EULALIA

European Latin Linguistic Assessment

Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership for Higher Education (2019-2022)

(2019-1-IT02-KA203-062286)

https://site.unibo.it/eulalia/en

O3: European Latin Language Certification – Advanced Level Methodological and Pedagogical tools, Multimedia Practical Tools

GUIDELINES

(English Version: 30.09.2022)

ADVANCED LEVEL GUIDELINES

OVERVIEW

EULALIA proposes a certification of linguistic competences in Latin modelled, in general terms, on the CEFR, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Given the numerous teaching traditions, methods and study plans that are used across Europe and the entire world to encourage the learning of Latin (a training itinerary that still involves millions of people), we believe it is worthwhile to provide a framework of reference that can focus on linguistic competences. Therefore, we hope that our proposal might be understood as a valid instrument to favour exchange and dialogue among teaching environments that, although different, share the same purpose: to promote the learning of a language with a well-known and important cultural value.

Thus, the Latin language, which, as such, is unquestionably comparable to modern languages, despite its undeniable and perfectly noticeable differences, is at the heart of our proposal. The clearest difference is that Latin has not been used as a language for communication in open environments for a long time. For most of its learners, the use of this language is basically linked to the reading and interpretation of texts that have been regarded for centuries as the bearers of a cultural tradition that, especially in Europe, is part of our history and therefore keeps raising new questions. Consequently, they are mostly complex texts that require adequate teaching methods that are sometimes different from those traditionally used for modern languages.

Above all, we regard Latin as a language of culture and not only a tool for daily communication. In other words, although we have a keen interest in learning how life in ancient times was conducted, we are aware that this knowledge must be largely acquired from the texts that have reached our days and that it lies in the words that we have inherited in the languages we currently express ourselves in.

Because of this, the first purpose of the EULALIA certification is to assess reading skills in relation to texts that are part of our cultural tradition. However, it does not disregard the importance of the originally interactive function of Latin, hence the (preferred) choice of monolingualism and the proposal of exercises that also test certain language production skills. Regarding reading skills, EULALIA moves away from traditional translation-based methodologies to assess instead overall (and gradually more detailed) understanding of the Latin text. From this point of view, the clear separation between the assessment of Latin language skills and the assessment of target language skills makes EULALIA particularly useful in cases of multilingual student groups (see § 2.2). The attention paid to comprehension skills is also expressed in the use of tools that focus on hearing, by proposing audio versions of certain stimuli so that the understanding of the oral text may accompany that of the written text. This encourages the use of EULALIA in the case of visually impaired students.

The acquisition (and, therefore, assessment) of linguistic competences is gradual; thus, EULALIA is structured into two levels (Basic Level and Advanced Level), each of them with its own curriculum (for the Basic Level, see *infra* § 4).

Hence, EULALIA is suggested as a useful tool to integrate and, hopefully, streamline the numerous curricula that already exist. Its purpose is not to replace them, but, if anything, to create a channel of communication and promote beneficial exchanges for their common goal: knowledge of the Latin language.

EULALIA is not intended as a teaching method, but as an assessment tool. Our aim is not to promote a new method for the teaching of Latin, but only a way to measure and, therefore, assess specific competences in Latin. This is why the metalinguistic terminology of our certification tests is simplified and follows the internal categories of Latin as closely as possible, in such a way that students who have acquired their reading and linguistic analysis skills following different methods may understand it.

ADVANCED LEVEL GUIDELINES

1. Competences that are subject to certification

The EULALIA certification for the Advanced Level accredits three types of competences: (1) comprehension competences, (2) production competences, and (3) translation competences.

1.1. Comprehension competences

The comprehension skills already indicated for the Basic Level are applied to more complex texts at the Advanced Level (B). At the Advanced Level, therefore, the ability to orientate oneself in the comprehension of an original Latin text is required (cf. section 3), understood as both the comprehension of the meanings of the text and the ability to decode those surface morphosyntactic structures or signifiers which must be understood in order to access the meaning of the text. At this level, comprehension is assumed to be such as to grasp not only the broad outline of the text but also particularly significant details. For example, in texts of particular literary complexity, comprehension may include the identification of rhetorical and stylistic structures which condition meaning, such as metaphor, metonymy, personification, litotes and irony: in general, those figures in which the 'letter' of the text does not correspond to the meaning.

This ability to grasp the general outline of the text and the most significant details remains, however, a partial understanding; full understanding of the text, on the other hand, will be verified through the exercise of translation, which requires a highly accurate reproduction of the meaning of the source text in the target language (1.3.).

1.2. Production competences

Production skills at the Advanced Level (B) are limited to the appropriate use of the morphosyntactic structures indicated in the Advanced Level syllabus. This verifies full mastery of the standard structures that usually appear in an original Latin text characterised by a medium-high level of complexity.

1.3. Translation competences

As far as translation is concerned, our starting assumption is that it is a complex, cross-linguistic competence: translating a text with a highly articulated structure and almost always characterised by a marked level of literariness, such as that found in the Latin texts used for the certification tests, implies not only a good understanding of the source text but also an even higher production capacity in the target language.

