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RAISING AWARENESS IN DEVELOPING THE PLURILINGUAL REPERTOIRE

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Abstract

This study examines building awareness of the plurilingual repertoire and the use of plurilingual competence among university students majoring in English who are preparing to become future English teachers or professionals in fields where English plays a central role, such as interpreting, translation, or cultural studies related to English-speaking countries. The paper investigates cognate recognition in an intercomprehension setting, where university students do not know the text's language directly but are familiar with a closely related language they study as a major.
The research addressed two main problematic areas: (a) the impact of interlingual correspondences on cognate recognition in English-French intercomprehension on mediating a text from French into English (an experimental group) and (b) the effect of guided instructions on students' cognate recognition (an experimental group) in comparison with the cognate recognition of those who were not specifically instructed (a control group).
The results show that meaningful context improves the likelihood of cognate recognition. In the first research, the main objective – comprehending a sufficient amount of information to mediate a written French text orally in English – was achieved; however, the results were dependent on the text. The text with fewer cognates prompted students in the experimental group to activate prior knowledge, draw on personal linguistic experience, and consciously mobilise their plurilingual resources to transfer meaning from one language to another. Students' performances were evaluated against the rating scale for transmitting the message and using the mediation descriptors in the CEFR CV. In the second research, data from two groups: experimental (with an intervention) and control groups are presented and analysed.

Keywords: Plurilingualism; Mediation; Interlingual correspondences; Cognate recognition; Intercomprehension.

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1 Introduction

Although the concept of plurilingualism was introduced in the original *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)* published by the Council of Europe in 2001, it was fully elaborated in the *CEFR Companion Volume* (Council

of Europe, 2020). The CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) emphasised the idea of languages forming an interrelated repertoire, in contrast to earlier views that treated languages as separate, compartmentalised systems. This conceptual shift is further illustrated through the framework's focus on learners' sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences, their positive perception of linguistic complexity, and their autonomy in developing strategies for new communicative contexts.

The CEFR Companion Volume (CEFR CV) builds on this foundation by introducing detailed reference levels for mediation, online interaction, and plurilingual and pluricultural competence, and it is widely recognised as a key resource for inclusive plurilingual education. North and Piccardo (2016) provide a detailed account of the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of these additions. The CEFR CV (Council of Europe, 2020) places particular emphasis on mediation, highlighting the construction of new meaning – often collaboratively and for others – rather than interaction, which is understood as the co-construction of discourse through the negotiation of meaning. While interaction involves reception and production, mediation encompasses reception, interaction, and production (Piccardo & North, 2022). Among the three categories of mediation, *Mediating a Text* is the most familiar, offering scales for both oral and written mediation. In contemporary communication, acting as an intermediary is an essential skill for exchanging information and collaborating effectively. Mediation can therefore be intralinguistic or interlinguistic.

Neuner (2004) argues that a key feature of plurilingualism is the expansion of the language repertoire through learning additional languages, since learning does not begin from zero each time. In modern language education, the goal is not full mastery of each language; rather, competence levels may vary across languages. Coste et al. (2009) further emphasise that proficiency may differ across skills within a single language. Although plurilingualism includes pluriculturalism, competence in these two dimensions may develop unevenly. For example, a high level of cultural competence in a target community does not necessarily require an equivalent level of linguistic mastery. Competence develops gradually and is shaped by changes in family, geography, work, and personal interests.

Galante (2020) conceptualises a language repertoire as encompassing an individual's past, present, and future linguistic experiences, including social, historical, and biographical dimensions at both cognitive and emotional levels. This makes the repertoire inseparable from personal identity. Mediation plays a crucial role in developing linguistic and cultural awareness and highlights the dynamic, evolving nature of linguistic repertoires, thereby supporting successful plurilingual encounters. Plurilingual and pluricultural competence includes openness towards speakers of other linguistic and cultural communities. This perspective aligns with earlier views emphasising the close relationship between language learning and intercultural education, and the need for their integration in order to foster mutual understanding and social cohesion (Ferrari, 2015). Awareness of the diversity within one's own linguistic repertoire and understanding the functions of its components also foster a positive perception of other people's languages (Council of Europe,

2006).Plurilingual competence can be achieved through a variety of dynamic linguistic processes such as switching from one language to another (codeswitching, flexible bilingualism, translanguaging), expressing oneself in one language and understanding a person speaking another (intercomprehension), calling upon a knowledge of a number of languages to make sense of a text (translanguaging, intercomprehension) and recognising words from a common international store in a new guise (intercomprehension). Intercomprehension can be viewed as the ability of users of different but related languages to understand each other without intentional study (European Commission, 2012).

