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A PROPOSAL OF TASKS TO DEVELOP CEFR MEDIATION ACTIVITIES AT B2 LEVEL AT SPANISH OFFICIAL SCHOOLS OF LANGUAGES

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ABSTRACT

This Master Dissertation describes the role of mediation in language learning and teaching at Official Schools of Languages in Spain in order to design tasks to implement mediation activities at a B2 English level course. The practice of mediation language activities requires a thorough understanding of this language activity by both teachers and learners. For this purpose, this MA Dissertation revises what mediation activities entail, the current status of mediation at Official Schools of Languages and its application in classroom contexts. By identifying these three aspects, tasks covering the types of mediation activities described in the CEFR will be designed in accordance with CEFR descriptors at the B2 level for English.

Keywords: mediation, tasks, Official School of Languages, Spain, English, B2, CEFR

ABSTRACT

Este TFM describe el papel de la mediación en el aprendizaje y enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras en las Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas de España, para diseñar tareas que implementen actividades de mediación en un curso de inglés de nivel B2. La práctica de actividades de mediación requiere que tanto profesores como aprendientes entiendan esta actividad de lengua. Por esta razón, este TFM revisa lo que supone la mediación, su actual estatus en las Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas y su aplicación en el aula. Una vez identificados estos tres aspectos, se desarrollarán tareas que cubran las actividades de mediación descritas en el MCER según sus descriptores para un nivel B2 de inglés.

Palabras clave: mediación, tareas, Escuela Oficial de Idiomas, España, inglés, B2, MCER

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last few decades foreign language teaching has drastically changed. Until recent days the focus was on the development of learners receptive and productive skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) (Holden & Rogers, 1988) to deal with real-life, communicative situations using the foreign language. Teachers have been therefore concerned with providing students with practice to acquire the necessary communicative competence (Wilson & Sabee, 2003). This includes subcomponents such as grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence or strategic competence to apply these skills.

With the introduction of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR) in 2001 (Council of Europe, 2001), descriptive guidelines of language learning, teaching and testing were proposed as a meeting point for reflection on what language learning requires in order to use it for communicative purposes. This document includes a set of common reference levels (A1-C2) (vertical dimension) in which general and communicative competences, strategies and language activities (horizontal dimension) are defined by means of illustrative descriptor scales. According to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001), those statements indicate outcomes at almost every level, providing not only a roadmap for learning, but also a reference for practice and assessment of the above-mentioned elements.

More recently, and especially since the advent of the Companion Volume to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (Companion Volume) (Council of Europe, 2018), a further step has been taken, with new challenges on how to teach, learn and assess. The Companion Volume adds more descriptors, especially for areas such as mediation as a language activity, or pluricultural and plurilingual competences, which are closely related to mediation. Therefore, teaching, learning and testing are currently being reconsidered in the light of these changes.

A crystal-clear example of this influence is how educational entities are taking into more consideration mediation language activities in classroom practise or even in their tests as to check learners' acquisition of a foreign language. For instance, in Spain, Official Schools of Languages have been subject to legislative modifications. Official Schools of Languages are Spanish state-owned institutions that aim at providing foreign language teaching to adults. This new legislation has established not only their own classification for language learning competences and the CEFR level structure in its course catalogue, but also mediation as a

language activity that needs to be taught, learnt and tested when issuing certificates. Hence, it is of the utmost importance to include mediation in their syllabi.

These changes result in new challenges in both teachers' and learners' ways of practising foreign languages. It is for this reason that it would be necessary to provide them with new resources and tasks that allow them to put mediation into practice. Mediation is still unknown either because teachers and students have not been aware of the processes it involves or because it is a notion that is still subject to continuous research (North & Piccardo, 2016). It is also an activity of relative recent implementation in the foreign language classroom context.

This MA Dissertation will revise the concept of mediation for both teachers and learners at Official Schools of Languages. This revision is focused on answering what mediation is (Section 2.1) in foreign language teaching, its current status at Spanish Official Schools of Languages (Section 2.2) and its application in foreign language classroom contexts (Section 2.3). By doing this, the design of several English language tasks that involve mediation language activities will be proposed for the B2 CEFR level (Section 3 and 4), in accordance with the CEFR descriptors and the current legislation regulating Official Schools of Languages in Spain.

Hence, the main purpose of this MA Dissertation is to understand mediation in order to design tasks that can be used at B2 English level courses at Official Schools of Languages in Spain and in order to do it, the following objectives are set:

1. To define mediation as a language activity according to the CEFR
2. To identify mediation activities types in the CEFR
3. To indicate their main features
4. To understand how mediation has been included in the learning teaching process at Official Schools of Languages
5. To illustrate how mediation is being implemented in other language teaching contexts
6. To design mediation tasks using the CEFR

2. MEDIATION: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section defines mediation following the CEFR (Section 2.1). It also describes the process by which it has been introduced at Official Schools of Languages (Section 2.2), and illustrates how it has been implemented in different language teaching and learning contexts (Section 2.3).

2.1 Understanding mediation

Mediation, as understood in language teaching, requires more than a simple definition. It would be impossible to give an overview of mediation language activities without examining the main elements that the CEFR takes into consideration to describe language acquisition according to it. According to the CEFR, language activities are the different ways one can use to communicate. These uses of language are four: production, reception, interaction and mediation which can be carried out with different channels or modes (written or oral) thanks to strategies for the different language activities and communicative competences. According to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 9), competences are “the sum of knowledge, skills and characteristics that allow a person to perform actions.” All human competences contribute to some extent to the communicative competence (one’s ability to interact with individuals and exchange and negotiate meaning by using language or other conventions).

However, within the communicative framework, it is necessary to distinguish between general competences and linguistic competences. The former is made up of their knowledge and their skills from their personal and different experiences, something that modifies the way in which they interact with society. Every act of human communication depends on shared knowledge of the world. Thus, when communication all the knowledge that comes into play does not exclusively stem from language and culture. There is also knowledge about daily life, the social aspect of cultures and countries where a language is spoken, which is essential for the realization of effective communication activities in this language. These competences, which range from one person to another, condition, personalize and give meaning to our communicative acts. Therefore, they must always be present and in any teaching-learning process so that the learner makes conscious use for any reception, interaction, production, let alone mediation language activity or process. In other words, competence-based learning allows learners to carry out real-life tasks in an efficient way while performing language activities that promote lifelong learning.

2.1.1 The notion of mediation

Etymological speaking, ‘mediate’ stems from the Latin word *medius* (middle) (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2020). The Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online (2020) defines it as “bring accord out of by action as an intermediary”. Needless to say, this meaning can be applied to numerous contexts, but probably conflicts, translation or diplomacy are some of the most well-known disciplines. The context which this MA dissertation examines is that of mediation in linguistic communication and notably in foreign language teaching, where it has been subject to increasing interest in recent literature. One of the first sources considering the notion of mediation in language teaching was the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001), understood as a way of including a language activity that goes beyond mere production and reception. Mediation was introduced together with interaction in the light of a new understanding of language, in which its social dimension is highlighted, something that is clear according to the way mediation is defined in the CEFR: “it makes communication possible between persons who are unable, for whatever reason, to communicate with each other directly. Examples of this activity are found in “translation or interpretation, paraphrasing, summarising, recording...” (Council of Europe, 2001, p.14).

Hence, the CEFR insists that the nature of mediation activities lies in reformulating a message for a third-party that has any difficulty in accessing it. As a matter of fact, the CEFR highlights the value of this type of activities, since they happen in usual communication in our society. Language users are not expected to just receive and produce or convey their own information. They may act as intermediators, since they may facilitate the understanding of certain information. North & Piccardo (2016) also insists that mediation entails making information accessible to another party. This party could be a friend, a classmate, a colleague, a stranger, or even more than one individual, i.e. a group. It is originated from the necessity to clarify something, no matter in what communicative mode or channel. In Figure 1, mediation is interwoven with the other three language activities that the CEFR establishes.

The updating of the CEFR given by the Companion Volume (2018) makes use of the following image to explain to what extent mediation is connected with both reception and production, which at the same time allows language users to interact. Cantero & De Arriba (2004) describe that although mediation seems to be a secondary activity integrated in production, reception and interaction in this description, it has special relevance, as the learners’ communicative acts in a language are activated through language activities altogether.

