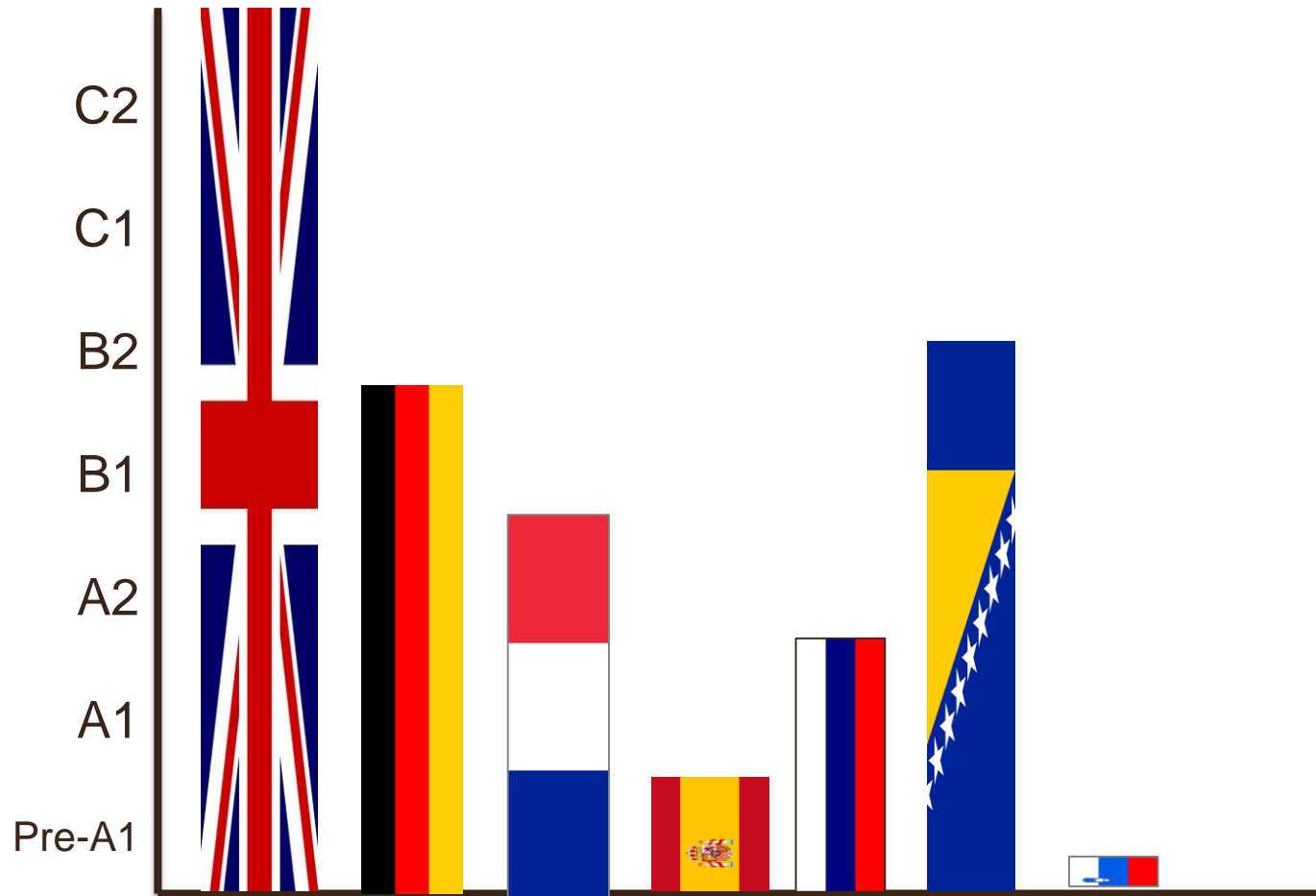# What is Plurilingual Assessment?

Graham Seed

Ljubljana, 8 November 2019

Aims

- Quick look at the different terminology to understand what "plurilingual" means
- Therefore, what does plurilingualism mean for language assessment?
- How can this be put into practice?

