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**MAPPING THE TERRAIN OF PRACTICE:
THE TEACHING OF MEDIATION AT THE
OFFICIAL LANGUAGE SCHOOLS IN
ANDALUSIA**

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ABSTRACT

Mediation, a basic ability in the everyday use of a language, has only recently become a specific language activity regulated in the curricula of the Official Language Schools in Andalusia. This fact has caused a lack of standardisation in the teaching methodologies employed among the teachers when dealing with mediation. The work presented in this dissertation aims to explore the real methodological practices displayed by foreign language teachers to promote linguistic mediation at the Official Language Schools across Andalusia. With this aim in mind, a questionnaire was specifically designed and distributed among some foreign language teachers that would show their knowledge about mediation, the frequency of conducting mediation tasks in class, the prospective combination of mediation with the other mandatory language activities, the inclusion of cultural aspects in mediation and the designing of tasks themselves. Findings show that, while the concept of mediation itself is well understood, it is still poorly implemented when compared to the other language activities, as some of them are much more amenable to work in conjunction with mediation than others. The latter issue makes the designing of suitable mediation tasks to work a significant challenge, a problem more pronounced due to the lack of experience and training of teachers in this functional aspect. Therefore, a series of lines of action are suggested to improve the effectiveness of the methodological approaches for teaching mediation.

Keywords: mediation, methodological guidelines, implementation, Official Language Schools (EOIs / OLSs)

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent times, Official Language Schools (henceforth, OLSs) have been immersed in a strong process of renewal. They have been adapting to the new social demands, especially after the emergence of the CEFR for the teaching and learning of languages and the Promotion of Plurilingualism. The new curricula leave behind the mother tongue versus foreign language(s) formula and put more emphasis on the acquisition of plurilingual skills, which can respond to the new cultural reality of the Autonomous Community of Andalusia.

Until two years ago OLSs had focused on teaching four language skills during the classes, being spoken production and interaction (monologue and dialogue), reading comprehension, listening comprehension and written production and interaction, and, consequently, the same ones have been officially assessed. It was Royal Decree 1041/2017 (December 23rd) which first included the new nomenclature for the language activities, that is, comprehension of oral texts, comprehension of written texts, production and coproduction of oral texts, production and coproduction of written texts, and the inclusion of a new one, mediation. In Andalusia these changes were first included in an official document in Decree 499/2019 (June 26th), making reference to the same aspects as the national Royal Decree.

Linguistic mediation is not a new concept, as people speaking more than one language have always helped others who could not communicate for linguistic barriers, but it has recently been established as an independent language activity in the OLSs curriculum, and students are being trained specifically to cope with multilingual situations and be able to act as mediators in an increasingly multilingual and multicultural society.

Unfortunately, research on mediation is scarce in our country. To our knowledge, only one experimental study covering mediation in an educational context has been carried out by some schools in Alicante, as it will be expanded in the section devoted to prior studies. This MA dissertation attempts to fill this gap by exploring the methodology used by foreign language teachers at the OLSs when teaching mediation to their students. For this purpose, a questionnaire was

designed ad hoc for this study and distributed to foreign language teachers working at different OLSs in Andalusia.

This dissertation is organized as follows: this introduction presents a general overview of the research topic; the literature review section contextualizes and refers to prior research in the field and includes the justification of the investigation based on niche it aims to fill; the present study section includes the objectives where the research problem is stated carefully, and the research design characteristics to become fully acquainted with the key features of the study, that is, the participants or respondents, the instruments employed in the investigation and their validation phase, and the procedure or overall timeline followed; the section devoted to results provides rendering of the actual outcomes; the discussion section relates the aforementioned outcomes straightforwardly to the research objectives; finally, the section devoted to conclusions underscores the main outcomes, pinpointing the major limitations of the study and defining the lines to address through further research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Concept and types of linguistic mediation

To begin with, two possible definitions for mediation need to be highlighted, a more conventional one used in our everyday life and an specific one for the academic language field. Firstly, mediation in most common dictionaries has been defined as *"a means of resolving disputes outside of the judicial system by voluntary participation in negotiations structured by agreement of the parties and usually conducted under the guidance and supervision of a trained intermediary"* (Mediation, 2020). This first definition is quite general and encompasses all sorts of conflicts. The second definition has been established by the Council of Europe (2001, p. 4), for the field of Foreign Language Teaching (FLT), included in the CEFR, and reads *"... the written and/or oral activities of mediation make communication possible between persons who are unable, for whatever reason, to communicate with each other directly. Translation or interpretation, a paraphrase, summary or record, provides for a third party a (re)formulation of a [spoken or written] source text to which this third party does not have direct access. Mediating language activities – (re)processing an existing text – occupy an important place in the normal linguistic functioning of our societies"*.

