BUILDING BRIDGES, NOT WALLS IN A GLOBALIZED SOCIETY: PREPARING YOUNG CITIZENS FOR A MULTILINGUAL AMBIANCE

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Abstract. *A change in language instruction methods is required due to the growth of globalization and increased worldwide mobility. Even though English is still an important lingua franca, multilingualism must be encouraged through a well-rounded approach. This article discusses contemporary educational approaches like translanguaging and intercultural competency development as it examines the advantages of multilingual education and emphasizes the need to move beyond monolingual paradigms and embrace the strengths of multilingual learners. In addition, it looks at how technology functions in a multilingual classroom and the difficulties associated with curriculum development and teacher preparation. Lastly, the paper offers ways to strike a balance between learning English and maintaining a mother tongue legacy, with the goal of giving young people the communication skills they need to succeed in our globalized society.*

Key words: *multilingualism, language education, mother tongue, lingua franca, translanguaging, intercultural competence*

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1. INTRODUCTION

English serves as the lingua franca for trade, work, and education in today's multilingual world. Proficiency in the language is essential for anybody hoping to succeed professionally or academically in the twenty-first century. Language policy should concentrate on ways to give more equal access to high levels of English language proficiency so that these opportunities are inclusive rather than exclusive and open to all socioeconomic groups. English has a lot of promise. English is insufficient as a communication medium, nevertheless. A well-run language program can help ensure that students learn English effectively and are assimilated into society without sacrificing their native tongue, culture, or sense of place.

Being multilingual and having a solid command of English are especially important in this day of rapidly growing global mobility. People move for a variety of reasons, such as to escape oppression and war or to pursue better opportunities, but it is evident that migration patterns and the degree to which migrants can integrate and contribute to their host societies are significantly influenced by the languages they can speak or aspire to speak. This emphasizes the need for an international language policy that provides people with the languages and language proficiency they need both at home and in other countries (Arocena, E., Cenoz, J. & Gorter, D., 2015).

We should be able to speak a wide variety of languages and understand which ones are best to learn for specific goals thanks to education. This is in favor of a language policy that both promotes and safeguards the value of several languages while also improving the curriculum, instruction, and learning in state education. Languages collide and overlap in a multicultural and multilingual society. The work on code-switching and translanguaging is an example of the frequently disorganized practice of multilingual households, cities, and schools (Cenoz, J., 2013).

This means that it needs to be found out how to give people the language skills needed for a multilingual society and how to teach them the necessary awareness of the linguistic and cultural needs of their fellow citizens. The purpose of compulsory education is vital, and we need a language education plan that protects the legacy of mother tongues while simultaneously educating children for a globalized world in which English is the primary language. There are implications for curriculum design and teacher preparation in state education at the primary and secondary levels. It is evident that further research is required to figure out how to hasten young people's development of high-level language proficiency, perhaps through new pedagogical models that steer clear of the low (Angelovska, T., 2018).

Thus, the ability of people or civilizations to speak more than one language is referred to as multilingualism. This might range from a bilingual person who speaks two languages fluently to actual polyglots who speak many languages (Gorter & Cenoz, 2011). The capacity to communicate fluently in three or more languages is known as multilingualism. Therefore, studies indicate that the majority of people on the planet may actually be multilingual, with monolingualism being the exception (Escamilla, K., Hopewell, S., Butvilofsky, S., Sparrow, W., Soltero-Gonzalez, L., Ruiz-Figueroa, O. & Escamilla, M.,2013).

Multilingualism is becoming more common and significant in today's interconnected world due to a number of causes that have a significant impact on society as a whole. Thus, the ability of people or civilizations to speak more than one language is referred to as multilingualism. This might range from a bilingual person who speaks two languages fluently to actual polyglots who speak many languages (Gorter & Cenoz (2011).