Mediation focuses on meaning-making and facilitating communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries, often through collaborative processes. While mediation can occur within a single language, it frequently involves movement across languages. The concept of mediation reflects the CEFR's social vision and occupies a central place in the action-oriented approach. In this perspective, language users are viewed as social agents who draw on all available resources in their linguistic repertoire and continue to develop these resources throughout their trajectories. Plurilingualism supports this process by fostering awareness of languages and emphasising the interconnectedness of linguistic resources.

2 Literature Review

The theoretical assumptions underlying the concepts of mediation and plurilingualism, introduced in the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) and further elaborated in the CEFR Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2020), have been expanded by subsequent scholarship. North (2014) and Piccardo and North (2019) contributed significantly to this development and established the professional forum API (Action-oriented, Plurilingual and Intercultural Education), which enables researchers and practitioners to examine how these concepts can be implemented for practical pedagogical purposes.

A shift towards using tasks in language education is based on criteria for a task: viewing a task as a work plan, focusing on meaning, involving real-world language use, engaging all four language skills, engaging cognitive processes, and having a clearly defined communicative outcome (Ellis, 2003). This approach enabled the elaboration of the clear distinction between a *task* and an *exercise*, emphasising that a task engages learners in purposeful action aimed at achieving a specific outcome and can be contrasted with the more traditional approach, the task-oriented approach, in which learners are presented with certain language, working in pairs to improve fluency (North, 2014). However, within the action-oriented approach, tasks require learners to collaborate, activate prior knowledge, search for information, negotiate meaning, and assume roles autonomously, with communication serving as the central mechanism for achieving the intended result (Piccardo, 2014; Piccardo & North, 2019).

In contrast to task-based language learning and teaching, CEFR-based scenarios are seen as a mental framework, providing 'a holistic setting that integrates situations, tasks, activities, texts and different aspects of competence in real language use' (North, 2014, p. 141). Hunter et al. (2019) further highlight the value of action-oriented scenarios that unfold through stages of reception, production, interaction, and mediation, culminating in the collaborative creation of artefacts or performances. Learners receive linguistic input, resources, and scaffolding, and are encouraged to draw on multiple-language sources, thereby working in a plurilingual manner. The impact of the action-oriented approach has been examined in various contexts, focusing either on its influence on coursebook design (Puren, 2009) or on its effects in research settings. For example, Mirici et al. (2023) investigated its effect on low-performing students and found that integrating CEFR-based concepts increased learner motivation.

Mediation viewed as the central concept of sociocultural theory (Lantolf & Thorne, 2016), has not been developed to its full potential in the CEFR. The theories related to the mediated social interactions, individuals' actions with the environment mediated by tools that are socially constructed and culturally connoted, evolved as a result of the experience contributed to the complexity of mediation as a phenomenon (Lantolf & Thorne, 2016). All human behaviour is organised and controlled by material and symbolic artefacts, while the sign as a symbolic tool replaces the material tool in mental activity. Language develops through social interaction and later becomes the object of reflection, in which the language user can reconstruct and internalise processes such as thought. Kramsch (2012) views whole language acquisition as socialisation into communities of practice through the mediation of material signs. Language takes a vital role as the main vehicle for mediation, being 'a working tool, an object of learning, a vehicle for knowledge and a support for reflection and the construction of meaning' (Piccardo & North, 2019, p. 76). It fully fulfils its role as a semiotic tool, facilitating thought and the co-construction of meaning and concepts. The sociocultural theory significantly contributed to the conceptualisation of mediation in the CEFR, offering a dynamic and innovative view of language learning.

The pedagogical integration of mediation has been promoted in several national contexts, including Germany (Kolb, 2016) and Greece (Dendrinos, 2024). Bérešová (2021) explored the perspectives of future English teachers regarding mediation in conventional language classes. Participants valued mediation as a means of enabling learners, viewed as social agents, to participate in the co-construction of meaning. In real communicative situations, texts are frequently conveyed to interlocutors who may not share the same knowledge base or linguistic resources, whether within the same language or across different languages.

The plurilingual comprehension scale in the CEFR CV (Council of Europe, 2020) includes the descriptors referring to the recognition of similarities and identical uses of the words, which is in line with teaching vocabulary related to the strengthening of the form-meaning connection (Nation, 2001). The scale for building on plurilingual repertoire includes descriptors for using different languages in

collaborative interaction to clarify expected outcomes, address concerns, and make inferences from context (Council of Europe, 2020).

