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Guidance for the classroom-based assessment of multilingual learners

Assessing languages, literacies and learning across the curriculum

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ASIA AND THE PACIFIC | LE2030+

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The LE2030+ coordinates regional efforts for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, uniting partners for stronger collaboration, peer learning, joint accountability and advocacy. Established in 2016, it supports the implementation and monitoring of SDG 4 in Asia-Pacific, linking regional efforts with the global education cooperation mechanism. The LE2030+ operates under the UN's Regional Collaborative Platform, enhancing coordination towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

ASIA-PACIFIC
MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION
WORKING GROUP

MLE WG – The Asia-Pacific Multilingual Education Working Group
The MLE WG is a coalition of development agencies, universities, civil society organizations and others dedicated to promoting first language-based multilingual education and reducing language barriers for all learners in the Asia-Pacific region. Established in 2009, the MLE WG functions under the LE2030+ Networking Group and is co-chaired by the UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok and the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office.

SHORT SUMMARY

This publication provides **guidance on the classroom-based assessment of multilingual learners.** It was developed under the direction of the UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok and the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office to support policymakers and practitioners of Member States of the Asia-Pacific region, in response to the critical need for accurate and inclusive learning assessments in multilingual contexts.

Recognizing the challenges and opportunities of teaching multilingual learners in this linguistically diverse region, this publication provides resources for the development, implementation and interpretation of assessments that accurately document the skills and assets of emergent multilingual learners. The focus is on **(1) raising awareness about the capabilities of multilingual learners; (2) enhancing knowledge regarding the importance of language choices in teaching, learning and assessment; (3) planning systematically for the assessment of multilingual learners; and (4) developing practical strategies for teaching and learning that enhance multilingualism and multiliteracies.**

This publication begins with an introduction to the assets and capabilities of multilingual learners, along with a description of how learning outcomes can be linked to assessment in section 1. Guiding principles for planning and assessing learning in multilingual schools and classrooms are found in section 2, followed by strategies for classroom-based assessment of emergent multilingual learners in section 3. The practical strategies for assessment in section 3, which serve diagnostic, formative and summative purposes, are organized according to speaking and listening language skills, reading and writing language skills, and curricular content other than language, such as mathematics and the sciences. Section 4 concludes with a summary of general guidelines and recommendations for assessing multilingual learners. At the end are a glossary of terms and concepts, along with five country case studies of multilingual education assessment.

The publication focuses on:

(1) capabilities of multilingual learners
(2) language choices in teaching, learning and assessment
(3) systematic planning for the assessment of multilingual learners
(4) practical teaching and learning strategies that enhance multilingualism and multiliteracies

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"Since wars begin in the minds of men and women, it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed"

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Guidance for the classroom-based assessment of multilingual learners

Assessing languages, literacies and learning across the curriculum

Foreword

Our world continues to face a learning crisis: still today, a majority of children in low- and middle-income countries are unable to read and understand a simple text by the age of ten. This learning crisis disproportionately affects children from indigenous, ethnolinguistic minority and migrant backgrounds, who often enter the learning environment speaking a different language, limiting their ability to fulfil their true potential.

Assessments are a vital tool to help us tackle this global learning crisis. Well-designed and appropriate assessments provide accurate measurements of learning and can form the basis for effective interventions and evidence-based policymaking.

When instruction begins in the language children already speak fluently, children can develop the literacy, numeracy and transferable skills they need for all areas of the curriculum. Despite having made great progress in first language-based multilingual education policy and practice across Asia-Pacific, policymakers and teachers still face challenges in accurately assessing what their learners in multilingual contexts know and can do. For multilingual learners, assessments conducted in a language they do not understand do not accurately reflect their knowledge and abilities – such assessments tend to measure language skills instead. Teachers and educators need to be able to distinguish between assessments of language proficiency and assessments of literacies and curricular content. This distinction is crucial for utilizing assessments effectively and ultimately improving teaching and learning practices.

This publication, *Guidance for the classroom-based assessment of multilingual learners: Assessing languages, literacies and learning across the curriculum,* is designed to support policymakers and teachers to assess multilingual learners in the classroom. It begins with an introduction to the dynamic relationship between language, learning and assessment, followed by guiding principles for planning and assessing learning in multilingual schools and classrooms. The *Guidance* also includes practical strategies and promising country case studies for assessing multilingual learners' speaking and listening skills, reading and writing skills, and learning across the curriculum. By using this guidance, policymakers and teachers can ensure that language barriers in the classroom do not prevent multilingual learners from developing crucial skills for lifelong learning.

As co-chairs of the Asia-Pacific Multilingual Education Working Group, the UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok (UNESCO Bangkok) and the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (UNICEF EAPRO) are committed to supporting countries to transform education systems and improve learning through language-inclusive approaches that will ensure accessible, quality education for all. In this regard, the *Guidance* promises to advance Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) of the 2030 Agenda, which expressly seeks to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.'

Just as vitally, this guidance also speaks to SDG 10, in seeking to reduce inequalities in the classroom. Every child, everywhere, deserves to fully realize their true potential. With evidence-based education policies and interventions, we can set every child on that path of equity and opportunity.

Soohyun Kim
Regional Director
UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok

June Kunugi
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UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office

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The author would like to express her gratitude to all of the above-mentioned experts in this endeavour. She hopes that this work adequately reflects our shared goal of supporting quality education for emergent multilingual learners.

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Executive summary

This publication is designed to support educational policymakers and practitioners who make decisions about assessing learning outcomes in multilingual contexts across the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. It provides research-based advice on how learning assessments can be designed, implemented and interpreted to accurately reflect both the assets and the needs of learners who speak non-dominant languages. The discussion takes a language-as-resource perspective on such learners, considering them to be 'emergent multilinguals' with the potential to develop oral and written proficiency in two or more languages alongside intercultural and metalinguistic competencies while accessing learning across the entire school curriculum. Two research-based principles underlie this publication: one, that both literacy and content-area learning are most efficient when they build on the languages that learners speak and understand best; and two, that multilingualism in local, regional and international languages is a desirable and attainable outcome in a public education system. These principles are supported by research evidence affirming that the development of oral and written proficiency in a home language, known as L1, is most likely to result in reasonable levels of proficiency in additional languages, known as L2s.

Although the principles and practices discussed here are relevant to any part of the world, they are tailored as much as possible to the multilingual contexts of countries comprising the Asia-Pacific region through examples and case studies. The focus of the discussion is on the first five or six years of primary basic education, where it is most critical for schools to adapt teaching and learning to include and develop learners' own languages. There are guidelines for the assessment of multilingual learners, whether or not they currently have access to a formal multilingual education that entails assessment procedures, activities and instruments that will effectively capture emergent multilingual learners' skills and knowledge in both or all of their languages.

This publication is organized into four sections and followed by supporting information in three annexes. The introduction in section 1 establishes the need for relevant stakeholders in linguistically diverse countries to understand the home-school language mismatch as part of international efforts to improve equity and inclusion of education along with the quality of instruction. Assessments can have an important role in decision-making about education for emergent multilingual learners if those learners are assessed in both or all of their languages. An assessment only in the L2, however, does not offer an accurate picture of what multilinguals are learning and what they still need to work on. This section also describes what L1-based multilingual education is, how it works and how it connects to assessment practices for emergent multilingual learners. The importance of additive approaches to multilingualism and multiliteracy in education is explained, including the research principle of interlinguistic transfer, which explains why the development of L1 skills positively affects the development of skills in new languages and, ultimately, across the curriculum.

Section 2 provides guiding principles for how a classroom-based assessment can be planned, implemented and interpreted to improve teaching and learning as well as to document the progress of emergent multilinguals. It covers the principles of classroom-based assessment, how such learning assessments are currently used and how instruments could be better designed to document and support the developing skills of multilingual learners. There is information related to three essential activities:

1. Planning to assess skills in appropriate ways and in relevant languages
2. Collecting formative assessment data through multilingual strategies and approaches
3. Analysing, utilizing and applying formative assessment data to inform teaching practice

Diagnostic, formative and summative assessments need to align with the curriculum, which should specify a set of intended learning outcomes for each level of language proficiency. Intended learning outcomes for a strong multilingual education curriculum are listed in section 1 under four types of knowledge: bilingualism or multilingualism; biliteracy or multiliteracy; metalinguistic awareness; and content learning (such as mathematics, social studies and the sciences). A two-track approach to language assessment is presented as a way to organize the instruction and assessment of both or all languages and literacies according to whether the focus is on accuracy or on meaning. Section 2 concludes with some guidelines for the assessment of multilingual learners who do not yet have access to multilingual education programmes. These include the use of oral L1 to provide instructions and translate assessment items. Two other categories of assessment are used mainly for policymaking: large-scale national or international assessments, which are not covered in this publication, and assessments designed to compare multilingual and non-multilingual programmes, which are described in some of the country cases in Annex A.

Section 3, the largest section of this publication, discusses specific strategies for strengthening learning assessments at the classroom level for emergent multilingual learners. These assessment strategies are organized under the language skills of speaking and listening comprehension, followed by reading and writing and then non-language curricular content assessment. Connections are made between these assessment strategies and the intended learning outcomes of the multilingual education curriculum listed in section 1. Strategies are described for both the accuracy and meaning tracks of the two-track approach presented in section 2. The section concludes with considerations for translation so that content assessments may be conducted in two or more languages and with dynamic assessment strategies based on the latest understanding of how multilingual learners draw on all of their linguistic resources. This table summarizes some of the strategies discussed; see section 3 for the conditions under which they are advised.

Assessment strategy	Assessment purpose		
	Diagnostic	Formative	Summative
Assess learners' oral proficiency in home and additional languages.	X		
Allow learners to respond in more than one language as needed.	X	X	X
Use oral language assessments to determine realistic proficiency aims.	X	X	
Assess reading and writing in both or all languages.	X	X	X
Limit reading aloud and prioritize reading for meaning.		X	X
Interpret responses to open questions using a rubric.		X	X
Separately assess writing accurately and writing for meaning.	X	X	X
Assess curricular content knowledge using two or more languages.	X	X	X

Source: Author.

The conclusion in section 4 proposes several ways forward in creating and administering assessments for emergent multilinguals, and interpreting and acting on assessment data in ways that will inform and improve teaching, learning and policymaking for multilingual learners. The most important considerations for assessment of classroom learning overall are to:

- Assess productive language skills, including oral and written skills development, paying particular attention to L1 skills as they become available for transfer into additional languages.
- Assess languages and literacies with a two-track approach, where skills from the accuracy track are assessed according to correctness and skills from the meaning track are assessed according to levels of self-expression.
- Assess literacy skills across languages and promote comparison and contrast to facilitate metalinguistic awareness and interlinguistic transfer.
- Assess curricular content in the L1 or bilingually or multilingually, at least at the primary level, to help learners understand the curriculum and apply new knowledge to locally familiar contexts.
- Find alternative assessment forms that are inclusive of the multiple realities of learners, show respect for all learners and their funds of knowledge and demonstrate what they can do in all their languages.

It is hoped that these and all of the other considerations in this publication will help policymakers move forward with an agenda to more accurately and completely assess emergent multilingual learners.

1. Introduction

1.1 Multilingual learners across the Asia-Pacific region

The multilingual learners of the region are speakers of many different dominant and non-dominant languages, some of which are recognized by their school systems and some of which are not yet recognized. According to the Asia-Pacific Multilingual Education Working Group,[1] 42 countries in the region have educational policies that mention languages, and 25 countries have policies that mention non-dominant languages.[2] A total of 16 countries have endorsed the Bangkok Statement on Language and Inclusion (2019), which calls for the educational use of languages spoken by minority, migrant and refugee communities, with particular relevance to early literacy.[3] And 20 countries have endorsed the Bangkok Priorities for Action on First Language-based Multilingual Education (2023),[4] which emphasizes the important role of language in accelerating learning and achieving equitable and inclusive quality education for all. This demonstrates a commitment in the region for addressing ethnolinguistic diversity through appropriate educational approaches, such as L1-based multilingual education. What remains to be done is to adapt the ways that learning assessments are designed and conducted – and how assessment data are interpreted to improve teaching and learning – to adequately assess the skills and knowledge of learners who speak a non-dominant language at home.

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1 The Asia-Pacific Multilingual Education Working Group, established formally in 2009 and co-chaired by the UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok and the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, is a coalition of international non-governmental organizations, universities, and bilateral and United Nations agencies providing technical and material support for multilingual education initiatives and evidence-based policy advocacy throughout the region.

2 See <https://asiapacificmle.net/country-profile>.

3 See <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000372785>.

4 See <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000387958>.

Non-dominant language speakers have at least one home language, or L1, that has not been given high status in their society and has traditionally been left out of formal education. In contrast, people who speak *dominant languages* are those who typically are privileged in society and in schools. For speakers of non-dominant languages, this situation creates a home-school language mismatch, whereby the first language of learners is not the language of instruction, making it difficult for them to understand lessons or gain basic literacy skills while their peers, who already speak the dominant language at home, require less learning at school. This highlights the need for more equitable approaches that utilize learners' own languages in teaching, learning and assessment.

This publication refers to learners from non-dominant ethnolinguistic groups in dominant-language schools as *emergent multilinguals*. This is to recognize the linguistic resources that such learners bring with them from their home and community while signalling the great potential for them to develop oral and written literacy in two or more languages. Emergent multilinguals also see their languages as resources for teaching, learning and assessment by using not only the L1 but also other languages in learners' *linguistic repertoire,* or range of proficiencies.[5]

At the same time, it is important for assessment designers and policymakers to recognize that *intersectionality* characterizes people's experience of discrimination and disadvantage across society, including how they access or attempt to access formal education.[6] This means that overlapping individual and group characteristics, such as language, race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, ability and remote rural life affect learners' educational opportunities in diverse, compounding and potentially disadvantaging ways. Adapting the language of teaching, learning and assessment to be compatible with learners' languages is a way to remove at least one of the barriers to education that they experience.

1.2 International and regional efforts to include non-dominant languages

Progress is being made across the Asia-Pacific region, but worldwide an estimated 40 per cent, or 2.3 billion people, are not taught in a language they speak or understand.[7] A World Bank report provides a breakdown by region, estimating the home-school language mismatch at 37 per cent in the East Asia and Pacific region, in contrast with a much higher 80–87 per cent in the Africa, North Africa and Middle East regions. However, regional averages may hide the disaggregated rates for highly multilingual countries. For example, another World Bank report used country-level data from *Ethnologue* to determine that 12 of the 20 countries with the highest rates of learning poverty, defined as the proportion of learners who can read and understand a simple text by the age of 10, use an instructional language that most learners do not understand when they start school.[8]

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5 See the seminal work of García (2009) on emergent bilingualism, Ruíz (2010) on seeing languages as resources rather than problems and Benson (2014a) on creating a multilingual habitus in education to appreciate learners' linguistic and cultural diversity.

6 Crenshaw (2017) describes the theoretical basis and practical implications of intersectionality in education, which vary in the degree to which people are able to access educational opportunities and benefit from them.

7 This was a conservative calculation made by Walter and Benson (2012) using available language and population data.

8 Data sources are not revealed in World Bank (2021, p. 9) for the percentages by region. The learning poverty estimate is from World Bank (2019), which uses language data from the 2020 version of *Ethnologue: Languages of the world* (updated to Eberhard, Simons and Fennig, 2023).

The evidence is clear that decisions about language of instruction are linked to issues of educational access, equity and especially quality.[9] If children have access to schools but not to instruction in a language they speak and understand, their opportunities to learn across the curriculum are severely limited. Evidence from a range of countries demonstrates how the quality of instruction is greatly improved when teachers are trained to use languages that they and their learners understand and speak well and when teachers are placed appropriately so that there is a home-school language match. This is reinforced by recent evidence from the region that shows that the impact of language of instruction – specifically the home-school language match – is equal to or greater than the impact of all the other school quality indicators combined. Similarly, there is a strong relationship between school use of the home language and positive learning outcomes in mathematics.[10]

Regional and global commitments to learning and education relate to language. The Convention on the Rights of the Child makes quality education and respect for culture, including language, a child's right. In the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, Goal 4 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals specifies targets for improving the quality of education. SDG target 4.1 calls for Member States to "ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes" by 2030. Target 4.5 further specifies that efforts should "eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education…for persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations".[11] Even though language is not mentioned specifically in the target, working towards a home-school language match has been identified as a strategy for achieving the target because it is a major factor in school access, quality and equity.[12]

Since 2018, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics (UIS) has attempted to monitor the percentage of learners (a) in the early grades, (b) at the end of primary education, and (c) at the end of lower-secondary education who have their first or home language as the language of instruction. This is now known as SDG indicator 4.5.2 and used to monitor progress.[13] Unfortunately, these data have not been generated systematically nor regularly; as Table 1 reveals, data have only been collected for early primary levels in some countries in East Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia. The table does show that for some highly multilingual countries – Indonesia, Pakistan and the Philippines – the majority of learners are still not being taught in the languages they understand best.

9 See studies linking language to out-of-school youth (Benson, 2014b), to lifelong learning (Alidou, Glanz and Nikièma, 2011) and to effective learning and quality (Laitin, Ramachandran and Walter, 2019; Benson, 2016; Walter, 2016; Heugh, 2011).

10 See Walter (forthcoming).

11 See <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda> and UNGA 2015.

12 Scholars engaging with language and the SDGs include Milligan, Desai and Benson (2020), Kosonen (2017) and Benson (2016).

13 See original indicators and metadata at UIS, 2018, which have been updated.

Table 1. Percentage of learners in early grades whose L1 is the language of instruction

Country or territory	2015	2016	2019	2021
Hong Kong SAR, China	70.54	68.04	69.45	59.99
Macao SAR, China	—	68.85	—	71.30
Indonesia	43.75	—	—	—
Japan	98.41	—	98.55	—
Pakistan	—	—	32.45	—
Philippines	—	—	25.22	—
Republic of Korea	91.74	—	85.54	—
Singapore	48.59	52.09	58.62	53.13

Note: '—'=no information available.

Source: Selected monitoring data from UNESCO Institute for Statistics SDG 4 indicators as of November 2023, <http://sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org>.

An examination of the linguistic diversity of the Southeast Asian region is shown in Table 2, which presents the estimated percentage of primary school learners whose L1 is not the language of instruction.[14] This demonstrates both the great effort that is being put into including learners' languages in education and the progress that still needs to be made.

Table 2. Estimated percentage of primary school learners whose L1 is not the language of instruction in Southeast Asia

Estimated percentage of primary school learners whose L1 is not the language of instruction	Country	Estimated number of languages
76–100%	Brunei Darussalam	15
	Indonesia	707
51–75%	Singapore	24
	Timor-Leste	20
26–50%	Lao PDR	84
	Malaysia	134
	Myanmar	117
	Philippines	183
	Thailand	72
0–25%	Cambodia	27
	Viet Nam	108

Source: Adapted from Kosonen, 2017, p. 11.

14 The estimates in Kosonen, 2017 are from the 2016 version of the *Ethnologue*, which has been updated to Eberhard, Simons and Fennig, 2023.

