

FROM PLURILINGUAL TEACHING TO PLURILINGUAL EXAMINATION

Isabella Gruber and the Austrian CEBS-Team¹

1. PLURILINGUALISM – MISSION AND CHALLENGE²

The development, support and recognition of plurilingual competence, in other words a person's ability to perform successfully in a plurilingual setting, goes hand in hand with the development of "Project Europe". As early as March of 2002, at the meeting in Barcelona³, the heads of governments in the European Union demanded school curricula to contain the instruction of at least two foreign languages. Ever since, the European Commission has been supporting individual plurilingualism with the aim that all European citizens, in addition to their mother tongue, also have practical knowledge in at least two other (foreign) languages⁴. For example we can consider the combination of Italian and English as plurilingual competence of two foreign languages.

In view of the realities of globalization, *being* plurilingual – both as an educational objective as well as a life-long learning goal – means recognizing that the total is infinitely larger than the sum of its components.

Language itself helps us to understand that. Being plurilingual means so much more than being in command of a cumulative collection of different language competences. It includes rather, a conscious attitude and comportment towards oneself and towards the identities influenced by cultural, social, economic and, last but not least, language factors, which surround and accompany this self.

2. BEING PLURILINGUAL

Being plurilingual is not a definition in itself, but rather defines and manifests itself in its application, in abilities and in action. It is therefore never a static process but always a dynamic one, expressing itself in conscious self-awareness of being a life-long learner.

Being plurilingual means

- being curious and "capable of" learning. It empowers one to approach people and situations that are unfamiliar and, while doing so, develop understanding and respect;
- being humble and "capable of" reflecting. It protects the learner from arrogance and self-importance since the limits of one's own competence are rarely as obvious as in a plurilingual context;
- being self-determined and "capable of" actively and responsibly participating in

¹ Ute Atzlesberger, Irmgard Greinix, Thomas Ladstätter, Franz Mittendorfer, Gerda Piribauer, Helmut Renner, Belinda Steinhuber, Isolde Tauschitz.

² Franz Mittendorfer, April 2015.

³ Europäischer Rat (Barcelona), 15. und 16. März 2002, Schlussfolgerungen des Vorsitzes, Teil I, 43.1.

⁴ KOM (2003) 449: Förderung des Sprachenlernens und der Sprachenvielfalt: Aktionsplan 2004. 2006. KOM (1995) 590: Weißbuch "Lehren und Lernen".

current processes which are shaping communities and economies. Having access to a variety of sources of information leads to detailed viewpoints and lateral thinking.

- being mobile and “capable of” thinking creatively. Mental and physical flexibility protect me from isolation and are important factors in the development of individual quality of life and work.

Plurilinguallism leads to an individual’s, and ultimately, to a society’s exceptional quality of being. Everyone who takes on the responsibility for education is also responsible for the development and growth of this quality.

We have always, at least in schools, taught languages “side by side”, and for the most part, kept each language in a separate mental compartment. Therefore, it is not always easy for us to simply press a button and switch languages when called for. It is almost as if we first needed to “activate a different (school) subject” before being able to switch languages.

As early as 1979, in his book, “Die Mehrsprachigkeit des Menschen,”⁵ Mario Wandruszka made a clear distinction between “internal plurilingualism” (the ability to use language variants in one’s mother tongue) and “external plurilingualism” (the ability of learning and using knowledge of other languages and cultures). He recognized both as a natural predisposition of an individual – a predisposition, however, which needs to be developed and maintained.

3. BILINGUALISM, PLURILINGUALISM, MULTILINGUALISM

For about two decades now, Europe has shown very clearly that it is in favour of bilingual or plurilingual education and the instruction of non-linguistic subjects in a foreign language (CLIL programme).

3.1. *What is bilingualism?*

Briefly, bilingualism is the practice of two languages. For example, a person who speaks French as a mother tongue and a second language in their daily life, depending with whom and under what circumstances.

3.2. *What is plurilingualism?*

It includes individuals who communicate in different languages for different activities: for example, a Greek who would speak French in his professional life, Greek in his family (which is defined as “internal linguistic plurality”), and Italian in his social life because he lives in Italy.

3.3. *What is multilingualism?*

Multilingualism is when several languages coexist within one society. Individuals speak a language and live alongside other individuals whose language they do not know. For example, Armenians and Swedes living in France⁶.

⁵ Piper Verlag, München, 1979; siehe auch: Bausch K-R., Königs F. G., Krumm H-J., *Mehrsprachigkeit im Fokus, Gießener Beiträge zur Fremdsprachendidaktik*, Narr Francke Attempto, Tübingen, 2004.

⁶ <http://www.atenao.com/blog/actualites/bilinguisme-multilinguisme-plurilinguisme/>.

Figure 1. *Example of plurilingual assessments: English & French for German speaking Austrian students*



4. PLURILINGUAL EXAMS – REASONS AND RATIONALE

- Plurilingualism is part of the European identity.
- A plurilingual exam documents and shows respect for diversity.
- It implements the goals of Agenda 2020 of the European Commission.
- Successful completion of a plurilingual exam documents proof of acquired competences.
- A plurilingual exam opens up new opportunities. New types of exams, with a clear view of the learners' individual profiles, can be offered.
- Individual portfolios can be developed.
- A plurilingual exam is an additional offer for learners who are interested and/or talented in languages.
- Successful completion of a plurilingual exam increases opportunities on the job market due to the upgrading and expansion of the learner's individual portfolio.
- The introduction of plurilingual exams in schools contributes to cross- curriculum teaching of subjects which, until now, have been taught separately.

5. THE DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF PLURILINGUAL COMMUNICATION

«Plurilingual and pluricultural competence refers to the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw»⁷.

Plurilingual communication takes place when interlocutors with different linguistic and cultural identities meet in a given situation and desire to communicate in order to exchange information.

⁷ *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR)*, § 8.1, p. 168.

