

# **Towards A Holistic Perspective On English Language Learning In Educational Contexts: The Multilingual And Translanguaging Approach**

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## **Abstract**

This article focuses on the learning of English in school contexts in Ibero-American states where Spanish, Portuguese, indigenous languages, minority languages and immigrant languages are also spoken. After showing data from different countries and the link between low levels of proficiency in English and low socioeconomic background, the article takes a holistic perspective by looking at multilingual competence instead of competence in English in an isolated way. The approach “Focus on multilingualism” is presented with its three dimensions: the multilingual speaker, the multilingual repertoire and the social context. Then, the concept of translanguaging is discussed paying specific attention to pedagogical translanguaging as an approach to activate the learners' prior knowledge when learning English as a second or additional language. The importance developing metalinguistic awareness and valuing the multilingual resources students already have are highlighted in the conclusion so as to improve the quality of English language teaching and proficiency in this language.

Keywords: english; multilingual competence; linguistic diversity; multilingual repertoire; translanguaging.

## **1. Introduction**

Ibero-America has an important diversity of languages. Spanish and Portuguese are the most spoken languages in Latin America and are among the most spoken languages in the world. According to Statista (2022), the two languages have a total of 801 million speakers, distributed among native speakers who have Spanish or Portuguese as their first language (L1) and as a second language (L2) or additional language (Lx). as can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. Spanish and Portuguese speakers (in millions of speakers)

	L1	L2 or Lx	Total
Spanish	460	83	543
Portuguese	221	37	258
Total	681	120	801

Source: Own elaboration based on data from Statista (2022).

The importance of Spanish and Portuguese goes beyond the number of speakers as can be seen in the multidimensional analysis of the influence of these languages in relation to areas such as the economy, education, science, the Internet or their future forecast (Crespo and Challenge, 2022). In addition to Spanish and Portuguese, in Ibero-America more than 40 million people speak other languages (Prado, 2021). Speakers of indigenous and/or minority languages are in many cases bilingual because they have communicative competence in their L1 and in Spanish or Portuguese.

The data indicate that the number of speakers of English as L1 is higher than that of Portuguese, but lower than that of Spanish (Table 2).

Table 2. English speakers (in millions of speakers)

	L1	L2 or Lx	Total
English	379	969	1348

Source: Own elaboration based on data from Statista (2022).

The data in Table 2 also indicate that the majority of English speakers have English as a second language (L2) or additional language (Lx), that is, as a third, fourth, fifth language, etc. Today, the use of English is linked to multilingualism and as Cenoz and Gorter (2020) point out, English is one of the languages in the repertoire of the multilingual speaker.

The use of English as a lingua franca of international communication is related to historical, economic and political factors. There have been other languages of international communication, but they have not had the presence that English currently has, both geographically and socially. More and more sectors of the population from different parts of the world are learning English and using English in communication. Today, English is the language of economics and business, science and technology, international politics and for many sectors of the population, education, culture and leisure. For example, the study carried out by Badillo (2022) indicates the predominance of English in relation to Spanish and Portuguese and the drawbacks that this dominance entails due to the limitation of perspectives and access to information. Despite these problems, the position of English is strengthening in different areas and as Hernández-Fernández and Rojas (2018, p.189) state: “English is today the global lingua franca, and there is no indication of that this is going to change drastically in the next or even three more decades.” A clear example of English proficiency is the publication of scientific texts.

Communicative competence in English gives the possibility of relating in an increasingly globalized world in which the economies of many states have a high degree of interdependence that is characterized by international communication and population mobility. In this context, knowledge of English is considered a necessity to communicate and access information in today's society (Rodríguez, 2015; Mejía-Mejía, 2016; Cronquist and Fiszbein, 2017).

In recent years, the teaching of English in Latin America has been acquiring greater importance and in most states educational policies have been implemented to improve English proficiency in educational centers. In this sense, Philominraj et al. (2020) affirm that teaching English is part of the comprehensive training of students so that they can access knowledge and technology and communicate in today's world. Cronquist and Fiszbein (2017) also refer to employment opportunities and economic returns, which increase with knowledge of English.

