

The Case for Mediation: A Conceptual Review

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Abstract—This conceptual review investigates the use of mediation in English language teaching contexts. Following a review of mediation and its background and uses. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and multilingualism are explained, along with its history and goals. The various definitions of mediation are examined, including those from the CEFR, as well as definitions related to translation and interpretation, and the one underpinning the mediation aspect of the National Foreign Language Exam System (KPG). It is argued that mediation is critical in all linguistic, social, and cultural contact zones, including language teaching and learning contexts. Mediators have a vital role in settings where the meanings of languages, identities, and relationships are being reassessed and renegotiated, and English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' mediation ability should be developed to enable them to fulfill this critical role in society. Teaching mediation strategies should constitute a new objective in foreign language learning and teaching by adopting new methodological approaches.

Index Terms—mediation, multilingualism, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), National Foreign Language Exam System (KPG), English language teaching

I. INTRODUCTION

Intercultural encounters are increasingly common in a globalized society. People with different languages and cultures must communicate and work together to achieve their goals. Mediation is a process that serves as a bridge between two (or more) cultures and plays a key role in a range of contexts. This article explores the use of mediation in English language teaching environments, arguing for the need to update traditional perceptions of the translator's role to include intercultural mediation and to develop English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' mediation ability to advance diverse societies. The paper begins with a brief overview of mediation (Section II). Section II gives a brief introduction to mediation and section III discusses multilingualism and the history and goals of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Then, definitions of mediation according to CEFR (Section IV), translation and interpretation (Section V), and the National Foreign Language Exam System (KPG) (Section VI) are discussed. Finally, Section VII focuses on the written mediation tasks included in the KPG, followed by concluding remarks.

II. THE ROLE OF MEDIATION

Mediation is the voluntary assistance of a third party with limited or no authoritative decision-making authority to help the parties engaged in a negotiation or conflict come to a mutually agreeable resolution (Moore, 2014, p. 15). Mediators are neutral intermediaries delivering information from one source to another; in the case of languages, the source language is adapted into a target language for recipients. To avoid or settle disputes and strengthen links with other parties, diplomats frequently participate in mediation (Berridge, 2022; Ruhe, 2020; United Nations, 2012; Wallenstein & Svensson, 2014).

Mediation has a rich history in many cultural, social, and religious traditions and has been used for centuries to achieve peace and harmony in informal, community-based systems. The Phoenicians, Greeks, and Romans solved their conflicts through mediation (Chern, 2014; Horowitz, 2007; Malkin, 2011; Roebuck, 2007), and in many cultures, mediators are important and highly respected community members. In the past, both inside and outside of their communities, mediators have translated what people said to one another, explained specific phenomena, and passed along information about social and everyday happenings (Xirofotou, 2012). The process of mediating between languages depends on this knowledge transfer (Tsaryk et al., 2021). The mediator stands between the source and recipient as a third party to ensure that the flow of communication is easy, clear, and as close to the original as possible.

Mediation remains essential in modern society and is applied in many contexts, such as diplomacy and resolving family conflicts after separation or divorce (Parkinson, 2020; Roberts, 2016; Roberts & Moscati, 2020). Mediation can also be used in school settings to prevent or reduce conflict by using learners trained as mediators to help peers involved in disputes tell their stories and reach a mutual agreement (Cohen, 2005; Gilhooley & Scheuch, 2000; Hansberry et al., 2017). Mediation may help to resolve legal disputes, for instance, when a neutral third party facilitates an out-of-court settlement (Goldberg et al., 2020; Lovenheim & Guerin, 2004; Menkel-Meadow, 2015; Spencer & Brogan, 2007). Although mediation often focuses heavily on language/s and resolving communication challenges, social and cultural implications typically occur, too, meaning that the mediator must consider a wide range of factors affecting the dynamics between the parties. This review focuses broadly on factors beyond language to provide a deeper understanding of the complexities of written mediation tasks.

Mediation within the language classroom is relevant to changes in society. Migration has led to homogeneous societies searching for ways to restructure their new worlds, including developing new relationships often characterized by linguistic differences. Translators and interpreters can no longer be regarded as 'walking dictionaries' who translate words and phrases directly. Their role has changed to include producing an equivalent meaning based on the social and cultural contexts where a text is used. In a dynamic society, translating and interpreting serve two primary functions: firstly, as professionals who convert texts from one language to another with fidelity and adequacy, and secondly, as 'intercultural mediators' who bridge the gap between different cultures and languages with a good understanding of the involved communities (Katan & Taibi, 2014). The latter approach is of interest here and provides the rationale for the present study. Migration wave to Europe, particularly in Greece, as well as globalization in general have made mediation essential to language comprehension to ensure social understanding on a broader scale (Pollastri, 2021). Therefore, this new translation and interpretation role corresponds to the description of an 'interlinguistic mediator' presented by Taft (1981), who claims that a person who helps others coming from diverse languages and/or cultures communicate, comprehend, and act. Interpreting one group's intents, expressions, and perceptions for another is his or her responsibility. to create the necessary communication equilibrium, because:

... a person that possesses... a deep knowledge of the languages, a high grade of cultural sensibility... to negotiate the meaning between both cultures and... transmit it to the members of the other community (Taft, 1981, p. 75).