According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, there is a triple threat to effective education internationally: the lack of equity and inclusion in the context of school access, the lack of quality instruction and the lack of relevance of curricula to twenty-first-century needs.[15] Large numbers of learners are made vulnerable to this triple threat due to their intersectionality and the use of a single dominant language in education. Indigenous communities are particularly challenged to learn dominant languages without compromising the recovery and promotion of their own languages. The United Nations established the International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022–2032 to address the urgent need to preserve, revitalize and promote these languages.[16]

1.3 Categories of assessment that affect educational decision-making in the region

In its most general form, an assessment involves the gathering of evidence to evaluate the characteristics of someone or something so that a judgement can be made. In the case of assessment in education, there are three main categories that affect decision-making in the Asia-Pacific region, as with many regions of the world:

- At the **learning** level, there are classroom- and school-based assessments designed for teachers and school leaders to improve teaching and learning, calling attention to learners' assets and capabilities as well as where they need support from teachers in monitoring progress towards curricular goals. The classroom-based type is the focus of this publication.
- At the **system** level, there are national and international large-scale assessments designed for school leaders and policymakers to make decisions about the education system rather than the individual learners. This type can be conducted for all learners at the subnational or national level and is often summative and based on the national curriculum or on a selected sample of learners. It can inform decisions related to learners, such as grade promotion, or decisions about programme design and implementation, curricular content or teacher training and deployment, among other aspects.
- At the **impact** level, rigorously designed learning assessments can inform comparison of multilingual and non-multilingual education programmes, comparing the assessment data of all or some learners with non-dominant language backgrounds studying in two different programmes. This type can inform decisions about whether to scale an L1-based multilingual education programme or to adopt a subnational or national L1-based multilingual education policy.

While all types of assessment are important and impact emergent multilinguals, national and international large-scale assessments are beyond the scope of this publication. Some assessments that have been used to compare multilingual and non-multilingual education programmes are mentioned, particularly in the country case studies. The primary focus of this publication is on classroom-based assessments, given their direct role in monitoring learning and informing teaching to achieve curricular goals.

15 See the Garnier (2023) report on the 2022 *Transforming Education Summit*.

16 See <www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/indigenous-languages.html> and UNESCO 2022.

1.4 L1-based multilingual education: What it is and how it works

L1-based multilingual education is an umbrella term for a systematic approach to using learners' strongest language for instruction in initial literacy and content, like mathematics and the sciences, while they are learning one or more additional languages. **The term *L1* refers to learners' first language, home language or mother tongue, while *L2* and sometimes *L3* refer to additional languages that are expected to be taught and learned in school programmes.** Recognizing that the home L1 and the school-selected L1 may differ,[17] the aim is for learners' home L1 and the school L1 to match as closely as possible so that learners and their teachers are using languages they share as a foundation for teaching and learning. This also means that teachers should have, or develop through training, both oral and written proficiency in the L1 and the L2. See **Annex C** for ideas on documenting teachers' language skills.

The scientific basis for multilingual education is the cognitive process of *transfer,* whereby the skills and knowledge developed in one language – for example, the act of reading – do not have to be relearned in another language.[18] The learner's own language (L1) is used for teaching and learning self-expression, literacy and knowledge across the curriculum, providing a foundation for basic and continuing education while one or more additional languages are added. The process of transfer takes time because learners are being taught the L2 as they are developing expressive oral and literacy skills in their own languages. During this process, learners will automatically begin transferring their knowledge, for example, their understanding of how letters represent phonemes or units of sound, to decode and understand the written form of their new language. This transfer of skills and knowledge can be facilitated with explicit teaching of similarities and differences between the languages. Similarly, any mathematics or science concepts learned in the L1 can be transferred to other languages as learners develop the L2 vocabulary needed.

Maintaining and developing more advanced literacy skills in the L1, at least throughout primary education, is known to have positive effects on learners' L2 development precisely because of interlinguistic transfer. *Additive bilingual or multilingual education* programmes take time to promote transfer and do not try to remove the L1 from the curriculum. Additive programmes have much better results than *early-exit transitional* programmes, which are considered *subtractive* because they discontinue use of the L1 and switch abruptly to the L2 after two or three years. Scholars find no research evidence that L2 proficiency is improved by programmes that *transition* to exclusive use of the L2.[19] On the contrary, studies show that removing the L1 from the curriculum can negatively affect the learning of the L2 and other curricular content, as shown in L2 and mathematics assessments in grades 1, 3 and 5 in Cameroon and grades 4 and 8 in Ethiopia.[20] Even if it might seem logical that more time spent in the L2 would improve learners' L2, the evidence supports investing in L1 literacy and learning as the best way to improve L2 results – meanwhile, resulting in learners who are multilingual and multiliterate.

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17 In cases where the L1 used by the school is different from a learner's L1, multilingual education can still be effective, possibly because the L1s may be linguistically closer to each other than to the dominant L2. See Eberhard et al. (2023) on 'closeness' as the degree of lexical (vocabulary) similarity in form and meaning. Regarding speakers of other languages, see the Nepal case study in Annex A and Benson (2022) on multilingual education implementation in Senegal.

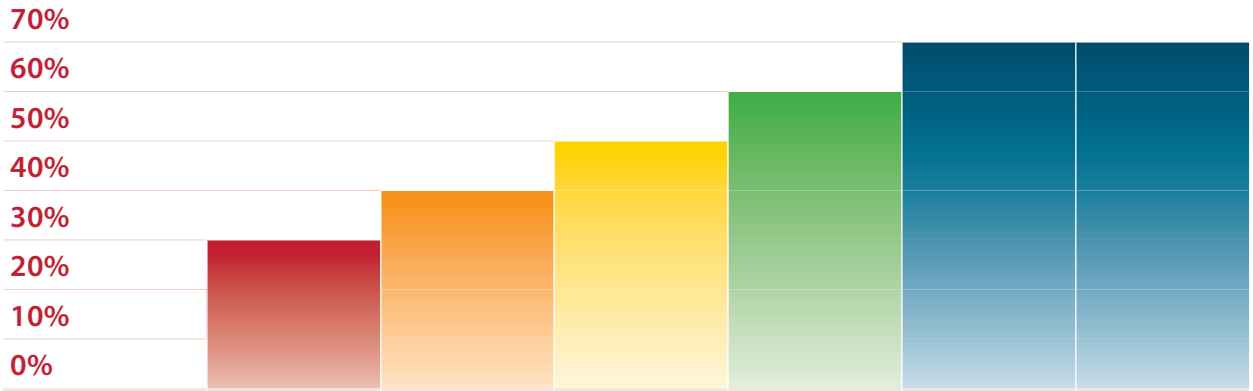
18 See Cummins (2009), who reviews the research-based principles underlying effective bilingual education.

19 This has been established using research from many contexts (Alidou, Glanz and Nikièma, 2011; Cummins, 2021; Heugh, 2011). According to Cummins, the body of evidence is irrefutable regarding the role of L1 development in L2 proficiency.

20 See studies by Laitin, Ramachandran and Walter (2019) for Cameroon and Heugh et al. (2012) for Ethiopia.

This principle of investing in the L1 to improve L2 skills has been incorporated into a table based on research findings on a range of approaches to teaching learners from non-dominant language backgrounds. Table 3 describes the outcomes in L2 proficiency (in percentages) that could be expected for learners studying through six different approaches, ranging from no use of the L1 in education (subtractive) to strong use of the L1 (additive).[21] 'Medium' refers to the language of instruction. As the table shows, learners are expected to have better L2 leaning outcomes the more a multilingual education programme uses the L1 or multiple languages for instruction along with developing and maintaining foundational skills in the L1 as a basis for L2 learning.

Table 3. Expected L2 learning outcomes, by approach to multilingualism



Type	Subtractive L2 only	Early-exit transitional	Early-exit transitional+	Late-exit transitional	Additive dual medium	Additive L1 mainly
Description	L2 medium only	L1 medium for 2–3 years then L2 medium only	L1 medium for 2–3 years then L2 medium only with L2 enrichment	L1 medium for 4–6 years then L2 medium only	L1 and L2 medium simultaneously for 6–7 years	L1 medium with L2 as subject

Source: Adapted from Heugh, 2011, pp. 130–131.

This table can guide Asia-Pacific policymakers in determining which approach is likely to have the desired results in terms of L2 learning, and it can be cross-referenced with actual assessment outcomes by country. It explains why researchers usually find that **even short-term use of the L1 is better than nothing, but that longer and stronger use of the L1 in well-implemented additive L1 multilingual education programmes will have much better results in the L2, as well as in the L1 and across the curriculum**. It also demonstrates why multilingual education programmes include learning targets for the L1 as well as additional languages and why learners should be assessed using both or all languages.

21 These approaches are based on Heugh (2011), who cross-referenced research from North America (see, for example, Thomas and Collier, 2002) with results of bilingual programmes in the Africa region to extrapolate the level of L2 outcomes that could be expected based on how much the approach invests in and builds on L1 literacy and learning.

1.5 Assessing the capabilities of multilingual learners

Research on education in multilingual settings suggests that assessments should be designed to demonstrate the assets and capabilities of learners, which are all of the skills and knowledge they bring with them from home that can help them learn at school.[22] These assets can best be determined by assessing using learners' strongest languages. Especially when emergent multilinguals are in the early stages of expressive language development as well as literacy learning, the L1 is the most efficient way to activate and extend prior knowledge. Even when the L2 is assessed, learner outcomes should not be judged by monolingual L1-speake standards but rather by standards based on steps in language learning. Learning activities and assessments that draw upon both or all languages rather than separating them have the potential to facilitate comparison and contrast and skills transfer between languages.

Researchers now use Dynamic Systems Theory to explain how the development of oral and written proficiency in multiple languages transforms an individual learner's way of thinking.[23] In other words, adding the L1, the L2 and the L3 results in at least three separate languages and leads to dynamically integrated linguistic and cognitive skills that are not 'balanced' but constantly shifting. Multilingual individuals do not use all of their languages in the same way, nor at the same levels. Instead, they draw on their strongest languages to make sense of new languages. Dynamic Systems Theory and its implications for assessments are further discussed in section 4.

This theory now informs current thinking on *translanguaging,* which is a concept that describes emergent multilinguals' active and dynamic use of their languages as an integrated whole, both in their minds and in their oral and written expressions. Across the curriculum, new content tends to be taught in learners' strongest languages and reviewed or practised in learners' newer languages. Pedagogical translanguaging refers to practices that develop literacy skills and concepts across languages in an integrated and simultaneous way, known as a focus on multilingualism.

As a practice, a focus on multilingualism gives learners opportunities to use all of their languages to do things like paraphrase a task on a worksheet, determine what knowledge is needed to undertake the task, negotiate which group members will do what, decide how an idea will be expressed, hypothesize, disagree or approve group decisions and defend an opinion – all skills that can be assessed and all skills that allow for mixing languages, switching between them, making mistakes and negotiating meanings in the process.[24] With a focus on multilingualism, meaning-making and good communication are prioritized over accuracy. This represents an understanding that language learning involves using all of one's linguistic resources, making mistakes, receiving informal as well as formal feedback and self-correcting over time while proficiency develops. Assessments of emergent multilinguals need to reflect this understanding by prioritizing communication over correctness.

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22 González, Moll and Amanti (2006) discuss how the linguistic, social and cultural *funds of knowledge* that learners develop at home, including intercultural and metalinguistic competencies, should be incorporated into teaching and assessment.

23 Using the L1 as a basis for learning has been studied extensively (see, for example, Cummins, 2021; Cummins and Persad, 2014). Herdina and Jessner (2002) provide the original proposal and rationale for Dynamic Systems Theory, and Jessner and Allgäuer-Hackl (2020) present a useful set of building blocks for holistic multilingual education.

24 See García (2009); see also Cenoz and Gorter (2014) and Cummins (2017) on pedagogical translanguaging.

The elements of a strong holistic multilingual education programme are listed in Table 4, which interprets them in terms of intended learning outcomes of a curriculum. These are appropriate for both primary and secondary education levels and can guide teaching and learning as well as learning assessment. Even if multilingual education programmes in the Asia-Pacific region are not yet designed to promote the teaching and learning that would result in all of these outcomes, policymakers can determine which of these characteristics their multilingual education programmes have and expand on them as teachers develop proficiency in multiple languages and literacies, as teaching methods and materials are developed to support them and as stakeholders see for themselves how a multilingual curriculum can function. The key is for stakeholders to see learners' home languages and cultural practices as resources and for educators to take an additive approach to building on learners' resources through multilingual pedagogies.

Table 4. Intended learning outcomes of a strong multilingual education programme

Type of skill or knowledge	Intended outcomes of the curriculum
Bilingualism and multilingualism	• Learners can express themselves to varying degrees in their L1 and in one or more additional languages. • Learners can understand and interact with each other in their L1 and in one or more additional languages.
Biliteracy and multiliteracy	• Learners can read age-appropriate texts in their L1 and in one or more additional languages and demonstrate comprehension orally and in writing to different degrees depending on learning stage. • Learners can express themselves in writing in their L1 and in one or more additional languages to different degrees depending on learning stage.
Metalinguistic awareness	• Learners can compare and contrast their L1 and one or more additional languages in terms of orthography, vocabulary, structure and other elements. • Learners demonstrate a capacity to use appropriate languages, varieties and registers for particular situations and can explain their choices. • Learners demonstrate a capacity to interpret (orally) and translate (in writing) between languages.
Content learning across the curriculum	• Learners demonstrate age-appropriate understanding of curricular content in their L1 and in one or more additional languages.

Source: Author.

1.6 Why multilingual assessment is important for policymakers

Assessment has an important role in decision-making about education for emergent multilingual learners. Specifically, assessment data can give an accurate picture of what multilinguals are learning and what they still need to work on – when they are assessed in both or all of their languages. However, if multilinguals are assessed only in the L2, it will be difficult for teachers, school leaders and policymakers to understand their actual levels of learning and interpret data to improve educational quality.

There are at least two challenges with educational assessment using only the L2, a language that younger primary grade learners are just beginning to learn:

L1 assessment is necessary to understand transfer of literacy skills. If language and literacy skills are assessed only in the L2, there is no evidence of the skills already developed in the L1 that will support L2 learning. Assessing the L1 and the L2 provides teachers with evidence on where learners are with their transfer of literacy skills from their strongest languages to their new language.

Content assessments in the L2 are assessments of L2 language skills first, not content knowledge. If skills, knowledge and attitudes in mathematics and the sciences are assessed only in the L2, the data are difficult to interpret. An incorrect answer may mean that learners do not understand the content or that they understand the content but not the question, or that they understand the content and the question but cannot express the answer. Another issue is that teachers may grade answers according to L2 accuracy rather than on how well learners have understood the content.

In other words, using only the L2 to assess language, literacy and other curriculum knowledge is not likely to give teachers or the school system an accurate picture of what emergent multilingual learners know. Another problem is that an L2-only assessment can create negative *backwash effects* on teaching practices or learning behaviours.[25] For example, learners who do not understand the L2 may rely on memorization of correct answers in the L2 rather than on actual understanding of the content. And because there is a tendency to 'treasure what is measured', the L2-only assessment tends to cause teachers and parents to devalue the L1 and to believe that only the L2 is important in education.

In contrast, assessing using the L1 alongside the L2 and other languages of the curriculum has the potential to give a more accurate picture of the skills and knowledge that learners bring with them to the classroom, what they are learning, what they are having difficulty understanding and how teaching and learning can be improved to help them.

There are also systemwide reasons to assess multilingually. For multilingual education policies and programmes to be successful, stakeholders need to understand the impact of investing in L1 development as a foundation for literacy and learning. **Assessing in both or all languages creates a positive backwash effect because it demonstrates what learners are learning in each of their languages and how that is contributing to the overall quality of their education.** This may mean redesigning assessments to demonstrate real understanding rather than relying on memorized words and phrases in the L2.[26]

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25 See Heugh et al. (2012) regarding Ethiopia, where L3 English assessments in secondary education caused negative backwash in public attitudes towards the L1, despite a very effective eight-year L1-based multilingual primary programme.

26 See, for example, Bender et al. (2005).

Table 5 provides a simple framework in the form of questions that policymakers can ask about their education system to determine what kinds of diagnostic and learning assessments should be given to emergent multilingual learners to inform teaching.

Table 5. Questions for evaluating progress through multilingual learner assessment

Focus	What should be assessed
Incoming skills	• Are the learner's oral languages assessed at the time of enrolment?
Language and literacy learning	• Are the learner's L1 skills assessed in all four language skills at each stage of learning? • Are the learner's L2 skills assessed in all four language skills at appropriate stages? • Are multilingual skills like metalinguistic awareness or intercultural awareness documented?
Content learning	• Is academic content assessed in the L1 (when taught in the L1) and bilingually or multilingually (when taught in both or all languages)? • Is the learner assessed according to content knowledge and not language accuracy?
Formative assessment	• Do teachers use classroom-based assessments on a regular basis to monitor learners' progress? • Do teachers use assessment data to reteach or remediate as needed?
Summative assessment	• Are national and standard assessments administered in the L1 or in both or all languages?
Learning and programme supervision	• Are learners individually assessed in all subjects every year, with records kept? • Are assessment data used to improve teaching and learning, curriculum and teacher professional development?

Source: Adapted from Benson, 2016.

Multilingual assessment supports not only teaching and learning but also awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity as a means for social justice by including all learners in educational processes. To improve educational quality and equity for marginalized learners, this publication provides strategies to address an overarching question: **How can learning be assessed in all of the languages used by learners to gain access to the national curriculum?**[27]

27 See, for example, Rivera and Rodríguez-González (2022) and Shohamy (2022) on the role of multilingual assessment in promoting justice, equity, diversity and inclusion, or JEDI, which is a social justice acronym that has been applied in a range of contexts, including educational development.

1.7 Overview of the guidance on classroom-based assessment of multilingual learners

This publication is designed to support educational policymakers and practitioners who have responsibility for ensuring that all learners of the Asia-Pacific region learn the knowledge they need to reach their potential, including in multilingual contexts. The aim is to explore both research and practice that can help inform the design and interpretation of learning assessments so that they more adequately reflect the skills and knowledge of learners from non-dominant language backgrounds. The focus is on formative assessment strategies in the primary education years, where it is most critical for schools to adapt teaching and learning to include learners' own languages.

Although most of the principles and practices discussed here are relevant to any part of the world, they are tailored as much as possible to countries in the Asia-Pacific region. These countries represent great diversity in terms of multilingual contexts, multilingual education policies and assessment practices.

All domains of educational assessment should be adapted to make education more inclusive and effective for multilingual learners. This publication supports the development of learning assessments at the classroom level to more effectively capture multilingual learners' assets and capabilities and to better identify and remediate any challenges they are having. Strategies are explored to systematically document the skills and knowledge of non-dominant language speakers, whether or not their schools are using their first or home language (L1) for literacy and learning, though they are especially useful for assessing learners participating in L1-based multilingual education programmes. More specifically, this publication aims to:

- Synthesize global knowledge and trends in the Asia-Pacific region for determining appropriate techniques for assessing learning in bilingual and multilingual education settings;
- Highlight issues, gaps, challenges and opportunities involved in conducting assessments for multilingual learners in the region;
- Identify and describe promising practices in classroom-based assessment and strategies for teachers of multilingual learners in the region; and
- Provide recommendations for classroom-level assessment for transforming education systems in the Asia-Pacific region.