Plurilingual communication is characterized by the following features:

- Communication occurs not in one single language but rather in a combination of languages (polyglot dialogue)⁸.
- The languages are not opposed but rather complementary.
- Several languages are used in order to make information available and to exchange information; this requires (code) switching among the languages.
- All participants must accommodate to numerous interlocutors with different linguistic and cultural identities.
- In addition to language competence, social, intercultural and emotional competence is of vital importance for successful communication.
- The participants play a bridging role in many respects.
- The decision of the participants to use their various languages instead of a “lingua franca” is either a necessity or a conscious choice in order to express appreciation for cultural and linguistic diversity.
- Plurilingual communication demands flexibility and sensibility regarding language, sensitive issues and behaviour.
- One aspect of plurilingual communication is the act of mediating between interlocutors⁹.
- In all plurilingual communicative situations it is even more vital than usual to confirm understanding by using a “comprehension check”.

6. EXAM FORMAT AND SPECIFICATIONS

The plurilingual oral exam consists of a monologue and an interactive task, which simulates a polyglot dialogue. In both parts of the exam several languages are used, all of which are characterized by elements of mediation and code-switching¹⁰.

CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION
General Goal	To determine whether the candidate has plurilingual oral competency, whereby the proficiency of the candidate in English and in the second foreign language must be at Level B2 and Level B1 (according to CEFR) respectively.
Specific Goals The candidate:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shows plurilingual competence and can interact flexibly and in a goal-oriented manner in a given context. 2. Demonstrates competence in both general language and professional language use. Depending on the situation, the candidate can alternate spontaneously between (foreign) languages (language switching); the candidate can switch languages on his/her own initiative when it appears logical and sensible in a given situation. 3. Is aware of similarities and differences between the cultures and is capable of intercultural communication in both personal and professional domains.

⁸ See glossary at the end of this article.

⁹ CEFR, § 4.4.4, p. 87. See glossary at the end of this article.

¹⁰ See glossary at the end of this article.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none">4. Can act as an intermediary to facilitate communication between interlocutors who are unable to understand each other directly¹¹.5. Ensures that all interlocutors are included in the conversation and receive the desired information.6. Demonstrates intercultural sensitivity and can react appropriately to the interlocutors, both verbally and non-verbally.7. Can successfully select and use communication strategies in order to reach a goal in a given situation.8. Can use strategies to compensate linguistic deficiencies and to ensure successful communication.9. Can carry on a conversation spontaneously in both languages (at a high degree of fluency in English) about a variety of familiar topics, of general, professional or of personal interest, during which he/she expresses opinions, feelings (emotions), plans and desires.10. Can give accounts of personal events and experiences in both languages, describing feelings and reactions, in English in detail and at a high degree of fluency.11. Can converse spontaneously and with some confidence in both languages on familiar routine, in English clearly and in detail, so that interaction is possible without imposing a strain on either of the participating parties.12. Can recognize problems in general and in professional situations, develop solutions and choose appropriate courses of action.13. Can discuss the advantages and disadvantage of various options in both languages, can state or defend his/her personal viewpoint, make suggestions and in English, is able to discuss and evaluate these.14. Can, in both languages, invite others to express their opinions and can then briefly comment on these points of view.15. Can explain, in both languages, where the problem lies and can discuss further action and compare and contrast alternative solutions.16. Can, in both languages, present a topic (i.e. presentation) clearly enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time. The candidate can highlight the most important points and following the presentation he/she can answer a series of follow-up questions spontaneously, might, however, in the second language, need to ask for repetition, should the speech be too rapid.17. Can, in both languages, give a short speech and make announcements in a personal or professional context (i.e. welcoming visitors, outlining the programme).18. Can, in both languages, pass on information, reliably and in detail, provided that he/she is familiar with the topic and that the input is expressed clearly and in well- structured language.19. Can use and/or summarize information from different sources in order to fulfil a particular task.
--	--

¹¹ Lenz P., Berthele R, *Assessment in Plurilingual and Intercultural Education*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg 2010: 21. See glossary at the end of this article.

	20. Can, as a member of a team, take on responsibility and contribute constructively to a common solution.
Situation in the target languages at the time of testing	The school leaving exam is taken at Vocational Colleges at the end of upper secondary education. Successful completion of the leaving exams grants both professional job qualifications as stated in the valid national curriculum of Austria as well as entrance qualifications for tertiary educational institutions (i.e. colleges, universities).
Description of the candidate	The candidate is 18-21 years of age at the time of his/her A-level oral leaving exams. German is L1 for the majority of candidates and for those candidates whose mother tongue is not German, German is then L2.
Level of the exam	The candidate is expected to show competence at Level B2 in English and at Level B1 in the second or additional foreign language.
Specifications	The exam paper consists of a sustained monologue task and an interactive polyglot dialogue, both of which are set in an area of language use which has been selected from a pool of established domains. It is recommended to begin with domains and situations of Level B1 and make any necessary adjustments for English. The topic categories are a pool of topics decided upon by the foreign language teachers of the school.
Authenticity	The test paper should mirror situations of personal and professional life in which both the target languages and the language of instruction are needed. The given situations should be realistic and should correspond to the candidates' fields of experience.
Type of discourse	The following types of discourse are to be expected in the plurilingual oral exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - arguing, describing, reporting, citing examples and explaining, illustrating and/or recounting of examples; - expressing feelings and reactions; - drawing comparisons and comparing different points of view; - illustrating advantages and disadvantages of different options; - testing, confirming and passing on of information; - commenting; - expressing and justifying a point of view; - expressing and defending a personal opinion; - making suggestions and, in English, discussing and justifying the suggestions; - describing intentions, desires and hopes; - summarizing.
Content of the tasks	The content of the given tasks can be both concrete and abstract.
Test format	The exam paper consists of a sustained monologue task and an interactive polyglot dialogue task. Each task has clear instructions given by operational verbs. The test paper also contains input or impulses. Both tasks of the test paper, (monologue and dialogue), are always embedded in a given situational context.

