

Translanguaging Practices in Multilingual Foreign Language Classrooms in Cross-Border Regions

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Abstract

This paper explores the theoretical foundations and pedagogical applications of translanguaging in multilingual and cross-border educational contexts. It reviews the emergence of translanguaging within the multilingual turn in sociolinguistics, highlighting its challenge to monolingual ideologies and its potential to support inclusive and equitable educational practices. The empirical component presents a case study conducted at Uzhhorod National University in Zakarpattia, a multilingual cross-border region of Ukraine. The study investigated the effectiveness of pedagogically structured translanguaging strategies in university foreign language classrooms. Thirty-four second-year students participated in an eight-week intervention, divided into an experimental group exposed to translanguaging-oriented instruction and a control group receiving traditional target-language-only instruction. Data were collected through teacher and student questionnaires, classroom observations, vocabulary and grammar tests, oral fluency assessments, and a final comprehensive language test. The findings demonstrate that translanguaging practices positively influenced students' comprehension of complex linguistic material, vocabulary retention, communicative confidence, classroom participation, and intercultural awareness. Students in the experimental group displayed more favourable attitudes toward multilingual instruction and achieved higher levels of communicative, lexical, and grammatical competence than those in the control group. Teachers also reported that translanguaging facilitated the explanation of difficult concepts, reduced learner anxiety, and promoted active classroom interaction. The study confirms that pedagogically structured translanguaging can serve as an effective educational resource in multilingual university classrooms, particularly in border and cross-border regions characterised by linguistic diversity. The findings contribute to growing evidence supporting translanguaging as a transformative pedagogical approach that values learners' complete linguistic repertoires and enhances both language learning and educational inclusion.

Keywords: Translanguaging, Pedagogical Translanguaging, Multilingualism, Cross-Border Education, Foreign Language Teaching, Multilingual Classrooms

Introduction

The accelerating processes of globalisation, migration, transnational mobility, and intercultural communication have transformed the linguistic landscape of contemporary societies. Educational institutions increasingly serve learners who navigate multiple languages, cultures, and identities in their everyday lives. As a result, multilingualism has become a defining characteristic of many educational contexts, particularly in border and cross-border regions where linguistic diversity forms an integral part of social interaction and cultural exchange. These developments have challenged traditional monolingual approaches to language education and prompted scholars and educators to seek more inclusive pedagogical frameworks capable of responding to multilingual realities.

Recent developments in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics have questioned long-standing assumptions that languages exist as separate, bounded, and autonomous systems. Instead, language is increasingly understood as a dynamic, socially situated practice through which individuals draw on a range of linguistic and semiotic resources to communicate and construct meaning. Within this broader theoretical shift, the concept of translanguaging has emerged as one of the most influential frameworks for understanding multilingual communication. Translanguaging refers to the flexible deployment of an individual's complete linguistic repertoire in order to make meaning, communicate effectively, and participate in social life. By challenging rigid language boundaries, translanguaging recognises multilingual speakers not as users of separate languages but as individuals who draw upon integrated linguistic resources.

The growing interest in translanguaging has generated extensive research into its theoretical foundations and pedagogical applications. Studies have demonstrated that translanguaging can enhance learners' comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, language awareness, communicative confidence, and academic achievement. Furthermore, translanguaging has been recognised as a means of promoting educational equity by validating students' linguistic resources and challenging deficit-oriented perceptions of multilingual learners. Consequently, pedagogical translanguaging has become an increasingly important area of research within language education, bilingual education, and multilingual education.

Border regions frequently function as multilingual contact zones where languages, identities, and cultural practices intersect. Such environments provide particularly valuable contexts for examining translanguaging practices, as multilingual communication forms a natural part of everyday social life. Despite growing scholarly interest in both translanguaging and border studies, relatively limited attention has been devoted to investigating pedagogical translanguaging in higher education settings located within multilingual cross-border regions.

This paper seeks to address this gap by examining the theoretical foundations of translanguaging in border and cross-border educational contexts and by presenting a case study conducted at Uzhhorod National University in Zakarpattia, a multilingual region of western Ukraine characterised by the coexistence of Ukrainian, Hungarian, Romanian,

Slovak, German, and other linguistic communities. The study explores the implementation of pedagogically structured translanguaging practices in university foreign language classrooms and investigates their impact on students' linguistic and communicative development.

The objectives of the study are twofold. First, it aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the theoretical developments that have shaped contemporary understandings of borders, multilingualism, and translanguaging. Second, it seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of translanguaging strategies in multilingual foreign language instruction through an empirical classroom-based investigation. Particular attention is paid to the influence of translanguaging on students' comprehension, vocabulary retention, communicative confidence, classroom participation, and intercultural awareness.

By integrating theoretical discussion with empirical evidence, the paper contributes to ongoing debates concerning multilingual pedagogies and language education in linguistically diverse environments. It argues that translanguaging represents a valuable pedagogical resource capable of supporting more inclusive, equitable, and effective educational practices, especially in multilingual and cross-border settings where linguistic diversity constitutes an everyday reality.

Translanguaging in Border and Cross-Border Educational Contexts: Theoretical Foundations

Since the emergence of Border Studies as an interdisciplinary field, scholarly understandings of borders have undergone a significant transformation. Earlier approaches conceptualised borders primarily as fixed territorial lines separating nation-states. Contemporary perspectives, however, increasingly emphasise the dynamic, relational, and connective dimensions of borders. Rather than viewing borders merely as sites of division, recent scholarship highlights their role as spaces of encounter, interaction, and negotiation, where social, cultural, and linguistic practices intersect.

This shift reflects broader theoretical developments within the humanities and social sciences. As Wille (2021) observes, border research has progressively shifted from static notions of the border toward an examination of bordering as an ongoing process involving complex, interconnected practices. Border regions are therefore understood not simply as geographical margins but as socially produced contact zones characterised by mobility, hybridity, and multilingual interaction.

Contemporary border studies emphasise an interdisciplinary perspective, examining borders as complex, dynamic constructions and exploring the social, cultural, political, and linguistic processes that transcend, reshape, or are constrained by them (Wille et al. 2021, p. 8). Theoretical dimensions of border studies conceptualise borders not simply as fixed geopolitical boundaries but as dynamic social, cultural, and political processes. Central analytical dimensions include bordering practices, such as the construction and

negotiation of socio-cultural identities, the sociopolitical dimensions of multilingualism in border regions, and the role of language and discourse in shaping cross-border interactions and identities.

A comparable transformation has occurred in language studies. According to Baynham and Lee (2019, p. 15), contemporary linguistic scholarship increasingly treats language as “dynamic and emergent rather than as a reified code.” This process-oriented perspective resonates with Street’s (1993) influential proposition that “culture is verb,” emphasising action, practice, and continual meaning-making rather than fixed structures.

Consequently, traditional conceptions of language as a bounded and autonomous system have been challenged. Moore, Bradley, and Simpson (2020, p. 2) note that the conventional understanding of languages as monolithic entities existing independently of communicative practice has largely been abandoned in favour of conceptualisations of “*linguaging*”. Within this framework, language is viewed as social action that mobilises a broad repertoire of linguistic and semiotic resources in situated communicative contexts.

The convergence of these theoretical developments creates fertile ground for examining language practices in border regions. Linguistic Border Studies increasingly investigates how language and borders interact at multiple scales, encompassing both top-down and bottom-up perspectives. Such research may address language policies, everyday multilingual practices, the construction and contestation of linguistic boundaries, discursive processes of border production and deconstruction, critiques of linguistic nativeness, sociolinguistic dynamics in borderlands, and diverse linguistic, political, and aesthetic semiotic practices.

Within this context, multilingual language use becomes particularly significant. The notion of “border linguaging” seeks to connect the spatial complexity of border regions with multilingual communicative practices, emphasising how speakers negotiate linguistic resources in socially and politically contested spaces.

The Multilingual Turn and the Emergence of Translanguaging

The growing recognition of multilingualism as a global reality has fundamentally altered approaches to language and communication. While monolingual ideologies historically dominated language education, contemporary societies are increasingly characterised by linguistic diversity and mobility. As Kleyn and García (2019) note, language teaching traditionally prioritised monolingual approaches designed to develop proficiency in English while often disregarding learners’ linguistic backgrounds.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, multilingualism increasingly replaced mono- and bilingualism as the dominant paradigm in sociolinguistic research. Makoni and Pennycook (2007) argue that this development reshaped the linguistic ecology of contemporary societies and challenged conventional assumptions about language boundaries. Within this context, García and Wei (2014) introduced the concept of “translanguaging” to capture the fluid communicative practices of multilingual speakers.

The emergence of translanguaging coincided with what has been termed the “multilingual turn” in sociolinguistics. This intellectual movement sought to move beyond viewing languages as naturally bounded, fixed, and autonomous entities. Although several related concepts emerged during this period, including codemeshing, polylingual languaging, metrolingualism, and transglossia, translanguaging has developed into the most influential framework (Straszer, Paulsrud & Rosén, 2022).