Two research-based principles underlie this publication:

1. Both literacy and content learning across the curriculum are most efficient when they build on the languages that learners speak and understand best.
2. Multilingualism in local, regional and international languages is a desirable and attainable outcome in a national education system.

Terms and concepts highlighted in *italics* in the text are defined in the glossary at the end of the publication.

2. Guiding principles for planning and assessing learning in multilingual schools and classrooms

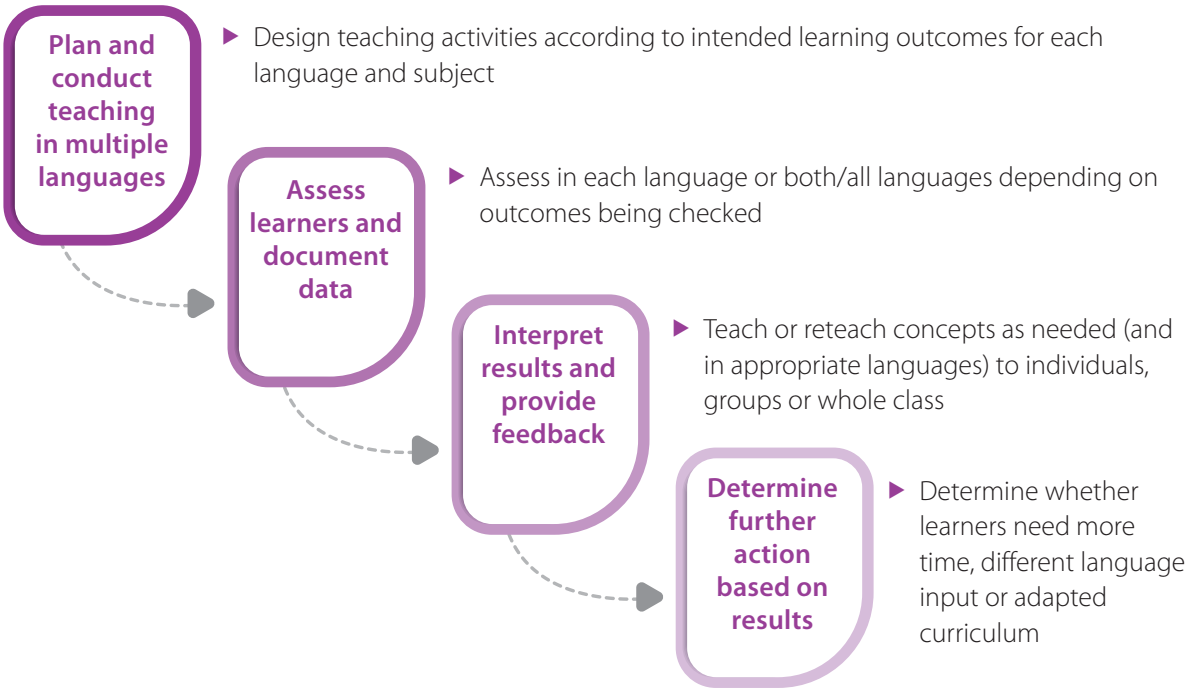
An assessment is a systematic approach to documenting and interpreting evidence of learners' knowledge, attitudes, skills, competencies and proficiencies at certain points in their education with the aim of improving teaching and learning – both individually and collectively – and/or refining education programmes.[28] This means that an assessment is only the first step, after which the data need to be interpreted – and that interpretation should have implications for teaching practice. An assessment should provide data for decision-making of some kind at the classroom level, the school level or even the district to national levels. **All assessment data should be analysed and interpreted so that they can be used to improve policy or practice.**

2.1 Planning for instruction and assessment of emergent multilinguals

The aim of any assessment is to improve teaching and learning to better serve the needs of a particular group of learners or even individual learners who may be having difficulties. For assessment to improve learning outcomes, it should be seen as a process or series of steps, as shown in Figure 1.

28 See Bialik et al. (2016) for an updated range of assessment types.

Figure 1. Steps in planning instruction for multilingual learners



Source: Author.

The process here begins with the planning and teaching of lessons for multilingual learners based on the intended learning outcomes for each language and for other content areas. This is immediately followed by assessing learning as accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes, which will give a teacher information about whether or not – and to what degree – learners have understood the teaching. The data of an assessment are not merely for registering on the class list or using for grading; they also need to be interpreted, which happens next. For example, if most learners respond to assessment questions correctly, they may be ready to move on to a more advanced lesson. However, some learners may still be having difficulty and may need reteaching or a review. The teacher may note these points in a planning book or a class list for monitoring individual learning and determining what actions need to be taken. Providing feedback to each learner about the results is important, so that both the learner and the teacher know how learning is going. If the interpreted assessment data show that most learners did not comprehend the content of the lesson, the teacher may need to reteach it, teach it in another way, give more examples, provide more practice or find other strategies so that learners can understand and apply the lesson content. There are also implications for the curriculum: if an intended learning outcome appears to be too advanced for learners at this stage, it may need to be moved to a later lesson. This process of teaching, assessing, interpreting the data and acting on those results is repeated throughout the school year.

2.2 Main types of classroom-based learning assessments

Classroom-based learning assessments take a systematic approach to documenting learning outcomes at certain points in time. These outcomes relate to certain competencies, knowledge and skills that are outlined in the form of intended learning outcomes in the curriculum and taught in the classroom.

There are three main types of classroom-based learning assessments:

- **Diagnostic** assessment, which determines what individual learners know or can do related to what is planned. This often takes place before a programme begins or before a lesson or unit is taught to check for prior knowledge and/or learning difficulties. The assessment data help teachers to identify learning needs so that they can plan appropriate teaching and learning activities.
- **Formative** assessment, which is a direct way to assess learning because it can be conducted by the teacher at any point in the process and is embedded in instruction. It is designed to monitor learning and to provide ongoing feedback to teachers and learners about their progress. For example, if most learners demonstrate understanding of a concept that has been taught, the teacher can build on that concept or teach the next topic. If many learners demonstrate confusion, the concept needs to be reviewed, practised, retaught or taught in a different way. The assessment can also be used to identify learners in need of extra attention and support.
- **Summative** assessment, which documents what learners know and can do at important moments in their education, such as the end of a unit, module, term, school year or level of education. Like formative assessment, it is linked to the curriculum through specific standards, intended learning outcomes or detailed criteria to be achieved. When a summative assessment comes at the end of an academic term or year, it is designed to efficiently assess the higher concepts or intended learning outcomes for the entire period so that decisions can be made about whether or not learners can move on to the next level.

Classroom-based learning assessments have implications for many aspects of education beyond improving teaching and learning. They are potentially the most important assessments for educational decision-making because they are usually administered and the data interpreted by specific teachers and schools for specific learners, so that teaching and learning can be improved for those learners. Table 6 gives some examples of how diagnostic, formative and summative assessment data may contribute to different levels of educational decisions, with particular attention to a bilingual or multilingual education programme. Note that there may be two or more sources of assessment data, which will allow for triangulation or comparison between results. For example, using multiple methods of formative assessment to monitor learning towards a specific target provides teachers with a well-rounded view of learning progress.

Table 6. How assessment data can contribute to decision-making

Assessment type	Hypothetical data	Implication of data
Diagnostic: • Learner diagnostic assessment of oral language proficiency in the L1 and the L2 when entering school • Family interviews	• 28/30 learners demonstrate age-appropriate oral L1 skills and 5/30 demonstrate low-level L2 skills; 2/30 have a different L1. • According to families, 24/30 learners speak mostly the L1 at home, 2 speak other L1s and all are exposed to the L1, the other L1s and the L2.	For teachers, school personnel and community: • The home-school L1 match for all but 2 learners confirms the relevance of materials and teaching in this L1. • Because few learners have L2 skills, all will need L2 instruction. • Teachers should plan how to support the 2 learners with other languages.

Assessment type	Hypothetical data	Implication of data
Formative: • Observation of in-class activity • Individual assessment of ability to explain process	• 15/30 learners can add one-digit numbers and explain how in the L1. • 15/30 learners make mistakes when adding and cannot explain.	For teachers and learners: • 15 learners can go on to harder addition problems and learn to explain in the L2. • The other 15 need reteaching and/or more practice in the L1 at this level. They could be partnered with others for help.
Formative: • Individual oral L1 assessment of grade 3 learners • Observation of grade 3 teachers A, B and C • Check teachers' lesson plans	• 90% of teacher A's learners, 50% of teacher B's learners and 30% of teacher C's learners can explain photosynthesis orally in their L1. • Teacher A teaches clearly in the L1 and practises with learners; teachers B and C have difficulty explaining the concept in the L1.	For teachers A–C and resource or head teachers: • Teacher A's learners can proceed to the next lesson; teachers B and C need to reteach and reassess most learners. • Teachers B and C need more help from the resource or head teacher and a check if the issue is language or content related. • Teacher A can be praised and asked to share teaching strategies with the others.
Summative: • Grade 2 multilingual education end-of-year curriculum-based assessment • Final grade lists • Learner attendance records • Teacher attendance records	• 80% of grade 2 learners demonstrate learning in the L1 and the L2 with 75–95% accuracy; one class has lower average scores. • 92% of grade 2 learners earn passing grades from their teacher. • 20% of learners have high absentee rates and weak assessment scores. • One teacher has weak class scores in the L1.	For learners, teachers and school personnel: • Cross-referencing assessment data with grades and attendance indicates who can pass to grade 3 multilingual education and who must repeat or receive remedial help. • Teachers of repeaters should see the assessment data to know their strengths and weaknesses. • Learners with low scores and high absenteeism need feedback and support. • The teacher of the class with low scores needs feedback and L1 help from school personnel.

Source: Author.

In addition to giving teachers and education specialists the information they need to improve instruction, assessment results are also important for learners themselves so that they can understand where they are in their learning, what they are already able to do and where they go next. For this, constructive feedback is important. Teachers should help learners to interpret their assessment scores, encouraging them to monitor and take responsibility for their own learning. Individual assessment-related feedback can motivate learners to do better.

2.3 Challenges associated with learning assessments in multilingual classrooms

A particular challenge of classroom-based learning assessments in the Asia-Pacific region is that **a single *dominant language* is often used to assess all learners**, including those who speak non-dominant languages and are just beginning to learn the dominant language (L2). As mentioned in section 1, assessments carried out only in an L2 fail to provide an accurate picture of what multilingual learners know and what L1 literacy skills they have developed that will later transfer to L2 literacy and learning across the curriculum.

Another more general challenge is that **classroom-based learning assessments are not always well aligned with the national curriculum.** This may be because the curriculum is not detailed enough to designate specific learning outcomes for each subject at each grade level. Another reason may be that an assessment has not been built into the teaching and learning processes. Learning outcomes should be realistic, build upon each other and create the conditions for learning at the next level.

Another important challenge is teachers' access to relevant professional development. **Teachers need training to support emergent multilinguals to meet learning standards** by checking for their understanding and by ensuring that skills and knowledge are taught and learned in an appropriate sequence during the school year. Moving from one lesson to another without checking for understanding creates a situation in which teachers are not aware of what learners can or cannot do. The use of only a dominant L2 for assessment is one part of this problem because it means that teachers are not aware of what learners know and can do in their own languages.

2.4 Guiding principles for the assessment of emergent multilinguals

Quality learning assessments are designed to accurately capture the skills and knowledge that learners have mastered and to highlight the areas where they need additional support. Only when the assessment accurately captures learning levels can the data meaningfully improve pedagogy, practice and policy. In all settings, learning assessments should be tailored to learners' needs and be designed to empower learners to best demonstrate what they know. To accurately capture learners' learning in a multilingual context, learning assessments must be designed with learners' linguistic needs in mind. This is particularly important for classroom-based assessment, which directly informs teachers' daily practice.

There are five guiding principles that inform classroom-based assessment in a multilingual context:

- Determining which languages learners speak and understand best is the first step to meaningfully assessing learning for multilingual education learners.
- Linguistic diversity enhances learning and should be reflected systematically in curriculum standards and assessments.
- Intended learning outcomes are measured correctly when there is a clear purpose for the multilingual classroom assessment.
- Organizing language assessments according to accuracy and meaning tracks captures different aspects of linguistic development, thereby providing a more detailed account of language ability.
- Communication is best facilitated in multilingual learners' L1s, and their skills and knowledge are best assessed using the languages they understand the best.

Start by determining the languages in which learners can express themselves best. To tailor assessments to learners' linguistic needs, the teacher and school should first document each learner's linguistic resources, including local language varieties. Only then can assessments be designed to give policymakers, planners, education staff and teachers the information they need to determine how to build up learners' learning and skills in all languages. Table 7 suggests some of the questions that can be asked about learners' skills and how data can be collected.

Table 7. Data for determining a learner's linguistic resources

Learner's linguistic resources	Sources of data
• Which languages are spoken by the learner? • To what degree is the learner able to express their self in each language? • Which language does the learner use with adults in the household? • To what degree is the learner exposed to additional languages outside the school?	• Teacher's assessment of each learner's language proficiency • Self-report by family members when enrolling the learner • Teacher–family discussions • Household language survey • Self-reports by learners • Language mapping

Source: Adapted from Benson, 2016.

Curriculum standards and assessments should address linguistic diversity. Classroom-based learning assessments should be aligned with the curriculum so that each intended learning outcome guides the teaching and learning activities, each formative assessment documents learners' progress towards that learning outcome, and each summative assessment demonstrates accomplishment of the desired outcome. In a multilingual context, curriculum and assessment standards should already be designed to address emergent multilingual learners' needs, and the expected learning outcomes should already take account of learners' linguistic diversity and set appropriate benchmarks for learning. Curriculum standards should provide guidance to teachers on how to align their classroom-based assessment to

the aims of multilingualism. Even if multilingual standards are not yet included, teachers should still use a language-inclusive formative assessment to understand where learners are to guide their learning.

Teachers may help guide emergent multilingual learners through a series of assessment steps. Table 8 describes the steps that can be taken in an approach that aligns with the intended learning outcomes of the curriculum. These steps can be applied to any intended learning outcome, which should be stated in such a way that the means of assessment is clear.

Table 8. Steps in aligning assessment with planned curricular outcomes

Step	Example
1. Identify desired skill as an intended learning outcome for the summative assessment.	By the end of week 3 in a grade 1 multilingual education programme, learners will be able to recognize the letter 'a', know that it makes the sound /a/ and orally provide at least three words in the L1 that begin with that sound.
2. Plan teaching and learning activities, scaffolds and benchmarks.	Plan teaching and learning activities that exercise learners' ability to distinguish the letter 'a' and its sound from other letters and sounds and to practise finding L1 words using that sound. The teacher may help by scaffolding learning based on what learners already know, giving hints and showing items or pictures of items that encourage learners to use the sound. The teacher may also determine some benchmarks or steps for learners to take that will move them progressively closer to the aim.
3. Formatively assess to document learners' progress towards the intended learning outcome.	Periodically during the week of lessons on this letter and sound, the teacher may formatively assess learners' understanding to document their progress.
4. Teach, reteach, practise or otherwise help learners towards the intended outcome.	Based on how the learners do, the teacher may reteach the letter or sound, help learners practise, give them homework to find more words using that sound and so on. If learners are ready, the teacher may go on to the next letter and sound.
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until learners are ready for the summative assessment.	
6. Summatively assess to document achievement of intended learning.	Later in the month or term, the teacher will summatively assess learners' accomplishment of the desired outcome to be sure that they have mastered it. If any individuals are still having difficulty, the teacher should note this and try to help them catch up with the class.

Source: Author.

Have a clear purpose for the multilingual classroom-based assessment. The purpose and use of each assessment should be clearly defined to ensure that it is measuring what it is intended to measure. This includes formative assessments during the teaching and learning cycles along with summative

assessments at the end of a unit, term or year. The following are some possible purposes for an assessment in the L1, the L2 or multiple languages:

- Provide feedback for teachers to improve multilingual education teaching and learning.
- Provide immediate feedback for learners so they know what skills to work on.
- Provide evidence corresponding to curriculum standards of language, literacy and content learning.
- Provide information for planning future lessons and units.

Organize the assessment (and instruction) of both or all languages and literacies according to a two-track approach, where the focus is either on accuracy or on meaning-making.[29] Assessment strategies should then be selected based on what the assessment is trying to measure. Different levels of proficiency can be expected for different languages in multilingual contexts. If the L2 is new to learners, they may need to communicate most of their ideas in the L1, particularly if the school and teacher are the main or only source of input in the new language. Thus, it is necessary to differentiate between the goal – accuracy or meaning – when assessing emergent multilinguals.

- **Accuracy:** Do language errors prevent learners from demonstrating their knowledge of lesson content? Are their assessment responses considered incorrect if they demonstrate knowledge but make language errors? Are there ways to assess L2 skills that allow learners to make errors?[30]
- **Meaning:** Have learners understood the concepts taught? Do they understand the assessment questions? Are they able to express answers to those questions?

This approach helps teachers give equal weight to accuracy and meaning by teaching and assessing from both tracks every day. Table 9 breaks down the language skills in each track with examples of activities and learning outcomes to be assessed in the L1 and the L2. The middle column represents accuracy-oriented skills and the right-side column represents meaning-oriented skills that should together guide instruction in each language. Both tracks provide opportunities for multilingual education teachers to assess multiple languages by comparing and contrasting component parts in the accuracy track and by translanguaging to interact across languages in the meaning track.

29 Malone and Malone (2019) report that multilingual education teachers find the two-track approach helpful for organizing their language lessons and assessment so that there is space for learners to participate in discussions and to simply enjoy reading and writing without fear of committing errors.

30 Errors are part of language learning. In fact, responses considered as errors may demonstrate positive aspects of bilingualism or multilingualism as learners draw on their stronger languages and literacies to attempt tasks in new languages.

Table 9. Language skills to be assessed following the two-track approach

Language skill and task	The learner can…	
	ACCURACY TRACK (Focus on parts of language)	MEANING TRACK (Focus on meaningful language)
LISTENING SKILL	Recognize sounds, syllables, words and sentences.	Actively listen to make sense of and respond to what is heard.
Example activity	Look at picture, letter and key word.	Listen to a story.
Example assessment	Identify the initial sounds of five L1 nouns.	Perform actions of five commands in the L2.
SPEAKING SKILL	Use standard vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar.	Speak to communicate thoughts, feelings and ideas to others.
Example activity	Practise vocabulary.	Share their experiences with others.
Example assessment	Correctly identify and pronounce five L2 animal names.	Use the L2 to tell about three things they do every day.
READING SKILL	Recognize letters, syllables, tone marks, etc. and associate them with sounds.	Read for enjoyment and to gain new ideas and information.
Example activity	Read aloud.	Read silently in the reading corner.
Example assessment	Read a short L1 or L2 text aloud.	Read an L1 text silently and talk about it.
WRITING SKILL	Form letters clearly, spell words correctly and use correct grammar.	Write different texts to communicate thoughts, feelings and ideas.
Example activity	Compose simple grammatically correct sentences.	Write creative texts, such as poems, stories and experiences.
Example assessment	Correctly write three questions in the L1.	Write a letter to a friend in the L1.

Source: Adapted from Malone and Malone, 2019.

Note that skills in the accuracy track can be assessed using a checklist while skills from the meaning track need to be assessed using inferential interpretation tools, such as a rubric or other qualitative descriptions of behaviour that demonstrate levels or stages of learning. Some examples are given in the next section.