In a plurilingual perspective, language awareness focuses on similarities and differences between languages (and cultures and other concepts). Plurilingual competence can be achieved through codeswitching, bilingualism, translanguaging, intercomprehension, cross-linguistic mediation, code mixing, code meshing and metrolingualism (Piccardo & North, 2019; Garcia & Wei, 2014; Grosjean, 2010). In language teaching methodology, intercomprehension between related languages is part of four pluralistic approaches, which are didactic approaches based on language teaching/learning involving several languages. A systematic focus is on receptive skills, as developing comprehension is the most effective way to use knowledge of a related language (Candelier et al., 2012).

Further research into plurilingual education is needed to examine its potential to enhance learners' interlinguistic mediation skills. Bérešová and Ševčík (2024) conducted an initial investigation into cognate recognition in English-German intercomprehension, which was further expanded through mediation activities, emphasising the role of plurilingual education as a pedagogical tool for supporting the acquisition of target languages. Their findings contribute to the ongoing professional discourse on plurilingualism, which has gained renewed relevance with the introduction of the new national curriculum for lower-secondary education in Slovakia. The concept of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism also influences language policy beyond Europe (Savski, 2019; Nadrah & Harwati, 2021).

To conclude, it is very important to emphasise that the concepts referring to the systematic framework of bilingual education (Grosjean, 2010; Garcia & Wei, 2014) differ from the concept of plurilingualism in the educational procedures (Piccardo & North, 2019); however, a cross-linguistic approach (Koda, 2005) can encourage learners to apply their plurilingual repertoire for real-life purposes. Plurilingualism can be viewed as a complex phenomenon guided by concepts such as linguistic and cultural repertoires and trajectories. However, in different situations, users of second/foreign languages can rely on different resources of their plurilingual competence to achieve comprehension or effective communication.

3 Research Methodology

The Faculty of Education at Trnava University in Slovakia offers three study programmes at both bachelor's and master's levels to prepare future professionals in English Language Teaching and in English Language and Anglophone Cultures. Graduates of the former programme are expected to teach English at primary and secondary schools in alignment with CEFR-based national curricula. Graduates of the latter programme pursue careers in various sectors, including interpreting, translation, private-sector education, and cultural institutions that require English-language and cultural expertise.

English is a lingua franca and dominates academic publishing; the Slovak Ministry of Education therefore declared it the primary foreign language in Slovakia in 2016. This regulation was later revised, and since 2019, English has become a mandatory second foreign language for pupils whose first foreign language is German, French, Italian, Russian, or Spanish (Bérešová, forthcoming, 2026). Although these changes expanded learners' choice of target languages, national examination data show that 96.6% of the 36,725 secondary-school test takers opted for English at one of the three officially approved levels (B1, B2, C1).

From a methodological perspective, the research project included two quantitative quasi-experimental studies. In the first study, the main focus was on measuring performance differences in mediating through a summary task and comparing mean scores between two text-mediating groups within an experimental group. The second study investigated instructional effects between two groups of students: an experimental group that received explicit instruction in intercomprehension and a control group that did not.

3.1 Research 1

Students enrolled in English master's programmes are mostly proficient only in English; some of them studied German in secondary education. Given that competence in only one foreign language is insufficient for students' future professional needs, it seems relevant to encourage students to take advantage of opportunities to be exposed to other languages. The data referring to the words derived from French and Latin that make up 36% of the first 1,000 most frequently used words, which equals to 51% (Nation, 2001, p. 264), gave rise to the research project to build on learners' knowledge of the historical influence of Norman French on Anglo-Saxon English. This linguistic background was used to raise awareness of another foreign language – French – by linking students' prior knowledge and their existing linguistic repertoire to the comprehension of a new language. The academic course called *English Language and Its Developmental Specifics* includes the analysis of English texts, with a focus on the origins of the English lexicon. The enrolled students revealed that the number of English words derived from Norman or Central French is quite significant. To stimulate students' interest in developing their plurilingual repertoire, a two-part research project was planned to demonstrate that awareness of cognates across languages can facilitate reading comprehension of texts written in an unfamiliar language and transmit the message (the first part of the project) and to compare the effect of guided and unguided instructions in using an intercomprehension didactic approach (the second part of the project). The problem related to the effect of explicit guidance in cross-linguistic similarities on students' comprehension of texts in an unstudied language was addressed in the following research question:

RQ1: To what extent does guided exploitation of similarities between languages facilitate comprehension of a text in a previously unstudied language to enable the

students concerned to transmit the message from an unfamiliar language into a studied language?