In today's interconnected world, multilingualism is becoming increasingly prevalent and important due to several factors that affect the entire society a lot (figure 1).
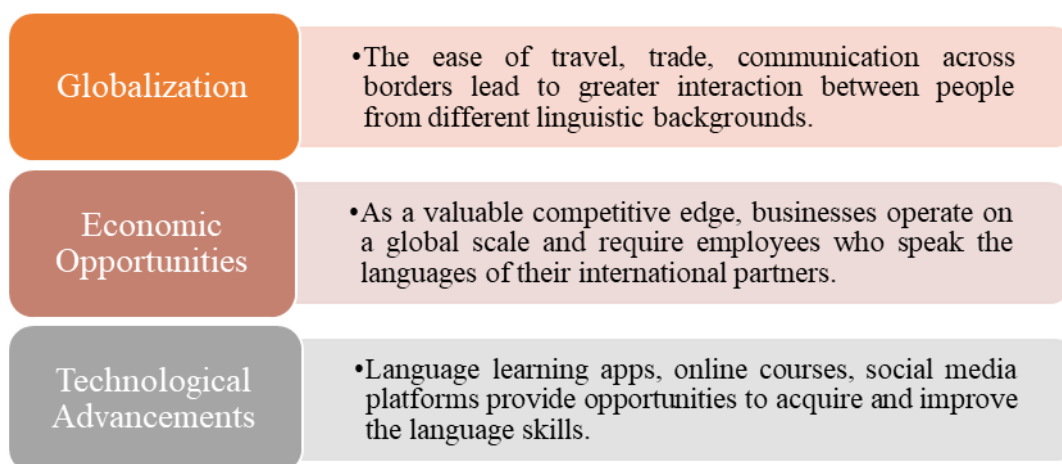

Figure 1. Major catalysts of multilingualism
Source**: Elaborated by the author based on (article Multilingualism: A Very Short Introduction John C. Maher https://doi.org/10.1093/actrade/9780198724995.001.0001)**

Embracing multilingualism not only enhances communication and collaboration but also enriches individuals' personal and professional lives by opening doors to new experiences and perspectives.

2. THE IMPACT OF MULTILINGUALISM ON LANGUAGE TEACHING

Fluency in a single target language, usually English, was the main goal of traditional language education approaches. But this monolingual approach must change in light of the growing multilingual population. Teachers are starting to recognize that multilingual students do exist and that they have some language proficiency already. This creates opportunities for innovative teaching strategies that use these already-spoken languages as a basis for learning new ones.

Translanguaging is one method that encourages pupils to use all of their languages in the classroom (Cenoz, J. & Gorter, D., 2017). This confirms students' preexisting linguistic vocabulary, which not only promotes greater knowledge but also boosts confidence. Moreover, learning a language now involves more than just grammar and vocabulary. Current approaches seek to foster intercultural competency, giving students the tools they need to successfully navigate and communicate across cultural boundaries. According to research, learning many languages has a number of advantages for one's cognitive abilities. They exhibit a higher level of metalinguistic awareness, or the capability to take into account the innate structure of language. This results in a better understanding of grammatical rules and how languages function. Additionally, bilingualism enhances cognitive flexibility by facilitating kids' ability to switch between languages and draw connections between them, which accelerates vocabulary expansion and enhances overall language competency. Therefore, a number of advantages of multilingualism for language acquisition could be listed, including:

• Metalinguistic awareness;
•   Cognitive   flexibility;
• Growth of vocabulary;
   • Identity and motivation;

Those who are multilingual have a richer comprehension of language by being exposed to a variety of grammatical structures and phonemes. This encourages a cognitive understanding of language mechanics, which is useful when learning a new language. The process of switching between languages helps learners develop cognitive control, which enables them to focus differently and change the way they think. This adaptability contributes to an improved understanding of grammatical rules and new language concepts (Cenoz, J. & Gorter, D., 2015).

Learners commonly come across cognates—words that have similar meanings and origins in different languages. They can more effectively increase their vocabulary in the target language by identifying these relationships. Those who are multilingual frequently have a high internal motivation to learn languages because they want to interact with people from other backgrounds and cultures. This drive may encourage increased participation in.

The following tactics can be used by language educators to capitalize on the capabilities of multilingual learners, highlighting the pedagogical implications in this field (Aguirregoitia Martinez, A., Bengoetxea Kortazar, K. & Gonzalez-Dios, I., 2021) Translanguaging;

• Emphasizing language acquisition techniques;
• Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL);
• Honoring multilingualism.