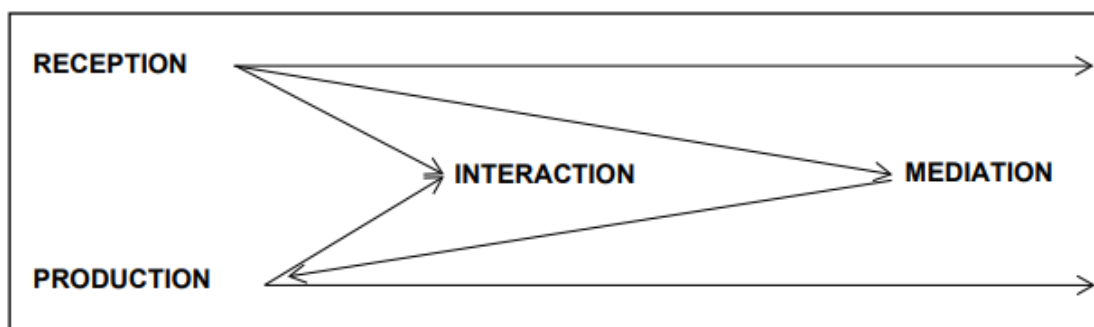


Figure 1. Relation between language activities, taken from the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 32)

Although the CEFR defines mediation by highlighting the importance of this language activity in language learning and daily communication, understanding and conceptualizing this notion is a process under development. As a matter of fact, in the last few years, different projects have tried to expand this notion firstly introduced by the CEFR. Coste & Cavalli (2015) indicate that the notion of mediation defined by the CEFR manifests that it consists of content transmission, in which the distance between two entities is reduced in a given social context. It is also noted by Coste & Cavalli (2015) that the original 2001 CEFR does not include scales of descriptions for this activity despite its differences with the other language activities. North & Piccardo (2016, p 21) also claim that the original CEFR conceptualization of mediation seems to be “incomplete”. As they put it: “it would also be simplistic to limit mediation to one single dimension: that concerning the transfer of information from one language to another”. This focus on revising, understanding and developing the richness of the notion of mediation was one of the reasons leading to the advent of the Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2018) as an expansion of the original CEFR.

The Companion Volume (2018, p. 103) clarifies what it is understood by mediation in language teaching through further details in its definition as a language activity. “The user/learner acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning, sometimes within the same language, sometimes from one language to another”. Additionally, the Companion Volume also develops descriptors as a guide that helps to establish what mediation consists of.

2.1.2 Descriptors: mediation and related strategies and competences

The importance that mediation receives within the CEFR framework is captured by the formulation of can-do descriptors¹ for this language activity, its strategies and some competences that are closely related to it, i.e. plurilingual and pluricultural competences. They categorize the user-learner's abilities in mediation activities, strategies and competences. Therefore, in order to comprehend the nature of CEFR mediation language activities nowadays, their types and characteristics, a closer look and analysis of the following descriptors would be essential.

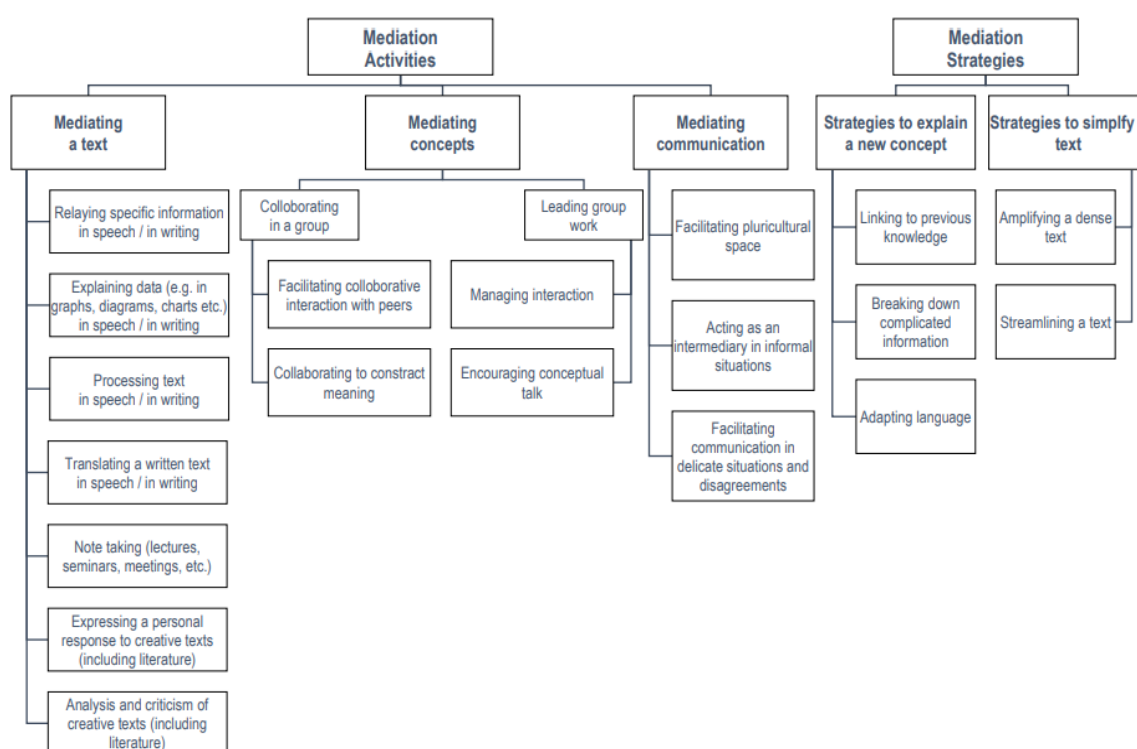


Figure 2. An overview of descriptors for mediation activities and strategies subcategorization from the Companion Volume (Council of Europe, p. 104)

As a first step, the Companion Volume establishes a general illustrative descriptor scale generally examining what can be done by mediating at the different CEFR levels. For instance, at a B2 level:

Can work collaboratively with people from different backgrounds, creating a positive atmosphere by giving support, asking questions to identify common goals, comparing options

¹ CEFR can do descriptors are illustrative can-do statements, a guide of what the learner is able to do at the different proficiency levels established by the CEFR (vertical dimension).

for how to achieve them and explaining suggestions for what to do next. Can further develop other people's ideas, pose questions that invite reactions from different perspectives and propose a solution or next steps. Can convey detailed information and arguments reliably, e.g. the significant point(s) contained in complex but well-structured texts within his/her fields of professional, academic and personal interest. (Council of Europe, 2018, p.105)

The first type of mediation activity is mediating a text. It involves “passing on to another person the content of a text to which they do not have access, often because of linguistic, cultural, semantic or technical barriers” (Council of Europe, 2018 p. 107). Here, eleven scales are included for different mediation activities, as seen in Figure 2 (relaying specific information in speech, in writing explaining data, processing text, note-taking, etc.). In mediating texts, special attention is paid to distinguishing the languages that come into play. The Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 107) indicates, “For all the descriptors in the scales in this section, Language A and Language B may be two different languages, two varieties of the same language, two registers of the same variety, or any combination of the above. However, they may also be identical.”

Therefore, mediation can take place between languages (cross-linguistic mediation) (Bohle, 2012) or within the same language. It is of the utmost importance to bear in mind the concept of cross-linguistic mediation despite this one not being the only type. According to Stathopoulou (2015, p. 40), cross-linguistic mediation is a (trans)linguaging practice in which users relay information, that is a “hybrid practice of language”.

This view follows the last CEFR developments about the relation of different languages, plurilingualism and interculturality, as a way of connecting and relating learners' different linguistic codes. Nevertheless, mediation does not necessarily involve two different languages. North & Piccardo (2016), insist on this idea:

The CEFR does not confine the concept of mediation to cross-linguistic mediation. Yet, many people appear to associate mediation in the CEFR solely as cross-linguistic mediation – usually conveying the information given in a text, and to reduce it to some form of (more or less professional) translation and interpretation. Where mediation has been included in curricula and examinations, it tends to involve informal interpretation/translation or summary of a text - written or spoken - in one language into another language. (North & Piccardo, 2015, p. 6)

The second group of descriptors is organized under the heading mediating concept activities. In this group, mediation activities consist of facilitating access to notions, concepts or knowledge to others. These mediation activities deal with constructing meaning while facilitating and stimulating conditions for this exchange. This type of mediation is further

subdivided into collaborating in a group and leading group work. As the Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2018, p.117) indicates this mediation consists of “establishing the conditions for effective work (= relational mediation)”.

The last group of mediation activities refers to the mediating communication type. According to the Companion Volume, this is an activity that renders understanding more accessible between users, irrespective of their differences, either sociocultural, sociolinguistic or intellectual. Indeed, communication is not always hindered because of language, sometimes it is due to lack of schematic knowledge or familiarity with the topic. In this respect, this type of activities can be very useful for teachers, trainers or professionals who are commonly involved in communicative encounters. Dendrinos (2006) reflected on the diversity of mediation agents, subclassifying them as professional mediators (teachers, legal mediators, translators, journalists...), informal mediators (peers, siblings, parents...). Hence, the social context and the participants are considered to be variable elements in mediation activities. In this section, the Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2018) presents descriptors under three descriptive scales: facilitating pluricultural space, acting as intermediary in informal situations and facilitating communication in delicate situations and disagreements.

The CEFR advocates that when language users perform language activities such as mediation, they mobilise certain strategies, as a hinge between competences and language activities. In this respect, mediation strategies are also presented in the form of descriptors with the aim of describing the mechanisms language users should use to perform and facilitate mediation activities, allowing the mediator to clarify meaning and facilitate communication. They also allow the learner to better process information and establish equivalent meaning.

This clearly involves an adaptability on the part of the user in terms of conventions, constraints, or conditions that stem from the context, which is another factor of the utmost importance when dealing with mediating activities. As a matter of fact, the mediator, as the Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2018, p.126) states, “may shuttle between people, between texts, between types of discourse and between languages, depending on the mediation context.”

Mediation strategies are subdivided into two main types: strategies to explain a new concept and strategies to simplify a text. They are further subdivided into linking to previous knowledge, adapting language, and breaking down complicated information and strategies for the former and amplifying or streamlining a text for the latter.