ALTE – Association of Language Testers in Europe

multilingual

multilingual

SUSTAINING DIVERSITY

ALTE Members test

24 languages

from **21 European countries**

and Institutional Affiliates
represent other **16 languages**
from Europe and beyond.

ALTE supports the learning, teaching and testing of all languages, including regional and sign languages. ALTE's quality standards were designed with this diversity in mind, and can help both the largest exam boards and those with only a few candidates per year.

All languages matter...

multilingual

"The coexistence of different languages at the social or individual level" (CEFR Companion Volume, p.28)

plurilingual

"The dynamic and developing linguistic repertoire of an individual user / learner" (CEFR Companion Volume, p.28)

"The ability to call flexibly upon an inter-related, uneven, plurilinguistic repertoire to:
- Switch from one language or dialect or variety to another
- Express oneself in one language and understand a person speaking another
- Call upon the knowledge of a number of languages to make sense of a text

plurilingual

- Recognise words from a common international store in a new guise
- Mediate between individuals with no common language, even with a only a slight knowledge onself
- Bring the whole of one's linguistic equipment into play, experimenting with alternative forms of expression

(CEFR Companion Volume, p.28)

Plurilingualism in the CEFR

A1	Can recognise internationalisms to deduce meaning of simple signs
A2	Can understand short, clearly written messages and instructions by piecing together what he/she understands from the versions in different languages
A2	Can use a word from another language in his/her plurilingual repertoire to make him/herself understood in a routine everyday situation, when he/she cannot think of an adequate expression in the language being spoken
B1	Can extract information from documents written in different languages in his/her field to include in a presentation
B2+	Can alternate efficiently between languages in his/her plurilingual repertoire in order to facilitate comprehension with and between third parties who lack a common language

plurilingualism

translanguaging

"The deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named languages" (Otheguy, Garcia & Read, 2015)

Hult (2019) argues that these two terms are, for the most part, interchangeable.

Some more terms…

Named languages

Loan words

Code-switching

Code-mixing

Heteroglossia

Transversal skills

The Multilingual Turn (May 2014)

- Away from idealised native speaker
- Away from siloed language lessons in schools
- Utilisation of plurilingual repertoires
- Embrace translanguaging in education
- Increased research and practice

Europe wants multi- and plurilinguals

2002 Barcelona European Council: " mother tongue plus two"

2018 Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages

EUROPEANS AND LANGUAGES

What young people say about languages:

33% I could not study in a foreign language

77% I would like to learn a new language

84% I already learned a foreign language but would like to improve it

Statistics show that:

FIRST FOREIGN LANGUAGE is almost a basic skill

97% of pupils learn ENGLISH

SECOND FOREIGN LANGUAGE is not compulsory everywhere or can be dropped after 3-4 years

9% of all 15-year olds in the EU speak a different language at home than at school

Our goal:

At the end of upper secondary school young people should be able to:

❶ Fully use the language of schooling

❷ Fully use another European language

❸ Confidently use a third language

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 466 – European Education Area 2018
Eurydice Brief on teaching languages at school in Europe, https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/images/0/06/KDL_2017_internet.pdf
© European Commission

European Commission

Source: European Commission. (2018a). *Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages.* Brussels: European Commission.

But what about plurilingual *assessment*?

