

## Challenges in language testing of multilingual individuals

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This paper illuminates the intersection between language and education from childhood to adult age through the lens of institutional language testing of multilingual individuals. The research question is how the language competences of multilingual individuals are made measurable within three institutional settings in Denmark: daycare, primary school and language schools for adult learners of Danish.

Grounded in the theoretical understanding that an institutional linguistic evaluation is a situated political act (Shohamy, 2006) this paper focuses on the construct (Fulcher & Davidsen, 2007) of the different language testing instruments.

The cross-institutional and comparative perspective is supplemented with a diachronic perspective that illuminates the epistemological and political background for the linguistic evaluations. This approach supplements Scandinavian research in which language evaluation typically is analyzed within specific institutional settings (Monsen, 2014; Vallberg-Roth, 2012; Vik, 2020).

The empirical basis for the article is legislation, governing documents, and evaluation tools as well as international research literature about language evaluation.

On the one hand, the analysis shows a considerable epistemological difference between the various linguistic evaluation tools. On the other hand, it appears as a common feature that the evaluations have difficulty dealing with multilingualism and the linguistic repertoire of multilingual individuals and thus raises ethical challenges (McNamara & Ryan, 2011).

Based on the concept of linguistic repertoire (Garcia & Wei, 2014), the ethical challenges in current evaluation practices are discussed and the importance of relating language evaluations to the linguistic complexity that currently characterizes many Western societies is highlighted.

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