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English-only or Home Language in Testing? Researching Preferences on Home Language Use in Language Assessment in Poland, Georgia and Brazil

Język obcy czy ojczysty w testowaniu?
Badanie preferencji użycia języka ojczystego w ocenie
osiągnięć językowych uczniów w Polsce, Gruzji i Brazylii

Abstract

Between the Grammar Translation Method favouring L1 use and Communicative Language Teaching refraining from it, language teachers have a range of options for the use of L1 and L2. While it is accepted that the target language should dominate instruction, this does not have to be the same in assessment. It is interesting to examine how teachers approach L1 and translation in testing, and how their socially rooted perceptions about testing coincide with their testing practices. The present study investigates the effect of teachers' culture on their attitudes towards home language use in language assessment by a semi-closed questionnaire examining opinions of Polish, Georgian and Brazilian teachers. The undertaken research showed differences in testing habits across cultures; however, at the same time, the effect of globalized teaching methodology is also visible.

Keywords: language assessment, home language, English-only policy, translation

Abstrakt

Nauczyciele języków obcych mają szeroki zakres możliwości wykorzystania języka ojczystego i obcego, z metodą gramatyczno-tłumaczeniową i podejściem komunikacyjnym jako przeciwnymi filozofiami kształcenia językowego. O ile przewaga języka docelowego na lekcji języka obcego jest ugruntowana, nie jest tak samo w przypadku oceniania. Interesującym problemem badawczym jest zatem określenie, jakie jest nastawienie nauczycieli języków obcych do języka ojczystego i tłumaczenia w procesie testowania oraz w jakim stopniu ugruntowane społecznie przekonania dotyczące oceniania wpływają na ich praktykę dydaktyczną. Celem badania było stwierdzenie, jaki wpływ ma kultura pochodzenia nauczyciela na nastawienie do użycia języka ojczystego w testach językowych.

By to sprawdzić, uzyskano opinie studentów – przyszłych nauczycieli oraz aktywnych nauczycieli z Polski, Gruzji i Brazylii przy pomocy półotwartego kwestionariusza. Badanie pokazało z jednej strony uwarunkowane kulturowo różnice w podejściu do języka ojczystego, z drugiej – wpływ globalizacji na ugruntowanie jednolitych praktyk edukacyjnych.

Słowa kluczowe: ocenianie językowe, język ojczysty, mediacja językowa, tłumaczenie

Introduction

Once the Communicative Approach became firmly established in English language teaching throughout the 1980s and 1990s, a frequent practice of using only the target language in language assessment developed (Richards and Rodgers 2002). Growing dissatisfaction with Grammar Translation Method contributed to reducing the role of the home language in assessment instruments (Larsen-Freeman 2000). While quite a few national language examinations used to offer task instructions in home language, only some (e.g., Polish Matura before 1999) included some ‘use of English’ tasks which incorporated L1 in assessment.

The climate towards mother tongue use in language assessment started to change in the 2000s, with the 2018 publication of Companion Volume to Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR CV, Council of Europe 2018/2020). Within CEFR CV, home languages gained a much stronger position than before, with mediation across and between languages as important components of foreign language competence. The development of scales for interlingual mediation was followed by the inclusion of interlingual mediation tasks in many high-stakes exams in the following years. One such example is the Polish matriculation examination (*Matura*), which in its current format includes several mediation tasks in the reading comprehension section. Since the introduction of external Matura in the 2001/2002 school year various attempts to focus on text mediation have been visible in the listening and reading comprehension sections. Some reports (e.g., Paczuska et al. 2014) evidenced the use of English-Polish vocabulary tests even before explicit focus on mediation was emphasized in the CEFR Companion Volume.

This already complicated picture got even more complex due to the COVID-19 school lockdowns, which forced teachers to quickly find emergency testing solutions. As one of our previous studies showed (Krajka 2021), many went for online quizzing tools such as Duolingo, Quizlet, Bamboozle or Learning Apps, which, to a large extent, tap into equivalence and inter-

lingual transfer in their task design. This resulted in a revival of translation tasks in tests created by many teachers during the COVID-19 emergency teaching.