The goal of translanguaging is to help learners grasp the target language more easily by encouraging them to use all of their linguistic resources, including their home tongue. This may entail interpreting ideas, switching between codes, and making linguistic analogies (Creese, A. & Blackledge, A., 2010).

Two ideas form the basis of pedagogical translanguaging, which questions the powerful language separation theories that permeate schools. The first is that when students are exposed to multiple languages at once, they may become confused. The best way to avoid this is for the school system to enforce language separation by designating distinct teachers for each language and adhering to strict time and space allocation guidelines (Cenoz, J. & Gorter, D., 2020)

Maximizing exposure to the target language is the second strategy for promoting linguistic compartmentalization in schools. The strong legacy of language segregation can be observed in establishments that work to promote multilingual competency in several languages as well as in schools that instruct children who speak diverse native tongues in the majority language.

Promoting multilingualism in classrooms and advocating for an integrated approach to language learning are the two main objectives of pedagogical translanguaging. In this element, we propose that students' linguistic and academic development may be enhanced by utilizing the resources that multilingual speakers have at their disposal. Languages may support one another, and prior language learning is a great resource for teachers. Another argument is that, even in cases when the target language is a minority language, having two or more languages in the same class does not equate to less exposure to it.

Pedagogical translanguaging across the curriculum and the use of the minority language in other contexts can easily offset the time spent activating resources from the majority language in the minority language. As Cenoz and Gorter (2020) argue, it appears counterintuitive to disregard and avoid exploiting multilingual students' resources by employing a monolingual strategy when the purpose is to foster multilingual competencies. Multilingual students' diverse backgrounds might serve as valuable resources for learning other languages and academic disciplines.

One of the aims of pedagogical translanguaging is to enhance metalinguistic awareness so that multilingual speakers benefit from their own multilingualism. Figure 3 shows how the resources multilingual speakers have can influence the development of multilingual competence through metalinguistic awareness. Pedagogical translanguaging has two roles: (i) to influence the development of metalinguistic awareness by enhancing an optimal use of multilingual resources and (ii) to influence metalinguistic awareness so that it results in increased multilingual competence.
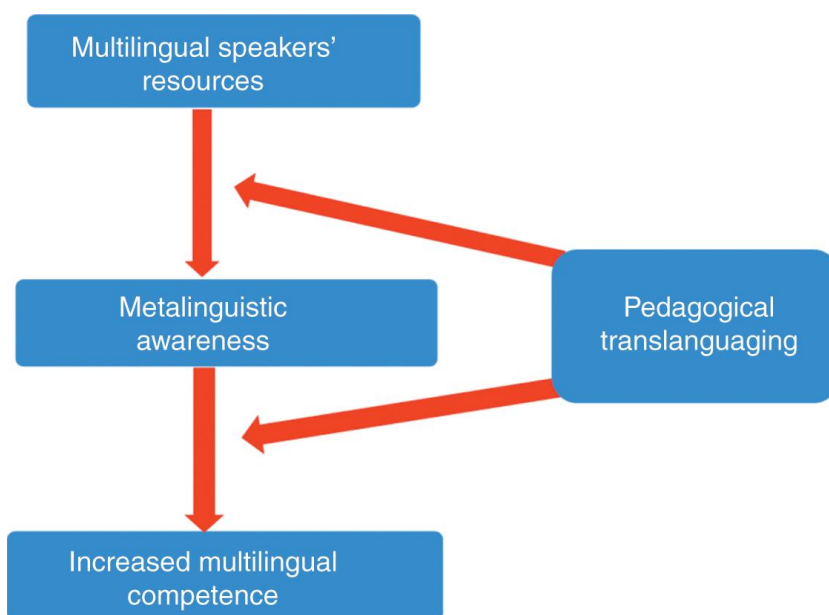

Figure 2. **Pedagogical translanguaging and metalinguistic awareness**
Source: https://www.cambridge.org/core/elements/pedagogical-translanguaging/67802C1E5AE4A418AE3B8E2DEFBAD30A

Multilingualism has been associated with enhanced metalinguistic awareness in studies on the outcomes of bilingualism, particularly when explaining the positive influence of bilingualism on third language acquisition (Cenoz, 2013). The positive association of multilingualism with metalinguistic awareness can be explained because the multilingual speakers' repertoire is broader and has more resources, and this prior knowledge can be used when a third language is acquired. Moreover, many multilinguals have more expertise as language learners because they have learned other languages apart from their first language (Rauch, Naumann and JudeRauch, Naumann & Jude, 2011). When learning a third or additional language, multilingual speakers can apply metalinguistic strategies that they have already developed previously (Yarahmadzehi, 2020).