Authors such as Taft (1981) and Viaggio (2006) reinforce the need for cultural awareness, viewing mediation as a process through which social communication and meaning are interpreted and circulated between people who cannot participate in direct communication, with the help of an intermediary. Mediation can occur within or between different societies, nations, and cultures where the lack of shared ideas and values may lead to misunderstandings. The social context in Greece has changed dramatically in recent years. The country hosts large numbers of economic immigrants, increasing everyday intercultural encounters between Greeks and people from other countries who do not know Greek. Explaining Greek literature frequently requires transferring the key concepts from Greek into English, either verbally or in writing (Xirofotou, 2012). Thus, the modifications strengthened the addition of a mediation exercise to the National Foreign Language Exam System (KPG) in the Greek social landscape where interaction between cultures is common (Panzarella & Sinibaldi, 2018). Mediation facilitates and improves intercultural communication in contexts such as Greece by bridging gaps and reconciling linguistic and cultural differences. Mediation also assists parties from different cultural backgrounds in managing social and communicative needs, helping them adapt to the changing needs of societies. The following section considers the implications of multilingualism and multiculturalism in the face of these changing needs. The CEFR is introduced, and its relationship to the policies adopted in language classrooms is discussed.

III. MULTILINGUALISM AND THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE FOR LANGUAGES

As EU member states have become increasingly multilingual and multicultural, implementing policies, strategies, and practices to facilitate communication and understanding between EU citizens has become necessary and has contributed to dialogue between groups at local, regional, and national levels. In general, multilingualism and appreciation of cultural diversity help promote international communication and are of paramount importance (Mackiewicz, 2009). Europe's political and social transformations are marked by the accession of additional countries to the EU, tourism development, and student exchange initiatives facilitating greater mobility and contact with Europeans. These developments have contributed to the EU's expansion and the implementation of educational policies that foster and support multilingualism (Erling & Moore, 2021; Gunesch, 2013; Hogan-Brun, 2010; Schedel, 2018).

Thus, in 2001—the European 'Year of Languages', to encourage openness and uniformity in foreign language instruction throughout Europe, was established the CEFR (Council of Europe et al., 2001). The CEFR originated from over 40 years of work on modern languages in various Council of Europe projects (Heyworth, 2004). Several important achievements occurred before the CEFR, e.g., the notional-functional approach (Wilkins, 1976) and the detailed syllabus specification at several language learning levels (Curipallo Lizano, 2019; Rahimpour, 2010). The CEFR (2001) has been translated into at least 36 languages and surpasses all expectations in terms of its influence on the language classroom. Still in use today, the original CEFR can now be used in conjunction with the CEFR Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2020), which expands on many of the concepts introduced in the earlier version. Mediation is one of the concepts that was only briefly introduced in 2001 and has subsequently benefited from further research, leading to the development and expansion of the updated framework (discussed in Section IV of this paper). The CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020; Council of Europe et al., 2001) underpins this research, and its particular focus on multilingualism is the rationale for the written mediation task included in the KPG exams.

The CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020; Council of Europe et al., 2001) primarily aims to provide a unified framework for discussing language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, and textbooks throughout Europe. The framework also aims to facilitate teachers', learners', publishers', and testers' communication across languages, educational sectors, and national boundaries (North, 2004, 2021). The Council of Europe encourages Europeans to look beyond their own culture and develop their understanding of the languages spoken in other European countries. The 1+2 language learning policy emphasizes acquiring multilingual skills through learning community languages, specifically the official languages of the EU, advocating that all European citizens should be proficient in at least two community languages besides their native language. This approach underscores the significance of foreign language learning for

cultural enrichment, mobility, and enhancing European competitiveness (Earls, 2016). The shift in foreign language teaching methods was primarily driven by multilingualism, which gained a new significance with the formation of the EU in 1992 and has been deeply connected to the EU's societal, political, and economic changes (Rindler Schjerve & Vetter, 2012).