The concept itself has evolved considerably. Initially, translanguaging referred to a pedagogical strategy involving the planned use of two named languages in classroom input and output (Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012). Over time, however, the term expanded to encompass the broader communicative practices of multilingual speakers. García and Wei (2014) define translanguaging as the fluid deployment of an individual’s complete linguistic repertoire to create meaning, communicate, and engage with the world.

Baker (2011, p. 288) conceptualises translanguaging as “the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages.” This definition highlights the cognitive, communicative, and experiential dimensions of multilingual language use. Translanguaging is therefore concerned not merely with linguistic form but with communicative function, cognitive activity, and the construction of meaning. Similarly, García (2009, p. 45) defines translanguaging as the “multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds.” This perspective challenges structuralist models that treat languages as separate systems and instead promotes an integrational understanding of language as interconnected, dynamic, and socially situated (Bouknify, 2025, p. 72).

According to Bouknify (2025, p. 72), translanguaging allows bilingual individuals to draw upon their combined linguistic resources to construct meaning and express identities, thereby challenging traditional assumptions that languages operate as separate systems governed by fixed norms. The concept recognises bilingualism and multilingualism as normal human conditions and emphasises the flexibility of linguistic practices in everyday communication.

Despite growing linguistic diversity, many educational systems remain influenced by monolingual assumptions. The dominance of monolingualism in language education has historically resulted in policies that discourage or prohibit the use of students’ home languages in educational settings (Bouknify, 2025, p. 71). Gogolin (1997; 2021) characterises this phenomenon as the “monolingual habitus”, defined as the deeply embedded assumption that monolingualism constitutes the norm within a nation-state. Although often implicit, such assumptions can disadvantage multilingual learners. Gogolin (2011) argues that multilingual students are frequently evaluated through a deficit lens, being perceived as lacking linguistic competence rather than possessing valuable multilingual resources.

Research demonstrates that multilingual learners are disproportionately vulnerable to educational inequalities. Menken (2013) and Moraru et al. (2025) note that such students may be placed in lower educational tracks, retained in grades, or referred to special education programs based on deficit-oriented assessments of their language abilities.

Translanguaging offers an alternative perspective by viewing learners' linguistic repertoires as assets rather than obstacles. Numerous studies have demonstrated the educational value of incorporating students' heritage and home languages into classroom practice. Research by Canagarajah (2012), Cummins (2008), and García and Wei (2014), shows that multilingual approaches improve teaching effectiveness, enhance academic achievement, and strengthen language awareness. By connecting languages, learners can develop deeper conceptual understanding and improved retention of knowledge. Translanguaging also highlights the importance of home languages as valuable resources in children's educational trajectories (Moraru et al. 2025, p. 2). From this perspective, multilingualism becomes a pedagogical resource that facilitates learning, identity development, and participation, especially in border contexts.

The scholars usually distinguish between translanguaging as the flexible use of multilinguals' complete linguistic repertoire for communication, and teacher-directed translanguaging, i.e., structured pedagogical practices that promote the use of learners' full communicative resources in the classroom (Luić, 2017, p. 219).

Pedagogical Translanguaging

Among the various applications of translanguaging, pedagogical translanguaging has received particular attention within educational research. Although translanguaging practices occur naturally in multilingual communities, pedagogical translanguaging refers specifically to the intentional use of learners' linguistic resources to support teaching and learning. Cenoz (2017, p. 194) defines pedagogical translanguaging as translanguaging practices that are deliberately planned and implemented by teachers within classroom contexts. Through pedagogical translanguaging, teachers mobilise students' complete linguistic repertoires and facilitate meaningful interaction across languages (Cummins, 2019). Pedagogical translanguaging is known to be widely credited for enhancing students' development of both content and language (Nguyen et al. 2025).

According to Cenoz and Gorter (2020), pedagogical translanguaging encourages the use of multilingual repertoires and multimodal resources to foster both linguistic and academic development. Although now implemented in diverse educational settings, pedagogical translanguaging was initially developed for language classrooms because of its potential to support target-language learning while simultaneously drawing on students' existing linguistic knowledge.

The pedagogy of translanguaging has subsequently been adopted in a wide range of educational contexts, including mainstream education, higher education, foreign language instruction, immersion programs, heritage language education, minority-language education, and content and language integrated learning (Bonacina-Pugh, Costa

Cabral & Huang, 2021). Nevertheless, these pedagogical practices operate within diverse sociopolitical contexts shaped by global inequalities and differing patterns of linguistic diversity (Bonacina-Pugh, Costa Cabral & Huang, 2021; Heugh, 2021).

The overarching goal of pedagogical translanguaging is to create flexible plurilingual spaces where learners can utilise their complete linguistic repertoires as resources for communication and meaning-making (García, 2009). Such spaces challenge hierarchical language ideologies and seek to recognise all languages as valuable educational resources.

Importantly, translanguaging has transformative potential, particularly for minoritised linguistic groups and learners in cross-border regions. Research suggests that translanguaging can contribute to reducing educational inequalities by validating linguistic diversity and expanding opportunities for participation (García, 2009; Heugh, 2021).

Moreover, translanguaging can be presented as a framework for understanding how multilingual practices shape and reflect personal and collective identities while engaging with broader ideological and language policy issues (Tsokalidou, 2016, p. 110).

Recent scholarship has sought to identify the specific processes through which translanguaging occurs. Moraru et al. (2025) distinguish between constitutive and leveraging processes.

Constitutive processes include:

- Combining linguistic features associated with different named languages;
- Employing semiotic features multimodally;
- Translating;
- Comparing languages.

Leveraging processes include:

- Collaborating;
- Brokering;
- Designing multilingual linguistic landscapes.

Accordingly, translanguaging fundamentally depends on the first constitutive process, the combination of linguistic features traditionally attributed to different languages. The remaining constitutive and leveraging processes may occur simultaneously or sequentially to enhance multilingual meaning-making. However, practices that do not involve the integration of linguistic features from different languages are not considered translanguaging.

Research also identifies several forms of pedagogical translanguaging. Gusdian et al. (2026) found that one common practice involves enhancing metalinguistic awareness, whereby teachers encourage students to reflect on linguistic similarities and differences to deepen understanding of the target language. A second practice involves utilising learners' whole linguistic repertoires across various classroom activities (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). Finally, translanguaging shifts refer to teachers' spontaneous decisions to alternate between languages in response to learners' immediate communicative and educational

needs (Gusdian et al. 2026). Translation and code-switching remain among the most frequently observed classroom manifestations of translanguaging, when code-switching involves movement between languages and may also include shifts in tone, register, and communicative style depending on context and purpose.

Educational Benefits of Translanguaging

A substantial body of research highlights the educational benefits associated with translanguaging practices. Wedin (2022) argues that learners engage more deeply with educational content when they can connect new information to their prior linguistic and cultural knowledge. Such practices enable teachers to gain a better understanding of students as individuals and to adapt instruction to their specific needs and interests. By recognising students' cultural and linguistic experiences, translanguaging creates more inclusive classroom environments where learners are encouraged to participate actively in the learning process. This inclusive atmosphere can enhance motivation, engagement, and academic achievement.

Research also demonstrates that translanguaging strengthens conceptual understanding, supports bilingual proficiency, improves language awareness, and facilitates knowledge retention (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Cummins, 2019; García & Wei, 2014). Through flexible movement across languages, learners are able to build richer connections between concepts and linguistic forms.

Furthermore, translanguaging precedes and supports interaction among multilingual speakers, particularly among emergent bilingual learners who assist one another in meaning-making processes. Alam (2020, p. 361) argues that translanguaging possesses considerable potential for transforming multilingual subjectivities and promoting equitable participation in society. Nevertheless, despite its benefits, translanguaging continues to be viewed with suspicion in some educational contexts where monolingual ideologies remain influential.

Although pedagogical translanguaging has become a major focus of educational research, important challenges remain. Gusdian et al. (2026) note that relatively little attention has been devoted to investigating teachers' actual translanguaging practices despite teachers' central role in implementing translanguaging pedagogies. Moreover, studies have shown that translanguaging practices are often selectively applied. Li (2022) observes that some educational contexts validate only dominant or standardised languages while marginalising non-standard varieties and less prestigious minority languages. Such selective practices may undermine the transformative potential of translanguaging by reproducing existing linguistic hierarchies.

Consequently, scholars continue to emphasise the need for greater integration of translanguaging into teacher education and classroom practice. Developing teachers' understanding of multilingual pedagogies is particularly important in linguistically diverse and cross-border regions where multilingual communication forms an integral part of everyday life.

The theoretical developments discussed above demonstrate a profound shift in understandings of multilingual practices in border regions. Contemporary Border Studies conceptualise borders as dynamic sites of interaction rather than fixed divisions, while contemporary sociolinguistics increasingly views language as fluid, emergent, and socially situated. Within this intellectual context, translanguaging has emerged as a powerful framework for understanding multilingual communication. Translanguaging challenges traditional views of languages as separate systems and instead conceptualises multilingual speakers as drawing upon integrated linguistic repertoires to construct meaning, negotiate identities, and participate in social life. As both a theoretical perspective and a pedagogical approach, translanguaging promotes inclusion, values linguistic diversity, and supports learners' academic and linguistic development.

