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Enhancing Productive Skills in Plurilingual Educational Settings through Metalinguistic Awareness and Instructional Dialogue[1]

Abstract. In those educational settings where several languages coexist, strategies such as metalinguistic awareness and instructional dialogue can easily be implemented, in that students are immediately able to observe the similarities and differences between languages. The present article examines metalinguistic awareness and instructional dialogue in detail, through an analysis of the findings of a number of studies. Some specific teaching implications are then exposed for the development of both these strategies. The characteristics of plurilingual educational settings, in which languages can and should be taught in an integrative manner, are addressed, looking particularly at regions and communities in Spain where two co-official languages coexist with one or two foreign languages. The benefits of using the same text in various languages as a teaching and learning resource is then showcased, particularly when students are familiar with it, as we will see in the case of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Finally, the practical implementation of metalinguistic awareness and instructional dialogue is encouraged, essentially to enhance students' productive skills.

Key words: language teaching, metalinguistic awareness, instructional dialogue, plurilingual educational settings, productive skills

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1. Introduction

Across the world there are a great many communities and regions with a rich cultural patrimony which is manifested in the coexistence of various languages. Also, due to the recent spread of globalisation and the increasing mobility of people, many regions receive a growing number of migrants from developing areas, who speak their own language. Although for any individual the maintenance of their own linguistic and cultural identity is important, effective communication is essential in all forms of human social contact. One of the principal settings for developing social relationships among people from different linguistic backgrounds is at school, since attendance by children and teenagers is mandatory. No matter how complex the circumstances are, students in such educational settings can benefit from the multicultural and plurilingual environment surrounding them. Moreover, schools and teachers in particular can promote and reinforce this special situation by implementing integrated language syllabi and programmes. Hence, bilingual and plurilingual students are able to use all their linguistic background and knowledge to learn additional languages, due to their enhanced metalinguistic awareness and communicative skills.

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* includes an interesting reflection on plurilingual individuals, who, it is said, do not keep "languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather [build] up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact" (Council of Europe 2001, 4). Indeed, any person who speaks more than one language, or who is learning a language, is aware that there are a variety of interactions between the languages that they know and practice. This can be considered plurilingual or interlinguistic awareness, and as various scholars and practitioners have demonstrated, it can be exploited with great success to promote language learning (Guasch Boyé 2014, Narcy-Combes et al. 2019). Looking at the concept of plurilingualism and at a study by Beacco and Byram in 2007, Vez Jeremías has established a series of peculiarities of plurilingualism, and these should be taken into account by teachers who work in such contexts. This author considers that in educational settings where several languages coexist, the linguistic and communicative competence of individuals is developed by means of the interactions between several languages; according to this principle, the traditional model of teaching a language should undergo a notable transformation (2011, 14). However, one only has to visit a school to see that languages are normally taught separately and maintained in isolation, and it is not clear when students make the connection between languages. This might lead to erroneous interference from which fossilisations which may arise. Another significant challenge for language teachers occurs when they have students from diverse origins who are also learning languages in the classroom. Such languages, due to globalisation and the influx of migrants, might be L1s for some students, and L2s, L3s or even L4s for others; that is, some students may be plurilingual individuals in their daily lives, each one with his or her own linguistic and cultural identity (Ziegler 2013, in Narcy-Combes et al. 2019, n.p.).

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Hence, the aim of this article is to explore metalinguistic reflection and subsequent instructional dialogue as valuable teaching strategies, which can be exploited easily in plurilingual educational settings around the world. The particular cases of some Spanish regions and communities will be used as examples, notably those in Galicia, where two official languages exist, these being taught at school along with one or two foreign languages. By means of metalinguistic awareness, students contrast and compare languages, discovering on their own the similarities and differences between them, and generating hypotheses on how the respective linguistic systems work. For this purpose, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is an appropriate text, since it has been used widely in Spain as a reader, that is, as an adapted or graded text for students, in secondary education and thus students in general are already familiar with the story. We then discuss how, following their engagement with the text, students' findings are structured and shared through instructional dialogue in the classroom, both with the teacher and with their peers.

2. Metalinguistic awareness

Pastor Cesteros proposes an interesting definition of metalinguistic awareness as a starting point (2005, 638), arguing that it is the introspective process carried out by students when they reflect on the functioning of the language and the subsequent verbalisation of that process. Therefore, she recommends an intervention in two phases, first, students should use the receptive skills (input) to analyse the text, and then, they should employ productive skills (output) in describing what they have observed.