"The contrast between the expanding use of multilingual practices in pedagogy, and the absence of multilingual approaches in assessment and evaluation measures is striking"
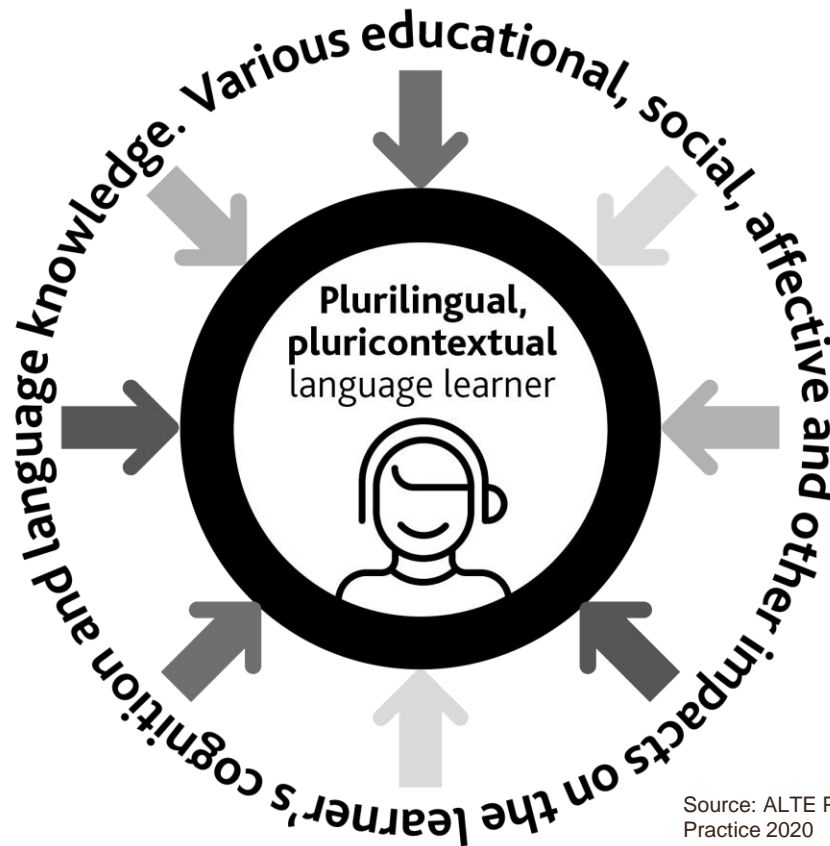(Schissel, De Korne and López-Gopar, 2018)

"We want to encourage the development of plurilingual competence, but measuring it is a challenge that has not been resolved"
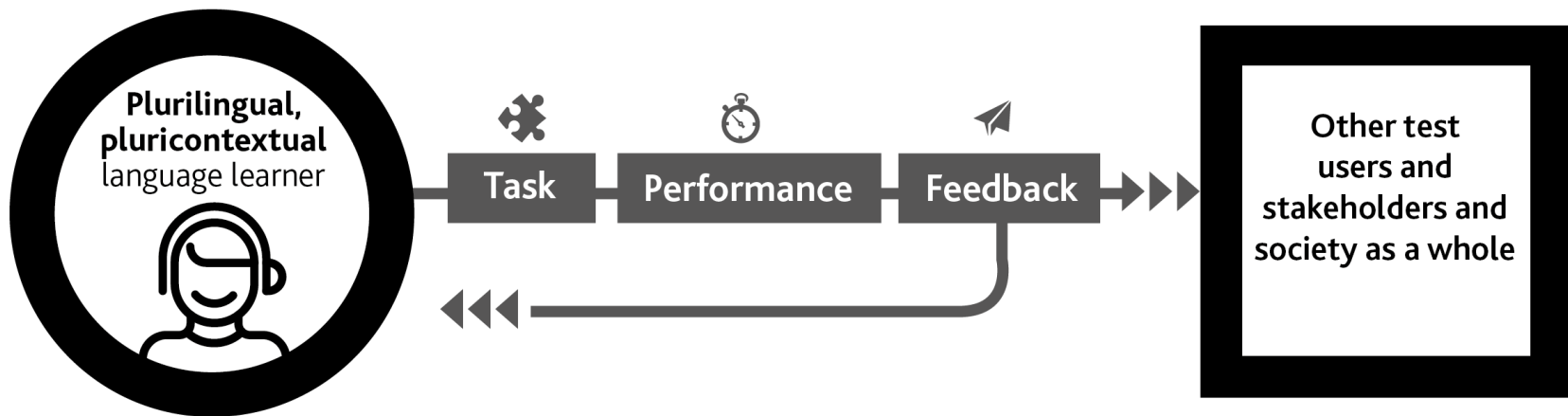(Dunlea & Erickson, 2018)

But what about plurilingual *assessment*?

"Tests should match actual language practices and multilinguals use resources from their whole linguistic repertoire. If teaching is going in the direction of a multilingual focus, assessment should also follow the same path."
(Gorter and Cenoz, 2017, p.43)

Plurilingual, pluricontextual language learner

Various educational, social, affective and other impacts on the learner's cognition and language knowledge.