Particularly in multilingual and cross-border regions, translanguaging offers a valuable lens for understanding how individuals navigate complex linguistic landscapes. By recognising all linguistic resources as assets, translanguaging contributes to more equitable, inclusive, and effective educational practices while challenging the monolingual assumptions that continue to shape many educational systems.

Traditional foreign language pedagogy has long been based on the monolingual principle, which holds that only the target language is used in classroom instruction. In many educational contexts, both teachers and students have traditionally been monolingual and shared the same linguistic and cultural background. However, the growing processes of globalisation, migration, multiculturalism, and multilingualism have significantly transformed contemporary educational environments. As a result, teaching foreign languages to multilingual learners has become increasingly relevant, especially in multilingual and multicultural regions.

Implementing Translanguaging in Multilingual Foreign Language Classrooms:

A Case Study

Uzhhorod National University is situated in Zakarpattia, a multilingual cross-border region of Ukraine characterised by the coexistence of Ukrainian, Hungarian, Romanian, Slovak, and German. Such a sociolinguistic environment creates favourable conditions for conducting research on pedagogical translanguaging. The experiment was conducted at the Faculty of Foreign Philology, where multilingual students, alongside students of Ukrainian nationality, study English, German, French, and Romanian.

The *aim* of the case study is to investigate the effectiveness of translanguaging strategies in university English language classrooms and determine their impact on students' linguistic and communicative competence. The study investigates whether controlled pedagogical translanguaging improves comprehension, participation, vocabulary acquisition, learner confidence, and intercultural awareness.

The *objectives* of the case study are as follows:

- to identify translanguage practices used by bilingual/multilingual teachers;
- to compare traditional monolingual instruction with translanguage-oriented instruction;
- to analyse students' attitudes toward multilingual classroom practices;
- to examine how translanguage affects vocabulary retention, speaking fluency, grammar comprehension, classroom interaction, and anxiety reduction.

The objectives of the study gave rise to the following research questions:

- *How does translanguage affect students' participation in foreign language classes (L2 and L3)?*
- *Does translanguage enhance comprehension of complex linguistic material?*
- *Which translanguage strategies prove most effective in multilingual classroom settings?*
- *How do students perceive the use of multiple languages during classroom instruction?*
- *Are there differences in the effectiveness of translanguage practices between English (L2) and German or Romanian (L3) classes?*

The study hypothesises that *pedagogically structured translanguage practices in multilingual university classrooms of cross-border regions contribute to higher levels of learner engagement, comprehension, vocabulary retention, and communicative confidence than monolingual instructional approaches.*

Quantitative data were collected through language achievement tests and structured questionnaires administered before and after the intervention, whereas qualitative data were obtained from classroom observations, reflective teacher journals, and semi-structured interviews. The integration of quantitative and qualitative evidence enabled methodological triangulation and strengthened the credibility of the findings.

The case study involved 34 second-year students developing practical communicative skills in English as an L2 and German or Romanian as an L3. The participants were deliberately divided into two groups: an experimental group of 17 multilingual (bilingual) students and a control group of 17 monolingual Ukrainian students. Prior to the intervention, all participants completed a diagnostic assessment consisting of a vocabulary test, a grammar test, an oral communicative task, and a questionnaire on previous language-learning experience. The diagnostic assessment indicated comparable levels of English proficiency, grammar knowledge, vocabulary, and communicative performance in the two groups at the beginning of the study. The observed differences were minimal and did not affect the implementation of the intervention. The experimental and control groups were therefore considered comparable with respect to their initial language competence. Assignment to groups followed existing class organisation; consequently, the study employed a quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test control-group design rather than random assignment.

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the faculty research committee. Participation was voluntary. All participants provided informed consent and were assured that questionnaire responses would remain anonymous and would not influence their course grades. Three bilingual instructors (Ukrainian–German, Ukrainian–Romanian, and Ukrainian–Hungarian) participated in the study by teaching English as the first foreign language and German or Romanian (elementary level) as the second foreign language. In the experimental group, the instructors implemented pedagogically structured translanguaging practices, whereas in the control group, they employed traditional target-language-only instruction.

To ensure consistency of implementation, all participating instructors received common methodological guidelines describing the translanguaging activities, expected learning outcomes, lesson sequence, and principles governing the use of multiple languages. Throughout the intervention, teachers followed the same instructional framework while adapting examples to English–German or English–Romanian classes. The experiment was conducted over a period of eight weeks and comprised three stages: diagnostic, intervention, and evaluation, each designed to fulfil a specific research objective. During the diagnostic stage, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected to ensure a comprehensive understanding of translanguaging practices in multilingual foreign language classrooms.

A mixed-methods approach was selected because quantitative data alone could not fully explain how translanguaging influenced classroom interaction and learner confidence. Combining statistical evidence with qualitative observations enabled a more comprehensive evaluation of both learning outcomes and classroom processes.

Qualitative data collection methods included classroom observations, reflective teacher journals, and informal interviews with both teachers and students concerning their bilingual and multilingual experiences. Furthermore, foreign language instructors completed open-ended questionnaires to explore their translanguaging practices and perceptions of the challenges of teaching foreign languages in multilingual educational contexts.

Quantitative data were collected through an initial student questionnaire that measured attitudes toward multilingual classroom learning and the use of translanguaging strategies in foreign language instruction. Additional quantitative instruments employed during the diagnostic phase included a vocabulary retention test, a grammar comprehension test, and an oral fluency assessment rubric.

The questionnaire items were developed based on previous research on translanguaging and multilingual pedagogy (e.g., Cenoz & Gorter, 2020; García & Wei, 2014) and adapted to the multilingual university context of Zakarpattia. Prior to the study, the questionnaire was reviewed by three specialists in applied linguistics and language pedagogy to establish content validity. Minor revisions were made to improve clarity and wording.

A pilot administration involving students who did not participate in the experiment was conducted to verify the comprehensibility of the questionnaire items and testing procedures.

The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires and the language achievement tests were analysed using descriptive statistics. Frequencies, percentages, and average scores were calculated to compare the results of the experimental and control groups before and after the intervention. The findings were presented in tables and figures to illustrate changes in students’ attitudes toward translanguaging, classroom participation, communicative confidence, vocabulary retention, grammar comprehension, and overall language performance. The quantitative results were interpreted by comparing the trends observed in the two groups throughout the study.

The qualitative data collected through classroom observations, teachers’ reflective journals, and informal interviews with teachers and students were analysed using thematic analysis. The data were carefully reviewed to identify recurring themes related to the implementation of translanguaging practices, students’ classroom participation, communicative confidence, and perceived learning benefits. The qualitative findings were then compared with the quantitative results to provide a more comprehensive interpretation of the translanguaging intervention’s effectiveness.

The preliminary open-ended questionnaire was administered to three bilingual foreign language teachers, with the expectation that it would yield valuable insights into their attitudes, experiences, and perceived challenges in implementing translanguaging practices in multilingual foreign language classrooms.

Table 1. Open-ended questionnaire administered to the multilingual teachers

	Questions	Answers
1.	<i>How would you describe your own multilingual and multicultural background, and how has it influenced your teaching practices?</i>	
2.	<i>What role do you think students’ native and additional languages should play in university-level foreign language instruction?</i>	
3.	Can you describe situations in which you intentionally use more than one language during English or German/Romanian classes?	
4.	What translanguaging strategies or multilingual teaching techniques do you consider most effective in helping students understand difficult linguistic material?	
5.	What challenges have you encountered when teaching multilingual students in foreign language classrooms?	
6.	In your opinion, how does translanguaging influence students’ participation, motivation, confidence, and communicative interaction during classroom activities?	
7.	How do you perceive the differences between monolingual and multilingual students in terms of foreign language learning strategies and classroom behaviour?	