As Cots and Nussbaum indicate in the introduction to their volume on this subject (2002), such a process does not always occur in contexts where speakers are able to use several languages. However, they provide three situations which will be quite familiar to many of us, in which metalinguistic skills are enhanced: first, when speakers spontaneously ask for clarification from their interlocutors when they do not understand; second, when speakers are monitoring and reviewing their own productions, both orally and in writing; and finally, in formal learning contexts, by means of linguistic explanations, given that it is very common to speak and reflect on languages in the classroom. In addition, as indicated in the Secondary Education curriculum, activities of these types should be promoted. Thus, in the introductory section, when describing the subject "Spanish Language and Literature" in the curriculum, metalinguistic awareness appears as a verbal activity that should be integrated into all language levels, in discursive, textual and sentence levels, and should be implemented into the whole learning processes, both in oral and written discourses, through the different stages of production: preparation, textualisation, and revision. By practicing these activities students acquire the necessary mechanisms to learn their own language actively, autonomously, and for life. The Spanish and Galician legal documents, then,

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stress the two phases mentioned above, reception and production, as well as both oral and written production.

Before considering this type of analysis and reflection on languages, there are some prior factors to bear in mind, such as the selection of the linguistic area in which we are going to apply it. Metalinguistic reflection is typically put into practice in the study of grammar (Pastor Cesteros 2005, Milian and Camps 2006, Rodríguez Gonzalo 2011, Guasch Boyé 2014), although it has also been demonstrated that written composition activities require a significant element of metalinguistic reflection (Ribas et al. 2002, Camps 2015, 30–33)[2]. On the other hand, we need to differentiate between implicit and explicit reflection, since the former occurs more spontaneously and remains internalised, whereas the latter is normally verbalised, and hence would be the stage which we would aim to achieve in the classroom. Additionally, a further distinction can be made between instrumental and declarative metalinguistic reflection: the former refers to the knowledge that permits an individual to use a language spontaneously, and the latter constitutes the knowledge used by individuals to explain how a language functions (Pastor Cesteros 2005, 639).

Pastor Cesteros considers that metalinguistic awareness can, depending on the materials and methodology involved, be conveyed directly to students, or on the contrary can be generated through daily classroom practices, both individually and in groups (2005, 639). As noted above, using a text in different languages is especially valuable here, allowing students to form hypotheses on the functioning of the language and to discover different rules when comparing the languages in question. For this reason, Shelley's text will be used in what follows to explore this type of contrastive reflection. As we have said, it is possible nowadays, through promoting learning autonomy, to reintroduce contrastive analysis into the classroom as a valid instrument for students to compare examples and thus draw their own conclusions (James 2002, 31). This type of pedagogical strategy is also suitable due to its recurring or spiral nature, as students who have reflected on a certain aspect of one or more languages will have increased their ability to identify other components related to the topic under examination, and finally, to develop an abstract analysis of it (Roberts 2011, 226).

Metalinguistic analysis can be applied to a great variety of linguistic categories and grammatical concepts. Camps, for example, points out a number of studies in this area which have focused on linguistic components such as adjectives, personal pronouns, and verb tenses (2015, 33). Moreover, she cites various unique situations that have been the focus of different studies here (Camps 2015, 34), such as the fact that students do not often acquire grammar by applying just the strategies proposed in the classroom, but rather do so by using their own means. In this regard, a text in two or more languages can provide a highly effective means of expressing the same concept or event in two or more different ways, which in turn would favour reflection and autonomous learning. On the other hand, Camps (2015, 35) also specifies those

[2] For more examples of metalinguistic awareness in the classroom, see the corresponding section in the volume by Cots and Nussbaum (2002).

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techniques most frequently used by students for the recognition of grammatical categories in a text, namely, the analysis of the sentence, the position of a word within it, and its relationship with the rest of the elements in the sentence or paragraph. She describes, then, some of the strategies which are clearly fostered by implementing the technique promoted in this study: reading and exploring the same text in different languages.