The first part of the research focused on measuring performance differences in mediating through a summary task and comparing mean scores between two groups distinguished by two texts. This mixed-method study involved analysing a French text, identifying English cognates, comparing results, and evaluating students' mediation abilities. Cognate identification was carried out using two approaches: (1) selected AI tools and (2) students' own analysis based on perceived lexical similarity. The results from the AI tools and the students' recognition and verification processes were compared. Students' mediation performance was evaluated through qualitative content analysis, focusing on the accuracy of meaning transfer. Supporting methods included descriptive statistics and the CEFR-based mediation framework.

Participants were first-year master's students enrolled in the academic course called English Language and Its Developmental Specifics, which consists of a one-hour lecture and a two-hour seminar. Twenty-four students participated in the study out of the total cohort of thirty-eight; the remaining students were attending a *Cultural Experience Field Trip* in Dublin. The participants were divided into two equal groups of twelve, each working with a different French text. Within these two major groups, subgroups of four were established to enable students to work closely together and to ensure they had sufficient time for interaction and negotiation. None of the students had studied French; their second foreign language at secondary school was German.

The materials consisted of two short texts from a French educational magazine published in Germany (Appendices A and B). Although students had not previously engaged in such an activity, they were familiar with the historical influence of French on English. The concept of mediating a text was introduced, with particular emphasis on interlinguistic mediation within plurilingual education and on developing plurilingual repertoires.

The activity proceeded in several stages. Each group of twelve students, divided into three subgroups of four, was assigned one French text. Within each subgroup, roles were assigned: two students generated a list of cognates using the selected AI tool, while the other two compiled a list based on their own linguistic knowledge, focusing on words that resembled English. Each subgroup, therefore, produced two lists – one generated by AI and one created through student analysis. When comparing the two lists of lexical cognates compiled differently, the students were expected to negotiate and decide which words were relevant to their scenario, providing justification and evidence for their choices. Through collaboration, dictionary consultation, etymological verification, and discussion, the groups refined their lists.

In the second stage, students concentrated on obtaining accurate information by rereading the text, focusing on content and main ideas, and using their verified cognate lists to support comprehension. They then estimated how much of the text they understood and whether they could identify the required information. The lists

of lexical cognates – based on different languages and prior knowledge – were used to calculate the number of recognised lexical items.

In the final stage, students collaborated to prepare an oral mediation of the French text in English, based on the information extracted from the original texts. Working in their four-member groups, they contributed specific ideas and supported one another throughout the process. During collaboration, one student in each group naturally emerged as a leader, stimulating logical reasoning, encouraging contributions, and guiding the discussion, despite not being formally appointed to this role. The other group members responded positively, feeling encouraged and respected by this person. Their performances were assessed using a holistic rating scale for the transmission of retrieved information.

3.2 Research 2

To demonstrate the effectiveness of introducing the conscious approach to developing the plurilingual repertoire, the second part of the investigation compared results from an experimental group after an intervention with those from a control group. This study referred to the following research question:

RQ2: Will students who are explicitly guided on the concept of intercomprehension achieve better results than those who are not?

The second study examined instructional effects between two groups of students: an experimental group that received explicit instruction on intercomprehension and a control group that did not. The main aim was to determine the impact of a particular intervention on the experimental group students' performance. This quantitative research was based on data on recognised cognates in both groups and compared students' achievements.

An experimental group is described in the first part of the research. In its second part, the control group consisted of 24 first-year master's students majoring in English who participated in the pre-service teacher training programme. These students were not offered the previously mentioned academic course, as their focus is on a variety of methodologies and teaching techniques in English language teaching. Consistent with the organisation in the experimental group, these students, who are expected to become English teachers, were divided equally into two main groups and worked with the same two texts. In this phase of the study, the focus was put on recognition of the lexical cognates achieved under different conditions, as these students were not trained to analyse the etymology of English words and were not instructed to mediate a text written in French into English. Their instructions focused on identifying similarities between French and English words and confirmed that those could be considered cognates, sharing the same meaning.

To prove the effectiveness of introducing the conscious approach to developing the plurilingual repertoire, it was important to compare the results achieved in two groups (experimental and control). In the experimental group, the instructions from presenting an intercomprehension didactic approach, through stages of comparing AI cognates and students' selection of cognates (critical

thinking), to explaining the concept of mediating a text (transmitting a message) were precisely planned and scaffolded during students' work. The control group students were only tasked with accomplishing the task mentioned above.

4 Results and Interpretation

In the research project, two research questions were addressed: one related to students' ability to convey a message from text written in an unfamiliar language, and the other to a comparison of the results achieved by students who were explicitly instructed in the concept of intercomprehension and those who were not.

RQ1: To what extent does guided exploitation of similarities between languages facilitate comprehension of a text in a previously unstudied language?