Use the L1 to facilitate communication and assess skills and knowledge of multilingual learners in schools with or without formal multilingual education programmes. In general, learners will best demonstrate their skills and knowledge when assessed in the languages they understand the best, which is typically the language they learned first at home. Important considerations for assessing multilingual learners according to the aims of strong multilingual education programmes – bilingualism and multilingualism, biliteracy and multiliteracy, *metalinguistic awareness* and content learning across the curriculum – as described previously are as follows:

- Assessing languages and literacies according to a two-track approach, whereby skills from the accuracy track are assessed according to correctness while skills from the meaning track are assessed according to levels of self-expression.
- Assessing productive language skills, including oral and written skills development, paying particular attention to L1 skills as they become available for transfer into additional languages.
- Assessing literacy skills across both or all languages, promoting comparison and contrast to facilitate skills transfer between languages.
- Assessing curricular content in the L1 or bilingually or multilingually, at least at the primary level, to help learners make sense of the curriculum by applying new knowledge to locally familiar contexts.
- Finding alternative assessment forms that are inclusive of the multiple realities of learners, show respect for all learners and their funds of knowledge and demonstrate what they can do in all of their languages.

The next section offers strategies designed for learners who are getting at least some exposure to literacy and learning in their own languages through multilingual education programmes. However, many learners in the Asia-Pacific region do not yet have access to L1-based multilingual education. In such contexts, educators should consider the following in the assessment of all multilingual learners:

- Assessing oral L1 skills to inform teachers about the communicative resources that learners bring with them to the classroom and that will transfer to the L2 as that language is learned.
- Assessing some L1 literacy if taught in the early years to document skills that will be available for transfer in the L2 as that language is learned. Knowing what learners can do in the L1 will help teachers facilitate skills transfer.
- Using the L1 orally to assess prior knowledge that is relevant to new concepts being taught in the L2 across the curriculum because learners continue to think and apply knowledge in their strongest languages.
- Conducting content assessments bilingually if some L1 literacy is taught and allowing learners to choose which languages to respond in.
- Ensuring that content assessment is not a language assessment, because errors in self-expression in any language may affect the data when the language of assessment is not understood.
- Using oral L1 to assess L2 language learning, especially in the case of vocabulary and concepts that can be explained or translated in the L1.

Assessing in an L1 may not address all of the challenges associated with documenting learning achievement for multilingual learners. There are clear linguistic challenges, as in cases where learners speak local varieties of an L1 while the school uses a standard variety[31] or a different L1 altogether. If schools are using learners' languages for the first time, shared understandings of new pedagogical terminology, such as a newly minted L1 term for 'photosynthesis', must be negotiated, and misunderstandings may occur. However, assessing using the L1 will give teachers more realistic feedback on what learners know and what they need to work on. Finally, using the L1 at least orally could have positive backwash effects in terms of changing people's mindsets and valuing learners' L1s, their funds of knowledge and their identities.

31 See the distinctions between *learner L1* and *school L1* in the glossary section.

3. Strategies for classroom-based assessments of emergent multilingual learners

Based on the guiding principles from the previous discussion, this section describes specific strategies for strengthening learning assessments at the classroom level for emergent multilingual learners. The considerations for classroom-based learning assessment highlighted here are based on strong understandings of multilingualism and multiliteracy, multilingual education and the types of learner assessments that will give insight into the skills and knowledge of emergent multilinguals. Such considerations include the following.

- For assessing speaking and listening skills:
  - Assess learners' oral proficiency in home and additional languages
  - Allow learners to respond in more than one language as needed
  - Use oral language assessments to determine realistic proficiency aims
- For assessing reading and writing skills:
  - Assess reading and writing in both or all languages
  - Limit reading aloud and prioritize reading for meaning
  - Interpret responses to open questions using a rubric
  - Separately assess writing accurately and writing for meaning
- For assessing non-language subjects:
  - Assess curricular content knowledge using two or more languages
  - Use pedagogical translanguaging to facilitate content assessment
  - Provide educators with guidance on translating assessments
  - Use dynamic assessment strategies

3.1 Formal and informal formative and summative approaches to assessment strategies

The strategies in this section are most useful as formative assessment strategies, which can be conducted by teachers at any point in the teaching and learning process to check for understanding and to adjust teaching accordingly. For L1-based multilingual education programmes, languages, literacy skills and content learning should all be assessed in one or more languages to provide ongoing feedback on how learners are progressing towards achievement of the intended learning outcomes of the curriculum. As previously noted, **a particularly important role of formative assessment in multilingual education is to document literacy skills in the L1 that will be available for transfer to the L2 as oral L2 skills are being developed.** However, it is also important for teachers to assess content learning, such as mathematics and the sciences, using languages that learners speak and understand.

Many of the strategies discussed here could also be used for summative assessment, which documents learning at important moments, such as the end of a unit, module, term, school year or level of education in terms of how intended learning outcomes are achieved. Although many formative assessments may be informal in nature, integrated into lessons so that teachers are receiving feedback on learners' progress on a regular basis, most summative assessments are formal in nature, requiring written responses.

3.1.1 Approaches to formative assessment

Informal formative assessments are designed intentionally by the teacher to provide frequent feedback on learning, but they are not necessarily perceived as tests by learners because they are integrated into the lesson. The results do not become part of learners' grades, though the teacher may keep records to monitor progress. Informal assessments may take the form of individual or group tasks related to the lesson, during which learners can be observed by the teacher. For example, if learners are working in groups to make sense of a story read in the L1, the teacher can observe their use of vocabulary or their ability to infer meaning that is not explicitly stated and then make decisions about what knowledge or strategies to reinforce later. Informal assessments may also take the form of classroom activities or exercises that are low-stress and provide teachers with information about individual learner progress. In addition, they may simply be question-answer interactions between teachers and learners. Note that learners should have opportunities for guided practice, meaning practice with scaffolding from the teacher and/or peer help, before they are expected to apply and demonstrate new skills and knowledge on their own.

Teachers can use checklists or even their attendance lists to make note of individual accomplishments based on benchmarks, which are displays of knowledge or skills that represent steps in the process of achieving intended learning outcomes. For example, benchmarks could simply be demonstrations of increasingly complex written language according to an L2 assessment scale. Benchmarks could also be demonstrations of conceptual understandings that are components of a larger concept, such as long division in mathematics, whereby learners must be able to explain each component concept in one or more languages of their choice.

Informal, low-stress means of assessment are likely to provide more accurate results than formal assessments like tests, particularly for traditionally marginalized learners such as girls, learners with disabilities and those from non-dominant ethnolinguistic communities who may not feel at ease expressing themselves in the context of the classroom. Teachers should be aware that asking individual learners to perform a task in front of others may induce stress. Informal assessment is consistent with culturally responsive assessment, whereby teachers use appropriate language, acknowledge learning differences and allow for the different ways learners may behave, think or express their knowledge.[32] Being open to which languages learners can use, and how, is an excellent way to lower stress levels and thus to get an accurate idea of what learners have understood from a lesson.

Formal formative assessments are also designed to provide feedback on learning outcomes, but they are more likely to be perceived by learners as tests or tasks that check for understanding. These assessments take place at certain points during the teaching of a topic or unit, when teachers are looking for evidence of progress along a set of intended learning outcomes or a continuum of skills. The assessment data are likely to be recorded in some way, if not in the teacher's grading book, at least in a checklist or attendance list so that individual progress is documented. A good practice is to avoid grading numerically so that the data are as meaningful as possible. The teacher may also note what will be done individually or with the whole class to address gaps in learner understanding.

It is useful if learners have already practised the format that these formative assessments use so that they are familiar with how to respond. They may look like parts of the textbook or a worksheet with different ways of responding, such as matching, short answer, fill-in-the-blank or multiple choice. At the same time, it is useful for teachers to use different modalities that give learners a range of opportunities to demonstrate conceptual understanding in academic content areas, such as mathematics or the sciences, as well as in language development.

Formal means of formative assessment can be quantitative or qualitative, with a focus on what has been learned or what learners can do, because the teacher needs this information to decide whether something needs practising or reteaching or whether the class can move forward in the curriculum. An assessment with a quantitative focus tends to give a 'big picture' of learning progress on a certain topic or concept by assessing correct and incorrect answers and giving an overall score. To communicate this to learners, teachers can review each response to an assessment item with them so that they can analyse their responses. A qualitative assessment provides details about how learners are doing, documenting a range of appropriate responses.

3.1.2 Approaches to summative assessment

Summative classroom assessments tend to be conducted formally and often rely on short, close-ended questions as part of written assessments, such as multiple-choice, yes–no or fill-in-the-blank items, to represent what has been learned. The answers are either correct or incorrect, and the final score is a number. These types of assessments can disadvantage multilingual learners more than others when they do not accommodate language-related mistakes that are common in language learning. For

32 Montenegro and Jankowski (2017, pp. 8–9) identified culture as (a) explicit elements, like behaviours and customs, (b) implicit elements, like beliefs and values, and (c) cognitive elements, like communication and collaboration. They pointed out that appropriate use of language is a key strategy for culturally responsive assessment.

example, a fill-in response is usually considered correct only if it is spelled or written correctly, even if spelling is not the aim of the assessment item. In this case, the issue is not the question itself but how it is graded and interpreted by the teacher. An overall score may not demonstrate the actual knowledge of the learner.

Assessments that qualitatively evaluate different levels of performance or stages in learning may be better adapted to multilingual learners. Such assessment forms include essays, role-plays, portfolios (a collection of an individual's work is reviewed) and projects (assessment of the entire project from the planning phase to the end product). In these formats, mistakes are allowed as natural parts of each demonstration of progress. Learning outcomes are usually graded using a rubric or set of criteria, demonstrating to well-trained teachers where learners are in their learning process and where they will need more instruction or practice. Examples of rubrics that assess each learner's progress along a performance continuum are shown in Tables 11, 12 and 15.

Alleviating the stress of assessment is also important for emergent multilinguals, as previously explained. One strategy is for teachers to use the same or a very similar format for summative assessments as they have used for formative assessments, including both formal and informal, so that learners are already accustomed to responding in certain ways. Other strategies are language-related: using the L1 to assess is one way to maximize learners' opportunities to demonstrate what they know. Using two or more languages in a bilingual format is another way, particularly for curricular content like mathematics or the sciences. These are perfectly valid ways of conducting summative assessment for multilingual learners.

3.2 Assessing speaking and listening skills in multilingual contexts

Speaking and listening, or oral communication and comprehension skills, are building blocks to higher-order literacy, numeracy and content-specific skills in the L1 and additional languages. In multilingual contexts, the development and assessment of speaking and listening comprehension skills can give teachers an important benchmark of what learners can actually do in their L1 and in other languages they are learning.

Oral language assessments help teachers to determine learners' linguistic repertoire, or the range of languages they speak and understand, and to what degree. The assessments can be linked to the intended learning outcomes of the curriculum listed in Table 4 under skills in bilingualism and multilingualism, specifically that:

- Learners can express themselves to varying degrees in their L1 and one or more additional languages.
- Learners can understand and interact with each other in their L1 and one or more additional languages.

An assessment of oral language proficiency often takes the form of a diagnostic, which helps the teacher know the starting point or baseline for each learner. In the case of the L1, an oral language diagnostic such as answering questions or retelling a story will show the teacher whether or not the home and school L1s are the same. If they match, the teacher can proceed with existing L1 lessons. If learners speak a different variety of the L1 at home, the teacher will need to plan lessons that help them learn the school variety through comparison and contrast, vocabulary and pronunciation exercises and

so on. In the case of the L2, the diagnostic may take the form of assessing oral expression or vocabulary, whereby the teacher records initial data for each learner so that they know the baseline or beginning point and can document L2 learning progress with each subsequent assessment. If learners have no prior exposure to the L2, lessons will need to start from the beginning with listening and speaking skills. If learners have some familiarity with the L2, lessons may involve more speaking and a slightly faster pace.

Oral language can be assessed individually through relatively quick meetings between a learner and a teacher or another assessor who is proficient in the language of assessment, in the following sequence:

1. The assessor chooses a strategy to encourage the learner to speak about something meaningful in the language being assessed. Strategies include asking a set of questions or requesting that the learner talk about what is happening in a wordless picture book, picture cards or a storybook.
2. Based on the learner's oral expression, the assessor determines the level of oral language according to a set of criteria described in a rubric.
3. The rubric offers a guide for scoring the assessment of specific skills in an accurate and consistent way. Rubrics can be used for knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and proficiency. Examples will be given further on.

The following points should be considered when conducting oral language assessments:

- Assessors must be proficient speakers of the language being assessed.
- The assessor elicits the individual learner's speech in the language being assessed using a strategy of questioning or showing pictures.
- The assessor rates the learner's speech based on criteria described in a rubric.
- When being assessed in an L2, learners may use the L1 or mix languages to answer; this is normal when they are developing new language skills and drawing on the skills they have.
- The data can be used to determine which languages will be used for instruction, as a baseline for comparing future learning outcomes or as a way to formatively assess learners' progress in the L1 and additional languages.

3.2.1 Basic oral language proficiency rubric

A basic oral language proficiency rubric is shown in Table 10. This can be adapted to each context. The more detailed the criteria in each category, the more the rubric will help assessors accurately and consistently determine learners' levels. Details will also improve reliability if more than one person is assessing learners.[33]

33 See also Klein and Briceño (2019) for a description of an Oral Language Record, which is available with an Analysis and Planning Tool, <www.hameraypublishing.com/pages/oral-language-assessment>.

Table 10. Sample rubric for levels of oral language proficiency

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Beginning speaker	**Limited speaker**	**Intermediate speaker**	**Advanced speaker**	**Highly proficient speaker**
No answer, "I don't know" or pointing. Starting to develop receptive and productive skills.	One-word answers, basic vocabulary, demonstrations of understanding. Some receptive and productive skills.	Communication with errors in grammar, syntax, vocabulary use. Good receptive skills.	Communication with a few errors. Excellent receptive skills.	Easy, fluent communication with accurate grammar and vocabulary usage. Complete understanding.

Source: Author.

The assigning of levels is designed to give teachers an estimate of the degree of proficiency a learner has in each language. For example, young learners, such as those entering grade 1, are not likely to reach level 5 even in a first language because they are still learning and will make age-appropriate errors.

If a learner is assessed in two languages, for example the L1 and an additional language or the L2, the final score might be represented as 4/1, meaning a 4 in the L1 and a 1 in the L2. This tells the teacher that the learner can understand and speak the L1 very well but has almost no skills yet in the new language, so most instruction should be in the L1, and the L2 should be taught from the beginning.

A young learner who has been exposed to both languages might receive a score of 4/3 or even a 3/3, which tells the teacher that the learner has about the same proficiency in both, but neither language is fully developed. Educators might interpret this data as indicating that the learner could be placed in an L2-only programme, but it would be more appropriate for the 4/3 or 3/3 learner to be in an L1 multilingual education programme to fully develop the L1 as a resource for skills transfer between languages.

Another learner might have low scores in these two languages, say 2/2, but have a 4 or 5 in a different home language, if it is assessed. This tells the teacher that the learner will need individualized attention because there may be a mismatch between the home L1 and the school L1.

3.2.2 Story retelling to assess oral language

The retelling of a story is another strategy for eliciting and assessing a learner's oral languages as well as the ability to understand and tell stories, which is an important foundational skill to support beginning reading to make sense of text. A story retelling task can be a good diagnostic or formative assessment to monitor and document the development of pre-literacy skills. The task follows this sequence:

1. The assessor explains the task in the language being assessed. Alternatively, if the L2 is being assessed at beginning levels, the instructions might be given in the L1.
2. The assessor then tells a short story in the language being assessed.
3. The learner is asked to retell the story.

A simple rubric like the one shown in Table 10 or an alternative that is designed specifically for this task, as shown in Table 11, can be used. Both of these rubrics help teachers make an on-the-spot judgement, but there is always an option to record a learner's oral language for later analysis.

Table 11. Sample rubric for levels of story retelling

Does the retold story have a story line, including a beginning, middle and end?	
NO	YES
0 – No response	3 – Story with errors throughout
1 – Single words or "I don't know"	4 – Story with minor errors
2 – Partial sentences with errors	5 – Story told clearly

Source: Data Recognition Corporation, 2024a and Data Recognition Corporation, 2024b.

There are different ways to interpret data of story retelling assessments. Using this rubric, the levels from 0 to 5 capture the degree of oral language that results from the task. Not all assessment tasks work well with young learners due to their shyness or unfamiliarity with the task or with the assessor. Even a score of 0 may not mean that a learner has no oral language skills but rather that a different task may be needed or a different strategy for introducing the task – for example, demonstrating or practising beforehand. Another alternative is to triangulate data with a different task, such as question and answer, which will elicit more spoken language so that the teacher gets the most accurate picture of how proficient the learner is in the language being assessed.

3.2.3 Progressive oral language assessment

A progressive oral language assessment begins with the most basic skills and proceeds to more and more difficult ones, stopping when the learner cannot go on. This type of assessment is most often used for assessing a learner's L2 because it allows for learners to respond as much or as little as they can. As the example in Table 12 shows, a progressive oral task starts with questions that require basic receptive skills, from understanding simple to more advanced speech, and proceeds to productive skills, from individual words to telling a story. The assessor proceeds through the questions and notes or checks off the responses but stops when the learner can no longer respond, at which point the assessor has enough information to assign a level using a rubric like that in Table 10.

Table 12. Sample progressive assessment of oral language

Receptive skills	Examples of what the assessor does or says
1. Answer basic personal questions.	What is your name, what town do you live in, etc.?
2. Point to [a thing].	Point to your mouth, nose; point to a chair, a door.
3. Point to [a picture of] the thing I name.	Point to pictures of familiar animals, things, etc.
4. Do the action I tell you to do.	Stand up, sit down, get up and turn around, go touch the door.
Productive skills	**Examples of what the assessor does or says**
5. Say the word for the thing I touch.	[Touch things to elicit 'hand,''paper,''desk,''book'.]
6. What are the people doing in each picture?	[Show pictures to elicit 'a person is cooking', 'the learners are going to school', 'the animals are eating', etc.]
7. Answer these questions [in present, future, past].	Where do you go after school? What will you do tonight? What did you do yesterday?
8. Tell me a story that you know.	[free choice]

Source: Author.

When the language of oral assessment is learners' L1 or a language in which they have strong skills, they are not likely to mix languages. However, when assessed in an L2 or a language in which they do not yet have strong skills, learners may understand the question but answer using their stronger language or a mixture of languages. This is normal and should be understood as their intention to communicate as much as they can, drawing on all of their linguistic resources. Mixing provides the assessor with a picture of the learner's overall receptive (understanding) and productive (speaking) abilities. Teachers can take notes or use a checklist to indicate when learners switch languages, so that they can teach or reteach the needed vocabulary or grammar element.

Accepting and documenting learners' language proficiencies, even when they come in mixed ways, reinforces an assets-driven perspective of assessment,[34] where all of learners' communication skills are considered valid and useful in their education. The oral assessments described here are designed to target a single language but can allow for reporting of mixing. There are also assessments designed to use multiple languages; for example, picture cards or story books can be used flexibly to elicit any language that a learner uses to communicate. An adapted rubric may be useful for the assessor, whereby credit is given for completion of the task in any language, and there is space to notate the languages used.