Instructions	Instructions should be given in the curriculum language (i.e. German in Austria) using function verbs. Each sub point of the individual tasks must be addressed.
Instructions for the examiners	The examiners converse at the language level which corresponds to the candidate's level of receptive competence. They follow the guidelines regarding the conducting of the exam (see pt. 5.5 guidelines for examiners).
Assessor	As there are two examiners during the plurilingual exams, no additional assessor is necessary.
Weighting	Both tasks (monologue and dialogue) are to be evaluated equally as each task is equivalent in value.
Length of exam	According to official exam regulations in Austria, the exam is to last between 10 and 20 minutes. The recommendation of exam length lies at 12-15 minutes, whereby 4-5 minutes should be allotted for the monologue (including introduction and follow-up questions) and 8-10 minutes for the dialogue.
Preparation time	According to official exam regulations in Austria, a candidate has 20 minutes minimum preparation time. The recommendation lies at 30 minutes.
Assessment criteria	There is one common assessment grid for both examiners.
Implementation of the exam	Both examiners are present during the exam. It is recommended that assessment immediately follow the exam whereby time for joint consultation must be allotted.
Aids	Dictionaries (online or in book form) provided by the school may be used during preparation time.

7. DEVELOPING COMPETENCE ORIENTED PLURILINGUAL TASKS

It is recommended to use topics for Level B1 and then, if needed, adjust the contents for English. Using this recommendation and taking the specifications of the plurilingual exam (pt. 3.1) into consideration, concrete support for the implementation of these principles will now be outlined.

7.1. *Speaking tasks*

The exam papers testing plurilingual oral competency consist of two separate and independent speaking tasks: a sustained monologue speaking task and an interactive dialogue speaking task.

A – monologue	B – dialogue
<p>Using the input or impulse provided in the test paper, the candidate is expected to give a well-structured and coherent presentation in both foreign languages, during which he/she should address the audience defined in the task.</p>	<p>Using the input or impulse provided in the test paper, the candidate is expected to conduct a conversation with two interlocutors with different linguistic identities. During this interactive dialogue, the candidate should fulfil the set task, act as an intermediary between the interlocutors to ensure the successful exchange of thoughts and ideas and lastly, to actively lead the conversation in the desired direction.</p>

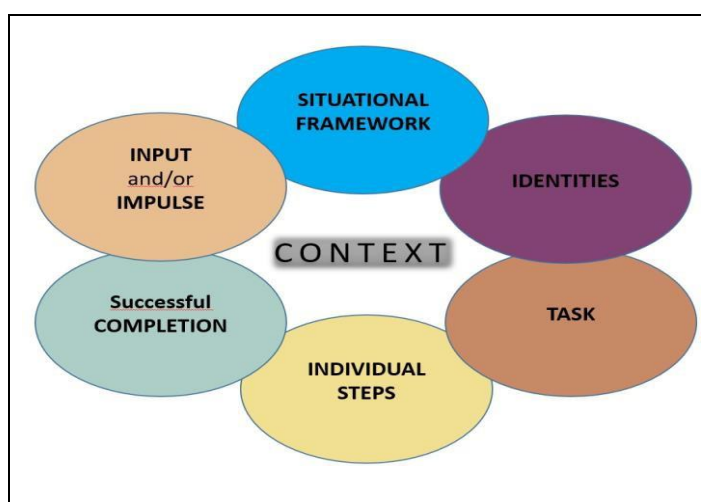
Both the monologue as well as the dialogue are characterized by various fundamental elements. Both tasks of the plurilingual oral exam paper must be embedded in a given **context**.

7.2. Exam context

This exam context is defined in short and precise words and specifies:

- the situational framework;
- the identities of the candidate and the audience/interlocutors;
- the task as such;
- the individual steps of the task;
- the successful completion.

In addition, each of the two tasks must contain an “input” and/or “impulse” (see glossary).



Situational framework:	This sets the location (i.e. home or abroad), the physical environment (i.e. host family, canteen, educational institution, company/department, exhibition, airport) and the reason for the conversation. If it is possible and makes sense, then the setting should be the same for both parts of the exam. The framework should be set in a manner which allows, as far as possible, natural plurilingual communication.
Identities:	While describing the identity of the candidate, attention needs to be paid that his/her position corresponds to his/her life experience. Although the candidate assumes a certain position and carries out a particular function for the purposes of the exam, he/she still always remains himself/herself. The allocation of roles and identities is based on a genuine sense of reality. If, for instance, the task requires candidates to interact with teachers or superiors, they will not be asked to adopt the role of buddy or best friend. The candidate assumes the same position in both the monologue and the dialogue.
Task and steps of the task	The task must be divided into (interactive) steps. The individual steps are introduced by using operational verbs. An interactive introductory phase (introducing oneself, small talk) before beginning the monologue is possible. Should an introductory phase be expected, the candidate must be informed about this in the task. The exam paper itself should be written in the language of instruction (in Austria, German) so that it is not necessary to take into account the different levels of the two foreign languages. It is recommended to use three operational verbs for the monologue task, where it can make sense to use only two in the dialog task, one of which to be accompanied by sub points.
Goal or objective:	The goal or objective of the conversation must be clearly recognizable. The primary goal is successful communication among the interlocutors.
Input/Impulse:	The input or impulse is a necessary element of the test paper, not a simple decorative add-on. Furthermore, the way the input or impulse is to be used must clearly stated in each task. This additional exam material should predominantly be in the curriculum language (in Italy, Italian if it is not acquired as foreign language)..., although depending on the situational framework, some elements of the input or impulse might also be taken from foreign language sources.

When using a foreign language text as input, the following should be taken into consideration:

- The degree of difficulty of the text must not exceed the level of the exam.
- The text should be as short as possible, so that the candidate is not tempted to use text passages verbatim.
- The text should be authentic but should not contain language mistakes which could influence text comprehension; if there are language mistakes in the original text, these should be corrected.

Longer texts as input should only be used if the set task demands that these texts be skimmed, and information be selected.

