APATCHE

Adding Plurilingual Approaches to language Teacher Competences in Higher Education

What? Module

Course syllabus

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Table of contents

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Introduction: The fluid concept of plurilingualism in Higher Education

(S. Calvi, K. Dankova, S. Gilardoni, M.V. Lo Presti, L. Sartirana, M.T. Zanola)

In multilingualism and multiculturalism, languages and cultures are considered static entities coexisting in a society, whereas the terms plurilingualism and pluriculturalism refer to the learner's/user's linguistic and cultural repertoire, defined as the set of languages, language varieties and cultures that they master at different levels (Council of Europe 2001; 2020). In this sense, the plurilingual repertoire is constantly evolving and it is influenced by the experiences of each individual. Plurilingual and pluricultural competences are extremely important for nowadays citizens, since they enable them to participate actively in commercial, scientific and cultural exchanges, where several languages and cultures come into contact.

This also applies to Higher Education (HE): in this context, characterised by international mobility and consequently rich in terms of linguistic diversity, plurilingual and pluricultural competences facilitate inclusion. Moreover, using several languages instead of one single *lingua franca* entails a dynamic development of scientific research, taking into account results of studies written in different languages, creating and transferring knowledge to speakers of different languages and cultures (Conceição *et al.* 2018: 130). As far as language learning and teaching in Higher Education is concerned, the role of plurilingual and pluricultural approaches is becoming more and more relevant too: a combination of several languages is appropriate for the development of students' language skills as it facilitates autonomous learning and fosters plurilingual and pluricultural approaches.

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Part 1. Multilingualism and Language Policy in Higher Education

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What is Language Policy and what is its importance?

(S. Calvi, K. Dankova, S. Gilardoni, M.V. Lo Presti, L. Sartirana, M.T. Zanola)

Nowadays, in an increasingly globalised and interconnected society, Language Policy (LP) issues are extremely important for the management of relations at national and international level, imposing ethical challenges on concerns such as democracy and linguistic diversity, language rights and duties, linguistic justice (Oakes, Peled 2017: 1). Moreover, LP has a direct effect on language learning and teaching.

While the literature describes LP in different ways, this concept must be defined precisely in order to understand the importance of its implementation. LP designates any form of decision regarding the use of one or more languages in a given geopolitical and social context. These decisions are taken consciously by a social actor, such as states, governments or other authoritative players who influence language choices (Calvet 2021: 276). The number of these social actors can be reduced exclusively to states, transnational and international organisations, limiting LP to decisions regulated at various legislative levels – local, regional, national, transnational, and international –, in order to establish rules for the official use of languages in different institutional and public contexts (Crawford, Filback 2021). As in the UNESCO definition (2006) that further restricts LP to government decisions (Boyer 2010: 67), LP is the set of choices and goals that a state adopts for language issues, often but not necessarily influenced by difficult and conflicting situations. In HE, LP performs a variety of sometimes mutually contradictory factors, including as facilitator in the internationalisation of HE, as the locus where linguistic diversity is managed, as a set of rules regarding multilingualism in scientific communication (Zanola 2023). LP is therefore a constitutive element of any HE development strategy, both locally and internationally. This is much in evidence with respect to the organizational structures of governance and operation, curricular structures, and educational, pedagogical and scientific practices, including assessment, certification and accreditation.

LP issues in HE appear differently in different contexts, which may be different countries or different settings in the same country. Consideration should also be given to the importance of outcomes for scientific communication, the development of research and its societal impact.

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The three levels of Language Policy

(S. Calvi, K. Dankova, S. Gilardoni, M.V. Lo Presti, M.T. Zanola)

Three main levels can be identified in LP: the macro, the meso and the micro level. These are distinguished based on the actors involved in LP decisions. The macro level involves society as a whole and LP decisions on a regional, national and global level. The meso level includes interventions implemented by organisations of different nature, non-profit or for-profit, public or private; among the stakeholders of this level, universities and schools are increasingly attentive to LP, given their plurilingual context. The micro level relates to LP adopted by each individual in the private and professional context.

In the definition of LP these three levels are not to be considered independent, but rather strongly interconnected as they are mutually influenced.

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Language Policy in the EU

(N. Mačianskienė)

Since the establishment of the European Union (EU), its motto "United in diversity" has been realized by preserving and promoting linguistic and cultural diversity. Multilingualism has been seen as an important element of economic competitiveness, an asset and a fundamental value. The EU has chosen an institutional multilingualism policy, which means that all 24 (national/official) languages of the member states are recognized:

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> Legislation, key political texts, as well as all parliamentary documents are translated into all EU languages, except those which are not legally binding. The latter are usually published only in English, French and German (ECSPM 2022).

Citizens can contact the European Commission (EC) and members of the European Parliament (EP) have the right to speak in any of the official languages.

The EU encourages all its citizens to be multilingual, i.e. to be able to speak two languages in addition to their native language. A key instrument in this respect was the Communication accepted in Barcelona in 2002 that invited Member States to *teach at least two foreign languages from a very early age in addition to their mother tongue*, commonly known as the Barcelona goal of the "mother tongue +2". This goal has been restated since its inception, depending on the achieved results. For instance, the outcomes of the *European Survey on Language Competences* (2012) showed that European students' level in their first (L2) and second (L3) foreign languages was not in line with policy expectations. The study performed on the *European Strategy on Multilingualism – Policy and Implementation at the EU level* in 2016 concluded that "the mother tongue+2" goal should be *reconceptualised* in light of the new linguistic reality in Europe, by:

- including not only EU but many other languages which are currently being used across the EU;
- moving away "from the idea of *advanced* proficiency in two foreign languages";
- encouraging EU citizens *"to develop rich linguistic repertoires"*, i.e., to acquire "different languages to different levels of proficiency and for different purposes and contexts across their lifespan".

Therefore, the EC Communication in 2017 (COM(2017)673: 11) set out a benchmark only for "all young Europeans finishing upper secondary education" to "have a good knowledge of two languages in addition to their mother tongue" by 2025, having a vision of Europe where "in addition to one's mother tongue, speaking two other languages has become the norm".