Descriptors for plurilingual and pluricultural competence have been also created, as a need to extend these initial notions presented in the CEFR in 2001. Plurilingual and intercultural education highlights social coexistence and lies in the promotion of communication and mutual understanding, which is closely related to mediation.

This relation with mediation can be seen in how the Companion Volume defines plurilingual competence.

Plurilingual competence involves the ability to call flexibly upon an inter-related, uneven, plurilinguistic repertoire to switch from one language or dialect (or variety) to another; to express oneself in one language (or dialect, or variety) and to understand a person speaking another; to call upon the knowledge of a number of languages (or dialects, or varieties) to make sense of a text; to recognise words from a common international store in a new guise; to mediate between individuals with no common language (or dialect, or variety), even with only a slight knowledge oneself; to bring the whole of one's linguistic equipment into play, experimenting with alternative forms of expression; to exploit paralinguistics (mime, gesture, facial expression, etc.). (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 28)

For the development of these descriptors the Companion Volume has taken into consideration the relation and connection of individuals' languages and cultures, which contribute to building up communicative competence. The final aim of plurilingualism as understood in the CEFR is to be able to modulate the usage of different languages according to the social and communicative situation, for instance when language is a barrier, when it exists cultural differences or when similarities can be proactively used to promote communication (cognates, internationalisms, etc.)

All in all, these competences lie in the fact that a learner or language user gains cultural and linguistic diversity, which turns into an asset for communication, a resource that allows them to participate in different contexts, even in those needing mediation activities to communicate. These competences are classified into building on pluricultural repertoire, plurilingual comprehension and building on plurilingual repertoire, as seen in Figure 3 below.

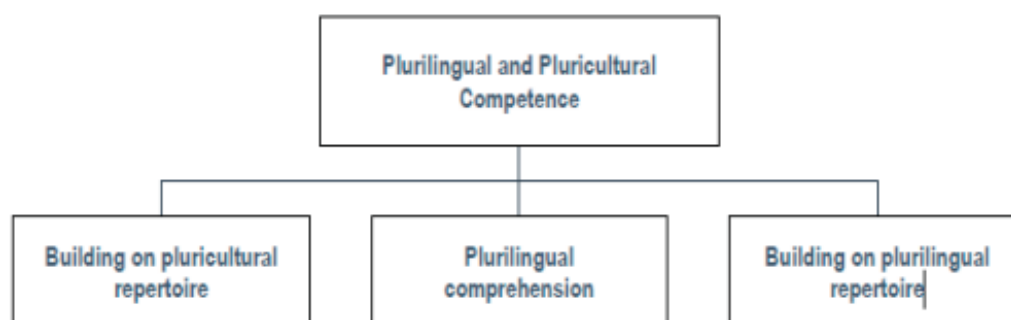


Figure 3. An overview of plurilingual and pluricultural competences subcategorization for descriptors, taken from the Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 159)

Plurilingual comprehension refers to comprehensive aspects, the ability to use different language codes within a context. Building on plurilingual repertoire makes reference to linguistic aspects that allow language users to exploit plurilingualism resources. Finally, building on pluricultural repertoire means using knowledge of different cultures to adjust communicative acts. Finally, these descriptors have been designed for almost every level (plurilingual comprehension descriptors are not present for C1 and C2 levels) in order to give more information about cross-linguistic mediation. These competences are also one of the most relevant aspects that have been introduced to conceptualize the notion of mediation in language teaching and learning.

2.2 Mediation at Official Schools of Languages

Foreign language teaching in Spain has witnessed a decisive shift towards incorporating some of the most significant CEFR key points and guidelines, including that of mediation, notably at Official Schools of Languages. The implementation of the CEFR to describe language teaching, learning and assessment at Official Schools of Languages was a process that started with the Organic Law of Education, LOE 2/2006 May 3rd, later modified by the Law for the Improvement of the Quality of Education, LOMCE 8/2013. Both legislative documents encouraged Spanish educational authorities to follow the suggestions by the Council of Europe.

Before these legal changes, the Royal Decree 967/1988 regulated the functioning of Official School of Languages teaching in the following way. There were five academic courses aimed at preparing students for a final certification exam (*Certificado de Aptitud*). The whole learning process was divided into two cycles: elementary, with three courses of 360 hours in

total, and the superior cycle, with two 240-hour courses. After each cycle students were tested to obtain a certificate. Each language department in each Official School of Language had great autonomy when designing those tests. Following the instructions of educational authorities, testing was normally organized into two main parts, according to the classical two modes (oral and written), including exercises covering both theoretical knowledge adapted to their syllabus contents as well as four language skills (listening and speaking, and writing and reading) at the corresponding level. Thus, neither level contents nor tests were harmonized in accordance with a common reference.

The Royal Decree 1041/2017 was published in a real attempt to ensure that Spanish Official Schools of Languages tests, certificates and level courses (A1-C2) gained harmonization and recognition in accordance with the CEFR key elements and its reference levels. It is in this context that mediation starts to gain recognition as a vital part in foreign language communication, especially after the publication of the Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2018) and its new descriptors (see Section 2.1). Therefore, the new curriculum at Official Schools of Languages specifies five language activities to be taken into account when teaching, learning and assessing learners' communicative competence, in agreement with what it is set out by both the CEFR and the new Companion Volume.

Another direct consequence of this new process is the publication of the Royal Decree 1/2019, January 11th, in order to regulate foreign language assessment at Spanish Official School of Languages by means of standardised tests according to the five language activities that are considered for each CEFR level. These tests aim at certifying a language level following the CEFR categorization (A1-C2) by the Official School of Languages. The tests are divided into five parts, namely comprehension of written texts, comprehension of oral texts, mediation, production and coproduction of written texts and production and production of oral texts. Each part consists of specific tasks whose completion show if the learner has acquired enough competences to carry out CEFR language activities (reception, production, mediation and interaction (coproduction) in their main modes (oral and written) (see Figure 1). Regional Educational departments in each Spanish region are in charge of creating test specifications, materials and tasks to assess each language activity. Learners need a minimum score of 65% in total to obtain the certificate, as long as they reach a minimum score of 50% in each part.

Thus, teaching and learning at Official School of Languages are organized in a way that ensures the learners' acquisition of the necessary competences to carry out language activities, which may lead to obtaining a certificate for a specific level. For this purpose, the different competences that learners need to develop are established by both the CEFR and the Spanish legislation . Although different paradigms for communicative competence can be found in the CEFR and the Spanish legislation, they basically differ in the classification of its subcomponents. While the Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2018) distinguishes between linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences as well as strategies for each language activity, the above-mentioned Royal Decree regulating Official Schools of Languages specifies competences more deeply and includes strategies as a particular competence. These different distributions can be seen in the following figures.

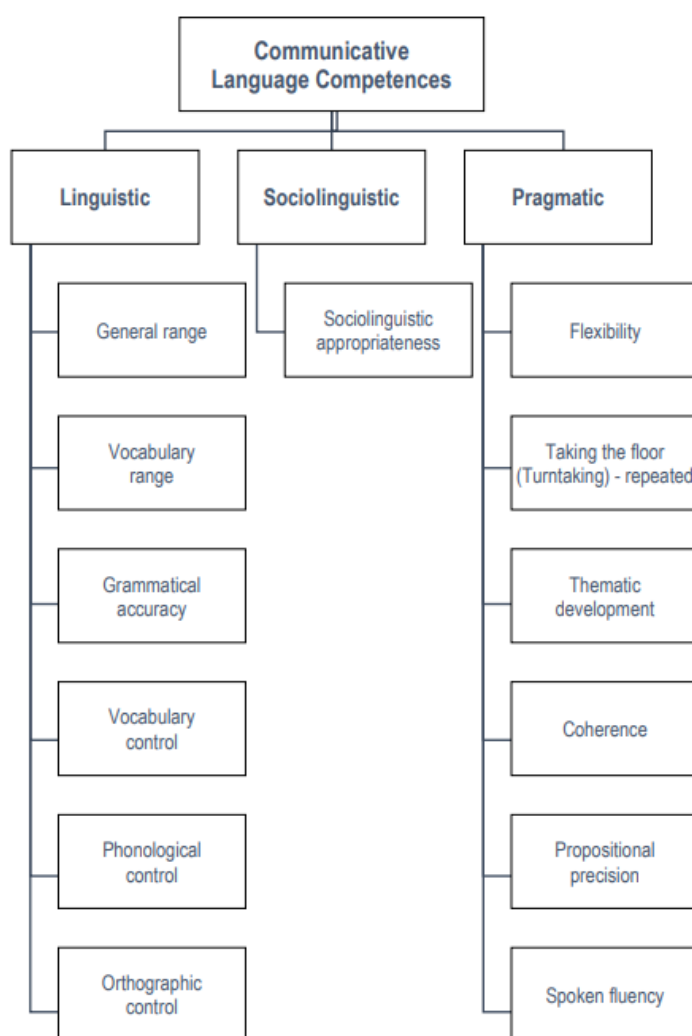


Figure 4. An overview of the communicative competences in the Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 130)

As for the competences that are described in the Spanish legislation (9 in total), syntactic, lexical, phonetic-phonological competences belong to the CEFR linguistic competence. Discursive and functional competences are related to the CEFR pragmatic competence. Sociocultural and sociolinguistic competence are equivalent to the CEFR sociolinguistic competence. Strategic competence refers to the strategies that are defined for each CEFR language activity. Finally, intercultural competence has been added similarly to pluricultural and plurilingual competence in the CEFR (see Section 2.1.2)

Therefore, relying on the Spanish legislation and the European policies on language learning, teachers and learners at Official Schools of Languages need to apply the necessary competences and language activities, including mediation, in their learning-teaching process to reach a specific foreign language CEFR level.