Another key reason to employ multilingual resources from the entire language repertoire is that it is natural for students to rely on what they already know and have at their disposal (Morales, Schissel, and López-Gopar, 2020). Students associate new knowledge with previous information, and instructional translanguaging tries to reinforce this process. Multilingual speakers tend to employ languages in a fluid and spontaneous manner (García and Li, 2014; Duarte, Kirsch, and Duartee (2020).
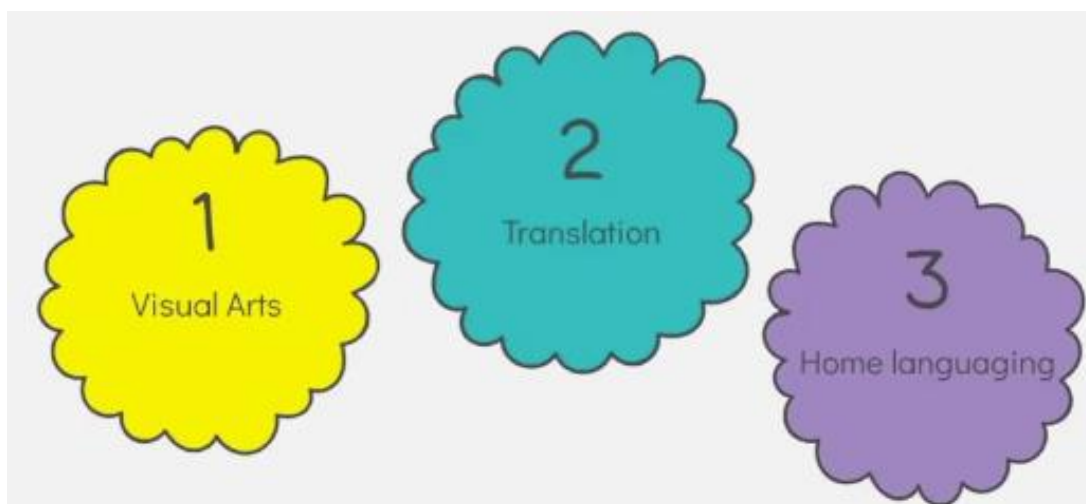

Figure 3. Steps of applying translanguaging inside the classroom
Source: https://www.eltbuzz.com/resource/translanguaging-excellence/

Effective language learning practices, such metacognitive skills and self-monitoring procedures, can be explicitly taught by educators to their students. This gives them the ability to handle the challenges of learning two or more languages at once using two metacognitive methods, like (Tedick and LysterTedick & Lyster, 2020):

1. Planning and goal-setting: Assist students in evaluating their abilities in both their target and native tongues. They are able to plan how to use translanguaging to support particular learning objectives because of their self-awareness. Before translating phrases into the target language, a student may choose, for instance, to brainstorm terminology associated with a science idea in their home tongue.

2. Monitoring and assessment: Assist students in keeping an eye on their comprehension while engaging in translanguaging activities. This could entail getting their help in identifying any areas of misunderstanding, then using.

Learners are able to apply their emerging language skills in a relevant setting when language acquisition and subject matter are integrated. For multilingual learners who are able to make links between their prior knowledge and the target language, this can be especially helpful.

Within the context of celebrating multilingualism, creating a classroom atmosphere that values language diversity can greatly enhance students' educational experiences. Establishing a school culture that values multilingualism empowers students and gives them a sense of self-worth. This may entail encouraging students to share their language experiences and using a variety of cultural elements. By fostering an atmosphere in the classroom that values multilingualism in these ways, teachers can encourage students to value their linguistic diversity, foster a feeling of community, and acquire the abilities and dispositions required to to prosper in a world growing more linked (Arocena, E., Cenoz, J. & Gorter, D., 2015).