Source: ALTE Principles of Good Practice 2020

Plurilingual, pluricontextual language learner

Task

Performance

Feedback

Other test users and stakeholders and society as a whole

Source: ALTE Principles of Good Practice 2020

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But what about plurilingual *assessment*?

- Can it be defined?
- How can this construct be operationalised into a test?
- How do you measure this diversity in standard ways?

"Each individual uses their different linguistic abilities in different ways in different situations." (Saville & Seed, forthcoming)

Ensuring assessors have similar plurilingual backgrounds to the test-takers, rewarding the test-taker appropriately, scoring reliably across multiple test versions (Brown, 2013; Lopez, Turkan & Guzman-Orth, 2017)

Why might we want to assess an individual's plurilingual competences?

Because the real-life target language use demands it (contextual validity) e.g.

- Communicative operation in one named language
- Communicative operation across more than one named language
- Ability to use linguistic strategies to operate in language domains you don't know, or only partially know
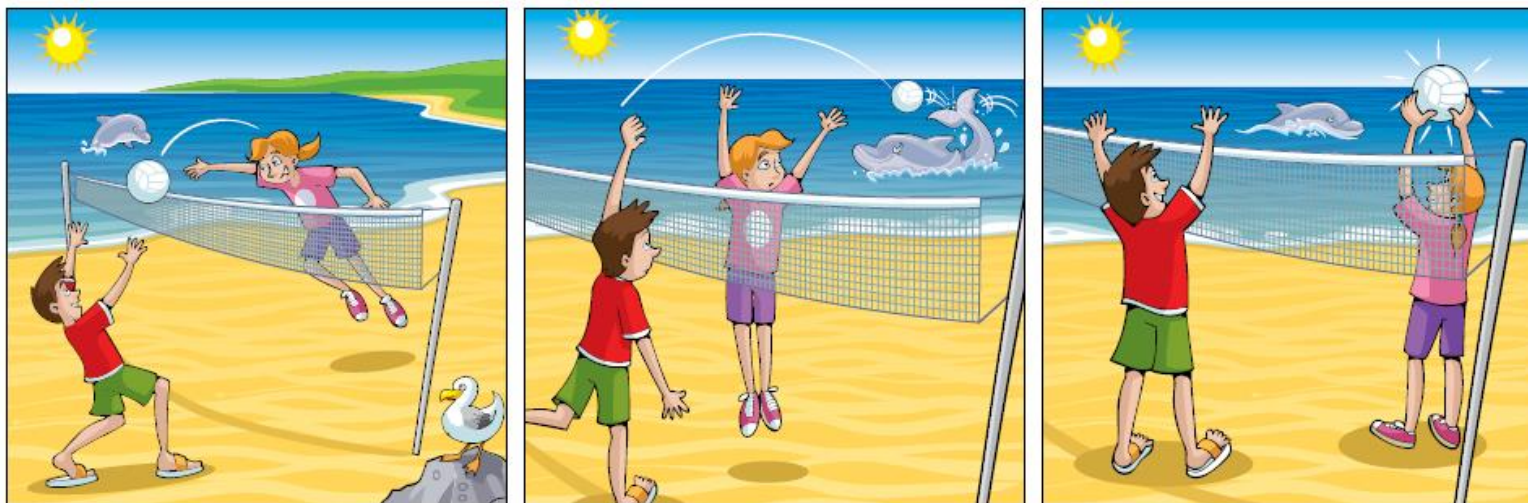
Communicative operation in one named language

An individual's plurilingual competences **can**, and **have to**, exist with standard named languages, in order to communicate.