To guide us in assessing this hybrid competence, we considered previous translation certification experiences related to modern languages: in particular, the Erasmus plus Petra-E project (https://petra-

educationframework.eu/) seemed an interesting point of reference, since it focused, as in our case, on the translation of literary texts. According to this model, in order to tackle the translation of a literary text, the minimum level of knowledge of the source language is B2 and that of the target language is C1. For our part, we tried to reconcile this model with the peculiarities of Latin translation, which presents some important differences as compared to how it is practised in modern language teaching. Firstly, it is based on literary texts which, in order to be adequately translated, require a good command of the formal language in L1, as well as the ability to orientate oneself, at least roughly, in the literary culture of which the source text is an expression; moreover, translation from Latin is a deeply rooted and highly valued teaching practice in several countries and is considered crucial for achieving the profound ability to interpret texts that is associated with the teaching of ancient languages and which is still one of the most highly valued transversal competences to which this genre of study gives access.

1.3.1. Translation and Latin language competence

Taking into account the specificities of Latin language teaching, where the reading of literary texts takes place at a fairly early stage of the curriculum, it seemed appropriate to lower the language skills required for a translation test to level B1: it is assumed that at this level students, used to dealing with literary texts in the early stages of their studies, already have enough reading experience to grasp the literary nature of the source text.

However, a learner with B1-level proficiency in the source language of translation (Latin) may not yet have C-level proficiency in the target language (the L1 in which the translation is usually produced).

In the EULALIA tests, therefore, translation competence is assessed at B level (both B1 and B2), but in a specific and separate section of the test, which can only be accessed after having completed the section focusing exclusively on Latin language skills.

At B1 and B2 levels, it will therefore be possible to obtain a certification of comprehension and production skills and a certification of translation skills separately (see section 6).

As the first part of the B1 and B2 tests focuses on comprehension skills, which also include knowledge of vocabulary specific to Level B, dictionary consultation is not allowed during this first section of the test. By contrast, during the second part of the test, which focuses on translation skills, the use of bilingual dictionaries is allowed. This choice is intended to encourage a specific and conscious use of the dictionary, which is an essential competence for beginning literary translators. The student taking the

translation test, after having developed his or her own interpretation of the text in the first part of the test (already completed and delivered), can use the dictionary to carefully choose the translations he or she considers most appropriate for his or her interpretation.

The structure of the EULALIA test reflects a teaching practice based on the awareness that knowledge of the Latin language and the skills associated with translating from Latin can (and in some cases must) be practised and checked separately. Poor translation skills do not preclude the ability to understand a Latin text at B1 and B2 levels; on the contrary, adequate translation skills are assumed to include the ability to understand a Latin text at B1 and B2 levels.

1.3.2. Translation and competence in the target language

The translation of a text always requires a higher level of competence in the target language than in the source language; this is all the more true when the source text is a literary text and therefore particularly complex. Hence, translation from Latin requires a high level (at least C1) in the target language. Translation competence, in fact, also manifests itself in the ability to produce a text characterised by coherence and cohesion, which complies with the spelling and morphosyntactic correctness rules of the target language and a sufficiently adequate vocabulary. The use of translations, which is almost inevitable in school contexts, is tolerated as long as it does not compromise comprehension of the target text.

2. Knowledge and competences that are not subject to certification

Even at the Advanced Level, the skills measured in our tests are of a strictly linguistic nature: historical and cultural, or even literary, knowledge of the context in which the Latin texts are set is not directly assessed, but it is an important prerequisite for understanding the text. Naturally, in cases where the text contains cultural references which cannot be deduced from knowledge of the required vocabulary, paratexts will be provided (short summaries, glosses and, in some cases, images) to supply the necessary indications to guide comprehension. Otherwise, it is assumed that knowledge of vocabulary includes the ability to orientate oneself in the culture of reference.

For example, the exercises do not include questions such as: "What were the functions of the consuls in Rome?" (unless the text presented proposes a precise definition of the functions of the consul). Rather, it is assumed that knowledge of the term consul implies knowledge, at least in general terms, of the function of this magistrate.

Thus, on a strictly linguistic level the test is limited to examining the surface structures or signifiers that must be understood in order to gain access to the meaning of the text: there are no questions of a theoretical nature concerning, for example, phonology, the formation or etymology of lexemes, metrics, history of the language. We are aware that many of these aspects are of considerable importance in school and university teaching practice and that, unquestionably, knowing them enables a fuller and more thorough understanding of the linguistic paradigm. For this very reason, the EULALIA model's workbood provides valid tools to also enhance some of this knowledge. However, for the purposes of the EULALIA certification, this knowledge is not directly certified; therefore, by analogy with modern languages, the certification test insists on the understanding of the meaning of the text, and the decoding of the signifiers is only required if it is strictly functional for the understanding of the meaning.

3. Texts that are subject to certification

The certification provided by EULALIA assesses the capacity to manage the reading of a short original text. The focus is placed on the understanding of the text rather than on the morphosyntactic decoding of isolated structures or more or less complex random isolated sentences, firmly believing that the purpose of knowledge and/or command of the most technical aspects of the Latin language is the most thorough and autonomous possible access to the Latin texts that are the basis of a large part of Europe's cultural tradition.