The article aims at verifying the claim that the socio-cultural-political context of language instruction will influence the preferences towards home language use in individual assessment practices and that language assessment practices are strongly culturally-embedded. The awareness of the effect of culture on teachers' assessment habits is essential for planning teacher development and setting national standards for teacher assessment. To verify these assumptions, questionnaire data from teacher trainees and language teachers from Poland, Georgia and Brazil will be analyzed.

Literature Review

Home Language Use in Language Teaching across Centuries and Cultures – From Grammar Translation Method to CEFR Companion Volume

Together with changing understanding and acceptance of the role of accuracy in language acquisition, home language use and translation have triggered diverse attitudes. On the one hand, dominating L1 usage in Grammar Translation Method was inspired by literature studies in those times when the primary source of language input were works of literature. According to Richards and Rodgers (2002), instructional objectives in GTM would be accomplished by studying grammar rules and paradigms, translating sentences and texts from L2 to L1, understanding and manipulating the morphology and syntax of the target language. While texts were the major vehicle for presentation of selected structures, they served mainly an illustrative purpose to expose patterns and put them into use by translation to and from the students' home language. Thus, students' native language was utilized as a medium of instruction to explain grammatical rules, translate across languages and draw comparisons between L1 and L2 and vice versa (Larsen-Freeman 2000). The study of words was followed by prescribed translation exercises, practising a given grammatical point with the use of structures and vocabulary from the text (Mackey 1965). In a similar vein language assessment was conducted – selected skills of reading, writing and translation were used to check students' mastery of particular structures by manipulation of single words, phrases, sentences from their native language to the target language and vice versa.

On the other extreme of the L1–L2 usage scale, one could see the Communicative Approach (CA) with its various forms (“deep-end” CLT, Task-Based Teaching, Lexical Approach – Lewis 1993; Richards and Rodgers 2002), where L1 use was either discouraged or even banned from teaching and testing. Since CA in its strong version aimed at developing learners’ communicative competence and at introducing procedures for the teaching of all language skills, over-emphasis on correctness, equivalence and analysis of linguistic structures together with home language use would obstruct development of L2 competence (Komorowska and Krajka 2020).

In the contemporary multilingual world, according to Cook (2007), there are good reasons for language instruction to use a plurilingual approach which awareness of the significance of home language and skilful use of translation and translanguaging inevitably lead to (Cook 2007). Such a plurilingual approach is a cornerstone for hope for peace and cooperation, an aesthetically and intellectually rewarding process in itself, a necessity for immigrant, mixed-language families or professional contexts with bilingual employees. Taking the whole person of a learner into account, forbidding the use of the home language may make learners disempowered, infantilized, frustrated, deprived of their identity and knowledge (Cook 2007). At the same time, a ban on translation and L1 use in ELT classrooms is often political, according to Cook (2007), with monolingual teaching augmenting the authority of the native speaker, the foreign expert and the English language publisher, thus reinforcing linguistic imperialism and “English-only Europe” (Phillipson 2000).

Multilingual practices, including home language use, translation and translanguaging, do bring significant benefits to language learning. According to Leonardi (2010), the use of translation in language classes is “a means to help learners acquire, develop and further strengthen their knowledge and competence in a foreign language” (p. 17). Nowadays, the phenomenon of ‘pedagogical translanguaging’ (Cenoz and Gorter 2020) is gaining ground, also due to the absence of negative connotations drawn from GTM (Komorowska and Krajka 2020).

Given the cross-cultural nature of the current study, it is interesting to analyze research findings regarding the use of L1, translation and translanguaging from different countries. For Chinese teachers and learners (de Jong & Zhang 2021), the use of home language was seen as helpful and important when teachers wanted to set high expectations, be more efficient in their language instruction, and enhance access to content learning in their classroom. ELT teachers used the Chinese language for classroom management, attracting learners’ attention, indicating transitions, enhancing

interaction and relationships, establishing rapport, showing humor and encouraging participation and talk. Very far from one another, Ecuadorian (Payne & Contreras 2019) and Iraqi researchers (Galali & Cinkara 2017) similarly reported teachers' and students' preferences for occasional use of L1 in language instruction, particularly with low-level language learners for it helps them to understand the language better, improves the learning environment, learners' academic performance and motivation. Very similar findings are reported about Saudi Arabia by Almohaimeed and Almurshed (2018), who noticed that natural and judicious use of L1 helps learners keep their self-esteem and self-image intact and brings their Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety down.