As the instructions were scaffolded, it is necessary to present the data obtained at each stage. In the first stage, Group 1 was required to analyse a 205-word text (Appendix A). After the first round, in which two students in each subgroup used their selected AI tool (ChatGPT 3.5), all three subgroups agreed on 39 words that were understandable because they resembled their English counterparts. They excluded items such as *vrai*, *Allemagne*, and *remporté* from the ChatGPT list and replaced them with more appropriate cognates, such as *milieu, petit* and *originaire*. Using their prior knowledge, the remaining six students prepared their own list, which included 12 proper names (also recognised by ChatGPT 3.5) and several prepositions and conjunctions. After a joint discussion and a second analysis of the text, drawing on their linguistic and cultural repertoire and comparing their lists, they concluded that the meaning of 60 notional words could be identified.

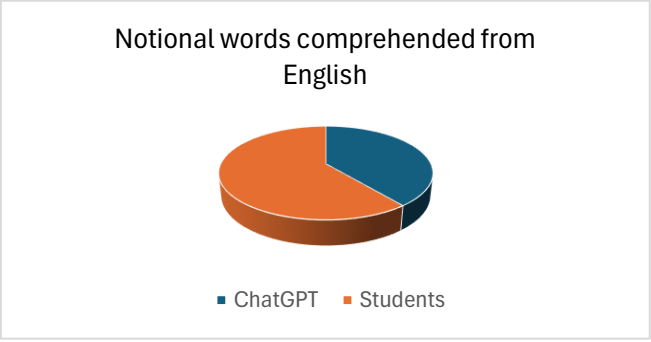

Figure 1. Notional words – English cognates in Text 1

The same procedures were applied in Group 2, whose members analysed Text 2 (Appendix B). Their selected AI tool, Copilot, provided 33 notional words claimed to be English cognates; however, the students decided to exclude three of them (*carrières*, *murs*, *foule*). The students working without AI recognised 49 notional words based on their knowledge of English. They then distributed the selected words

among themselves and systematically checked their origins to determine whether they were genuine cognates.

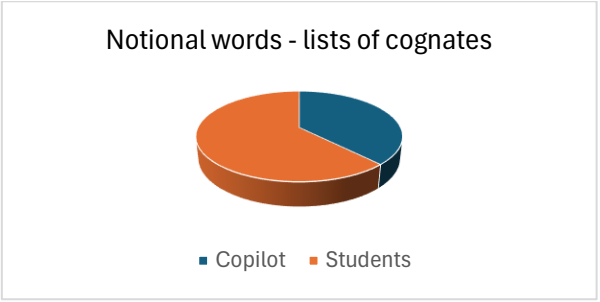

Figure 2. Notional words – English cognates in Text 2

However, when asked to mediate the message into English, they realised that the number of words in their lists was limited, which could negatively affect their comprehension. They divided the labour to search for additional words they could recognise in other languages or infer their meanings from context. This approach expanded their lists of words as they were able to identify further items through their awareness of other languages—for example, *l'été* from Slovak (*leto*), *belle* from Italian (*bella*), *enfant* from the phrase *enfant terrible*, and *mois* from Latin (*mensis*, the origin of English *month* and Slovak *mesiac*). Their understanding of *mois* was further supported by the names of the months appearing later in the text. Altogether, they were able to extract meaning from 60 notional words.

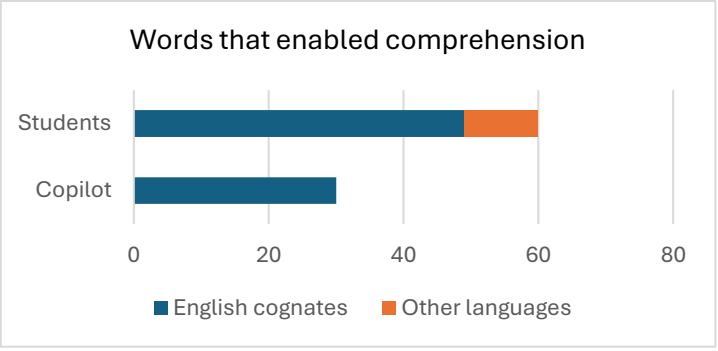

Figure 3. Text 2 – Students' English cognates and words comprehended through their plurilingual repertoire compared with English cognates provided by an AI tool

Students in Group 1 did not need to rely on other languages, as the number of English cognates was sufficient to transmit the message received in French into English. When being asked how much of the text they could comprehend, they removed proper nouns, articles, negative particles (*non*), and basic conjunctions such as *et* and *ou* to determine the total number of notional words. The resulting text contained 113 notional words, of which they were able to comprehend 60 lexical items.