When developing the exam paper attention should be paid to the following points:

- The monologue and the dialogue should cover different aspects of the same topic.
- If possible, the function verbs used in the first part of the exam should be different to those used in the second part, if possible.
- Various test papers developed by the teachers should be comparable regarding the demands and the time allotted for the processing of the input.

7.3. Exemplary task settings¹²

	SITUATION	POSSIBLE DETAILS
1	Internship in the press department of a non-profit organisation. Visit from foreign delegates of the organisation's international network	Introduction. Presentation of the organisation's fields and types of activity. Discussion about future common activities/projects/or areas of co-operation.
2	Employment in a firm. Visit of foreign business partners.	Small Talk. Presentation of a new product. Discussion about a marketing concept for the two countries which the interlocutors represent.
3	Employment in a firm. Visit of foreign business partners. Business lunch/dinner.	Small Talk. Explanation of Italian specialities. Conversation about eating habits and a healthy lifestyle
4	Employment at the Austrian National Tourist Board. Visit of foreign partners.	Presentation of new offers. Conversation about travelling habits in the target countries. Discussion about holiday possibilities in Austria for certain target groups.
5	Visit at a host family. Arrival of an English speaking flatmate who is not very proficient in the target language.	Conversation about cultural diversity, festivities. Comparing and contrasting clichés and reality. Relaying important information about the local language school, etc.
6	Employment at a radio station. Visit of foreign media representatives	Introduction of the radio station and its programmes. Conversation about the responsibilities and the importance of various media for the youth. Discussion about possible success strategies for radio stations.

¹² Focusing on Austrian professionally oriented secondary schools.

7	International event. Planning meeting with partners from abroad.	Welcome address. Presentation of the concept/ of the planning to date. Conversation about open points, i.e. finances, needs of specific countries and offers. Planning of further steps.
8	International fair. Responsible for a stand at the fair. Contact with foreign visitors.	Presentation of the company and its products. Planning a visit at the company. Discussion about possible business contacts.
9	Project with foreign schools. Preparatory visit of the project partners.	Information about the state of affairs in Italy concerning the project topic. Conversation about the partners' thematic focusses. Working out the common areas and the differences. Planning of further steps for the project.
10	Conclusion of an international project	Statement about the progress of the project in Italy. Planning of the closing event (where, who, with whom). Discussion about the possible expansion of the project.
11	Interview for a job placement in a plurilingual environment.	Personal introduction and information about education. Conversation about experience. Discussion about expectations.
12	Employment for an international business. Meeting with persons responsible for interns.	Statement about the work of the interns. Discussion about possible (financial) rewards in the different countries. Conversation about future opportunities.
13	Selection interview for an international flat sharing community (flat sharing casting) or joint search for possible living quarters.	Personal introduction and information about education. Thoughts/ideas about requirements for joint living quarters. Discussion about the expectations of joint responsibilities.
14	Organisation of a closing event at the end of an Erasmus+ programme	Presentation of the results of the programme. Discussion about the division of responsibilities, the planning, the venue, international buffet, possibility of (financial) sponsors...

8. THE PROCESS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXAM “PLURILINGUALISM”

8.1. *Exam participants*

There are three people participating in the exam: 2 teachers (examiners) and one candidate.

The candidate carries out the exam in both languages. Each of the teachers is the examiner for one of the two foreign languages. It is not necessary for the participating teachers to be proficient in or to be teaching the other foreign language.



8.2. *Choice of topic*

Out of a collection of sealed envelopes, each containing a different topic, the candidate picks **two** envelopes. After reading the contents of both envelopes, he/she chooses **one** of the topics and then receives the appropriate test paper from the examiner.

At this point, the preparation time for the exam begins.

8.3. *Preparation*

The candidate should use the recommended preparation time of 30 minutes to:

- familiarize himself/herself with the context of the exam;
- work out the most important information from the input / use the impulse to gather ideas and knowledge which are relevant to the task;
- plan the monologue (also in regards to sensible language switching, keeping in mind that he/she address both interlocutors);
- consider reactions to possible situations which might occur during the dialogue.

In order to give all candidates the same chances for successful completion of the exam, it should be ensured that each candidate has the same amount of preparation time.

Before beginning preparation, the examiners should remind the candidate that notes can be written down, but the candidate will not be permitted to read long written passages during the actual exam.

8.4. *Layout of the exam room*

The candidate can more easily adapt to the given exam setting if the setup of the furniture and the seating/standing arrangements of the candidate and examiners correspond to the context of the exam paper. For example, during a presentation it is advantageous if the student is standing and the examiners are sitting. It would also be possible to conduct the entire exam while standing, for example, around a high table.

8.5. *Instructions for the examiners*

The examiners should be familiar with the exam paper, should adapt to the given context of each exam and should attempt to create a positive atmosphere.

In order to obtain fair, valid and significant results in the assessment, it is necessary to give each candidate clear instructions.

The following recommendations could help in guaranteeing a standardized exam situation:

The *examiners* should:

- ... introduce each exam consistently in the same foreign language (state topic and title or number of the exam paper);
- ... make it possible for the candidate to lead the conversation according to the exam context and given task;
- ... speak clearly and adjust their speed to the level of the exam;
- ... remind the candidate, if necessary, that written notes may be used but must not simply be read off;
- ... clearly distinguish between the monologue and the dialogue during the exam;
- ... ensure that all points of the exam paper have been dealt with;
- ... pay attention to time management;
- ... keep eye contact with the candidate;
- ... make sure that the candidate has ample opportunity to produce language independently;
- ... ensure that the speaking time in each foreign languages is, as far as possible, equally divided;
- ... react appropriately when there are comprehension difficulties;
- ... not correct language mistakes,
- ... avoid making any judgmental comments about the language performance of the candidate;
- ... end the exam in a neutral manner.

Each candidate is unique and each course of conversation is an individual event. The fact that there are three interlocutors and two foreign languages involved causes additional challenges. Therefore it is necessary to adapt to each given exam setting accordingly. Both examiners not only have to follow the candidate's contributions closely, they also need to actively take part in the conversation themselves and to show respect for all interlocutors. The examiners should avoid taking notes during the course of the exam unless these notes are important details of the conversation. In other words, the examiners should only be taking note of informational details that would also be written down in a natural setting (that is to say, a non-exam situation). These notes should only pertain to informational content of the conversation. There must be ample time allotted for the assessment immediately following the exam.