It's OK to measure the proficiency of a standard language

But we can test a standard language recognising an individual's plurilingual abilities

One day, Sam and Mary play basketball. They are very happy. Suddenly, basketball in the ocean. one haitun help they catch the besketball

Score	Criteria
5	• Response describes a progression of events which are explicitly connected to each other **and** • Response is based on all three pictures **and** • Minimal effort is required on the part of the reader to make sense of the response

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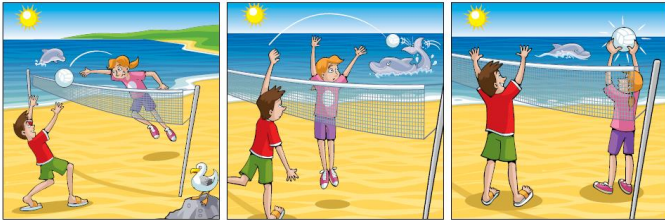
ALTE Framework 2018

Language	Organisation	Pre-A1	A1 ALTE Breakthrough	A2 ALTE Level 1	B1 ALTE Level 2	B2 ALTE Level 3	C1 ALTE Level 4	C2 ALTE Level 5
Dutch Nederlands	The Interuniversity Testing Consortium (IUTC)					Interuniversitaire Taaltest Nederlands voor Anderstaligen – ITNA – B2 • Re-audit May 2021	Interuniversitaire Taaltest Nederlands voor Anderstaligen – ITNA – C1 • Re-audit May 2021	
English	Cambridge English Language Assessment			Cambridge English: Key • Re-audit April 2023	Cambridge English: Preliminary • Re-audit April 2023	Cambridge English: First • Re-audit April 2023	Cambridge English: Advanced • Re-audit April 2023	Cambridge English: Proficiency • Re-audit April 2023
				Cambridge English: Key for Schools • Re-audit April 2023	Cambridge English: Preliminary for Schools • Re-audit April 2023	Cambridge English: First for Schools • Re-audit April 2023		
		Cambridge English: Starters • Re-audit Dec 2019	Cambridge English: Movers • Re-audit Dec 2019	Cambridge English: Flyers • Re-audit Dec 2019	Cambridge English: Business Preliminary • Re-audit April 2023	Cambridge English: Business Vantage • Re-audit April 2023	Cambridge English: Business Higher • Re-audit April 2023	
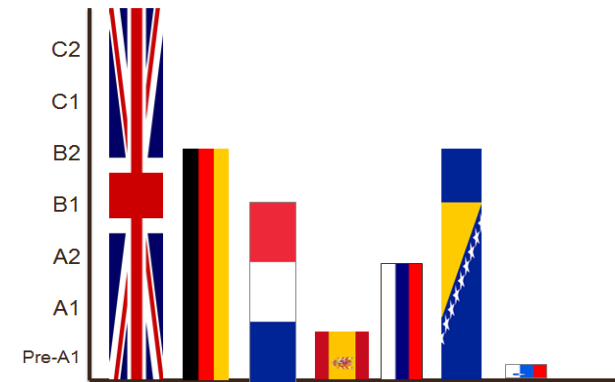
1. Recognise plurilingual abilities

2. Don't promote test in linguistic isolation

3. Practicality often demands individual tests but build a profile!

Oh that's lovely, I can see how I can apply that in the tests we create!

Yes, but that isn't really plurilingual assessment, is it?

Communicative operation across more than one named language (=Mediation)

KPG State Certificate of Language Proficiency Exams, Level B, Module 2, 2017. https://rcel2.enl.uoa.gr/kpg

Province of Bolzano. (n.d.). *Ejams de bi- y trilinguism.* Retrieved from : www.provinzia.bz.it/formaziun-lingac/bilinguism

Piribauer, G., Atzlesberger, U., Greinix, I. Ladstätter, T. Mittendorfer, F., Renner, H & Steinhuber, B. (2015) *Designing and Implementing Plurilingual Oral Exams: Framework for the Austrian upper secondary level oral leaving examination at colleges for higher vocational education.* Vienna: CEBS.

Using plurilingual resources in content knowledge assessments

Fauve De Backer, Piet Van Avermaet & Stef Slembrouck (2017) Schools as laboratories for exploring multilingual assessment policies and practices, Language and Education,31:3, 217-230, DOI: 10.1080/09500782.2016.1261896

Kathleen Heugh, Cas Prinsloo, Matthews Makgamatha, Gerda Diedericks & Lolita Winnaar (2017) Multilingualism(s) and system-wide assessment: a southern perspective,Language and Education, 31:3, 197-216, DOI: 10.1080/09500782.2016.1261894

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Assessing development of plurilingual competences

- Because plurilingual competences are specific to the individual, we need assessments targeted to the individual

- Therefore, we might need to think about "assessment" differently to traditional methods of assessment.