The protection of individual rights is one facet of multilingualism that the EU supports, and hence, the CEFR (Clouet, 2008). Encouraging the sharing of talents and ideals is related to these rights and is a primary aim of the democratic citizenry that includes rights to employment prospects and access to different cultures and services. Authors such as Biseth (2008), Liddicoat et al. (2014), and Wiley et al. (2014) argue that language proficiency is crucial for member states to embrace linguistic diversity, as democracy requires the involvement of all citizens, including those from linguistic minority groups and advocate for the strong connection between language education, multilingualism, and democracy. Furthermore, according to Mackiewicz (2009), multilingualism should be viewed from the perspectives of mediation and language acquisition/competence. To promote successful cross-cultural communication in multilingual society, people must hone their mediation skills rather than rely just on their language proficiency and interaction, characterized by information exchange and efforts to understand each other.

Therefore, developing intercultural skills that enable multicultural people to act as intercultural mediators is an important asset for Europe and the globalized world. Teaching mediation strategies is one way to achieve this goal and should constitute a new objective in foreign language learning classrooms. Little (2006) noted that advancing and accepting these values requires educational effort and that language teaching is of fundamental significance. The KPG includes aspects of intercultural communication tested through mediation performance, which requires relaying messages from one language to another. Serving as a mediator between discourses, texts, cultures, and languages entails imparting mediation techniques that are necessary for citizens to be productive in such diverse communities (Guillot & Pavese, 2019).

The CEFR shows that there are no universally accepted approaches to teaching in different languages (Horváth Futó & Hózsza, 2016). However, many approaches can be used based on the principle that foreign language learning can be adjusted to suit context. The framework is not directive but descriptive, intending to induce language teachers to reflect on and question their aims and methods (North, 2021). Instruction can be varied according to proficiency levels, phases of language learning, oral or written comprehension, and genres (Liddicoat, 2016). The variety of courses, skills, and organization levels is the foundation of multilingualism, deciding on objectives and what is exactly expected of students—is a necessary part of teaching (Lewandowska-Tomaszzyk, 2024). By analyzing and comprehending different viewpoints and challenging what is accepted in their own society, the language learner in this educational scenario gains the skills necessary to serve as a mediator between two cultures (Xirofotou, 2012). The next section focuses on the aims and methods associated with the concept of mediation in the CEFR. It explains CEFR's mediation activities, along with the information needed to complete written mediation assignments.

IV. THE CONCEPT OF MEDIATION IN THE CEFR

The inclusion of mediation in the CEFR indicates a change in direction for foreign language pedagogy, opening new dimensions in language teaching, learning, and assessment. Emphasized as a critical communication skill, mediation is defined as meaning-making and facilitating communication across linguistic and cultural barriers through collaborative processes. It is one of four language modes, along with reception, production, and interaction (Council of Europe, 2020). This role of mediation in the Companion Version of the CEFR (2020) is one of the key differences from the original CEFR (2001). North (2021) considers that mediation was introduced by the CEFR in 2001, but it took some time for research and industry practitioners to advance in order to create the framework for their further development and broader distribution in the updated 2020 version (North, 2021, p. 5).

The original CEFR placed significant emphasis on mediation through translation and interpretation. Language users were seen as intermediaries facilitating communication between individuals who would otherwise be unable to understand each other (Council of Europe et al., 2001). Mediation activities included oral interpretation, written translation, and summarizing or reformulating texts in the same language when the original text was not comprehensible to the intended audience. Oral mediation encompassed simultaneous interpretation at conferences and meetings, consecutive interpretation during speeches or guided tours, and informal interpretation in social or transactional contexts. On the other hand, written mediation encompassed precise translation of legal, scientific, and literary documents, along with translation, paraphrasing, or summarizing the main points of an article within the same language or between different languages. The CEFR (2001) viewed a mediator as a language user who primarily (though not exclusively) speaks different languages and serves as a bridge between interlocutors who are unable to understand one another directly (Xirofotou, 2012). The mediator is not concerned with expressing his or her own meanings (Council of Europe et al., 2001, pp. 87–88). Positioned between a source and a recipient, the mediator was perceived as impartial. However, given that every communicator is concerned with their own meanings that facilitate sense-making and involvement in the exchange of meanings, Dendrinos (2006) contended that the aforementioned viewpoint was uncommon.

