

Multilingual Language Assessment SIG

European Association of Language Testing and Assessment

Special Interest Group for Multilingual Language Assessment (MLA)

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Background and Rationale

The issue of assessment in multilingual societies has become increasingly significant in recent decades as we realise that multilingualism is now a legitimate reality around the world. Multilingualism is the norm rather than the exception due to ever increasing levels of migration and globalisation. In language education, multilingual approaches as a result of the “multilingual turn” (Conteh & Meier, 2014) have an impact on language assessment, representing an emergent field that necessitates thorough empirical and theoretical insights. In language testing, constructs based on the idea of languages as separate entities begin to be challenged as speakers’ plurilingual repertoires have to be considered (Chalhoub-Deville, 2019; Schissel et al., 2019), while most assessment policies and practices seem to be based on monolingual constructs (Gorter & Cenoz, 2016).

Multilingual approaches towards assessment have been categorised in different ways, taking into account various perspectives on multilingual assessment with a range of potential underlying constructs (Seed, 2020), comprising content-related constructs, mastery of plurilingual communication situations or learners’ proficiency in a named language while activating their plurilingual repertoire in the process. Related to various perspectives on multilingual assessment are questions of learner-centredness of assessment, accessibility, and inclusion, of the alignment of learning, teaching, and assessment, and of diversity and social justice, to name but a few.

The SIG addresses the need for research and aims at helping scholars embrace multilingual approaches to language education and assessment by furthering the discussion in the field.

Organisation and Focus

We expect the SIG to be a space for all interested in MLA issues, but particularly for:

- educators and researchers interested in this field
- test providers
- policymakers
- educational managers and leaders
- administrators in multilingual educational institutions

The aim of the MLA SIG is to provide a forum for discussion with the intention of sharing knowledge and research in the field, making practices more transparent and discussing present and future developments in multilingual language assessment, with particular reference to:

- Promoting and sharing of relevant research, policies, processes, and resources to accommodate learners with a multilingual background in assessment exploring two

perspectives of multilingual assessment, that is content assessment of multilingual learners and language assessment (MFL / EFL / EAL/ a named language) that considers multilingual learners;

- practices in multilingual teaching and assessment development, production, and quality review, with a view to mainstreaming of multilingual assessment thinking, (e.g., multilingual assessment tasks).

Activities are to include an annual event at the EALTA conference, together with regular additional meetings, webinars, and symposiums according to the interests of SIG members.