Bilingual, Immersion, Heritage, and Minority Education (BIH)

Embracing multilingualism in assessment: Recent attempts and future perspectives

Mon, March 24	10:10 AM - 11:10 AM	Parlur Tower - Street Level	1 Hour Colloquium

Description

Several studies point to the paradox of monolingual assessment with multilingual pupils (De Angelis 2021). Assessing and evaluating multilingual pupils' linguistic and cognitive abilities using monolingual tests and norms does not do justice to the complexity of their language experience. Nor does it reflect their acquisition and learning processes, which involve the dynamic interaction of the languages in their repertoire (Herdina & Jessner 2002). Psycholinguistic research on multilingualism has made progress in this respect since it relies less and less on monolingual norms as controls (Kupisch & Rothman 2018). However, although most of these studies test multilingual individuals in different languages, they tend to do so using one language at a time. Current research on assessment in education discusses the possibility of testing in a multilingual mode. These tests are designed in multiple languages, or give multilinguals the possibility to answer using their full linguistic repertoire (i.e., allowing code-mixing; Lopez et al. 2017). The design, administration and scoring of multilingual tests poses some challenges for teachers. However, recent studies have shown that the multilingual mode boosts pupils' performance in linguistic and cognitive tests, especially the ones tapping into their higher-order reasoning skills (Torregrossa et al. 2023).

After reviewing current attempts to assess multilingual children multilingually, we will consider in how far multilingual assessment benefits students' learning and how teachers envision the implementation of multilingual assessment in school. The one-hour colloquium will be structured as follows:

1. Introduction by the organizers (4 mins);

2. First short presentation: a scoping review of the literature on multilingual assessment in language education (12 mins);

3. Second short presentation: teachers' insights on translanguaging approach to multilingual assessment (12 mins);

4. Third short presentation: assessing bilingual pupils' text comprehension and inference-making abilities through a multilingual game (organizers' presentation, 12 mins);

5. Questions and discussion (20 mins)

Session Chairs

Organizer
Christiane Maria Bongartz, University of Cologne

Organizer
Sonja Eisenbeiß, University of Cologne

Organizer
Andrea Listanti, University of Cologne

Organizer
Jacopo Torregrossa, Goethe University Frankfurt

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Alexis A. Lopez, ETS

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Presentations

Multi/plurilingual assessment in language education: a scoping review of the literature

Karam Noel, University of Toronto (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education); Enrica Piccardo, OISE-University of Toronto

Info

Presentation Language(s):
English

Colloquium Abstract:
The past decade has witnessed an unprecedented growth of research on the multi/plurilingual turn in education (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2014). However, there has been disproportionately less consideration given to multi/plurilingual assessment practices (Canagarajah, 2006; Shohamy, 2012). Consequently, assessment of multi/plurilingual speakers has predominantly followed monolingual approaches, which not only undermine these speakers' unique communicative abilities and rich linguistic trajectories, but also hinders the development of coherent curriculum design and implementation of effective multi/plurilingual pedagogies. This paper addresses this gap through a literature review conducted using the PRISMA-ScR framework (Tricco et al., 2018). The review aimed

to identify, map, and characterize literature on language assessment and multi/plurilingualism, focusing on theoretical considerations and empirical approaches for assessing multi/plurilingual competence. Three search methods were employed: database searches across three major educational databases, manual searches in five key journals, and citation searches within retrieved articles. Out of 2,467 papers identified, 23 met inclusion criteria following multiple rounds of selection. Among these, 14 were conceptual papers highlighting two main perspectives on multi/plurilingual assessment: one centered on language and minority rights, linguistic and cultural equity, and political ideologies in assessment; the other emphasizing holistic pedagogies and norms in additive learning environments. Additionally, nine empirical studies point to the importance of examining the extent to which the multi/plurilingual construct, as operationalized through a heteroglossic or holistic view, can be feasibly assessed. The review concludes that adopting a multi/plurilingual approach to assessment requires a pluralistic perspective that considers learners' individual profiles. Practical implementation varies based on the languages involved, their intended purpose(s), and an ecological understanding of their local linguistic contexts in education and society. This ecological perspective not only shapes the assessment context but also informs the evaluation of students' multi/plurilingualism.