Some studies report clashing attitudes towards "English-only" or "judicious L1" policies. As reported by Shirvan et al. (2015) and Debreli (2016), Irani and Turkish ELT teachers respectively have numerous reasons to use L1 in their classes, however, they are often even forbidden to use their home language (HL) mainly due to the sociohistorical legacy and the norms of the institutions they are working for. These reasons for preferred HL use are confirmed by Sa'd and Qadermazi (2015), who conclude that Iranian elementary EFL learners and teachers generally have a positive attitude toward the role and use of L1, with the majority preferring its limited and judicious application. However, the clash between facilitating and debilitating effects of using HL in the Turkish classroom was also described by Kayaoglu et al. (2010), with mother tongue reported by learners as a double-edged sword, both help and hindrance.

It is difficult to attribute the attitudes and preferences for home language in ELT to a particular culture, as evidenced by a comparison of Indonesian (Resmini 2019) and Thai (Wangdi & Shimray 2022) research. In the former case, the study reported students' negative perceptions towards the teacher's use of L1 in the English classroom, in the latter, learners perceived the use of L1 in English language instruction as beneficial, felt less anxious, bored and stressed in the classroom where English language teachers speak their L1. Still, while translation itself may be regarded as obsolete and evoke negative connotations for many learners and stakeholders, translanguaging as learners' ability to access different linguistic features and draw from their rich linguistic repertoire to make meaning should be given greater consideration (Rahman et al. 2018). Hence, translingual pedagogy that takes place in multilingual educational settings might, on the one hand, deviate from orthodox deep-end CLT assumptions, and, on the other, be more realistic in enabling learners to allow a hybridized version of their language production during task accomplishment (Nagy 2018).

In-class English Language Assessment across Cultures

Studies conducted in diverse cultural contexts in many cases report upon predominant focus on assessment of (rather than for) learning, close-ended and discrete-items activities, tapping into learners' knowledge of language items rather than their performance within communicative abilities. Since learners might be assessed on their knowledge with a preference for memorisation (e.g., in Pakistan – Unis & Noureen 2022), there is not enough focus on skills development. Language testing may fail to sufficiently motivate students, be more summative than formative, provide insufficient feedback or even be used unethically for purposes other than originally intended (Colombia – Mendoza & Arandia 2009).

Despite great efforts to implement communicative, global and skill-based testing, individual teachers might have found that implementation challenging, reporting a gap between the principles of (communicative) assessment embedded in the curriculum and the actual classroom practices (e.g., for Bangladesh by Islam et al. 2021). This clash has particularly severe consequences for 'test-driven' educational systems (e.g., Bangladesh or South Korea – Yook 2010), where the social impact of the examination performance goes very much beyond the usual entrance to the next educational level. Typical tasks of matching, true/false, short answer questions, short composition, fill in the blanks with the given clues, letter writing, rearranging words to make sentences, and filling in forms with information demonstrate the traditional approach to assessment focusing on discrete test items (Islam et al. 2021). At times, as is reported for South Korea, the dominant philosophy of Confucianism, which reveres the value of education, permeates society and dominates the educational system (Śleziak 2013), may put communicative testing into question. The demands from the Korean government to implement a communicative approach contrast with the sociocultural needs of learners and parents' expectations about the CSAT examination. The negative effect of the examination, perception of its excessive difficulty and public pressure to implement change about it led the South Korean Ministry of Education to introduce a new formula for 2028 and reduce the scope of subjects (Park 2023).