34 According to Gottlieb (2021), instilling an assets-driven philosophy in the school system means taking into account learners' full linguistic repertoires and assessing to discover their strengths. Klein and Briceño (2019) suggest an assets-oriented oral language assessment to account for the social skills learners gain through communicative experiences in more than one language, variety or register.

3.2.4 Oral language assessments and multilingual education curriculum development

Even if most countries of the Asia-Pacific region are still working to bring learners' L1s into their school systems, policymakers can benefit from looking at how an assessment works in strong, additive, holistic multilingual education programmes in other contexts. Holistic multilingual education programmes develop skills and knowledge related to oral self-expression, reading and writing in multiple languages. Two examples are found in Table 13, both from semi-autonomous regional language communities in European countries and both highlighting the non-dominant regional language while working in four or more languages or language varieties.

Table 13. Two integrated multilingual education programmes

Country	Netherlands	Spain
Subnational context	Fryslân, an official bilingual region	Basque Autonomous Community
Regional L	Frisian	Basque
Dominant national L	Dutch	Spanish
Approach name	Holistic Model for Multilingualism in Education	Integrated Multilingual Curriculum
Languages included	Non-dominant home language Typologically similar regional language Non-standard varieties Official language of instruction	Basque Spanish French English
Levels of education	Primary and secondary	Primary and secondary
Goals	Foster positive attitudes towards all languages, develop awareness and receptive multilingual skills in new languages and cultivate metalinguistic knowledge and language learning strategies through comparison and contrast.	Multilingual approach to the teaching and learning of four languages based on a strong foundation of literacy and learning in Basque. The language-learning framework focuses on elements of the four languages that are most likely to promote skills transfer. Learning activities include translation, comparison and contrast.

Note: For more details on the Frisian multilingual programme, see Duarte and Günther-van der Meij (2018, p. 29); for details on the Basque multilingual programme, see Elorza and Muñoa (2008) and Elorza (2013).

The Basque programme in Spain, for example, uses multilingual norms for oral and written language proficiency, meaning that different levels and purposes of languages are accepted. Teaching and learning across the curriculum takes place in more than one language, where new content is often taught in learners' strongest languages and reviewed or practised in learners' newer languages. Assessment tasks are undertaken in languages that are comprehensible and meaningful to learners, depending on their progress.

Language assessments can be used to determine realistic aims for each language at each grade level in a multilingual education curriculum. Like the examples, the multilingual education curriculum can designate different aims for oral and written proficiency in each language; that is, high levels of an L1 may be expected, intermediate levels in an L2 and beginning levels in an L3.

Going back to the five oral language assessment levels, let us take an example whereby most incoming learners are assessed at level 4 or 5 in the L1, level 2 or 3 in the L2 and level 0 or 1 in the L3. This would suggest that outside the school there is strong L1 use, some exposure to the L2 and almost no exposure to the L3. Realistically speaking, this means that high proficiency in oral and written L1 can be developed at the primary level, with some intermediate-level proficiency in the L2, based on transfer from the L1 and explicit teaching of the L2. However, it may take many more years of teaching for learners to achieve high proficiency in the L3, which would be a more realistic goal for upper-secondary rather than for primary education.

3.3 Assessing reading and writing skills in multilingual contexts

Literacy skills are competencies to be learned in primary education, setting a foundation for lifelong learning. Improving educators' capacity to assess foundational literacy skills is critical to improving learning outcomes. Education authorities at the regional and national levels are also interested in improving the assessment of reading and writing to thus monitor progress. In multilingual contexts, classroom-based assessment approaches must consider and respond to the linguistic resources of learners to accurately inform teaching and learning practices.

This section describes the use of reading and writing assessments in two or more languages as they relate to determining learners' linguistic repertoire or the range of languages they speak and understand. These assessments are linked to the intended learning outcomes of *multiliteracy* listed in Table 4, specifically that:

- Learners can read age-appropriate texts in their L1 and one or more additional languages and demonstrate comprehension to varying degrees orally and in writing.
- Learners can express themselves in writing to varying degrees in their L1 and one or more additional languages.

Reading and writing assessments can also be linked to the development of metalinguistic awareness, particularly the first of the intended learning outcomes listed in Table 4:

- Learners can compare and contrast their L1 and one or more additional languages in terms of orthography, vocabulary, structure and other elements.
- Learners demonstrate capacity to use appropriate languages, varieties and registers for particular situations and can explain their choices.
- Learners demonstrate capacity to interpret orally and translate in writing between languages.

As the intended learning outcomes of a multilingual education programme suggest, the L1 and any additional languages need to be assessed both separately and together. The strategies in this section provide examples of how literacy skills can be assessed according to the accuracy and meaning tracks described in Table 9, beginning with examples of comparison and contrast between languages.

3.3.1 Assessing reading for accuracy by comparing and contrasting languages

Teachers can use different tools to help assess reading for accuracy by comparing and contrasting languages. One such tool is a comparative alphabet chart, which presents the phonemes of two languages in the same visual, showing which letters and sounds are the same in both languages, which are similar, and which are unique to each language.

One example developed for an Italian-German bilingual programme in Europe presents the phonemes of both languages in a rainbow design.[35] The shared letters, phonemes and key words are displayed in parallel bands in the inner arches, German in yellow and Italian in blue, to show the similarities between languages. The letters, phonemes and key words that are unique to each language are in separate bands in the outer arches.

A comparative alphabet chart can be hung on the wall of a classroom so that emergent multilingual learners can refer to it as needed. In the Italian-German programme, teachers referenced the chart for a range of activities that could constitute practice or be used for assessment. One activity involved asking learners to bring something from home to show the class. Each learner stood up, showed the item to the class, named it in the language of their choice, named it in the L2 if possible, and then pointed to the initial letters/sounds on the alphabet chart. If needed, classmates were asked to say the word in the other language and find that initial letter.

Activities like this can provide a means for informally assessing one important outcome of early reading education in the accuracy track: that learners can recognize letters, syllables, tone markings, etc. and associate them with meaningful sounds. This activity checks learners' recognition of letters and the phonemes they represent in the L1 and the L2 once they have all been learned.

If a comparative alphabet chart is not available, this kind of informal assessment could make use of two or three different alphabet charts hanging side by side on the wall.

In **Thailand,** comparative alphabet charts were developed separately for consonants and vowels for Patani Malay-Thai multilingual education, where some adaptations were made for Patani Malay L1. Listening, speaking and reading were taught and assessed in both the L1 and the L2 at the beginning and end of each year.

A comprehensive assessment administered to grade 1 learners in 2011 demonstrated the benefits of the multilingual education intervention, with the following highlights:

- The largest portion of learners in the Patani Malay-Thai programme scored in the 80–90 per cent range, while their peers learning only through Thai scored 20–30 per cent.
- Learning through the L1 had the greatest positive impact on boys' reading assessment scores and girls' mathematics assessment scores.

Note: See **Annex A** for details.

Note: See UNICEF (2018, pp. 62–63) for the comparative Patani Malay–Thai alphabet charts and how they are used.

35 See the Italian-German "rainbow" alphabet featured in Sandfuchs et al. (2013).

Figure 2 provides some examples of comparison and contrast charts that could be made for two or three languages and displayed on classroom walls for teaching and assessment. These charts allow learners to contrast how sentences are structured, how questions are structured and what vocabulary they need for asking questions. Making charts like these available for learners to refer to is one means of scaffolding learning and assessment. As shown in the example middle chart, learners could be tasked with asking a question in the L1 and then translating it into the L2 or the L3 using the appropriate structure.

Figure 2. Examples of contrastive charts

Sentence structure	
L1	S – O – V . Subject-Object-Verb
L2	S – O – V . Subject-Object-Verb
L3	S – V – O . Subject-Verb-Object

Question structure	
L1	S – O – V ? Subject-Object-Verb
L2	S – O – V ? Subject-Object-Verb
L3	V – S – V – O ? Verb-Subject-Verb-Object

Key vocabulary chart			
L1	L2	L3	Calls for:
[fill in]	…	Who	*person*
…	…	What	*thing*
…	…	When	*time*
…	…	Where	*place*
…	…	Why	*reason*
…	…	How	*way*

Source: Benson et al., 2021.

A small-scale trilingual education pilot programme in **Nepal** developed learners' skills and knowledge in a local L1, a national L2 and an international L3: Rajbanshi, Nepali and English. The following aspects of this programme illustrated positive contributions to multilingual assessment:

- The assessment of reading in each of the three languages results in different levels while demonstrating that L1 skills transfer to both of the additional languages.
- To compare learners in multilingual and non-multilingual programmes, data were triangulated with two other assessments: a government assessment and an adaptation of the Early Grade Reading Assessment.

Note: See **Annex A** for details.

3.3.2 Assessing reading for meaning and comprehension by using open-ended questions

Some important outcomes of early reading in the meaning track, as listed in Table 9, are reading for enjoyment and reading to get new ideas. These can only be assessed by providing learners with many opportunities to discuss texts they have read.

It is common for teachers to assess the reading skills of individual learners in any language by having them stand and read aloud for the class. However, reading aloud puts the focus on performance and accurate decoding, which distracts learners from comprehending what they are reading. This is why reading aloud should only be used to assess decoding and reading fluency, while silent reading should be used for assessment of reading comprehension. There are a few alternatives: front-loading the idea of reading for meaning by asking the questions ahead of time, allowing learners to go back to the text in front of them; or promoting silent reading combined with answering comprehension questions aloud. It is therefore best to assess reading accuracy separately from reading for meaning, giving readers more opportunities to show what they can do.

In a small-scale oral L1 intervention in **India**, assessments may have a positive backwash effect on implementing a full multilingual education programme. Some highlights are:

- The assessment of story comprehension in grades 1 and 3 showed strong progress in the L1, and strong progress in the L2 at grade 3 was attributed to language skills transfer.
- Assessment data for grade 3 intervention learners were higher than for non-intervention learners in the L1, and much higher in the L2.
- The L2 listening comprehension assessment allowed answers in the L1 or the L2, which demonstrated an advantage for intervention learners, many of whom answered more often in the L2.

Note: See **Annex A** for details.

Teachers can easily use informal means of formative assessment, whereby they observe how learners talk about what they have read. Alternatively, they can assess more formally by asking comprehension-related, open-ended questions to see what enjoyment and ideas learners had gleaned from the text. The goal is not to find single 'correct' answers, which are elicited with closed questions, but rather to see how learners relate to a story and what they think about it after the reading.

Table 14 provides examples of open-ended questions. As opposed to closed questions, which can usually be answered with yes-no, a single word, or a choice from multiple-choice options, open-ended questions allow learners to show what they are thinking, and relate what they have read to their own experiences. Some of these example questions might work for learners in grade 1, like the one about feelings, while others might be for older, more experienced readers. The questions do not require learners to prove that they understood every part of the story. Questions are most often answered orally, but they could also be used as a way to elicit expressive writing.

Table 14. Open-ended reading questions, possible responses and skills demonstrated

Example questions about a story in the L1 or in the L2	Possible responses	Possible skills demonstrated
How did the story make you feel? Why?	I felt worried because… but later everything got better when… I felt sad at the beginning because… but I felt happy at the end because….	Learner is able to express ideas and support their opinions.
Has anything like that ever happened to you? Please tell what happened.	I didn't do that, but once I…. Once I also had to…but I knew what to do because….	Learner is able to compare and contrast experiences.
What do you think you have in common with the main character? Why?	I think we are both afraid of… but we are not afraid of….	Learner is able to relate to story characters.
What would you have done if you were the main character? Why?	I would have done the same thing because…. I would not have…but I might have….	Learner is able to think like the story character and consider alternative actions.
Did anything in the story surprise you? Why?	I was surprised by…because….	Learner is able to remember the feeling experienced during the story.
What do you think will happen to the main character after this story?	I think….	Learner is able to create another story from this one.

Source: Author.

As shown in the right-side column, an assessment of reading comprehension that uses open-ended questions is likely to demonstrate relatively advanced skills of understanding the story, being able to relate to the story using previous experiences, relating to the main character or to feelings and being able to create an original story that begins where the other ends. Open-ended questions allow for different answers from different learners, which gives the teacher a good idea of where each learner is in the process of developing reading skills.

As with oral language expression, it may happen that learners will mix languages in their responses to open questions; this demonstrates that they are using all of their linguistic resources at their existing levels. Teachers also have the option of asking learners to read in the L2 and answer questions in the L1, for example, which acknowledges the fact that learners may have better receptive than productive skills in the new language.

Responses given to open-ended questions can be recorded or written down by the teacher or by learners and then assessed according to a scale or rubric. For the assessment of interpretive comprehension or the ability to read and infer meaning from a text, a rubric showing a continuum of skills may be appropriate. Table 15 provides one example; there are many others readily available online.[36]

Table 15. Rubric showing a continuum of skills for assessing expressive writing

Criteria	Meets all expectations	Meets some expectations	Continues to develop skills	Begins to develop skills
Expresses original ideas in writing	Writes ideas clearly and coherently	Writes ideas simply but with purpose	Writes ideas in unconnected manner	Writes ideas without linking them logically
Uses language correctly	Uses long and complex sentences with correct grammar	Uses different sentence lengths with mostly correct grammar	Uses simple sentences and makes some grammar errors	Uses simple phrases with inconsistent grammar
Exhibits creativity	Delivers an original and interesting message	Reveals some creative ideas	Relies on familiar ideas or stories	Offers limited insight into perspective
Shows personal perspective	Writes clearly in the first person	Refers to self in some way	Partially identifies as author	Lacks using own voice

Source: Author.

3.3.3 Assessing writing for accuracy

Writing is the most demanding language skill because it requires learners to combine physical skills, like holding a writing instrument; technical skills, like converting sounds or ideas into written form with correct diacritics and punctuation; linguistic skills, like vocabulary and grammar; and cognitive skills, like putting ideas together in ways that others will understand. There are both formal and informal ways of assessing multilingual learners in regard to accuracy and meaning. Like assessments of reading, some means of formative assessment can be derived from daily classroom exercises, the difference being that the teacher pays attention to what learners have written based on criteria for both or all languages. If teachers are not familiar with the written forms of both or all languages, they may seek help from school directors, education officers or community members.

Beginning with the accuracy track, some important outcomes of early writing education listed in Table 9 are for learners to form letters or characters clearly, spell words correctly using appropriate diacritics, and use correct grammar. At the beginning levels of either the L1 or the L2, writing accuracy may be assessed using dictation of letters or words that are not in the same order as the alphabet charts, or other reference materials available in the classroom. Teachers may want to cover up wall

36 See Integrated Performance Assessment Rubrics of CARLA, University of Minnesota for examples.

charts during the assessment so that learners must rely on their own knowledge. Once learners are able to write sentences, accuracy-based writing assessment tasks should focus on the particular skills that have been taught, as shown using examples from English in Table 16.

Table 16. Sample writing tasks and skills being assessed

Sample writing assessment task	Skills targeted
Use each word in a sentence: good, better, best, bad, worse, worst	The learner uses simple adjectives and adverbs correctly.
Circle the letters that should be capitalized: my friend khieu sits next to me one day khieu went to phnom penh [etc.]	The learner correctly capitalizes the first word of a sentence, proper nouns and names.
Use each word to connect two sentences: and, or, but	The learner correctly uses conjunctions.
Correct the spelling of the following words: [list incorrectly spelled words with short vowels]	The learner correctly spells words with short vowels.

Source: Author.

The particular writing skills targeted by an assessment task will depend on the specific rules for writing the standard form of each language. These skills should be specified as intended learning outcomes in the curriculum. As learners develop their skills in the L1 and the L2, teachers can integrate meaningful writing into accuracy-based assessments through the following steps:

1. The teacher chooses a topic for writing that will elicit meaningful writing, such as asking what learners did over the weekend, to assess writing in the past tense.
2. The teacher explains the task in the language being assessed. Alternatively, instructions might be given in the L1 but learners are asked to write in the L2.
3. The teacher collects the writing samples and checks how well learners do on the skills being assessed. Other incorrect aspects may be noted for follow-up, but they are not relevant to the task.
4. The teacher determines whether a certain skill needs to be retaught or practised, or whether an intended learning outcome has been achieved.

It is common practice for teachers to assess learners by dictating words, sentences or paragraphs from the reading book in the L1 or the L2. Dictation is useful but only assesses a small part of writing; dictation assesses how well each learner remembers how certain words are accurately written. Assessing only or mainly through dictation may have a negative backwash effect on meaningful writing, particularly in the L2, because learners will tend to memorize texts rather than practise self-expression. Those skills are learned gradually and require learners to make mistakes in the process, which is why they should be assessed as part of the meaning track. Learners will need to be able to put thoughts into writing to write short answers, essays and reports in upper-primary grades and beyond.

3.3.4 Assessing writing for meaning and communication

In the meaning track, some important outcomes of early writing education, according to Table 9, are writing to communicate thoughts, feelings and ideas and writing creative texts, such as poems, stories and experiences. Like the meaning track for reading, meaningful writing assessments focus on the quality of self-expression with certain genres of writing. Examples are writing a letter to a friend, writing someone's life story, describing how to plant potatoes, creating a poem or story, and so on. Teachers can stimulate writing by asking open-ended questions like those in Table 14.

Writing assessments in both or all languages need to consider the different aims for proficiency in each language for each year; that is, a high level of L1 writing, an intermediate level of L2 writing and a beginning level of L3 writing might be expected by the end of primary school. As the most demanding of the productive language skills, writing should be assessed mostly in the L1 in the early primary years and bilingually in the mid- to upper-primary years. However, L2 skills can be developed through interlinguistic transfer by allowing learners to first complete a writing task in the L1, then to translate it into the L2, then to check the L2 for grammatical aspects that may be different between the L1 and the L2, and then explain to the teacher how the process worked and what was learned. This is a multi-step assessment that recognizes that learners may still be doing their best thinking and writing in the L1, but that they can translate that thinking and writing into the L2 and that they are aware of differences between the languages that may affect the grammar of the L2 version. This kind of bilingual or multilingual assessment will also demonstrate learners' degree of metalinguistic awareness, or the ability to discuss the characteristics of languages as communicative systems.

In **Cambodia**, where multilingual education has been institutionalized, researchers piloted an expressive writing assessment on a small scale by asking learners to write in the L1 and the L2 about a dream they had one night. Some findings of the pilot assessment are:

- Assessing the productive skill of self-expression in writing provides evidence that multilingual education learners transfer literacy skills from the L1 to the L2.
- Non-dominant language speakers who are not in multilingual education programmes have difficulty writing more than single words in the L2 while multilingual education learners express themselves well in the L1 and reasonably well in the L2.

Note: See **Annex A** for details.

3.4 Assessing learning for emergent multilinguals in other subject areas of the curriculum

This section describes the use of assessments in two or more languages as they relate to learning outcomes in the curricular content, specifically in mathematics, natural and social sciences and other subjects. Going back to Table 4, these assessments are linked to the intended learning outcomes of content learning, specifically that learners demonstrate age-appropriate understanding of curricular content in their L1 and in one or more additional languages.