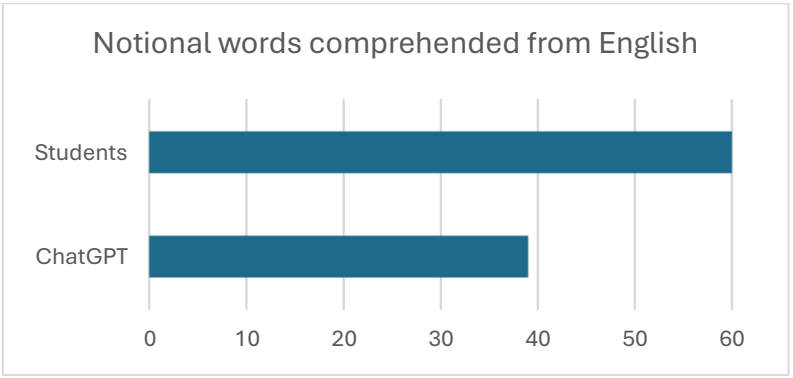

Figure 4. Notional words comprehended from English in Text 1

Although students in Group 2 applied the same procedure to Text 2, the outcome differed: the total number of words in the text was 157 notional words. The students became aware that this could make comprehension more challenging. During the whole-group discussion, they decided to use strategies such as identifying cues and making inferences to extract as much information as possible. This was essential if they wanted to transfer information from French into English.

To summarise the statistical analyses of notional words in both texts, it is evident that the removal of proper nouns, articles, negative particles (*non*), and basic conjunctions such as *et* and *ou* resulted in different numbers of notional words in each text, making Text 2 longer and more challenging for comprehension. Text 1, which contained 53.09% notional words that students could understand using their English knowledge, enabled Group 1 students to comprehend the text through their familiarity with English cognates. However, due to the lower number of articles, negative particles, and proper nouns, Text 2 remained longer and more complex. Combined with the lower number of English cognates, this required students to draw more extensively on their plurilingual repertoires in order to achieve a comprehensibility rate of 37.57%.

Both groups were asked to mediate the message from their texts to partners from the other group, ensuring that the essential content was communicated accurately. They were briefly familiarised with the proficient user performance description, which refers to their ability to explain the cultural background of beliefs, values, and practices sensitively, and to interpret and discuss them appropriately, managing sociolinguistic and pragmatic ambiguity and responding constructively. It was important to emphasise the expected reference level (level C), at which users can articulate complex abstract concepts and demonstrate cultural awareness in their interpretations and interactions, to prevent students from using simple language they had been exposed to in the French text. Their performance was measured using a holistic rating scale for message transmission. The rating scale was presented and discussed before the students' performances to make the assessment transparent and to inform the students about the expected outcomes.

Table 1. A rating scale for task achievement in transmitting the message

Scores	3	2	1
Task achievement	Includes all information required in the task	Includes most information required in the task	Includes some information required in the task

The selection of a rating scale was carefully reasoned out. In the initial planning of the research project, both rating scales seemed to have advantages and disadvantages. Although analytic rating scales contain more qualitative aspects and are more reliable than holistic ones, given their specific criteria, assessing holistically is a more natural process in real life. The main aim of the research was not to assess students' language competence, but rather to assess their ability to convey accurate information. Therefore, the students were informed about the descriptors for the qualitative aspect of task achievement. Since it was a collaborative task, their performances were assessed in pairs (two students from Text 1 Groups and two students from Text 2 Groups). Transmitting the message from a text written in French was in English. In each pair, students produced proportionally enough content to be assessed. The mean score for Group 1 was 2.66, indicating that the number of identified words enabled students to comprehend the text more deeply. They answered the key questions (who, what, when, where) appropriately and with confidence. Working collaboratively, students supported one another in preparing for their oral performances, often discussing possible interpretations and clarifying uncertainties. Observation of their mediation revealed two strategies: simplification by highlighting key information and inference from contextual clues. The high level of comprehensibility enabled Group 1's 6 pairs to convey the content successfully and meaningfully. Group 2's performance was scored 2.00. Although the number of cognates was lower, they changed their strategy and began relying on prior knowledge of certain words, either from their general linguistic repertoire or from exposure to other languages in real-life contexts. Since they did not comprehend the text in its full potential, their performances lacked the information expressed in French that they could not apply. However, they all acknowledged that their success was supported by their prior experience with the Online Etymology Dictionary, a specialised and comprehensive online resource which they had consulted in earlier tasks during the academic course *English Language and Its Developmental Specifics.*

Using the descriptors from the CEFR CV scale *Mediating a Text*, it can be concluded that the students were able to explain in English the relevance of specific information found in French (*relaying specific information*) and to summarise the main points clearly and in well-structured English at the C1 level. Their collaborative work aligned with C1 descriptors in two areas: facilitating *interaction with peers* and *collaborating to construct meaning*. While all students performed in line with the descriptor of *can show sensitivity to different perspectives within a group*, Group 2's performance also aligned with the descriptor of *can evaluate problems, challenges and proposals in collaborative discussions in order to decide on the way forward*, as they collectively agreed to draw on their plurilingual repertoires to enhance

understanding. This demonstrated not only linguistic competence but also a mature awareness of effective group-based problem-solving.