Teacher classroom assessment should be in line with national testing policies and systems, hence studies reporting negative attitudes of teachers towards language assessment, rare use of alternative and formative ways of assessment, their overreliance on ready-made test tools rather than producing their customized ones, inadequate language assessment literacy and insufficient training in complying with fundamental test principles

such as validity, reliability and feedback have to be confronted with those which consider nationwide assessment practices in different parts of the globe (the Philippines – Plata 2013; Malaysia – Ch'ng & Rethinasamy 2013; Hong Kong – Berry 2011; Slovenia – Brumen et al. 2005; Japan – Gonzales & Aliponga 2011; Sasaki 2008; Thailand – Prapphal 2008; Malaysia – Lay Ong 2010; Colombia – Armstrong et al. 2004). Almost all of these report a clash with the predominant teaching philosophy of the Communicative Approach. Few report “soft” assessment, naturalistic and alternative in nature, with predominant focus on “hard” testing, oriented at product rather than process and yielding quantitative data through exams and tests (Armstrong et al. 2004). Notable exceptions, such as New Zealand’s assessment reform with equal weighting of all four skills, concentrate on communicative and authentic language tasks, assessment of spoken interaction, collection of students’ spoken and written output and student selection of evidence guided by teachers in a language portfolio (East and Scott 2011).

The overview above leads to a conclusion that even though predominantly promoted in international policies, communicative and task-based methodologies might be at different stages of adoption, with some countries already leaning towards more balanced approaches, while others still residing in the English-only paradigm strongly focused on grammatical structures and translation (Glonty 2010).

Materials and Methods

The Aim of the Study

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the preferences of teachers from different countries towards home language use in assessment practices. Since language assessment is strongly influenced by societal attitudes towards home and target language, one might expect notable differences between the preferences of teachers from disparate countries despite being trained in same communicative methodology.

The aims were operationalized through the following research questions:

1. What are the attitudes of teachers from Poland, Georgia and Brazil towards the use of mother tongue in language assessment (both in-class and at the national level)?
2. Do they perceive translation as a valid task in written language tests in both contexts?
3. How do they perceive tasks demanding home language use from selected external examinations?

Participating Countries

Given the cross-cultural dimension of the study, the selection of participating countries was fundamental as the participants needed to display a range of expected differences in the attitudes towards L1/L2 use in assessment and ways of conducting language testing, yet the cultures teachers came from needed to have common points for the comparison to be valid. The three countries of Poland, Georgia and Brazil were selected for analysis – in all the three English has a high appreciation, all are Expanding Circle countries in Kachruvian terms, use English as a foreign language model and see Communicative Language Teaching as the target language teaching method, though with some country-specific variations (Paczuska et al. 2014; Kasztalska and Swatek 2024; Bohn 2003; Glonty 2010). However, since Brazil is more multilingual than the other two, despite the increasing demand for English as an international language, the lack of national language policy makes it more difficult to encompass a growing public demand for the maintenance of local identities associated with local languages (Bohn 2003). On the other hand, Georgia differs from the two in that the explicit focus on grammatical structure is still prevailing despite the many years of the country's attempts to establish a stronger communicative orientation (Glonty, 2010).

Sampling

While specific countries were selected based on the criteria above, the method of cluster sampling (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2017) was adopted in the study. In cluster sampling, particular cases are chosen as clusters in which participants can be conveniently located, and the subsequent selection of participants takes place inside the clusters.

In the case of the current research, it was important to select instructional contexts that would share common features – mainly in terms of dominating teaching philosophy. For that purpose, 2 universities in Poland, 3 universities in Georgia and 2 universities in Brazil were selected. Based on professional contacts of the researcher, predominant communicative training philosophy was ensured in all the institutions.

Respondents were sought in three groups: academic trainers, school teachers and ELT student teachers. Attempts were made to reach a comparable number of respondents for all three contexts, with a minimum of 30 responses for each. The participants were free to participate in the

research and withdraw at any stage with no consequences. They were assured of the aims of the study, full anonymity and non-maleficence of participation.