8.6. Sustained Monologue Task

Following a general introduction of the exam paper given by one of the examiners, the candidate can, depending on the task assignment, either begin the exam with an interactive introductory phase (personal introduction, small talk) or begin immediately with the monologue, during which the candidate should not be interrupted. At the conclusion of the monologue the teachers could ask follow-up questions in order to clarify certain

points, to gather missing information or to balance the speaking time in both foreign languages.

Should it be the case that the candidate has not touched upon all points in the task assignment but has clearly signalled that he/she has reached the end of the monologue, one of the examiners should give an impulse to encourage the candidate to continue speaking. The examiners should also supportively intervene if the candidate is obviously having difficulty continuing the monologue without aid. This assistance must be taken into consideration in the final assessment of the candidate.

8.7. *Interactive Dialogue Task*

The examiners guide the candidate from the monologue to the dialogue in accordance with the task context. The actual process of the dialogue depends greatly on the task setting.

The examiners can contribute significantly to the success of the dialogue if they:

- phrase their statements/questions in a manner applicable to the situation, thereby supporting the candidate in implementing the instructions;
- allow the candidate to lead the conversation;
- take the lead in conversation only if the candidate is obviously not able to do so himself/herself. This aid must be taken into consideration in the final assessment of the candidate;
- mention the sub points of the set task if the candidate does not touch on these ideas independently;
- initiate language switching when it appears natural or when the candidate is concentrating on only one of the two languages;
- interact with each other (although they do not speak the same language);
- show respect towards all interlocutors.

The conversation in the dialogue can be started or brought to an end either by the candidate or by the examiners. The exam itself is brought to a close by the examiners.

In order to familiarize the students with the unique demands of the exam subject “plurilingualism” the following hints for candidates (5.8) should have been raised, discussed and clarified at the latest, at the beginning of their final year.

8.8. *Information for the candidates (copy template)*

8.8.1. *Preparation time:*

You should use the recommended exam preparation time in order to:

- familiarize yourself with the context of the exam, analyse the **situational framework** of the two tasks involved in the exam, study the **identities** of the participating persons and exactly what their **tasks** are and what their needs and interests might be;

- work out the most important information from the input / use the impulse to gather knowledge and ideas which are relevant to the tasks you are expected to complete;
- plan the monologue (also in regards to sensible language switching, keeping in mind to address both interlocutors);
- prepare yourself for the situations in the dialogue and consider reactions to possible statements which might occur during the dialogue;
- take down notes where necessary;
- acquaint yourself with the time restrictions of each task.

Dictionaries will be at your disposal during the preparation time, however, due to time pressure, it is recommended that you use them sparingly

8.8.2. *Instructions for the exam situation (both for the monologue and for the dialogue):*

- React in accordance to the given context and, if possible, take the lead in the conversation after the examiners have officially introduced the exam.
- Be sure to demonstrate your competence in both languages.
- Speak loudly enough so that the entire exam board can hear and understand you.
- Attempt to switch from one foreign language to the other in a manner which is as natural as possible in order to address both interlocutors equally.
- At the end of the monologue be prepared to answer follow-up questions.
- Carry out your role as an intermediary; i.e. not only should you present your own ideas, but also make it possible for the two other interlocutors to exchange ideas among themselves.
- Make it possible for the two other interlocutors to interact with each other although they are not speaking the same language; i.e. pass along comments or observations.
- Remember that you may use the accompanying exam material and also your own handwritten notes, but be aware that you must not read out any passages.
- Take into consideration that you also have the possibility to end the conversation in a manner appropriate to the exam setting when you are of the opinion that you have fulfilled all aspects of the given task.

9. EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE IN PLURILINGUAL EXAMS

As the plurilingual exams consist of a sustained monologue and an interactive dialogue, the candidates will demonstrate two different types of speech – from planned to spontaneous – each demanding varying competences.

In order to evaluate these competences, each examiner uses one assessment grid for both the monologue and for the dialogue. The candidate's performances in both parts of the exam and in each foreign language are taken equally into consideration for the final assessment.

Paramount for the assessment is the successful communication in a plurilingual context. This demands not only competences in the individual languages but, in addition, an overlapping repertoire of communicative competences, including not only communicative skills but also understanding and personal attributes which enable the candidate to act, in a plurilingual context, as a successful interface between other users of language who are monolingual.

The following criteria must be taken into consideration for the final assessment:

- **Task achievement.**
- **Language switch and interaction.**
- **Range and accuracy of spoken language.**

The two examiners have one vote and therefore must agree on a common final mark following the exam.

9.1. *Structure of the assessment grid and instructions for use*

Evaluation is based on a special criteria-oriented assessment grid which has been developed in the spirit of the CEFR.

Only one assessment grid is used because:

- there is no assessor in a plurilingual exam;
- the main criterion of the exam is whether the candidate can master a given situation in both languages and not whether the candidate has attained level B2 or B1 in an individual language;
- experience shows that in plurilingual exams there can be an approximation of the levels when using two languages.

The grid describes the above mentioned evaluation criteria, all of which are independent of each other but of equal value. All of the criteria must be applied to the entire performance and the monologue and the dialogue are evaluated together to give one final mark. The columns for monologue and dialogue enable the examiner to check off impressions during the exam.

The grid consists of eleven levels (bands) just as the assessment grid in the monolingual foreign language exams of the Austrian Matura (school leaving exam). Band six describes a performance which fulfils the minimum expectations for a particular criterion and therefore is considered to be a successful pass.

The grid mainly contains descriptors which are relevant to plurilingual communication. The descriptors describe the most important characteristics of each criterion.

The assessment is based on an overall impression. Each examiner compares his / her impressions of the performance with the description of the levels and chooses the level which best corresponds to his/ her impression.

