the multilingualism construct, operationalized through a heteroglossic or holistic view, can be feasibly assessed. Moreover, it is equally important to have a clear understanding of how multilingual communication works.

In much the same vein, Dunlea and Erickson (2018) admit that even if encouraging the development of plurilingual competence in the language classroom, measuring such competence, if possible at all (Chalhoub-Deville, 2019), is a challenge that has not yet been addressed. The challenge results both from the complex nature of the construct to be measured as well as the difficulties attached to the design and implementation of valid, reliable, adequate, and practical testing formats and instruments.

The complexity of the construct is visible in the definition of plurilingual competence by the *Common European Framework for Languages* (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001), according to which plurilingual competence may involve (among others) the ability to:

- switch from one language to another;
- express oneself in one language and understand the other;
- call upon the knowledge of a number of languages to understand a text;
- play with alternative forms of expression in different languages;
- mediate across languages.

The notion of mediation is actually core in plurilingualism and within its complexity. It allows one to make sense of the heteroglossic or multivoiced nature of the social exchanges and language learning process in our increasingly diverse societies (Piccardo, 2016), where individuals develop their plurilingual competence in very different ways and merge different resources, according to their complex linguistic biographies. On the other hand, in terms of design and implementation of tests that measure such plurilingual competence, one cannot ignore the difficulty in constructing instruments that can classify, compare, and differentiate students based on their plurilingual accomplishments.

In this contribution, we delve deeper into the specific dynamics of assessing plurilingual competence by focusing on the assessment of cross-linguistic mediation as a communicative skill. We first discuss the concept of cross-linguistic mediation and the newly introduced descriptive scales in the CEFR *Companion Volume* (CV) (Council of Europe, 2020) as a way of introducing multilingual assessment practices which make use of the CEFR can-do statements, particularly those referring to mediation, plurilingual and pluricultural competence. Following this discussion, we present the METLA (*Mediation in Teaching*,

Learning and Assessment) project¹ and the way assessment is conceived and integrated in METLA tasks. We will see that cross-linguistic mediation tasks imply the use of at least two languages and can open up spaces for multilingual evaluation practices that include other curricular languages (and not just the target language) as well as students' home languages. Throughout this contribution, *multilingualism* is understood as the result of a situational context whereby multiple languages co-exist but are utilized separately, as opposed to *plurilingualism* which focuses on the individual, refers to his/her ability to use more than one language and is associated with the notions of intercultural competence and democratic citizenship. As we will see, the notion of plurilingualism features prominently in different European language policy documents such as the CEFR-CV.

2. Defining cross-linguistic mediation

Cross-linguistic mediation is considered as part of someone's plurilingual and pluricultural competence whereby the *mediator* acts as a "go-between", making meanings accessible to parties who cannot (or can only partially) understand one another. The *cross-linguistic* mediator acts as an intermediary between two (or more) different cultures, languages, discourses and/or texts. S/he is also a plurilingual social actor actively participating in two worlds, drawing upon source language content and shaping new meanings in the other language for the readers or listeners of a different linguistic or cultural background.

The CEFR (2001) introduced the term *mediation* as a way to "make communication possible between persons who are unable, for whatever reason, to communicate with each other directly". Within this framework, the mediator's role is to reduce the distance or the tension between different parties (Coste & Cavalli, 2015, p. 12). From a social perspective, mediation thus brings individuals together, as argued by Swain et al. (2015, p. 151). The CEFR (2001) introduced the concept of mediation by seeing translating, paraphrasing, recording and summarizing as instances of mediation through the reconstruction of the source text in order to become accessible to another person or group of people. Unfortunately, back in 2001, the CEFR failed to provide descriptors for the

1 The METLA project (2020–2022) was funded by the European Centre for Modern languages (ECML) of the Council of Europe. Team members are Maria Stathopoulou (Coordinator), Phyllisienne Gauci, Magdalini Liantou, and Sílvia Melo-Pfeifer. More information about the project can be found here: www.ecml.at/mediation.

particular ability, resulting in mediation not being systematically taught, assessed or researched in foreign language classrooms (Stathopoulou, 2013, 2015).

Notwithstanding this, a few years later we started seeing some interesting home-grown initiatives in relation to the assessment of mediation. One such notorious example comes from Greece, where testing candidates' (oral and written) mediation performance through tasks that involve relaying information from one language to another (from Greek to English) has been one of the innovations of the KPG examination system since 2003.²

In the meantime, in the more recent publication of the CEFR Companion Volume (CEFR-CV) (Council of Europe, 2020), the term *mediation* was refined, and the concept diversified, while new categories, scales and strategies were presented. According to the CEFR-CV, "in mediation, the user/learner acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning (...) from one language to another (cross-linguistic mediation)" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 90). "Mediating a text", "mediating communication", and "mediating concepts" became the three main categories which define mediation:

- (a) "Mediating a text" involves relaying information to a person with no access to the original text due to linguistic, cultural or social barriers. "Passing on" to another person messages from a text is the key practice here.
- (b) "Mediating concepts" is more related to the pedagogic aspects of mediation. The scales here refer to educational domains which require managing interaction on the part of the teachers, collaborating to construct meaning and facilitating collaborative interaction, among others.
- (c) "Mediating communication" scales refer to the process of facilitating understanding between participants in tensions, disputes or disagreements. Negotiating, creating shared spaces and resolving conflicts are the key practices here.

In this paper we focus primarily on "mediating a text" and the use of descriptive scales which relate to the way information is transferred from one text to another, namely: relaying specific information; explaining data; processing text; translating a written text; note taking; expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature); analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature).

2 KPG is an acronym for the Greek title *Kratiko Pistoitiiko Glossomathias*, a multilingual exam suite which leads to certification in language proficiency: https://rcel2.enl.uoa.gr/kpg/en_index.htm

As indicated by Piccardo et al. (2019), mediation encompasses reception, production and interaction, while the main focus of mediation is not self-expression but rather accommodating other people's understanding. Therefore, the mediator can potentially negotiate between languages, cultures and information that could otherwise act as barriers to someone's understanding. In this sense, cross-linguistic mediation is also closely connected to plurilingual competence since when participating in mediation tasks, a language user should take into consideration the cultures and the various languages involved (Council of Europe, 2020). As stated by Gutiérrez Eugenio and Saville (2017), by shifting the focus to plurilingual repertoires, individuals can focus on their full language abilities and develop them in an integrated way while avoiding learning languages in isolation.

3. Assessing cross-linguistic mediation

3.1. Rationale

The movement of populations, the subsequent flow of refugees and migrants as well as the fluid, heteroglossic (as opposed to monoglossic) language practices typical of the world nowadays, have led to the need for educational reforms as far as the teaching of languages in Europe is concerned.

In such a diverse context, inclusion, together with the right to education for all, have been closely associated with equal opportunities in schools, the acceptance of individual needs and the promotion of social justice (Hodkinson, 2010). In this respect, Shohamy (2011) states that a monolingual view of assessment could lead to the opposite, such as the segregation of various groups of learners who share a multilingual background which could also potentially lead to false conclusions about learners' academic skills. She also emphasizes that embracing the entire linguistic repertoire of plurilingual people in assessment is a way of empowering multilingual communities suffering from discrimination in a monolingual assessment setting.

A number of research studies have indicated the need for addressing the concept of multilingualism in assessment practices in Europe and beyond (Chalhoub-Deville, 2019; De Angelis, 2021; Saville, 2019; Schissel et al., 2019; Stathopoulou, 2018, 2020) and to take into account the full range of students' linguistic repertoires in those practices (Lenz & Berthele, 2010). Given the increased focus on multilingualism in language education, a harmonisation of teaching and assessment practices would be desirable (Gorter & Cenoz, 2017). There is, in other words, a need to adopt plurilingual approaches, not only to

language teaching and learning but also to assessment. The importance of such harmonization is further emphasized by the phenomenon known as the wash-back effect of language assessment. Unfortunately, teachers and students tend to prioritize areas perceived as crucial components of language assessment while they pay less attention to parts of their syllabus which are not included in the assessment process (Wall, 2012).

In their historical review of assessment practices in European language policy, Gutiérrez Eugenio and Saville (2017) summarize assessment trends from 1989 to current practices. They emphasize that even though the first two periods, 1989–2002 and 2003–2015, focused on measurement and standardization of assessment practices among different countries, the efforts were not fruitful due to the wide variety of socio-cultural contexts, purposes of assessment, as well as presentation and interpretation of results which made comparisons almost impossible. On the other hand, during the third period, from 2015 onwards, they contend that a transition to localized solutions and adaptations is being sought in order to serve the needs of language learning skills in language learners' own unique context. These adaptations may include, amongst others, the use of formative assessment, the integration of the CEFR in language education and the modernization of "current teaching and assessment systems to ensure learning outcomes are those required by our fast changing, diverse and ever more globalized societies, addressing the needs of both local and European labour markets" (Gutiérrez Eugenio & Saville, 2017).

Within the framework of multilingual and multicultural classrooms, mediation skills are important for students to bridge linguistic and socio-cultural gaps and co-construct meaning. However, teaching cross-linguistic mediation without embracing it in assessment practices could demote any effort of offering this valuable skill to foreign language learners.

The will to assess cross-linguistic mediation ensues from the need for authentic communicative assessment tasks in an increasingly language-diverse society (Stathopoulou, 2020). Cross-linguistic mediation echoes the need for assessment tasks extracted and modified for language purposes from (multilingual)real-life situations that students are potentially already experiencing or will come across in the future. Real-life situations must be used in the construction of assessment tasks to attract learners' interest and to help them associate the learning of a foreign language with their current or future needs (such as in multilingual classrooms or among multilingual families, in international workplaces or university programmes). The language classroom, as a place for teaching and assessing mediation through cross-linguistic mediation activities that mirror real-life

situations, contributes to preparing learners for the multilingual societies in which they live and act.

In order to create responsible assessment practices in cross-linguistic mediation, one must first consider the different domains, contexts and spaces where mediation can take place and then discuss a number of parameters and existing examples of how cross-linguistic mediation assessment tasks are constructed in the language classroom. In other words, before discussing assessment, we need to address some key considerations which are specific to the practice of cross-linguistic mediation.

3.2. Mediation and assessment: Key considerations

We have so far defined cross-linguistic mediation and provided a rationale for assessing it as a result of the practical needs of multilingual societies. In this section, we discuss some considerations in constructing mediation tasks for assessment purposes.

Localization of assessment. Chalhoub-Deville (2019) calls our attention to an alternative paradigm when considering the specific and unique needs of multilingual assessment practices. She highlights the issue of “localization” of multilingual assessment practices and stresses the relevance of local theories regarding the construction and administration of assessment while responding at the same time to potential issues of validity. A critical aspect of assessing cross-linguistic mediation as a form of multilingual assessment practices is that it is bound to and influenced by the local contexts since the languages involved as the source and target texts affect the structure of the assessment tasks. A plethora of studies acknowledge that localization includes unique characteristics of languages, cultures, disciplines and institutions, among others (Chalhoub-Deville, 2019; Dendrinos, 2009; Gutiérrez Eugenio & Saville, 2017; Jenkins & Leung, 2014, 2017, 2019; Leung et al., 2016). In discussing language entrance examinations, Jenkins and Leung (2019) call us to abandon the one-size-fits-all ideology of language assessment through “international testing practices”, since the traditional aspects of language testing (such as comparability and differentiation) are problematic when applied to the development of plurilingual competence. As plurilingual competence very much depends on specific life trajectories, comparability might be difficult, and differentiations might prove unfair. Mannion (2015), Karavas and Mitsikopoulou (2019) also argue that glocal (global+local) approaches to assessment and testing can be learner-centred and context-sensitive. Glocal testing tools have international features (e.g., are based on the CEFR levels or other international policy documents) but respect the social

needs of people who take the exams in terms of the topics and tasks chosen, which makes them purposeful and context-sensitive. Including localized cross-linguistic mediation tasks in such tests can greatly benefit test-takers who need to develop their mediation skills to participate successfully in multilingual and multicultural societies. Mediation assessment tasks thus need to be “situated” in the sociolinguistic contexts the students inhabit.

Authenticity and purposefulness. Emphasis should also be placed on the social aspect of mediation. Cross-linguistic mediation tasks should promote social inclusion by bringing together different parties and helping them overcome linguistic and cultural barriers, which could cause tension. This construct should also be reflected in the assessment task. In other words, it is not enough to have an assessment task which is translated in different languages, or to follow the CEFR-CV mediation scales. It is equally important to emphasize the purpose of the task at hand through authentic examples which may potentially also help in promoting social inclusion. By mediating between two different languages from the source to the target text, language users also mediate across the respective two cultures.

Dendrinis (2006) and Stathopoulou (2015) argue that mediation is not focused on the mere transfer of information from one language/culture to another. Rather it is a transformational process of the source text in which the context, such as the audience and the purpose of communication, is also to be taken into consideration by the mediator. Hence, the target text is not a copy of the source text which might only be loosely connected to it. Instead, the source text is interpreted through the lenses of the mediator who takes an active stance (Dendrinis, 2014). Stathopoulou (2019, p. 249) also refers to mediators as decision-makers who have to “consider a variety of contextual factors and employ a variety of mediation strategies.” In an empirical study conducted by Schissel et al. (2019), students showed positive reactions towards assessment tasks in which the source texts were given in English and Spanish while the output was assessed in English and praised the authenticity of the tasks and the similarities to real-life situations.

Construction of mediation assessment tasks and CEFR-CV alignment. Now that the framework of cross-linguistic mediation has been defined through the CEFR-CV and scales have been created, it is worth discussing how practitioners and institutions have instantiated them as part of their assessment practices. In Martyniuk (2017), Polish MA students consulted the CEFR-CV can-do statements and designed a number of assessment mediation tasks. They then reflected on certain challenges encountered while constructing their tasks and made specific reference to the way the can-do statements in the “mediating a text”

category are considered equal to the cross-linguistic and intra-linguistic mediation performance statements. This is a very relevant exercise that merits further discussion. For example, one should consider the different approaches that must be adopted when constructing cross-linguistic from intra-linguistic mediation tasks for assessment using the same performance scales. A study by Harsch et al. (2019) in the Cuban context indicated challenges related to the adaptation of CEFR-CV scales and issues related to formulating assessment tasks and aligning them with the CEFR-CV framework. The study focuses on the lack of statements for certain proficiency levels and difficulties of transnational transposition. This study highlights the difficulties of calibrating writing (assessment) tasks to meet specific descriptors, which might be transferred to mediation (assessment) tasks.

As to summative assessment practices, an example to take into consideration is the Greek national examination battery (KPG), which is based on a “glocal” system where both international practices and the local needs of the people living in the Greek society (e.g., topics, themes and texts) are considered through mediation tasks in order to accommodate test-takers (Dendrinou, 2009). Mediation is an important component of the KPG exam which includes mediation tasks in the writing and speaking modules. Having already discussed the importance of localization, Stathopoulou (2020) illustrates how she systematically involved teachers as experts in their local context and identified the scales in written mediation assessment tasks which were more relevant in the Greek context. Her findings indicate that “relaying specific information in writing” got the highest scores while “translating a written text in writing” and “analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature)” scales were scored as the least relevant. Additionally, practitioners seem to express a different opinion regarding the level of difficulty for each proficiency level on some scales. Such examples of good practice which involve the engagement of foreign language teachers in the integration of a multilingual approach to their classrooms through cross-linguistic mediation are indeed commendable, since these efforts still remain limited (Solly & Esch, 2014), and generally lack a supportive environment (Allard, 2017). Pavlovskaya and Lankina (2019) also created assessment tasks for oral mediation. The source texts were in the form of videos related to leadership, an authentic concept for management students, while the target text was the result of a group discussion based on the topic, through an introductory question made by the teacher. They empirically discovered notable differences in the students’ answers among various proficiency levels (B2-C1) in the assessment process. Specifically, they made a distinction between B2 and higher levels; in the former, students struggled to understand complex abstract ideas and focused partially on the task by explaining two or three concepts, while in the latter, students could mediate the

whole notion. These findings offer the opportunity for an open dialogue between theory and practice. Being aware of the difficulties and the linguistic demands of tasks across proficiency levels is crucial for the test-designer who wishes to construct mediation tasks for different levels.