If learners are in a multilingual education programme, content instruction in the early years is usually completely or mainly in the L1, which means that content should be assessed in the L1. Once bilingual teaching starts being used, usually around grades 3 and 4, both languages can start being used for assessment. Instructions for an assessment can best be explained in the L1 to be sure that learners understand the task. Assessment questions can be asked and answered in the L1 or in both languages. To check knowledge and understanding in mathematics, the sciences and other curricular content, formative assessment strategies using the L1 – or using both the L1 and the L2 – can include:

- Observations of learner performance
- Checklists
- Games
- Hands up for TRUE, hands down for FALSE
- Thumbs up for YES and thumbs down for NO in front of the body to maintain privacy
- A show of individual answers on slates
- A quick discussion
- An exit slip, where learners write three things they learned that day before leaving the classroom
- A brief oral or written quiz

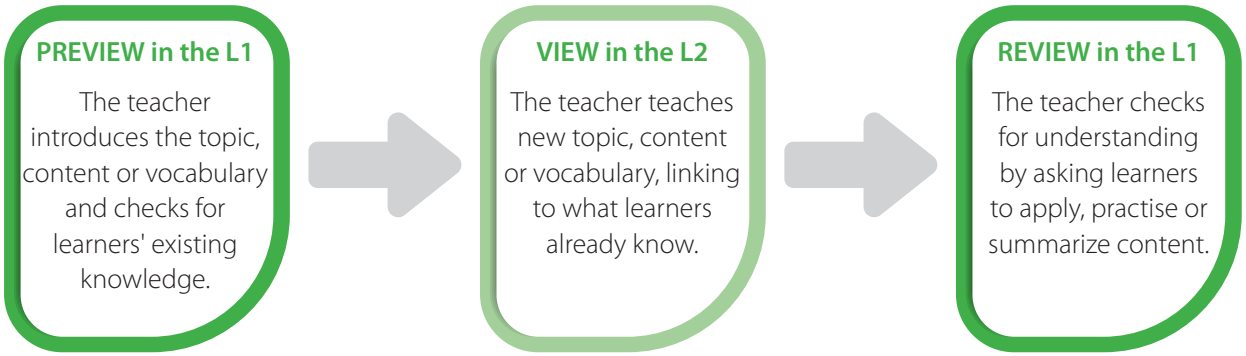
It is possible to assess both curricular content and language at the same time. In integrated multilingual curricula, like those described in Table 13 in Spain and the Netherlands, instruments may be already designed to assess intended learning outcomes that are both language-related and content-related. However, a common challenge in multilingual contexts is that content is often assessed in an L2, so that incorrect answers are often more a reflection of limited language skills than of content knowledge. In this section, the recommendation is to incorporate the L1 or bilingual strategies so that the focus of non-language content assessments is on understanding that content.

3.4.1 Assessing content multilingually

To give learners the best chance of demonstrating their knowledge and to focus on content-related errors or difficulties for the future planning of subject-area lessons, teachers need to be flexible about the languages of the response. In other words, teachers should not allow language-related errors to distract from their focus on whether or not learners have understood the content of the curriculum.

To accurately assess emergent multilinguals in the content of the multilingual education curriculum, particularly from grade 3 onward, it is important to use both or all languages in strategic and creative ways. Assessment strategies can separate the L1 and the L2, or they can integrate them. One common bilingual strategy that separates the L1 and the L2 for teaching and assessment is the preview-view-review or sandwich approach, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Preview-view-review approach



Source: Author.

In this approach, the teacher 'previews' the topic, content or vocabulary of the lesson by checking what learners already know about the content in the L1 and preparing them for new information that will be 'viewed' in the L2. The 'review' of the content at the end is done in the L1 by asking learners to apply, practise or summarize content to be sure it has been understood; this could be considered an informal assessment.[37] This is also known as a 'sandwich' approach, because the top and bottom pieces of bread represent use of the learners' strongest language, helping them to hold the 'food', or the challenging new L2 content, in the middle.

Languages can be separated in teaching and assessment for different reasons, particularly if certain language-related learning outcomes are being targeted. However, current understandings of multilingualism suggest that it is often more natural and direct to use learners' entire linguistic repertoire, particularly in classroom interactions, for content instruction and assessment.

As discussed earlier, a focus on multilingualism gives learners opportunity to use all of their languages to negotiate meaning with the teacher and with each other. Meaning-making and effective communication are prioritized, and language mistakes are considered normal. Language mistakes are only a problem if communication is blocked, but usually learners can help each other as long as they are able to use both or all of their languages. Some interactions that are part of teaching and learning activities can be assessed by the teacher through observation, for example:

- Paraphrasing in the L1 a task written on a math worksheet in the L2
- Determining what L2 vocabulary knowledge is needed to undertake a social studies task
- Negotiating which group members will do what for a research project
- Deciding how an idea will be expressed for a report on school leadership
- Hypothesizing about possible outcomes of a science experiment
- Defending an opinion about climate change

37 For more resources on previewing and reviewing, see Ferlazzo and Sypnieski (2018).

In all of these interactions, it is most natural for learners to use all of their linguistic and cognitive resources, focusing on communication, making language mistakes, receiving informal as well as formal feedback from the teacher and each other, and self-correcting over time while their L1 and L2 proficiency develops.

3.4.2 Bilingual assessment of content learning

Content instruction, particularly at grade 3 and above, is usually assessed both formatively and summatively in written form. Oral assessments can be useful when assessing emergent multilinguals, as they allow for both or all languages to be used as needed; likewise, written assessments can be made more understandable if oral assistance is provided. To design appropriate assessments in disciplines like natural science or mathematics, the following points should be considered:

- Preparing a few different ways to explain a key concept (e.g. photosynthesis)
- Finding appropriate translations for those explanations
- Translating assessment questions or prompts in ways learners will recognize and become accustomed to (for example, "describe the process" or "explain how")
- Finding ways for learners to share their understandings in both/all languages
- Ensuring that learner responses are graded based on the content, not the language

Learners can be prepared for responding to assessment questions by practising in class. For example, they can be asked, "How would you explain this to your younger sister?" or "Where could you see this happening outside the school?" If assessment questions use examples or scenarios that are culturally or experientially relevant to learners, they will be more likely to understand what is being asked of them in any language. For example, a lesson on pollination could be extended in either or both languages by asking learners to share knowledge from home about their family farms and what they see happening with flowers, insects and birds. Alternative forms of response such as drawing, using physical representations of elements, or acting out a process could be accepted.

Teaching and learning materials for multilingual education programmes can be developed in the L1 or bilingually, providing resources for both learners and teachers. Side-by-side bilingual materials often present the text on one page in the L1 and on the facing page in the L2. The texts may be parallel bilingual, where all text is available in both languages, or integrated bilingual, where some text is available in the L1 and some in the L2. Parallel bilingual texts may be close translations of each other or may cover the same material without being exact translations. When both the L1 and the L2 are used for questions, learners have the option to respond in either or both languages.

Multilingual scholars in South Africa experimented with side-by-side isiXhosa (L1) and English (L2) bilingual worksheets as teaching and learning tools that include a short assessment at the end.[38] For example, their grade 5 natural science lesson on pollination uses a parallel bilingual format, with all text available in both languages. The worksheet is divided into three parts: content information, key vocabulary and questions to assess understanding. Bilingual worksheets allow learners to read the text, review the vocabulary and respond to questions in either or both languages.

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38 See Mbude-Shale, Wababa and Plüddemann (2004) for this example.

There are other options to promote linguistically responsive assessment of science content.[39] These include:

- Offering some sections in one language and other sections or questions in another language. Teachers may want to pose the most challenging questions in the L1 and the less difficult ones in the L2, which would still present a challenge.
- Extending L1 use to assess higher-order thinking skills in an oral format. This should be done individually so that learners are not influenced by each other's responses. Teachers may ask some questions in each language, provided that appropriate scaffolding and cues are available to aid understanding, and provided that enough time is given for learners to respond.
- Using a "sandwich" model for teaching and assessment. For example, a concept is introduced in the L1 on day 1, that concept is reviewed or practised in the L2 on day 2, then the L1 is used to check for understanding on day 3, and finally both languages are used to assess learning on day 4.

3.4.3 Dynamic multilingual assessment

As discussed previously, emergent multilingual learners have a dynamic set of linguistic and cognitive skills and knowledge that goes beyond the ability to speak, read and write two or more languages. Based on new evidence that the languages of emergent multilinguals are integrated in their brains, specialists are developing dynamic and other alternative assessment methods that treat learners' linguistic repertoire as active and relevant to the assessment tasks.

Dynamic assessment is designed to measure the potential knowledge and skills of emergent multilinguals by scaffolding and contextualizing that knowledge.[40] This means that teachers help learners to demonstrate what they can do by talking through the assessment task and/or by discussing the context of the task as it is being completed. Some ideas are included here to inspire new ways of thinking about how the skills, knowledge and attitudes of emergent multilinguals can be demonstrated.

For example, photosynthesis might be taught by discussing in the L1 or multilingually how plants grow. The teacher might assess that knowledge by asking the learner to write a definition of photosynthesis in the L1 or the L2. This could be a representation of real knowledge, or it could be reproduction of a memorized passage. More dynamic multilingual approaches to assessment would be:

- Show learners how to grow plants from seed, then give helpful prompts in the L1 and the L2 to help learners orally explain how they grow in either or both languages.
- Send learners to the community to interview farmers in the L1, then ask them to compare farmers' knowledge of photosynthesis with the definition they have learned, orally or in writing, in either or both languages.
- Allow pairs of learners to develop their own explanations multilingually before presenting them in either or both languages to the class.

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39 See Lyon (2023) on strategies using multiple languages, literacies and experiences to assess science content.

40 This is based on Vygotsky's notion of the Zone of Proximal Development, where learners can do more if they are 'scaffolded', or assisted, than what they can do without help; in other words, what a learner is able to do one day with mediation, that learner is able to do tomorrow alone (see, for example, Poehner and Lantolf, 2005).

Dynamic multilingual assessments are graded or scored on the basis of clearly defined criteria, standards or indicators that represent different degrees of success, such as the rubrics mentioned previously. Reflection journals and presentations of community-based projects are examples of appropriate alternatives to traditional assessment.[41] Teachers can review these demonstrations of learners' work in relation to the intended learning outcomes of the curriculum, after which they design teaching and learning activities to exercise missing skills and knowledge.

Implementing alternative forms of assessment could have positive consequences for learning. For example, intercultural competence is not often taught in a multilingual education classroom, yet emergent multilinguals are likely to develop intercultural skills due to their use of multiple languages and exposure to the different practices associated with speakers of those languages. If creative ways are found to assess intercultural competence, this could have a positive backwash effect on instruction, thus encouraging teachers to develop intercultural activities. For example, learners could be given scenarios of intercultural misunderstandings and asked to role-play, then assessed using rubrics describing degrees of intercultural awareness and strategies for resolving conflict. This might lead to more teaching and learning time spent on exercising those skills.

3.4.4 Translation considerations in bilingual content assessment

Assessments can capture the wide range of skills of emergent multilingual learners if they are designed in two or more languages. There are several important considerations related to the role of translation when developing multilingual assessment tools.

First, translations between languages are rarely exact, word-for-word matches; rather, they are intended to capture meaning as accurately as possible. In the context of L1-based multilingual education, the following should be understood:

- Some vocabulary may not exist in non-dominant languages, requiring linguistic development to recover, repurpose or create appropriate vocabulary and means of expression for academic uses.
- Only terms and concepts of any languages that are taught and practised together as part of the curriculum and learning outcomes should be used for translation.
- Translated terms may differ in length and complexity from the original, requiring greater skill for learners to read and interpret them. This is especially true if the L1 and the L2 are linguistically distant from each other and/or if their writing systems are different.[42]
- Multilingual education teachers and education staff may rely on translation support from linguists, national language committees or research institutes, if they are available, as well as community elders and even learners themselves.

Ideally, bilingual and multilingual assessments should be designed for specific purposes and not simply translated from existing assessments in a dominant language. In reality, assessments are often developed in a dominant language and need to be translated into an L1. This is not always a good strategy for linguistic and cultural reasons. Here are some examples of times when assessment

41 See Rivera and Rodríguez-González (2022) for the theoretical background behind equitable bilingual and multilingual assessment, and Thompson (2022) for more detailed examples of alternative assessments and grading.

42 Linguistic distance has to do with differences in phonology, vocabulary, syntax and writing forms (alphabetic, abugida or syllabic, characters or morphosyllabic) (Share, 2021).

questions or items should be developed directly in the L1 and later translated into an L2 as needed, including language-specific as well as subject-specific content:

- If sight words, frequently used words or words beginning with a certain sound or letter are the focus of the assessment.
- If L1 assessments focus on characteristics of the language that do not exist in the L2, such as diacritics, tones, expressions or terms.
- If real-life stories or local situations that can best be described in the L1 are given as context, for example, in mathematics or science assessments.
- If learners have been taught the content and vocabulary in the L1 but not yet in the L2.

Despite these concerns, there will be times when assessments written in a dominant L2 or L3 need to be translated into the L1. One example is where district or regional assessments are being developed for speakers of different L1s. In that case, translators from different language communities may want to consult with each other to align their approach and share ideas about cultural or other local elements that can be brought in to provide learners with local context for assessment items. It may also happen that the L1s have more in common linguistically in terms of their structure and lexicon than they do with the L2, so translators could benefit from viewing each other's versions of the assessment. Some other strategies to consider when translating from a dominant L2 to a non-dominant L1 are:

- Use back-translation if it is important for the translation to be as close as possible to the source language. Once a translation is done, it is given to another person who translates it back into the source language to check meaning and make adjustments.
- Cover the same content in each language without an exact translation, particularly if using a side-by-side assessment where the content is covered in the L1 on one side of the page and the L2 on the other side. It is likely that learners will read both, so an exact translation will not be necessary.
- After translating the original into the L1, adapt the L2 to be sure that it is simple and straightforward enough to facilitate understanding for L2 learners, who are non-native speakers.

The **Philippines** developed assessments for learners' L1s and L2 Filipino during implementation of L1-based multilingual education. The following points can be highlighted:

- Language mapping tools assisted educators in determining learners' language varieties and proficiencies to ensure language-appropriate support in classrooms.
- Teachers developed culturally relevant assessment methods to evaluate language development, comprehension and critical thinking skills, including story-based comprehension questions, oral storytelling and performance-based activities.
- These teacher-led assessments evaluated learners' progress in the L1 and the L2 while building their confidence and establishing a connection between the home culture and school learning.

Note: See **Annex A** for details.

4. Conclusion: Moving forward with the assessment of multilingual learners

Linguistic diversity is widespread in countries of the Asia-Pacific region, but this diversity has not yet been fully understood as a resource and addressed with programmes like L1-based multilingual education. The guiding principles and strategies in this publication make the case for assessing emergent multilingual learners in ways that allow them to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in the languages they know best. Effective assessment of emergent multilinguals requires an understanding of how multiple languages and literacies are learned, how interlinguistic transfer works and can be facilitated, and how academic content can be taught and assessed multilingually. Assessments should document and highlight relationships between languages, literacies and learning to improve classroom instruction as well as to provide better data for policymaking in L1-based multilingual education and curriculum development. Language-conscious assessments and their interpretation have important implications for all multilingual learners, whether or not they currently have access to L1-based multilingual education.

4.1 General guidelines for language-inclusive perspective to assessment

Based on the research and discussion in this publication, the following are some useful guidelines for supporting multilingualism and multilingual education. They call for a language-inclusive perspective for developing assessment policies and practices that more adequately recognize and highlight the rich resources and skills of multilingual learners.

- **Adopt a multilingual habitus.** Consider what it means to see learners with non-dominant home languages as full of potential and with assets to contribute if they are seen for the linguistic resources and cultural funds of knowledge that they bring with them to school. This means finding ways to build on their existing skills and knowledge, and adding new languages and literacies while helping them develop literacy and self-expression in their strongest languages.

- **Learn about the emergent multilingual learners.** Develop an understanding of the ethnolinguistic and cultural backgrounds of learners who are being assessed, and think about how to capture a picture of what learners can do in their L1 – not only when they are instructed multilingually but also when they do not yet have access to multilingual education. Use alternative, culturally appropriate means of assessment to ease stress and tap into learners' diverse languages and funds of knowledge.
- **Think of multilingual assessment as a way to improve documenting progress.** Instead of focusing on performance and accuracy, consider ways for classrooms and schools to assess languages, literacies and content learning that allow for errors to be made, that allow for backtracking or stumbling and that demonstrate along a continuum or set of accomplishments where learners are in the process. Consider ways to scaffold content area learning through formative assessment by, for example, providing explanations in multiple languages, allowing learners to discuss a problem before writing their own answers or giving them opportunities to process information before having to perform individually.
- **Use an understanding of how transfer functions in multilingual education to assess additional skills of emergent multilinguals.** Give learners opportunities to compare and contrast their languages. Find ways to assess and value synergistic skills like metalinguistic awareness, translation and interpretation and critical multiculturalism. For example, learners can be asked to explain how they think when they are interpreting, how they strategize when they are looking for the right words in the L2 or how they analyse and make space for cultural differences between people. Learners can help write the rubrics to reflect how they see the process of developing such skills.
- **Make use of positive backwash from multilingual assessments.** Assessments will create positive backwash effects on learning if they are aligned with appropriate learning outcomes from the curriculum, and if they allow multilingual learners to use their languages to make meaning. For example, an assessment of oral language development that asks learners to present an opinion and give at least three justifications could be prepared in the L1 and then translated with help from a peer and presented in the L2 or bilingually. This kind of assessment has strong implications for teaching critical thinking in the classroom, and critical thinking can be developed if learners are allowed to use their languages.

4.2 Recommendations for assessing any and all multilingual learners

The following are recommendations for assessment design and administration that pertain to multilingual learners who may not yet have access to a multilingual education programme.

1. **All multilingual learners should have their oral language skills assessed when they enter school.** This will inform teachers about learners' communicative resources that are available for transfer to the L2. Data can be triangulated with other sources of information, like household surveys and language mapping (see **Annex B**), to inform the school or education system about which languages can be used when organizing L1-based multilingual education programmes.

2. **Classroom-based assessments, especially formative assessments, should be used in all learning environments, particularly multilingual contexts.** Oral L1 should be used systematically to assess learners' communicative skills (listening comprehension and speaking) and to assess their levels of academic content understanding, even if content is being taught in an L2. This may require some specific actions, for example:
    - Issuing a policy statement from the central level authorizing oral L1 use and suggesting systematic ways to use the L1 that are consistent with intended learning outcomes.
    - Taking steps to document teachers' language proficiencies (see **Annex C**), which can then be considered when teachers are assigned to schools.
    - Including information about oral L1 use along with teaching strategies in pre-service and in-service training programmes.
3. Whether or not instruction is explicitly multilingual, **the L1 should be used for an assessment whenever possible to create positive backwash effects** in terms of valuing learners' L1, knowledge, skills and identities, and encouraging linguists and speaker communities to contribute to developing their languages in oral and written form.

4.3 Recommendations for assessing learners in multilingual education programmes

These recommendations for assessment design and administration pertain to multilingual learners who are participating in some form of a multilingual education programme.