3. Instructional dialogue

As observed above, metalinguistic analysis offers an informal and independent approach to understand how languages work, but the conglomeration of new contents acquired should be systematised by the students, and this might involve significant difficulties for them. It is therefore necessary to engage students in an additional phase, one in which they verbalise their findings in dialogue, both with the teacher and with their classmates, as a means of taking the metalinguistic activity beyond the mere identification of words or other linguistic phenomena (Roberts 2011). However, this is not the most habitual method of teaching languages in classrooms, since, as Usó Viciedo (2014, 52–53) has noted, there is commonly a lack of metalinguistic reflection and of inferential processes and, most importantly, students do not often relate theoretical contents to communicative practice, and hence the tradition of memorising grammar without any contextualisation continues. This is especially the case in L1 lessons, and perhaps less so when dealing with foreign languages. Usó Viciedo (2014, 53–55) and Mosquera Castro (2018, 32–33) therefore consider that the procedures used in the latter case can be harnessed and can contribute a great deal to the instruction of grammar in students' native languages. In this regard, let us recall what Mosquera Castro (2018, 26) claimed about the special circumstances that occur in some communities, such as Galicia. Here, due to the sociolinguistic peculiarities of the region, there are many urban areas in which one of the co-official languages of the community (Galician) is similar to a foreign language for a notable proportion of speakers and students.

Instructional dialogue is crucial in making explicit those hypotheses obtained during metalinguistic practice, both in groupwork, when opinions are exchanged and contrasted, and with the teacher in the form of feedback, since the learners are likely to find it difficult to systematise all the new information acquired in the previous stage. With instructional or didactic dialogue, students transform the hypotheses arising from reflection into a new kind of manipulated and molded input, which allows them to integrate it into future metalinguistic practices. The dialogue that is normally present in the classroom is the one established between the teacher and the students. By using this specific interaction, the teacher guides the students to focus on certain aspects, to self-correct, and to delve deeper into their analysis (Roberts 2011, 261–262).

In order to complement teacher-students dialogue, collaborative dialogue between students should be fostered. This occurs when students work together to solve a task

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(Roberts 2011, 262)[3]. It is a type of dialogue that coexists with the previous one in the classroom, as long as the communicative learning of languages is encouraged and stimulated by teachers. Simultaneously, as Milian and Camps point out, instructional interactions among students activate their formative evaluations (2006, 30). Through dialogue, the pupils share their knowledge in order to complete an assigned task, to help the rest of their classmates, and to monitor or regulate their performance, both their own and those of the rest of the group. This is also significant in terms of students' communicative skills, since interactions of this type are an excellent means of practicing oral skills.

4. Didactic Implications

4.1. Plurilingual Educational Settings in Spain

In Spain, as in many places around the world, there are regions and communities where more than one language is spoken. For instance, in Galicia there are two official languages, Galician and Spanish, which all students have to learn and master by the end of secondary education, as well as one or two foreign languages. In the Galician curriculum for Compulsory Secondary Education and Upper Secondary Education (Decree 86/2015) it is explicitly stated that students should learn all the languages present in the curriculum in an integrated way. This includes not only the mother tongues and foreign languages, but also the classical ones (Greek and Latin). Moreover, it is also specified that schools, by means of their own linguistic strategies, will take the necessary measures for teaching languages in an integrated way. As established in the previously mentioned decree, these measures include common basic methodological principles, content and assessment criteria and learning standards, and shared terminology.

Recently, several studies, such as Apraiz Jaio, Pérez Gómez, and Ruiz Pérez (2012), Guasch Boyé (2014), Mallol and Alsina (2017) and Narcy-Combes et al. (2019), together with those in the special issue of the journal *Textos de Didactica de la Lengua y de la Literatura* (vol. 47, 2008), which is devoted entirely to this topic, have established integrated language teaching as an effective approach in contexts where several languages coexist. In the introduction to this special issue, the Editorial Board of the journal highlights the need to open new paths for teaching in the area of language and literature, in which teachers help students to reflect on the wonderful and complex world of languages, and to do so critically, while also discovering what they call the perverse uses of words (2008, 6). In this way, language teachers might engage students

[3] Robert distinguishes a third type of instructional dialogue, the one that the student establishes with their self (2011, 262); however, this, in effect, is considered in the process previously addressed regarding the creation of hypothesis and metalinguistic analysis.

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and capture their attention, avoiding the kinds of prejudices that often see learning languages as a useless activity.