Alternative assessment practices. In such practices, the focal point is on “assessment procedures which are less formal than traditional testing, gathered over a period of time rather than being taken at one point in time, usually formative rather than summative in function, often low-stakes in terms of consequences and claimed to have beneficial washback effects” (Alderson & Banerjee, 2001, p. 228). Ongoing assessment tasks such as portfolios, learning diaries, conferences, presentations and various projects which provide opportunities for self- and peer-assessment can be used to meet the requirements of each cross-linguistic scale as well as the strategies involved. Saito (2019) provides an example of what an e-portfolio could look like when we take into consideration overall mediation scales and adapt the can-do statements in order to provide an ongoing assessment. While the adoption of CV mediation scales is a starting point, scales focusing specifically on cross-linguistic mediation could also be very useful and will hopefully be developed in the future.

Although cross-linguistic mediation assessment practices are not developed and implemented everywhere to the same extent, another recent example has been reported in an ESAP (English for Specific and Academic Purposes) course offered in a higher education setting in Finland. As part of the final assignment of the course, medical students participated in a student conference simulation task where they had to transform the information extracted from various academic texts to a poster presentation, as well as consider the audience and the languages involved. The findings of the study indicated that the students acknowledged authenticity as a strong asset of the assessment task and they also mentioned the use of various mediation strategies in their answers (Liontou & Braidwood, 2021). As a matter of fact, ESP (English for Specific Purposes) courses can be used as springboards for the inclusion of mediation in language assessment (Stathopoulou, 2021) through relevant, discipline-oriented and authentic cross-linguistic mediation tasks. In Austria, the CEBS (Centre for vocational languages) implemented a plurilingual oral exam at several types of Upper Secondary Vocational Colleges. Here learners have the opportunity to show evidence of their oral plurilingual competences (between L2 and L3) through tasks in which test-takers need to pass on information from an oral or written input (language: German) orally or in writing using two other languages (e.g., English and French) and to take part in a discussion with partners speaking

two different languages, in order to achieve a common goal such as planning a project.³

In conclusion, cross-linguistic mediation assessment tasks open up ways of thinking about the assessment of plurilingual competence, in general, and of the learner's mediation ability itself, more specifically. While sustaining the traditional parameters of assessment and their supposed universality, in this section we saw how mediation assessment requires a reconsideration of what is meant by validity, reliability and objectivity, and opens up venues to think of "situatedness (or localization)" and "differentiation" in evaluation practices.

4. Assessing cross-linguistic mediation ability in METLA

In this section, we provide a short overview of the *Mediation in Teaching, Learning and Assessment* (METLA) project which considers the important role of assessment both in developing learners' mediation skills and evaluating mediation performance. We also reflect on the methodological and pedagogical approaches adopted and briefly address the four issues referred to previously: localization of assessment; authenticity and purposefulness; construction of mediation assessment tasks and CEFR-CV alignment; as well as alternative assessment practices.

4.1. Aims, underlying principles and outputs of the METLA project

The METLA project (2020–2022) draws upon pluralistic approaches to education where the development of plurilingual and pluricultural competence plays a key role. Its aim is to help teachers gain knowledge on how to develop and assess their students' mediation skills. The project's outputs echo the Council of Europe values and principles of respect for human rights, mutual understanding, social cohesion, inclusion (rather than exclusion) of languages, intercultural dialogue, culture of democracy, and cooperation. Specifically, the METLA project has developed a Teaching Guide for foreign language teachers of primary and secondary education who want to include linguistic mediation in their teaching practices. The Guide contains information about the theory and practice of language teaching, learning and assessment in relation to mediation together with examples of mediation tasks in different languages. Such examples draw on the new CEFR-CV (Council of Europe, 2020). The Guide (see Stathopoulou et al., 2023) offers orientations and provides suggestions as to how the Foreign Language (FL) teacher can:

3 Find more about the CEBS project here: <https://www.cebs.at/home/plurilingualism>

- help learners develop their mediation skills and strategies;
- adapt and differentiate tasks across languages, proficiency levels, learner groups;
- incorporate learners' heritage/home languages;
- integrate the pluricultural component in activities which ask for the parallel use of languages;
- develop learners' collaborative and social skills across languages;
- develop learners' intercultural understanding, openness, respect towards other cultures;
- assess learners' mediation performance mainly by providing ideas for alternative assessment.

The METLA project also involves the development of a databank with downloadable sample cross-linguistic mediation tasks in different languages for different educational contexts.

4.2. METLA mediation tasks for assessment

Mediation in METLA tasks entails the purposeful selection of information by the mediator from a source text in one language and the relaying of this information into another language, with the intention of bringing closer interlocutors who do not share the same language. Cross-linguistic mediation can thus be taught and assessed through METLA tasks which ask for the use of different languages (i.e., passing on information from one language to another), thus softening linguistic and cultural gaps in the process (Stathopoulou, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2019).

In the METLA project, the designed cross-linguistic mediation tasks are plurilingual in nature, encouraging learners to be aware and make use of additional and/or foreign languages from their repertoire, thus, being anchored in their sociolinguistic lives. More specifically, the tasks encourage students to actively create linguistic bridges, recognize the similarities and differences across languages and use different languages and semiotic resources (such as gestures, postures, gazes, mimic, drawings, etc.) for different communicative purposes. From this perspective, the tasks encourage students to participate in language negotiation by alternating languages, and in the plurilingual co-construction of meaning. Such a stance implies that languages do not need to stay separate during task completion as students might need to navigate different linguistic resources at the same time. Closely related to the plurilingual perspective included in task design, METLA tasks also aim at developing students' intercultural competence: first, the tasks aim at making students understand and appreciate the perspective and worldview of others; second, the tasks also stimulate

students' engagement in open, respectful, appropriate, and effective interactions across languages and cultures; third, the tasks lead students to adopt a positive attitude towards all forms of linguistic and cultural diversity, respectively *savoir-comprendre*, *savoir-faire* and *savoir-être* (Byram, 1997, 2021).

Because of these main tenets, METLA cross-linguistic tasks are aligned with the pluralistic approaches of learning foreign languages (i.e., didactic approaches using activities which involve different languages and varieties; Candelier et al., 2012), as learners are asked to engage their full linguistic repertoire and productively make use of transfer of information across languages. They are, of course, also in line with the new CEFR-CV descriptors which refer to linguistic mediation, an important parameter in task design as discussed in the previous section.

In methodological and didactical terms, the tasks are thematically organized (each scenario is structured around a specific topic such as travel, health, etc.), while the sub-tasks provide an internal sequence. Based on real-life topics and the scenarios, tasks are strategies-based, meaning that in each scenario, a number of mediation strategies are specifically targeted. Despite an overall structure, the tasks are flexible: on the one hand, they can be adapted to different teaching contexts fostering teachers' autonomy and, on the other hand, they answer to different students' profiles, catering for differentiation needs. The tasks also leave room for creativity, both for teachers and learners.

Some key aspects of cross-linguistic mediation tasks include: communication across languages and cultures; the relevance of the source and target text; the purpose of the task; the strategies involved; the importance of genre and target audience and much more. In terms of pedagogical approaches, because of the CEFR orientation, which promotes a co-actional approach to teaching and learning, METLA tasks are either collaborative (involving pair or group work) or individual and are context-oriented and purpose-related, which means that an attempt was made to present authentic tasks relevant to the students' everyday communicative needs. Tasks are thus learner-centred, catering for students' needs and relating to their personal, social and emotional experiences. This orientation is also visible in the way the tasks take the social and cultural dimensions of language learning into account, thus reflecting the link between language and culture. In the example below, from a B2-level mediation task from the METLA Teaching Guide (see Stathopoulou et al., 2023), learners have to read a text in Spanish (Language A)⁴ and relay textual and cultural information into another text in English (Language B):

4 The source text does not appear here due to space constraints. Such tasks can be used both for teaching and testing purposes.

Step 4

When Miguel is back in Mexico, he posts the following picture on his social media page. Your dad asks you if you know what this is all about. You remember having seen something about the *día de los Muertos* in a movie, and decide to look for information about this tradition online. You find the following article in Spanish: Read it and **explain** to your dad, who only speaks English, what this tradition entails. Send him a written text (private) on Facebook messenger.

As it becomes evident from the example above, cultural awareness is not confined to the idea of relaying information from the source text to the target text only across languages, but also involves moving across various styles, genres, and dialects. In this case, learners have to produce a personal message on a social media platform thus respecting the stylistic conventions of this type of (target) text.

Because they are student-oriented, cross-linguistic mediation tasks also privilege self and peer-assessment, as a key feature of formative assessment, which contribute to the development of learner autonomy. Following Gorter and Cenoz (2017, p. 43), assessment tools should match actual language practices and “if teaching is going in the direction of a multilingual focus, assessment should also follow the same path”. For this reason, METLA mediation tasks involve a self-assessment component at the end (see two examples below) which asks students to reflect on how they approached the different mediation tasks (through what strategies, what they learnt, etc.).

The figure contains two self-assessment forms. The top form, titled 'EMAILS Self-assessment email list', is a checklist with a table structure. It includes categories such as 'I have included:', 'I have:', and 'I avoided slang', with columns for 'I am not sure', 'Yes', 'No', and 'not applicable'. The bottom form, titled 'REFLECTION', is a grid with four quadrants for writing reflections on text messages and e-mails, including a list of factors to consider like recipient's culture and the form of the text.

I have included:	I am not sure	Yes	No	not applicable
an informative subject line				
opening greeting/salutation (e.g. Dear Mr. Smith)				
background information (e.g. the purpose of my email, name of the lesson/ date/ time etc.)				
specific request				
polite form (e.g. modal verbs: I would / I should / shall etc.)				
a complimentary close (Yours faithfully, Yours sincerely...)				
attachments				

I have:	I am not sure	Yes	No	not applicable
taken into account a specific audience (age/ethnicity/culture)				
used headings when appropriate				
stated the main point early				
effectively used transitions between ideas and paragraphs				
avoided slang				

Now, pass your email and your self-assessment list to your partner.

Stuort: _____ Class: _____

REFLECTION

WRITE DOWN THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF TEXT MESSAGES

WRITE DOWN THREE PHRASES YOU FOUND EASY TO TRANSFER FROM _____ (A) TO _____ (B) AND THREE DIFFICULT ONES. WHY?

WRITE DOWN THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF E-MAILS

WHEN YOU WROTE YOUR TEXT MESSAGES, DID YOU CONSIDER ANY OF THE FOLLOWING (AND WHY/HOW)?

- ... the recipient's culture
- ... the recipient's age
- ... the form of the text (e.g. online)
- ... the purpose of your text (e.g. to explain/inform/complain)
- ... the level of politeness
- ... the languages involved
- ... the way we text in: _____ (A)
- ... the way we text in: _____ (B)

Figure 1: Self-assessment component in METLA mediation tasks

As it becomes evident from the examples in Figure 1, the METLA project clearly puts emphasis on alternative assessment. Alternative assessment, or assessment that is not meant to be standardized or achieved through tests, can be carried out in the realm of both summative (at the end of a course/a year/a semester etc.)

and formative (ongoing) assessment. It is suggested that learners are assessed on an on-going basis by the teachers and/or themselves and they are encouraged to document their progress in the development of cross-linguistic mediation strategies.

As far as testing is concerned, learners' cross-linguistic mediation ability can be tested through mediation test tasks which may involve one or all of the following (see also Stathopoulou, 2020):

- summarizing oral or written information read or heard in one language and presenting it orally or in writing in another language, including changing the discourse and/or genre of the original text for a given communicative purpose;
- using information from different sources in different languages in order to produce a written or an oral text. The language output may be bilingual or trilingual.

Below is an example of a C2-level mediation test task taken from the METLA Teaching Guide (see Stathopoulou et al., 2023) which illustrates these points. Note that source texts have been omitted.

Learners have to read two articles written in different newspapers. The articles present research findings with figures about the educational system in France and Germany and the effectiveness of each system in its respective country. Article no 1 is written in French while Article no 2 is written in German. Students have to read both texts and **summarise, combine and paraphrase** information found there in order to produce a text to be included in a German **poster** which will inform about the differences between the two educational systems.

It is a complex task which involves not only cross-linguistic mediation but also interlinguistic mediation (one article is in German and some of its information has to be relayed in German). It requires learners to use the appropriate mediation strategies in order to use the relevant information which in some cases is also numerical and produce a poster (a different genre from the original). Students have to summarize, paraphrase and re-organize the original information respecting at the same time the target generic conventions.

The practical examples given above illustrate how such specific assessment tasks might hardly be transposable to other linguistic and cultural contexts, because of linguistic and cultural idiosyncrasies at hand. Therefore, as stated in Section 3.2, cross-linguistic mediation assessment tasks are prone to great variability and must be situated, referring to tangible contexts and (individual) competences. The challenge of standardization (and even the question of its necessity in evaluating plurilingual competence) becomes apparent.

5. Synthesis and perspectives

Our contribution to cross-linguistic assessment practices clearly indicates how it is possible to make use of learners' full linguistic repertoires even if this entails rethinking standardization and uniform validity as universal values of language evaluation practices. Firstly, if we acknowledge that it is possible to move along the *continuum* of being and becoming plurilingual, either by growing up bilingual through migration, by learning foreign languages at school, or a combination of both, multilingual assessment is valuable both for students with a migrant background who still have not developed command of the language of schooling and also for those learning multiple languages at school or in any other educational setting. Multilingual assessment practices can go beyond the use of the target-language and the language of instruction and embrace previously learnt foreign languages and students' home languages, in an integrated and holistic view of language education. This entails the need for differentiated multilingual assessment items and formats if we want to address the complexity of students' language biographies and foster (cognitive) equity in language education in general and in language classrooms in particular.

Secondly, cross-linguistic mediation tasks can play an important part in disseminating multilingual assessment practices. As cross-linguistic mediation is slowly but surely gaining ground in foreign language teaching and learning through language policy documents at a European level, its assessment might become an inspiration to think of other innovative forms of assessment, both in the foreign language classroom, as well as in other school subjects, while contributing to changing the prevailing monolingual mindset. The assessment of cross-linguistic mediation competences can, thus, inspire new forms of assessment for plurilingual students and new ways of thinking plurilingual assessment for the foreign language classroom.

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Viktoriia Osidak, Taras Shevchenko
National University of Kyiv, Ukraine

Maryana Natsiuk, Taras Shevchenko
National University of Kyiv, Ukraine

Towards 21st century multilingualism in Ukraine: The present landscape

Abstract: The paper presents the analysis of socio-cultural settings, Council of Europe language objectives, and language policy in Ukraine with a focus on a multilingual agenda. The chapter analyses how Ukrainian language policy promotes multilingualism and encourages language learning. The investigation into multilingualism in Ukraine indicates that education language policy is in line with European language objectives that envisage all EU citizens being able to speak their “mother tongue plus two additional languages” (Commission of the European Communities, 1995). Moreover, potential methodological directions for multilingual education embedded in instructional language education settings are discussed. In order to become multilingual in terms of foreign language proficiency, a range of approaches have been analyzed, e.g., content and language integrated learning (CLIL), language awareness, intercomprehension, immersion, with a view to their potential and relevance for the Ukrainian educational context. The study underscores the need to develop integration of multilingual approaches indicating benefits of its implementation in the Ukrainian context.

Keywords: language policy, multilingualism, multilingual education, multilingual approaches, Ukraine

1. Introduction

The use of multiple languages may be attributed to many factors. A geographical position, socio-cultural (historic events; globalization, etc.) and political settings may determine linguistic heterogeneity of a community and shape language policies (Tucker, 1999). Piccardo (2013) highlights that “language education does not happen in a vacuum; it is dependent on the particular context and the contextual societal vision of what characterises language and language learning/teaching” (p. 603). In a modern social context that is a result of globalization and mobility, linguistic and cultural diversity is a norm at the level of each individual and at the level of communities. In order to strengthen linguistic heterogeneity, the Council of Europe (CoE) declared the promotion of multilingualism and

plurilingualism as the main focal tasks of language learning (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020).