1. Policymakers should consider doing the following:
    - Assess the alignment between the existing approach to multilingual education, the intended learning outcomes and the multilingual curriculum.
    - Map the local socio-linguistic context and learners' exposure to the L1 and to additional languages outside of school.
    - Take stock of the current language proficiencies of teachers, how these relate to their deployment, and what training, if any, would be needed to improve their proficiencies in the L1 and the additional languages to support multilingual education.
    - Determine which approach to multilingual education can realistically be implemented given current learner and teacher conditions that are decentralized to meet different subnational needs.
    - Specify intended learning outcomes related to bilingualism and multilingualism, biliteracy and multiliteracy, metalinguistic awareness, content learning across the curriculum and critical interculturalism.
    - Set different levels of proficiency outcomes and teaching, learning and assessment strategies for each of the languages – the L1, the L2 and possibly the L3.

2. Multilingual education teachers should be trained to do the following:
    - Strengthen their ability to understand how to develop, deliver and interpret formative assessments, especially for multilingual classrooms.
    - Assess languages and literacies with a two-track approach, whereby skills from the accuracy track are assessed according to correctness while skills that are meaning-based are assessed according to levels of self-expression and allowing for language errors.
    - Assess productive language skills, including oral and written skills development, paying particular attention to skills in the L1 as they become available for transfer into additional languages.
    - Assess literacy skills across languages, promoting comparison and contrast to facilitate metalinguistic awareness and interlinguistic transfer.
    - Assess curricular content in the L1 or bilingually and multilingually, at least at the primary level, to help learners understand the curriculum and apply new knowledge to locally familiar contexts.
3. Whenever possible, the following should be considered with multilingual assessment:
    - Review and pilot all texts, like stories for reading comprehension or mathematics story problems, to be sure they are relevant and understood by learners. Design assessments in the L1 rather than translating them from a dominant L2 for linguistic and cultural reasons.
    - If written assessments need to be translated from the L2, consider a non-literal translation that covers the same content, or using appropriate translation strategies like back translation to check for understanding and equivalent language levels.

All of the considerations in this publication represent ways forward in creating and administering assessments – and interpreting and acting on assessment data – in ways that will inform and improve teaching, learning and policymaking for emergent multilingual learners.

Glossary of terms and concepts

Additive bilingual or multilingual education	An additive approach to languages in education involves developing oral and written literacy in the learner's L1 while teaching one or more additional languages (L2s). This promotes the transfer of skills and knowledge from the L1 to the L2, allowing for efficient and effective literacy development and learning across the curriculum (Cummins, 2005, 2009).
Backwash effect	Backwash, sometimes referred to as washback, is the positive or negative influence of an assessment on curriculum design, teaching practices and learning behaviours (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005). For example, a negative backwash effect would be created if an assessment of critical thinking skills required memorization of definitions; a positive backwash effect would be created if the assessment required defending a position or presenting a counterargument.
Dominant language or variety	A dominant language or language variety is considered more prominent in any given country or region in terms of number, prestige, status or official use by the government and/or education system (Kosonen and Benson, 2013).
Early-exit transitional approach	Early-exit programmes use the L1 but gradually phase it out after two or three years and replace it with the L2. The moment of replacement, which is known as transition, causes learners difficulty because their foundational skills in the L1 are not strong enough to support transfer to the L2 (Cummins, 2009). This subtractive approach is not supported by current understandings of multilingual learning.
Emergent bilinguals or multilinguals	Learners are considered emergent bilinguals or multilinguals if they are continuing to develop their L1s orally and in writing while learning additional languages. Use of either term highlights the idea that learners bring valuable linguistic and cultural resources from home and community to the classroom (García, 2009).
Funds of knowledge	Funds of knowledge are all of the experiences, strategies, understandings and attitudes that learners acquire from interacting with their families and communities. These funds of knowledge are assets that can be built upon for learning at school (González, Moll and Amanti, 2006).
Indigenous	Indigenous peoples, communities and nations have a historic and cultural "continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories" and consider themselves distinct from those now dominant in those territories (United Nations, 2004).

Interculturalism	Interculturalism is an element of multilingual education in which awareness is developed of one's own culture and the cultures of others. Multiculturalism involves identifying with two or more ways of knowing (Byram, 2009), while interculturalism promotes an understanding of non-dominant and dominant cultures in society.
Intersectionality	Intersectionality is the interconnected nature of social categorizations, such as race, class, ability and gender, as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage (Crenshaw, 2017).
L1 [individual]	The individual's L1 is the language that a person speaks as a *mother tongue* or *home language*. Multilingual people may consider several languages as their L1s. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) defines mother tongue as language that a person (a) has learned first; (b) identifies with; (c) knows best; and/or (d) uses most. Kosonen and Benson (2013) added: (e) speaks and understands competently enough to learn academic content at the appropriate age level.
L1 [school]	The school L1 is the main language that a multilingual education programme uses to build a foundation for literacy and learning. Ideally, it is the same as the learner's L1 or home language, but it may be somewhat different (if it is a standard variety versus the learner's local non-standard variety), quite different but familiar (if it is a widely spoken L2 in the community and/or is from the same linguistic family as the learner's L1) or completely different (if it is a state or provincial language that is not familiar to the learner).
L2 [individual]	The individual's L2 is a language that a person learns or acquires in addition to the home languages. The L2 may be a familiar language, like a lingua franca, that is spoken in the person's family, community or region or it may be a new or foreign language.
L2 [school]	The school L2 refers to additional languages that are taught explicitly in a multilingual education programme that builds on transfer from the L1. The term L3 may be used if the approach adds each language sequentially over the years. L2s are usually dominant subnational, national or international languages that learners will need to access future education and job opportunities. Learners may or may not have been exposed to school L2s prior to entering school, which is why comparison and contrast with the L1 aids learning.
Linguistic repertoire	The linguistic repertoire is an individual's entire set of language- and literacy-related skills, including local language varieties, registers, dialects, styles and accents, and involving oral and written capabilities as well as communicative and intercultural competence.

Metalinguistic awareness	Metalinguistic awareness is an individual's understanding of the structure and functions of languages that is particularly developed in bilinguals and multilinguals. This understanding is demonstrated by one's ability to talk about a language and how it works or to compare and contrast features of two or more languages.
Multilingual education	Multilingual education has become an umbrella term for primary education that uses two or more languages. However, L1-based multilingual education refers to the systematic use and development of learners' strongest languages to build a strong foundation for literacy skills and knowledge and promote transfer to additional languages (Kosonen and Benson, 2013; García, 2009).
Multilingualism	Multilingualism goes beyond the ability to understand and express oneself in two or more language varieties to include social and cultural aspects, like identity and intercultural awareness (Franceschini, 2011). Multilinguals have differing proficiencies in their languages depending on exposure, need, education, employment and many other variables that change throughout their lives. The concept of multilingualism can be extended to "the ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage, on a regular basis, with more than one language in their day-to-day lives" (European Commission, 2007, p. 6).
Multiliteracy or multiliteracies	Multiliteracy practices draw on learners' entire linguistic repertoire to develop reading and writing as forms of self-expression and meaning-making. The concept of multiliteracies in the plural form goes beyond print-based literacy to include literacies that leverage multiple languages, identities, discourses and types of text (García, Luke and Seglem, 2018).
Non-dominant language or variety	A non-dominant language or language variety spoken in a given state or region is considered less prominent in terms of number, prestige, status or official use by the government and/or the education system (Kosonen, 2010). The term *non-dominant* has been extended to cultures and social groups to highlight the linguistic power differentials involved in the search for more equitable educational approaches.
Subtractive approach	A subtractive approach to languages in education involves replacing the L1 with the L2 after only a short time. This approach fails to develop L1 literacy and learning enough to promote effective transfer of skills. It is based on the incorrect idea that more L2 equals better L2 learning, while the actual result is loss of skills and fluency in the L1 and a weak foundation for learning (Cummins, 2009).

Transfer	Transfer, also known as interlinguistic transfer, is the research-based principle underlying additive bilingual or multilingual education. Transfer is a cognitive process whereby the literacy and skills developed in a strong language (L1) do not have to be relearned in another language. Given time and exposure to both or all languages, learners transfer phonological awareness (sound-symbol correspondence), specific linguistic elements (vocabulary), pragmatic aspects (meaningful gestures), conceptual knowledge (photosynthesis) and metacognitive and metalinguistic strategies (for example, comparison or contrast) (Cummins, 2005).
Transition	Transition refers to the moment in an early- or late-exit bilingual programme when the medium of instruction switches to the L2. This term is no longer used due to extensive evidence that removing L1 time to increase L2 time does not result in better L2 learning (Cummins, 2009). Current scholarship supports the continued development of L1 skills alongside L2 learning, and the teaching and assessment of academic content in the L1 and bilingually or multilingually for as long as possible in the school system to maximize successful transfer of skills.
Translanguaging	The translanguaging concept refers to emergent multilinguals' active and dynamic use of their languages as an integrated whole (García, 2009). The implication for pedagogy is that teaching should promote connections between languages rather than forcing learners to work in one language at a time. This is consistent with the use of comparison-contrast activities to promote interlinguistic transfer and the prioritization of comprehension and meaning-making in content instruction (Cummins, 2017; Cenoz and Gorter, 2014).

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Annex A.
Regional case studies of multilingual education assessments

This annex provides five case studies that illustrate some innovative and effective ways that have been found in programmes in the Asia-Pacific region for the L1 and additional languages to be used to assess languages, literacies and curricular content. These interventions range from small to large scale and from experimental pilots to national programmes. Many of these cases demonstrate how different assessment data can be produced, interpreted and compared. All of them reveal the significant advantages for learners who are taught bilingually or multilingually.

Cambodia: Assessing literacy using an expressive writing assessment

In Cambodia, an estimated 96 per cent of the population speaks the national language, Khmer, as their first language. Multilingual education is implemented by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, targeting the largest non-dominant languages, which are spoken by ethnolinguistic communities in five remote highland provinces. Multilingual education interventions were initiated in 2002, with support from non-dominant language specialists and development partners UNICEF and CARE International through a community-based pilot school intervention for marginalized learners focusing on girls. From the initial pilot, the multilingual education programme grew to include six languages through national policy: Brao, Bunong, Jirai, Kavet, Krung and Tampuan.[43] The model supports L1 and L2 learning in the early grades, with transition to Khmer in grade 4. The use of non-dominant L1s for beginning literacy and learning as well as respect for local cultural values has provided documented advantages for learners from ethnolinguistic communities (Wright et al., 2022). In addition, a workforce of ethnolinguistic teachers has been developed, and some are even graduates of multilingual education. Current plans include expanding the multilingual education model through primary school and to additional languages, and including multilingual education as part of the pre-service teacher training curriculum.

43 Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, 'Multilingual Education Action Plan 2019–2023', 2019.

Using writing to assess L1 and L2 literacy

Since 2015, with the goal of designing a literacy assessment that demonstrates what multilingual education learners can do, an expressive writing task was piloted in two non-dominant L1s, in addition to L2 Khmer.[44] This assessment was administered to ethnolinguistic minority learners in multilingual and non-multilingual education classrooms. The research questions were as follows:

1. Can learners express their ideas in writing in the L1 and in the L2?
2. Is there a relationship between L1 writing and L2 writing?
3. Are there differences between learners taught bilingually and non-bilingually? Between girls and boys?[45]

The rationale for this assessment was the following:

- The assessment of biliteracy outcomes only or mainly in the L2 does not demonstrate all of the skills that emergent multilinguals are developing.
- The main data source on literacy has been the Early Grade Reading Assessment, which only assesses receptive skills of reading and whose measurement of speed and accuracy can hide learners' actual skills in the L1.
- If the productive skill of writing is assessed, it will provide a more accurate picture of learners' skills in L1 literacy that will become available in the L2 through transfer.

The writing task is simple to explain and can be administered to entire classes at the same time. Learners in grades 2 through 4 are given lined paper and asked in the L1 to write about a dream they had one night. In grades 3 and 4, they are asked to turn over the paper to write about another dream in the L2, so that their written expression in the L1 and the L2 can be compared.

Overall, the results demonstrated that despite their lack of experience in being assessed this way, some multilingual education learners were able to express themselves in written L1 by grade 2 and most by grade 3. The same was not true for learners in non-multilingual programmes. As well, grade 3 multilingual education learners who expressed themselves well in written L1 were also able to express themselves in written L2, whereas non-multilingual education learners at grade 3 could only write single words, as shown in Table A1. Even though the sample numbers were very small (13 multilingual education learners and 22 non-multilingual education learners), the results showed that learners who wrote multiple sentences in the L1 could also write multiple sentences in the L2. This was a clear indication that **interlinguistic transfer helps multilingual education learners achieve greater proficiency in the L2**.

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44 C. Benson has a forthcoming article on this writing assessment, which she developed with the support of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, CARE Cambodia and graduate students from Teachers College, Columbia University. Results were reported at a Ministry workshop in Phnom Penh in 2019.

45 Anecdotal evidence from several multilingual contexts suggests that girls benefit even more than boys from use of their L1 in the classroom (Benson, 2005). Unfortunately, the data from this study was inconclusive.

Table A1. Results of grade 3 writing assessment in the L1 and the L2

Class	N	L1 data: N	Best examples in the L1	L2 data: N	Best examples in the L2
MLE	13	Multiple sentences: 8 Long sentence: 3 Short sentence: 1 No response: 1	"…I saw a dog bite me and I had a big wound. I saw a big god [spirit]. I got sick with malaria. I saw people steal my chicken. I bit a dog. A snake bit me. I saw people plant cassava one day but it wasn't finished." "…I saw someone steal my pig and then my brother's dog came to bite that person. Then the person ran away and we took the pig back."	Multiple sentences: 6 Long sentence: 5 Short sentence: 2	"…I saw a forest cow run at me and then I climbed a big tree and then I jumped down into the water and I swam away." "…I saw a fish in the water and then I caught it." "…I was riding on the back of an elephant."
Non-MLE	22	Tried to write sentences: 13 No response: 9	*[L1 sentences were not legible.]*	One word: 22	"…I saw my [deceased] uncle Ishat." "…I saw a monkey." "…I saw a bird."

Note: MLE = multilingual education.

Source: Results reported by C. Benson at a Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport workshop in Phnom Penh in 2019.

The contrast between multilingual and non-multilingual education learners was striking. Most multilingual education learners were able to write one long sentence or multiple sentences in both the L1 and the L2 from their own experiences. Non-multilingual education learners were assessed in the L1 to see what they might be able to do even though they had not been taught L1 literacy, a strategy inspired by Hovens (2002). Interestingly, many attempted to write but their sentences were not legible. The same non-multilingual education learners could only write single-word responses in the L2. This is a clear indication that **L1 literacy development contributes to L2 literacy**. Gender-based differences were not found, which may mean that multilingual education helps all learners, but more study is needed.

This assessment could be considered formative in that the data demonstrated where learners were in their development of written literacy skills in the L1 and the L2. The learners' writing was analysed for originality, sentence complexity, grammar and use of orthographic conventions, such as spelling, all of which had implications for teaching and learning in multilingual education. **Multilingual education teachers could use such an assessment tool to analyse orthographic and grammatical errors, which will help them diagnose difficulties and design their lessons for the level of learners.** Perhaps the most important lesson from this study was that the assessment may have positive backwash effects on

teaching because multilingual and non-multilingual education teachers alike commented about the relevance of this assessment and the fact that they could help learners practise communicative writing skills instead of relying on receptive skills, such as copying or dictation.

Nepal: Assessing literacy and learning in a trilingual education pilot

In Nepal, Nepali is spoken by around 45 per cent of the population and is one of more than 120 languages spoken in the country. Nepali, English or both Nepali and English are used for instruction, with exceptions in some contexts that allow learners' first languages for teaching and learning in early primary education, as decided by municipalities.

Between April 2010 and 2019, in three Jhapa District schools in southeastern Nepal, an additive model of L1-based multilingual education was implemented in three languages: Rajbanshi L1, Nepali L2 and English L3 from kindergarten through grade 5, the final year of primary school.[46] The supporting NGOs – Nepali National Languages Preservation Institute and SIL International – conducted a series of assessments designed to demonstrate learner achievement.

- **Language mapping.** First, a needs assessment was conducted to map languages in 10 Nepali-medium government schools. Rajbanshi parents reported that 98 per cent of the learners spoke only or mainly Rajbanshi and no Nepali before entering school. Teachers reported teaching learners to memorize reading comprehension texts in Nepali and English because the government assessments require learners to answer questions based on memory of these texts.[47]
- **Formative reading assessments.** Because all three languages were used for instruction, the technical team helped teachers to conduct annual reading assessments to assess learners' reading fluency, accuracy and comprehension in the L1, the L2 and the L3. In kindergarten through grade 2, portfolios were collected of each learner's emergent writing in the L1 to demonstrate progress. Free writing assessments included 'draw a picture, write a story' exercises or responding to a prompt, like telling what they did after school, summarizing a story they knew or imagining 'What if…'. The programme also developed checklists for assessment of bilingual learners based on the national curriculum that could serve as models to promote formative assessment.
- **Adapted national assessments.** The multilingual schools, like all public schools, administer three written curriculum-based assessments annually in grades 1–5. For grades 1–3, the technical team assisted teachers in adapting the government assessments to the L1 and the L2. In 2015–2016, grades 4 and 5 learners took the common written examination in the L2 and the L3 developed by the district resource centre for all academic subjects. According to team reports, multilingual education learners performed very well, with an average of 65–75 per cent in each academic subject, where the national passing figure was 40 per cent.

The assessments aimed to answer three research questions:

- Are Rajbanshi speakers able to transfer language learning from the L1 to the L2 and the L3?
- Are Rajbanshi speakers able to learn abstract concepts trilingually so that they can be integrated into Nepali-medium government curriculum?

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46 See Benson and project team members (2021) for a full description of the programme and assessment.

47 Note that text memorization has been formalized in the national assessment instead of reading for meaning and comprehension, which should be assessed in languages that learners understand.

- Are speakers of languages other than Rajbanshi able to learn in Rajbanshi-based multilingual education?

On the six components of the Nepali reading assessment – letter or sound knowledge, matra[48] recognition, non-word decoding, oral reading fluency, accuracy and comprehension – the multilingual education learners consistently outperformed their peers from the non-multilingual government school. All (100 per cent) of the multilingual education learners could read with comprehension at each grade, in contrast to only 5 per cent of non-multilingual education learners at grade 2, 41 per cent at grade 3 and 73 per cent at grade 4. This is a clear indication of the advantage they experienced in learning initial literacy skills in Rajbanshi L1 and transferring them to Nepali L2. The multilingual education learners also demonstrated a clear advantage on the English reading assessment, which had five components – letter and sound knowledge, word recognition, oral reading fluency, accuracy and comprehension. More than 90 per cent of grades 3 and 4 multilingual education learners could read with comprehension, compared with 19 per cent of non-multilingual education learners in grade 3 and 34 per cent in grade 4. This is another clear indication of skills transfer, especially because multilingual education learners were introduced to the L3 a full year later than non-multilingual education learners.

In the end-of-year assessments in non-language subjects like mathematics and social studies, most of the average scores for each subject were 75 per cent, with many near 80 per cent. Considering that the national passing mark was 40 per cent, the data were particularly striking and demonstrated that the time spent teaching and developing skills in the L1 had no negative effects on their results in learning academic content. This data demonstrate that a multilingual education approach helps learners acquire the academic content knowledge needed to handle the Nepali L2-medium national curriculum.