2.3 Implementation of mediation tasks in the foreign language classroom

Educational institutions and scholars, particularly those involved in language teaching, have been recently concerned with how to formally integrate mediation in the classroom by means of tasks that enable its practise. Although mediation activities are not essentially new in the classroom, the CEFR descriptors and scales allow to implement mediation more formally in classroom in relation to foreign language learning and assessment (EALTA, 2018). This idea is also present in research carried out in Cyprus (Tsagari & Giannikas, 2017) by examining how the use of regular cross-linguistic mediation is usual in the foreign language classroom, as teachers normally use both the foreign language and the L1 when teaching a class. This is done by translating, giving explanations, verifying comprehension in L1, classroom management in different languages, etc.

The design and use of specific tasks to carry out mediation per se in the classroom context is a more recent phenomenon. It is by means of them that learners manipulate language for specific purposes. Tasks involve a workplan, with necessary materials, the use of language through language activities (as it is mediation), certain degree of authenticity and clear communicative outcomes (Ellis, 2003).

The CEFR promotes the action-oriented approach to language learning as a methodology based on real-life tasks for purposeful communication, understood as a social activity that demands active use of language activities. According to Piccardo (2016) (as cited in Byron & Díez-

Bedmar, 2015), tasks in the action-oriented approach allow the learner to take action and achieve a result in real-life contexts that could occur out of the classroom. In this respect, the concept of CEFR scenarios appear as possible real contexts that are simulated in the classroom. They foster the integration of tasks which can be designed thanks to CEFR descriptors, as they can serve as a basis for objectives and criteria specification of the necessary competences, strategies and language activities involved in the tasks.

Designing mediation tasks has also led to take into account the relation of mediation with other language activities (production, interaction, reception), the modes (written, oral) or codes involved (cross-linguistic, intralinguistic mediation). This idea is also argued by Trovato (2013) in Spanish as a foreign language classroom contexts, when highlighting that mediation is an integrating activity, as it involves other activities that are generally practised individually: oral production, comprehension, oral interaction, etc.

Thus, he presents some proposals to create tasks that include both oral and written mediation. Examples of these are: summarising texts (both oral or in written), identifying and expressing key concepts from a source text, lexical adjustment or sight translation, which can be applied in daily-life contexts. A case of early implementation of mediation in Europe (before the Companion Volume was published) can be found in KPG (Kratiko Pistopiitiko Glossomathias or State Certificate of Language Proficiency) exams in Greece (Dendrinos, 2013) (see Figure 5) .

Imagine you are a member of a team preparing a **tourist leaflet** for English-speaking visitors to Arachova. Write the text (150 words *in addition* to the short introductory paragraph below), **mentioning things worth seeing and doing** in your town such as monuments, entertainment, eating, shopping, walking tours, museums, around the town, etc.

ARACHOVA – Spring, summer, winter and fall!



Parnassos Ski Resort



Traditional Greek taverna



Galaxidi



Foothills of Mount Parnassos



The Ancient theatre in Delphi

Welcome to our beautiful town!

A blend of green hills, beautiful landscape, rich tradition and a wide range of activities, all in one neat package. There is something here for everyone all year round.

Don't miss the opportunity to....

Figure 5. An example of written mediation task in KPG. (Stathopoulou, 2014, p. 22)

According to Dendrinos (2013), KPG tasks for mediation activities go beyond translation and interpreting, because they do not merely produce equivalent text in meaning, but a different text, a product that despite stemming from a source, could differ in terms of register, genre, mode (oral or written) or even code.

An example of intralinguistic mediation involves conveying information in the same language from the source, as seen in:

Imagine that you are a medical student and you visit the doctor with your father, who has been taken ill. Upon leaving the doctor's office, your father asks you to tell him what the doctor's diagnosis was because he didn't understand a word of what she said – not because what she said was in a foreign language, but because she used medical discourse. (Dendrinos 2013, para. 8)

Interlinguistic (or cross-linguistic) mediation involves code switching, as in the example below:

You're watching CNN and your mother who doesn't understand English happens to see a scene which surprises her. Impressed by it, she asks you what's going on. You've been listening to the news and you report to her in Greek the gist of what's happened. (Dendrinos 2013, para.11)

Similarly, Stathopoulou (2013, 2014, 2015) has led research into Greece KPG national assessments in the English language, especially focusing on describing interlinguistic mediation as well as appropriate tasks for this language activity. Her examination depends on a fundamental practical perspective on language, using parameters such as text type, participants, topic, context, or purpose.

In Germany Caspari (2013) lists several tasks that mingle mediation activities with written and oral production tasks. These tasks include aspects described by some of the descriptors in the Companion Volume (see Section 2.1). For instance, tasks in which the learner has to relay information in his first language according to a listening or reading comprehension in his or her second language, answering questions in German thanks to a source in a second language, oral mediation by interacting with two people whose languages are different, paraphrasing concepts, summarizing a text in the second language that is in the learner's first language, etc.

Another illustration of how mediation has been implemented is found in Žindžiuvienė, Ingrida Eglė, & Szlaužys, Wioleta (2015), whose research examines mediation activities in EFL classrooms in Lithuanian and Polish secondary schools to identify its benefits regarding the linguistic competence: expanding vocabulary, improving grammar... or regarding other language activities, e.g. oral production. The analysis focuses on the materials and textbooks used in both countries, in which some mediation activities are found in the form of paraphrasing ideas or identifying the gist of a text. Nevertheless, the emphasis of their research is on the role of translation and interpreting tasks as the main resources for mediation activities, similarly to what the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) identified as the main mediation activities.

Research conducted on plurilingualism in the Austrian classroom context by Piribauer, Atzlesberger, Greinix, Ladstätter, Mittendorfer, Renner & Steinhuber, (2015) proposes several tasks used for oral assessment of the English language. The task design is based on a precise definition of the context, i.e, situational framework, steps of the task, successful completion and identities of the participants. Their proposal include both sustainable monologues (oral production) as well as a dialogue (oral interaction) in which cross-linguistic mediation activities are needed, as seen in Figure 6.

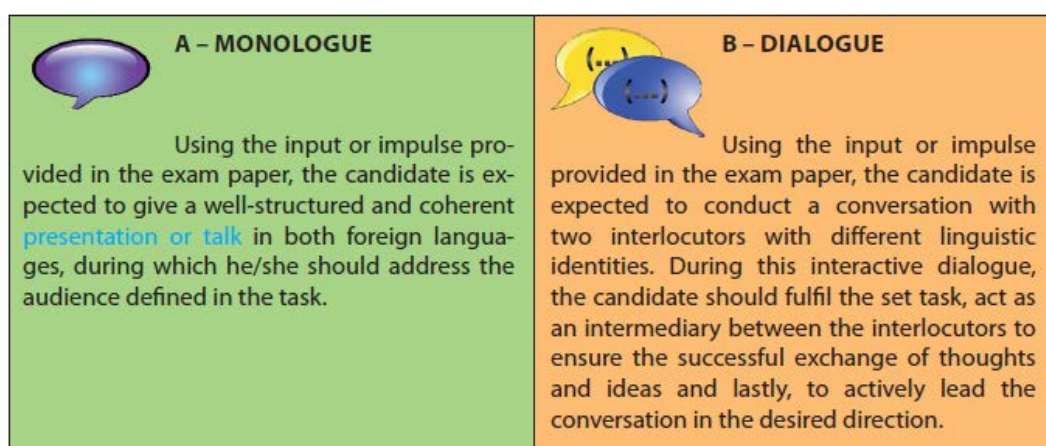


Figure 6. Speaking tasks at Austrian examinations (Piribauer, et al., 2015, p. 9)

Finally, in Spain, some certifying authorities have already started to include mediation within the tasks of their exams. For instance, universities organizing CertAcles exams have integrated mediation within written and oral production tasks. To do so, they have integrated some input that needs to be used during the production task (Ferrer & Laso, 2019). As for Official Schools of Languages, Calatayud (2018) analyses how exam tasks could implement oral and written production activities that include cross-linguistic mediation activities. This is done by producing orally or in written a new text in a foreign language thanks to another written or oral text in language 1 as a source. She highlights some positive aspects of integrating mediation tasks, such as boosting collaboration, motivation and pluricultural and plurilingual tolerance and awareness.

On balance, most of the tasks that put mediation into classroom practise and assessment have been designed especially for cross-linguistic mediation and mediating texts in both oral and written modes. It is for this reason that designing tasks combining other types of mediation activities is needed in order to cover the multidisciplinary nature and processes of mediation as a language activity described in the CEFR. That would include tasks combining modes and

other language activities in a mediation task simultaneously (e.g. oral and written or reception and production or interaction), intralinguistic mediation (same linguistic code) or other types of activities that are included in the CEFR descriptors, e.g. mediating communication.