Furthermore, the goal of mediation is to facilitate communication between parties or assist them in resolving a dispute or issue, which necessitates a more thorough understanding of what is spoken or written. Therefore, the mediator is also a social actor who oversees interactions and intervenes when necessary to aid communication and potentially influence

the outcome (Dendrinou, 2006, p. 11). The mediator also facilitates social situations where communication breakdowns or differences arise between two or more parties. Additionally, the mediator serves as a negotiator of meaning, functioning as an agent to create understanding, particularly in situations requiring meanings to be reconciled or compromised. Thus, the mediator must interpret and generate meaning—through writing or speech—for readers or listeners from diverse language or cultural backgrounds in order to fulfill the position as best they can (Xirofotou, 2012). In this case, the mediator actively acts as a meaning arbiter or arbitrator, making decisions on the meaning of something said or written to help both interlocutors. This view of the mediator as an active meaning-making agent was explicitly incorporated in the updated CEFR (2020). The companion version of the framework (Council of Europe, 2020) moved beyond the initial narrow scope of mediation to a broader conceptualization. Here, mediation is now related to social agents and the action-oriented approach (Piccardo et al., 2019) and is seen as a collaborative process of co-creation that may involve mediating a text, a concept, or communication. Linguistic mediation involves cultural and social mediation, necessitating a broader perspective that invokes the importance of working with others in a process of co-construction.

The CEFR (2001) outlined the process of creating equivalent meaning in the target language through several stages: (1) planning, which involves developing background knowledge, identifying supports, preparing a glossary, considering the needs of interlocutors, and selecting units of interpretation; (2) execution, which includes previewing in real-time, noting possibilities and equivalences, and bridging gaps; (3) evaluation, which entails checking the similarity of two versions and ensuring consistency of usage; and (4) repair, which involves refining by consulting dictionaries or thesauruses and seeking advice from experts and sources (Council of Europe et al., 2001, p. 88).

Although these stages remain relevant (North, 2021), the updated CEFR broadens the mediation descriptors to encompass seven specific aspects necessary at the execution level such as to relay on concrete information, clarify data, edit and translate the content, take notes, evaluate content as well as to analyze and criticize creative texts (Council of Europe, 2020). Effective execution also involves connecting to prior knowledge, adapting language, simplifying complex information, expanding dense text, and streamlining text (Council of Europe, 2020). None of these descriptors are new but represent a synthesis of findings from prominent researchers in the field (e.g., Bimmel & van Schooten, 2004; Dendrinou, 2006; Shreve, 2006; Wong, 2005) and the development of the initial version of the CEFR (2001).

While textual mediation and serving as an intermediary in informal contexts are well integrated into curricula and assessments in countries such as Germany (Kolb, 2016) and Greece (Stathopoulou, 2015), the 2020 CEFR update expands the concept of 'Mediating a text' to encompass non-verbal, creative, and literary information. Thus, mediation in a broader sense could involve mediation for self through reception and note-taking, mediating a text through the exchange of concepts garnered through research, and collaboration in constructing meaning during the planning and creation of an artifact.

As evident from the preceding text, the meaning and significance of mediation developed considerably from 2001 to 2020, and its evolution is detailed in the CEFR documents (North, 2021). The 2001 CEFR viewed mediation mainly as translation and interpretation, in contrast with the 2020 update, which broadened the scope of mediation. The following section considers mediation in more detail in the context of and in contrast to translation and interpretation theories.

V. MEDIATION IN THE CONTEXT OF TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION THEORIES

The concept of mediation is related to—but different from—translation and interpretation (Viaggio, 2006). Mediation is often understood as diplomatic negotiating or third-party intermediaries in a broader context than an interlinguistic one. This section considers theories of translation and interpretation, providing an alternative, more detailed definition of mediation and making a case for its use as an important language classroom task. Following this, the concept of mediation in the KPG exam is discussed. For the purposes of this paper, no differentiation is made between translation and interpretation. Moreover, only the differences between translation and interpretation and mediation are discussed.

Beyond language issues, interlinguistic mediation mechanisms are intricate. In interlinguistic mediation, translators must meet two criteria. They must possess extensive linguistic and cultural knowledge in order to serve as both linguistic and cultural mediators between languages (Malyuga et al., 2018). To effectively communicate the source language's message to the target, translators acting as mediators in this situation need to be cognizant of cultural nuances and asymmetrical features between languages. (Durán Muñoz, 2011; Viaggio, 2006) Thus, mediation requires more than translation. In general, interlinguistic mediation makes contact between cultures possible by involving the transfer and negotiation of meanings between the source and target, especially in instances where the target text's cultural references must be relayed in order to establish a cultural connection with the recipients. Translators are required to actively engage in the communication process and provide written or spoken content, and manipulate words to ensure the nuanced meaning is transmitted cross-culturally (Xirofotou, 2012).

In this context, Taft (1981) observed that cross-cultural mediation necessitates the exchange of concepts and data between cultural contexts. Although mediation involves more than just translation, this is comparable to the process of language translation. However, a mediator may never be asked to translate words exactly; instead, he will convey the concepts in a way that makes sense to the target culture's members (Taft, 1981, pp. 58–59).