Source: own elaboration

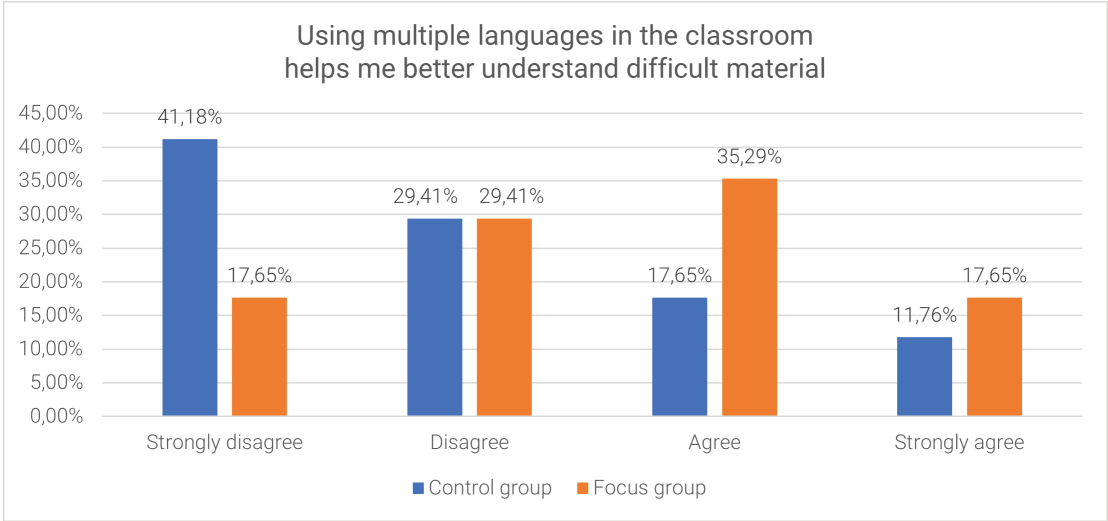
As concluded in previous studies, the successful implementation of translanguageing depends largely on teachers' attitudes, as these shape whether multilingual practices are encouraged or restricted in the classroom (Lujić, 2017, p.223). The responses obtained from the preliminary teacher questionnaire demonstrate a generally positive attitude toward translanguageing practices in multilingual foreign language classrooms. All three teachers emphasised that translanguageing increases students' willingness to participate in classroom interaction. The instructors observed that multilingual support reduces students' fear of making mistakes and encourages weaker learners to engage in discussions and collaborative activities. The teachers consistently reported that translanguageing is particularly useful when explaining complex grammar structures, abstract vocabulary, and culturally specific concepts. Cross-linguistic comparison and multilingual scaffolding were identified as effective pedagogical tools facilitating comprehension. The teachers particularly emphasised the role of comparative analysis in helping students identify similarities and differences among languages, thereby fostering deeper linguistic awareness. According to the teachers' observations, students generally perceive multilingual instruction positively. The instructors noted reduced anxiety, increased motivation, and greater emotional comfort among students participating in translanguageing-oriented activities. These results confirm that translanguageing is a normal and effective communicative practice in bilingual and multilingual communities, supporting García and Wei's (2014) theoretical framework.

Although the teachers evaluated translanguageing positively, they also identified several methodological challenges: maintaining sufficient target-language exposure; preventing excessive reliance on the native language; addressing differences in students' proficiency levels; and balancing multilingual support with communicative immersion. These responses demonstrate that translanguageing requires careful pedagogical structuring rather than unrestricted language mixing. The preliminary teacher questionnaire confirms that bilingual instructors perceive translanguageing as an effective pedagogical approach in multilingual university classrooms.

The next step in the case study was administering a closed-ended questionnaire to the students in the experimental and control groups.

The data provided in Figure 1 demonstrate significant differences between the control and focus groups regarding students' perceptions of multilingual instruction. The control group showed predominantly negative attitudes toward translanguageing, with 70.59% of students disagreeing that using multiple languages helps them understand difficult material. In contrast, the focus group demonstrated more positive perceptions: 52.94% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. These findings support the idea that multilingual instructional strategies positively influence students' learning experience and understanding.

Figure 1. Initial survey conducted in the control group and in the focus group presented as percentages of the total number of responses (N=34, N=17 (control), N=17 (focus))

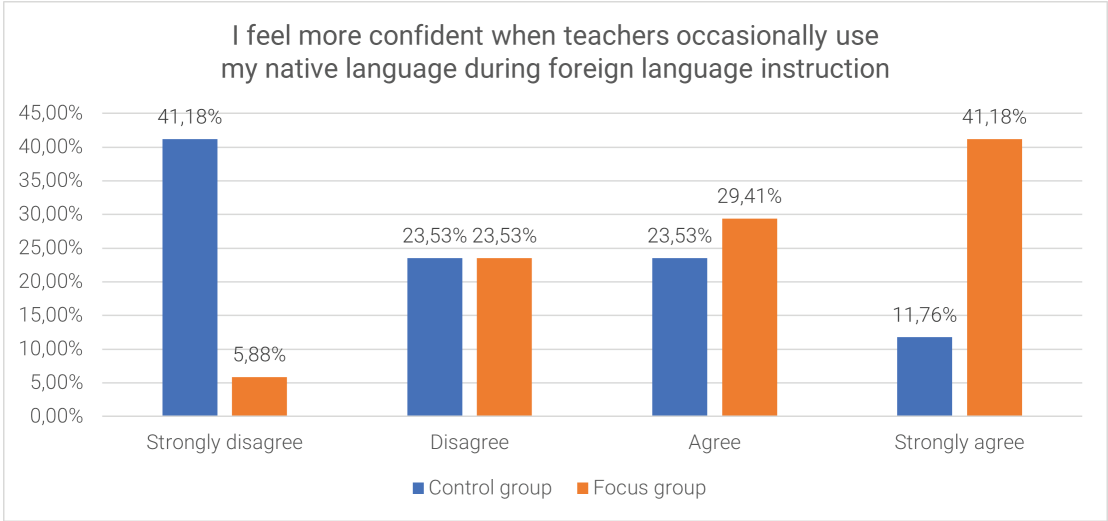


Source: own elaboration

The results of the respondents' answers demonstrate a clear difference between the control and focus groups in students' confidence levels during foreign language instruction. The majority of students in the control group (64.71%) expressed negative attitudes toward using their native language in foreign language instruction. In contrast, 70.59% of students in the focus group agreed or strongly agreed that occasional use of the native language increases their confidence (See Figure 2).

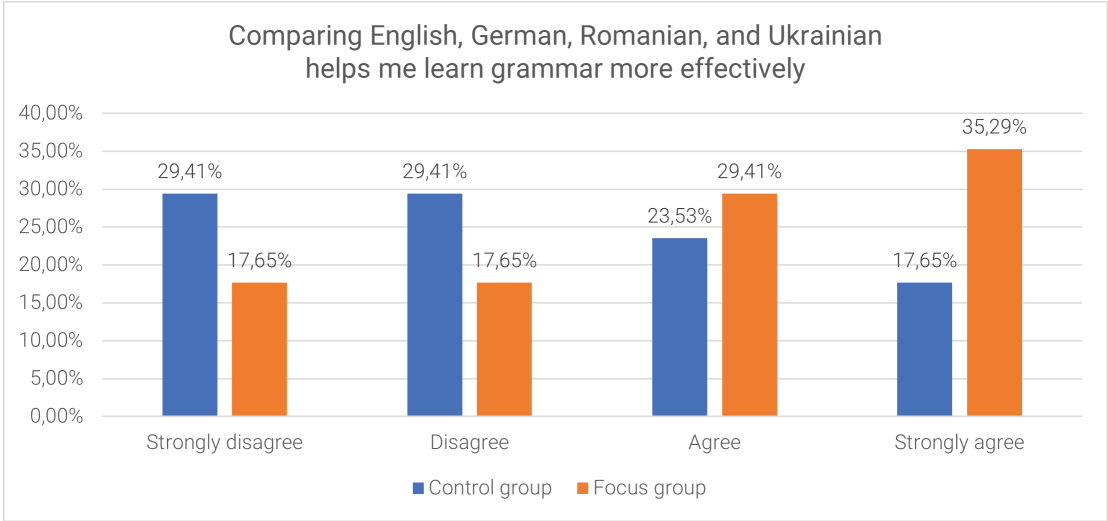
The data provided in Figure 3 indicate that students in the focus group demonstrated a more positive attitude toward cross-linguistic comparison in grammar learning than those in the control group. While opinions in the control group were relatively divided, the majority of students in the focus group (64.7%) agreed or strongly agreed that comparing English, German, Romanian, and Ukrainian facilitates grammar learning.

Figure 2. Initial survey conducted in the control group and in the focus group presented as percentages of the total number of responses (N=34, N=17 (control), N=17 (focus))



Source: own elaboration

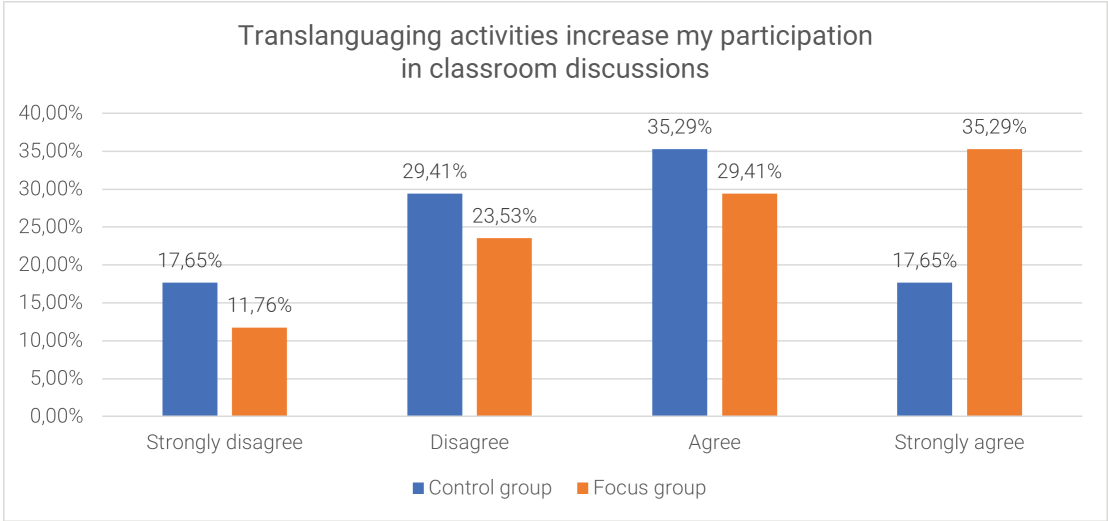
Figure 3. Initial survey conducted in the control group and in the focus group presented as percentages of the total number of responses (N=34, N=17 (control), N=17 (focus))



Source: own elaboration

The results of students' responses to one of the survey questions (See Figure 4) show that students in the focus group perceived translinguaging activities as more beneficial for classroom participation than did students in the control group. In the focus group, 64.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that translinguaging activities increased their participation in classroom discussions, compared to 52.94% in the control group.