A multilingual and plurilingual vision of language education is supported by three theoretical perspectives through which a multilingual/plurilingual phenomenon can be explored: the sociocultural, psychocognitive and pedagogical perspectives (Piccardo, 2013). The sociocultural perspective explores the so-called “macro-level” and presents a broad picture of the sociocultural, ideological and political setting and their impact on a language situation in a certain community. From a sociocultural perspective, language learning can happen if it is linked to a certain social context as some linguistic behaviours can be explained by macro-factors only (Brizić, 2006; Piccardo, 2013; Tucker, 1999). The pedagogical perspective presents the meso-level that focuses on language planning implementation through concrete strategies and the choice of language teaching methodology that can help learners to benefit from their prior linguistic knowledge and all the other skills they possess as multilingual speakers. The psychocognitive perspective focuses on the level of an individual, the micro-level, and looks into the speaker’s whole linguistic repertoire, analyzes how second and third language acquisition occurs, and explores the similarities and differences between L2 and L3 teaching.

Our framework comprises macro-, meso- and micro- elements that will contribute to the understanding of origin-specific features of multilingualism in the Ukrainian context. The macro-level will outline the global perspective (sociocultural realities, CoE language objectives) for language acquisition in Ukraine. The meso- level will describe how Ukrainian language policy responds to sociocultural settings and CoE language policy with a focus on a multilingual agenda and analyse multilingual approaches relevant for the foreign language classroom in Ukraine. The micro-level will focus on the role of languages in a learner’s linguistic repertoire. This level will consider learning as a reflective, active process that occurs when information can be linked to already existing knowledge.

For this purpose, in this chapter we aim at:

- analysing the social and cultural realities and political settings in Ukraine to understand multilingualism in the Ukrainian context from different perspectives;
- reviewing the legal basis and state language policies to understand whether Ukrainian education policy aligns with CoE language policy;
- presenting insights into multilingual approaches that would be relevant for the Ukrainian language education context.

2. Multilingualism in Ukraine: Socio-cultural and ideological realities

Ukraine as a geographical area is multilingual; it is rich in its cultural and linguistic diversity (Council of Europe Language Policy Division, 2008–2011; Nikolska & Pershukova, 2020). The first and so far only all-Ukrainian national census conducted in independent Ukraine by the country's State Statistic Service in 2001 recorded that the population of Ukraine constituted 48,457,100 people (State Statistics Service of Ukraine [SSSU], n.d.). According to this census, more than 130 nationalities lived in the country. Ukrainians made up 77.8 % of the population. More than eight million people were Russians that represented the largest national minority group (17.3 % of the country's population). These two main ethnic groups are unevenly distributed throughout Ukraine, with around 38 % of Russians concentrated in eastern and southern Ukraine (Donetsk, Luhansk and Kharkiv administrative regions), with only around 1 % of Russians in the west of Ukraine (Goodman, 2009). Nearly two and a half million people (4.9 % of the total population of Ukraine) constituted all other significant ethnic minorities, each of which counted around 300,000 people: Belarusians (0.6 %), Moldavians (0.5 %), Crimean Tatars (0.5 %), Bulgarians (0.4 %), Hungarians (0.3 %), Romanians (0.3 %), Poles (0.3 %), Jews (0.2 %), Greeks (0.2 %), Tatars (0.2 %), Georgians (0.1 %), Roma (0.1 %), Azerbaijanis (0.1 %), Germans (0.1 %), Gagauz (0.1 %) (SSSU, n.d., see Figure 1).

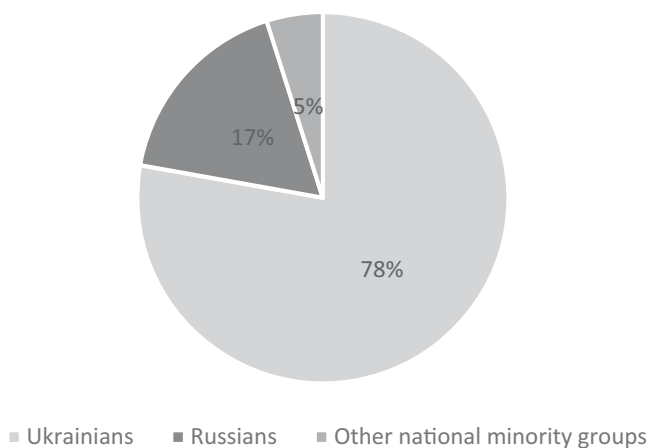


Figure 1: Nationalities residing in Ukraine in percentages, 2001

Ukrainian multilingualism as a national phenomenon is vividly represented in the use of a diverse linguistic repertoire (Extra & Yağmur, 2012). Ukrainians

speak several languages at different levels of proficiency (Goodman, 2009; Myhre et al., 2021). A prominent feature of the linguistic landscape in Ukraine is the omnipresence of the Russian language, the biggest minority language, which is widely used by many citizens of Ukraine, including minority groups, on a regular basis. Historically, first as a part of the Russian Empire, then as one of the republics of the Soviet Union, Ukraine experienced several periods of discrimination and russification (the forceful spread of the Russian language as the sole language of public life in Ukraine, Goodman, 2009). As a result, the majority of Ukrainians is bilingual in Ukrainian and Russian. There are other possible manifestations of multilingualism in Ukraine, let us name just a few, Ukrainian – Hungarian – Russian, Ukrainian – Romanian– Russian, Ukrainian – Polish, Crimean Tatar – Ukrainian, Ukrainian – Moldavian – Russian, etc.

According to the findings of the INTAS project on language policy in Ukraine (Besters-Dilger, 2010), in 2001 67.5 % of the Ukrainian population recognized Ukrainian as their native language, while 29.6 % considered Russian to be their L1. A distinctive feature of Ukrainian bilingualism is that native speakers of Ukrainian normally speak both Ukrainian and Russian. However, few Russians in Ukraine used to speak Ukrainian until 1991 (Goodman, 2009). This phenomenon can be explained by a political and practical need to speak Russian as a power language. Besides, in many educational institutions, Russian used to be either the language of instruction or one of the key subjects at schools. Nowadays, due to historical heritage and also due to many mixed Russian-Ukrainian families, Russian is naturally acquired through communication.

Historically, Ukrainian speakers had to comply with Soviet policy. However, many maintained their native language at home. Besides, western Ukraine was annexed by the Soviets only in 1944; prior to that, Ukrainian speakers had a relative freedom to study and use Ukrainian under the rule of Poland and the Austria-Hungarian Empire. This fact contributed to the development of a national identity which was represented in the language (Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008). Because of this reason, Russian has not received the status of an official language, despite the attempt to establish it as the second state language after Ukraine proclaimed its independence in 1991.

According to the sixth national poll¹ (2022), over the last 10 years a steady decrease in the share of the Russian language used by the population of Ukraine and the positive changes in the attitudes towards the Ukrainian language have

1 The poll was carried out in March 2022 among 1000 respondents who represented all parts of Ukraine, except the territories that were temporarily occupied.

been reported both in the central and in the southern and eastern parts of Ukraine. These changes were triggered between 2012 and 2016 by the Revolution of Dignity and Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014. The findings of this study also demonstrate that two thirds of those who have used both Ukrainian and Russian languages in their everyday life are ready to switch exclusively to Ukrainian. Moreover, the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2022 has impacted dramatically on the attitudes toward the status of the languages in Ukraine. Today, the absolute majority (83 %) support Ukrainian being the only state language. Evidently, a new investigation will be necessary to get an understanding about the changes in the language situation in Ukraine after the war.

3. Pedagogical perspectives of multilingualism in the Ukrainian context

3.1. Language policy context: EU and Ukraine in comparison

Language and cultural diversity in the EU is both a reality and one of its fundamental values (CEC, 1995). In this light, language is seen as a vehicle of opportunity and success. According to this view, multilingualism is a key element of Europe's competitiveness. Council of Europe (CoE) policy attaches particular importance to the development of plurilingualism – the lifelong enhancement of the individual's linguistic repertoire (CEC, 1995; Council of Europe, 2001; 2020). One of the key reasons behind the CoE language policy objective is the understanding that a multilingual community provides a conducive environment for professional, personal and academic development as their citizens acquire better access to educational, professional and economic opportunities of the EU (CEC, 1995; Council of Europe, 2001; Council of Europe Language Policy Unit [CoELPU], 2014).

Ukraine is a young state that gained its sovereignty only 30 years ago. Since then, Ukraine's priority has been to re-establish its national identity, where the national language is pivotal in consolidating the nation, promoting cultural self-affirmation and enhancing national unity. However, a re-establishment of the national identity is taking place in the era of globalization, when multilingualism is a part of a global identity and a learning process. This context places Ukraine in a challenging position in terms of implementing its language policy. On the one hand, the concepts of national identity and state sovereignty are critical to maintaining successful political order. On the other hand, Ukrainian national language policy should be built around democratic political values that recognize and respect diverse communities of the state.

An expert' report by the Council of Europe (CoELPD, 2008–2011) investigated how Ukraine was responding to the approaches and challenges as outlined in the White Paper (CEC, 1995). The findings revealed that Ukraine had witnessed quite a few achievements in terms of language education (CoELPD, 2008–2011, pp. 15–16). The experts observed widespread bilingualism of the population as a whole. Additionally, the state makes an effort to cater for the needs of national linguistic minorities and provides education in the learners' L1 (Council of Europe, 2017). A range of language institutions offers education both in Ukrainian and minority languages in primary, secondary and vocationally oriented secondary schools. Moreover, Ukrainian has a privileged position as the language of schooling, and much has been done in order to change the status of the Ukrainian language in society, including among national minority communities (Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008). Nowadays, Ukrainian as a language of instruction in educational institutions of all levels is no longer a matter of choice or preference, and a course in the Ukrainian language is mandatory at tertiary level regardless of the field a department is specialized in.

Furthermore, foreign languages in school education are a priority in Ukraine as a means for better prospects and opportunities. Foreign language learning is supported on a legislative level by expanding the number of languages offered in schools and recognizing the importance of building bridges between all languages in the curriculum (Council of Europe, 2017; Redko et al., 2021). Thus, Ukrainian language policy aligns with guidelines for the actions in the field of education and training expressed in the White Paper (CEC, 1995), which stresses the importance of proficiency in several community languages in addition to L1.

3.2. Implementation of multilingualism in the Ukrainian educational system

The main educational objective focuses on preparing learners for diverse, complex and dynamic social environments, where language plays an important part in attaining this goal (Council of Europe, 2017). Depending on how multilingual education is conceptualized, its implementation is achieved with different aims and objectives. According to Brizić (2006), under multilingual education one can subsume catering for the needs of learners of languages other than a majority language, tertiary language learning, the inclusion of more languages across all subjects and the teaching of more languages in a way that integrates content and language.

Ukrainian language education has been developed under the influence of two conflicting trends, which may pose a challenge for successful implementation of

its goals (Yakovleva, 2016). As explained above, on the one hand, language education has a strong national focus that strives to foster and (re-)establish Ukrainian identity by eliminating imposed russification in education, science and culture. In this light, according to Yakovleva (2016), the dominance and monopoly of Ukrainian as the language of instruction is reasonable and justified. However, EU language education, which mirrors a particular societal vision of what characterizes language learning and teaching (Piccardo et al., 2019, p. 19), has moved from the homogenization of individuals by nation states, to a condition characterized by “institutionalized pluralism, variety, contingency and ambivalence” (Bauman, 1992, p. 187). Ukraine, as a member of the Council of Europe, ensures the protection of national minorities and their languages (Council of Europe, 2017). Therefore, such trends that promote interculturalism, plurilingualism and multilingualism have been reflected in the objectives of Ukrainian national education policy. These objectives aim at enhancing foreign language learning and teaching at pre-school, primary and tertiary levels and recognizing national linguistic minorities’ right to learn their languages. In order to ensure linguistic minorities’ right to education in their languages, the state makes such education available in the relevant regional or minority language with respect to primary and secondary education (Council of Europe, 2017).

On the basis of the following legislative documents, namely Amendments to Article 7 of the Constitution of Ukraine (About supporting the functioning of the Ukrainian language as the state language, 2019); Law of Ukraine (About the principles of state language policy, 2012); Law on Education (Council of Europe, 2017), English for Specific Purposes: National curriculum for universities (Bakayeva et al., 2005); Core curriculum for second foreign languages in secondary schools (Redko et al., 2021); Policy on English for universities (British Council Ukraine, n.d., 2019; Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2019), we have analyzed how multilingualism is implemented in Ukrainian education. In our analysis we deployed current documents that regulate the status of Ukrainian in educational institutions, the rights of minority groups to receive education in their heritage language, and policies regarding foreign language education (Table 1).

Table 1: Legal basis for the implementation of the objectives of multilingualism in the Ukrainian educational system

Objectives of multilingualism	Legal basis of attaining multilingualism in Ukraine
Regarding the status of Ukrainian in the national education system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ukrainian is the language of the educational process and also the state language. – The state guarantees the right to obtain formal education at all levels in the state language at the state and communal institutions to each citizen of Ukraine. – Mandatory study (including minority language speakers and indigenous language groups) of the state language at institutions of vocational education and training, pre-tertiary vocational and higher institutions of education.
Regarding provision of an environment conducive to sustaining minority languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The state ensures conditions for the proper mastery of the state language in secondary schools with instruction in the languages of national minorities. – National linguistic minorities and indigenous people of Ukraine are guaranteed the right to education in municipal educational institutions in the language of the national minority/ indigenous group and in the official language of the state.
Regarding foreign language teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A foreign language is obligatory from first grade of schooling (at the age of 6–7). – The compulsory study of a second foreign language from fifth grade (at the age of 10–11). – A foreign language is a tool for building Ukrainian identity (a foreign language classroom is used to provide insights into Ukrainian history, traditions and customs). – The promotion of study of international languages, first of all, English, at the state and communal institutions of education. – External independent testing in a foreign language is optional for school leavers. – External independent testing in English at the end of school is offered on B1 and B2 levels. – One or more disciplines may be delivered at educational institutions according to the programme in two or more languages – in the state language, in English, in other official EU languages. – B2 in English is a minimum requirement for bachelor’s degrees of all specializations. – External independent testing in a foreign language is obligatory for students who apply for the master’s degree regardless of the field of specialization.

As Table 1 demonstrates, Ukraine has a well-developed legal basis for the promotion of linguistic diversity by developing proficiency in the state language,

providing conducive environment for sustaining minority languages and fostering foreign language teaching and learning. A more detailed interpretation of the legal basis is offered below.

3.2.1. Regarding the promotion of linguistic diversity through the state language

Teaching Ukrainian is a significant aspect of state and national language policy which is used in nation-building, the (re-)creation of a Ukrainian national identity (Myhre et al., 2021; Yakovleva, 2016) and in ensuring that all learners, including minority-language speakers, establish a good command of Ukrainian to succeed in other subjects (CoELPD, 2008–2011). In this light, Ukrainian is a necessary prerequisite for the inclusion of national linguistic minorities into the public, educational, socio-cultural and economic prospects that the state can offer to its citizens.

Establishing a Ukrainian language proficiency standard as the language of instruction is an important and necessary step after the centuries of russification of the Ukrainian population (Yakovleva, 2016). The established standard includes the description of the learning outcomes at the end of specified stages of schooling (CoELPD, 2008–2011). The inclusion of Ukrainian as a key subject at all levels at school and as a mandatory course at all types of universities is further evidence of the state effort to raise and promote national awareness.

Moreover, according to Piccardo (2013), every language learnt or acquired by a person adds to their linguistic competence and develops their multilingualism. Therefore, learning Ukrainian as a state language by people whose home language is a different one can contribute to enhancing their linguistic repertoire and can bring benefits related with being multilingual.

Despite notable achievements in integrating national minority groups in Ukraine primarily through providing language education possibilities, language policy decisions have elicited much criticism (Chernychko, 2009; Myhre et al., 2021; Zabolotna et al., 2019). Chernychko (2009), through the critical analysis of the language education policy documents and the language situation regarding local linguistic minority groups in the Transcarpathian region, outlined several problems. His study revealed that teaching practices of Ukrainian to minority groups should be revisited. He advocated that Ukrainian cannot be taught in the same way to minority language learners as it is taught to learners for whom Ukrainian is L1. Secondly, Chernychko (2009) insisted on the adoption of a new approach to the curriculum, textbook and teaching materials development. And finally, he argued for the need to lower the standard of learning outcomes for

the proficiency level in Ukrainian for minority language learners, as they often demonstrate underachievement in Ukrainian during external independent testing, which negatively affects their further academic prospects.