Teachers can do more with CLIL than only teach language and content by using translanguaging. They have the ability to establish a lively learning atmosphere that values multilingualism, gives students agency, and builds self-assurance and pride among the students. Being multilingual is a great advantage when studying a language. Understanding the cognitive and motivational benefits of multilingual students can help language teachers create inclusive and productive lesson plans. This change toward accepting multilingualism can enable students to develop into flexible, lifelong language learners as well as proficient speakers of their target language (Aguirregoitia Martinez, A., Bengoetxea Kortazar, K. & Gonzalez-Dios, I., 2021).

Pedagogical translanguaging is at the crossroads of several areas of applied linguistics because it is related to bilingual and multilingual education, second and foreign language acquisition and teaching and majority and minority languages. Pedagogical translanguaging broadens the original concept by including a wide range of possibilities beyond the alternation of languages in the input and output and also by proposing the integrated use of languages for phonetic, lexical, morphosyntactic, pragmatic and discourse levels. Moreover, pedagogical translanguaging is not limited to two languages and can include three or more.

Pedagogical translanguaging aims to develop multilingualism across the curriculum. A key feature is that it activates prior knowledge, which in this context refers to the pre-existing knowledge that students have in their multilingual repertoire. A key feature is that it activates prior knowledge, which in this context refers to the pre-existing knowledge that students have in their multilingual repertoire. By activating this knowledge, students make more progress in the development of their multilingual competence. Pedagogical translanguaging adopts a heteroglossic multilingual approach to enhance linguistic and academic development through the implementation of planned didactic activities. Another key feature of pedagogical translanguaging is metalinguistic awareness, understood as the ability to reflect on language and to focus on language as an object. Pedagogical translanguaging practices can have different levels of intensity. The strongest practices aim at enhancing metalinguistic awareness by analysing and reflecting on language when using two or more languages for teaching in the same lesson. The focus on metalinguistic awareness is not as strong in other pedagogical translanguaging practices (Cenoz, J. & Gorter, D., 2020).

Pedagogical translanguaging can enhance the comprehension of academic content at different levels. The resources multilingual students have in their whole linguistic repertoire can be useful to reflect crosslinguistically when unpacking complex vocabulary, analysing the structure of a text or understanding logical connectors (Cenoz, J. & Gorter, D., 2020).

A key idea in this element is context. Pedagogical translanguaging has to be designed and implemented taking into account the characteristics of the school context and the sociolinguistic context where the school is located. The university context refers to the aims of the programme, the language(s) of the students and teachers, the languages in the curriculum and the languages of communication at school. The sociolinguistic context refers to the languages used in the specific community where the school is located and the institutional support these languages receive. In the

wider context, the national and international prestige of the languages involved is also important. In this Element, we highlight that pedagogical translanguaging has to be sustainable so as to promote the protection and development of minority languages (Cenoz, J. & Gorter, D., 2020).

In a multilingual setting, technology opens up new options for language acquisition. Interactive language learning applications provide a variety of learning preferences and enable customized instruction that takes into account students' multilingual upbringings. Online learning environments are more global and engaging as they enable collaboration between students from different nations and native speakers (Baker, C. & Wright, W. E., 2017).

3. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN MULTILINGUAL PEDAGOGY

In contemporary education, integrating multilingual pedagogy offers both potential and obstacles. There are challenges of adjusting to this change, highlighting the significance of curriculum development that is flexible and teacher preparation. It examines methods for striking a balance between learning English and preserving one's mother tongue heritage, emphasizing the value of encouraging multilingualism as a teaching tool. Teachers can effectively use linguistic variety to improve student learning results by attending to these important variables (Cammarata, L. & Tedick, D., 2012).

Language diversity is a defining feature of the global educational scene, and as a result, pedagogical approaches must be reevaluated to better meet the needs of multilingual learners. This change presents a number of difficulties, such as managing multilingual classrooms well, developing curricula that accommodate a range of language proficiency, and maintaining mother tongue heritage while promoting English proficiency. Nonetheless, these difficulties present teachers with chances to create a welcoming and stimulating learning environment. As a result, the following could be listed as the primary difficulties in multilingual pedagogy (Cenoz, J., 2017).