Such an integrative model promotes coordination and collaboration among the teachers of different languages, so that the transference of learning between languages is facilitated. Apraiz Jaio et al. regret that the implementation of this type of successful practice, and also teacher coordination, are still far from being generalised in language teaching (2012, 124), and the truth is that traditional methodologies and textbooks continue to prevail as the only language resources in many classrooms. However, once implemented, integrative experiences have been favourably received by both teachers and students, although an initial reluctance to introduce changes is common. Mallol and Alsina (2017, 51), after conducting a trial of integrated language teaching in a secondary education context, summarised teachers' and students' opinions as thus:

1) Teachers communicate and work together, and this fact is perceived and appreciated by students, since in this way they do not repeat the same content and it is possible for them to explain certain topics further;
2) explanations are better understood by students, who are able to reflect and put them into practice later on;
3) coincidences and differences between languages are more clearly perceived and, therefore, students' cognitive work is more effectively achieved;
4) as students assimilate the deep structure of the linguistic components, they are more motivated to do the same in other languages;
5) the integrative experience takes into account what students already know, which facilitates the acquisition of new contents;
6) students develop more practical work in the classroom, which promotes autonomous learning.

All these positive reactions seem to invite more experiences of this type. In particular, in the current study the use of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* in different languages is proposed as a resource to enhance one of the aspects highlighted by participants in the previous survey, that is, reflecting on the differences and similarities between languages, this, in turn, promoting metalinguistic analysis in plurilingual contexts.

4.2. Literary Texts as Teaching Resources: *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley

A popular text in secondary school syllabuses in Spain is *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* (1818) by Mary Shelley, both in its original version and in adaptations for younger readers. It is also used as a set reading text on many modern language syllabi, be it in Spanish, in both the official languages in those regions with two such languages, or in English (as a Foreign Language). Thus, various editions of the book are available in each of the languages spoken in Spain, as well as in English, which makes the text very accessible for the students. Almost from the moment it was published, Shelley's *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* had a significant impact on English society, quickly crossing borders and genres, and enjoying prolonged success

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and influence. Today, two centuries later, Frankenstein's "hideous progeny", as Shelley herself put it in the prologue to the 1831 edition, lives on in new printed versions, films, plays and comics, video games and virtual creations (Grossman 2015). Similar to other weird and frightening literary creatures, such as giants, ogres, werewolves and vampires, Mary Shelley's monstrous protagonist in *Frankenstein* has been adopted as a popular figure in texts for both children and young adults (Coats and Norris Sands 2016, Alder 2018). Moreover, as Coats and Norris Sands have noted, issues such as "family relationships, the roles and dangers of knowledge and secrecy, and the fear of isolation" (2016, 243), which are addressed in the text, are meaningful for present-day young readers.

Traditionally, the use of literary texts as an educational resource has been a frequent feature of the teaching and learning of languages, although more recently, with the introduction of communicative approaches, texts of this type are no longer considered essential or perhaps even desirable. Most teaching time is currently devoted to communicative situations in day-to-day social environments and these often refer to academic or work environments (Ur 2012, 223). However, other positions can also be found which do favour the use of literary texts, although such texts are sometimes chosen simply because they are literary in nature, and the potential for their linguistic analysis is overlooked (Hall 2015, 3). In this study we agree with authors such as Bassnett and Grundy (1993) and Hall (2015), who try to overcome these prejudices and reconcile both positions. In this regard, Lazar, responding to those who consider that literary language is not advisable and appropriate for the teaching and learning of languages in that it typically deviates from the norm stylistically, argues that by analysing these deviations, the norm is effectively and unavoidably analysed by observing to what extent a text deviates from that norm (1993, 18–19).

In addition to the most obvious peculiarity of *Frankenstein*—its literary nature—teachers can, by using editions in different languages, design activities in the languages spoken by all students, as they work together designing and creating teaching materials. Thus, all the students can improve their linguistic and metalinguistic skills whilst valuing all the languages spoken in the classroom equally. Most importantly, any student can act as an 'expert' at least in one of the languages involved. This is especially needed in bilingual or plurilingual contexts, since from a theoretical point of view people are effectively bilingual or plurilingual, but in practice this is not the case, since most speakers do not present the same degree of fluency in all the languages they speak, and they use their languages in times and occasions shaped by the social context (Gorter 2015, 86). One of the most common situations here is that one language is used in the academic setting and the other with family and friends. These speakers find it strange and perhaps awkward to use one language in the context of the other, and might even lack the resources, such as vocabulary or expressions, to do so effectively in specific contexts (Gorter 2015, 86). Nevertheless, research on plurilingual speakers (Cenoz and Gorter 2011, Gorter 2015, Jessner 2008) has found that they can use their entire linguistic background as a learning source, given that they have a more highly

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activated degree of metalinguistic knowledge, and richer and better communication skills. As Ruiz Bikandi (2008, 38) points out, offering those who know two or more languages the possibility of contemplating the specific nature of these in a contrastive way affords them new perspectives and an unusual depth of linguistic training. Moreover, promoting a reflective and inquiring attitude in bilingual or plurilingual students guides them to consciously review their own linguistic knowledge, in order to improve it.