3. METHODOLOGY

This section describes the steps that have been taken for the design of tasks in this MA dissertation research. This research is directed to a practical nature (the design of tasks) by applying the theoretical framework seen in Section 2. Due to this practicability, the specific classroom context where these tasks will be implemented has also been analysed (Section 3.1). Section 3.2. describes the variables which have been used to identify the types of tasks, namely descriptors for mediation activities, other language activities, strategies and competences, as well as which materials, domains and topics have been taken into account.

3.1. Contextualization

The following task proposal as well as the CEFR scenarios (Section 2.3) where they could be applied have been designed considering a B2 English classroom at a specific Official School of Languages. It is necessary to consider the specific features of this environment, so we can adapt the tasks to the students' specific needs, likes and educational purposes. By doing it, suitable descriptors for their level (vertical dimension) in the CEFR and for competences, strategies and mediation activities (horizontal dimension) in the CEFR could be chosen (Section 1).

3.1.1 The school

The Official School of Languages group for this task proposal is The Official School of Languages *Fernando Lazaro Carreter*. This centre is located in Zaragoza, in the Actur-Rey Fernando district, in the north of the city. It is state-owned centre, belonging to the Department of Education, Culture and Sports of the Autonomous Community of Aragon, specialized in language teaching. The school makes use of learning methods, a methodology and resources in accordance with the current legislation (LOMCE 8/2013, Royal Decrees 1041/2017 and 1/2019). It comprises courses for English (A1 to C1 levels) but also Catalan (A1 to B2 levels), German (A1 to B2 levels), French (A1 to C1 levels), Italian (A1 to B2 levels) and Chinese (A1 to B2 levels). Regarding the facilities of the centre and the availability of its equipment, it is

necessary to bear in mind that this centre is located in the same building as the district High School IES *Tiempos Modernos*. Therefore, both centres need to share their classrooms, the assembly hall and the cafeteria. However, the Official School of Languages has its own language laboratory, teachers' offices and library, which are of exclusive use of the Official School of Languages.

3.1.2 The students

There are twenty students in this B2 level group. They are mostly young adults, who are studying at university or looking for a job. Therefore, these students have other priority occupations. Their personal lives might sometimes limit their time availability. Nevertheless, they are interested in the English culture and they have a very positive attitude to language learning. As a matter of fact, they are very committed to their own learning process.

As for their language proficiency, they have a good level of English (high-intermediate level (low B2, according to the CEFR). Almost all of them (except for one French student) are Spanish native speakers. This fact will be taken into account when designing cross-curricular mediation tasks where Spanish is needed. It is important to remark that the B2 level is divided into two years with the current syllabus (Royal Decrees 1041/2017). This group is located at the first year of the B2 level (B2.1). It exists some diversity in their proficiency level, especially as this is the first year of the B2 level.

Nevertheless, this is a quite homogeneous group as far as the level is concern. Most of the students' desire to study English for either academic or professional reasons. Despite this, we find students with different backgrounds, for example the reasons why they are studying English, their cognitive skills, or their countries of birth: apart from the French student, there are also 5 students from Latin American countries. That is why the tasks pay special attention to the students' diversity by recreating different CEFR scenarios and themes and proposing several roles to carry out the tasks. Another characteristic of this group is the young nature of the students. Hence, the use of Information and communications technology (ICT) will also be implemented in the tasks.

3.2 Task design

In order to design the tasks, several variables were considered, i.e., descriptors according to the Companion Volume (Section 2.1.2), modes (oral or written) (Section 2.3), linguistic codes involved (Section 2.1.1) and CEFR domains and themes, i.e., broad sectors of social life in which social agents operate, that is: the educational, the occupational, the public and the personal domains.” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 10). Other elements such as the resources and materials, the task instructions and timing are also described. The design of the following tasks makes use of the action-oriented approach to implement the CEFR descriptors in specific scenarios and contexts. To do this implementation, it is necessary to specify descriptors or unzip them (break down descriptors into specific and easily comprehensible goals). This process will establish the task mediation activities (and other related language activities), as well as some of the most relevant competences and strategies that are involved in the tasks.

In this stage, it is necessary to select how many and which types of mediation activities will be implemented in order to select their corresponding descriptors at the B2 level band. Following the Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2018), the following task proposal provides nine tasks in total: three tasks for each subtype of mediation activity, that is, three tasks covering mediating a text, three additional tasks focusing on mediating concepts and three tasks for mediating communication. In Table 1 below, the main characteristics of each task (mediating activity, languages and domain) are presented.

MEDIATION TYPE		
Mediating text	Mediating concepts	Mediating communication
mode: written languages: crosslinguistic domain: personal	mode: written languages: intralinguistic domain: occupational	mode: written languages: crosslinguistic domain: educational
mode: oral languages: intralinguistic domain: occupational	mode: oral languages: intralinguistic domain: educational	mode: written to oral languages: intralinguistic domain: personal
mode: oral to written languages: intralinguistic domain: educational	mode: oral to written languages: crosslinguistic domain: personal	mode: written to oral languages: intralinguistic domain: occupational

Table 1. An overview of the tasks included in this proposal

It is important to remark that the descriptors describing mediation activities in the Companion Volume can refer to activities in which only one language or different languages are involved, so my proposal will include both cross-linguistic, also known as interlinguistic mediation, (Spanish-English), but also intralinguistic (English to English) mediation. The tasks in this proposal also promote strategies, linguistic, sociocultural-sociolinguistic, plurilingual and pluricultural competences (the latter especially for cross-linguistic mediation), which are necessary to carry them out successfully. Therefore, descriptors in these categories at a B2 level have also been taken into account for the design of tasks. These descriptors can be found in the Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 132). These competences and strategies have been compared with the contents of the corresponding competences at a B2 level given by the Royal Decree 1/2019, January 11th, regulating the curriculum at Official Schools of Languages (Section 2.2).

As for the language activities involved, tasks normally stem from a reception language activity (or input) that can be in the English or Spanish language (intralinguistic and crosslinguistic, respectively) in written or oral modes, and a production or interaction language activity (output) as the final language product that results in after mediating, as considered in Section 2.1.1. Therefore, descriptors that describe these language activities in the Companion Volume (p. 54-104) are also included.

The students' personal interests and their background in the specific B2 group described in the section 3.1 have determined the selection of the themes and the scenario domains in which these mediation activities might occur. Most of the students are young adults, whose main goal is to study or to find a job. They give great importance to their future careers. It is for this reason that the tasks will deal with educational, occupational and personal domains and related topics, as shown in Table 1.

It is also necessary to give some insight into the resources and materials that are used in the following tasks in order to link them to the domains and themes that have been previously mentioned. All teaching and learning of a foreign language should be done in contact with real life, but, since it is not always possible, we use realia. Realia support the teaching-learning process and facilitates the communication process in the classroom insofar as to interrelate the simulated scenario/context, the themes, the language activities, competences, strategies, the teaching methodology, the contents, etc.

When choosing the materials, special attention has been given to the use of authentic input material, as they show real English environments, which may be encouraging for the learners. They have been sometimes slightly modified (semi-authentic materials) in order to adapt them better to a B2 level. Materials have been found from a wide range of sources, for instance, advertisement, mass media (radio and press), literature, etc. These resources and materials have also been selected according to the reality of Official Schools of Languages. This means that the materials that have been used are available at the Official School of Languages and are adapted to the students' characteristics: B2 books, audio-visual means, fixed visual resources (boards, posters, pictures, charts...), projected visual resources (slides, overhead projector), fixed and in movement resources (videos), computers, Internet, digital board, audio.

Finally, it is important to bear in mind that this proposal does not have a rigid structure. It can be modified once elaborated. It is open, flexible and allows adjustments and modifications which may be required during the learning and teaching process, notably as mediation activities are characterised by the great range of contexts where they can occur.

4. RESULTS: PRESENTATION OF TASKS

Tasks are presented according to each mediation type. Each presentation includes a table summarising its main elements as well as a description of how it should be carried out. These descriptions indicate how to develop the task and gives insight into the main language activities, mediation activity descriptor, mediation strategies, competences, and resources or materials.

4.1. Tasks involving mediating a text

The activities designed to mediating a text (passing on the content of a text) are offered in this section. An overview of each task will be first offered to then describe how it could be implemented according to the CEFR descriptors that have been considered.