1. *Teacher preparation*: In order to effectively oversee multilingual classrooms and capitalize on the different linguistic ability of their students, educators must complete extensive preparation. This entails becoming proficient in cultural sensitivity, language teaching practices, and methods for fostering language development among learners of different skill levels.

2. *Curriculum development*: It's critical to create a curriculum that can be easily modified to meet the needs of students who are learning multiple languages. Teachers need to create teaching resources that support students from a variety of language backgrounds and help them develop transferrable language abilities like critical thinking and communication techniques.

It is essential to strike a balance between mother tongue and English acquisition in order to support students' overall development and cultural preservation. The preservation of students' mother tongue heritage must be given priority in educational practices in order to achieve this balance, while simultaneously fostering English language acquisition (Cenoz, J., 2015).

First and foremost, maintaining cultural identity and promoting cognitive growth depend on preserving mother tongue heritage. It is essential to combine education in one's mother tongue with English language acquisition. Programs for dual language education, which give equal teaching time to English and the native tongue, present a viable strategy. This methodology maintains students' ties to their cultural heritage while guaranteeing English competence.

Second, encouraging multilingualism is essential to developing a welcoming classroom atmosphere that values linguistic diversity. Students who see the benefits of multilingualism are more likely to see their varied linguistic backgrounds as assets than as obstacles. In order to empower students from different language origins and improve their sense of belonging in the classroom, instructors should encourage kids to take pride in and be strong in their multilingual talents (Cenoz, J. & Gorter, D., 2011).

Teachers may establish inclusive learning environments that respect students' cultural identities and encourage academic success by finding a balance between mother tongue

preservation and English acquisition. Seeing multilingualism as a strength and source of pride helps create an education system that is more egalitarian and sensitive to cultural differences (Cenoz, J. & Gorter, D., 2014).

A sophisticated awareness of the opportunities and difficulties presented by linguistic variety is necessary to successfully navigate the complexity of multilingual education. Through the prioritization of teacher training, adaptable curriculum design, and the conservation of students' mother tongue heritage in conjunction with English language acquisition, educators may establish inclusive learning environments that foster students' academic and cultural success. Adopting multilingualism promotes a broader understanding of the various cultures and viewpoints that exist within the global society in addition to improving language ability (Cummins, J., 1979).

4. A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO TRANSLANGUAGING

The IER (International Economic Relations) students were given the opportunity to use of translanguaging through *visual aids*.

Discussing about "Letters of Credit," a crucial concept in international trade, the teacher might not just explain it in English, but also pull up a Google image. The image could be a flowchart, with the steps labeled in both Romanian ("Scrisoare de credit") and English ("Letter of Credit"). Arrows would connect the steps, making the process visually clear.

Another great example was the use of infographics. Studying the "Incoterms," a complex system of international trade terms, the teacher could display an infographic with the different Incoterms listed in both Romanian and English, alongside icons that illustrate the responsibilities of the buyer and seller under each term. This visual representation paired with their native language makes understanding these dry terms much easier.

These visual aids in translanguaging serve a few purposes. First, they break down complex concepts into manageable chunks. Second, by seeing the Romanian alongside the English, the students can grasp the vocabulary much faster. Finally, the visuals themselves add another layer of understanding, making the information more memorable.

Overall, the teacher's use of translanguaging with visual aids makes learning international economic concepts in English much more engaging and effective. It bridges the language gap and allows us to excel in our studies.

As ESP students focusing on International Economic Relations, navigating complex economic concepts can feel like traversing a minefield of unfamiliar vocabulary. But here's where translanguaging comes in as a powerful tool, and *translation* plays a key role within it.

One of the most impactful strategies is the use of compiling glossaries. This might seem like a simple exercise – translating terms from English to Romanian, students' native language. However, it goes far deeper than a one-to-one word swap.

By translating economic terms, the students bridge the gap between the technical language of textbooks and the way they naturally understand these concepts. They delve into the nuances of each term, ensuring the Romanian explanation captures the full essence of the English definition. This not only solidifies their grasp of the concept but also allows them to readily switch between languages when discussing these ideas – a crucial skill for navigating the international economic landscape.