A decade later, a similar concern was expressed in the study by Zabolotna et al. (2019), which was based on 70 in-depth interviews with main stakeholders (school principals, school administration team, high school students, high school students' parents, university students, representatives of political parties and local authorities). The objective of the study was to collect findings for the development of evidence-based recommendation for the Ministry of Education and Science in Ukraine regarding language policies. Zabolotna et al. (2019) brought up the case of the ethnic minority groups' (Romanians and Moldavians, Chernivtsi region, Ukraine) failure rates in Ukrainian during external independent testing. In order to improve the educational and developmental prospects of minority language learners in Ukraine, this problem was approached in Article 7 of the Law on Education (CoELPU, 2014) by a gradual significant increase in the proportion of school subjects taught in Ukrainian. Yet, a Romanian ethnic group expressed their dissatisfaction with the document. They argued that it violates human rights and they demanded to bring immediate change to the Article. Zabolotna et al. (2019) reported the tensions between promoting Ukrainian and at the same time supporting minority languages. They concluded that "reaching the balance between the necessity to speak Ukrainian as the state language and national minorities' striving to preserve their identity" (Zabolotna et al., 2019, p. 66) is important. In this light, the question of the curriculum and syllabus design of Ukrainian as a non-native language for the national minority groups may still be seen as open.

3.2.2. Regarding the provision of an environment conducive to sustaining minority languages

The studies by Goodman (2009), Myhre et al. (2021), Nikolska and Pershukova (2020), Shumytska (2020), Yakovleva (2016) and Zabolotna et al. (2019) on aspects of contemporary education in Ukraine reported that Ukrainians in their majority are plurilingual and demonstrate competences in several languages. Ukrainian is the language of education, but the use of regional languages as languages of instruction is observable when the number of speakers of these languages in a certain region is at least around 10 % of the population (About the principles of state language policy, 2012). In Ukraine, 19 languages of national minorities are studied at school, and Ukraine is one of the few countries in the world where teaching is conducted in eight languages of national minorities (Nikolska & Pershukova, 2020, p. 6).

The right to receive education in a learner's heritage language is ensured through the network of preschool child care facilities, general secondary, extra-curricular, vocational and higher state and communal education institutions (Chernychko, 2009; Nikolska & Pershukova, 2020; Shumytska, 2020). These schools vary depending on the language of instruction (Ukrainian or other languages) and the amount of contact hours devoted to teaching a minority language. The following types of schools assist in implementing the right of minority groups to receive education in the state language and preserve and foster their own languages (Chernychko, 2009; Nikolska & Pershukova, 2020; Shumytska, 2020):

- schools where a minority language is the main language of instruction, and the state language and foreign language(s) are separate school subjects;
- schools where Ukrainian is the language of instruction, and a minority language and the literature of a minority language and a foreign language are separate subjects;
- bilingual and trilingual schools, which provide instruction in two or three languages, including the instruction in a minority language;
- an optional study of a minority language at school with Ukrainian as a language of instruction;
- Sunday schools, language courses and cultural centres.

Moreover, recognizing the tensions in some of the regions of Ukraine regarding the role of minority languages in education (Chernychko, 2009; Zabolotna et al., 2019), the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine carried out several projects in 2009–2014 and 2015–2020 to provide educational opportunities for national linguistic minorities (Shumytska, 2020). The main objective of these projects was to implement best multilingual practices in pre-school, primary and secondary education in order to provide conducive environment for supporting education in such minority languages as Crimea-Tatar, Romanian, Hungarian, Moldavian, and Slovakian. By providing the educational opportunities for minority groups to attend school, classes and language centres in their L1/ heritage language, Ukraine fulfils one of its obligations to the Council of Europe to make education accessible for all language groups.

3.2.3. *Regarding foreign language teaching and learning*

Foreign language teaching is one of the key educational and state policy priorities that helps integrate Ukraine into European society. Schools in Ukraine offer a total of 12 foreign languages (Nikolska & Pershukova, 2020). Since 2012,

compulsory foreign language learning from the first grade and compulsory second foreign language learning from the fifth grade have been introduced. The main foreign language taught is English. English as a lingua franca in the contemporary process of globalization is normally the first foreign language as over 90 % of secondary educational institutions choose English over other foreign languages (Extra & Yağmur, 2012). English is considered to be L2 or a first foreign language as presented in the national curriculum.

According to Nikolska and Pershukova (2020), the most frequent foreign language combinations at schools are:

- English (L2) + German (L3),
- English (L2) + French (L3);
- German (L2) + English (L3),
- French (L2) + English (L3),
- “language of the neighbouring country” (L2) + English (L3).

A core curriculum for second foreign languages in secondary schools (cf. Redko et al., 2021) was developed for six languages to give general guidelines about the expected proficiency level at the end of every form, language learning goals and topics, etc. The core curriculum reiterates key principles of multilingual education defined by the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001), namely, deepening mutual understanding among citizens in Europe, promoting linguistic diversity, valuing and employing learners’ linguistic resources, and developing learner autonomy. According to the core curriculum, teaching L3, among other recommendations, should be based on learners’ experience in studying other subjects, specifically their L1 and L2, which is English in the majority of cases; and be aimed at the development of communicative, intercultural and plurilingual competences. The differences in teaching L2 and L3 are recognized and are explicitly set forth in the document. In particular, in teaching L3 it is important to understand linguistic characteristics of L1 and L2 in order to anticipate the instances of L1, and L2 interference with L3 (Redko et al., 2021). Moreover, teaching L3 should be built on learners’ linguistic repertoire, communicative skills, learning and cognitive strategies acquired in learning L1, L2 and the expertise and knowledge in other subjects (Redko et al., 2021).

Tertiary education in Ukraine does not have a universal model for foreign language teaching. This fact is explained by differences in types of institutions and programmes and the autonomy of higher education sector. However, in the higher education sector it is mostly English that has been recognized as crucial for personal academic and professional development (Kravets, 2019). Despite the fact that English is a foreign language most commonly taught at tertiary level,

Bolitho and West (2017), in their report on the current English provision in universities in Ukraine, stated that Ukrainian students generally have a low level of English proficiency, ranking 41st of the 72 countries according to the 2016 English Proficiency Index.

An attempt to improve proficiency level in English in the tertiary sector was made in a number of national initiatives (Law of Ukraine about higher education, 2014; Nikolaeva, 2001) which set up a basis for foreign language education in universities pertaining to the improvement of students' proficiency in English (MESU, 2014) (see Table 1). These initiatives include target-language-only classroom practices and independent language syllabus that are supposed to increase students' exposure to a target language.

Table 2 gives the summary of the overview of language policy documents. The overview demonstrates that goals and pedagogical implications for language education will vary depending on how multilingualism is envisaged. Table 2 demonstrates three perspectives of multilingualism in the Ukrainian context and distinguishes between goals and pedagogical implications in the Ukrainian educational context depending on the overarching objective that specifies the role of the language in the classroom.

Table 2: Differences in education goals and pedagogical implications

Overarching goal	Academic goal	Pedagogical implications	Language use
Regarding promotion of linguistic diversity through the state language	Proficiency in Ukrainian		Ukrainian as a medium of instruction; Ukrainian as an additional language taught as a subject.
Regarding sustaining minority languages	Proficiency in a minority language	Integration of a minority language and content; Teaching and learning a minority language as a subject	A minority language as a medium of instruction; A minority language as an additional language taught as a subject.
Regarding foreign language teaching and learning	Proficiency in a FL	Explicit language instruction; English as a medium of instruction (higher education context)	FL as an additional language taught as a subject; English as a medium of instruction (higher education context)

The above overview shows that multilingual education is a key objective in the Ukrainian education policy. According to the legislative basis, the socio-cultural paradigm and language education policy, the majority of Ukrainians are multilingual speakers with partial competences in several languages. Moreover, the state has marked some achievements in integrating national minority speakers into the Ukrainian community as well as assisting them in preserving their languages.

Regarding foreign language teaching and learning, plurilingual and multilingual education is only just beginning to be introduced in education contexts (Nikolska & Pershukova, 2020; Redko et al., 2021). Understanding the core multilingual principles for foreign language teaching, such as an integrated language approach to teaching languages, which is based on previous learners' skills and abilities in other languages is reflected in some language policy documents (see as an example Redko et al., 2021). However, in practice, foreign language teaching is more in line with a monolingual approach (see Tables 1 and 2). As the analysis demonstrates, the aim of foreign language teaching is to achieve proficiency in at least two languages: Educational institutions have introduced L2 at an early age since first grade and they have increased the number and variety of languages studied at school by encouraging pupils to learn more than one foreign language. In these settings, multilingualism is achieved in an additive manner through languages still being taught separately.

In this light, it is not surprising that multilingual education in Ukraine was defined in some studies as a disconnected teaching and learning process of several foreign languages (Extra & Yağmur, 2012). The same situation is found in educational contexts around the world where the target language is taught in isolation (Aoyama & Denton, 2022; Günther-van der Meij et al., 2020). Moreover, how to implement multilingual approaches to foreign language teaching and learning is still an open question and requires further investigation. Similar findings were reported by the European Commission (The President, 2018) that recognized that despite the attempts to put plurilingual and multilingual education into practice in EU, its implementation had not been attained yet.

3.3. Mapping multilingual approaches to the Ukrainian context

The analysis of core statements of multilingual education revealed that the aim of language education stated in CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) is to provide learners with a diverse language choice and the opportunity to develop plurilingual competence.

Coste et al. (2009) argue that plurilingual competence is not a simple addition of monolingual competences in several languages, rather it is their dynamic combination and interrelation. In addition, the development of plurilingual competence promotes the emergence of linguistic awareness, metacognitive strategies, which give learners understanding in what way they handle their plurilingualism in practice. This can be achieved by an active inclusion of several languages in instruction through the implementation of pedagogical multilingual approaches.

Multilingual approaches (also called “pluralistic approaches”) are defined as those which involve more than one language or their varieties in teaching or learning practice. These approaches are opposed to monolingual (“singular”) approaches which consider only one language or culture, taken in isolation (Candelier et al., 2010).

According to Duarte and Kirsch (2020), multilingual approaches intend to incorporate several languages into the instruction processes due to the fact that students and teachers have various linguistic resources that can be acknowledged and used for foreign language learning. Consequently, we regard multilingual approaches as those used in multilingual education with the purpose to sustain and develop multilingualism.

The goal of applying multilingual approaches in practice may be dual-purpose. On the one hand, their use in the classroom aims at developing pluricultural and plurilingual competence in the environment where a variety of languages is recognized (Candelier et al., 2010, p. 10). On the other hand, multilingual approaches are called to bring together learners’ previous linguistic experience, which includes acquiring their home language or dialect and foreign languages.

With this in mind, in order to embrace the multilayered concept of multilingualism, multilingual approaches in the classroom can be used for different teaching purposes (Duarte & Kirsch, 2020). In our understanding, multilingual approaches in the classroom may serve two main goals:

- to foster multilingualism by means of creating multilingual materials, transforming tasks, providing multilingual assessment;
- to make use of the learners’ entire linguistic repertoire for enhancing language learning.

In this section the characteristics and implementation details of multilingual approaches, specifically language awareness, intercomprehension, immersion and content and language integrated learning (CLIL) will be discussed for their suitability for the Ukrainian context.

Language awareness can be viewed as a pedagogical approach applied to help learners gain insights in and about the language. A key element of this approach is that learners make their own language discovery in combination with fostering a positive attitude towards languages and language learning (Bolitho et al., 2003). Intercomprehension is a multilingual approach of teaching related languages where each participant understands the language of other participants while using their own languages in communication. In this process, the participants develop mostly the receptive competences in the language of their interlocutors (Celentin, 2020). The application of immersion means using the target language while teaching school subjects based on the curriculum identical to the local first language curriculum. It supports development in all the learner's languages, therefore additive bilingualism occurs (Bratož et al., n.d.). According to related studies (Tedick et al., 2011) immersion initially aims at developing multilingualism and intercultural understanding, it boosts language knowledge and skills through regular language practice. In addition, immersion can be applied to preserve endangered languages. On the other hand, this approach is criticised as it leads to “language separation pedagogies” (Günther-van der Meij et al., 2020). CLIL is an umbrella term which encompasses any activity in which “a foreign language is used as a tool in the learning of a non-language subject in which both language and the subject have a joint role” (as cited in Coyle, 2007, p. 545). CLIL promotes multilingualism because in this setting students are taught content subjects through two or more languages with the aim to progress in content subjects simultaneously improving a foreign language/languages (Hurajová, 2015).

The summarized information on the core characteristics of the multilingual approaches (intercomprehension, language awareness, immersion, CLIL) is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Core characteristics of multilingual approaches for the Ukrainian context

Approaches	Focus	Educational outcomes
Language awareness	Realising the way how languages work	Developing linguistic awareness. Promoting discovery learning. Fostering language learning strategies.
Intercomprehension	Using related languages simultaneously	Applying code-switching. Developing receptive competence. Developing linguistic awareness. Fostering language learning strategies.

Table 3: Continued

Approaches	Focus	Educational outcomes
Immersion	Using a target language for learning content	Developing communicative competence of a target language. Content learning.
CLIL	Teaching non-language subjects through the target languages	Non-language subject learning. Development of communicative competence.

As a next step, we will attempt to align the multilingual approaches to the three perspectives of multilingualism in the Ukrainian context: Promotion of linguistic diversity through the state language, the provision of an environment conducive for sustaining minority languages; and foreign language teaching and learning.

3.3.1. Promotion of linguistic diversity through the state language

Intercomprehension can be a suitable approach for teaching Ukrainian to citizens whose L1 is different from the national language and is linguistically related to Ukrainian (Russian, Belarussian, Polish, etc.). Nowadays, there is a general social and political tendency towards reestablishing an active use of Ukrainian for Russian speaking citizens of Ukraine through social media and blogs (Ohoiko, n.d.). The Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine has launched a national platform for studying the Ukrainian language with an ample collection of applications, courses and online resources (Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, n.d.). Although, to our knowledge, intercomprehension has not been investigated in the Ukrainian context as an approach to promote multilingualism with learners, it seems suitable for promoting Ukrainian with minority language speakers.

In the Ukrainian context, immersion is present as an approach aiming to integrate minority language speakers into the national educational system by means of acquiring Ukrainian in the educational environment. This approach is especially relevant for the areas where Russian (Donetsk, Kharkiv regions) or any other minority languages (Romanian, Hungarian in the Transcarpathian and Chernivtsi regions) is the L1 for the majority of the population. In these social settings, learners have an opportunity to develop a wide range of relevant language skills in Ukrainian in an authentic context being immersed in a school with Ukrainian as the language of instruction.

Language awareness as an approach that enhances multiple languages learning through language analysis and comparison can be applied in teaching Ukrainian to minority language speakers. This approach relies heavily on learners' linguistic repertoires, their previous language knowledge and skills, their cognitive skills of generalizing, hypothesizing, and learning strategies of compensation, substitution. The consistent application of language awareness approach may lead to recognizing linguistic diversity, developing motivation for further language discovery.

3.3.2. Provision of an environment conducive to sustaining minority languages

The intercomprehension approach can assist in sustaining minority languages which are related to the target language. In the Ukrainian context, it can be applied in the process of learning the national language or related foreign languages while learners use their home languages (Belarus, Polish, Bulgarian, Slovak, etc.) in the classroom.

Immersion, which initially had a function of keeping endangered languages alive (Tedick et al., 2011), can be recommended to be used extensively for this purpose in Ukraine. Furthermore, it can already be regarded as an existing approach to sustaining minority languages at schools (bilingual, trilingual, Sunday schools) with a minority language as a language of instruction. One vivid example of applying immersion is presented at pilot educational institutions of the Transcarpathian region where, under the initiative of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the experiment "Formation of multilingualism in children and students: Progressive European ideas in the Ukrainian context" (2015–2020) took place (Shumytska, 2020). The pilot schools have a choice between the models of bilingual study (transferring model, additive model) and the languages, which are taught (Slovak, Romanian, Hungarian).

CLIL can be used to support minority languages on condition that a minority language is the main language of instruction at bilingual or trilingual schools. The status of minority languages as the languages of instruction is ensured in the legislative documents as well. The approach can be successful for sustaining minority languages, provided there is a sufficient language support while teaching non-language subjects in minority languages.