Thus, a literal translation is not anticipated from a translator acting as a mediator (Katan & Taibi, 2014; Lomaka, 2017; Reiss & Rhodes, 2014; Schaffner, 1997; Viaggio, 2006). Instead, they must possess extensive linguistic and cultural expertise to mediate actively between the source and target texts. However, there is no hierarchy among the source,

mediator, and recipient; all hold equal status. Beyond being a translator, the mediator might not even need to use linguistic tools to convey messages and can be considered a 'cultural mediator'—someone who facilitates communication, understanding, and action between individuals or groups from different linguistic or cultural backgrounds (Council of Europe, 2020). Cultural mediators play a unique role as active third parties in the information relay process, which may involve interpreting each cultural group's expressions, intentions, perceptions, and expectations of the other, thereby establishing and balancing communication between them (Katan & Taibi, 2014). To effectively serve as a link, the mediator must have the ability to engage with both cultures to some extent. Thus, Taft (1981, p. 73) notes that a mediator must be bicultural to some extent, possessing "two skills in one skull" and sufficiently flexible to switch their orientation. The CEFR Companion Version (Council of Europe, 2020) refers to plurilingualism and pluriculturalism, essentially the single, interrelated repertoire that individuals combine with their general abilities to accomplish mediation tasks to meet language and/or cultural needs. Mediators require a high degree of intercultural sensitivity to effectively negotiate meaning across both cultures and transmit these meanings to the community (Viaggio, 2006).

The translator is primarily a mediator between two parties for whom mutual communication might otherwise be problematic. The original words, ideas, and information are manipulated into the target language by removing, adding, or modifying the source text to altering the original text to remove any barriers to communication, language, or information when conveying the message from L1 to L2 (Xirofotou, 2012). Hence, the role of the mediator is to link or fill in linguistic and cultural gaps by decoding ideas and behaviors and not just to translate the content. The 'conventional' translator, whose job it is to remove barriers to communication, continues to be an unseen player in the process. The mediator, on the other hand, is a tangible presence who makes use of those barriers as a crucial component of the message delivery process. An impediment has linguistic and cultural significance and contributes significantly to the meaning conveyed.

Byram and Risager (1999) highlight mediation's communication role, claiming that it allows for effective communication. The individual's ability to mediate between the source and target language (spoken or written) is essential for developing intercultural competence. Olk (2009) describes the intercultural mediation process when transferring information between source and target languages, including relating the source and target culture to identify culture-specificity in the source text (Angelone, 2016; Tomozeiu et al., 2016). As a result, learners must attempt to explain one culture in the context of another to find a satisfactory mediating position for cultural differences (Olk, 2009). Additionally, when cultural and social knowledge gaps make it difficult or impossible to convey a message, interpreters may need to step in. By changing the original words, adding justifications, or leaving out specific passages, this active intervention serves as a cultural mediator as opposed to an impartial or invisible force (Gercek, 2007, p. 8).

The interpreter must sometimes become the mediator, stepping away from their 'invisible' role to add a further dimension of culturally shared knowledge. Viaggio (2006) presented his theory of interlingual mediation based on extensive experience in conference interpreting and literary and pragmatic translation. He argued that although mediation often involves translation, it has a greater purpose. Mediation aims to produce ideational identity and/or pragmatic correspondence in different subjects or situations to achieve relevant identity. The role of the mediator is to communicate whatever is required, practical, wise, or prudent so that the new interlocutor is aware of (a) what the mediator deems to be required, practical, wise, or prudent and (b) how it is necessary, convenient, advisable, or prudent from a metacommunicative standpoint. Viaggio's (2006) perspective on mediation is closely aligned with his view of communication, which is always embedded within a social context, and mediators need to hold pluralistic views of languages and cultures. The ability of the interlocutors to comprehend the linguistic utterances' content and intention, which are entrenched in particular social contexts, is essential to the metacommunicative success of communication (Viaggio, 2006, p. 45). Thus, the ability to modify meaning in order to overcome pragmatic and interpretive challenges is a crucial mediation skill. To ensure that the meaning intended is understood, the mediator should interpret the interlocutors' words while taking into account their goals, motives, and interests. His role is to convey meaning indirectly and make sure that communication is successful in terms of understanding and practical meaning in a particular social context. Interlingual mediation may fail if appropriate, polite forms are not understood and conveyed, even when word-for-word translation is accurate. The development of analytical skills, which include understanding propositional structure and pragmatic aims, is therefore a crucial prerequisite for the mediator.