Once an exam has been completed, the examiners compare their evaluations in order to obtain a common proposal for the exam mark. Ultimately, a candidate is assessed according to which band best describes a candidate's overall performance, i.e. to which extent he/she meets the criteria in both languages, plus: to which extent the candidate actually fulfils his/her task as a mediator between languages and people.

An explanatory example:

A candidate performs exceptionally well in one language and is evaluated at band 10 by his / her examiner. The evaluation of the performance in the other language lies at band six.

It is not sufficient to merely add those two scores and divide them by two. Equal value is given to each of the three criteria (see above) and the candidate's performance is evaluated according to the corresponding descriptors.

9.2. *Explanation of the individual criteria*

Task fulfilment

The optimal fulfilment of the task means that each given point must be raised but not each aspect needs to be dealt with in both languages in the same amount of detail. Likewise, it is neither necessary nor does it always make sense to transfer all content information into both languages. It is important that the interlocutors get the attention and the information that they personally desire. This is not only true for facts but also for details concerning emotions, attitudes and opinions. The candidate is expected to show that he/she has understood the context /the situation and can adjust and react accordingly.

Language switch and interaction

The candidate should demonstrate that he / she is attuned to the needs of the interlocutors and

- can switch both spontaneously and flexibly between the two languages.
- can take the initiative and also lead the conversation.
- can address both interlocutors equally (i.e. he/she does not use one language predominantly over the other in the sustained monologue; asks, in the interactive dialogue, whether the interlocutor whose language is not being spoken, has any questions).
- can make it possible for the two other interlocutors to interact with each other by passing along comments or information.
- can act in a sensible and meaningful manner and react spontaneously.
- is aware of intercultural differences when necessary (i.e. varying manners of greeting).

Should the candidate spontaneously react to a question at first in the “wrong” language, but then correct himself/herself or if he/she/ uses words from the other language, this should not be counted against him/her as long as it only happens occasionally.

Spectrum and accuracy of spoken language

The criteria “spectrum” and “accuracy” have been grouped together in order to allot the proper amount of emphasis to the criteria of “task fulfilment” and “language switching and interaction”.

When interpreting the descriptors attention is paid to the fact that the candidate’s repertoire in structure and vocabulary is going to be different in each language (compare level B2 and B1).

The use of compensation strategies¹³ (i.e. nonverbal communication, attempt at transferring words from one language to the other) is of particular importance in a plurilingual context.

In band 4 and less, no comments have been made as to the type of mistake, since the mistakes are so grave and so numerous that they strongly influence successful communication and or even, as in band 2, prevent it.

¹³ See glossary at the end of the article.

10. ASSESSMENT GRID

	Task fulfilment (Relevancy, detail, accuracy, clarity, identification with the context/situation)			Language switching and interaction (Flexibility, spontaneity, initiative, coherence and cohesion, accommodation to interlocutor, ability to mediate).			Range and grammatical accuracy of spoken language (Appropriateness of vocabulary and structure in relation to context, task and topic; flexibility; frequency and communicative significance of mistakes in vocabulary, structure, pronunciation and intonation)		
		Monologue	Dialogue		Monologue	Dialogue		Monologue	Dialogue
10	(1) All aspects of the test paper are addressed and are persuasively/strongly/convincingly executed. (2) Both interlocutors receive all the desired information. (3) Conduct continuously corresponds to the context/ situation			(1) Switches language on his/her own initiative when it appears logical and sensible in a given situation. (2) Leads the course of conversation satisfactorily for both interlocutors. (3) mediates successfully between the interlocutors. (4) Reacts flexibly to a change in language. (5) Reacts appropriately and spontaneously.			(1) Demonstrates a broad spectrum of communication strategies in both languages for the given task. (2) Paraphrases or circumlocutions to compensate for occasional lack of vocabulary. (3) Mistakes are rare in both languages and they do not cause misunderstanding; they can often be corrected by the candidate himself/herself. (4) To a certain extent, pronunciation, intonation and fluency are natural and smooth.		
9									
8	(1) All aspects of the test paper are addressed and executed. (2) Both interlocutors receive most of the desired information. (3) Conduct, for the most part, corresponds to the context/situation.			(1) Generally switches language on his/her own initiative when it appears logical and sensible in a given situation. (2) Generally leads the course of conversation satisfactorily for both interlocutors. (3) Generally mediates successfully between the interlocutors. (4) Generally reacts flexibly to a change in language. (5) Generally reacts appropriately and spontaneously.			(1) Demonstrates a fairly broad spectrum of communication strategies in both languages for the given task. (2) Compensates verbally for his/her lack of vocabulary. (3) Mistakes rarely interfere with communication and occasional misunderstanding can be clarified. (4) Pronunciation and intonation are easily understood.		