The learning of an international communication language such as English is characterized by its diversity with regard to the contexts in which its teaching takes place (Banfi, 2018). Indeed, English is taught in schools, universities, academies, companies and there are a large number of digital courses to learn English from the workplace or from home. The student body also presents great diversity in terms of age, educational background or social status. In recent years, the teaching of English in early childhood and primary education has intensified, but English is also taught at other higher levels and it can be said that there are English learners of all ages. Furthermore, there are different methodological approaches in the educational context where English can be taught as a subject or as an additional language of instruction in the so-called CLIL or bilingual and plurilingual education programs (Banegas, 2021).

## 2. Communicative competence in English in Ibero-American states

There are data on knowledge of English in Ibero-American states, but they have some limitations. The most complete data is from Education First (EF, 2021), which is based on two million people from 112 countries who have taken this organization's tests, which are free and administered online. These data include people who want to learn English and who want to know their level and are not necessarily representative of the general population. Education First establishes a ranking of countries (1 to 112) according to the level of English obtained in the test score.

The scores correspond to five levels: very high (600-652), high (550-599), moderate (500-549), low (450-499) and very low (360-449). The country with the highest score (652) is the Netherlands and the country with the lowest score (360) is Yemen. Education First (EF, 2021) also establishes the correspondence between its five levels and those of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2002). Table 3 shows the Ibero-American states with a moderate or very high level of English.

Table 3. Ibero-American states with a moderate or very high level of English

	Ranking	Punctuation	Level
Portugal	07	625	Very high-C1
Argentina	30	556	High-B2+
Spain	33	540	Moderate-B2-
Bolivia	41	524	Moderate-B2-
Cuba	43	521	Moderate-B2-

Costa Rica	44	520	Moderate-B2-
Dominican Republic	44	520	Moderate-B2-
Paraguay	44	520	Moderate-B2-
Chili	47	516	Moderate-B2-
Uruguay	53	509	Moderate-B2-
The Savior	54	508	Moderate-B2-
Honduras	55	506	Moderate-B2-
Peru	56	505	Moderate-B2-

Source: Own elaboration based on EF data, 2021.

We can see that according to data from Education First (EF, 2021), Portugal is the Ibero-American state with the highest level of English, followed by quite a distance from Argentina. The rest of the states in this table have a moderate level that would be equivalent to level B2- (or B2 lower) in the levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Table 4 shows the Ibero-American states with a low or very low level.

Table 4. Ibero-American states with low or very low level of English

	Ranking	Punctuation	Level
Brazil	60	497	Low-B1+
Guatemala	61	493	Low-B1+
Panama	73	475	Low-B1+
Venezuela	73	475	Low-B1+

Nicaragua	76	470	Low-B1+
Colombia	81	465	Low-B1+
Ecuador	90	440	Very low-B1-/A2
Mexico	92	436	Very low-B1-/A2
Haiti	105	403	Very low-B1-/A2

Source: Own elaboration based on EF data, 2021.

We can see that although Brazil's level has been classified as low, it is not far from that of Peru, which is considered moderate. The data draws attention to the very low level of Mexico taking into account its proximity to the United States. The EF report (2021) indicates that the level of English proficiency has increased in recent years in most Ibero-American countries, but not in all. Another interesting fact from this report is related to gender differences because a significant improvement has been observed in the English level of men in Latin America while the English level of women has decreased slightly. In Spain there are also gender differences in favor of men. Regarding age, the most significant improvement in Latin America occurs in adults between 30 and 40 years old and is related to the motivation to achieve economic and social improvements and greater exposure to English.

There is concern about the level of English in Ibero-America and specifically about the level of English in the educational context (Ponce-Merino et al., 2019; Hernández-Fernández and Rojas, 2018; Cronquist and Fiszbein, 2017). Cronquist and Fiszbein (2017) consider that, despite the efforts to improve the learning of English and the educational policies for the implementation of specific programs in different countries, the educational system does not generate students with the

competence in English that is considered today. necessary. Cronquist and Fiszbein (2017) analyze the situation of ten Latin American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Uruguay) and detect that there are some important deficiencies. Among them, the little attention to monitoring and evaluating learning and the low level of teacher preparation stand out. Regarding monitoring and evaluation, further development of a strategy would be necessary to carry out diagnostic evaluations that allow knowing the level of competence of the students at different levels. It is also necessary to develop policies to improve the English level of pre-service and in-service teachers. Cronquist and Fiszbein (2017) consider that formulating linguistic objectives is not enough and that it is necessary to evaluate the communicative competence of in-service teachers in order to offer training courses in cases where it is necessary. The need to improve the level of teachers in training also implies that clear parameters and monitoring are established in universities, as Abrahams and Silva (2017) point out. Teacher training, both in the case of teachers in training and in-service teachers, includes, in addition to the level of communicative competence necessary to teach English classes or in English, methodological and technological training.