4.1.1 Task 1

Task title	COVID symptoms
Task instructions	Your English friend is extremely worried about the COVID-19 outbreak. You have seen a chart on an online newspaper describing the most frequent COVID symptoms. You have decided to write a short email (150 words approximately), explaining which ones are more likely to occur when you fall ill.
Materials and resources	Computer (text processor), chart (Figure 7)
Languages involved	Spanish and English, crosslinguistic mediation
Modes	Written
Timing	30 minutes
Domain	Personal
Competences descriptors	Plurilingual competence: plurilingual comprehension, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 160) Linguistic competence: vocabulary range, grammatical accuracy, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 132 and p. 133)
Mediation descriptor activity	Explaining data in writing, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.110)
Mediation descriptor strategies	Adapting language, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.128)
Other language activities	Reception: reading comprehension: reading for information and argument, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 63) Interaction: written interaction: correspondence, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 94)

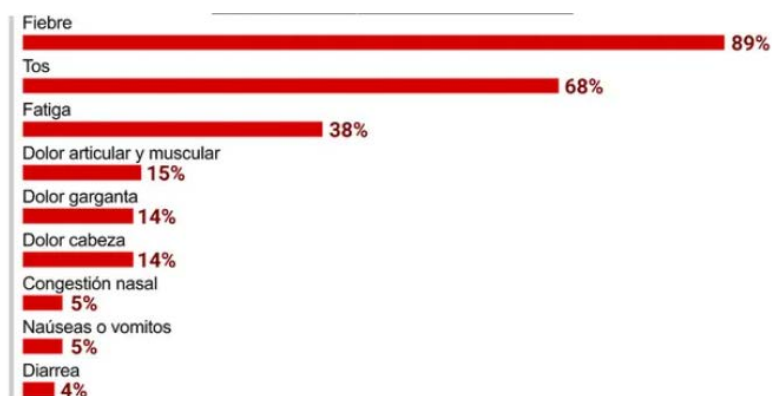


Figure 7. Chart for the task taken from Niusdiario, https://www.niusdiario.es/sociedad/sanidad/diferencias-sintomas-coronavirus-covid-19-gripe-catarro-comun-estudio-chino_18_2910345314.html

Task 1 consists of explaining data in writing (graphs, diagrams, charts, etc.). It focuses on written mediation. Students are asked to produce a personal email of around 150 words in the target language (English) explaining which symptoms are more frequent in COVID cases (interaction: written interaction: correspondence) thanks to a written input in Spanish from an online article (reception: reading comprehension: reading for information and argument). This will be done individually and in around half an hour of class time. For the development of this task, students will use computers as well as referential materials (online dictionaries). For this task, the following mediation activity the following descriptor has been considered: “Can interpret and present reliably in writing (in Language B) detailed information from diagrams and visually organised data in his fields of interest (with text in Language A). (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 110), unzipped as: Can interpret and present reliably in English detailed information from a Spanish diagram containing percentage on illnesses (personal domain, crosslinguistic mediation).

They are expected to call mediation strategies into action, notably those related to adapting language, as they will need to explain technical concepts (related to health issues) paraphrasing, for example. “Can explain technical topics within his/her field, using suitably nontechnical language for a listener who does not have specialist knowledge” (Council of Europe, 2018, p.128). As a crosslinguistic mediation activity, students are expected to activate their plurilingual competences, as in the following B2 descriptor: “Can alternate between languages in his/her plurilingual repertoire in order to communicate specialised information” (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 160). Other competences, more related to the communicative ones that this task works could be dealing with illness vocabulary, conditionals such as (if you are feeling bad...) (linguistic competence: vocabulary range and grammatical accuracy), as well as pragmatic competence (discourse competence: flexibility: informal emails).

4.1.2 Task 2

Task title	Summarising a business teleconference
Task instructions	You have been invited to attend a teleconference on behalf of your manager as she cannot be there at the scheduled time. She asked you to call her later in order to let her know the main points discussed as well as some specific details.
Materials and resources	Computer, Internet, Projector, YouTube video (Figure 8)
Languages involved	English, intralinguistic mediation
Modes	Oral
Timing	30 minutes
Domain	Occupational
Competences descriptors	Sociolinguistic competence: sociolinguistic appropriateness, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.138) Pragmatic competence: turn-taking, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.140)
Mediation activity descriptor	Processing text in speech, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 111)
Mediation strategies descriptor	Adapting language, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.128)
Other language activities	Reception: listening comprehension: listening to audio media and recordings, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 59) Interaction: written interaction: correspondence, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 94)



Figure 8. An image taken from the video that students watch, extracted from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7YA2M2WFJI>

In task 2, students will work in pairs and will do a role play. One will watch a recorded teleconference twice (reception: listening comprehension: listening to audio media and recordings) The student needs to summarised it in 2 minutes orally to his/her classmate (who will leave the class for some minutes) (production: spoken production: sustained monologue: giving information). Students will swap roles. This specific task makes use of spoken English, so it is intralinguistic. It deals with a plausible occupational domain in which the student is placed in a realistic professional context.

For the design of this task, several descriptors have been used. As for the mediation activity, the following descriptor has been unzipped: “Can summarise (in Language B) the important points made in longer, spoken and written complex texts (in Language A) subjects of current interest, including his/her fields of special interest” (Council of Europe, 2018, p.111). This would result in “the student can summarize in English the important points made in longer English oral texts in general business and professional contexts. It is important to remark that according to the Companion Volume, languages A and B can differ or not. By specifying this descriptor, the aim is to design a task that assess whether students can summarize in English the important points made in a spoken text in English in an occupational field, as it can be a business teleconference on sales.

Students will also work on mediation strategies that deal with adapting language and breaking down complicated information as in “Can make a complicated issue easier to understand by presenting the components of the argument separately”. (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 128).

Additionally, this task enables to work on sociolinguistic competence: sociolinguistic appropriateness in terms of etiquette in business and special conventions that should be taken into account in this specific context (formal/informal register) as well as pragmatic competence, notably when identifying turn-taking to initiate and maintain discourse.

4.1.3 Task 3

Task title	A lesson at university
Task instructions	Imagine that you are attending a lesson during your university degree. One of your Spanish classmates needs your help as he or she has fallen ill and cannot attend the lesson. You need to take notes for him or her. Watch the lecture and take notes. You can use both English and Spanish, as your classmate is fluent in both languages.
Materials and resources	YouTube video (Figure 9), notebooks
Languages involved	English and Spanish (French), crosslinguistic mediation
Modes	Oral to written
Timing	45 minutes
Domain	Educational
Competences descriptors	Plurilingual competence: building on plurilingual repertoire, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 162) Linguistic competence: general range, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 131)
Mediation activity descriptor	Note-taking, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.115)
Mediation strategies descriptor	Streamlining a text, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.129)
Other language activities	Reception: listening comprehension: listening as a member of a live audience, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 56) Production: written production: overall written production, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 94)



Figure 9. An image taken from the video, extracted from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7YA2M2WFJI>

A lesson at university is a task whose main aim is to practise the mediation activity known as note taking by means of a receptive and a productive language activity. Students will watch a fragment of a university lecture twice (reception: listening comprehension: listening as a member of a live audience). They will take notes while watching the video (25 minutes in total). After that, students will compare their notes to check their degree of comprehension and how they have selected information (10 minutes). Finally, the whole class will discuss and select the 10 most important pieces of information to create common notes in English (10 minutes) (production: written production: overall written production).

This task has been designed for an academic context (educational domain) following the B2 descriptor of this mediation activity in the Companion Volume: “Can understand a clearly structured lecture on a familiar subject and can take notes on points which strike him/her as important.” (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 115) unzipped as follows: Can understand a structured academic lecture, taking notes for general points that are important in different languages (English and Spanish/French). It is important to remark that mediation activities, as suggested in the Companion Volume, also include processes for oneself (as note-taking, so the notes do not need to be for another person).

The mediation strategy defined as streamlining a text is vital here, as students need to select the main parts and information from a long source (12-minute lecture). As the B2 descriptor in the Companion Volume indicates, students need to edit the source text (lecture) and take notes about the parts that are relevant. As for materials and resources, they will watch the video on YouTube thanks to the classroom computer. This video is a real university lesson that was recorded and uploaded on this platform.

As a cross-linguistic mediation activity learners will be allowed to use both English and Spanish (or French for the Erasmus student) to take notes in their notebooks, as a way of promoting plurilingual competence and comparing textual patterns in different languages. This also promotes the development of learners’ linguistic repertory in different languages while extending learners’ linguistic abilities and respect towards the English language. (linguistic competence: general range: B2: “Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions...” (Council of Europe, 2018, p.131).

4.2 Tasks involving mediating concepts

The activities designed to mediating concepts are offered in this section. An overview of each task will be first offered to then describe how it could be implemented.

4.2.1 Task 4

Task title	Online security at your company
Task instructions	As a manager of the company, your team has attended a talk about online security for business in the sector. Unfortunately, most of them have not understood some concepts of the presentation since their English is not as good as it should have been. You have created a WhatsApp group so they can discuss about the talk. You suggest trying to define these terms in order to make sure all the members of your team understand them. You have a flyer with the key ideas of the presentation and the definitions that you can use to help them. Suggest some useful questions that can be used during the WhatsApp discussion. Terms: cloud-VPN-IP address-ransomware-botnet-BYOD
Materials and resources	Smartphones, WhatsApp, flyer (Figure 10), blackboard and notebooks
Languages involved	English, intralinguistic mediation
Modes	Written
Timing	20 minutes
Domain	Occupational
Competences descriptors	Linguistic competence: grammatical accuracy, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018 p. 133) Linguistic competence: orthographic control, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 137)
Mediation activity descriptor	Facilitating collaborative interaction, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 119)
Mediation strategies descriptor	Linking to previous knowledge, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.128) Breaking down complicated information, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.129)
Other language activities	Reception: reading comprehension; reading for orientation level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 62) Interaction: online interaction: goal-oriented online transactions and collaboration, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 99)