7									
6	<p>(1) Most aspects of the test paper are addressed and sufficiently executed.</p> <p>(2) Both interlocutors receive most of the desired information OR one interlocutor receives all of the desired information while the other interlocutor receives only a part of the desired information.</p> <p>(3) Conduct generally corresponds to the context/situation</p>	Monologue	Dialogue	<p>(1) Infrequently switches language on his/her own initiative.</p> <p>(2) Mainly guides/leads the course of conversation satisfactorily for both interlocutors.</p> <p>(3) Mainly mediates successfully between the interlocutors.</p> <p>(4) Mainly reacts flexibly to a change in language.</p> <p>(5) Mainly reacts logically.</p>	Monologue	Dialogue	<p>(1) Demonstrates sufficient communication strategies in both languages in order to cope with the given task.</p> <p>(2) Compensates non-verbally and most of the time also verbally for his/her lack of vocabulary.</p> <p>(3) Mistakes rarely interfere with communication; possible misunderstandings can usually be clarified.</p> <p>(4) Pronunciation and intonation can be sufficiently understood.</p>	Monologue	Dialogue
5									
4	<p>(1) Only some aspects of the test paper are addressed but not sufficiently executed.</p> <p>(2) Both interlocutors receive only a part of the desired information OR one interlocutor hardly receives any of the desired information.</p> <p>(3) Conduct rarely corresponds to the context/situation.</p>			<p>(1) Never switches language on his/her own initiative.</p> <p>(2) The course of conversation is mainly guided by the interlocutors.</p> <p>(3) Shows little success in mediating between the interlocutors.</p> <p>(4) Rarely reacts flexibly to a change in language.</p> <p>(5) Does not always react appropriately.</p>			<p>(1) Communication strategies are too insufficient in one of the languages to be able to cope with the given situation.</p> <p>(2) Has major difficulty compensating for lack of vocabulary.</p> <p>(3) Mistakes often interfere with communication.</p>		
3									
2	<p>(1) Only some aspects of the test paper are partially addressed.</p> <p>(2) Neither of the interlocutors receive much information at all.</p> <p>(3) Behaviour does not correspond to the context/situation.</p>			<p>(1) Course of conversation is lead /guided by the interlocutors.</p> <p>(2) Cannot mediate between the interlocutors.</p> <p>(3) Does not react flexibly to a change in language.</p> <p>(4) Rarely reacts appropriately.</p>			<p>(1) Communication strategies are too insufficient in both of the languages to be able to cope with the given situation.</p> <p>(2) Cannot compensate for lack of vocabulary.</p> <p>(3) Mistakes often prevent communication.</p>		
1									
0	Test paper is not fulfilled; task is not achieved			not enough language to assess					

11. EXAMPLES OF TEST PAPERS

The following are examples of plurilingual test papers. They could be used regardless of which second or additional foreign language is combined with English. The input/impulses which accompany the exam papers would usually be in the curriculum language (in Italy, Italian), but actually could be in any one of the languages used in the exam, depending on the situation (compare 4.1).

Example 1

<p>TOPIC: health and nutrition EMPHASIS: (un)healthy lifestyle</p>
--

Situation:

Your school is particularly involved in various activities encouraging a healthy lifestyle. Your class has organized a meeting with students and teachers from other countries who are also interested in implementing projects in this field.

Monologue (4-5 minutes)

During the meeting, you are responsible for presenting information on health in Austrian schools. The basis of your presentation is the study carried out during the academic year of 20.. (impulse #1)*.

Begin your presentation by greeting your visitors.

- Introduce yourself and present your school.
- Inform your visitors about, in your opinion, the most important results of the study.
- Comment on the results from your point of view.

Dialogue (8-10 minutes)

Following the presentation, you carry on a conversation with the visiting teachers in which you discuss the possibility of working together on interscholastic projects.

- Present examples of activities or projects promoting a healthy and active lifestyle which have been introduced at your school (input #2)*.
- Inquire about similar activities at the schools of your foreign visitors.
- Discuss the possibilities of a joint project.

<p>Present your own ideas. Answer questions and react to the comments of the interlocutors. Facilitate the exchange of ideas between the two interlocutors. You do not have to discuss all point of the tasks in equal detail in each language and it is not always necessary to give the same information in both foreign languages.</p>

* Impulse #1 is a bar chart illustrating the results of a study carried out among young people in Austria aged 11 to 17 concerning a healthy lifestyle. Impulse one also includes a short text about the smoking habits and sport activities of youth in Austria. Both are in German in the original test paper. The input 2, used in the dialogue includes 3 pictures showing young people in healthy lifestyle situations and two short texts giving examples of healthy lifestyle projects in an Austrian Secondary Higher Vocational school. Similar short texts have to be in the first language of the students.

Example 2

TOPIC: lifestyle, school, education and personal point of view
EMPHASIS: study abroad, mobility

Situation:

You are the head student of your school. In the course of preparing the Erasmus project with England and Italy¹⁴ representatives of the partner schools come for a visit.

Monologue (4-5 minutes)

It is now your job, at the start of the visit, to introduce your school and to present information about study abroad programs. Begin your presentation by greeting the guests.

- Introduce yourself, describe your position and present your school.
- Inform the foreign visitors about the various activities abroad which your school organizes (internships abroad, language courses/weeks, etc.).
- Explain why the Italian youth are interested in study abroad programs (impulse #1).**

Dialogue (8-10 minutes)

A student exchange is planned as one aspect within the Erasmus project framework. Discuss the details with the representatives of the partner schools.

- Clarify the following aspects: accommodation, activities, and school visits during the stay.
- Discuss which challenges must be faced when dealing with foreign cultures during a study visit, i.e.
 - Differences in communication practices (for example greeting someone).
 - Conversational closeness and distance.
 - Dress code.
 - Punctuality.
 - Daily routines.

Use the input #2** and cite two additional examples.

Present your own ideas.
Answer questions and react to the comments of the interlocutors.
Facilitate the exchange of ideas between the two interlocutors.
You do not have to discuss all point of the tasks in equal detail in each language and it is not always necessary to give the same information in both foreign languages.

** Impulse #1 is a bar chart illustrating reasons for participating in study abroad programmes. It is in German in the original test paper. The input used in the dialogue includes 3 pictures illustrating difference in communication practices and two short texts giving examples and explanations of cultural differences. Similar short texts have to be in the first language of the students.

¹⁴ Exemplary choice of countries.