A client who used the English equivalent of the Spanish phrase "elegido mejor compañero" ("chosen as the best fellow") in his resume is described by Viaggio (2001, pp. 9–10). The young Argentinean economist was applying for postgraduate studies at a US-based institute and considered that including this information in his resume would be helpful. However, this type of information does not meet the acceptability criteria for CVs in the US professional context, where an applicant's accomplishments should rather imply such positive attributes. In fact, including such information could have a detrimental effect on the application and appear too self-serving. Interlingual and intercultural mediation made the applicant aware of this fact and helped him select and present information more relevant to that context. The relationship between translation and pragmatics enables the translator to capture and translate all communication elements, including the verbal and non-verbal elements, by considering the context of the given situation.

Thus, the role of culture in communication is emphasized and, consequently, the role of translators and interpreters as cultural mediators. Similar to Viaggio (2006), Katan and Taibi (2014) contend that in order to appreciate the importance of culture and how it relates to communication, translation, and interpretation, a thorough understanding of it is necessary.

Moreover, when it comes to creating, interpreting, and perceiving reality, culture plays a crucial role. According to Katan and Taibi (2014), translators should understand geography, history, customs, traditions, behavior patterns, and popular culture of the cultures they are mediating. According to Bell (1991, p. 161), a translated text is a new creation that results from careful reading; it is a reconstruction rather than a copy. Also, Cincotta-Strong (2001, p. 108) notes that Katan's approach to translation is not a process of coding—encoding or re-coding—but rather of virtual text creation. This idea of translating as reconstruction continues to draw critical attention (Zelyck, 2019). The translator is a cultural mediator, able to understand the frames of interpretation in the source culture and write a text that can let the target reader reach a similar collection of interpretation frames (Katan & Taibi, 2014, p. 125). Translators serving as cultural mediators should possess the ability to analyze, (re) interpret, and (re) create the complex embedding of metacommunicative frames.

Thus, translators/interpreters have a new more active role than before. Since the world is becoming globalized, they should promote mutual understanding among foreigners, negotiating and promoting understanding between cultures. This new role corresponds to that of the cultural mediator and encompasses other roles such as arbitrator. It is important to point out that before, translators and interpreters were more perceived as a 'walking dictionary', which now needs to shift to incorporate the specialist role of negotiating understanding between cultures and shifting cultural orientation through analysis (Katan, 2015).

Additionally, Katan (2008) suggests that the mediator should take on an assertive position and support collaboration of the interlocutors in accomplishing their communicative goals. As the third person in the hierarchy-neutral triangle of source, the mediator has an empowering role, which allows them active interventions in the communication process, promoting effective transmission through explanation and analysis of the cultural and linguistic context. Also, mediators infuse their own knowledge and beliefs into the processing of texts in order to intervene and negotiate meaning between L1 and L2 texts (Katan, 2008, p. 89).

In order to approach the L1 and L2 texts critically and convey verbal cues as well as cultural beliefs and values embedded in the target communicative and social context, the mediator needs to be knowledgeable about both of the cultures involved (Hatim & Mason, 1990). Figure 1 describes mediation and the identification of communicative purposes in relation to a text. Katan's (2009) 'logical levels table' can assist the mediator in determining how to convey information between the source and target text, and it includes inquiries that guide.

LEVEL	What is going on?	Potential differences to be accounted for in the text	Potential differences to be accounted for between cultures
Environment	Where and when is this 'going on'? In what context of what situation?	Lexicogrammatical resources, genre, intertextual links, specialized language	Physical, political, social environment; period, people, setting, artefacts; culturemes, encyclopaedic knowledge, allusions, culture bumps
Behaviour	What is it that is 'going on'? What is to be translated?	Semantics: visible text, locution, cohesion	Visible action/ descriptions: (non)verbal behaviour, proxemics
Strategies	How are these things 'going on'? How is it to be translated?	Pragmatics: illocutionary intent/force, register, organization of discourse, house rules, individual style, coherence	Communication preferences: development of ideas, spoken/written styles, habits, customs; Norms, appropriacy, rules; linguaculture
Values/Beliefs	Why are these things 'going on'? What is the purpose of the translation?	Intentions: message, hidden message, assumptions, presuppositions	The hierarchy of preferred value-orientations; Beliefs about identity and about what 'right', 'standard' or 'normal'
Identity	Who is involved with this 'going on'? • Original author • Reader(ship)s • Commissioner • Translator as copier/manipulator	Actors in the text: personalities, animated subjects	National, ethnic, gender, religious, class, role; individual personality and cultural provenance(s)
Role, mission in society	Is this 'going on' coherent with my role/mission and the relevant social forces?	Text as agent change or status quo: esteem, ethics (of actors), long-term perlocutionary effects	The social forces, power issues, hegemonies, ideologies; moral issues

Figure 1. 'Logical Levels Table' of Context of Culture and Situation (Katan, 2008, pp. 89-90)

The first two columns of Figure 1 establish the framework for intervention, guiding the mediator to questions pertinent to that level. The third and fourth columns address the source and target texts, as well as the cultural and situational context, highlighting the relevant cultural aspects at each level. Thus, as a result, a new text will be created based on a completely different paradigm with a new perception of the world (Katan, 2008).