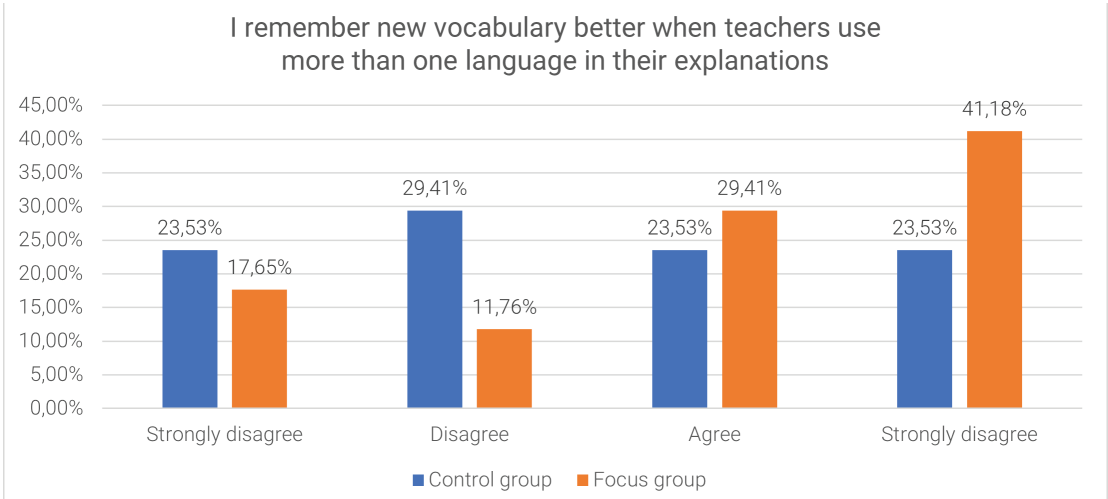
Figure 4. Initial survey conducted in the control group and in the focus group presented as percentages of the total number of responses (N=34, N=17 (control), N=17 (focus))



Source: own elaboration

The data in Figure 5 show that students in the focus group evaluated multilingual vocabulary explanations more positively than those in the control group. While the control group showed mixed opinions, the majority of students in the focus group (73%) agreed or strongly agreed that using multiple languages helps them remember new vocabulary more effectively. These findings suggest that translanguaging strategies positively influence vocabulary retention and support the research hypothesis that multilingual instruction is effective in foreign language learning.

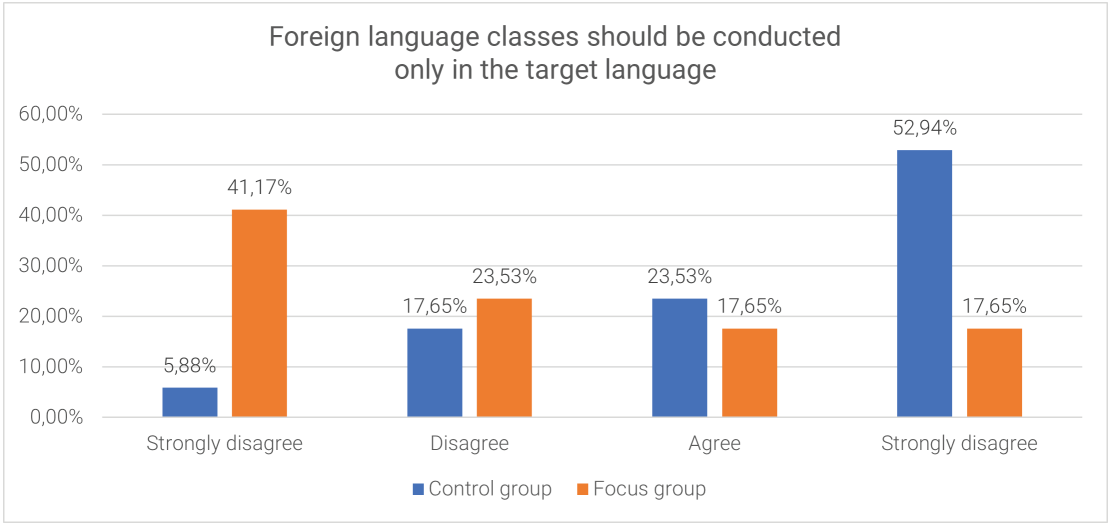
Figure 5. Initial survey conducted in the control group and in the focus group presented as percentages of the total number of responses (N=34, N=17 (control), N=17 (focus))



Source: own elaboration

The data of Figure 6 reveal substantial differences between the control and focus groups regarding attitudes toward target-language-only instruction. The majority of students in the control group (76.47%) supported target-language-only instruction, whereas 64.7% of students in the focus group disagreed with this approach. These findings suggest that students exposed to translanguaging practices become more supportive of multilingual instruction and less oriented toward monolingual teaching models.

Figure 6. Initial survey conducted in the control group and in the focus group presented as percentages of the total number of responses (N=34, N=17 (control), N=17 (focus))



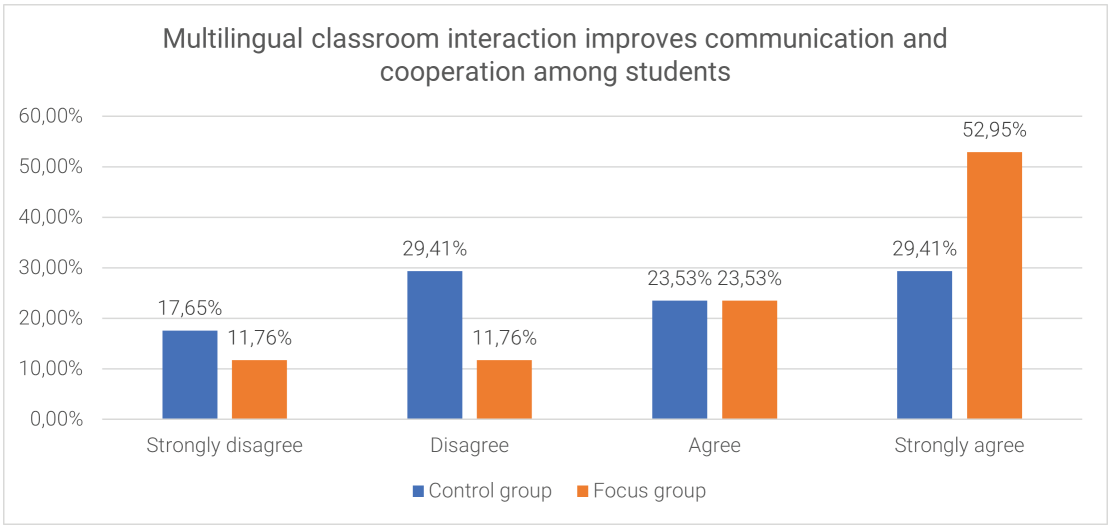
Source: own elaboration

The survey results in Figure 7 display that students in the focus group perceived classroom interaction in a multilingual classroom more positively than those in the control group. In the focus group, 76.48% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that multilingual interaction improves communication and cooperation among students, compared to 52.94% in the control group. These findings indicate that translanguaging practices foster collaborative learning, communicative interaction, and a more supportive classroom environment.

The results of the initial questionnaire administered to students within the case study framework indicate noticeable differences between the control and focus groups in their attitudes toward translanguaging in foreign language instruction. Students in the focus group generally demonstrated more positive perceptions of multilingual classroom practices, particularly regarding comprehension of difficult linguistic material, vocabulary retention, communicative confidence, and participation in classroom discussions. The findings also show that multilingual instructional practices help reduce students' anxiety when speaking a foreign language and promote more effective communication and cooperation among learners. In contrast, students in the control group expressed stronger support for traditional target-language-only instruction and showed less confidence in

the pedagogical value of multilingual practices. The questionnaire results suggest that pedagogically structured translanguaging is positively perceived by multilingual learners and may contribute to greater learner engagement, emotional comfort, and effectiveness of foreign language acquisition in multilingual classroom settings.

Figure 7. Initial survey conducted in the control group and in the focus group presented as percentages of the total number of responses (N=34, N=17 (control), N=17 (focus))



Source: own elaboration

The intervention phase of the case study included a system of pedagogically structured translanguaging activities aimed at improving students’ comprehension, vocabulary retention, communicative confidence, intercultural awareness, and classroom participation in L2 (English) and L3 (German/Romanian) instruction. The activities were designed specifically for the focus group of multilingual students and implemented during the eight-week intervention. Meanwhile, the control group, consisting of students from predominantly monolingual linguistic backgrounds, continued with traditional approaches to teaching English and German/Romanian.