While these two definitions might seem very quite apart, the underlying basic concept is the same, as the first one is centered around any kind of concept and the second one is focused on solving the possible "conflicts" that may appear due to the lack of linguistic understanding among people. The key focus in the second definition is assisting people when they do not manage to understand certain concepts or when they cannot access the original source, either because they do not understand language or cultural aspects, because of lack of proficiency in different registers or for physical reasons, such as inaccessibility to the text itself or physical or cognitive disabilities.

Taking into account the definition of mediation, it can be stated that this concept as such has existed for centuries. In medieval times, merchants needed to trade items with tradesmen from other countries and they must have been helped by mediators in order to reach agreements and sell or buy goods. According to

Dendrinos (2006, p. 12), in today's information societies, mediation has become essential as there has been a shift from trading goods to the production of knowledge, and this knowledge is always mediated in all aspects of our life. Therefore, mediation could be seen as a common social practice, which purpose is to relay information to others when it could not be understood fully or partially using their own strategies.

Indubitably, the application of these definitions in our day-to-day teaching, the process involved in mediation has always indirectly been practiced in class together with other language activities through a wide variety of tasks, and an extension of this ability was privately instructed to those students who showed specific interest because of their particular needs. Taking into consideration foreign language teaching methodology, using a language different from the one which is being studied in class has recently been considered negative, either as a communicative tool or in the specific tasks devoted to the teaching-learning process. However, the development of multilingual societies makes it necessary to communicate in everyday situations where more than one language and/or culture is involved. As a consequence, the CEFR included plurilingual and pluricultural competence defined as *"the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages, and experience of several cultures."* (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 168).

Regarding mediation, the CEFR claims that, with the promotion of plurilingualism, those who are able to speak more than one language may use this competence to help others to communicate by mediating (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 4). While this idea of mediation may prompt to think that it is equivalent to translation, according to Howell (2017, p. 148), there is a difference between professional translation and interpreting and, following his terminology, cross-language mediation, in the sense that the former tries to offer an equivalent text to the source one, and the latter focuses on selecting the information that is needed for an audience according to the context.

In the section devoted to mediation activities and strategies in the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 87 and 88), there are no descriptors available for this language activity yet. What is more, they have been published years later in the

CEFR Companion Volume with New Descriptors (Council of Europe, 2018). In fact, the approach is broader than that presented in the CEFR, since apart from scales for activities to mediate a text, some are included for mediating concepts and mediating communication, which were not mentioned in the CEFR. In addition, strategies are not only centered on the preparation of mediation tasks, but they are also concerned with those employed during the mediation process itself.

According to North and Piccardo (2016, p. 8), considering the angles adopted in the CEFR, it can be said that four types of mediation can be distinguished:

- linguistic mediation, which involves the interlinguistic and intralinguistic dimension. For example, summarising or transforming one text into another, and collaborative interaction in multilingual situations;

- cultural mediation; undoubtedly a process which involves passing from one language to another is also a process of cultural mediation, that is passing from cultures to cultures.

- social mediation. In the CEFR, mediation is limited to the idea of helping others who have problems to communicate because of the language they use, but in fact social mediation goes beyond that, as these problems may arise from different interpretations with the mediator bridging these gaps to overcome these misunderstandings. Besides, the lack of understanding could derive from the lack of knowledge of a specific field.

- pedagogic mediation, which could be divided into cognitive mediation and relational mediation. As Costa and Cavalli (2015, p. 28) stressed, knowledge building, either alone or in collaboration with others, is described as cognitive mediation, and everything which entails creating a positive climate of understanding is described as relational mediation. Therefore, relational mediation can be considered a prerequisite for cognitive mediation in a school.

This distinction of different kinds of mediation has been taken into account for the establishment of the scales for the mediation activities in the Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 104), presented in Figure 1.