An "original" text is understood as one born in contexts where Latin was actively used for the purpose of giving life to a culturally significant way of communication. Thus, the Latin texts that are used for the certification test are not necessarily related to the classical canon of ancient authors but might also belong to different stages throughout the long history of the Latin language.

A fundamental characteristic is that the difficulty of the text used for the certification test matches the level: it must, in the first place, be a text which is comprehensible (cf. section 1.1) for those who have an advanced (B1) or already completed (B2) knowledge of the standard forms of Latin and, in particular, of the vocabulary and programmes specific to the Advanced Level. As far as possible, preference will be given to particularly coherent texts that are therefore self-sufficient and effective in communication. It is important that those who are confronted with these texts perceive their nature as communicative acts and are driven to extract their meaning through a process of comprehension in which the analysis of formal structures is closely integrated with that of the meanings expressed by these structures. In order to facilitate the pleasure of reading the text, minimal adaptations and cuts are allowed, but the most

significant addition is that of monolingual glosses which, without suppressing the more complex parts of the text, can explain its meaning.

4. The B sub-levels: B1 and B2

The Advanced Level certification is divided into two sub-levels: B1 and B2.

The difference between levels B1 and B2 lies mainly in the different complexity of the text on which the test is based. Indicators of this difference are: 1) the different breadth of the syllabus and vocabulary required for each level; 2) the complexity of the exercises proposed, both in the comprehension and translation parts. For example, the exercises at level B2 include comprehension questions that analyse more specific details than those focused on at level B1; the part of the text to be translated at level B1 is shorter than at B2 and/or presents fewer translation difficulties in the target language.

5.   Monolingualism

Latin is, as far as possible, the metalinguistic foundation of EULALIA. This decision stems from the need to align, where possible, the certification of Latin with that of modern languages, strengthening in students the idea that even today Latin still has a communicative function and can be used for interaction (although in a closed environment and limited to specific situations, one of them being, precisely, the certification).

Likewise, limiting the metalinguistic use of L1 or of a vehicular language such as English consolidates the idea, which is especially important for beginners, that the certification is focused on competences in the Latin language. During the pilot tests that we have given to students whose mother tongue was different from the instruction language, this aspect has proved especially motivating.

Nonetheless, the use of Latin as a metalanguage is not complete; Latin is used to build the initial exegetical foundation for the original text. This exegetical foundation includes the title and brief summaries that precede the text, the annotations that accompany it to explain terms or phrases that do not refer to the basic vocabulary or syllabus (sometimes pictures may be used as an alternative to Latin), as well as the paraphrases that are the basis of some exercises.

On the other hand, the use of Latin as the metalanguage for the exercises that require morphosyntactic analysis has not been considered appropriate. Although it is true that Latin has its own categories to

describe its morphosyntactic structures, they are not normally used in teaching. Hence, in this specific case, we have preferred to choose L1.

6. The Tests

To certify competences related to the Advanced Level, EULALIA proposes two types of tests (B1 and B2), each of which is divided into two sections.

The first section (B1 without translation skills/ B2 without translation skills) consists of suitable exercises to certify both the comprehension and production skills described in sections 1 and 2. Comprehension skills, both those related to the meaning of the text and those related to surface structures, are essentially assessed using exercises that involve multiple-choice questions; production skills are assessed using exercises that involve the completion and transformation of syntagms.

The second section (B1 with translation skills /B2 with translation skills) requires the translation of the same text given in the comprehension exercises. Those who only pass the first part of the test will be certified (B1 or B2) "without translation skills", whereas those who also pass the second part of the test will be certified (B1 or B2) "with translation skills". Thus, according to the theoretical assumptions set out in section 1.3.1, obtaining the certification "with translation skills" is not the only possibility.

From a practical point of view, since the use of dictionaries is only allowed in the second part of the test (B1 or B2 with translation skills), this second part will be administered only after the first part has been taken.

Further details on how the tests are administered and assessed are described in the model tests (or in the annexes to the models).

The assessment threshold for B1 and B2 levels without translation skills is set, as an indication, at 75%. This decision is based on the results of experiments carried out in different teaching environments (secondary schools and universities) and different countries.

As far as B1 and B2 levels with translation skills are concerned, establishing a threshold of acceptability is not so simple, since translation is not a closed-response exercise with an unambiguous solution. Defining the threshold requires careful preliminary analyses based on a reliable history of the errors made by candidates when translating the individual text. Each of the partners involved in this project follows a specific translation assessment methodology that is closely linked to their own pedagogical tradition.

Since one of the premises of this project is also to avoid distorting local traditions, rather than identifying a single system, it has been regarded as useful to provide a sample of the repertoires and methods used by each of the partners.

7. The Workbook

In addition to the tests, EULALIA makes available to its users an exercise booklet containing different types of elements that are useful for the development of the competences underlying the tests at different levels. The workbook includes a variety of exercises based on different pedagogical traditions, although not all these types are found in the test. This choice depends on the conviction that exercises that are not particularly useful for measuring the competences to be assessed can, nevertheless, be very useful for developing and reinforcing them.