Cross-linguistic grammar comparison aimed to facilitate comprehension of grammatical structures by comparing English, German/Romanian, Ukrainian, and other known languages. The teachers participating in the experiment introduced a grammatical structure in the target language, and the students then compared sentence patterns across languages. The learners were asked to identify similarities and differences in: word order, tense formation, articles, modal verbs and prepositions. For example, the English Present Perfect was compared to the German Perfekt (with students whose native language was German), the Romanian equivalent of this tense (with students whose native language was Romanian), and Ukrainian past constructions. The *translanguaging element* in this strategy consisted of a classroom activity in which students discussed explanations in Ukrainian,

Hungarian, Slovak, or Romanian before producing answers in the target language. The expected outcome of this activity was improved grammar comprehension and deeper metalinguistic awareness.

Multilingual vocabulary mapping was applied during the intervention phase of the experiment to improve students' vocabulary retention through multilingual lexical associations. The students created multilingual vocabulary maps in which new lexical items are linked to equivalents or associations in other languages they know. Learners were asked to classify vocabulary according to themes or semantic fields. For example, within the topic "Travel", the students compared words such as *journey* (English), *Reise* (German), *подорож* (Ukrainian), *voiaj* (Romanian), *utazás* (Hungarian), *cestovanie* (Slovakian), etc. The expected result of the activity was an increase in students' ability to retain new vocabulary and use it flexibly in different contexts.

Translanguaging group discussions were introduced into the procedures of foreign language classes to increase students' classroom participation and communicative confidence. The learners were supposed to work in multilingual groups, being instructed that initial discussions of ideas could take place in mixed languages, but the final presentation should be delivered in the target language. The discussion topics were as follows: "Cultural traditions," "Education systems," "Student life," and "Cross-border communication." The translanguaging element in this educational activity was flexible language use during planning and collaborative interaction, applied to reduce speaking anxiety and increase learner engagement.

Multilingual scaffolding activities were implemented to facilitate students' comprehension of complex texts, instructions, and linguistic concepts in English and German/Romanian classes. As part of these activities, the instructors provided bilingual glossaries, multilingual keyword lists, parallel explanations, and visual aids incorporating multilingual support. Reading comprehension tasks were supplemented with English–German–Ukrainian or English–Romanian–Ukrainian vocabulary lists and multilingual annotations to assist learners in processing unfamiliar lexical and grammatical material. The translanguaging component of these activities involved the strategic use of students' stronger languages as cognitive and linguistic resources for constructing meaning in the target language. The expected outcome of these activities was enhanced reading comprehension, improved understanding of task instructions, and more successful completion of learning tasks.

Collaborative translation and mediation tasks were incorporated into the intervention phase to develop students' mediation skills and intercultural communicative competence. During these activities, students worked collaboratively to translate short dialogues, instructions, and text summaries between the languages involved in the study. They were encouraged to explain meanings, clarify concepts, and negotiate understanding with their peers by drawing on multiple languages within their linguistic repertoires. For example, students summarised a German text in English and discussed complex vocabulary or culturally specific concepts in Ukrainian, Hungarian, or other languages they were familiar with. The translanguaging component of these tasks involved purposeful movement between

languages to facilitate meaning-making, interpretation, and communication. By using several languages, learners were able to compare linguistic structures, bridge knowledge gaps, and support one another's understanding.

Multilingual role-play activities were implemented during the intervention phase to foster students' spontaneous communication skills in multilingual and intercultural contexts. These activities required learners to participate in simulated real-life situations involving communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Students engaged in role-plays based on scenarios such as tourist interactions, international student exchanges, border-crossing communication, and multilingual workplace encounters. During the preparation stage, learners were encouraged to discuss ideas, negotiate roles, and plan communicative strategies using the languages available within their linguistic repertoires. The role-play performances themselves, however, were conducted primarily in the target language (English or German/Romanian), allowing students to apply previously acquired linguistic knowledge in meaningful communicative situations. These activities were expected to increase learners' communicative confidence, promote active participation, reduce speaking anxiety, and enhance interactional fluency in foreign language communication.

Intercultural comparison tasks were incorporated into the intervention phase to foster students' intercultural awareness through multilingual interaction and reflection. These activities required learners to compare cultural concepts, idiomatic expressions, traditions, values, and communicative norms represented in the languages involved in the study. Students analysed similarities and differences in greetings, politeness strategies, idiomatic expressions, and classroom communication styles across English, German/Romanian, Ukrainian, and other languages they were familiar with. Through guided discussions and collaborative tasks, learners were encouraged to draw on their multilingual knowledge to explore how language reflects cultural perspectives and social practices. The translanguaging component of these activities involved examining and interpreting cultural meanings through multiple linguistic lenses, enabling students to draw on their full linguistic repertoires as resources for intercultural understanding. These activities were expected to enhance students' intercultural communicative competence, deepen their awareness of cultural diversity, and foster greater cultural sensitivity and respect for different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

At the final stage of the classroom experiment, conducted at the end of the eighth week, students in both the focus and control groups completed a comprehensive written test assessing vocabulary and grammar, as well as an oral communicative test. These instruments were designed to evaluate the students' communicative, lexical, and grammatical competence in foreign languages following the experimental intervention. Vocabulary and grammar tests were constructed according to the learning objectives of the course and aligned with CEFR B1 descriptors. Oral performance was assessed using an analytical rubric evaluating fluency, grammatical accuracy, lexical range, pronunciation, and interaction. Two independent language instructors evaluated the oral performances using the same assessment rubric.

A summary of the final test results is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of students' performance on the final complex test

Level of students' communicative, vocabulary and grammar competence	Focus group Final test		Control group Final test	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
High	6	35.29	3	17.65
Sufficient	8	47.06	8	47.06
Average	3	17.65	5	29.42
Low	0	0	1	5.87

Source: own elaboration

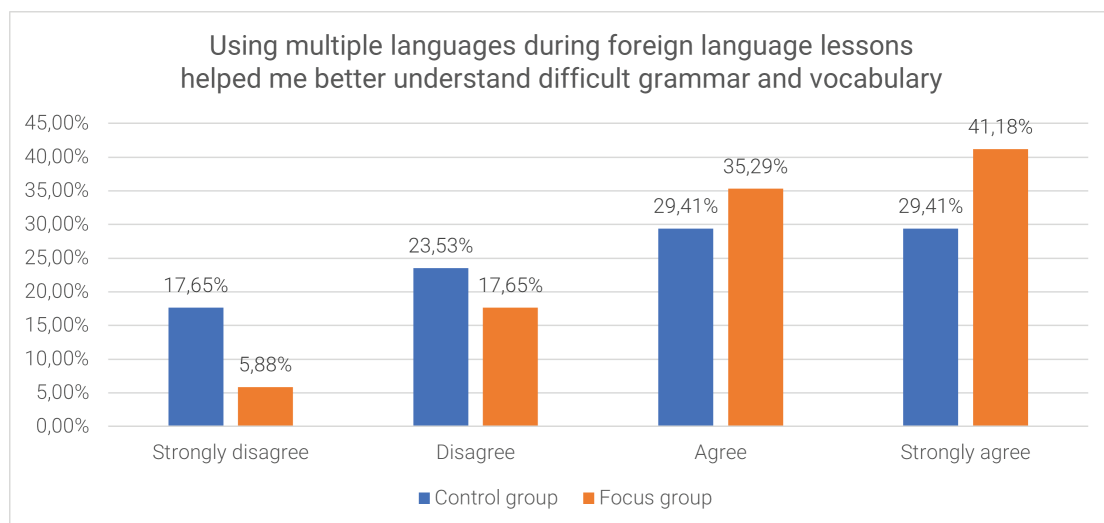
The results of the final complex test reveal notable differences between the focus group and the control group in terms of students' communicative, vocabulary, and grammar competence following the intervention. The findings indicate that students in the focus group, who participated in translanguaging-based instructional activities, achieved better overall results than those in the control group. The proportion of students demonstrating a high level of competence was twice as large in the focus group (35.29%) as in the control group (17.65%). At the same time, no students in the focus group were classified as having a low level of competence, whereas 5.87% of students in the control group were.

Although both groups had an equal proportion of students at the sufficient level (47.06%), the focus group showed a more favourable overall distribution, with fewer students at the average level and none at the low level. These outcomes suggest that integrating pedagogically structured translanguaging practices positively affected students' communicative performance, vocabulary development, and grammatical competence.

The results of the final test support the case study's core idea and confirm the research hypothesis that translanguaging can enhance learner engagement and facilitate more effective foreign language learning in multilingual university classrooms. The findings indicate that students who were encouraged to draw on their full linguistic repertoires achieved higher levels of language competence than those who received traditional target-language-only instruction.