Eventually, the sample consisted of 73 respondents from the three countries, with Poland (43 respondents in total) represented by 6 teacher trainers, 16 student teachers and 21 pedagogy students. Brazil was represented by 9 teachers only. The Georgian subsample (27 participants) was slightly more complex as it was composed of 5 teacher trainers, 4 school principals or school subject leaders, 2 student teachers and 16 teachers. Due to small numbers of participants in the subgroups, the study's generalizability is limited and its results should be taken with necessary caution. Especially the Brazilian perspective turned out to be strongly underrepresented, despite the researcher's efforts to increase the number of participating teachers.

Design and Procedure

The study adopted a mixed-method design, with the questionnaire tool merging a quantitative approach (Likert-scale descriptors) with a qualitative aspect (three test tasks prompting reflection). The instrument was a self-prepared close-ended and semi-open questionnaire subdivided into four sections:

- I. basic socio-demographic data;
- II. attitudes towards the use of L1/L2 and translation in teaching and assessment elicited through Likert-scale statements:
 1. Tests should not use translation tasks as this reinforces students' expectations of one-to-one correspondence between languages.
 2. Instructions in tests should be given only in L1 in order not to provide lexical assistance to students.
 3. Tasks in tests should encourage students to be correct and precise, understanding every single word.
 4. Rather than focusing on particular words, students' skills to summarise and describe should be practised and tested.
 5. An important skill to be tested is understanding a message in a foreign language and putting it into one's words in mother tongue.
 6. Students should be encouraged to conduct self-assessment in their mother tongue to make it easier for them to understand and assess themselves objectively.
 7. Online quizzes based on giving equivalents (e.g., Duolingo or Quizlet) should be promoted for students' self-study as a useful way of testing vocabulary.

8. L1 should be avoided at all costs because learners make mistakes due to native language patterns transferred to L2.
 9. Translating is a useful exercise for tests as it shows learners' meta-linguistic awareness and higher-level thinking skills.
 10. Contemporary communicative methodology, which assumes throwing students at the deep end with L2-only input, is not appropriate for younger and lower-level students in my country.
 11. Second language competence is built through relating target language structures to the first language system.
 12. Finding and correcting errors in sentences is an inappropriate task for language tests, as differences between the two languages are not always the source of problems to the same extent.
 13. Some learners, especially adult and more analytically-oriented ones, could benefit from translation as a way of making input more comprehensible and giving them a sense of security.
 14. Grammar Translation Method, which assumed studying grammar rules and paradigms, translating sentences and texts from L2 to L1, understanding and manipulating L2 forms is rather unappealing for adolescent learners in my country.
 15. Since language exams in my country require accuracy, bringing L1 into grammar teaching and testing is the best way to achieve it.
- III. responding to selected testing tasks from other cultures that use the home language in English language testing;
- IV. encouraging personal responses on using home language in alternative assessment and post-COVID digital assessment in one's school reality.
- The broader scope of the Likert statements used in the tool (encompassing both teaching and assessment) was supposed to approach the phenomenon studied from a more comprehensive perspective, having in mind that testing and assessment also impact teaching (washback).

To prepare the questionnaire, secondary school-leaving examinations from numerous countries were browsed to arrive at 3 tasks that were used as prompts in Section 3: a multiple-choice translation task from the Turkish LYS examination, an interlingual formal-informal text mediation task from the Polish Eighth-Grader examination and an interlingual multiple-choice gap-filling task from the Polish Matura examination. Since the tool used multilingual tasks with instructions in English and data in English as well as the native languages (Turkish and Polish), the respondents were suggested to use Google Translate to understand language data used in tasks.

Data were collected between December 2022 and March 2023 via online questionnaires, then duly collated and processed. Before tool administration,

the researcher sought permission from the institute's management responsible for approval of ethics of conducted research.

Results and Discussion

As regards cross-country comparison of attitudes towards Home Language vs. English-only policies in language assessment, Polish and Georgian respondents were relatively similar in their rating of particular descriptors, with a similar mean of around 3.20 and a similar SD of around 1.15 (see Figure 1 below for exact data). On the other hand, Brazilian respondents collectively disagreed to a greater extent with the descriptor items ($M=2.80$, $SD=1.00$).