4.3. Practical Implementation of Metalinguistic Awareness and Instructional Dialogue

In addition to studies on metalinguistic awareness in a single language, be it a mother tongue or an additional one, groups of teachers from Catalonia (where Spanish and Catalan are also co-official) have already proposed, and, in fact, have already experimented with, the teaching and learning of areas such as grammar and language skills in an interlinguistic way, that is, using comparisons between languages. In particular, research and practice here have concentrated on grammatical concepts such as verb aspect and tense in narratives in Spanish, Catalan, and English (Guasch Boyé et al. 2004, Milian and Camps 2006). Interlingustic studies have also been proposed in another community with two official languages, the Basque Country, by taking advantage of the contexts in which several languages are used, in this case Spanish, Basque, and English, to promote metalinguistic awareness in the classroom (Ruiz Bikandi 2008). This type of research and practice seeks to capitalise on the communicative situations in the classroom, such as the one proposed in this article in which the same text is read in different languages, and where differences and similarities are examined. Such an activity is related to a teaching and learning model in which students develop a cognitive process to discover or identify a phenomenon: they discover a difference between the languages studied, form hypotheses through the use of metalinguistic reflection, and draw conclusions that they will subsequently apply in other situations, thus verifying the effectiveness of what they have hypothesised. As such, the model relates to Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, and also to inductive approaches, in which data are offered to pupils, who then draw consequences and propose rules.

In addition, the use of texts in two or more languages accords perfectly with the factors that Pastor Cesteros (2005, 643) provides as a means of simplifying excessive theoretical content and making complex linguistic subjects in educational programs more accessible:

- Morphosyntactic and lexical content is simplified, as the students have to develop their own information while reading texts.
- Activities of this type encompass not only the analysis of sentences but also discourse, in that students use real texts.
- Students identify linguistic units as they encounter them, instead of being provided with prior descriptions of them.

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– Reflection on languages is approached through comprehension activities, first through reading, and then through productive activities, by using dialogue and by creating new texts.
– An inductive approach is promoted, since it amplifies students' reflections and favours their autonomy.

In order to assist students, Ruiz Bikandi (2008, 37–38) considers that it is necessary to plan linguistic reflection tasks carefully. She considers that students should observe the nature of interlinguistic differences and be given the opportunity to use their first language, whichever it is, and that this choice should be made by them when they are offered texts in two or more languages. Ruiz Bikandi (2008) proposes to exploit the basic components that languages share, even if they exhibit phonological and morphosyntactic differences and show diverse social uses. For example, languages tend to share certain kinds of markers, such as time markers. Indeed, these are amongst the linguistic devices that students will be likely to notice in the type of discourse present in *Frankenstein*. In some chapters of the novel, the protagonist, using the first person, narrates what has happened to him from the sense of creating the monstrous creature until the present; the diverse verb tenses used in the story are crucial to understand the plot correctly.

As noted above, by observing linguistic phenomena in the texts, students will create hypotheses and reflect on them. There is no doubt, as Guasch Boyé points out, that when students speak and learn languages simultaneously, they tend to apply their knowledge of the linguistic system of the language in which they are more proficient or have learned previously to the one they learned later, or in which they are less proficient (2014, 33). This is something that we all do naturally, and we can easily take advantage of it. Once students have formed their hypotheses about the linguistic phenomena observed, by means of instructional dialogue, they will be able to present their findings and will get feedback from the teacher and their classmates. Regarding the dialogue with the teacher, Salaberri offers various discursive resources that the teacher can apply to facilitate the constructive and collaborative process with students, such as certain questions, code switching, translating, and negotiating the metalanguage (2002, 73–83). This author describes the use of these resources for teaching foreign languages, specifically English, but as observed previously, there is a growing consensus on the need to use methodologies and resources typical in foreign language instruction for teaching native languages. After discovering their findings through an instructional dialogue guided by the teacher, students are ready to interact with their classmates, using strategies such as short debates, which have been considered beneficial for problem solving in the classroom, not least because contributions can be offered by all students (Santalla-Fernández and Lasa-Álvarez 2019, 61–62). However, debates are also one of the best tools to improve language skills, specifically the oral skills of speaking and listening.