In addition to the gender gap, which has been detected in the English First report (EF, 2021) in which it is observed that the level of English improves among men more than in the case of women, we can also refer to a gap social in learning English. The influence of socioeconomic level is evident in the study by Mejía-Mejía (2016), who analyzed data from the English tests from the years 2008 and 2013 of the Saber 11 exam, a standardized test at the end of secondary education in Colombia. The results obtained indicate that the level of family income is

significantly related to the level of English obtained in the test. Rodríguez (2015) analyzed the relationship between socioeconomic level and type of school and the results in English of the SIMCE standardized test in the third year of secondary school in Chile. The results also confirm the enormous importance of socioeconomic level in learning English and Rodríguez (2015, p. 90) reaches this conclusion:

The possibility of certification for a student from a private-fee-paying school is 27 times greater than in one run by a municipal agency; The possibility of certification for a student from a high socioeconomic level is 167 times greater than that of a student from a low socioeconomic level.

Santana et al. (2016) also highlight the influence of family socioeconomic level in Mexico and the differences in favor of private education over public education in learning English.

Students from higher socioeconomic levels may be more motivated by the need to use English, at a professional level, when traveling or on the Internet than students who come from lower levels. In addition, socioeconomic level is also a determining factor when it comes to having more opportunities to learn English in academies or during stays in English-speaking countries.

Some educational programs try to benefit students of all socioeconomic levels by offering the possibility of learning English from the earliest school levels. Pozzi (2017) conducted a study with teachers and trainers from three primary schools in Buenos Aires in which English classes were taught to students with different socioeconomic levels in very different areas of the city. Although the program attempted to reduce differences between different social groups and provided access to computers and the Internet for all participating students, Pozzi (2017)

observed important differences between the three schools. Schools with students of low socioeconomic status had a greater number of students per class and less technological training. Furthermore, in the study, Pozzi observed that the pedagogical materials were aimed at the middle classes and the examples were not suitable for students living in poverty. Despite these problems that need attention, the teachers positively valued offering students the opportunity to learn English to empower students from low socioeconomic levels, who in many cases are indigenous and immigrants and did not have this opportunity before.

Internet access represents a great opportunity to improve English learning. Brovetto (2017) describes the Ceibal in English plan implemented in Uruguay in primary education since 2012. This plan combines face-to-face teaching with the use of videoconferencing and has the collaborative work of two teachers, one remote and the other in-person. The results of this plan confirm the potential of this plan and the advantages of combining in-person and remote education (see also Marconi and Brovetto, 2019).

Virtual teaching that has been developed in different plans and projects in recent years, such as the Ceibal plan in Uruguay, has experienced an acceleration with the COVID-19 crisis. Vélez (2020) explains that this situation has been a challenge for the educational system, but it has allowed different capacities to be developed to face virtual teaching and believes that the educational system can be strengthened. However, the limitations of access to the Internet and technological tools in schools and especially in homes have aggravated inequalities between different sectors of the population. The integration of technology in the teaching of English and other subjects represents a change in the educational model. Ganimian and Vegas (2020, p. 61) consider that the integration of technology still has a

limited effect on learning and propose that to implement approaches that use technology in education it is necessary: “to solve an important learning problem with current levels of infrastructure and capacity, an evidence-based theory of change, a widespread perception of its usefulness and reliable implementation among principals, teachers and students.”

### **3. Learning English and multilingual competence**

English is currently the most important language of international communication, but it is one of the languages in the plurilingual repertoire of students and one of the languages in the school curriculum in Latin America. As already mentioned in the Introduction, Latin America is characterized by great linguistic wealth. The two languages of international communication stand out, Spanish and Portuguese, which together have more than 800 million speakers (Statista, 2022). Minority, indigenous and migration languages are added to these languages. The report prepared by Prado (2021) for the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI) offers data on indigenous and minority languages in the OEI states. The number of indigenous languages of Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela stands out. The indigenous languages with the largest number of speakers in Latin America are Quechua, Guaraní and Aymara. In recent decades, Intercultural Bilingual Education programs have been developed in several countries (Hornberger and López, 1998; López, 2021). López (2021) explains that programs that include indigenous languages as part of the curriculum cannot in some cases be implemented due to the lack of materials and experts in language teaching.