Disregarding ethnic groups and culture could accentuate racial, cultural, and linguistic differences, and Valero-Garcés (2006) draws attention to the mediator's ability to address ethnocultural differences. Mediators require both parties to have global knowledge to avoid cultural misconceptions. They must be aware of attitudes held by people from diverse backgrounds, including traits that must be adapted through intercultural communication, such as ethnocentric beliefs, phobias, prejudices, or preconceptions (Valero-Garcés, 2014). A major factor in promoting communication is the mediator's cultural background (Valero-Garcés, 2014). While mediators may belong to both, one, or neither cultures involved (Valero-Garcés, 2006), the mediator's ability to observe and study the involved cultures is the most important factor. Cambridge (2002) distinguishes between 'advocacy' and 'impartial' models—qualities frequently discussed in relation to mediation (Mayordomo, 2023)—by regarding the role of the interlinguistic mediator. Some institutions supporting migrants adopt a distant and objective attitude, with translators and interpreters considered mere reproducers of the message. For example, in Spain, some institutions involved in interlinguistic communication offer free translations and interpretations for migrants and recommend that interpreters should not assume functions when interpreting other than those inherent to the work and that they should remain objective and avoid putting themselves in the user's or provider's place (Valero-Garcés, 2006).

Thus, opposing views exist regarding the impartiality or involvement of the mediator. However, it is clear that needs to be totally involved in the information-sharing, reformulation, and summarization process (Wallenstein & Svensson, 2014). Thus, mediators must create a text that satisfies the language and cultural standards of all participants in order to foster a connection amongst role-players from various backgrounds. In addition to having a thorough understanding of the languages, this new role for translators and interpreters calls for someone with a high level of cultural sensitivity, which enables them to negotiate meaning between two cultures and effectively communicate it to members of the other community (Taft, 1981, p. 75).

The job of the translator, who concentrates on the literal or faithful transfer of concepts and subject matter from L1 to L2 texts, is different from that of the interlinguistic mediator and frequently results in misunderstandings for the recipients (Zelyck, 2019). The mediator actively participates in deciding what information should be kept, left out, hidden, or added in order to bridge this cultural communication gap and foster understanding between individuals from different backgrounds (Stathopoulou, 2019). This description offers insights into the abilities necessary for interlinguistic mediators in the EFL context. Language teachers could use these insights to help learners acquire, develop, and use strategies for effective mediation.

Thus, the ideas of translation and interpretation in connection with the mediation process were reviewed in this part. Translation is only one aspect of mediation. Mediators should be visible agents actively intervening to overcome linguistic and cultural obstacles. Although the translation of words and linguistic expressions is often involved, mediation entails the further skills of reformulation, addition, omission, and adaptation through selecting and explaining cultural information, conveying meaning, and ensuring expectations are met in terms of communicative purpose and social context. The text produced may not abide by the principles of faithful translation. The mediator actively participates in the transfer of concepts, knowledge, and values as well as the negotiation of meaning between the source and target texts. The following section focuses on the concept of mediation underpinning the KPG exam.

VI. THE NATIONAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE EXAM SYSTEM (KPG) AND THE CONCEPT OF MEDIATION

With an emphasis on written mediation techniques, exercises, and performance, this part addresses written mediation comprehension in relation to the KPG English language tests. Candidates must mediate, or transmit information verbally or in writing, from a text written in the source language (Greek) to the target language (e.g., English), as part of the written mediation assignments in the KPG exam. For the mediated text to be functionally adequate in the target language, the candidates must take into account the communicative goal and social context. To achieve a different communicative goal and impact on the intended reader, candidates must extract information from Greek texts and convey pertinent points in English.

The concept of mediation articulated by Dendrinos (2006) involves negotiation and interpretation of (social) meanings conveyed to individuals who may not fully understand the source text; this concept underpins the philosophy of the KPG mediation activities. One issue with the CEFR's idea of mediation is that foreign language programs do not provide simultaneous and consecutive interpretation/translation; as a result, the way they are regarded as separate communicative tasks (Xirofotou, 2012). There are many types of translation, each with its own purpose and required expertise, e.g., being well-read and having a background in the arts is necessary for literary text translation.

