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## Assessing general comprehension abilities of newly arrived multilingual students

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When testing linguistic and subject-specific skills in linguistically and culturally diverse contexts, one challenge is to avoid bias. Especially in the assessment of linguistic skills the instruments' construct validity plays a crucial role, since Method Bias (van de Vijver & Tanzer 2004) can influence the validity of results. This is likely if communicative skills are to be measured, which are to be seen as independent of skills in named languages from a theoretical perspective. As a consequence, multilingual students' skills are potentially underestimated. Otheguy, García & Reid (2015) point out in this context that in assessment skills 'in language' and skills 'in a language' must be distinguished. Hence, if the focus is on general linguistic abilities, learners should be able to exploit their entire linguistic repertoire to make meaning and respond to test items.

Against this background, we are currently working on an online-based diagnostic tool in which learners' general comprehension ability is operationalized as a cross-linguistic construct. Learners can employ linguistic means from the named languages Ukrainian, Russian, German, and English when listening to and reading texts and switching fluidly between the languages. Following listening and/or reading, the learners perform tasks that are to a major part based on the German national competence models for reading and listening comprehension. The students listen as well as read the questions and answer in all the languages mentioned above.

Our work aims to contribute to assess multilingual students' potentials unbiasedly and to enable teachers to distinguish between skills 'in language' and 'in a language'. In this paper, we present the current state of development (as work in progress) by showing a prototype and we discuss both didactic and research-related potentials.

**References.** • Van de Vijver, F., & Tanzer, N. (2004). Bias and equivalence in cross-cultural assessment: an overview. *Revue européenne de psychologie appliquée* (54), 119-135. • Otheguy, R., García, O., & Reid, W. (2015). Clarifying translanguaging and deconstructing named languages: A perspective from linguistics. *Applied Linguistics Review* 6(3), 281-307.