Moreover, it would be advisable to transfer all information gathered through reflecting on and analysing linguistic elements to the performance of some kind of cre-

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ative task. Like Dr Frankenstein in the text read by the students, they might, for example, be asked to write a short story in the first person and in at least two languages about their own life or specific personal experiences, but with the condition that they focus on their linguistic and cultural identity. Autobiographical texts of this type are motivating because they are familiar to students, among other reasons because today's society is obsessed with self-exposure and with sharing first-person experiences in both the media and on social networks. Texts like these also connect with students in terms of their emotional burdens, and often provoke empathic responses from peers (Lasa-Álvarez 2017). For this particular activity, the format of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) would be used, as designed by the Council of Europe, with its three parts: the language passport, the linguistic biography, and the dossier[4]. Among the objectives of this document are aspects such as the following: promoting linguistic and cultural diversity and intercultural learning, fostering plurilingual and intercultural experiences, and developing students' autonomy. In particular, while producing their passport and their linguistic biography, students can assess themselves in terms of their use and learning of languages, an aspect that can be directly linked to the teaching strategies and techniques analysed in this study.

When students perform this creative task in the two official languages of their community, for instance, Spanish and Galician, they will try to do so simultaneously, in order to increase their skills in both languages. However, when a foreign language is added (typically English in the context of Galicia) the process will be different, since, apart from preforming it at the same time, they will have to use translation as a resource at specific moments. Bassnett and Grundy (1993, 80) make an interesting observation here in associating translation with language learning. When individuals are learning languages they begin to think about the process of translating one linguistic system into another, and they are very much aware of this. Hence, they need to know how to do so and how to practice the process, one which is fostered very effectively by the use of texts in two or more languages.

In case of using translation, students will be offered a card with the main ideas to design a text in various languages (adapted from Glazer et al. 2017, 84 –85):

- Produce an outline or draft of the text in the mother tongue and submit it to the teacher for editing and comments.
- Translate the revised and edited text. Depending on the length of the text, an online translator may be used.
- Resubmit the translated text to the teacher for further editing and corrections.
- Use an online programme or application so that the text looks like a professional publication.
- Use an online platform or application to share the text with the other students.
- Finally, provide feedback about the texts created by classmates.

[4] All the information on the ELP can be consulted on web page of the European Council devoted to this document: https://www.coe.int/en/web/portfolio/home.

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Although this task of creating an ELP will have an individual character, for obvious reasons, in order to continue with the already familiar collaborative dynamics of the classroom, students can use the dialogue with the teacher and their peers to share ideas and resolve doubts during the creative process and to offer feedback as a group.

5. Conclusions

In present day societies, where plurilingual educational settings are more and more common, strategies that capitalise on the positive features of such scenarios are necessary. From this starting point, the current article has proposed the use of metalinguistic analysis and instructional dialogue in the classroom as effective tools to maximise students' knowledge and contact with various languages. Thus, instead of teaching and learning the languages present on the curriculum in isolation, they are compared and contrasted by students to discover how linguistic systems function and to form their own hypotheses here. For this procedure, diverse translations of the same text have been proposed, namely Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Students in secondary education in Spain are familiar with this novel, as it is habitually included in teaching programmes and curricula at this educational stage, both in native and foreign languages. Afterwards, by means of instructional dialogue, students organise and verbalise their findings when interacting with the teacher and with their classmates. In terms of linguistic skills, students mainly develop receptive skills and oral production during this process; therefore, for practicing the written production, they are also required to create a text in the first person, following the example of the text analysed, *Frankenstein*, which includes some chapters with the main character's first person narrative. Yet in this case, to continue addressing linguistic instruction, students have to create a plurilingual text about their linguistic experiences.

The strategies proposed in this study are closely connected to learner-centred teaching approaches, which seek to enhance students' engagement and involvement in the teaching and learning process. This process may be demanding for them, but students' participation is necessary in order to activate more sophisticated learning skills, not only regarding their linguistic abilities, but also to achieve harmonious academic and personal development. With techniques such as metalinguistic analysis and meaningful dialogue in the classroom, students learn to examine information, form hypotheses, solve problems, and evaluate findings; in other words, their autonomous learning is strongly enhanced. However, in any classroom, students can learn with and from their classmates, and in this regard, cooperation should be even more consistently used in a plurilingual educational setting, since students share not only their knowledge and learning with the rest of the group but also their own linguistic experiences.

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