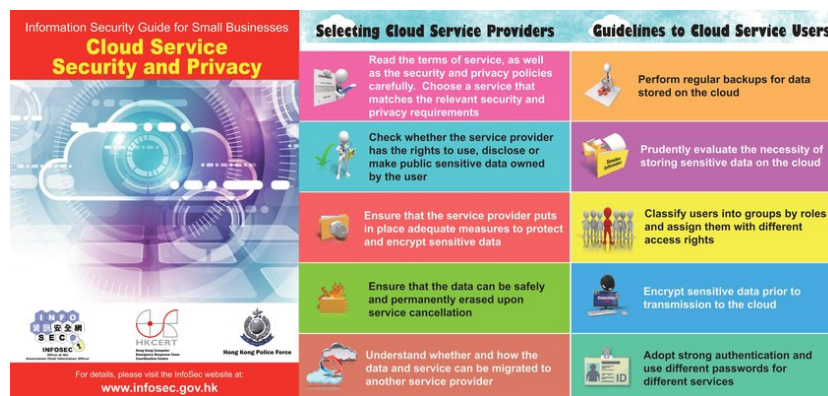


Figure 10. Leaflet used for task 4, taken from <https://www.cybersecurity.hk/en/resources.php>

In this task, students' objective is to co-construct and facilitate access to knowledge by using English in a working context (occupational domain). For this specific task students will need to provide the group with help to define these terms thanks to the definitions they have been given previously. They will read the flyer above (in English) (reception: reading comprehension; reading for orientation). Then, using that information, the students will write at least 4 questions in English (written, interlinguistic mediation) that promote discussion on each term so that the group can infer their meaning cooperatively. To do so, students will interact by using their smartphones in a real WhatsApp group (interaction: online interaction: goal-oriented online transactions and collaboration). For instance, in order to help to understand BYOD, the student mediating could ask: do you know what an Acronym is? Can you imagine what the B, the Y, The O and the D stand for?

The descriptor that has served as a guideline to implement the mediation activity in this task is: "Can ask questions to stimulate discussion on how to organise collaborative work" (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 119). Mediation strategies such as breaking down complicated information or linking to previous knowledge are crucial in this type of task, as students are asked to help others to understanding concepts by posing questions to encourage people to activate prior knowledge or break down complicated information into simpler parts. Equally important are other communicative competences that can be practised during this task. For instance, descriptors for grammatical accuracy at B2 level where unzipped to work on questions and word order ("Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding") (Council of Europe, 2018, p.133) or orthographic control as in "Spelling and punctuation are reasonably accurate but may show signs of mother tongue influence" (Council of Europe, 2018, p.137). This last descriptor is unzipped to deal with specific spelling and punctuation in online messages.

4.2.2 Task 5

Task title	An interview on learning
Task instructions	As a university student, you have been given a group assignment in which your team needs to interview an expert on competence-based education. This interview will appear in the students' association online newspaper. You need to manage your group by designing the steps for the interview as well as assigning the different roles to your team members. Your group needs a researcher that seeks literature about competence-based education, a question designer, an interviewer, a writer for the article and a proof-reader in charge of the final edition and revision. Discuss with your team which duties each role has and assign a role to each member according to their suitability for these duties. Reach a final agreement.
Materials and resources	Notebooks and video (if recording is allowed)
Languages involved	English, intralinguistic mediation
Modes	Oral
Timing	30 minutes
Domain	Educational
Competences descriptors	Pragmatic competence: spoken fluency, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 144)
Mediation activity descriptor	Managing interaction, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 121)
Mediation strategies descriptor	Linking to previous knowledge, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.128)
Other language activities	Reception: listening comprehension: listening to announcements and instructions, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 58) Interaction: spoken interaction: formal discussion (meetings), level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 87)

This oral task deals with mediating concepts, and more specifically with managing interaction in an educational domain (working for a university project). Students will work in groups of 5 or 6 people and each one will be mediating and sharing their own ideas orally in English. To do so, each student should have previously designed their own description of the roles. Everyone has to make sure that the whole team takes part in the task and listen to everyone's contributions (reception: listening comprehension: listening to announcements and instructions). Finally, students need to have a meeting to agree on which duties each role needs to be in charge of and who is the best candidate to play it (interaction: oral interaction: formal discussion (meetings)).

For the design of this task the following mediation activity descriptor has been considered: "Can explain the different roles of participants in the collaborative process, giving clear instructions for group work." (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 121). This has been unzipped as: Can explain in English the different roles to be played in academic projects, giving clear instructions for the group work.

In this mediation practise, oral interaction as the final output is vital. Recording the session would be advantageous so the teacher can check them and provide students with suggestions after finishing the task. In this respect, students must authorize that recording previously. With regards to the strategies that can be worked, this task enables to practise mediation strategies such as linking to previous knowledge: "Can clearly explain the connections between the goals of the session and the personal or professional interests and experiences of the participant(s)." (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 128).

Concerning competences this task allows students to focus on aspects that are related to the pragmatic competence. An example of it could be the way students need to organize the interaction and the discourse, as stated in spoken fluency descriptors at B2 level "Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with speakers of the target language quite possible without imposing strain on either party." (Council of Europe, 2018, p.144). Additionally, students can review how to perform certain communicative functions in English: making suggestions, (I wonder if..., why don't you...) expressing one's opinion (I believe, I reckon, If I were you...), justifying (since, because, owing to...).

4.2.3 Task 6

Task title	Rephrasing your classmates' ideas about holidays
Task instructions	You need to write a short message to an American friend about the benefits of different types of holiday in Spain as she wants to come to spend her summer in your country. You always go to the coast so you do not know a lot about other holiday options. You decide to ask your classmates about their experiences on these five different types of holidays: • Parques de atracciones • Resorts vacacionales • Ir de camping • Viaje en caravana • Campamentos de verano You need to discuss in Spanish, as your friends cannot speak English. Please, bear in mind that our American friends is on a short budget and loves to travel to secluded places. Write a short message of 150 words.
Materials and resources	Notebook, computers, internet, search engines
Languages involved	Spanish and English, crosslinguistic mediation
Modes	Oral to written
Timing	55 minutes
Domain	Personal
Competences descriptors	Plurilingual competence: building on building plurilingual repertoire, level B2 (Council of Europe, 2018, p.162)
Mediation activity descriptor	Encouraging conceptual talk, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.121)
Mediation strategies descriptor	Amplifying dense text, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.129)
Other language activities	Reception: listening comprehension: understanding conversation between other speakers, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 56) Interaction: written interaction: notes, messages and forms, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 97)

This task involves a cross-linguistic mediation activity from Spanish into English. Students need to interact in Spanish orally to produce a written text to find a solution: recommending holiday options. For the development of this task, students are divided into groups of 5 people. They have to talk about the different holiday options they have been provided (listening comprehension: understanding conversation between other speakers). Before discussing, students can do some research online in the computer room and take notes about the holiday options they have to discuss (15 min). After discussing and reaching a consensus (20 minutes), they have to write a short message suggesting a type of holiday according to the given context (interaction: written interaction: notes, messages, forms) (20 minutes).

The following B2 descriptor for the mediation language activity was considered as a source for this task: “Can encourage members of a group to build upon one another’s information and ideas to come up with a concept or solution”. (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 121), which has been unzipped as: Can encourage members of a group to build upon their own ideas on holidays to brainstorm and come up with a solution.

As for mediation strategies, amplifying dense text can be worked. This strategy allows the students to implement helpful information in the given context by giving examples, data, reasons or explanations. The following descriptor in this category was unzipped when designing this task, concreted as: “Can make concepts on personal interest accessible by giving examples, recapitulating step by step what one has found out and repeating the main points.” (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 129).

As students will be using both languages, plurilingual competence will be particularly promoted in this task (building plurilingual repertoire: “Can alternate efficiently between languages in his/her plurilingual repertoire in order to facilitate comprehension with and between third parties who lack a common language”. (Council of Europe, 2019, p. 162).

4.3. Tasks involving mediating communication

The activities designed to mediating communication are offered in this section. An overview of each task will be first offered to then describe how it could be implemented according to the CEFR descriptors that have been taken into account.

4.3.1 Task 7

Task title	Translating for the school festival
Task instructions	There is a new exchange student in your high school. He has been added to your friends' WhatsApp group in which you were talking about what you need to do for your school festival. Suddenly, a new private message pops up. The exchange student does not understand anything and asks you to translate the main points that are being discussed over in the group. You have to write a short message briefly translating the main ideas of the following WhatsApp messages, focus on the tasks the exchange student is in charge of.
Materials and resources	Smartphones, WhatsApp conversation transcript (Figure 11)
Languages involved	Spanish and English, crosslinguistic mediation
Modes	Written
Timing	25 minutes
Domain	Educational
Competences descriptors	Linguistic competence: grammatical accuracy, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.133) Sociolinguistic competence: sociolinguistic appropriateness, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.138) Plurilingual competence: building on plurilingual repertoire, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.162)
Mediation activity descriptor	Acting as intermediary informal situation, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 124)
Mediation strategies descriptor	Adapting language, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.128)
Other language activities	Reception: reading comprehension: reading correspondence, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 61) Interaction: online interaction: online conversation and discussion, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 98)



Figure 11. Extract from the WhatsApp chat that serves as written input for task 7, taken from https://aminoapps.com/c/ladybug-en-espanol/page/blog/el-grupo-de-whatsapp-de-la-clase-de-marinette/LBjZ_5wu8uMWKD7B3DpQbPp5BKRLgnjgVtP

In this task, students' main goal is to act as intermediaries in an informal communicative situation where their assistance is needed. The input is in Spanish, while the output will be written English. Therefore, it is a written cross-linguistic mediation task that is set up in an educational context. For the development of the task, each student will be provided with a transcript with several messages in Spanish (reception: reading comprehension: reading correspondence) that will need to be translated into English, merged and sent to the classroom WhatsApp group in English (interaction: online interaction: online conversation and discussion).