The EC has funded numerous programmes and projects to promote multilingualism, language learning and linguistic diversity (e.i., Erasmus + programme for education, training, youth and sport for 2021-2027). The EU also works with Member States to protect minorities, based on the Council of Europe's *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*.

Although EU institutions play a supporting role in this field, based on the principle of subsidiarity and promote a European dimension in the Member States' Language Policies, the content of educational systems and the Language Policy is the responsibility of individual Member States.

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HELP: Higher Education Language Policy

(M.T. Zanola)

HELP is called upon to perform a variety of sometimes mutually contradictory functions: it works as facilitator in the internationalisation of Higher Education (HE), as the locus where linguistic diversity is managed, as a set of rules regarding multilingualism in scientific communication – all this against the backdrop of important societal challenges in which HE is a key player.

Language Policy (LP) is therefore a constitutive element of any HE development strategy, both locally and internationally.

Starting with responses to the profound transformations occurring over time, there have been interventions in different aspects of the autonomy of HE institutions (organisational, financial or academic; from admission to graduation). Languages can be taught as subjects/contents, as languages of instruction, as languages in research activities, as languages for internal/external communication: depending on these directions, some choices must be made (Zanola 2023).

If languages are taught as subjects/contents, the choice will focus on which linguistic offer to be promoted, on what languages to teach and for what reasons, which skills levels in what languages, with which methods, considering even budgetary implications. As for languages of instruction, there will be consequences on which language(s) are the one(s) used for teaching – and for which courses, on which skills levels are expected from students and teachers: there will be effects also on universities practices and access to education (Gilardoni, Sartirana 2023).

In terms of languages of research activities, no limitations should be predetermined, taking into account the needs of multilingual and multidisciplinary research: languages will be an exchange ground for an open education giving access to knowledge in several cultures and approaches, from *lingua franca* to national and prestige languages, up to minority languages. Languages can be taught and/or used for internal/external communication, in order to accomplish universities' identity and behaviour on institutional image, with implications for student recruitment up to specific pedagogical issues and language quality assurance and control.

LP issues in HE are of particular interest in many countries: differences between European contexts can inspire different LP solutions and help to give a reinterpretation of LP practices.

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Part 2. Multilingualism in the Higher Education context

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Multilingualism in Higher Education: some facts and figures

(K. Peeters, M. Mangiarotti, J. Ureel)

Contrary to what many people think, English is not omnipresent in European Higher Education (HE), nor is it the only language of academia. Although English often serves as a *lingua franca* that facilitates communication in international research groups, at conferences and meetings, or with international students, this does not have to be the result of an exclusive choice between *either* English *or* other languages. Of course, English as "*the* lingua franca of the world" (De Swaan 2001) is an admittedly important part of international communication in HE, but there is, and there needs to be, more.

Researchers', teachers' and students' experiences in contemporary HE are fundamentally multilingual, since they travel between classes, conferences, meetings, readings, etc., in several languages, and in increasingly international and therefore linguistically and culturally diverse settings. Language alternation and code-switching are part of our daily lives, yet are not always perceived as an opportunity for cultural awareness, inclusion and diversity. All too often, we believe that using English is the solution, and that others' limited proficiency in English is the problem. Yet, in language use, context is key: not all contexts are equally suited for the use of a single language, and scholars need to communicate in national and local languages to foster engagement with stakeholders and the public – see the Leiden manifesto (Hicks *et al.*, 2015), which calls for high-quality publications in languages other than English to protect and promote regionally and nationally engaged research or Sivertsen's (2018) call for "balanced multilingualism".

In fact, our daily practices are plurilingual, even if many of us conceive of that plurilingualism as a set of compartmentalised language uses: French, Italian or German in class, English when writing an article and speaking with colleagues abroad or foreign students, our national language when addressing domestic colleagues or the public at large. Yet, in doing so, we continuously use our plurilingual repertoires. Far from compartmentalising languages, we are in fact constantly auto-translating as we alternate between languages, translanguaging our scientific and educational practices from one context to another. In this form of daily plurilingualism, the problem at hand is much larger than limited proficiency in English; attaining high levels of functional command, including the multilingual scientific terminology needed for knowledge-building and transfer, in other languages (L1 +2, according to the European Commission) is equally important and can be equally problematic. If we want our students to be effective communicators, scientific or otherwise, in our superdiverse societies, if we want them to embrace the core European values of diversity, inclusion and democratic participation, we need to teach them how to use their plurilingual and pluricultural repertoires, and we need to help them to develop their plurilingual pluricultural skills, including yet not limited to English as *a*, but not *the*, dominant *lingua academica*.

Arguably, the field in which English as an academic language is most dominant is scientific communication, especially article publications. Yet, as a recent study by Kulczycki *et al.* (2020) has demonstrated, in Europe, in the social sciences and humanities (SSH), English, although widespread, is hardly the sole language of scientific publication. 58.7% of the 51,000 researchers in the seven European countries examined by Kulczycki *et al.* (2020) have published in English,

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while 65.5% have published in their national language(s) and 9.5% have published in a third language. 53.4% of researchers in the SSH who have published at least three articles in the period 2013–2015, have published in at least two languages, however with significant national differences, ranging from 37.7% in Flanders to 68.5% in Slovenia. Only 30.3% have published only in English. Multilingual scientific communication not only exists, it is even prevalent.

This prevalence of multilingualism in HE was also confirmed by the APATCHE survey we conducted between 12 September and 15 October 2022. According to our survey results, the European HE linguistic landscape is multilingual at all levels, although we must interpret these data with caution, since the respondents were those interested in taking part in a survey on multilingualism, most often teaching languages themselves (72%, 37% of whom teach their second language).

Of the 450 respondents, almost 10% (n=44) indicated having more than one home language; 7 respondents even have three home languages. As for the number of languages used either privately or at work, only 6 respondents (1.3%) reported using only one language, in which case that language was never English. 72.7% (n=327) reported using English, either in private contexts or at work, among other languages, while 27.3% (n=123) reported not using English at all, although being at least bilingual. No fewer than 32 different languages were mentioned. 52.7% of the respondents (n=237) reported using two languages (in 43% of these cases not including English), 46% (n=207) use at least three languages (not including English in 13 cases), 24.7 % (n=111) at least four, 13.6% (n=61) five languages or more; one respondent reported using up to eight languages.