The aim of the second research question was to obtain appropriate data to compare two groups of students: those who underwent a specific intervention (an experimental group) and those who were only asked to complete the task: "Focusing on the cognates, try to comprehend the text through your English or other languages."

RQ2: Will students who are explicitly guided on the concept of intercomprehension achieve better results than those who are not?

In this context, it was considered that students had the same background (the course of lexicology), and it was not necessary to introduce a pretest. Beyond focusing on the probability of outperforming students in the experimental group, it was useful to determine how much the master's programme course *English Language and Its Developmental Specifics* can contribute to the development of intercomprehension as a systematic approach to plurilingual language learning, thereby raising awareness of plurilingualism. The similarities between languages cannot only improve comprehension but also facilitate effective communication.

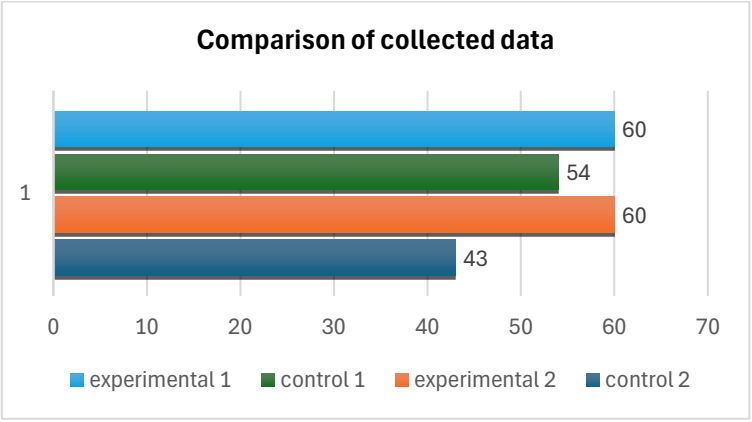

Figure 5. The comparison of the experimental group and control group achievements

The comparison of the achieved data provided evidence of differences in quality based on the cognates in Text 1 and Text 2. In the latter, similar problems arose in understanding the words in both the experimental and control groups. This can be seen as evidence that randomly selecting students did not affect the results. As regards Text 1, although the control group students were expected to focus mostly on cognates, their motivation to comprehend the text naturally led them to draw on their morpho-syntactic experience and demonstrate their understanding of one question and one sentence in the text. Their approach enabled them to mediate the full sentences. Taking this approach into account, it can be concluded that the difference in students' comprehension of Text 1 between the experimental and control groups is not significant. However, the comprehension of Text 2 by the experimental group is considerably different from that of the control group. Since

the control group students were not aware of the concept of intercomprehension, they strictly adhered to the task and tried intuitively to use any strategies or approaches to comprehend text in a language they had not studied.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

The study focused on several concepts underpinning the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which was initially perceived primarily as a framework defining reference levels through 'can do' descriptors. However, it also introduces key concepts, including the action-oriented approach, the four modes of communication (reception, production, interaction, and mediation), and plurilingual and pluricultural competence. Their further elaboration in the CEFR Companion Volume (CEFR CV), which has significantly enriched post-communicative approaches to language learning, teaching, and assessment, calls for systematic and consistent verification in practice.

In the presented research, a two-group student design was used to measure the impact of an intervention emphasising the knowledge of the historical influence of French on English (an experimental group), compared with data from the group that received no intervention (a control group). In both major groups, students were divided into two main groups, each similarly exposed to two different French texts. In the first part of the research, the experimental group students were asked to identify English cognates using two approaches: generating a list with selected AI tools and compiling a list based on lexical similarities between the two languages, drawing on their knowledge of the historical influence of French on English. The control group students were tasked to compile a list of lexical similarities. Since the second text contained fewer French – English cognates, the students in both groups were required to adjust their strategies and rely more actively on their plurilingual repertoires (in the experimental group) and any experience with other languages (in the control group) to extract the necessary information. None of the students who engaged in the research had studied French or acquired it naturally.