A strong example could be negotiations with a foreign partner, where the ability to seamlessly translate economic jargon fosters clears communication and avoids misunderstandings. Here's where the glossary comes in handy. Students can quickly reference the precise Romanian equivalent of an English term, ensuring both parties are on the same page.

But translation goes beyond simple vocabulary exchange. It allows us to explore the cultural context surrounding economic terms. For example, the Romanian term for "quantitative easing" might not have a direct English equivalent. By delving into the specific Romanian explanation,

students gain a deeper understanding of how this concept is perceived within their own economic framework.

Translation, within the context of translanguaging, empowers students to leverage the strengths of both languages. They utilize their native Romanian as a springboard to grasp the intricacies of English economic terminology. This two-way flow of understanding not only enhances their learning but also equips them to navigate the complexities of international economic relations with confidence.

In their International Economic Relations ESP class, the concept of translanguaging has become a game-changer. Forgetting the days of feeling tongue-tied – now, the teacher actively encourages them to use their native languages alongside English. This third strategy, focusing on ***home languaging***, is a true brilliant.

When students are grappling with a complex economic term like "comparative advantage", instead of staring blankly, they can discuss it in your first language, Romanian, Russian, or even English (for some of them). This sparks a whole new level of understanding and the teacher provides additional resources – books, articles – in these languages, making the concepts click.

But it goes beyond just understanding, this home languaging creates a welcoming environment by showing the teacher's values and appreciating students' entire linguistic background. It fosters empathy too – when someone explains a concept in their native language, students gain a deeper understanding of their perspective. Suddenly, the classroom becomes a vibrant tapestry of languages, all contributing to a richer learning experience.

Hence, here the power of translanguaging via home languaging breaks down barriers, builds bridges, and makes learning not just effective, but truly empowering.

CONCLUSIONS:

Students found the teacher's use of translanguaging through ***visual aids*** incredibly helpful. It bridges the gap between the technical concepts students are learning in English and their understanding in Romanian.

Nowadays, translanguaging is one of the most influential concepts in bilingual and multilingual education. It is a planned strategy aimed at developing proficiency in two or more languages. As we have seen, it is a polysemic term and its use varies in different contexts. The contribution of different translanguaging theories and research studies to the fields of multilingualism, sociolinguistics and applied linguistics challenges many traditional theoretical approaches and practices by offering new original ways of looking at language and education. This element focuses on pedagogical translanguaging, and it is closely related to the original meaning of translanguaging and goes beyond it.

Multilingual students have resources in their multilingual repertoire, but these resources often need to be activated so that they develop metalinguistic awareness and improve their multilingual competence. Pedagogical translanguaging practices can have different degrees of intensity depending on their focus on metalinguistic awareness and the use of different languages in the same class. Assessment based on multilingual and translanguaging pedagogies can take various shapes depending on context.

As a theoretical and practical approach, pedagogical translanguaging aims at improving learning across the curriculum. In this element, we presented its core characteristics and propose practices that can maximise the resources multilingual students have at their disposal.

Future progress in this area will depend on the development of theoretical and empirical studies that can take the state-of-the-art on pedagogical translanguaging further. A pressing challenge, among others, is to obtain evidence regarding the optimal ages, grades, intensity and the required level of multilingual competence for its implementation, as well as the specific ways to make translanguaging sustainable in the case of minority languages. The number of studies

comparing the results obtained in language and content by groups that have followed translanguaging pedagogies and control groups is still very limited, and it is necessary to confirm the positive findings in different contexts.

In fact, languages can be regarded as friends and not enemies. Schools have traditionally adopted monolingual ideologies and have tried to isolate languages, but multilingual speakers' languages are not isolated. Speakers know that depending on their interlocutors, they can use one of their languages in some contexts, while in others they can use resources from their whole linguistic repertoire so as to communicate more effectively.

Pedagogical translanguaging aims at helping students learn languages and academic content more efficiently.

Pedagogical translanguaging aims to empower multilingual students who have not reached this point and need to develop their metalinguistic awareness crosslinguistically so as to benefit from their own multilingual repertoire. Improved multilingual competence will certainly lead to the acquisition of additional languages and a deeper understanding of academic subjects.

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