The following descriptor in this specific mediation activity category at B2 level has been used: "Can communicate in (Language B) the sense of what is said in (Language A) on subjects within his/her fields of interest, conveying and when necessary explaining the significance of important statements and viewpoints, provided speakers give clarifications if needed." (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 124.)

Special attention needs to be paid to mediation strategies that allow students to define concepts, rephrase and translate, i.e., mediating strategies: adapting language, “Can explain technical topics within his/her field, using suitably nontechnical language for a listener who does not have specialist knowledge” (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 128);

As per competences, students are expected to use the B2 level linguistic repertoire (linguistic competence) they have in the target language (English) e.g. reported speech, and attend the needs given by the context. Several B2 level competence-related descriptors were used to take these aspects into consideration, for example, plurilingual competence: building on plurilingual repertoire, “Can recognise the extent to which it is appropriate to make flexible use of different languages in his/her plurilingual repertoire in a specific situation, in order to increase the efficiency of communication.” (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 162); sociolinguistic competence: sociolinguistic appropriateness, “Can express him/herself appropriately in situations and avoid crass errors of formulation” (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 138); and linguistic competence: grammatical accuracy (“Has a good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms, although he/she tends to use complex structures rigidly with some inaccuracy”) (Council of Europe, 2018, p.133).

4.3.2 Task 8

Task title	Talking about Aragonese dishes
Task instructions	Your friend Mary, who lives in Chicago, has come to spend a few days in Zaragoza. She would like to try typical food and she has asked you to help her choose some of the best dishes in the Aragonese cuisine. You have found a website with the most typical dishes (https://spanishsabores.com/2014/06/23/what-to-eat-in-aragon/). You have sent it to Mary, but the description of some dishes are not very clear because of a poor translation. You can look up photos online for you to have references to describe these dishes. Explain what options she should take into account providing that she likes meat more than fish. • Aragonese breadcrumbs • Aragonese ternasco • Aragonese sausage • Broken eggs with Teruel Ham • Garlicarriero cod
Materials and resources	Computers, website, notebook
Languages involved	English, intralinguistic mediation
Modes	Written to oral
Timing	15 minutes
Domain	Personal
Competences descriptors	Pluricultural competence: building on pluricultural repertoire, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.159)
Mediation activity descriptor	Facilitating pluricultural space, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 124)
Mediation strategies descriptor	Adapting language, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.128)
Other language activities	Reception: reception: reading comprehension: reading for information and argument, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 63) Production: spoken production: sustained monologue (giving information), level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 73)

In this task, students will be provided with the names in English of some Aragonese dishes and some descriptions (misleading translations). They will be allowed to look up pictures of these dishes or descriptions online and on the website that they have been provided if they are not familiar with them (reception: reading comprehension: reading for information and argument). They will have to explain their main features in English to describe and recommend dishes orally according to the context (3-minute monologue) (production: spoken production: sustained monologue (giving information)).

Students are asked to carry out a mediation activity that stems from the following descriptor: “exploit knowledge of socio-cultural conventions in order to establish a consensus on how to proceed in a particular situation unfamiliar to everyone involved” (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 123), unzipped as: can exploit knowledge of socio-cultural conventions about personal matters and interests (one’s own culture cuisine) in order to help someone in a unfamiliar situation.

To carry out this language activity, students need to use mediation strategies, notably those that refer to adapting language, as in “Can make accessible for others the main contents of a spoken or written text on a subject of interest (e.g. an essay, a forum discussion, a presentation) by paraphrasing in simpler language.” (Council of Europe. 2018, p. 128).

Despite being an interlinguistic mediation, pluricultural competence is essential as students will lead with referents that might not exist in the English culture. B2 students are supposed to project themselves into another person’s way of thinking according to the culture distance so they can connect appropriately both worlds. By building on pluricultural repertoires, students will “reflect on and explain particular ways of communicating in his/her own and other cultures, and the risks of misunderstanding they generate (Council of Europe, 2018, p.159).

4.3.3 Task 9

Task title	Reaching a working agreement
Task instructions	You work in a company and two of your colleagues do not get along with each other. You have been assigned a project to work together but they do not seem to agree on several aspects. You have been taking notes about their requirements and you have decided to fit them. Please bear in mind they need to work 3 times per week together and for about 3 hours. As for resources and assistance, they can settle for half of their requirements. Prepare a short oral intervention to inform about the possible ways of agreeing.
Materials and resources	Written chart (Table 2), notebook
Languages involved	English, intralinguistic mediation
Modes	Written to oral
Timing	30 minutes
Domain	Occupational
Competences descriptors	Linguistic competence: phonological control, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.136) Pragmatic competence: flexibility, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.139)
Mediation activity descriptor	Facilitating communicating in delicate situations, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 124)
Mediation strategies descriptor	Adapting language, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.128) Breaking down complicated information, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.128)
Other language activities	Reception: reading comprehension: reading instructions, level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 64) Production: spoken production: sustained monologue (putting a case), level B2, (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 72)

Requirement	Colleague A	Colleague B
Working time	9 to 10 / 13-14 / 18-20	9:30-13 /15-19
Materials needed	Laptop 1, projector 1 or 2, printer B	Laptop 1, printer A or B, projector 2 or 3
Working days available	Monday to Friday	Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
Needed assistance	John, Mary, Sarah and Mark	Andrew, Sarah, Laura, John

Table 2. Example of written input for task 9

This task aims at reaching an agreement orally in an occupational domain from a written English input (reception: reading comprehension: reading instructions). Students are asked to deliver a brief oral monologue of 3 minutes (production: spoken production: sustained monologue (putting a case)).

Students are provided with the above chart in order to look for ways of dealing with a complicated and delicate situation in which his intermediary role is needed to negotiate, easing the communication between two parties that disagree. In this respect, students need to fit the different requirements that both parties have and negotiate orally what can be done. To produce this task, students work individually. By doing this task, students will practise the following mediation activity, as described in this B2 descriptor “Can formulate a clear and accurate summary of what has been agreed and what is expected from each of the parties” (Council of Europe, 2018, p.124).

They need to adapt themselves to the given context and use several mediation strategies such as adapting language (“Can make a specific, complex piece of information in his/her field clearer and more explicit for others by paraphrasing it in simpler language” (Council of Europe, 2018, p.128)) or breaking down complicated information.

Additionally, the oral speech also could serve as an oral production activity in which students can practise on linguistic (overall phonological control), pragmatic (functional) competence (“Can vary formulation of what he/she wants to say”) (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 139) by contents such as suggesting, agreeing, disagreeing or expressing opinions.

5. CONCLUSION

This MA Dissertation has analysed mediation, a language activity that is under conceptual development, especially in foreign language teaching. Notwithstanding, the conceptualization provided by the CEFR and Companion Volume with the scales and descriptors that have recently been added have provided a myriad of tools that can serve as guides for mediation tasks design. They allow to understand and put into practice concepts such as pluriculturalism, plurilingualism and mediation as real-life processes that are called into action on a daily basis in linguistic communication.

Nevertheless, these descriptors seem to be clearer for certain mediation activities, as they are easier to be implemented with tasks. That is probably why mediation tasks that involve mediating texts and cross-linguistic mediation abound and have a wider acceptance when implementing mediation in class. This does not mean that mediating communication and mediating concepts cannot be implemented through tasks. However, more teacher training on task design of these mediation fields would be desirable, as few resources or real examples of tasks focusing on these types of mediation activities are found.

Another aspect that needs to be noted is the role of intralinguistic mediation when designing tasks. No difficulties have been found when using a same linguistic code (English) when using receptive, productive or interactive language activities within the mediation task. Therefore, it is important to insist that mediation is not just a synonym of translating or interpreting languages. Although working with different languages (cross-linguistic mediation) might entail this kind of processes, intralinguistic mediation proves that mediation activities can be done in just one linguistic code or language.

Finally, the creation of tasks involving mediation activities is a crucial step when practising this language activity at Official Schools of Languages. Although mediation is given a wide treatment in Spanish legislation regulating Official Schools of Languages, it takes into account the CEFR vision of this language activity and therefore it would be recommendable to try to implement as many types, descriptors and categorizations of mediation activities as possible when teaching a foreign language, as this proposal has tried to do. The implementation of tasks for mediation activities is a recent practise in foreign language teaching, especially within the context that this Master Dissertation tackles (Official Schools of Languages). Therefore, it should be tested in order to check their appropriateness in the classroom context for both teachers and students. Nevertheless, due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation in Spain while

elaborating this MA Dissertation, testing these tasks in specific B2 level groups at an Official School of Languages could not be done. However, it would be recommendable to do it in the near future. By doing it, it would be able to assess the difficulty of certain tasks with regards to the students' level of English or the timing needed, as well as the suitability to the learners' backgrounds, interests and characteristics. By the same token, this would allow to realize whether some mediation activities have more benefits than others, notably in terms of testing practicability or just for the whole learner progress in the foreign language.

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