When we look at scientific communication, of the 238 respondents who reported on their scientific communication with peers, 121 (50.8%) stated that they had used only one language. In only 71 cases (29.8%) is that language English, while 50 respondents (21%) use only their national language. The 117 other respondents (49.2%) use two languages (69 respondents, 10 of whom do not use English), three languages (27 respondents), or more (45 respondents using between 4 and 6 languages). 179 respondents (75.2% of 238) report using English for scientific communication with peers. When participants communicate with lay audiences, the importance of English drops considerably: of 158 respondents, only 70 (44.3%) report using English. 115 (72.8%) use only one language, which in only 20 cases (12.7%) is English; 43 respondents use more than one, and some up to five languages for scientific communication with lay audiences.

Finally, as for teaching, of the 325 respondents teaching language courses, 59.1% (n=192) teach their L2 to L2 students, while 40.3% (n=131) teach their L1 to students for whom it is an L2. Only 12.3% (n=40) of the respondents teach their L1 to students with the same L1, while 11.4% (n=37) teach their L2 to students for whom it is an L1. Of the 325 respondents, 61 (18.8%) teach both their L1 and L2.

Multilingualism in HE is a fact. To create multilingual, multicultural teaching and learning spaces is what allows us to maximize the benefits of multilingualism on knowledge transfer and creation, on internationalisation, and on diversity and inclusion, without falling into the trap of a single and seemingly unproblematic *lingua franca*.

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Multilingualism, knowledge transfer and knowledge creation

(M. T. Zanola)

Multilingualism is clearly fundamental for knowledge transfer, knowledge creation and public engagement of knowledge; it enhances creativity (Fürst, Grin 2018); it respects scientific traditions and practices, disciplinary and cultural issues; it promotes equity by reducing advantages between speakers of languages of power and speakers of other languages. All these aspects show the extent to which multilingualism enables an effective impact of Higher Education (HE) activities at all levels, from local to global (Van De Craen 2021). Language Policy promoting multilingualism is not a commodity of immediate consumption, nor is it easy to develop: the wide-ranging benefits are measurable in terms of inclusiveness, respect for diversity, and understanding between peoples and cultures (Gazzola 2014).

The relation between multilingualism and knowledge creation, the relation between multilingualism and knowledge transfer and the role of HE institutions in society and their organisation should take into account institutional, cultural and educational aspects of languages (Zanola 2013: 254-256).

Language promotes the participation of all in the political, economic and social organisation of a country, so it should not be relegated to the background in the educational process; teachers and professors should choose the language(s) they prefer for their professions; these are reasons for retaining the use of the (or a) national language with the same consideration given to any international language or *lingua franca*. Language is the vector of the history and identity of the national community(ies), the promoter of the development of culture and its terminology is heritage to be preserved and a common good to be enhanced.

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In fact, it is necessary for each language to be able to express technical and scientific innovations without being limited to the use of a single *lingua franca.* It is the right of professionals to be able to study and communicate precisely in their own language, and of every individual to have access to knowledge without necessarily having to resort to other languages.

A clear and effective communication is essential for transfer of knowledge, professional communication and public engagement: if academic and university communication in a single language or in a *lingua franca* which students and teachers do not master, what chance is there for effective communication in the professional and institutional space?

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Multilingualism and internationalisation

(J. Fituła, A. Murkowska, J. Romaniuk, M. Wojakowska)

Mutual interconnectedness at the intercultural and plurilingual levels is a feature of today's societies. Pluralism of languages and cultures is a common and wide experience, with virtually no homogeneous groups existing outside economic links, dialogue, or cultural exchange, either directly or through media. Entire nations are now being reshaped following migration, population mixing, cohabitation, and assimilation of lifestyles, rites, and values. An increase in physical, virtual, intellectual, spiritual, and identity-based intercultural encounters is observable. Thus, accompanied by fears of the *New* and *Not Known,* interculturality and plurilingualism have become crucial issues in political discourse and education. Over the course of the past few decades, the EU has developed an ambitious agenda and launched numerous initiatives to advance internationalisation in Higher Education.

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Since its foundation in the 1970s-1980s, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has seen language as a social practice: a vehicle, product, as well as a producer of cultural heritage, focusing in language education on developing communication in the target language rather than on grammatical competence solely. The subsequent publication of *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe 2001) has had a profound impact on language teaching methodologies, emphasising internationalisation by focusing on plurilingualism and intercultural awareness. The Council of Europe's document has been a crucial step towards engagement with language education, seeking to "protect linguistic and cultural diversity, promote plurilingual and intercultural education, reinforce the right to quality education for all, and enhance intercultural dialogue, social inclusion, and democracy" (Council of Europe 2001: 11). Nowadays, the intercultural dimension and plurilingual approach are central to the didactics of foreign languages. Plurilingualism is now defined as:

> an uneven and changing competence, in which the user/learner's resources in one language or variety may be very different in nature from their resources in another. […] plurilinguals have a single, interrelated, repertoire that they combine with their general competences and various strategies in order to accomplish tasks (CEFR 2001 Section 6.1.3.2) (Council of Europe 2020: 30).

This change of paradigm from monolingualism to plurilingualism has been seen as an opportunity in HE and in the foreign language tuition where learners can experience and appreciate cultural otherness, and to use this experience to reflect on matters that are usually taken for granted within one's own culture and environment. This, in turn, requires the abandonment of the monolingual ideal (which has long dominated Europe) and the promotion of pluralistic approaches described in detail in the *Framework for Pluralistic Approaches* (FREPA).