In Spain, the most spoken minority languages are Catalan, Galician and Basque. These languages are part of the school curriculum in different

communities and are frequently used as languages of instruction for some or all subjects. In addition to Spanish, Portuguese, indigenous languages and minority languages, it is important to consider the languages of the migrant population.

The diversity of languages in the Ibero-American states and the presence of different languages in the school curriculum means that English is not only a second language but also a third language or even in some cases a fourth or fifth language. In this context we cannot consider communicative competence in English in isolation but in relation to competence in other languages.

The concept of communicative competence contains different dimensions that are considered necessary to determine the goals of learning second or additional languages. These dimensions include linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, discursive and strategic competence (Cenoz, 1996). In the case of multilingual speakers, the communicative competence of each language does not exist in watertight compartments but rather in related ones as referred to in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages:

[...] the individual does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separate mental compartments, but rather develops a communicative competence to which all linguistic knowledge and experiences contribute and in which the languages relate to each other and interact. (Council of Europe 2002, p. 4)

This concept of interaction between languages has important pedagogical implications because it is possible to create conditions so that the languages in the students' linguistic repertoire reinforce each other. In this way, language learning can be promoted, as in the pedagogically translanguaging approach, which we will see later.

Another important idea that is underlined in the complementary volume of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2021, p. 137) is the following: “the objective is not to achieve balanced mastery of different languages, but rather the ability (and willingness) to adapt its use to the social and communicative situation.” In the context of Ibero-America, English, being a lingua franca and used in some specific communicative contexts, has a different role in society from other languages of interpersonal communication such as Spanish, Portuguese, indigenous and minority languages. .

It may be the case, for example, that English is used as a lingua franca only in formal contexts related to professional communications and not in family contexts. Multilingual speakers need all dimensions of communicative competence (linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, discursive, strategic) to communicate effectively, but they do not need the domain of communicative competence to be the same in the different languages they speak. Traditionally, it has been considered that the monolingual native speaker was the reference for communicative competence in the teaching of English and other languages. This idea is increasingly questioned because the multilingual speaker is different from the monolingual speaker and uses languages in different contexts (Cenoz and Gorter, 2017). The common European framework of reference for languages in its original version (Council of Europe 2002, p. 5) was already moving away from the idea of the ideal native speaker as a reference: “It is no longer seen as the simple achievement of “mastery” of one or two – or even three languages – each considered in isolation, with the “ideal native speaker” as the fundamental model.”

In the complementary volume of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe 2021), a further step has been taken and

references to the level of proficiency of the native speaker in the descriptors of the different levels have been removed. In the examples in table 5 we can compare the wording of the descriptors in 2002 and 2021.

In the Ibero-American context, the idea that the native speaker is the reference for learning English is quite widespread, but it has been criticized. For example, González and Llurda (2016) analyzed the discourse about native and non-native speakers in newspaper articles and official documents about learning English in Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Mexico. The study revealed that there is a tendency in favor of native speakers and teachers over non-native speakers and that the myth of the superiority of the native speaker still prevails. Waddington (2022) confirms the difficulty of changing beliefs in a study carried out in Catalonia with teachers in training.

Table 5. Difference between the descriptors of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

	2002	2021
C2 Comprehension	He has no difficulty understanding any type of speech, even at the fast speech, both face-to-face and speed typical of native speakers, both in face-to-face conversations and in broadcast speeches (p.69)	Easily understands virtually any type of spoken/signing naturally rapid speed (p. 289)
B2 Conversation	He interacts with native speakers	Relates to users of the target language without being funny

unintentionally amusing or unintentionally annoying, or annoying them, and or without requiring them to without demanding behave differently than they different behavior from would with another them than they would competent speaker/signer. (p. 289) with a native speaker. (p. 289) 119)

Source: Own elaboration based on Council of Europe (2002, 2021).

Cenoz and Gorter (2017) emphasize the importance of considering the multilingual speaker and their repertoire in a central place in the learning of English and other languages. The plurilingual approach they propose adopts a holistic perspective of interaction between languages and consists of three interrelated components: the plurilingual speaker, the total linguistic repertoire and the social context (see also Cenoz 2020, 2021).