[Canceled] A Translanguaging Approach for Developing Multilingual Assessments: Teacher Insights

Alexis A. Lopez, ETS

Info

Presentation Language(s):
English

Colloquium Abstract:
Traditional multilingual assessments are used primarily to evaluate the language proficiency of individuals who speak more than one language. They tend to reflect monolingual ideologies, and the different languages are measured, scored, and interpreted separately. Thus, there is a growing need to shift from language isolation policies towards more holistic approaches that measure multilingual learners' entire linguistic repertoire. I propose a translanguaging approach for developing multilingual assessments rooted in valuing the linguistic and cultural resources that students bring to school, including language diversity, so they can utilize their full range of linguistic and semiotic resources to demonstrate what they know and can do. In this approach, multilingual assessments measure integrated multilingual constructs and allow multilingual learners to deploy resources as needed in specific contexts of use and embrace fluid and dynamic language practices (e.g., language choice, translation, code-switching, code-mixing). As a result, multilingual learners will complete some assessment tasks in one language, other tasks in another language, or integrate multiple languages in others. The goal of this translanguaging approach to developing multilingual assessments is to provide detailed information to users regarding multilingual learners' linguistic assets to better support them in developing their multilingual abilities in different contexts and for different purposes. I recruited six bilingual teachers to evaluate the use of this multilingual assessment approach. The teachers participated in one-on-one online interview meetings. The teachers shared their perceptions of the multilingual assessment approach, discussed how they would implement, score, interpret, and use it to support multilingual learners in developing their linguistic repertoire, and described the

potential challenges in using a translanguaging approach to develop multilingual assessments. In this presentation, I will present this alternative approach and share teachers' insights into implementing multilingual assessments that allow students to use all their linguistic resources.

Reading in more than one language improves bilinguals' ability to integrate information from different texts

Andrea Listanti, University of Cologne; Jacopo Torregrossa, Goethe University Frankfurt; Sonja Eisenbeiß, University of Cologne; Christiane Maria Bongartz, University of Cologne

Info

Presentation Language(s):
English

Colloquium Abstract:
Studies on bilinguals' processing of written texts typically compare bilinguals with monolinguals and involve only one language. However, bilinguals' discourse-models result from dynamic interactions between all languages of their repertoires (DeHouwer 2022, Rothman et al. 2022, Torregrossa et al. 2022). Our study only investigated bilinguals, but in one-language vs. two-language MODE, allowing for within-participant comparisons: We studied effects of two-language MODE on bilinguals' abilities to comprehend texts, draw intertextual inferences, and create discourse representations. This was inspired by didactic activities, where children integrate information from texts in different languages (Celic/Seltzer 2011, Ascenzi-Moreno/Espinosa 2018). Thirty-nine Italian-German 4th-graders of a German-Italian bilingual school played a board-game: the monkey Cheeky solved problems in 8 map-locations using superpowers. At each location, children found information about 3 superfruits/superpowers (Text_A) and a story describing Cheeky's problem (Text_B). Both texts contained indefinite objects (Text_A: eating Meraca lets someone bend metal pieces very easily; Text_B: The monkey is now stuck in a fence). Texts appeared in one-language (Italian or German) or in two-language MODE (Italian-German/German-Italian). Children answered four questions:

(Q1-Q2) Comprehension: Where was Cheeky at the beginning of the story?/Why does Cheeky have a problem?

(Q3) Inference based on Text_A AND Text_B: Which fruit should Cheeky eat?

(Q4) Text integration: What can Cheeky do after eating the fruit?

For (Q4), children received points for referring to both texts(e.g., Cheeky can bend metal [Text_A] and get out [Text_B]), or using definite/specific referring expressions (e.g., Cheeky can get out of THE fence)

A logistic mixed regression model showed no significant MODE-effect on COMPREHENSION and INFERENCE, but a significant MODE-effect on TEXT INTEGRATION. In two-language mode, children produced more elaborate and information-rich responses integrating both texts, suggesting that reading in two-language mode allows them to build more coherent discourse representations. The results support the use of bilingual reading-activities in schools.