3.4. Foreign language teaching and learning

The concept of foreign language teaching has been undergoing considerable changes marked by a multilingual turn. Consequently, English as a foreign

language has acquired various new functions. It is regarded as a “gateway” or bridging language (Cutrim-Schmid, 2021, p. 2) through which other languages can be taught: “It has been argued that, since English is the first foreign language taught in most schools in many parts of the world, it has the potential of becoming the default model for additional language learning” (Cutrim-Schmid, 2021, p. 2).

The newly acquired status of English is considerably relevant for the Ukrainian context as well. English is the first foreign language taught in most Ukrainian schools. Also, English as Indo-Germanic language bears strong similarities with other European languages (e.g., German) and even with Romance languages (e.g., French, Spanish) due to their shared Latin alphabet and numerous lexical concordances. Respectively, English can become a bridging language for acquiring new languages and developing language awareness.

In this light, the application of monolingual approaches to teaching English that are based on language separation pedagogy requires reconsideration in a modern language classroom. On the contrary, foreign language teaching requires approaches that will actively use students’ diverse linguistic repertoire as a resource for developing students’ multilingualism.

The overview shows that intercomprehension can be applied for this purpose in case English is regarded as a “gateway” language, taught accordingly and is used for learning a second foreign language. As a suitable approach for insights into mental processing with new foreign languages (Meißner, 2011), the use of intercomprehension in multilingual teaching can be beneficial for teaching other foreign languages (German, French, Spanish etc.) and for promoting multilingualism in the foreign language classroom.

CLIL has already been applied in order to promote multilingualism in the Ukrainian context. Firstly, CLIL methodology courses have been introduced in higher education curricula in the framework of the Erasmus+ project “Foreign Language Teacher Training Capacity Development as a Way to Ukraine’s Multilingual Education and European Integration” (MultiEd) (Multilingual Education Project Partners, n.d.) launched at eight Ukrainian universities. It aims at training pre-service English teachers to be able to apply CLIL at different levels of school education. Secondly, English is extensively used at specialized schools in Ukraine for teaching non-language subjects (e.g., Intellect School, Can School Ukraine, Pechersk School International). Though CLIL is already used as an approach in English, to our knowledge, its application for teaching other foreign languages in the Ukrainian context has not been theoretically investigated nor practically applied.

According to studies of multilingual education (Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, 2018; Günther-van der Meij et al., 2020), an integration of approaches is expected to bring a “multilingual turn” in foreign language teaching. The approaches analysed as a synergy (intercomprehension, language awareness, immersion and CLIL) will promote language and cultural diversity, through raising language awareness, fostering language learning strategies, enhancing reception and production in foreign languages and increasing students’ motivation and autonomy. Thus, the idea of creating an integration of multilingual approaches aims at making them fit for the purposes of foreign language education in the Ukrainian context.

4. Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to provide an analysis of multilingualism in the Ukrainian context from three perspectives: sociocultural, psychocognitive and pedagogical. We set out to examine in much detail the current socio-cultural, legislative and educational context for multilingualism in Ukraine and reviewed approaches for promoting multilingual education in Europe as well as the perspectives of their implementations in different educational settings in Ukraine.

Just like many other European states, Ukraine as a geographical area is multilingual and characterized by cultural and linguistic diversity. Language policy in Ukraine is in line with the Council of Europe language policy where language is regarded as an instrument for the personal, social, academic and professional development of the country. Multilingualism in Ukraine was approached from three perspectives: Promotion of linguistic diversity through the state language; sustaining minority languages; and promoting foreign language teaching and learning. On a legislative level, the state policy has a strong focus on developing their citizens’ identification with Ukraine, while at the same time maintaining the right of minority language speakers for the education in their language. According to the state policy, Ukraine has attained considerable achievement in integrating national minority speakers into the Ukrainian community as well as assisting them in preserving their languages.

Regarding foreign language teaching and learning, multilingual education is only just beginning to be tentatively introduced in most education contexts. Several initiatives were implemented in order to update language teaching curricula, reform pre-service teacher training programmes, revisit approaches to foreign language teaching and assist students in foreign language learning. These steps undeniably promote foreign language learning. However, students’ mastery in several foreign languages is achieved mostly through monolingual practices

with little or no focus on multilingualism. Obviously, despite a well-established theoretical basis, there is a gap between theory and its practical implementation. Traditional monolingual approaches that proclaim language separation pedagogies to teaching foreign languages seem to be dominant in a foreign language classroom in Ukraine.

Consequently, the analysis of the characteristics and implementation details of multilingual approaches (language awareness, intercomprehension, immersion and CLIL) have been considered in relation to the Ukrainian context. The advantages of the language awareness approach include fostering Ukrainian learners' positive attitude towards languages and language learning through language discovery and reflection on the language system. The characteristic feature of intercomprehension is to use two related languages simultaneously, which can bring benefits for both promoting Ukrainian and sustaining minority languages. The application of immersion means using the target language in teaching school subjects, which leads to fostering language knowledge and skills through regular language practice. Furthermore, it is used for preserving minority languages in some multilingual areas of Ukraine. CLIL is also applied to enhance language practice in communication in close connection with content learning and has already been both theoretically studied and practically applied in Ukrainian education.

The multilingual approaches are supposed to bring about changes in multilingual education in the Ukrainian context. Our analysis of multilingual approaches underscores the need to develop integration of multilingual approaches to teach foreign languages in a multilingual paradigm. In the process of teaching foreign languages, an integration of approaches can be beneficial in employing learners' multilingual repertoire in order to raise their linguistic awareness, foster language learning strategies, and enhance reception and production in targeted languages. Further research needs to aim at exploring the existing preconditions of applying multilingual education in the Ukrainian context.

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Carmen Konzett-Firth, Innsbruck University, Austria

Anastasia Drackert, RuhrUniversity Bochum/ g.a.s.t. e.V.,
TestDaF-Institut, Germany

Wolfgang Stadler, Innsbruck University, Austria

Judith Visser, RuhrUniversity Bochum, Germany

Same educational standards, same assessment needs?

The professional development needs of teachers of French, Italian, and Spanish in the area of language assessment

Abstract: Schools in Germany and Austria offer various foreign language courses in which teachers are expected to adhere to the same teaching and testing standards, and learners are supposed to achieve similar goals. However, these foreign languages have different teaching and testing traditions, their status and role in the curriculum vary, and access to assessment materials is not equally available. One could expect these divergences to lead to differences in teachers' perceived needs in terms of their language assessment competence.

This chapter presents the results of a needs analysis study conducted among French, Italian and Spanish teachers in academic secondary schools in Germany and Austria (Drackert et al., 2020), revealing teachers' expectations and requirements for professional language training regarding language assessment are indeed diverse. They can be linked to factors such as teachers' respective initial training programmes, their traditional "teaching cultures", and local educational requirements.

Keywords: language assessment literacy, Romance languages, secondary schools, foreign languages, perceived needs

1. Introduction

In the world of global ELT, testing and assessment have played an essential role for a long time, especially in the context of international English proficiency certifications and English as a second language, with certification bodies and examination boards usually located in European or North American institutions. By contrast, Austria and Germany have only recently introduced standards supported by language testing research into curricula and examinations in foreign language teaching in state schools, leading to rising awareness

of language assessment issues among stakeholders. The introduction of testing and assessment standards has been primarily instigated top-down by reforming high school curricula and exam formats, forcing teachers to extend their language assessment literacy. However, there has also been a bottom-up movement in recent years, as language assessment has become a topical issue in pre-and in-service teacher education in Germany and Austria (Dalton-Puffer et al., 2019; Hinger & Stadler, 2018). Some significant changes have included transitioning towards a more competence-oriented, differentiating view of student performances and moving away from traditional and longstanding methods such as error quotients. This change in perspective has been crucial for schoolteachers and has brought to light the status quo of their language assessment ability and the need for more knowledge transfer and competence training (Harsch, 2015). Research on language assessment literacy (LAL), i.e., knowledge about language testing principles and functions and the practical ability to apply this knowledge to testing and assessing in the classroom (e.g., Fulcher, 2012; Harding & Kremmel, 2016; *Special Issue of Language Testing*, 3/2013; Tsagari & Vogt, 2017; Tsagari, 2020; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014; Vogt et al., 2020), has found that language teachers' theoretical knowledge and practical skills play a pivotal role in their teaching. It has also become clear that it is neither sufficient nor desirable for teachers to base their competence solely on their learning biography, their experience as teachers, their exchange with colleagues or on "learning on the job" (Drackert et al., 2020, p. 52). Instead, teachers should acquire basic theoretical and applied knowledge in their training, allowing them to make independent, competent decisions about testing and assessing student performances. School teachers have to prepare their students for external standardized exams and apply their knowledge about valid assessment and fair grading in the classroom every day (Hinger, 2018; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014).

In this chapter, we will focus on teachers of French, Italian and Spanish in Austria and Germany and their individual needs in terms of LAL. Studying the language assessment training needs of teachers of Romance languages (TORL) widens the horizon of LAL research and provides insights into the specific contexts and requirements of teachers of a "language other than English" (Michel et al., 2021). The teachers studied in our data form a specific sub-group not only because they teach languages that are part of the same language family (Romance) but also because these languages are the most taught second or third foreign languages in Austrian and German schools after English (which is almost always the first foreign language).

However, there are also essential divergences within that group, i.e., between the individual languages. While French is a language commonly taught as a

second foreign language across Austria and all the German federal states, the situation for Italian and Spanish shows regional differences. For example, significantly fewer teaching materials and relevant teaching journals are available for Italian as a Foreign Language than for French or Spanish. There are also fewer scholars specializing in Teaching Italian as a Foreign Language at German higher education institutions than those representing French or Spanish language pedagogy (cf. Grünewald & Verriere, 2015).

2. Components of TORL's LAL

2.1. Conceptualizations of teacher LAL

Although there is consensus that knowledge, skills, and principles make up LAL, the research literature does not (yet) provide a canonical list of specific abilities. However, there are several models whose common features provide a sound basis for training programmes and further research. Existing models of LAL either build on theoretical and experience-based reasonings by experts (e.g., scientists, test experts or teacher trainers) or needs analyses based on surveys of different stakeholders (e.g., teachers from different contexts).

Overall, researchers agree that the concept of LAL is multi-faceted and complex, consisting of several differently structured areas that are related to other scientific domains. Moreover, language teachers constitute only one of several possible stakeholder groups for whom LAL is relevant. Each group has different needs and requirements concerning the scope of their assessment competence. For some groups – for instance, persons in charge of educational policies or learners – it may be sufficient to have an overview of fundamental principles of assessment processes without needing to know the technical details. Others – for instance, professional testing experts who design and evaluate standardized high-stakes exams – must have in-depth and comprehensive knowledge of the whole field of testing and assessment (cf. Taylor, 2013). Language teachers can probably be situated somewhere between the two poles on this continuum. On the one hand, they need basic knowledge in almost all areas of testing and assessment. However, they should also develop specific skills for assessing and grading learner performances in school teaching (Taylor, 2013). Some researchers specifically investigate *teacher* assessment literacy (Harding & Kremmel, 2016; Wagner & Werry, 2015; Werry & Wagner, 2010), focusing on the particular needs of this target group.

Fulcher (2012, p. 125) has provided a frequently quoted definition of LAL referring to teachers in particular. He lists the following components:

The knowledge, skills and abilities required to design, develop, maintain or evaluate large-scale standardized or classroom based tests, familiarity with test processes, and awareness of principles and concepts that guide and underpin practice, including ethics and codes of practice. The ability to place knowledge, skills, processes, principles and concepts within wider historical, social, political and philosophical frameworks to understand why practices have arisen as they have and to evaluate the role and impact of testing on society, institutions, and individuals.

The LAL model by Taylor (2013) groups these concrete aspects into larger units and locates them in a diagram in which it is also possible to distinguish different *levels* of competence (see Figure 1):

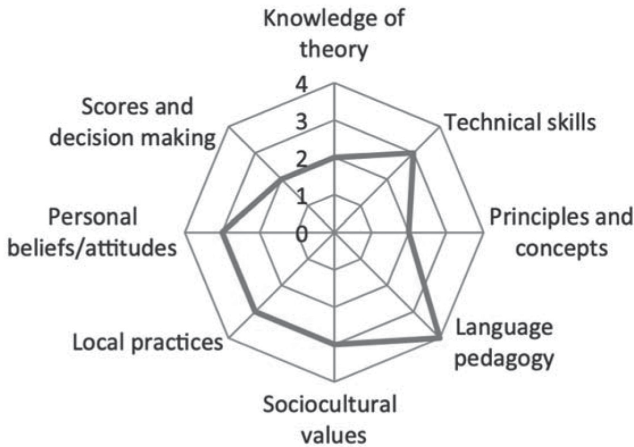


Figure 1: Assessment literacy profile for classroom teachers according to Taylor (2013, p. 410)

In this diagram, which depicts the LAL needs as Taylor assumes them for “classroom teachers”, the radial threads of the web represent the different components of LAL and the frame threads the different levels of competence, with competence increasing from the inside towards the outside. According to this model, teachers would require a high amount of knowledge and competence with regard to language pedagogy. They would need to have good technical skills, be good at managing subjective theories, personal beliefs and attitudes, know a lot about sociocultural values of testing and assessment and be knowledgeable about local assessment practices. Taylor sees a lesser need for them to

know about evaluations of tests and decision-making as well as theoretical and conceptual knowledge of testing and assessment.

This does not quite represent the situation in our context of foreign language teachers at secondary schools in Germany and Austria (cf. Hinger, 2018, p. 182). Throughout the years leading up to the final school-leaving exam, these teachers do have to diagnose, evaluate and assess their students entirely independently and use the results of their assessments to draw conclusions about further teaching and learning processes. In other words, they need a very high competence in classroom assessment (Vogt & Tsagari, 2014). Even within the context of the (partially) standardized final examinations in Austrian and German schools, a large part of the assessment and grading process (e.g., assessment of oral competence, marking and scoring of written production) is in the hands of teachers. In view of these challenging tasks, it seems as though teachers also need a high – if not the highest – amount of theoretical and practical knowledge about test principles, test theories and decision processes related to assessments.

LAL research has also shown that the assessment competence within the various stakeholder groups is complex and dynamic (Kremmel & Harding, 2020). LAL can be divided into sub-components that can be rank ordered (as in Fulcher's 2012 model), allowing a prioritization of different components for different target groups (e.g., as described by Pill & Harding, 2013, p. 383). So far, we know very little about the effectiveness of the different LAL competence models for training purposes (Harding & Kremmel, 2016; Harsch, 2015). However, the development of LAL seems to benefit from training designed in a context-sensitive manner for the target group and the local assessment context (Harding & Kremmel, 2016; Vogt et al., 2020). In line with these considerations, this paper provides some empirical insights into the needs and requirements of TORL in Germany and Austria.

2.2. Status of LAL in Romance language teacher training in German-speaking countries

Although school teachers have always been responsible for both teaching *and* testing in their classrooms (Vogt, 2010), language assessment does not enjoy much popularity in German and Austrian language teacher education. A cursory survey of publications in pre- and in-service training for TORL (i.e., French, Italian and Spanish) shows that testing and assessment are relatively infrequent topics. Relevant (German language) journals for this domain have included only two special issues on the topic since 2010 (one in *Der fremdsprachliche Unterricht Französisch* in 2010, another in *Der fremdsprachliche Unterricht Spanisch* in

2016). German introductions to teaching Romance languages usually contain relatively short chapters on language testing, although newer editions seem to have increased the focus on LAL: while the first edition of the popular introductory text by Decke-Cornill and Küster (2010) only consisted of a few pages (198–203) on the evaluation and assessment of learner performances, the third edition (32015) dedicates a whole chapter to this topic. Similarly, Nieweler's (2017) introduction to French language pedagogy includes a chapter on "Evaluating, diagnosing, assessing and supporting", while an older edition (2009) did not feature "testing" in any of the chapter headings. Other frequently used introductions present a similar pattern (e.g., Fäcke, 2017 vs. 2011) or touch upon the topic relatively briefly (e.g., Bär & Franke, 2016; Koch, 2020; Michler & Reimann, 2019; Sommerfeldt, 2011). This is not meant as a criticism of the quality of these introductory texts, which naturally have to be selective about the content they choose to include. Given the complexity, scope and dynamics of teachers' work, introductions to language teaching necessarily have to make a choice that will not cater for all aspects. However, testing competence / LAL does not yet play a central role in basic textbooks for teachers of (Romance) languages in Germany and Austria. There are blurry boundaries between concepts such as testing, examining, evaluating, assessing and diagnosing. Since this could affect teachers' LAL, it is worthwhile to explore how training in language testing and assessment should be increased and extended. This is the point of departure for the empirical study presented in this paper: a survey of secondary school TORL in Germany and Austria, leading to evidence-based suggestions for target-specific training in the area of language testing and assessment.