GLOSSARY

Code-Mixing	<p>In relevant literature a difference is sometimes made between code-mixing and code-switching, whereby some linguists use only the term code-switching.</p> <p>One speaks of code-mixing when the language is changed within a sentence or when code-switching takes place within a sentence.</p> <p>Vgl. Munukka P.(Dezember 2006, S.14), <i>Funktionen und Typen des Code-Switchings im DaF-Unterricht</i>. Pro Gradu –Arbeit. Deutsche Sprache und Kultur. Institut für moderne und klassische Sprachen. Universität Jyväskylä.https://jyx.jyu.fi/bitstream/handle/123456789/11491/URN_NBN_fi_jyu-2006602.pdf?sequence=1.</p>
Code-Switching	<p>Code switching can be explained as the changing of languages (or language varieties) among bilingual or plurilingual speakers depending on the demands of the communicative situation (Bußmann, 1990).</p> <p>According to Gumperz a distinction is generally made between situational code-switching and metaphorical code switching.</p> <p><i>Situational code-switching</i> happens when bilingual or plurilingual speakers alternate between language varieties depending on the context of the conversation, i.e. children being raised bilingually speak one language with their father and the second language with their mother, thus switching occurs within the interactions.</p> <p><i>Metaphorical code-switching</i> refers to language switching within a single interaction. The speaker uses code-switching to influence the communicative effect, exploiting associations between languages and social roles, i.e. a public speaker uses standard language to demonstrate his status and social position, but will also switch to the regional dialect in his speech in order to demonstrate solidarity and down to earthiness with his audience.</p> <p>Vgl. Schepelmann Alexandra (2003), <i>Kontextualisierungskonventionen im Internet. Relay Chat</i>, Diplomarbeit, Univeristät Wien: https://www.univie.ac.at/linguistics/publications/diplomarbeit/schepelmann/Daten/code-switching.htm.</p>
Function	<p>Throughout the exam, the candidate assumes a given role or function which has been determined by the exam paper. He/she is, for example, an exchange student, an intern, a co-worker in a department of a company. In a professional context, function refers to a position within the structure of an organisation carrying a defined area of work and responsibility.</p>
Operational competence	<p>Operational competence refers to the ability to fulfil tasks and/or to solve problems within the context of a particular situation.</p> <p>Operational competence is often referred to as a primary competence. Personal /existential competence, professional competence, methodical competence and social competence are understood to be secondary competences.</p> <p>http://qualifikation.kenline.de/qualifikation/handlungskompetenz.htm.</p>
Communicative situations requiring problem-solving and targeted action	<p>In a teaching context, communicative situations requiring problem-solving and targeted action are the most important level of methodical action. They are structured and restricted in time, consciously executed by teachers and students, make sense and are meaningfully interactive. These communicative situations are task oriented. They initiate the teaching process, keep it flowing and deliver concrete results.</p> <p>Vgl. http://lehrerfortbildung-bw.de/.</p>

Impulse	An impulse demands a reaction (contradiction, acceptance, questions, search for alternatives) and offers thematic stimuli; an impulse can be individual/subjective and thus ignite the conversation (i.e. cartoons, quotations, interview); among other things, an impulse leads to an exchange of opinions with possible personal components.
Input	Input may be provided in form of texts, pictures or data which need to be processed (i.e. combined, connected, compared, structured, presented); Input defines the CONTENT of the exam conversation and it is objective in character.
Operational verbs	Operational verbs clarify which language activities need to be completed in the given task. These operational verbs can be divided into three different requirement categories (reproduction, re-organization and transfer, reflection and problem solving), each expressing different levels of difficulty. They call up language patterns and simultaneously demand cognitive operations (activities). When dealing with foreign languages, the level of difficulty is determined on the one hand, by the cognitive requirements and on the other hand, by the language elements which the candidate must use in order to fulfil the spoken language activities demanded by the operational verbs. Vgl. http://mokant.at/gesellschaft/1304-lehrplan.html https://www.bifie.at/system/files/dl/srdp_de_operatoren_2013-07-16.pdf .
Performative speech act performance	Based on John L. Austin (1955) and developed in the sixties, this term refers to the successful completion of a speech act. Competence enables a momentary utterance which is called a performative speech act or simply performance. This means that a performative speech act is a part of competence. When assessing language achievement, it is the performative speech act and not the (language) competence which is being evaluated. Vgl. http://www.iik.ch/wordpress/downloads/downloadDZ/Was_heisst_Sprkmpeten z.pdf . The term performance is often used as an umbrella term for language production in exam situations.
Polyglot Dialogue	Polyglot dialogue is an interactional regime that allows for the use of two or more different languages in interpersonal interaction. Most often participants use one of their best-mastered languages productively and are capable of understanding the languages used by their interlocutors. Polyglot dialogue thus involves the use of two or more different languages in oral interpersonal exchange in production and the use of two or more different languages in reception as well. Both code-switching and mediation can be parts of a polyglot dialogue. A polyglot dialogue represents an alternative to using a <i>lingua franca</i> (a common language distinct from the native languages of the conversation participants but used by all to make communication possible). See: Lenz P., Berthele R (2010), <i>Assessment in Plurilingual and Intercultural Education</i> . Council of Europe, Strasbourg, p. 21.
(field of) emphasis	A field of emphasis is a possible in-depth aspect of a domain. Schools can place the emphasis on certain sub-points or in-depth aspects of a domain which reflect the school profile.

<p>Mediation</p>	<p>Written and/or oral activities of mediation make communication possible between persons who are unable, for whatever reason, to communicate with each other directly.</p> <p>When mediating it is not the intent of the speaker to express his/her own personal opinion or view point, but rather to act as an intermediary between interlocutors who cannot understand each other because they speak different languages.</p> <p>Intercultural aspects could play an important role. Mediation can also be necessary within a particular (single) language, i.e. summarizing and paraphrasing a scientific (technical, specialized) text for lay persons.</p> <p>See: CEFR, § 2.1.3, p.14; § 4.4.4. p. 87</p> <p>See: Lenz P., Berthele R. (2017), <i>Assessment in Plurilingual and Intercultural Education</i>, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, p. 17.</p>
<p>Verbal und nonverbal compensation strategies</p>	<p>Compensation (production) strategies are problem solving strategies used to compensate linguistic deficiencies. The language user applies what resources he/she has in a positive manner.</p> <p>Examples of verbal and non-verbal compensation strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Nonverbal compensation strategies</i>: for example, identifying what he/she means by pointing at it; by using an inadequate word and gesturing to clarify what he/she wants to say. • <i>Verbal compensation strategies</i>: for example, foreignizing a mother tongue word; using a simple word with a similar meaning to the concept he/she wants to convey and then inviting correction; conveying meaning by qualifying a word with a similar meaning; paraphrasing or using circumlocution. <p>See: CEFR, § 4.4.1.3, pp. 63-64.</p>