

Exploring linguistically responsive formative assessment in primary education: a scoping review

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Linguistically responsive assessment practices, such as allowing multilingual pupils to sit content tests in both the school language and their home language, are essential for addressing educational inequity and the achievement gap (Friedman et al., 2020; Melo-Pfeifer & Ollivier, 2023). There is, however, limited understanding of how to incorporate linguistic accommodations into formative assessment. Most research has focused on summative assessment and there is often a lack of attention paid to primary education, where there is a possibly higher proportion of multilingual children using their home languages, who are yet to become fully literate in the school language (Yang, 2020). Moreover, teachers have reported having limited expertise and time for adapting assessment for multilingual pupils (Robinson-Jones & Duarte, 2023). To contribute to improving equity and validity in assessing multilingual pupils, this presentation will provide insights into the key findings of a scoping review of empirical research on linguistically responsive formative content assessment in primary education. Following Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) framework, the initial search resulted in 695 articles, to which the inclusion-exclusion criteria were applied, leaving only six articles that focused on primary education. The analysis of the six studies, categorised under (a) pupils' and (b) teachers' perspectives, explored the research aims, contexts, methods, and outcomes, and how linguistically responsive assessment was operationalised. The review highlights how translanguaging spaces that welcome pupils' home languages can be created in formative assessment through pedagogical translanguaging strategies (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021), and how translanguaging can foster the use of an asset-based lens (i.e. focus on pupils' strengths) in assessment. While pupils perceived these practices positively, concerns about fairness were also expressed. Although the limited studies and exclusive use of qualitative methods may restrict generalisability, the findings offer valuable insights for (primary) education stakeholders, suggesting the importance of further teacher-researcher collaboration to develop these approaches and explore their implementation.

Keywords: multilingual assessment; formative assessment; linguistic responsiveness; primary education; pedagogical translanguaging

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Biography

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