Drackert et al. (2020) discuss subjective theories of Austrian and German TORL on language testing and assessment. When asked about the purpose of their classroom assessment activities (exams, tests, evaluations), teachers gave many answers that went beyond the evaluation and grading of student performances. They prioritized other, more learning-oriented aspects such as evaluating students' learning progress, diagnosing learners' competences, and giving feedback. Teachers also considered testing as a means of training and applying skills and a way of consolidating knowledge. They often referred to "differentiation" in their answers, meaning that tests should offer items for stronger as well as weaker students and pay attention to their different performance abilities.

Teachers' beliefs imply objective needs for training. The study described in Drackert et al. (2020) reveals that TORL in Austria and Germany may not have had enough training with respect to construct validity. Teachers are unsure what classroom assessment instruments measure and for which purpose they should be used. There also seems to be a necessity for training on adapting tests and test

items to the learners' competence level and the contents taught in class. Another issue seems to be test design in the context of classroom assessment and issues of heterogeneity and feedback in classroom assessment.

3. Romance language teachers' professional development needs in the area of language testing and assessment

3.1. Study design

The data discussed in this paper was obtained through a needs analysis survey conducted among teachers of the three Romance languages, French, Italian and Spanish in Austrian and German schools. Data collection was carried out in autumn/winter 2017/18 using a three-part online questionnaire¹ adapted from a questionnaire developed by Drackert and Stadler (2017, 2018) for a survey with teachers of Russian as a foreign language.

3.2. Participants

A total of 613 TORL participated in the study; 501 filled in the entire questionnaire. Of the 613 participants, 504 were teaching at schools in Germany and 109 at schools in Austria at the time of data collection (autumn/winter 2017/18). 358 were teaching French, 194 Spanish and 61 Italian. The most frequent type of school was "Gymnasium", an academically oriented type of secondary school ($N = 389$). The participants' work experience ranged from 1 to 30 years, with a third (31.6 %) having more than a 10-year-experience. 64.8 % of the participants said that they were involved in the development, invigilation or marking of school leaving exams ("Abitur" in Germany, "Matura" in Austria). About a third of the teachers (31.8 %) reported spending between 20 % and 30 % of their class preparation time on assessment activities.

3.3. Data collection and analysis

The first part (Questions 1–11) asked for participants' personal and professional data. Questions (Q) included teachers' L1, the location of their school, the type of school, level at which they teach, experience in test development, the relevance of topics relating to testing, assessment and evaluation during their initial training, and their involvement in the school-leaving exams. The second part (Q 12–23) consisted of 12 open and closed questions about teachers' language

1 See <https://tinyurl.com/y6qxskzv> for the complete questionnaire.

assessment competence and assessment practices, particularly in the classroom. This included questions about guidelines and criteria for assessment, the purpose of assessment in language classrooms, the frequency of assessment of different skills and the use of different task types and test formats. Q 24 and 25 in the third part were dedicated to the needs TORL expressed for future professional development courses in testing and assessment.

This study focuses on teachers' answers to two background questions (Q10, Q11) as well as two specific questions targeting teacher training needs (Q24, Q25):

- Q10:** Where/when in your teacher training did you learn something about testing and assessment?
- Q11:** What were the main contents of these courses or trainings?
- Q24:** Which topics in the area of testing language competences in French/Italian/Spanish would you like to be covered in an in-service teacher training course?
- Q25:** Please rate the importance of the following topics of in-service teacher training courses for your job as a teacher of French/Italian/Spanish (on a scale ranging from "not at all important" (=1) to "very important" (=6)).

The data was analyzed using SPSS 27. For Q25, we calculated means and standard deviations for rating each option, whereas the answers for the open-ended Qs 11 and 24 needed to be categorized first. To group teachers' open answers, we used Drackert and Stadler's (2017) categorization from their previous survey as a starting point, adding additional categories where necessary. Each author analyzed the answers responding to the open-ended questions separately at first, and then the individual categorization of answers was compared by all authors in a cross-checking procedure.

4. Results: Teachers' needs and wishes in the area of language testing and assessment

This section will present and summarize the answers teachers gave to Q10, Q11, Q24 and Q25, thereby providing information about the kind of training in language testing and assessment teachers have already received and about the needs these teachers perceive for further training on these topics.

4.1. The role of testing and assessment in teachers' pre-service training

In order to gain access to teachers' wishes and needs respectively, respondents were asked to convey what role the topic of testing and evaluating played in their pre-service training (Q10). They were first asked to report if they had acquired

knowledge in this area during their studies or during their post-graduate training phase (one school year in Austria, between 16 and 24 months in Germany). 200 teachers chose “during my studies” and 584 chose “during the training phase”. Some teachers selected both options. So, while almost all teachers had experienced some training in testing and assessment in their initial practical teaching phase, only about a third reported having been taught anything about testing and assessment in their pre-service study programmes.

Q11, an open question, set out to identify which topics had been covered by the courses mentioned in Q10. Altogether, 553 teachers named 908 aspects, which were grouped into 19 categories.

Table 1: Topics covered by pre-service teacher training courses

Contents	Total (N) 553	FR (N) 321	SP (N) 178	IT (N) 54
Designing and marking tests	17.8 %	19.7 %	16.1 %	12.5 %
Assessing productive skills	12.3 %	10.7 %	12.6 %	21.6 %
Error correction	12.3 %	11.4 %	12.9 %	15.9 %
Other	9.3 %	10.1 %	9.1 %	5.7 %
Assessment of participation	7.0 %	7.1 %	6.6 %	8.0 %
Competence oriented assessment (general)	6.0 %	6.2 %	5.6 %	6.8 %
Grading	6.0 %	5.6 %	6.3 %	8.0 %
Quality criteria	4.5 %	4.7 %	4.5 %	3.4 %
Assessment of learner performances	4.4 %	3.9 %	6.3 %	1.1 %
Legal requirements	4.2 %	3.9 %	4.5 %	2.0 %
There was no course about this.	3.6 %	3.7 %	3.8 %	2.3 %
Test formats	2.5 %	2.2 %	2.4 %	4.5 %
Functions of assessment: diagnosing, motivating, feedback to students	2.0 %	1.9 %	2.1 %	2.3 %
School-leaving exams (“Abitur”, “Matura”)	1.8 %	2.2 %	1.0 %	1.1 %
Competence oriented assessment (according to CEFR; integrative assessment)	1.5 %	1.5 %	1.4 %	2.3 %
Positive correction	1.4 %	1.9 %	1.0 %	0.0 %
Assessment of receptive skills	1.1 %	1.3 %	1.0 %	0.0 %
Alternative test formats	1.1 %	0.6 %	2.1 %	1.1 %
Assessment of individual skills	1.0 %	1.3 %	0.3 %	1.1 %

As can be seen in Table 1, the category “Designing and marking tests” (17.8 %) was mentioned most often. This is followed by the categories “Assessing productive skills” (12.3 %), “Error correction” (12.3 %), “Other” (9.3 %) and “Competence oriented assessment” (7.0 %). The category “Other” includes dealing with heterogeneity and dyslexia when testing and assessing, as well as transparency and internal differentiation.

Teachers of French most often mentioned aspects subsumed under the category “Designing and marking tests” (19.7 %). Considerably fewer mentions were made by this group of teachers regarding aspects of “Error correction” (11.4 %) and “Assessing productive skills” (10.7 %). “Assessment of participation” was listed in 7.1 % of answers. A similar picture emerges for teachers of Spanish: they listed the same aspects in the same categories and in the same order of frequency. Teachers of Italian, however, named aspects regarding “Assessment of productive skills” most frequently (21.6 %), followed by “Error correction” (15.9 %) and “Designing and marking tests” (12.5 %). The next two categories given by teachers of Italian are “Assessment of participation” and “Grading” (each featured in 8.0 % of answers), and “Competence oriented assessment (general)” (6.8 %).

Although the results of the group “Teachers of Italian” might be less representative than those of the other groups due to the lower number of respondents ($N = 54$), it is possible to compare teachers’ reports across the languages: in all three groups, “Error correction” takes second place in the ranking of the most frequent answers. While teachers of French and Spanish gave remarkably similar answers, the responses by teachers of Italian differed more substantially. French and Spanish teachers listed “Designing and marking tests” most often, but in the Italian teachers’ group, this category only occupied third place. Conversely, in the Italian group, aspects related to “Assessing productive skills” were mentioned most frequently.

In summary, the data confirm the assumption that language assessment is one of the less popular topics in German and Austrian language teacher education.

4.2. Teacher training needs in testing and assessment

Q24 was designed as an open question to find out what teachers themselves perceived as needs in the field of their own LAL. They were asked to name three topics from the area of testing and assessment that they would like to see in a teacher training workshop. A total of 443 teachers answered this question.

Table 2: Teachers' wishes for future teacher training courses on testing and assessment

Teacher training expectations	Total (N) 443	FR (N) 246	SP (N) 150	IT (N) 47
Other topics connected with teaching	17.6 %	18.6 %	15.3 %	19.1 %
Designing speaking test tasks and assessment of oral production	14.4 %	15.8 %	12.2 %	14.0 %
Designing (good) tests and test items	13.5 %	14.2 %	13.2 %	11.0 %
Finding, designing and assessing test tasks for audiovisual comprehension	7.1 %	5.1 %	9.3 %	10.3 %
Alternative forms of testing	6.3 %	6.6 %	6.0 %	5.9 %
Designing and assessing mediation tasks	4.3 %	3.8 %	6.0 %	1.5 %
Other (involving testing)	3.5 %	3.3 %	4.3 %	2.2 %
Error correction	3.3 %	3.8 %	2.9 %	2.2 %
Dealing with heterogeneity	3.0 %	3.8 %	2.6 %	0.7 %
Designing writing tasks and assessing written production	2.9 %	3.0 %	2.4 %	3.7 %
Designing and assessing tasks for the four skills (general)	2.8 %	2.6 %	2.9 %	3.7 %
Designing and assessing test tasks for grammar, language in context or lexis	2.7 %	3.0 %	2.9 %	0.7 %
Preparation for the new formats of the school leaving exam	2.2 %	1.6 %	2.4 %	4.4 %
Assessing intercultural and sociolinguistic competences	2.2 %	1.3 %	3.8 %	1.5 %
Finding, designing and assessing reading tasks	2.0 %	1.6 %	1.7 %	5.1 %
Legal conditions of testing	2.0 %	0.7 %	2.9 %	5.9 %
Designing and assessing differentiating tests	1.9 %	1.6 %	3.1 %	0.0 %
Ready-made test tasks	1.8 %	1.9 %	1.0 %	4.4 %
Assessment of participation, project and group work	1.2 %	1.6 %	1.0 %	0.0 %
Grading	1.1 %	1.7 %	0.5 %	0.0 %
Online Testing	1.0 %	1.2 %	0.7 %	1.5 %
Testing for diagnostic purposes	1.0 %	1.2 %	0.7 %	1.5 %
Motivation	1.0 %	1.2 %	1.2 %	0.0 %
Media in foreign language teaching	0.7 %	0.7 %	0.7 %	0.7 %
(Development of) authentic tasks	0.3 %	0.3 %	0.5 %	0.0 %

Table 2 contains 25 categories generated from the answers given by participants. The sheer range of answers displays the high sensitivity with regard to testing among the survey participants. However, the category ranked highest is “Other topics connected with teaching” (17.6 %), in other words, a residual category containing aspects that were not directly linked to testing and which did not answer the question “Which topics would you like to see in a professional development workshop on testing and assessment of French/Italian/Spanish competences?” The answers subsumed in this category included “vocabulary work in the upper secondary level”, “citation” or “drama pedagogy”, which underlines the participants’ wishes for teaching rather than testing scenarios in training sessions, i.e., for workshops aimed at teaching rather than assessment.

The second and third place in the rank order of frequency are occupied by the categories “Designing speaking test tasks and assessment of oral production” (14.4 %) and “Designing (good) tests and test items” (13.5 %). When comparing the answers of teachers of the three different languages, we can see that teachers of Spanish and Italian seem to have a much higher (almost double) need for training in the area of audiovisual test tasks than teachers of French. Conversely, mediation tasks seem to be a more relevant teacher training issue for teachers of Spanish (6 %) and French (3.8 %) than Italian (1.5 %). However, altogether, the need for training on the topic of mediation does not seem to be very pronounced. The categories “Designing and assessing test tasks for grammar, language in context and lexis” contain fewer responses by teachers of Italian than by those of other languages. In contrast, teachers of French more frequently name aspects belonging to the area of “Error correction”. Further, more teachers of Italian have requested ready-made test tasks and training for reading tasks than teachers of other languages. And finally, teachers of Spanish have been more numerous to mention “Assessment of intercultural and sociolinguistic competences” than teachers of the other two languages.

The answers show that teachers have a substantial number of needs in the area of assessment, and these seem to differ depending on the language they teach.

4.3. Evaluation of teacher training topics in testing and assessment

Q 25 asked respondents to evaluate 15 given teacher training topics on a scale ranging from “not at all important” (=1) to “very important” (=6). The question aimed to identify further possibly important topics that had not been mentioned in the answers to the open question (Q24). The table shows the mean importance (M) of each rating as well as the standard deviation (SD) for the whole teacher population and the three languages separately (= number in brackets).

Table 3: Evaluation of teacher training topics in testing and assessment

	Total (N) 503	FR(N) 292	SP(N) 160	IT (N) 51
Rating scales for speaking, writing and mediation	4.72 (1.47)	4.82 (1.42)	4.53 (1.57)	4.76 (1.41)
Design and assessment of classroom tests	4.51 (1.50)	4.48 (1.53)	4.58 (1.49)	4.49 (1.38)
Effective feedback based on test results	4.37(1.38)	4.44 (1.36)	4.29 (1.41)	4.25 (1.44)
Assessment of project work in foreign language teaching	4.29 (1.49)	4.38 (1.48)	4.23 (1.50)	3.96 (1.52)
Advantages and disadvantages of different task formats	4.24 (1.54)	4.33 (1.55)	4.12 (1.51)	4.14 (1.54)
Analysis and evaluation of an administered test	4.05 (1.39)	4.04 (1.38)	4.06 (1.41)	4.14 (1.41)
Design and assessment of school leaving exams	4.02 (1.80)	3.83 (1.91)	4.26 (1.67)	4.35 (1.37)
Continuous formative assessment (<i>progress checks</i>)	3.94 (1.45)	3.97 (1.41)	3.78 (1.49)	4.27 (1.44)
French proficiency certificate DELF/ Italian proficiency certificate CELI/ Spanish proficiency certificate DELE	3.90 (1.57)	4.02 (1.58)	3.64 (1.55)	4.00 (1.51)
Assessment of intercultural competences	3.88 (1.36)	3.87 (1.33)	3.93 (1.39)	3.82 (1.40)
Adaptation of existing tests for one's own teaching	3.88 (1.59)	4.01 (1.56)	3.64 (1.66)	3.82 (1.49)
Assessment of integrated skills	3.87 (1.39)	3.85 (1.37)	3.83 (1.43)	4.12 (1.34)
Designing test specifications (information about the structure and content of a test)	3.85 (1.54)	3.89 (1.58)	3.71 (1.51)	4.08 (1.31)
Self-evaluation (learners assess themselves) in foreign language teaching	3.69 (1.52)	3.74 (1.51)	3.66 (1.46)	3.45 (1.72)
Peer-assessment (learners assess each other) in foreign language teaching	3.61 (1.48)	3.71 (1.45)	3.56 (1.43)	3.16 (1.67)

Table 3 shows that overall, teachers consider the following three potential topics most important for training: (1) “rating scales for speaking, writing and mediation” ($M = 4.72$), (2) “Design and assessment of classroom tests” ($M = 4.51$) and (3) “Effective feedback based on test results” ($M = 4.37$). Self-evaluation and peer-assessment received the lowest ratings by the teachers in comparison with

the other aspects, but on the whole, all topics were evaluated as “important” or “very important”. This indicates a high awareness of many aspects of testing and assessment by teachers of all three languages.

