Assessment of plurilingual competence: intercomprehension as a focus

Maria Helena Araújo e Sá[1], Ana Isabel Andrade[1], Ana Raquel Simões[1], Cristina S[1]á, Filomena Martins[1], Luísa Álvares Pereira[1], Maria Helena Ançã[1], Maria João Loureiro[1], Mónica Lourenço[1], Rosa Faneca[1], Susana Pinto[1], Ângela Espinha[1]

1 — Department of Education and Psychology & CIDTFF-Research Centre on Didactics and Technology in the Education of Trainers, University of Aveiro

FIGURE 1

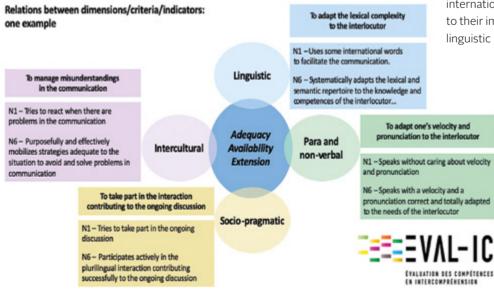Dimensions, criteria, indicators and levels to assess intercomprehension.

There has been much research about plurilingual competences in the last 20 years, especially concerning intercomprehension as a didactic approach due to the publication of the first version of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment (2001). The results show that approaches related to intercomprehension contribute to the development of multiple dimensions of language competences (attitudes, motivation for learning, cognitive and metalinguistic strategies, skills, …), but are not used in the schools, namely because there are no validated tools to assess the plurilingual performance.

Therefore, a group of researchers coming from 7 European countries speaking 6 languages developed tools to assess plurilingual competence through intercomprehension . This concept refers to a way to communicate in multilingual situations using competences in several languages including some transversal ones (metalinguistic, cognitive, strategic, among others) to promote the interaction between people speaking different languages who are not supposed to master one another's languages.

As the Figure shows, these tools include dimensions of plurilingual competence, criteria for assessment, and descriptors for 6 levels in reception and interaction accompanied by a protocol designed to certify plurilingual competence and validated tests with guidelines for the jury and the candidates.

These products adaptable to assessment and certification programs received the seal of approval of the European Commission, in 2019, and the attention of international agencies related to linguistic politics due to their important contribution to the promotion of the linguistic and cultural diversity of today's societies.

Relations between dimensions/criteria/indicators: one example

To manage misunderstandings in the communication
N1 – Tries to react when there are problems in the communication
N6 – Purposefully and effectively mobilizes strategies adequate to the situation to avoid and solve problems in communication

To adapt the lexical complexity to the interlocutor
N1 – Uses some international words to facilitate the communication.
N6 – Systematically adapts the lexical and semantic repertoire to the knowledge and competences of the interlocutor...

To adapt one's velocity and pronunciation to the interlocutor
N1 – Speaks without caring about velocity and pronunciation
N6 – Speaks with a velocity and a pronunciation correct and totally adapted to the needs of the interlocutor

To take part in the interaction contributing to the ongoing discussion
N1 – Tries to take part in the ongoing discussion
N6 – Participates actively in the plurilingual interaction contributing successfully to the ongoing discussion

Linguistic · Intercultural · Para and non-verbal · Socio-pragmatic · Adequacy Availability Extension