The current EU educational policy strongly promotes multilingualism and linguistic diversity through pluralistic language education, which results in a great number of initiatives in research and pedagogy undertaken. This is manifested in such EU documents as: the *High Level Group Final Report on Multilingualism* FINAL REPORT (2007); the *Civil Society Platform on Multilingualism, Policy, Recommendations for the promotion of Multilingualism in the European Union* (2011); the *EU High Level Group Report the to the European Commission on the Modernization of Higher Education* (2013); the Council of Europe *Recommendation on a Comprehensive Approach to the Teaching and Learning of Languages* (2018) adopted by education ministers at the Council meeting on 22 May 2019, and most recently *New Council of Europe Recommendation on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for* democratic culture adopted on 2 February 2022 at the meeting of Ministers' Deputies.

The promotion of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism has also been identified in the new updated and developed CEFR (2020) with its innovative aspects of plurilingual and pluricultural competence and building on plurilingual and pluricultural repertoire together with its focus on mediation (Council of Europe, 2020):

> Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism aim to capture the holistic nature of individual language users/learners linguistic and cultural repertoires. Learners/users are seen as social agents who draw upon all sorts of resources in their linguistic and cultural repertoires and further develop these resources in their trajectories. Plurilingualism/pluriculturalism stresses the dynamic use of multiple languages/varieties and cultural knowledge, awareness and/or experience in social situations.

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The implementation of a plurilingual and pluricultural pedagogy in language learning seems to be an indispensable stage in facilitating the desired process of internationalisation, i.e. motivating the citizens of Europe to learn more than one foreign language and become plurilingual.

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Multilingualism and diversity and inclusion

(M. C. Conceição, N. Costa, P. De Sousa)

The Higher Education Area (HEA) is increasingly diverse, multilingual and multicultural, among others, because of the massive expansion and diversification of the student population and staff due to mobility and internationalisation. As a multilingual and multicultural teaching and learning space (MMTLS), HEA must reconceptualize all its activities and strategies to take into account diversity and respect the need for inclusion.

Multilingualism should be seen as a hypernym for the range of languages and cultures *in praesentia* and *in absentia* in the MMTLS. By diversity we mean the multiplicity of languages, cultures, and knowledge backgrounds of students and staff (teaching and non-teaching staff) and the subsequent variety of governance and service structures to be organized to meet these needs.

The main challenge is then to build and to disseminate knowledge (respecting the heritage knowledge of each participant in the MMLTS, and producing innovative knowledge) with societal impact, considering three levels, meso, micro and macro. Inclusion is a *sine qua non* condition.

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In MMLTS, inclusion is the promotion of access to all (including marginalised and minority groups) to foster equity and social justice, as democratic principles, but without compromising academic relevance and Higher Education expected results.

Multilingualism is a trade-off between diversity and inclusion. On the one hand, diversity must be taken into account in all linguistic and communicative strategies policies; on the other, no social cohesion and fair personnel development and societal impact can occur without inclusive intention. Too much diversity without inclusion would result in Babel chaos; too much inclusion without diversity would result in newspeak, in Orwell's words.

Multilingualism, diversity, and inclusion will benefit from a clear strategy to encourage diversity respecting fairness and equity through the promotion of intercultural competence and constantly bearing in mind that knowledge about cultures and languages has a primordial role in shaping interactions and in building the above-referred trade-off that will allow science evolution.

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Part 3. Multilingualism and language learning: Plurilingual competence in Higher Education

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Multilingualism, plurilingualism, metalinguistic competence and the co-construction of meaning

(M. C. Conceição, N. Costa, P. De Sousa)

In multilingual contexts, individuals must deal with a diversity of languages or varieties to communicate, access information and knowledge and let their interlocutors do the same with what they verbalise, to shape meaning together. They would need multilingual/plurilingual competence that allows them to use these languages and/or varieties according to their needs. For the appropriation of the concept of plurilingual competence, language knowledge must be reconceptualised not only as grammatical paradigms but also as emergent verbal communicative needs in a multilingual society, based on language use in concrete social activities (Piccardo, North 2019). These social activities specific to domains and communities of practices are rooted in the permanent co-construction of meaning and knowledge linking language and content. Therefore, under this perspective, knowledge is more than factual and may be built, acquired, and transmitted by the negotiation of meaning. Being dynamic, knowledge results from a multicompetence that includes language, communication, context, intention, interpretation, etc. The link between multilingualism, plurilingualism, and the co-construction of meaning assumes a clear sociocultural approach to knowledge because of joint construction by different actors (in HE's case, experts/professors and the students).

The joint construction, in interaction, implies a variety of cognitive and (multilingual) tasks that include the knowledge of languages (under the above definition) but also the control of cognitive operations. Furthermore, it requires linguistic, cultural, and conceptual forms of mediation (Council of Europe 2020). Interactions are historically and culturally situated and here the prefix *co-* may include a huge range of aspects (interpretation, skill, ideology, identity, stance, etc.) and of processes (collaboration, cooperation, etc).

The plurilingual competence may mobilise different resources as code-switching, code-mixing and translanguaging, that consider multifarious and multilingual language ecologies. All these resources, if inappropriately used, will cause miscommunication. When correctly used, they will lead to co-construction of meaning, and co-construction of knowledge.

The most significative factor that permits the co-construction of meaning in multilingual communication (use of plurilingual competence) is metalinguistic competence, understood not only as the control of linguistic components of language, but also as the capacity to adapt them to communicative needs in order to transmit information for the creation of knowledge. Its first step is metalinguistic awareness. In this multilingual perspective, it has to be seen as the possibility to use critical thinking to explain what is built and transferred across languages in the context, beyond the structural aspects of language and being able to manipulate languages.