The answers to Q24 and Q25 reveal that respondents are sensitive to the complexity of testing and assessment as they rate almost all topics as highly relevant for their professional training. However, several of the topics that were judged as very important in Q25 were not mentioned in the answers to the open question Q24, for instance “Effective feedback on the basis of test results”, “Analysis and evaluation of administered tests”, “Advantages and disadvantages of different task formats”, “Designing test specifications”, “Proficiency certificates”, “Assessment of integrated skills”, and “Progress checks”. By contrast, the aspects “self-evaluation” and “peer assessment” were mentioned in Q24 but not considered as important in the answers to Q25 – this may be due to the fact that teachers are well aware of these assessment methods and do not feel they need much training in this area. Altogether, the divergences between Q24 and Q25 show that TORL in Austria and Germany are conscious of testing and assessment issues, yet there is still room for improvement.

5. Discussion of results

The results of the questionnaire presented above provide an overview of teacher training needs in testing and assessment for TORL in Germany and Austria. First, the answers show some variance between the different language teacher groups: generally, the answers given by teachers of Italian seem to differ more strongly from those of teachers of Spanish and French. This may be due to the small number of Italian teachers among the questionnaire participants but could also be attributed to the differences in “teaching cultures” (cf. Drackert & Stadler, 2017, 2018). For one, Italian is the least frequently taught language of the three. This means that in many schools, Italian is only offered as a subject in the upper secondary cycle and students only achieve basic proficiency. Moreover, the low overall number of lessons per week often means that Italian cannot be chosen as a subject in the school-leaving exam. Italian is therefore generally considered a “minor” school language with fewer pupils and teachers, and consequently, there are fewer offers of teaching and testing materials for this target market by publishers (cf. Thiele, 2021, pp. 92–93).

Another diverging case in point is the perceived need for training in designing and assessing language mediation tasks, something that teachers of French and Spanish mentioned but teachers of Italian did not. This disparity may be related to a lack of subject-specific teaching material for the first two languages while

German teachers of Italian have long been able to refer to an in-depth reference work on the topic (Katelhön & Nied Curcio, 2012). The example shows that it may be very specific contextual factors, such as particular publications relevant to the target teaching group, that determine teachers' training requirements.

In some other cases, teachers of Spanish and Italian gave similar answers, and the group of French teachers was the one to diverge. For instance, the first two groups indicated a much greater need for training in the field of "Finding, designing and assessing audio/visual test tasks" than teachers of French, especially among teachers in Germany. This may be linked to the fact that French is among the most frequently taught foreign languages at German schools and has been treated extensively by educational institutions such as the IQB (Institute for Educational Quality Improvement), which provide freely available test tasks for French but not for the other two languages. Austrian teachers generally see less of a need for training in this area, which might be since quite a lot of relevant audio/visual tasks for Romance languages are now available through the ÖSZ (Austrian Competence Centre for Languages). Furthermore, teachers of Spanish and Italian saw a greater need for training in designing and assessing school leaving exams, whereas French teachers did not consider this aspect very important. This could again be due to the greater availability of material for French as a foreign language in the German-speaking market, linked to the relative importance of French as a foreign language at school compared to Spanish and Italian.

In one case, teachers of Spanish stand out from the rest: they seem to be more aware of the importance of "Assessment of intercultural and sociolinguistic competences" than teachers of the other two languages. A possible interpretation might involve the fact that the Spanish-speaking area is extremely large (official or co-official language in 21 countries, native speakers in Europe, North, Central, South America, Africa and Asia, cf. Ossenkop, 2013) and diverse and that Spanish, therefore, offers more alterity experiences to German and Austrian students than the other two languages.

Other topics mentioned by all teachers were issues such as heterogeneous learner groups, dealing with learners who have dyslexia, transparency and differentiated instruction. These are topics that are currently much discussed in German and Austrian teaching in general (due to the signing of the "Convention of the United Nations on the rights of persons with disabilities" in both countries) – not just of languages – and have also been reflected by TORL, as visible in the responses to our survey.

If we compare teachers' answers to Q24 and Q25 with the answers they gave to the question on their pre-service training (Q11), we can see that teachers indicate a desire to receive more training in areas such as "Assessment of productive

skills”, “Designing and marking tests” or “Error correction” despite having had some pre-service training on these topics. Generally, teachers report that their pre-service training was either entirely theoretical or mostly limited to assessment practices. However, teachers’ answers to Q24 and Q25 show that they are well aware that LAL is not only about assessing performances but also about other aspects, such as finding/choosing/designing good tasks or test items. It seems that in their daily practice, teachers experience many challenges which – according to them – were not addressed during their studies or their practical teacher training. Either these topics were not included, or the training failed to enable a transfer from theory into practice.

Overall, the results seem to reflect the major changes to the school exam structures Germany and Austria have witnessed in the last ten years: standardized exam formats, psychometric test analysis used for item development, and compulsory use of rating scales for assessing productive skills. Through a washback effect, these innovations have led to seismic shifts in Austria and Germany’s language classrooms and have changed teachers’ views on testing and assessment. Romance language teachers are often considered to be in a less fortunate position to implement changes regarding testing and assessment procedures: first, because most research literature on testing is published in English and is thus less accessible for German and Romance language users (cf. also the status of testing and assessment in the teacher training literature described in 1.3), and second, because Romance languages are less wide-spread in schools than English (which is the compulsory first foreign language in almost all school types). Hence, this has led to fewer test materials (sample tests, model performances and model ratings, and ready-made test items) being available for the Romance language teachers, although testing institutions and publishing houses have recently caught up with these rapid developments.

6. Conclusion

Our needs analysis based on a survey of TORL in Austria and Germany reveals a relatively lucid picture of the needs of this group. Some aspects stand out as crucial for all of them. At the same time, there are also divergences between the different language groups and sometimes between the two countries, Austria and Germany (results that were not discussed here, but see Drackert et al., 2022). On the whole, teachers’ demands seem to be very diverse. The results not only show which particular contents are likely to be relevant and fruitful in teacher training courses offered to TORL, but they also confirm that professional development should be tailored to the specific educational contexts and needs of the

target group. Furthermore, it seems that educational standards only play one role among many. Other aspects, such as the status of the foreign language in the school system, the availability of relevant textbooks and testing material and teachers' own training history are at least as important, if not more, for the emergence and establishment of teacher training expectations. It would seem fruitful to explore these aspects separately and more in-depth in future studies. A comparison of school teachers' needs with those of teachers of the same languages in tertiary education (universities) should also be insightful for the specific needs of teachers of languages other than English.

It is beyond doubt that recent challenges imposed by the COVID-19 crisis might have impacted some of the needs of teachers, particularly concerning media-supported testing and assessment in digital and distance-learning contexts. However, as the survey was carried out long before the outbreak of COVID, these needs are not taken into account. It would therefore be important in future research to compare teachers' needs regarding assessment in the post-COVID era.

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Dina Tsagari, Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway

Karin Vogt, University of Education Heidelberg, Germany

Foreign language learning, teaching and assessment in multilingual contexts – In conversation with Dina Tsagari

Karin Vogt: In terms of multilingual communities, what would be the principles of teaching English as an international language to multilingual learner groups?

Dina Tsagari: From the perspective of teachers or from the perspective of students?

Karin Vogt: Maybe teachers first.

Dina Tsagari: Well, I am going to be talking a bit about Norway, even though I don't call myself an expert there. It depends on the type of school and the school resources. If it is an international school or a private school where students have to pay fees, then integrating multilingual students is done in different ways than in schools located in the city center which receive a large number of students or in schools that receive a very small number of multilingual students in a rural area. So, it very much depends on whether you are teaching in a highly multilingual school or whether you have enough resources in the school or whether there's enough teacher training, and of course, it goes without saying, what kind of teacher you are, and whether you accept differences, and whether you are prepared to get out of your usual kind of routines as well to accommodate the needs of non-standard ways of teaching and learning. On top of that is your own awareness and perception of what English as an international language is all about. How you view language, and in this case English: as a way to communicate, to support, to integrate or to teach.

Karin Vogt: What kind of role would English as an international language have then?

Dina Tsagari: I wouldn't say there's a rule to that. Well, it depends on the perspective you're taking. For example, are you teaching English because you are trying to develop a window to the world of students who are going to be citizens of the 21st century? Or are you looking at a subject – a school subject – that needs to be taught in the usual formal way? Or do you see English as a language that is changing. There are so many things around the issue of teaching English as an international language, right?

Karin Vogt: Would it make a difference as to what kind of languages the learners have and bring to the classroom?

Dina Tsagari: Absolutely. It would make a very big difference. First of all, it would make a difference in the sense that if as a teacher you share or understand some

of the languages your students use. This makes it easier to identify yourself with the language and the culture of the students, in other words be aware of any similarity with the structure, the sounds, and lexis, vocabulary of the language. If the teacher is open to take on some of the languages of the students. Not learning the languages of the students, but at least some basic words. Or if the teacher is willing to use the students' linguistic resources in their teaching or communication.

Karin Vogt: Can you give an example from your own research?

Dina Tsagari: For example, we, with a group of other researchers from Oslo Metropolitan University, have worked on a project already where we have attended English language classes in first and second years in a primary school. We could see that the teachers very often fell back into Norwegian, which was very interesting to me in a multilingual classroom where the majority of the students might not have Norwegian as a functioning language yet. Sometimes some of the teachers that we observed could even use other types of communication. For example, one of the English teachers we observed came to Norway some years ago from Sweden. His Norwegian was not very advanced. So, on and off we could hear that he was using some vocabulary in Swedish thinking that this could be helping students given the similarities between Swedish and Norwegian and in absence of English in the students. And most interestingly, when some students in the room with multilingual background could not understand the teacher who would revert to Norwegian, thinking this could help the students in learning English, we saw others supporting them and explaining things in English. So, when there was a lack of teaching methods, students themselves were helping each other. This was frequently done when students were working in groups. That was very interesting to observe.

Karin Vogt: Absolutely. So, what kind of implications do you see for assessment in such an environment?

Dina Tsagari: I hope that teachers will be able to recognize the meaning and the power of formative assessment in these settings, especially of self- and peer-assessment. Giving agency and voice to students themselves is very important and not being afraid of using multilingual practices in terms of using several languages or as many languages as possible in the teaching of English as a foreign language. Consequences for assessment? Definitely the Assessment for Learning paradigm, formative assessment. Using a lot of peer assessment, especially when students are working in groups and perhaps self-assessment in students' chosen languages, especially for the younger ones. On the basis of careful profiling of students.

Karin Vogt: So, it would be important to know about the learner group.

Dina Tsagari: Yes, that is true. Knowing whose language proficiency needs support and whose does not and what the students prefer is very important indeed. It's not the authority that dictates. And those who don't have the authority or the knowledge to receive knowledge. We are all together in this. And

from other projects that we conducted with other colleagues we realized that very often us, the researchers, or the teacher educators are a step behind the practitioners in class in terms of practice. Teachers use not only summative assessment but also formative assessment practices in a balanced way.

Karin Vogt: Would you say that this kind of paradigm shift is evolving? This reversal – maybe not reversal of roles but change of roles? Do you think that theory’s lagging behind?

Dina Tsagari: Yes, I think so. We need to understand the shift of roles pretty much as we need to build theories, too. We have actually published a paper on this where we basically see that teachers are ahead of us in the way they think, in the way they manage assessment in the classroom, the way they use their own teaching and language resources for assessment purposes. It is remarkable.

Karin Vogt: Can you give an example?

Dina Tsagari: In mixed groups, we see that very often. We see teachers collecting different types of assessment information through anything their students are able to produce either orally, as part of everyday communication in the classroom, or through all kinds of written scripts, written assignments. Projects the students are involved in. Anything they can get in terms of information about their progress. And they are doing it very systematically.

Karin Vogt: But learners are still assessed or evaluated on their output in English as a *Lingua Franca*, right?

Dina Tsagari: Yes, exactly, English as a Foreign Language. But in terms of managing classrooms, multilingual classrooms I think that teachers are giving us a lot of good examples. Perhaps we are the ones who are lagging behind, especially in terms of practical support and in terms of trying to enhance and develop teacher’s language assessment literacy in multilingual classrooms. I think that the teachers are ahead of us teacher educators and researchers, we are the ones who are behind. And we need to be careful when we are doing observations and data collection. We need to be open, pay attention to instances where teachers are consciously evaluating students’ performance. Because they want to take students to the next level. That for me is a brilliant instance of assessment. Happening on the go, integrated in everyday teaching. Not really coming out as visible as I’m doing assessment now, but it’s there.

Karin Vogt: And you were mentioning English as a Foreign Language and English as *Lingua Franca* being separate things. For the Norwegian context, why is that?

Dina Tsagari: There is a huge debate on the role of English in Norway. In the curriculum, for example, there’s discussion about learning of foreign languages and learning of English. English is a school subject. It’s no longer part

of the group foreign languages. So, it has a character and an identity of its own.

Karin Vogt: Because of the amount of exposure that people have to it?

Dina Tsagari: Because of similarity too because English and Norwegian, they are Germanic languages. So, there are a lot of similarities. The alphabet is similar. For example, the alphabet is similar and a lot of sounds are similar. Syntax is not very different. So, there is a lot of connection there. And of course, the historical and political reasons. English has been introduced as a school subject for years in schools. It's only natural that people will choose English. And there is English everywhere. I myself use English all the time for everyday communication outside my work environment, for instance. Everywhere. The civil service system works in both languages, Norwegian and English. And other neighboring languages as well. English is everywhere. Any kind of sphere, all communication is done through English. It's not an age issue either. Older people speak English, too. And so very often you hear the debate about "Is English a foreign language?" or "Is it a second language?". Well, the curriculum says that it's a subject. It is still inconclusive whether it's foreign or second language. A lot of people think English is a second language. For me, a second language is much more than that.

Karin Vogt: Which is not the case in Norway.

Dina Tsagari: It's not the case but it's been used as if it is. But it's not formalized that way. And, of course, people travel. In Norway people travel abroad. We use English all the time. They do business in English. They receive a lot of people in Norway that have to communicate in English. So, English is everywhere. And of course, teachers nowadays realize that school children learn a lot outside the classroom. So, there is a lot of informal learning happening outside school. It's called Extramural English in Norway. This is a vibrant research field with a lot of research happening. Internationalization of English and international English is of course accepted. It's there. It's happening. There's been a change in choice of materials that are taught in schools. Very often, textbooks are not labelled as foreign language when it comes to English. A lot more textbooks are produced with a more international scope in mind in the sense that a lot of books are not just textbooks. Different modalities coming from different resources can be used as resources for teachers, we don't want to follow one specific textbook. There is a range of these materials in use, and teachers can adapt these materials for as long as they need them for the syllabus. Teachers in Norway nowadays consider English as an international language rather than localized one. But very often they lack training. And I think training is important. They need support in that. Understanding context, understanding uses, understanding linguistic resources they need to accept and respect and use as the medium for teaching English.

Different varieties, different forms of English that need to be taught in the classroom as well.

Karin Vogt: Has this had an impact or should it have an impact on assessment practices?

Dina Tsagari: Yes, and you can't ask a newly arrived immigrant with very little English to perform like a student that you have been working with and teaching English for the last five years.

Karin Vogt: I was also thinking about English as an international language in terms of varieties of English, for example.

Dina Tsagari: The thing is that for classroom-based purposes a well-trained teacher can bring these varieties in the examination or in a test that they produce themselves. If standardized forms of tests are used then it's somebody else's decision. And so, when we are referring to tests that are set externally, and the teachers are mandated to introduce these in the school systems, there is very little teachers can do there. It's someone else that needs to take care of that. But if it is a type of mapping test or a diagnostic test used for classroom-based purposes or material that can be used for classroom-based assessment purposes.

Karin Vogt: But this would be a shift to formative or classroom-based language assessment.