On this basis, Dendrinos (2006, 2013) maintains that mediation is altogether different from professional translation. It is an everyday exchange that uses 'meaning-making agents' to communicate, negotiate, and deliver the meaning between languages, taking from the source and 'feeding' it to the recipient. Consequently, the concept of mediation for the KPG exams for English and other languages significantly diverged from the original perspective in the 2001 CEFR (Council of Europe et al., 2001). However, it has influenced the updated companion version (Council of Europe, 2020),

contributing to developing the broader notion of mediation currently in use. Translators are expected to remain invisible and adhere strictly to the original source without injecting their views or standpoints or appearing in the final output. They are not permitted to alter the text's discourse, genre, or register. Mediators, in contrast, are communicative agents. In mediation, the source and recipient rely on judgment from a third party about aspects of relevance (Viaggio, 2006).

Consequently, the goal of mediation exercises is to help learners become more adept at considering the social and functional significance of language forms in the L2. According to Dendrinos (2006, p. 12), the mediator's position is all-encompassing for mediation as a social activity, and when someone accepts or is assigned this duty, they also take on the responsibility of interpreting social meanings for others. Phrases like "What she means is..." or "What he really wants to say..." are occasionally used to qualify the mediating statement.

Mediation is related to the power because the mediator takes the opportunity given to them by the source to interpret social meanings for another party (Dendrinos, 2006). In the KPG exam, the mediator may act as a meaning negotiator, facilitator or meaning-making agent, among other functions (Xirofotou, 2012). Their communicative purpose is to promote communication between two parties or assist them in settling a problem, necessitating a profound understanding of spoken or written language. As a facilitator, the mediator would assist two or more parties experiencing a communication breakdown at a social event. They would act as a negotiator of meanings in situations requiring reconciliation, settlement, or compromise. The role of a meaning-making agent would be accomplished by interpreting and generating meanings through speech or writing for audiences from diverse linguistic, cultural, or social backgrounds (Dendrinos, 2006). The context determines which part of the message should be transferred together with the type of register used. The following section provides further detail on the mediation task in the KPG exam.

VII. THE WRITTEN MEDIATION TASK IN THE KPG EXAM

Mediation activities in the written test papers for all KPG languages (starting from the B1 level) are based on real-life scenarios and require candidates to selectively extract information, ideas, and meanings from a Greek source text and produce an original content in another language. The target text may be different from the source material in terms of type and communication goal. For example, an article on movies from a Greek daily that tells people about movies at the theater could be used as part of a B2-level written mediation exercise. The mediation task requires candidates to write an English recommendation for two films for children and two for teenagers. In another B2 activity, the mediation task asks candidates to read an article entitled 'The Key to Success' about preparing for school exams from a Greek magazine as the source text and write an English blog post giving advice to their friends preparing for exams. Written mediation tasks and performance requirements differ in the English test papers at each exam level (Stathopoulou, 2009, 2014, 2019).

Candidates must take into account the full context when completing the mediation tasks, which includes the text's setting, readership, and motivations for writing. The tasks draw on linguistic competence and awareness of the intercultural setting in which texts are produced. Candidates should use various mediation strategies based on their instruction in class regarding relaying information from a source to a target, as well as approaches they have learned for evaluating strategies. Dendrinos and Stathopoulou (2010) specifically advise that candidates should be trained to identify and appropriately reformulate information relevant to the communicative purpose, integrate information from various parts of the source text or reorganize relevant details into the target text, add or omit information as needed, restructure the source text, accurately and suitably paraphrase source information, creatively merge source information with additional details, avoid literal translation of entire sentences, and convey the essence of the source text.

These practical pointers enhance EFL learners' ability to effectively respond to KPG exam questions regarding mediation and, more importantly, help develop their mediation skills for practice in culturally and linguistically diverse settings. These pointers are similar to the descriptors included in the CEFR Companion Version (Council of Europe, 2020, Section IV), clearly indicating the contribution of authors such as Dendrinos and Stathopoulou (2010) to the revised CEFR framework.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This paper provides an overview of mediation in the context of linguistic, social, and cultural interactions, where the meanings of languages, identities, and relationships are dynamically being re-evaluated and renegotiated. The concept of mediation was examined from multiple perspectives, along with an exploration of translation and interpretation. The importance of mediators in our culturally diverse globalized society was emphasized, and an argument was made for updating the conceptualization of the translator's role to include complex abilities associated with intercultural mediation. Effective intercultural mediation requires linguistic knowledge in addition to more advanced mediation skills such as cultural awareness, negotiation, and evaluation. Instruction of mediation strategies should be incorporated into language learning classrooms to promote the development of EFL learners' mediation abilities, vital skills needed in globalized societies.

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