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The 2020 CEFR (1): The plurilingual repertoire, or the individual language user as social agent

(S. Gilardoni, M. V. Lo Presti, L. Sartirana)

Since the beginning of the 21th century, the Council of Europe has been working on the promotion of multilingualism and plurilingualism, designating language learning as a priority for Europe's competitiveness. Not only mastering two other languages in addition to the first language (L1) is an objective of the Council of Europe's Language Policy, but also the acquisition of communicative skills in other foreign languages, along with the L1, is considered to be a key competence that each person has to develop for their personal and professional growth. Moreover, the current globalised world has witnessed an increase in international exchanges and the immigration phenomenon: this has as a direct consequence on the fact that people are increasingly exposed to different languages and, according to different communicative situations, to different languages varieties. In this context, the set of languages and languages varieties a person knows at different levels of proficiency shapes their personal plurilingual repertoire. Therefore, this repertoire can be highly rich and heterogeneous: the L1 and the foreign languages studied at school or at HE level are not the only languages composing it. Both dialects and languages people are exposed to, for example during a period abroad, contribute to the enrichment of their individual plurilingual repertoire. For this reason, the plurilingual repertoire is not fixed; as part of a person identity (Cummins 2001: 19-20), it changes over time and thanks to different experiences (Räsänen *et al.* 2013: 6). Furthermore, the plurilingual repertoire is an instrument to facilitate communication in plurilingual contexts (Council of Europe 2020: 127) and in an action-oriented approach the learner assumes the role of a social agent who, thanks to their plurilingual and pluricultural repertoire, can perform tasks and actions using different languages. In this way, languages are perceived as vehicles of communication rather than as mere object of study (Council of Europe 2020: 29). Moreover, the plurilingual repertoire facilitates inclusion especially in HE, which is a reality characterized by a rich linguistic diversity among professors, international students and researchers (Conceição *et al.* 2018: 120). The definition of plurilingual repertoire given so far describes individual repertoire, meaning each individual personal linguistic background. However, this concept can be expanded

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to a class, as the set of languages and languages varieties spoken by the teacher and their students and to a region, as the set of languages and languages varieties spoken in a specific area.

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The 2020 CEFR (2): Plurilingual, pluricultural competence and its components

(N. Mačianskienė, D. Pundziuvienė)

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2020), a reference document that describes aspects of language competence and defines these aspects at different levels of proficiency, defines plurilingual and pluricultural competence as the ability to understand, communicate and interact effectively in multiple languages and cultural contexts:

> The fundamental point is that plurilinguals have a single, interrelated, repertoire that they combine with their general competences and various strategies in order to accomplish tasks (Council of Europe 2020: 30).

The plurilingual approach adopted by the CEFR describes cultural and linguistic diversity at the level of the individual, promoting the need for learner as a "social agent" to draw on all their linguistic and cultural resources and experiences.

Plurilingual and pluricultural competence includes three notions:

(1.) *building on pluricultural repertoire*, which at most levels includes

- recognising and acting on cultural, socio-pragmatic and sociolinguistic conventions/cues;

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- recognising and interpreting similarities and differences in perspectives, practices and events;
- evaluating neutrally and critically (Council of Europe 2020: 124)

(2.) *plurilingual comprehension,* which includes the following:

- openness and flexibility to work with different elements from different languages;
- exploiting cues;
- exploiting similarities, recognising "false friends" (from B1 up);
- exploiting parallel sources in different languages (from B1 up);
- collating information from all available sources (in different languages) (Council of Europe 2020: 126)

(3.) *building on plurilingual repertoire*, which embraces aspects from the previous scale, key concepts being ability to:

- adapt to the situation flexibly;
- know "when and to what extent" to use several languages;
- adjust language depending on the linguistic skills of interlocutors;
- blend and alternate between languages where necessary;
- explain and clarify in different languages;
- encourage people to use different languages by giving an example (adapted from Council of Europe 2020: 127)

Plurilingual and pluricultural competence includes a variety of components:

— *Language proficiency*: the ability to understand, speak, read, and write in multiple languages.
— *Cultural awareness*: understanding and appreciation of different cultural norms, values, and beliefs.
— *Intercultural communication skills*: the ability to communicate effectively and respectfully with individuals from different cultural backgrounds.
— *Transcultural competence:* the ability to adapt to new cultural environments and understand the relationship between culture and communication.
— *Metalinguistic awareness:* the ability to reflect on one's own language use and the language use of others.
— *Language-culture connection:* understanding the relationship between language and culture, and how they influence each other.
— *Flexibility in language use:* the ability to switch between languages and adjust language use according to the context and audience.

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Plurilingual, pluricultural approaches in Higher Education

(S. Calvi, K. Dankova, M.V. Lo Presti)

The European society is now highly pluricultural, integrating people of different languages and cultures. This pluricultural society, dynamic and fluid, enhances networking between all its linguistic and cultural realities. Due to mobility and migration, its social texture becomes even more complex, imposing significant changes in the field of education, especially in terms of the raising of awareness in plurilingualism (Byram *et al.* 2009: 5). Plurilingualism has led to the development of plurilingual and pluricultural approaches in language learning and teaching that take advantage of the learners' metalinguistic awareness and of their plurilingual and pluricultural experiences, in order to help them acquire the target language more efficiently (Cenoz, Gorter 2013: 596). Furthermore, plurilingual and pluricultural teaching practices result also in enhancing the intercultural dialogue, which plays an essential role in creating and maintaining social cohesion and inclusion and for the acquisition of intercultural competence (Byram *et al.* 2009: 7)

The plurilingual and pluricultural approaches in Higher Education are didactic implementations aiming at developing plurilingual and pluricultural competence. They occur through properly organised language instruction and integrates different languages and cultures into the same syllabus and the same teaching activities. In plurilingual and pluricultural approaches, all the languages and cultures composing students' and teachers' plurilingual repertoires are indeed integrated. These approaches to language teaching consider linguistic and cultural diversity, along with the different linguistic backgrounds of learners, as an asset: plurilingual and pluricultural competence does not consist of separate competences for each language and culture, but includes languages, varieties and dialects belonging to the speakers' repertoires that are treated as an interconnected entity in which languages and cultures interrelate and interact (Council of Europe 2020).

Among the main aims of the plurilingual and pluricultural approaches in Higher Education there is the fact that students develop abilities to become skilled plurilingual and pluricultural speakers that can communicate in more languages and varieties, rather than being fluent speakers of only one language in addition to their first language (Cenoz, Gorter 2013: 596).