Dina Tsagari: Yes, that's the only way teachers can adapt their assessment to more internationalized contexts. For example, a student can listen to conversations between a native speaker and a person coming from another country, for example, somebody who comes from Australia being a native and someone who comes from the Czech Republic or Bulgaria using English as a foreign language or someone who uses another variety of English such as Singaporean English which is just as acceptable to have. And then ask your students questions about the discussion they listened to. And on the basis of that assess the students' performance. But this is something that well-trained teachers can only do in the classroom. We need teachers with a positive mindset around these issues. Those who have always functioned with a different mindset, understanding that English is an international language rather than a school subject.

Karin Vogt: I see. So, if I get you right then your reading of multilingual assessment would be that you would value multilingual resources that are there in the classroom all the while for a certain target language. It could be English; it could be any language...

Dina Tsagari: Yes, that is true. There are so many ways to practice multilingual assessment. You can have a test, for example, where the instructions are given in three or four or five languages. Or ask your students to read a text in one language and respond in writing or speaking in another.

Karin Vogt: Would you do that for a target language?

- Dina Tsagari:** Yes. This is the minimum type of multilingual assessment you can do because the rest of it depends very much on the content of the text you can bring. By text I mean something more general than just a written passage. It could be any type of multimodal text, e.g., an oral message, podcast, an advertisement, etc.
- Karin Vogt:** So, your reading of multilingual assessment is that you want to value the different linguistic resources in a classroom-based assessment context, the linguistic repertoire of the learners in order to be functioning in the target language which might be English as an international language. Is multilingual assessment the way you read it a component of inclusive assessment?
- Dina Tsagari:** Yes. I mean you can't be talking about addressing the assessment needs of multilingual students without placing that under a general framework of inclusion. Inclusion is definitely helping, supporting, accommodating those in need of special kinds of deviations from the expected norm in the classroom to meet the needs of multilingual students. And multilingual students are a very specific group of learners whose needs should be catered for. One needs to use various language resources. So, for example, a progress task can be presented in many different languages for as long as the task is performed in English as expected from all students. For example, instructions or examples can be given in different languages, for as long as the construct it assesses is not affected by language choice. Another example is if it is an integrated task from reading into writing or listening into writing, the input text can be given in the language that the student understands. But the output should be done in the language that is examined. For example, if the exam is about English, the instructions to the assessment tasks can be offered in any of the languages the students can understand to facilitate the assessment process. Or the input text can be in the students' mother tongue, but the task output has to be in English.
- Karin Vogt:** Wouldn't that be a mediation in terms of construct?
- Dina Tsagari:** Yes, the input text can be presented in the language that the student understands but the task itself needs to be performed in English. This also relates to the new scales included in the Companion Volume of the CEFR, where mediation and mediation skills are described in detail.
- Karin Vogt:** So, that would mean that teachers have to be trained in, for example, mediation activities.
- Dina Tsagari:** Yes, that is true. Actually, teachers need to be trained in having a different mindset around these issues. I'd like to give an example. We did work on that in the ENRICH project (<http://enrichproject.eu/>) where teachers first needed to understand the meaning of multilingualism. What it means to have to adopt one's teaching practices to the needs of the multilingual students, what it means to have to change and accommodate one's teaching and assessment accordingly, what it means to have to accept linguistic varieties and all other linguistic resources students bring in the classroom nowadays. So, there's a lot of work you need to do in advance in terms

of bringing teachers within the right mindset to accept the difference, to accept the idea of helping students in class, of including students, of working with so many different needs before moving into assessing students' performance. You can't push teachers into doing something different in terms of assessment without having everything else in place.

Karin Vogt: How does that link up with language assessment literacy?

Dina Tsagari: Oh, that's very challenging. Raising teachers' assessment literacy takes time. For example, you might be working with a group of pre-service or in-service language teachers who have not worked on the assessment of reading, for example, as systematically as they are expected to. And then in discussions of "How to go about assessing reading", you can do a lot of work on understanding reading, what reading is and how we understand reading. What we mean by reading texts, what kind of texts, in which language etc. And so you can do a lot of good work in advance on reading before introducing teachers to the assessment of reading for multilingual students. But first we need to train teachers in teaching reading before actually assessing reading. And that's what most of the language assessment literacy courses get to do. It's not pure assessment skills that we're trying to develop with teachers but we also try to up their level in understanding the basics in language and assessment when it comes to improving teachers' assessment practices.

Karin Vogt: Which has also been happening in the TALE project (<https://taleproject.eu>). In this project, we developed modular self-access learning materials for example not just for assessing reading – but also in terms "How do I gauge the level of difficulty of a text?" and so on.

Dina Tsagari: Exactly, we need to help teachers understand the construct of what they are teaching first before attempting to assess language. But multilingual assessment is really challenging because I think our field needs to go a long way before offering solutions. Or even courses on multilingual assessment. I think we need to do more research. I think we need to interact with teachers in multilingual environments. We need to observe. We need to learn from them, see how they cope on a daily basis because they are ahead of us in the way they do assessment in multilingual classes and that's what we have seen in one of our projects.

Karin Vogt: In some contexts.

Dina Tsagari: In some contexts. So, they are doing a lot of work. Most of the teachers are already aware that the established assessment routines might not be helping. Even if they don't have enough assessment resources, at least they become aware that a test that is mandated by the school or the district might not be adequately serving the purposes of language learning in multilingual environments. Even that realization is important. But I think that the profession of teachers is always a step ahead. Especially in these challenging times where multilingualism is becoming the norm. I think we are still at the beginning. It's only recently that we have been working

in that direction and are trying to find ways of accommodating our teaching when we work with English as a Lingua Franca. And trying to see how these can be turned into accommodated tasks that could lend themselves to assessment purposes in multilingual environments. This takes a lot of time. Not everybody is ready to take on teaching multilingual students: “What is that supposed to mean for teaching and learning? To what extent is my group of students multilingual? How do I as a teacher deal with multilingualism in the classroom? And what are my resources? How can I support the students, let alone how can I assess my multilingual students?” I think that multilingual students perhaps could be accommodated in similar ways to students with diverse learning needs. The accommodations that we offer for students with learning difficulties are not very different from early stages of accommodating students with multilingual backgrounds.

Karin Vogt: Can you give an example?

Dina Tsagari: Recently, the SCALED project (<https://scaled.uw.edu.pl/>) made me think that introducing UDL (Universal Design of Learning) can help so many students. And we could save so many resources in terms of time for teachers who can start the school year actually with accommodations for all students in the classroom rather than having to modify their teaching afterwards which takes a lot more time. Especially when meeting the needs of individual students. But we hope that with SCALED we would be able to do that. And so, UDL, differentiation, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approaches, etc. that we have introduced in the SCALED project, especially in the online training course materials for language teachers. And hopefully that teachers will develop a different mindset, with a different approach to their teaching in the future. At least those who come to take the course. But we hope that also in local, national syllabi, the need for UDL is going to become a main feature. We don't get to see that yet. UDL implementation is relying very much on the goodwill of individual practitioners and perhaps institutions that would like to introduce this in their practice. I very much believe in UDL as a way to move forward. And to practice inclusive education at all levels, for all students. And it's not just multilingual or students with learning difficulties. It could be other marginalized groups who might be in need of UDL in the classroom.

Karin Vogt: So, at the end of the day, it's all about the alignment of learning and teaching and assessment?

Dina Tsagari: Yes, I think so.

Karin Vogt: Thank you for your time.

List of contributors

Bassey Edem Antia is a Professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa. An alumnus of the German Academic Exchange Service and a fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, he is currently a fellow in the Trinity Long Room Hub for the Arts and Humanities, Trinity College, Dublin. His interests span across terminology, language policy, multilingual teaching and assessment, and decolonial approaches to language and text analysis. In addition to awards, he has authored, edited and co-edited several books in these and other areas of his interest.

After 21 years in academic management **Susan Coetzee-van Roy** returned to her position as research professor in UPSET from 1 January 2019. UPSET is a linguistic research group at the NWU that is interested in the *Understanding and Processing of Language in Complex Settings*. In UPSET, Susan specializes in macro-sociolinguistics and the sociology of language and she currently focuses on issues related to the multilingual repertoires of people and how these link to language learning, language in education policies, language and identity and language and social cohesion. She uses larger scale language surveys, language history interviews, language portraits and social networks in her mostly mixed methods studies.

Carmen Konzett-Firth is a researcher and teacher at Universität Innsbruck, specializing in Applied Linguistics with a focus on French linguistics and the learning and teaching of French as a foreign language. Her research interests include the development of interactional competence, classroom interaction, multilingualism, task-based language learning and teaching, and the testing and assessment of productive skills.

Zikho Dana is an nGAP (New Generation of Academics Programme) lecturer at the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching, and Learning (CHERTL) in the Extended Studies Unit (ESU) at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. She is also a PhD candidate in the Political and International Studies Department, Rhodes University.

Anastasia Drackert serves as the Research Director at the Society for Academic Study Preparation and Test Development (g.a.s.t. e.V.) and holds the position of Professor of Language Testing and Digital Learning at the German Department,

Ruhr University Bochum. Previously, she was an Assistant Professor specializing in Teaching Russian as a Foreign Language. Anastasia Drackert has extensive experience in teaching German, English, and Russian, and has dedicated significant efforts towards the training of both prospective and current foreign language teachers.

Gudrun Erickson is Professor of Education in Language and Assessment at the University of Gothenburg; formerly a teacher and teacher educator of languages. Her principal research interests lie within the field of language policy and assessment. She has long experience of national curriculum and syllabus design and of national and international projects on language learning, teaching and assessment. Gudrun is currently coordinating a national pilot project aimed at developing a general eligibility test for tertiary education and is scientific leader of the Swedish national language assessment project. She was President of EALTA (European Association for Language Testing and Assessment) from 2013 to 2016.

Dr Phyllisienne Gauci is Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Education, University of Malta. Her research interests revolve around teacher training, second language acquisition, multilingualism, and interlanguage and intercultural pragmatics. She has contributed to work related to the Council of Europe, higher education and curriculum development in various local and international research projects.

Magdalini Liontou currently works as an English language teacher in the Languages and Communication unit at the University of Oulu (Finland), where she teaches English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) courses to undergraduate students in various disciplines. She is also a PhD researcher focusing on language assessment at the University of Jyväskylä (Finland). She is particularly interested in formative assessment and inclusive pedagogy.

Prof. Siphokazi Magadla is an Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Political and International Studies at Rhodes University, South Africa. She teaches and researches on war and militarism in Africa; armed struggle in South Africa; women and South African foreign policy; and African feminisms, gender and citizenship. She is the author of the book *“Guerrillas and Combative Mothers: Women and the Armed Struggle in South Africa”* (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2023; Routledge, 2024), which won the Humanities

and Social Sciences Award for “Best Non-Fiction Monograph” and the Rhodes University Vice Chancellor’s Book Award for 2023.

Dr. Eleni Meletiadou is an Associate Professor in Management Learning and Education (specialized in EDI). She is a multi-award-winning Programme and Research Group Director with over 20 years of international experience. She is the Chair of the European Association for Educational Assessment (AEA-Europe) Inclusive Assessment SIG and an Expert Member of the European Association of Language Testing and Assessment (EALTA). She is the Conference Track Chair of the British Academy of Management Knowledge & Learning SIG and the European Academy of Management (EURAM) Doctoral Accelerator Mentor.

Silvia Melo-Pfeifer is Professor of Romance Language Teacher Education at the University of Hamburg, Germany. Her research is focused on pluralistic language education and arts-based approaches to language teaching and teacher education. Her publications include “Linguistic Landscapes in Language and Teacher Education” and “Visualising multilingual lives: More than words”.

Darlington Mutakwa is a Senior Manager responsible for enrolment planning and institutional research in the Institutional Planning, Evaluation and Monitoring division at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. Previously, he was a statistician in the Centre for Educational Assessment at the University of Cape Town, responsible for statistical analysis of various educational assessments. He holds a BSc in Applied mathematics and an MPhil in Demography. His research interests are in student access and success in higher education.

Maryana Natsiuk, PhD, Associate Professor at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. Maryana Natsiuk teaches a wide range of courses related to Teaching English as a Foreign /Second Language (TEFL / TESL), Intercultural Competence, and English Practice for philological, methodological, and specific purposes. Having diverse scientific interests including TEFL, innovative methods of teaching foreign languages, multilingualism / plurilingualism in foreign language teaching, she has gained invaluable experience through participation in international projects, as well as through an internship at Heidelberg University of Education.

Dion Nkomo is a full professor of African Language Studies at the School of Languages and Literatures at Rhodes University, South Africa. He occupies a research chair on Intellectualization of African Languages, Multilingualism and Education, funded by the National Research Foundation. Among others, his

academic interests are in language planning and policy, multilingualism, language teaching, translation and terminology. He is a national and international collaborator in capacity building and research projects on multilingualism. He previously worked at the University of Cape Town and at the University of Zimbabwe. He obtained his PhD from the Stellenbosch University in 2012.

Viktoriia Osidak is a PhD holder in Education, an associate professor of the department for Methodology of Teaching Ukrainian and Foreign Languages and Literatures at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine. Her primary area of expertise is teaching English as second language (L2) and language assessment with an emphasis on alternative assessment strategies to enhance L2 learning and teaching. She has been involved in research projects on the Companion to the CEFR, multilingualism in the Ukrainian educational context and university teachers' language assessment literacy.

Dr Kabelo Sebolai is head of the Language Unit at Cape Peninsula University of Technology in Cape Town, South Africa. He served as Language Centre Deputy Director at Stellenbosch University, initiated and led a curriculum-renewal initiative at Central University of Technology (Bloemfontein, South Africa), and coordinated language testing at the Centre for Educational Assessment at the University of Cape Town. He is the current chairperson of the Network of Expertise in Language Assessment (NExLA) and Editor-in-Chief of the SAALT (South African Association for Language Teaching) Journal for Language Teaching. His research interests revolve around academic language teaching and assessment.

Wolfgang Stadler is professor emeritus of Russian linguistics and language pedagogy at Innsbruck University and former Dean of the Faculty of Teacher Education. He also holds an MA in Language Testing from Lancaster University, UK. Stadler taught at Salzburg University, Berlin Humboldt University, and was a guest professor at the University of Alberta, Canada. He has published extensively on the teaching and learning of Russian, with a particular emphasis on sociopragmatics, intercultural communication, language change, language assessment (literacy), and language skills development. Stadler recently founded the journal *Didaktik der Slawischen Sprachen* (DiSlaw) and serves on several linguistic journal editorial boards.

Dr Maria Stathopoulou is an Adjunct Lecturer at the Hellenic Open University. She is a member of the English team preparing the national foreign language

exams in Greece, member of the authoring team for the mediation descriptors of the CEFRCV (2014–2017) and coordinator of the ECML project “Mediation in Teaching, Learning and Assessment” (2020–2023). She has published extensively on linguistic mediation.

Dr Dina Tsagari, PhD, Professor, Department of Primary and Secondary Teacher Education, Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway. Dina Tsagari has also worked for the University of Cyprus, Greek Open University and Polytechnic University of Hong Kong. Her research interests include language testing and assessment, materials design and evaluation, differentiated instruction, multilingualism, distance education, learning difficulties and inclusive education. She is the editor and author of numerous books, journal papers, book chapters, project reports etc. She coordinates research groups, e.g., CBLA SIG – EALTA, EnA OsloMet and is involved in EU-funded and other research projects (e.g., TEFF, TREL, KIDS4ALL, SCALED, NORHED, KriT, DINGLE, TRIBES, ENRICH, TALE, DysTEFL, etc.).

Judith Visser is a Professor of Romance linguistics (French, Spanish, Italian) and language pedagogy at Ruhr Universität Bochum. As a board member of the Professional School of Education, she works on cross-curricular teaching development. Her main research areas are multilingualism, glottopolitics, discourse analysis, competences for democratic culture and education for sustainable development. She is co-editor of the interdisciplinary journal *metaphorik.de* (2007–) and the journal *Zeitschrift für romanische Sprachen und ihre Didaktik* (2021–).

Karin Vogt is a Professor of Teaching English as a Foreign Language at the University of Education in Heidelberg, Germany. Among her research interests are classroom-based language assessment, multilingual language assessment, Language Assessment Literacy, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and inclusive foreign language teaching. She has published widely in these and other areas, serves on various editorial boards and is the co-convenor of the Special Interest Group “Multilingual language assessment” of the European Association of Language Testing and Assessment (EALTA).