The results also showed that it is likely that parts of the multilingual education approach and creating a child-friendly atmosphere facilitated learning for learners from other language groups not specifically targeted by the interventions – speakers of Santhal and Maithili. As well, it is likely that the acceptance and even celebration of learners' own languages went beyond the pedagogical to the affective, supporting child and family identity and self-esteem and contributing overall to the well-being of all programme participants.

Philippines: Assessing languages and literacies n learners' L1s and the L2 Filipino

Policy regarding L1-based multilingual education in the Philippines has gone through various phases. In 2009, the Philippine Department of Education institutionalized the use of L1-based multilingual education through Department Order 74, and it became part of the K-12 curriculum in 2013 as part of the Republic Act No. 10533. However, the passing of the Republic Act No. 12027 in 2024 has discontinued the use of the L1 as a medium of instruction from kindergarten to grade 3, while allowing for its optional use in monolingual classes where all learners speak the same L1.

Until 2024, the approach was for the L1 to be used as a medium of instruction and assessment from kindergarten to grade 3, beginning with L1 oral development and initial literacy. Filipino L2 and English L3 were taught orally in lower primary, with literacy gradually introduced based on transfer from the L1. The L2 and the L3 were gradually introduced as languages of instruction between grades 4 and 6, but the L1 remained as a subject of study.

48 A matra is a diacritic in the Devangari writing system.

When L1-based multilingual education was institutionalized in the Philippines, the Department of Education required schools to conduct a language mapping procedure when enrolling learners at the kindergarten level. Parents indicate the learner's L1 to the teacher, who validated the information (Department of Education, 2015). The results were used to guide decisions regarding language support for young learners who do not speak the language of instruction. In 2022, a simple computer-based Language Identification Tool was developed for the ABC+ Project by the United States Agency for International Development. For this assessment, selected mages were shown to each learner to name in the L1, and answers were analysed to determine the learner's language varieties, arranged from most to least familiar (Aquino, 2023).

Teachers have used a wide range of approaches to develop appropriate assessment tools to track learners' learning progress in the L1 and the L2. Some reported methods include reading a story aloud and asking questions to assess comprehension and higher-order thinking skills, or using artistic expressions or performances like singing, chanting, declamation and drama to assess oral proficiency. These methods not only evaluate learners' progress in the L1 and the L2 but also help to build confidence and establish a connection between the home culture and school learning.[49] Teachers reported that learners demonstrated their knowledge more profoundly by expressing it through oral language, especially in the L1, which highlights their strong background in oral storytelling and other cultural traditions. In the context of multilingual education and the development of intercultural competence, this is an important direction for assessment to take.[50]

Following the policy changes in 2024, the Department of Education is expected to develop Implementing Rules and Regulations, in collaboration with the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF, the Commission on the Filipino Language) and other key stakeholders, to provide guidance to schools. It is also expected to develop a language mapping policy and framework to properly identify and classify learners based on their L1 to systematically determine the existence of monolingual classes per year. The Department of Education is further expected to conduct regular review of the optional implementation of L1-based multilingual education in monolingual classes every three years, including learner assessment, teacher recruitment and matching, development of learner resources developed in L1s, capacity building efforts for teachers and funding requirements of the programme. Such a review shall include assessment of learning outcomes – including achievement of literacy and numeracy among others – to measure the effectiveness of these instances of L1-based multilingual education.

India: Assessing outcomes from small-scale use of multilingual education strategies

In India's Dungarpur District in southern Rajasthan, the Light – or Ajuvaroo – programme was implemented in 40 government schools by state education officials and the Language and Learning Foundation beginning in 2019.[51] Its aim is to develop a systematic approach to language and literacy learning in the L1 (variations of Wagadi) and the L2 (Hindi), which is new to learners and their communities. The population is characterized by low adult literacy and high poverty rates.[52]

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49 Personal communication between M. Arzadon and L. Tejano on 10 July 2023 on the use of cultural performance to assess learning.

50 Scholars have long seen listening and speaking as part of curriculum and assessment; see, for example, Buckley, 1995.

51 See <https://languageandlearningfoundation.org/what-we-do/>.

52 In India, these terms are used for officially designated, socio-economically disadvantaged groups. See for example, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2022/08/23/what-role-does-caste-play/>.

Assessment data were collected on 160 learners, roughly half from 10 intervention schools and half from 10 control schools, from incoming grade 1 learners in 2019 at baseline and again in 2022 when they had completed grade 3.[53] Learners were assessed on nine tasks, two of which were of particular interest here due to their use of the L1 and their ability to demonstrate the advantages experienced by school use of the L1.

The first task was **picture narration**, whereby the assessor told learners a story in Wagadi L1 by laying out four picture cards in sequence, after which learners retold the story in the L1 using the cards. Learners were given 2 points per picture card if they included all of the predetermined elements from the story and 1 point for some of the elements. They were scored on each picture and a fifth criterion, which was the flow of storytelling, such as use of linking words like 'then'. The average score from both groups at baseline was 1.4, but by grade 3, the average score for intervention learners was 9.8 versus 6.1 for the control learners. Because all were Wagdi speakers, it was apparent that the use of the L1 to develop oral storytelling and expression at school had a positive effect for Ajuvaroo learners. That effect was demonstrated in an assessment of oral expression in Hindi L2, where all learners had 0 at baseline, but by grade 3, the average score for intervention learners was 48.3 versus 14.9 for the control learners.

The other assessment of interest was **listening comprehension**, whereby the assessor told learners a story of six or seven short sentences in Hindi L2 and then asked them five questions in Hindi about the story, each of which the learners could answer in the L1 or the L2. Correct and complete answers were given 2 points and partial answers 1 point. The average score for Ajuvaroo learners was 4.8 versus 2.6 for the control learners. Ajuvaroo learners were more likely to answer in Hindi L2 than the control learners, demonstrating that they had developed more oral proficiency in Hindi through the multilingual intervention.

Thailand: Assessing learning outcomes across all subjects

The Patani Malay–Thai Multilingual Education Programme (PMT-MLE), running in four of Thailand's southernmost provinces, uses Patani Malay, the L1, as a resource to help children learn Thai as an L2 and to build a strong academic programme. The programme rolled out in 2008 in the first preschool year (K1), proceeding in 2009 to the second preschool year (K2), and continuing to grades 1 through 6. The expected outcomes of the programme are that:

- The school performance of learners who speak Patani Malay will be improved, enabling them to pass the national assessment, improve their job prospects and enhance their overall quality of life.
- The unique Patani Malay language and cultural heritage will be preserved.
- Patani Malay communities will be empowered, fostering self-esteem and more positive attitudes towards schooling.

An important teaching tool developed for the programme was a pair of alphabet charts, one for consonants and one for vowels, comparing Patani Malay L1 and Thai L2. Listening, speaking and reading in both languages were taught and assessed at the beginning and end of each year. For the L1, traditional assessments were used for reading comprehension (listening to a story and answering oral

53 All data presented here come from the final assessment report (Change Alliance, 2022).

questions), reading aloud and dictation. For the L2, reading aloud was assessed by asking learners to obey commands.

In 2011, grade 1 learners were given a comprehensive assessment covering reading, mathematics, social studies, science and Thai language (L2). As shown in Table A2, there was a significant difference in assessment results between learners in the PMT-MLE intervention and their peers in the comparison group, who attended monolingual Thai-medium schools. The largest portion of PMT-MLE learners scored in the 80–90 per cent range, while most non-PMT-MLE learners scored in the 20–30 per cent range.

Table A2. Performance of PMT-MLE vs comparison learners on grade 1 assessment

Number of participants who achieved overall scores at each level of performance											
Learner group	0–10	10–20	20–30	30–40	40–50	50–60	60–70	70–80	80–90	90–100	Total
PMT-MLE	—	—	4	5	13	8	10	17	28	13	98
Comparison	—	—	19	13	6	10	6	12	5	1	72
Percentage of participants who achieved overall scores at each level of performance											
Learner group	0–10	10–20	20–30	30–40	40–50	50–60	60–70	70–80	80–90	90–100	
PMT-MLE	—	—	4.08	5.10	13.27	8.16	10.20	17.35	28.57	13.27	
Comparison	—	—	26.39	18.06	8.33	13.89	8.33	16.67	6.94	1.39	

Note: '—' = no participants scored at these levels.

Source: Adapted from Walter, 2011.

The data above were further analysed on the basis of whether the learners "passed" or scored 50 per cent or higher in each subject area of the assessment. As show in Table A3, the passing rates are significantly higher for all PMT-MLE learners compared to the non-PMT-MLE comparison group. Further, the right-hand column shows a calculation of how much the PMT-MLE intervention impacted learners' likelihood of passing. The results are both dramatic and gendered, as shown in the two highlighted rows. For boys, the PMT-MLE programme most significantly impacted their likelihood of passing the reading assessment. For girls, the PMT-MLE programme had the greatest impact on their likelihood of passing the mathematics assessment.

Table A3. Pass rates and increase in pass rates due to PMT-MLE

Domain	Group	PMT-MLE pass rate %	Comparison pass rate %	Increased likelihood of passing %
Reading	All learners	72.4	41.7	73.6
	Girls	72.5	51.4	41.1
	Boys	72.3	32.4	123.3
Math	All learners	50.0	25.0	100.0
	Girls	51.0	20.0	154.9
	Boys	48.9	29.7	64.8
Science	All learners	95.9	80.6	19.2
	Girls	96.1	77.1	24.6
	Boys	95.7	83.8	14.3
Social Studies	All learners	88.8	52.8	68.1
	Girls	90.2	45.7	97.4
	Boys	87.2	59.5	46.6
Thai (L2)	All learners	65.3	34.7	88.2
	Girls	72.5	40.0	81.4
	Boys	57.4	29.7	93.4
Overall	All learners	77.6	47.2	64.3
	Girls	80.4	51.4	56.4
	Boys	74.5	43.2	72.4

Source: Adapted from Walter, 2011.

As reported in later years, these overall positive results for learners in the multilingual programme were maintained at statistically significant levels for all subjects from grades 1 to 5. In addition, PMT-MLE learner scores on Thailand's standardized grade 6 Ordinary National Education Test (O-NET) were above the regional average, demonstrating that the multilingual education intervention made an important contribution to the education of Patani Malay learners.[54]

54 See UNICEF (2018) for the full report to explore these data and other results of the Patani Malay-Thai Multilingual Education programme.

Annex B. Language surveys and mapping

These are some sources of data that complement the assessment of learners' oral language skills when they begin school. The data can be triangulated to inform the teacher regarding the starting point for each learner and to inform the school regarding which languages to use as the L1 and additional languages in a multilingual education programme.

Household language surveys allow schools to collect data on learners' language use that can be triangulated with their language assessment data to provide a holistic picture of learners' languages. An example of a household survey form is shown in Figure A1. This form could be completed by the teacher, resource teacher or school director for each learner, either by visiting the learner's home or by interviewing a family member who comes to the school. Extra rows can be added to include all household members who interact with the learner. Columns can be adapted for more information about languages and proficiency levels.

Figure A1. Household language survey form

Learner name:			**Teacher:**		
Person interviewed:			**Date:**		
	Name	Age	Relationship to learner	Occupation or education	Languages spoken with learner and percentage of time
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

Source: Author.

Not only do household language surveys offer data on emergent multilinguals' linguistic repertoires but they also provide opportunities for teachers to get to know learners' families. It is possible for these

personal connections to result in adults participating in classroom activities, even if they are not highly literate. Family members can help with L1-related exercises, tell stories, share local skills, work with small groups, volunteer for after-school reading clubs, help author storybooks and poetry and other activities. They could even help supervise assessments.

Language mapping is a strategy that can be used to determine the geographical distribution of languages spoken in a given community, school district or region. The focus is on learners' language exposure and use outside the school to inform educational decision-making.[55] Gibson (2021) recommended language mapping in all multilingual societies because there is rarely a one-to-one correspondence between ethnicity and language and because there may be a range of language varieties, some quite different from the variety chosen as the school L1. He also warned that multilinguals do not understand the term 'mother tongue' in the same way, nor do they call languages by the same names, so it is important to explain, ask people for examples and triangulate data. His 2018 study conducted in the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed the following questions (paraphrased from Gibson, 2021, p. 261):

- How often do learners use languages A, B and C in the targeted provinces, and what is their proficiency in each?
- Which languages are used in learners' interactions outside the classroom?
- How widespread is teachers' use of languages A, B and C in the targeted provinces, and what is their proficiency in each?
- What barriers exist to implementing L1-based multilingual education with respect to teachers' language proficiency levels and attitudes?

Gibson's study sampled according to geographical and demographic variables, paying most attention to remote communities because they are particularly challenged to provide quality basic education. Methods included observing and speaking with children outside the school, asking them to respond to questions about a story, observing classrooms and interviewing teachers and principals. Data were used to improve the multilingual education curriculum, integrating understandings about learners' local language varieties, along with recommending improvements to teacher placement and training.

Language mapping was used successfully in the Lao Cai Province of Viet Nam by the provincial and national Ministry of Education and Training, UNICEF and SIL International (UNICEF 2012). The Primary Classroom Language Mapping project collected data from primary learners and teachers about learners' language proficiencies and academic performance, which was then used to identify homogeneous school sites where L1-based multilingual education could easily be implemented using teachers proficient in the appropriate languages. Plans were made to conduct language mapping in other areas.

A nationwide language mapping exercise was conducted in Timor-Leste from preschool to grade 6 (Owen, 2015). School directors asked teachers to identify each learner's strongest languages as well as the teachers' own languages. This project, which had a 98 per cent completion rate, found that although 30 languages were reported countrywide, 75 per cent of the 8,348 classrooms were monolingual, meaning that learners and teachers shared an L1.

55 Some additional examples are USAID Mozambique (2017) and USAID Ghana (2018).

Annex C. Assessing multilingual teachers' language proficiencies

Language assessments, like language mapping, can also be used to gather data on teachers to improve their training and to determine where they should be placed in terms of matching their languages and proficiencies to appropriate schools and grade levels. Table A4 suggests how teachers' own linguistic resources can be assessed. Teachers need as much oral and written proficiency as possible in the L1s being used in multilingual education programmes, which is why it is best if they have the same L1 as their learners. It is useful to document multilingual education teachers' proficiencies (in both languages) at the beginning of a multilingual education programme for a baseline and as they are cultivated over time. If they have not had the opportunity to learn through multilingual education programmes,[56] they may be transferring reading and writing skills developed in dominant languages to their own L1s. They will need explicit training in reading and writing with a focus on orthographic conventions for writing their L1s, and spelling mistakes will be part of their developmental process. Many new multilingual education teachers take pride in their learners for being able to correct them if they make mistakes in class; this can create a positive environment whereby teachers and learners are working together to develop their L1 literacy.

Table A4. Data for determining a teacher's linguistic resources

Teachers' linguistic resources	Sources of data
• What are teachers' levels of oral and written proficiency in the languages of learners (L1) and the additional languages of the school (L2)? • Are teachers placed appropriately according to their proficiencies in learners' L1 and additional languages (L2)? • If there are two or more L1s spoken in one community, school or classroom, how are teachers organized? • If teachers have limited exposure to the L2, are those with the highest proficiency tasked with teaching the L2?	• Teacher self-reports • Teacher self-assessments • Formal language assessment results • Teacher placement records • District or school-based records • School director reports

Source: Adapted from Benson, 2016.

56 Multilingual education teachers who are newly literate in their L1 need training and support to develop the confidence to teach L1 literacy to learners, and many have been corrected by their own learners. This is a temporary challenge because the next generation of teachers will have graduated from multilingual education programmes. In Cambodia, a new generation of trained teachers who attended primary multilingual education programmes as children are now proficient in oral and written L1 and highly confident in their teaching; they numbered 34 in 2024, and their numbers increase every year.

To determine multilingual education teachers' languages and levels of proficiency, it may be possible to administer written examinations for dominant languages, but formal assessments for their non-dominant languages may have to be created. In well-resourced contexts, such as the Basque Autonomous Community in Spain, the development of an examination system in the Basque language was a critical element of teacher training to improve the quality of the L1-based education (Mercator, 2020).

In the temporary absence of formal L1 assessments for teachers, it may be efficient to ask teachers to self-assess their language proficiencies. There are several frameworks for self-assessment of language skills. Of them, the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)[57] is the best known and most user-friendly. It is designed to provide a common basis for assessing language proficiency. Self-assessment is carried out using a grid of 'I can' descriptors organized by receptive skills (listening and reading), productive skills (speaking and writing), interaction (spoken and written) and mediation (translating and interpreting). The self-assessor can choose a descriptor under the appropriate level out of six, from A1 beginning level to C2 highly proficient.[58] These reference levels are intended to support the design of curricula, teaching programmes, learning materials and assessment instruments.

Another framework that could serve as a model for assessment or self-assessment is the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines,[59] which similarly describe tiered levels of proficiency in terms of what speakers can do in listening, speaking, reading and writing as well as the content, context, accuracy and discourse types associated with tasks at each level.

As with all assessments, the results of teacher assessments have implications for improving the quality of education. Both with actual assessment results and with self-assessments, the results could be analysed to see what aspects of L1 development need to be worked on through in-service training, self-study or peer group support. As long as there are opportunities to update the results, they could become part of teachers' employment files and be included in teacher management systems so that teachers can be appropriately placed in multilingual education programmes and at the appropriate grade levels.

57 The CEFR was developed by the Council of Europe; see theoretical background and support documents, <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680459f97>.

58 The rubrics grid is available in 32 languages spoken in Europe, <www.coe.int/en/web/portfolio/self-assessment-grid>.

59 The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages supports the teaching and learning of all languages at all levels of instruction; see <www.actfl.org/educator-resources/actfl-proficiency-guidelines>. There are guidelines and examples of tasks available online for 13 languages.

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Guidance for the classroom-based assessment of multilingual learners

Assessing languages, literacies and learning across the curriculum

This publication provides guidance on the classroom-based assessment of multilingual learners. It was developed under the direction of the UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok and the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office to support policymakers and practitioners of Member States of the Asia-Pacific region, in response to the critical need for accurate and inclusive learning assessments in multilingual contexts.

Recognizing the challenges and opportunities of teaching multilingual learners in this linguistically diverse region, this document provides resources for the development, implementation and interpretation of assessments that accurately document the skills and assets of emergent multilingual learners. The focus is on (1) raising awareness about the capabilities of multilingual learners; (2) enhancing knowledge regarding the importance of language choices in teaching, learning and assessment; (3) planning systematically for the assessment of multilingual learners; and (4) developing practical strategies for teaching and learning that enhance multilingualism and multiliteracies.

This publication begins with an introduction to the assets and capabilities of multilingual learners, along with a description of how learning outcomes can be linked to assessment in section 1. Guiding principles for planning and assessing learning in multilingual schools and classrooms are found in section 2, followed by strategies for classroom-based assessment of emergent multilingual learners in section 3. The practical strategies for assessment in section 3, which serve diagnostic, formative and summative purposes, are organized according to speaking and listening language skills, reading and writing language skills, and curricular content other than language, such as mathematics and the sciences. Section 4 concludes with a summary of general guidelines and recommendations for assessing multilingual learners. At the end are a glossary of terms and concepts, along with five country case studies of multilingual education assessment.

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4 QUALITY EDUCATION

Sustainable Development Goals