In plurilingual and pluricultural approaches, the level expected to be achieved by students in each language and variety can differ: it varies according to each student's background and communicative needs. It can therefore be said that Higher Education is considerably changing, and approaches – such as the plurilingual and pluricultural ones – enhance the ability of mediation as they enable the plurilingual and pluricultural speaker to be a communication mediator between individuals who do not have a language in common (Council of Europe 2020).

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Other frameworks for plurilingual, pluricultural approaches to language learning and teaching

(N. Mačianskienė, V. Misevičiūtė, & D. Pundziuvienė)

There have been many projects funded by the EU or the Council of Europe that developed various frameworks related to multilingualism, plurilingual and pluricultural approaches to language learning and teaching. Some ECML projects (FREPA; PLURCUR) aimed at supporting teachers and learners in plurilingual/pluricultural education mainly at the school level and some EU projects involved with Higher Education (INTLUNI; MAGICC; MIME; LANQUA) aimed at creating principles, descriptive frameworks and benchmarks. Little has been undertaken to raise awareness and provide training in plurilingual approaches for HE teachers.

Some earlier EU-funded projects produced frameworks for realisation of plurilingual competence through intercomprehension (IC). GALATEA (1995-1999) – the first European project that intended to produce digital material for the development of the IC between speakers of Romance languages. The GALANET project (2001-2004) continued the work by producing a platform for the online learning of IC; GALAPRO (2008-2010) produced a platform for training IC; REDINTER (2008-2011) was the first European Network for cooperation (of practices, skills and syllabi in training IC and development of the didactics of the verbal IC). The European Project MIRIADI (2012-2015) - "Cooperation and Innovation for an Online Intercomprehension Network" (financed by EACEA) - contributed to the innovation of the teaching and learning process of languages by promoting trainings of IC in interaction on internet. They designed descriptors for the acquisition of communication skills in IC and developed two major documents: 1) the Skills Reference Data of

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plurilingual communication in IC (i.e. REFIC) and (2) the Skills Reference Data in didactics of the IC (REDFIC).

FREPA - "Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures: Competences and Resources" (2012) – promotes 'pluralistic approaches', four didactic approaches involving the use of several languages or cultures: language awareness, integrated didactic approaches, IC between related languages and intercultural approaches. FREPA descriptors of competences and resources (knowledge, attitudes, skills), which can be developed through pluralistic approaches, have been translated into a variety of languages. A rich database of useful teaching materials, relevant to pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures, enables language teachers to select educational resources according to their particular objectives, target language levels, thematic areas or the type of a pluralistic approach.

The PLURCUR project piloted, assessed and provided tools to clarify, develop and implement a plurilingual, inclusive and intercultural whole school policy which not only comprises majority and minority languages but also regional, heritage and neighbouring languages.

Various other EU-funded projects have been used in order to effectively identify training needs in the field of multilingualism in HE, both in the past (DYLAN, focused on language dynamics and management of linguistic diversity; LANQUA, exploring issues of quality in the context of the discipline of languages and its successor SPEAQ; MULTICOM on multilingual communication; MOLAN on language motivation; ENLU on languages for all; MAGICC on multilingual competence evaluation; IntlUni on principles for quality of teaching and learning in Multilingual and Multicultural Learning Space of HE; MIME focused on mobility and inclusion funded by the 6th framework; TECON3 - teaching English as a content in tertiary education) and in the present (LISTiac – "linguistically sensitive teaching in all classrooms"; FAB - "formative assessment benchmarks"; MiLLaT – "mediation in language learning and teaching").

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Projects

Conseil Européen pour les Langues/European Language Council (2023): https://www.celelc.org/past-projects/.

DYLAN (Language Dynamics and Management of Diversity): https://www.dylan-project.org/Dylan_en/home/home.php.

FAB (Formative Assessment Benchmarking): https://faberasmus.org/.

FREPA (A framework of reference for pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures): https://carap.ecml.at/.

GALATEA (Development of the intercomprehension between Romance language speakers) https://www.miriadi.net/en/projects .

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2021-1-LT01-KA220-HED 000030285

INTLUNI (The Challenges of the Multilingual and Multicultural Learning Space in the International University): https://www.facebook.com/IntlUni/.
LANQUA (The Language Network for Quality Assurance): https://www.lanqua.eu/.
LISTIAC (Linguistically Sensitive Teaching in All Classrooms): https://listiac.org/.
MAGICC (Modularising multilingual and multicultural academic communication competence): https://www.unil.ch/magicc/home.html.
MiLLat (Mediation in Language Learning and Teaching): http://millat.uw.edu.pl/polski-opis-projektu/.
MIRIADI (Mutualisation et Innovation pour un Réseau de l'Intercompréhension à Distance): https://www.miriadi.net/.
PLURCUR (Plurilingual whole school curricula): https://www.ecml.at/ECML-Programme/Programme2012-2015/PlurCur/tabid/1750/language/en-GB/Default.aspx.
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SPEAQ (Société pour le perfectionnement de l'enseignement de l'anglais, langue seconde, au Québec): https://www.speaq.org/en/.
TE-Con3 (Teaching English as a content subject at the tertiary level): https://tecon3.wn.uw.edu.pl/.

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Part 4. Approaches and strategies for plurilingual teaching and learning

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Inter- and cross-linguistic comparative approaches

(S. Calvi, K. Dankova, S. Gilardoni, M. V. Lo Presti)

In many language courses, an immersion experience in a target language is proposed on an individual basis without taking into account learners' plurilingual and pluricultural repertoires and the elements of contact of the languages composing them. However, learners' first language influences the process of acquiring a foreign or second language (L2), and it is precisely for this reason that in language learning/teaching, the adoption of inter- and cross-linguistic comparative approaches is an effective and promising choice (Cummins 2021: 291). The concept of inter-/cross-linguistic influence refers both to the influence of L1 on other languages learned/taught and, more generally, to the reciprocal influence of all the languages in a learner's plurilingual and pluricultural repertoire. From a comparative point of view, languages can be compared at different levels – phonological, lexical, morphological, and syntactic. The process of learning another language can be accelerated by underlining similarities and differences between learners' languages. More in detail, adopting inter- and cross-linguistic comparative approaches has a number of advantages, such as: observing linguistic phenomena that are subject to variation or not; using the same terminology in descriptive categories to analyse linguistic phenomena regardless of the target language; analysing the target language by comparing it with the features proper to L1 or to other languages; and developing predictive skills in the study of the L2 grammar. Especially when dealing with particularly complex phenomena, the adoption of inter- and cross-linguistic comparative approaches simplifies the explanation: for instance, it is possible to introduce a concept by referring to the learner's prior knowledge derived from L1 and, possibly, from other languages.