The students were individually and collectively engaged in the learning process, during which they made decisions about their tasks and monitored their progress. In the experimental group, the scenarios requiring students to share information in a target language, based on input received in a related language (French), were realistic, and the students actively participated in completing the tasks. They naturally distributed roles within their groups, with each member responsible for identifying French words similar to their English counterparts, which enabled them to understand the French text. Whether using AI tools or drawing on their prior knowledge, the students compiled lists of English cognates and supplemented them with items from their plurilingual repertoires. Through text analysis, they extracted as much information as possible in order to convey the content in a language they had not previously studied. The mediation process aligned with the *can-do* statements for language learners at level C1.

The main goal of the activity in the experimental group was to apply theoretical knowledge in a practical context to support the development of plurilingualism. While the number of English cognates in Text 1 enabled Group 1 to obtain sufficient information, students in Group 2 had to adjust their strategy and draw on their plurilingual repertoires to extract the required meaning. Their experiences with travelling and exposure to various languages encouraged them to draw on their individual collections of linguistic and communicative resources, allowing them to use different linguistic tools effectively across contexts. The integrated use of multiple languages – including their mother tongue and languages learned informally – enabled them to understand information written in French. This ability to mobilise the sum of one's linguistic knowledge and exploit parallel elements across languages represents a significant shift from traditional teaching practices, in which learners focused primarily on differences between languages and kept them in separate compartments. These conclusions are supported by introducing data comparing a conscious attitude with the influence of cross-linguistic/plurilingual approaches on students' comprehension of a text written in a language they have not studied, in contrast to an unconscious attitude.

A limitation of the study was the number of participating students. Two closely related studies enabled the engagement of 48 students. The first investigation involved two groups of twelve students each, which restricts the generalisability of the findings. Future research should include a larger sample size and expand the range of languages involved. Although the number of students in the second investigation was doubled, it was again 24 in each group (experimental and control), which does not allow for generalisation. Additional studies could also be conducted with learners at lower educational levels who have achieved different CEFR reference levels. Research involving students with lower communicative competence would provide valuable insights into their specific learning needs.

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Appendix A

Text 1 – Zaho de Sagazan
Oui, c'est vrai, nous avons déjà présenté son album au moment de sa sortie. Mais Zaho de Sagazan est un vrai tourbillon dans le milieu de la chanson française, c'est pourquoi nous lui consacrons un deuxième article. Et en plus, elle fait une tournée européenne avec des dates en Allemagne et en Suisse. Cette année, Zaho de Sagazan a remporté quatre Victoires de la musique : révélation féminine, prix du meilleur album, de la chanson de l'année (avec le vote du public et non pas des professionnels) pour La Symphonie des éclairs et enfin, révélation scène. Car ce petit bout de femme de 24 ans aux cheveux blonds déménage en concert. Encore inconnue l'année dernière, Zaho, originaire de Saint-Nazaire, près de Nantes, profite de chaque instant de cette notoriété. Fan de Brel et de Barbara, cette hypersensible trouve dans la musique le moyen de canaliser ses émotions. Son timbre de voix mezzo-soprano, les textes qu elle ecrir elle-meme, son excellente dictions se marient a de l'electro berlinoise. Pas de doute, elle apporte un souffle nouveau à la chanson française. À voir sur scène absolument. En concert le 17 octobre à Cologne, le 18 octobre à Berlin, le 21 novembre à Lausanne.

Appendix B

Text 2 – L'été indien à Arles
Selon Florence Ogier, directrice de l'hôtel du Forum, à Arles, l'automne est la saison idéale pour passer du temps en Provence. Elle sait de quoi elle parle : la famille Ogier tient cet hôtel depuis 100 ans.
Pourquoi est-ce que l'automne est une période idéale pour visiter la Provence?
Tout simplement parce qu'on appelle ça « l'été indien ». Cette belle arrière-saison permet aux gens de séjourner et de circuler en Provence sans souffrir de la chaleur. C'est très agréable ! Nous avons alors une autre clientèle : des personnes plus âgées, sans enfant. Beaucoup de cyclistes aussi.
Comment est l'ambiance?
Elle est beaucoup plus détendue. C'est un tourisme différent de l'été. Les gens se laissent plus de temps pour visiter. Ils peuvent aller partout sans être gênés par la foule. Les plages ne sont plus bondées et on peut se baigner jusqu'en octobre. On peut se promener dans les Alpilles sans étouffer sous la chaleur.
Où aimez-vous aller durant l'automne ?
Aux Carrières des Lumières. C'est un centre d'art numérique situé dans des anciennes carrières de pierre, aux Baux-de-Provence, un village magnifique plus accessible sans la foule. Des œuvres sont projetées sur les murs et, chaque année, il y a un peintre différent. Au mois d'octobre ou de novembre, on peut venir sans réserver son billet.