At the final stage of the case study, the questionnaire was administered to students in both the focus and control groups. The aim was to assess the effects of the translanguaging intervention on students' attitudes toward multilingual instruction, communicative confidence, classroom participation, and perceived effectiveness of translanguaging strategies in foreign language learning. Additionally, the survey provided an opportunity to collect students' reflections on their learning experiences during the intervention phase.

Figure 8. Final survey conducted in the control group and in the focus group presented as percentages of the total number of responses (N=34, N=17 (control), N=17 (focus))



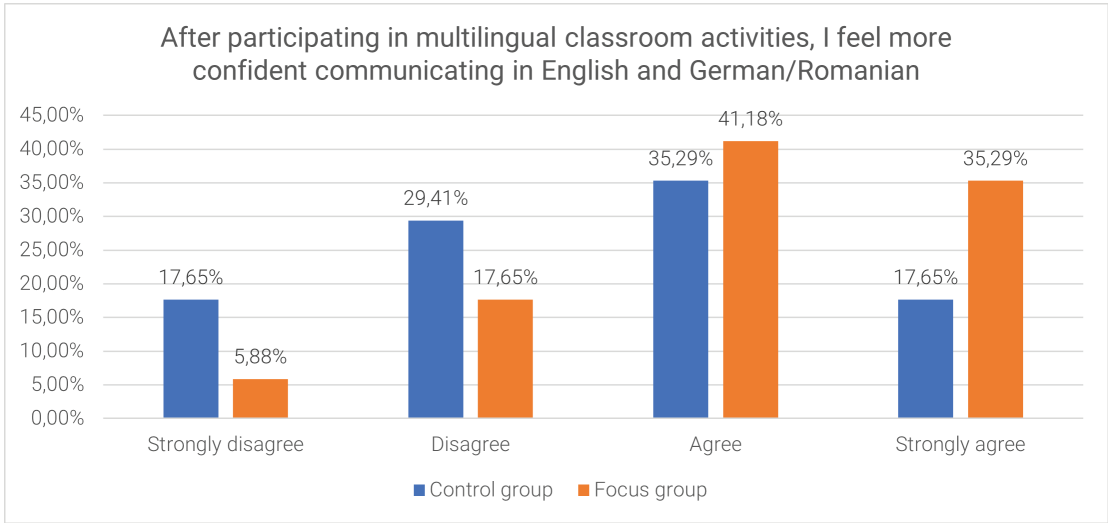
Source: own elaboration

The results provided in Figure 8 indicate that students in the focus group evaluated the role of multilingual instruction in understanding difficult grammar and vocabulary more positively than students in the control group. In the focus group, 76.47% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that using multiple languages helped them better understand difficult grammar and vocabulary, compared with 58.82% in the control group. At the same time, the proportion of negative responses was considerably lower in the focus group (23.53%) than in the control group (41.18%).

A substantial majority of students in the focus group (76.47%) agreed or strongly agreed that multilingual classroom activities increased their confidence in communicating in English and German/Romanian, compared to 52.94% in the control group. Conversely, negative responses were less frequent in the focus group (23.53%) than in the control group (47.06%) (See Figure 9).

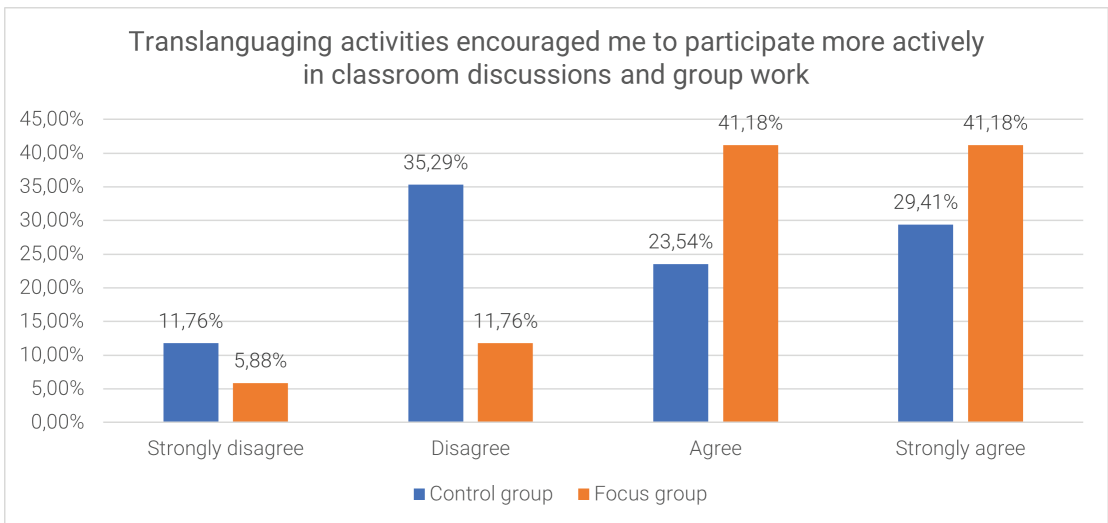
The results in Figure 10 indicate that students in the focus group perceived translanguaging activities as more effective at promoting classroom participation than those in the control group. In the focus group, 82.36% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that translanguaging activities encouraged them to participate more actively in classroom discussions and group work, compared to 52.95% in the control group. The proportion of negative responses was also considerably lower in the focus group (17.64%) than in the control group (47.02%).

Figure 9. Final survey conducted in the control group and in the focus group presented as percentages of the total number of responses (N=34, N=17 (control), N=17 (focus))



Source: own elaboration

Figure 10. Final survey conducted in the control group and in the focus group presented as percentages of the total number of responses (N=34, N=17 (control), N=17 (focus))

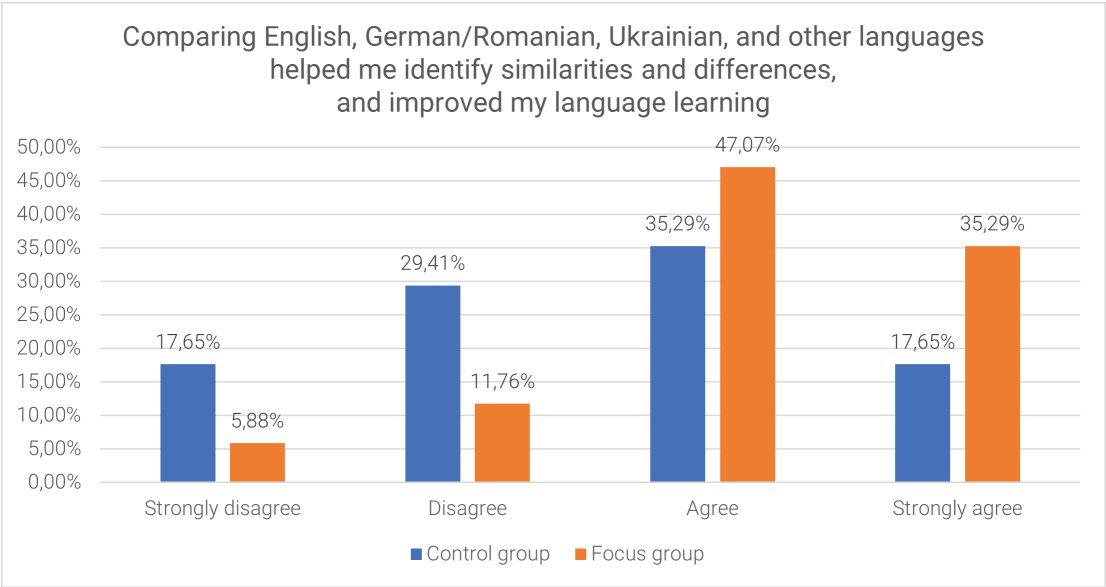


Source: own elaboration

Students in the focus group held more positive views on the value of cross-linguistic comparison for language learning than students in the control group (See Figure 11). In the focus group, 82.36% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that comparing English, German/Romanian, Ukrainian, and other languages helped them identify linguistic

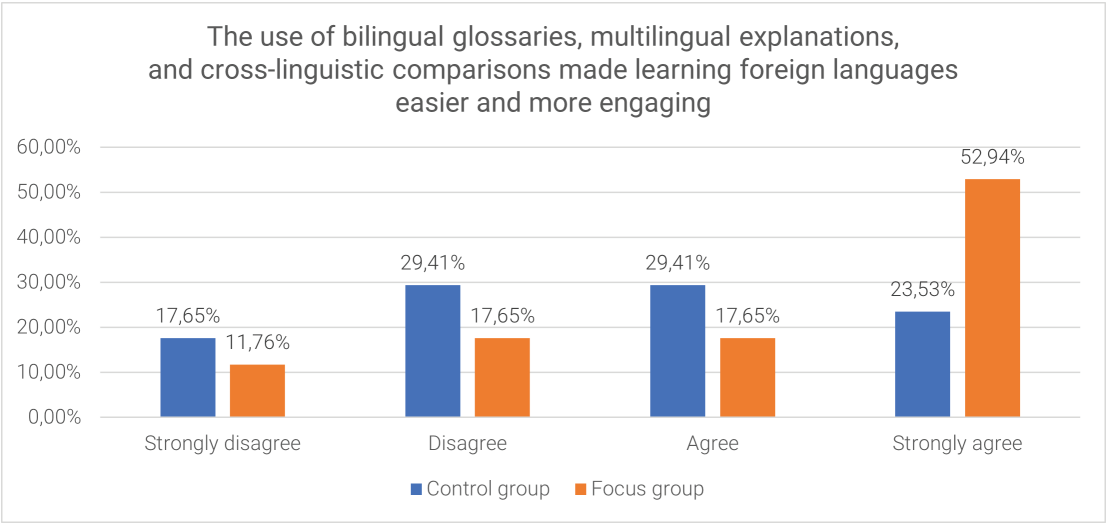
similarities and differences and improved their language learning, compared to 52.94% in the control group. Negative responses were also less frequent in the focus group (17.64%) than in the control group (47.06%).

