
What is the future of plurilingual language assessment in a large, so-called 'monolingual' language testing organisation?

Nick Saville¹ & Graham Seed¹

¹*Cambridge University Press and Assessment*

nick.saville@cambridge.org, graham.seed@cambridge.org

In the era of the 'multilingual turn' in language education (May, 2014), academic critics have been quick to point out the lack, or slow speed, of recognition or adoption of plurilingual, code-switching and/or translanguaging practices within language assessment (e.g. Shohamy, 2011). One particular source of vexation is how language tests, so historically entrenched in promoting proficiency in languages along monolingual lines, can ever make a truly plurilingual turn. In Europe especially, it has only been in the last few years that practitioners have been able to identify what a 'plurilingual assessment' might look like in practice.

Seed (2020) gives some examples and categorises four different types of plurilingual assessment. This paper aims to briefly explain this categorisation and then go into more depth regarding the first of these categories, „using one's plurilingual repertoire to prove skills in one named language“ which has particular relevance to large so-called 'monolingual' English language testing organisations. We seek to address how the recognition of plurilingual repertoires and standard named languages can in fact co-exist (Kunnan & Saville, 2021). In order to address the question of whether and how test-takers already utilise their plurilingual repertoires, we report on how examples of code-switching are found even within what are supposed to be monolingual written test responses.

We evaluate what that might mean in practice before finally taking a more futuristic look at how the use of digital technology and AI provide the best chances of creating a truly personalised plurilingual assessment offer. In doing so, we review the nascent work already started (Nguyen, Yuan & Seed, 2022) and consider what the next steps might be in order to achieve more long-term aims.

References: • Kunnan, A. & Saville, N. (2021). Setting standards for language learning and assessment in educational contexts: a multilingual perspective. In W. Ayres-Bennett & J. Bellamy (eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of language standardisation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. • May, S. (2014). *The multilingual turn: Implications for SLATESOL and bilingual education*. New York: Routledge. • Nguyen, L., Yuan, Z. & Seed, G. (2022). Building educational technologies for code-switching: Current practices, difficulties and future directions. *Languages* (7), 220. • Seed, G. (2020). What is plurilingualism and what does it mean for language assessment? *Research Notes* (78), 5-15. • Shohamy, E. (2011) Assessing multilingual competencies: Adopting construct valid assessment policies. *The Modern Language Journal* 95 (3), 417-429.