Learning Oriented Assessment

Jones & Saville, 2016

An ecological model of the learning context
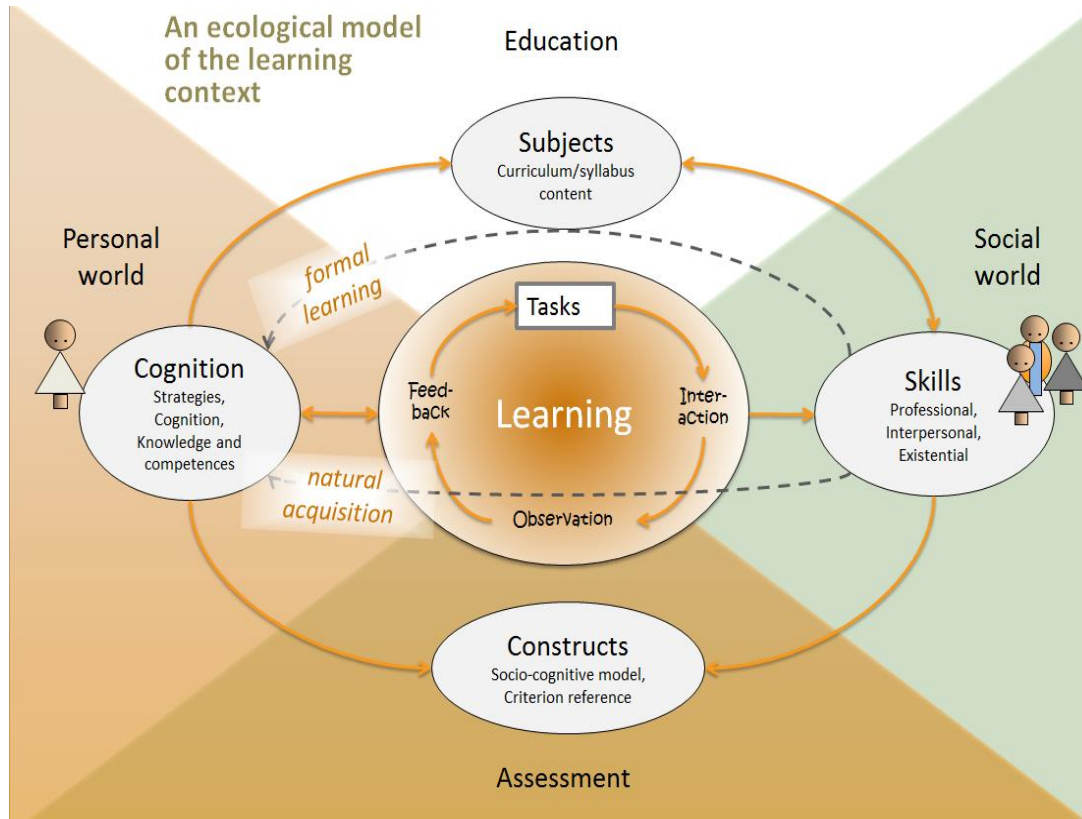
Learning Oriented Assessment

Collate evidence of plurilingual development by:

- Language-neutral plurilingual curriculum
- Language learning diaries
- Observations and monitoring
- Portfolios
- Self-assessment

Use new CEFR descriptors to help describe someone's plurilingual competences: *Plurilingual Comprehension; Building on Plurilingual Repertoires* and plurilingual Mediation scales

FREPA - A Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures

More languages? – PlurCur! Research and practice regarding plurilingual whole school curricula

Integrated Plurilingual Approach (IPA): González Davies, Mitchell-Smith, Soler and Wilson (2018)

A digital future for plurilingual assessment

- Capturing evidence of plurilingual practices in action

"Internet-based adaptive language assessment should be able to accommodate our bilingual selves" (Garcia & Flores, 2014, p.162)

- Personalised to the learner and localised to the context

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