*The multilingual speaker* has dynamic and fluid competence in two or more languages and can use each language in a different communicative context, but can also use elements of the different languages in informal contexts. The multilingual speaker is not the sum of different monolingual speakers and does not have the same level of competence in the different languages and may also be an emerging multilingual speaker. Her competence is dynamic and can undergo changes related to the use of languages in communicative contexts. Multilingual competence is also fluid because languages are not separated into watertight compartments (Canagarajah, 2013). The student who learns English as a second or third language is not a deficit speaker of this language, but rather a multilingual speaker who

continues to advance in the development of his or her skills and who has different levels of proficiency in different languages as a result of his or her communicative experiences.

*The plurilingual repertoire* includes all the languages that speakers use. In the educational context it refers to both the languages that are learned at school and those that are not part of the school curriculum. The plurilingual approach is based on the resources that the student has for being plurilingual, highlighting the interaction between the languages of the linguistic repertoire. The activation of resources from the plurilingual repertoire can have a positive effect on language learning (Cenoz and Gorter, 2021).

*The social context.* Multilingual speakers learn languages through interaction in the social context. Traditionally, languages have been taught as codes in school contexts without giving much opportunity for interaction and carrying out a strict separation between languages. Furthermore, students frequently use resources from different languages in a creative and hybrid way when they communicate with each other spontaneously on social networks. Learning English and other languages from a plurilingual perspective takes into account that, depending on the social context, it is necessary to use a single language or it may be acceptable to use elements of two or more languages. The plurilingual approach highlights the importance of students being aware of differences in the use of languages from the plurilingual repertoire in relation to the social context.

The plurilingual approach represents a change from the tradition of language teaching-learning. Nowadays, the monolingual approach is increasingly criticized because it does not value the importance of prior learning and does not respond to the linguistic diversity of today's society (Cenoz and Gorter, 2021). In this context,

one of the most important concepts today is translanguaging or translanguaging, as we will see in the next section.

#### **4. “Translanguaging” or translanguaging**

As Cenoz (2020) explains, the term “translanguaging” can be translated into Spanish as translanguage, translingualism or translenguar. The three terms are used and although the first two may be more natural in Spanish, the term “translenguar” reflects the dynamic character of the term in English. In this article we use the term translanguaging which, as García (2013, p. 354) indicates: “By emphasizing the act of “language” (..) and not the abstract concept of “language”, the act of translanguaging highlights the linguistic practices of people, and not the languages defined, constructed, and even invented by nation-states and their institutions.”

The concept of “translanguaging” has its origins in bilingual education in Welsh and English in Wales. It refers to a didactic practice that alternates input and output languages. That is, within the same class you can present a video or text in English (input) and ask students to summarize or comment on the content (output) in Welsh. The input and output languages alternate so that in some cases the input is in English and in other cases in Welsh and likewise the output can be in either of the two languages. As Williams (2012) explains, translanguaging helps to understand the content and promotes the development of academic language competence.

The original concept of translanguaging has undergone some changes when it is used not only within the school context as in Wales but also more generally to refer to bilingual discursive practices that occur in any communicative context inside and outside of school (García 2013; García and Li, 2014). From this perspective, bilinguals and multilinguals have a unique linguistic repertoire and use resources

from that repertoire when they communicate. This vision of translanguaging is closely related to the contact between Spanish and English in the United States and is about legitimizing the interpersonal communication of bilingual speakers who spontaneously use elements of both languages. The idea of translanguaging in relation to the fight against social inequalities and the need to promote policies for language contact areas has also been developed in Ibero-America. (see for example, Rocha and Maciel, 2015; Maciel and Ferrari, 2019).

Cenoz and Gorter (2021) distinguish between spontaneous and pedagogical translanguaging. Spontaneous translanguaging designates the use of elements associated with two or more languages in discursive practices naturally in the school context or in other communicative contexts. On the other hand, pedagogically translanguaging is closely related to the original Welsh concept of translanguaging and is a theoretical and didactic approach that integrates two or more languages in the school context. In this article we focus on this meaning of translanguaging in a pedagogical way.