These approaches will not only facilitate the acquisition of new linguistic phenomena, but also develop the individual's capacity for reflection: by observing different languages, learners will be able to identify generalities and specific differences between languages, which will foster their metacognitive reflection.

It must be, however, underlined that the notion of inter- and cross-linguistic comparative approaches is not limited to linguistics elements, but rather it is to be extended to cultural observation, since language and culture are intrinsically linked.

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Receptive intercomprehension

(N. Mačianskienė)

While communicating in a multilingual context, speakers of different but related languages face situations where they can understand the interlocutor speaking a language they do not even know and have never learnt and perform communicative acts rather smoothly on the basis of the process of receptive intercomprehension (RIC), as part of their plurilingual competence. IC is enabled by the person's acquired receptive strategies that allow them to "co-construct a meaning from clues provided by different sources" (Eur-lex. Europa: 44) which may be linked to a relationship between languages, i.e. knowledge of languages of the same linguistic family, ability to recognize certain words, discover, anticipate, guess, deduce and make inferences based on their home language and their whole linguistic repertoire.

Receptive intercomprehension is used every day in society, education, and the business world. People use it at workplaces, restaurants, banks, sports and cultural events, radio talk shows, in other words in any situation or activity. For instance, it is common in more multilingual places, such as Catalonia, Galicia, Friesland, or among the speakers of related or geographically close languages, like Slavic languages, to hear people using their different home languages in conversations and feeling no need to change language or dialect because they can perfectly understand each other due to similarities in grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation thanks to their receptive skills.

It is the teacher's task to make plurilingual students aware of the fact that RIC works, and that they possess this kind of knowledge and ability and, certainly, it is crucial to train them to develop certain RIC strategies through practical experience. The designers of The Skills Reference Data of multilingual communication in RIC in MIRIADI project see the necessity of learner's advancement in three fields - a growing degree of learner's autonomy in transferring knowledge and interlinguistic analogy; acquisition of textual skills; and linguistic knowledge and know-how (syntax, lexicon, morphology), all three fields growing on three levels of advancement: consciousness rising, training and improvement.

It is also necessary to note that ideological factors can be important here, i.e. attitudes towards other languages: for example, positive attitudes promoting IC between Scandinavian languages in Nordic countries. IC works best when languages are of equal status.

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Language alternation, code-switching, translanguaging

(K. Peeters)

When it comes to using more than one language in Higher Education contexts, especially in Higher Education classrooms, several possible strategies of combining languages come to mind. Some of these strategies occupy the middle ground between comparative and receptive approaches, in which language learning is stimulated through observation and reflection, and fully integrated approaches, in which several languages are included simultaneously, which might seem ambitious and challenging. Language alternation, code-switching and translanguaging are three possible plurilingual strategies somewhere in the middle between language comparison and receptive intercomprehension, on the one hand, and fully integrated approaches to language teaching, on the other hand. Together, these strategies represent a path of growth towards deeper integration of all languages present in the HE classroom and environment.

Despite the conceptual and terminological fuzziness in the literature on these strategies, it can be argued that language alternation, code-switching and translanguaging share three common features. First, the fact that language learners often practise them already, yet keep them hidden from their instructors, given the still predominantly one-language-only pedagogies used in foreign language classrooms. Second, language alternation, code-switching and translanguaging are similar strategies in that they rest on an approach, in which languages are not completely integrated but combined through consecutive uses of one language after the other. Finally, these three strategies all imply active production in more than one language, by the language learners, most often combining production (either written or oral) with reception (either written or oral). As such, these strategies are not only effective but also realistic in HE classroom settings.

One of the most obvious ways in which different languages can be used in the classroom is language alternation. Alternation refers to the separate use of languages, that is, one language alternating with another. From a plurilingual methodological viewpoint, this could be referred to as a sequential monolingual use of several languages, first one language (and only that one), then another language. In most cases, the languages used will be a language of instruction combined with a subject language – for instance instructions given in French for an exercise in Spanish or Italian – or with a *lingua franca* – for instance, when the teacher translates instructions given in Lithuanian into English for foreign exchange students. As is the case with any language use, language alternation is subject to contextual constraints, such as the languages present in the international classroom, the communicative tasks to be performed and the teacher's and audience's perceived proficiency levels. These are the main factors that determine the need for, as well as the success of, language alternation in the classroom.

Code-switching occurs when a speaker alternates between languages or varieties of languages in the context of a single communicative situation. Most often, code-switching is related to conversation, and occurs at the level of sentences, clauses, phrases, words or even individual morphemes. It can be considered a kind of language alternation, yet at the micro-level, when elements of one language are integrated into a conversation that occurs in another language. Subsequently, code-switching moves one step further towards language integration, as compared

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000030285

with the examples of language alternation given above. Although code-switching is sometimes associated with low proficiency and difficulty to communicate, either in language learners or in migrant or indigenous communities, it also occurs when speakers are fluent in both languages. It can also be a useful strategy of communication for language learners, for instance, when the use of an L1 word or an English expression inserted in L2 speech can allow them to communicate ideas or concepts for which they have not yet achieved the proper word or expression in their L2. As a result of the dominant one-language-only pedagogies in foreign language classrooms, such examples of code-switching are generally taboo, yet can be a useful means to an end: it is by revealing a lacuna, to themselves and to teachers, that learners can subsequently acquire words or expressions in L2s. Allowing code-switching in oral production in an L2 is also a way to dispel the fear of talking, hence to increase student participation.