Greater variation (around 1.0 points) was observed in response to "Tests should not use translation tasks as this reinforces students' expectations of one-to-one correspondence between languages" and "Contemporary communicative methodology, which assumes throwing students at the deep end with L2-only input, is not appropriate for younger and lower-level students in my country". This seems to indicate that attitudes towards translation as a beneficial or harmful activity in language instruction do vary, perhaps because of differences in exposure to English in Georgia vs. Poland.

Much greater variability (of as many as 2 points) was observed for "Tasks in tests should encourage students to be correct and precise, understanding every single word" and "L1 should be avoided at all costs because learners make mistakes due to native language patterns transferred to L2". Apparently, for Brazilian respondents, absolute correctness, word-for-word understanding and L1 avoidance were highly unacceptable (average ratings of 1.88 and 1.38 respectively), while the other two countries were more moderate in that respect. Specific figures for particular countries can be found in Figure 1 below.

On the whole, despite geographical and cultural distance between Polish, Brazilian and Georgian participants, quantitative analysis of respondents' attitudes towards most descriptors leads to an assumption that the groups were relatively similar in their judgment of particular descriptors.

A similar conclusion can be drawn when one divides the pool of respondents according to the educational role. Most items received a roughly similar rating, with the variability up to 0.5 points, except for Items 1, 3 and 8, which saw the greatest disparity of opinions. Trainee teachers were generally most positive about the three controversial statements (Items 1, 3 and 8), while students disagreed to the greatest extent. This might indicate that

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
POL MEAN	2.97	2.16	2.92	3.78	3.65	3.16	4.19	2.62	3.35	3.32	3.00	2.92	3.70	3.30	2.92
POL SD	1.26	1.17	1.28	1.11	1.21	1.07	1.15	1.09	1.16	1.11	1.03	1.26	1.15	1.13	1.16
BRA MEAN	3.00	2.63	1.88	4.00	3.63	3.00	3.50	1.38	2.38	2.38	2.63	2.75	3.25	3.50	2.13
BRA SD	0.53	1.19	1.13	0.76	1.19	1.51	1.31	0.74	0.92	0.52	0.92	1.28	1.16	1.07	0.83
GEO MEAN	3.93	3.07	3.78	4.07	3.30	3.00	3.78	3.59	2.56	2.85	2.96	2.78	2.96	3.59	2.59
GEO SD	1.17	1.47	1.28	0.96	1.32	1.07	1.15	1.19	1.22	1.20	1.16	1.19	1.19	1.05	1.25

Fig. 1. Means and standard deviations of responses to particular descriptors (country-wise)

the trainee teachers, educated through globalized methodology assumptions, were eager to apply them regardless of country-specific expectations, while in the case of pedagogy students, societal influence might have a greater impact on the perception of HL and translation in assessment tasks.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
STUD MEAN	2.88	2.18	3.03	3.76	3.74	3.21	4.12	2.65	3.35	3.26	3.15	2.85	3.59	3.15	2.91
STUD SD	1.23	1.14	1.27	1.07	1.19	1.04	1.20	1.12	1.15	1.08	0.89	1.23	1.13	1.08	1.19
TEACH MEAN	3.42	2.65	2.96	4.00	3.23	3.00	3.73	2.85	2.54	2.88	2.73	2.73	3.12	3.62	2.62
TEACH SD	1.17	1.41	1.40	1.02	1.27	1.23	1.15	1.41	1.21	1.21	1.28	1.22	1.31	0.98	1.17
TRAIN MEAN	4.50	3.00	4.00	4.33	3.17	2.50	4.33	4.00	2.67	2.67	2.50	3.33	3.17	4.00	2.17
TRAIN SD	0.55	1.67	1.55	1.03	1.72	1.05	1.21	1.10	1.03	1.37	1.22	1.37	1.33	1.26	0.98

Fig. 2. Means and standard deviations of responses to particular descriptors (educational role-wise)