In the context of learning English in Latin America, translanguaging in a pedagogical way can help students use their plurilingual repertoire as a resource to develop their communicative and academic competence in English. As Cenoz (2020) explains, when translanguaging, prior knowledge is related to new knowledge and metalinguistic awareness is developed by activating prior knowledge. In this way, a holistic approach is adopted in which the entire multilingual repertoire of students is considered without establishing rigid delimitations between languages.

Translanguaging can be done pedagogically in different dimensions of communicative competence (linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic or discursive)

and in the learning of different linguistic levels (phonetic, lexical, morphological or syntactic). Cenoz et al. (2019) report on a teaching project carried out in a multilingual school in the Basque Country where three languages are taught: Basque, Spanish and English. The activities of this project encourage students to benefit from their own multilingualism by relating new vocabulary in English with words they already know in Basque and Spanish in the case of cognates (atmosphere-atmósfera-atmosfera). The number of cognates from Spanish and English is more than 10,000 words, most of which come from Latin and which totally or partially share the meaning and spelling (Lubiner and Hiebert, 2011). There are fewer cognates that share Basque, Spanish and English, but they are also abundant in academic texts because there is a high number of technical terms in Basque that come from Latin. Students do not always recognize cognates automatically, but they can activate their prior knowledge by carrying out didactic practices based on translanguaging in a pedagogical way.

This project also develops metalinguistic awareness by asking students to reflect on the similarities and differences in the composition of the vocabulary in the three languages in the case of compound and derived words such as: play-player; jolastu-jokalari; game-player (see also Cenoz and Arocena, 2018; Leonet et al., 2020; Cenoz and Santos, 2020).

Translanguaging in a pedagogical way implies the integrated treatment of different languages as proposed in Apraiz et al. (2012), but it goes beyond the joint programming of teaching classes of different languages. In the case of pedagogically translanguaging, the languages are used together in the same class. The systematic and planned use of all languages so that they reinforce each other when translanguaging has great potential when English is the language of

instruction for content subjects. In these contexts, it is essential that students be able to understand the content in order to advance not only in the development of plurilingual competence but also in the development of academic content competences.

Translanguaging in a pedagogical way assumes a holistic perspective and establishes bridges between languages and by reflecting on the functioning of English, students activate their linguistic repertoire in other languages such as Spanish, Portuguese, indigenous languages or minority languages that can also benefit from the reflection. metalinguistics. In this way, it is not only English proficiency that benefits, but also multilingual proficiency. Competence in native and minority languages is also reinforced, although it is necessary to emphasize the need to pay special attention to these languages, taking into account that in many cases their position is weak. When translanguaging pedagogically, learning is centered on the students and their plurilingual competence, which may still be emerging, is taken as a starting point. From a multilingual approach, the students and their repertoire are taken as a starting point and they propose translanguaging taking into account the social and school context.

## **5. Conclusion**

Improving the level of English proficiency in Latin America is necessary and positive because English is today the most important language for international communication and access to information. If the level of English in schools is improved, an opportunity is being offered to students who do not have the financial means to complete their linguistic education in academies and stays in English-speaking countries. Furthermore, if the data from Education First (EF, 2021) on the improvement in competence in the case of men, but not women, is confirmed in

other studies, it is very important that educational centers contribute to reducing these differences. It is necessary to improve the teaching of English, but this teaching is closely related to the socio-educational context in which it takes place, which includes, among other factors, the languages and cultures of the students and the socioeconomic level. Learning English does not occur in a vacuum but in a social context that has specific characteristics. The plurilingual approach and pedagogically translanguaging proposed in this article represent a holistic perspective that does not focus only on one language but on all the languages in the students' linguistic repertoire.

This holistic perspective is based on multilingualism and the interaction between languages (see also Council of Europe 2002, 2021). This perspective offers several advantages. Being holistic, it is based on relating the students' prior knowledge of all languages with the different elements and uses of English, highlighting existing knowledge and practices. In doing so, the starting point is to consider students as central to the learning process with competencies and skills in other languages and not as poor English speakers. Furthermore, by reflecting on their multilingual repertoire, students become aware that all their languages have value, even indigenous, minority or immigrant languages. We can also point out that this perspective is more appropriate taking into account the characteristics of the current world in which English is used as a lingua franca and the majority of its speakers are multilingual who know other languages and for whom English is one of the languages in its multilingual repertoire.

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