Whereas language alternation and code-switching are consecutive strategies that are related to language production and can be combined with receptive activities, translanguaging goes one-step further, in that it includes not only reception and production, but also plurilingual interaction. The term translanguaging implies an action taking place. In this ongoing action learners use their plurilingual repertoires to perform communicative tasks that imply using several languages, not consecutively, but simultaneously. Put differently, translanguaging refers to a more active and simultaneous interplay of all languages present in the classroom. On a conceptual level, the notion of translanguaging implies a unitary approach to plurilingualism, which is also advocated by the Council of Europe, that is, plurilingual speakers use a single repertoire in which all languages are interrelated and mutually influence each other. Translanguaging implies an integrated plurilingual approach, whereas the concepts of code-switching or language alternation rest on the idea of discrete languages, presented in a dual competence model, which assumes the existence of separate linguistic systems. As such, translanguaging leaves room for all languages present in the classroom and all language varieties, considering plurilingualism to be an asset when learning a foreign language, while stressing the importance of metacognitive understanding of language practices and moving beyond the sentence-level and grammatical concerns to focus on discourse issues and the effectiveness of communication in realistic settings. Possible examples of translanguaging activities are the following: reading bilingual authors and texts, reading a text in an L2 and making a resume in an L1, academic writing in an L2, combined with writing an abstract in an L1 and/or an L3, a conversation class in an L2 and L3, prepared by multilingual terminology lists, rephrasing L1 discourse in an L2, having students explain in an L1 what they learnt in an L2, and etc. In all these cases, translanguaging implies some form of basic translation or interpreting, for which language learners can greatly benefit from translation and interpreting skills, such as identifying potential cognitive difficulties, rewording and rephrasing, deverbalizing and adapting word order to basic theme-rheme structures, or note-taking. This leads us to a next step towards truly integrated plurilingual strategies, which occur when language learners are not only reading, speaking, interacting in several languages, but also mediating.

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Integrated approaches

(S. Calvi, K. Dankova, S. Gilardoni, M. V. Lo Presti)

Plurilingual and pluricultural approaches, based on teaching/learning activities that encompass several languages and cultures simultaneously, also include integrated language teaching which represents an innovative challenge in HE.

In this approach, learners create links between different languages. It entails using the first language (L1) to access a first foreign language (L2), which, together with L1, can be used in order to have access to a second foreign language (L3) (Candelier *et al.* 2012: 6). In this context, links between languages that are part of learners' plurilingual repertoire constitute a prerequisite for the development of plurilingual competence.

From a theoretical point of view, integrated language teaching relies on the conviction that there is mutual cognitive influence between different languages. More specifically, the plurilingual integrated approaches are based on two principles: the anticipatory principle and the retroactive principle (Coste *et al.* 2007: 65-66; Cavalli 2005).

The anticipatory principle emphasises the crucial role of the chronological criterion influencing the status of different languages in the language acquisition process: for example, an L1 lays the foundations for the acquisition of an L2, which in turn, influences the learning process of a third language (L3). On the contrary, the retroactive principle argues that in the process of acquiring languages other than L1, there is also an influence that occurs in the opposite direction: for example, learning an L3 can have a direct influence on the knowledge of an L2, and, at the same time, on the L1. From a didactic point of view, the anticipatory principle means that teachers know

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they can refer to the knowledge and skills that learners have already acquired in other languages. On the other hand, various activities show the retroactive principle in a didactic context: studying an L3 allows learners to deepen and modify knowledge in the L2 and L1 by discovering linguistic phenomena that were previously unconsciously performed.

Integrated approaches can build bridges between languages and cultures. This can be also achieved through the integration of language and subject content learning. At the level of HE, teaching activities aimed at integrating language learning and content learning enable the learner to use more than one language in the development of knowledge and promote the transmission of knowledge in different languages (Gilardoni *et al.* 2023).

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Cross-linguistic mediation as cross-cutting plurilingual strategy

(D. Pundziuvienė)

Different types of mediation strategies and activities represent a recent innovation in the didactics of languages and cultures. As stated in *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (2020), the mediator "acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning … across modalities (e.g., from spoken to signed or vice versa, in cross-modal communication)" (Council of Europe 2020: 90). Constructing meaning from one language to another is defined as cross-linguistic mediation. A flexible use of different languages (L1, L2, L3, ...) and using linguistic and cultural diversity as a teaching/ learning resource empower both the language teacher and the language learner. The added value of cross-linguistic mediation is the development of a learning culture in which "classroom discourse mediates between curriculum

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content and the pupils' developing plurilingual repertoires" (Little, Kirwan 2021: 173). In this context, the usage of translanguaging is no longer observed as an obstacle but as a tool for developing learners' multilingual identity and raising their motivation and confidence.

To be able to move across languages and bridge linguistic and cultural gaps, learners need to apply appropriate mediation strategies. In *The CEFR Companion Volume* (2020), cross-linguistic mediation is presented in three categories of mediation activities: mediating a text, mediating concepts, and mediating communication (Council of Europe 2020: 90). Cross-linguistic mediation tasks usually focus on analysing, interpreting, explaining or creating meaning with the interplay among languages. Thus, learners' plurilingual competence is being used and further developed at the same time. Piccardo provides the following example of cross-linguistic mediation (mediating the text):

> At the restaurant, student A needs to explain in English (the target language) different dishes and options on a menu to his / her friend, student B, who does not speak English. At the moment of ordering student A also helps student B communicate with the waiter / waitress about further details concerning the dishes. As the menu is provided in two languages (English and French) and student B speaks Italian, the learners develop their plurilingual competence by comparing several languages and trying to decode the meaning (adapted from Piccardo, North 2021).

After the lessons, where cross-linguistic mediation is applied, learners are expected to:

— be more flexible when switching between languages (code-switching);
— improve as mediators in plurilingual communication;
— become more plurilingual in their mindset (e.g. being proud of all their language skills, comparing languages while learning the target language);
— develop intercultural awareness;
— raise non-linguistic competences (creativity, leadership, collaboration, critical thinking, summarising, providing explanations, constructive criticism, resolving conflict or empathy).

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