In the second part of the study, despite differences in structure, all three tasks sparked rather disparate reactions from respondents, both on the positive and the negative side. Most negative reactions were triggered by the LYS task (“Read the main sentence in L1 and choose one out of five in L2 which is closest in meaning”), where choosing out of sets of isolated and decontextualized sentences was generally perceived as inappropriate and unnecessary (30% of Brazilian respondents, 3 out of 9; 63% of Polish

respondents, 27 out of 43). However, some Polish respondents thought that matching sentence translations would be useful with secondary students, claiming that “[...] they check deep understanding of the sentences”. Brazilian respondents were much more in favour of the LYS task: “Rather than focusing on vocabulary, students’ skills to comprehend the meaning are tested”, with 2 remarks noting its appropriacy in testing comprehension. Finally, Georgian participants were most in favour of this kind of task, with only 18% (5 out of 27 respondents) criticizing it as inappropriate, confusing or even useless. A number of positive comments (moderately or strongly) were recorded, e.g., “This kind of task is very common as a second language learning activity in my country, thus I would not be surprised or confused if I saw this exercise in my test. I would say, this is a socially-accepted activity among L2 learners because it makes the learner think of different ways to express the same meaning of a sentence with different vocabulary and grammar”. Thus, an almost exactly reversed pattern can be noticed in the preferences of Polish vs. Georgian teachers – a similar number of teachers were negative in the former while positive in the latter.

The second input task, “Read the text in English, then complete the dialogue in your mother tongue given on the right using information from the text” encountered generally negative responses (more than half of the Georgian sample; one-third of both the Polish sample and the Brazilian sample), though roughly the same number of Polish and Brazilian participants appreciated its activation of both languages and interlingual transfer. The Polish respondents recognized the task from their primary school-leaving examination and felt more positive about it.

Quite surprisingly, those Polish respondents who were against this interlingual mediation activity termed it as ‘old-fashioned’ or ‘obsolete’. This is a somewhat astonishing finding, as the task is strongly rooted in the revised CEFR, and the new examination format based on mediation has been strongly promoted, especially at the school level.

The third input task, “For Polish words in brackets, choose one English form which is most accurate” (Polish Matura) encountered a similar reaction in the Georgian and the Brazilian sub-samples (30% positive comments, 30% negative comments, with 20% of blank answers or reports of illegible text), with respondents stressing its usefulness in developing accuracy and grammatical awareness, however, de-emphasising communicative competence at the same time. It seems that since this is a more traditional task that had been in use for several years as a legacy of Grammar Translation Method, its social acceptance is much greater. This was especially true in the Polish

sub-sample (understandably, Polish respondents were most familiar with that kind of task), where 60% were positive or highly positive, only around 20% negative, while the remaining 20% reported legibility problems or gave no response.

Final Conclusions

The socio-cultural context in which language instruction is taking place does have a considerable influence on preferences towards the choice of methods and tasks for language assessment. At the same time, especially in terms of the latter, economically underprivileged societies and countries might be encouraged to adopt globalized assessment approaches rather than be free to develop their locally-justified tools. One solution to this dilemma can be glocal testing, which uses the knowledge and responds to standards developed through international proficiency testing, together with tasks utilizing Home Language.

The use of Home Language in English language assessment raises conflicting opinions even among teachers educated within the same communicative methodology. The research shows that attitudes towards translation and interlingual mediation and preferences towards their use in testing vary across the globe – selected tasks from locally produced exams with heavy use of HL triggered negative reactions in all the three countries, though to a varying degree. Thus, despite current orientation on mediation, much time and effort are needed for translanguaging and interlingual mediation to be universally accepted in language tests.

Despite certain interesting preliminary results, the study has its limitations. While the Polish and Georgian sub-groups were close to the target number of 30 participants (37 and 27 respectively), only 8 Brazilian teachers took part in the study. The Polish and Georgian sub-samples also showed some internal variability (more student teachers in the Polish sub-group, more experienced teachers in the Georgian one).

Finally, even though the input tasks had instructions and most items in English and the participants were advised to use Google Translate when needing translation of items, around 20% of respondents in each group reported misunderstanding or incomplete comprehension. To remedy this, input tasks from international examinations would have to be fully translated into English, at the expense of authenticity.

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