Figure 11. Final survey conducted in the control group and in the focus group presented as percentages of the total number of responses (N=34, N=17 (control), N=17 (focus))



Source: own elaboration

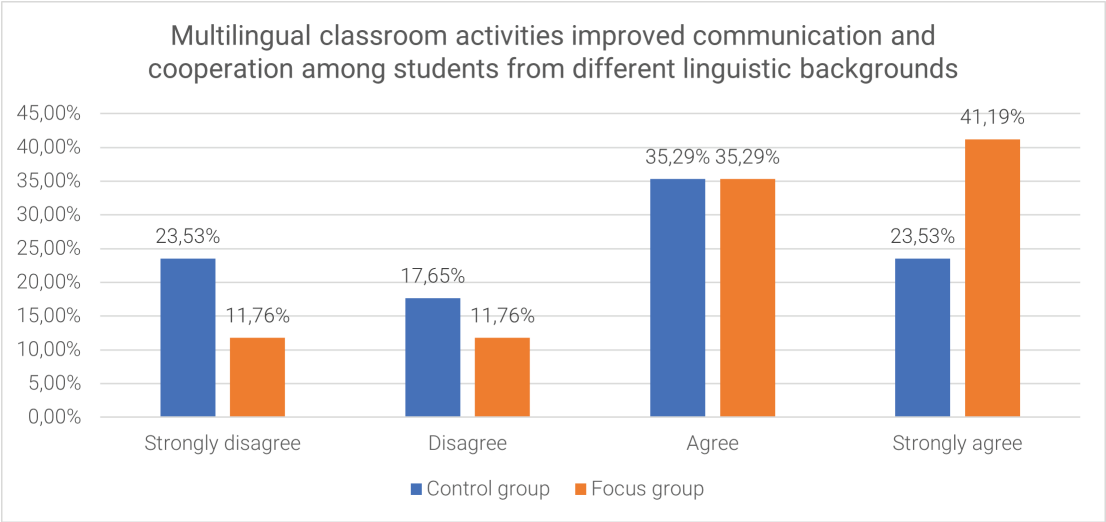
Figure 12. Final survey conducted in the control group and in the focus group presented as percentages of the total number of responses (N=34, N=17 (control), N=17 (focus))



Source: own elaboration

As indicated in Figure 12, students in the focus group perceived multilingual support strategies as more beneficial for foreign language learning than students in the control group. In the focus group, 70.59% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that bilingual glossaries, multilingual explanations, and cross-linguistic comparisons made learning foreign languages easier and more engaging, compared to 52.94% in the control group.

Figure 13. Final survey conducted in the control group and in the focus group presented as percentages of the total number of responses (N=34, N=17 (control), N=17 (focus))

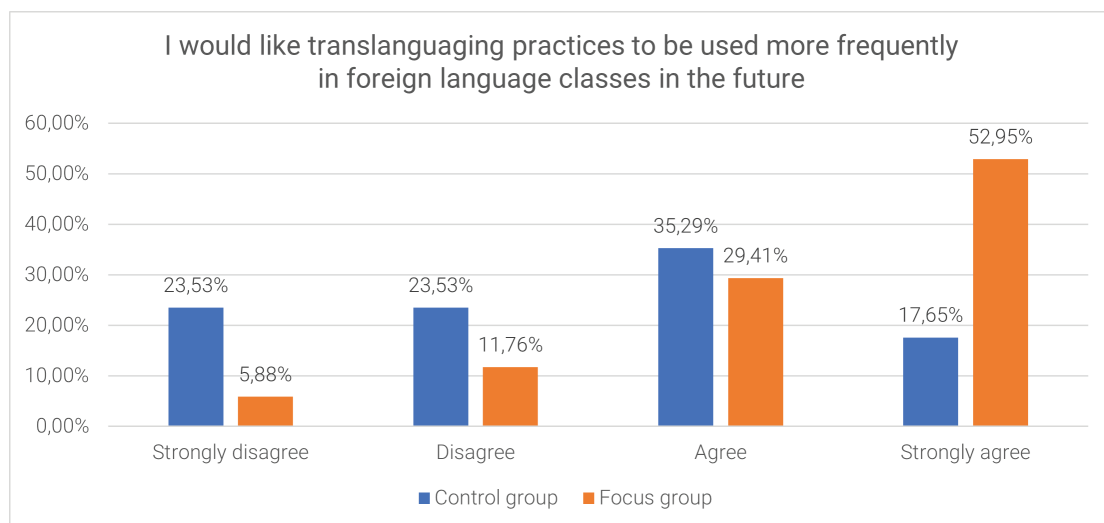


Source: own elaboration

Students in the focus group viewed multilingual classroom activities as more effective in fostering communication and cooperation than students in the control group (See Figure 13). Overall, 76.48% of students in the focus group agreed or strongly agreed that multilingual classroom activities improved communication and cooperation among learners from different linguistic backgrounds, compared to 58.82% in the control group. The proportion of negative responses was also substantially lower in the focus group (23.52%) than in the control group (41.18%).

The results shown in Figure 14 indicate a stronger preference for the future use of translanguageing practices among students in the focus group than among those in the control group. In the focus group, 82.36% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that translanguageing practices should be used more frequently in future foreign language classes, compared to 52.94% in the control group. These findings suggest that students who experienced the translanguageing intervention developed highly positive attitudes toward multilingual instruction and recognised its value for foreign language learning, thereby confirming the effectiveness and acceptability of translanguageing practices in multilingual classrooms.

Figure 14. Final survey conducted in the control group and in the focus group presented as percentages of the total number of responses (N=34, N=17 (control), N=17 (focus))



Source: own elaboration

Conclusion

The present case study investigated the effectiveness of pedagogically structured translanguageing practices in multilingual university foreign language classrooms in Zakarpattia, a multilingual cross-border region of Ukraine. The research was grounded in contemporary theories of Border Studies and multilingual education, which view borders as spaces of interaction and languages as dynamic, interconnected resources rather than separate and fixed systems. Within this framework, translanguageing is understood as the flexible use of learners' complete linguistic repertoires to support communication, learning, and meaning-making. The theoretical analysis demonstrated that translanguageing challenges traditional monolingual approaches to language education and promotes more inclusive and effective learning environments. Previous research has shown that translanguageing can enhance comprehension, language awareness, learner participation, communicative confidence, and intercultural competence. It has been demonstrated that translanguageing should not be viewed as a temporary pedagogical strategy but as a continuous and dynamic classroom practice that fosters multilingual competence within and beyond formal education.

The case study findings support these theoretical assumptions. The preliminary teacher questionnaire revealed positive attitudes toward translanguageing and highlighted its value for explaining complex linguistic material, increasing student participation, and reducing anxiety. The results of the initial and final student questionnaires showed that students exposed to translanguageing practices held more positive attitudes toward multilingual instruction and perceived clear benefits in comprehension, vocabulary learning,

communicative confidence, classroom participation, and peer cooperation. The results of the final complex test further confirmed the intervention's effectiveness. Students in the focus group achieved higher levels of communicative, lexical, and grammatical competence than those in the control group, with a larger proportion demonstrating high achievement and none demonstrating low achievement.

The study confirms the hypothesis that pedagogically structured translanguaging practices contribute to greater learner engagement, improved comprehension, enhanced vocabulary retention, and increased communicative confidence compared to traditional monolingual instruction. The findings suggest that translanguaging is a valuable pedagogical resource in multilingual university classrooms, particularly in border and cross-border regions where linguistic diversity is an integral part of students' everyday lives. Although the present study provides valuable insights into the implementation of pedagogically structured translanguaging practices, several limitations should be acknowledged. Because intact classes rather than randomly assigned participants were used, causal conclusions should be interpreted with caution. While baseline equivalence between the groups was established through pre-testing and common instructional objectives, the relatively small sample size and the short duration of the intervention limit the generalisability of the findings. Future research should therefore employ random assignment where feasible, involve larger and more diverse samples, and adopt longitudinal research designs to examine the long-term effects of translanguaging on language development and intercultural competence.

Despite these limitations, the findings provide empirical support for integrating pedagogically structured translanguaging into foreign language education in multilingual university contexts. The study contributes to the growing body of evidence that translanguaging can enhance learner engagement, comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, communicative confidence, and classroom interaction, while underscoring the need for further research into its sustained educational impact across diverse multilingual settings.

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