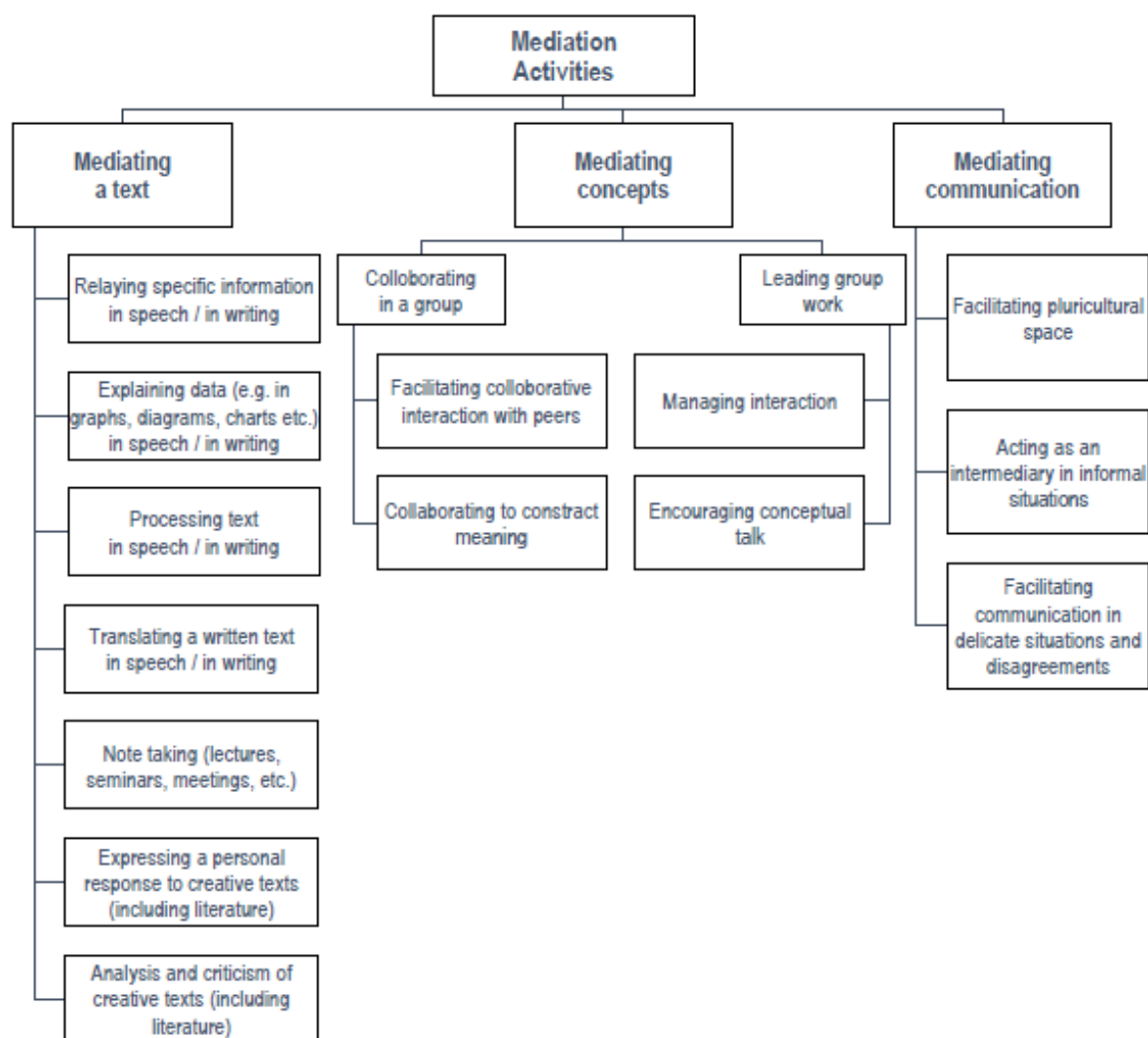


Figure 1. Scales for the mediation activities included in the Companion Volume, (Council of Europe, 2018, p.104)

In the scales, three main concepts could be clearly differentiated:

- *mediating a text* or passing a text on to somebody who cannot have access to it because of lack of language or cultural knowledge or due to technical barriers. This idea could clearly be link to linguistic mediation, as it makes reference to aspects of the language;

- *mediating concepts*, which is clearly connected to the facilitation of knowledge carried out by teachers or parents. This idea is subdivided into collaborating in a group, connected to relational mediation, as it involves cooperation and facilitation, and leading group work, linked to cognitive mediation, based on the construction of knowledge or development of critical thinking; and

- *mediating communication*, which could also be linked to relational mediation when facilitating communication, solving conflicts and overcoming misunderstandings.

Additionally, according to Coste and Cavali (2015, p. 36), there are three key elements for our current society: mobility, otherness and community, which are represented in the vertices of a triangle (figure 2) and, as nexus, the different kinds of mediation: linguistic, cognitive and social, thanks to which otherness is reduced in favour of mobility between different communities within a society.

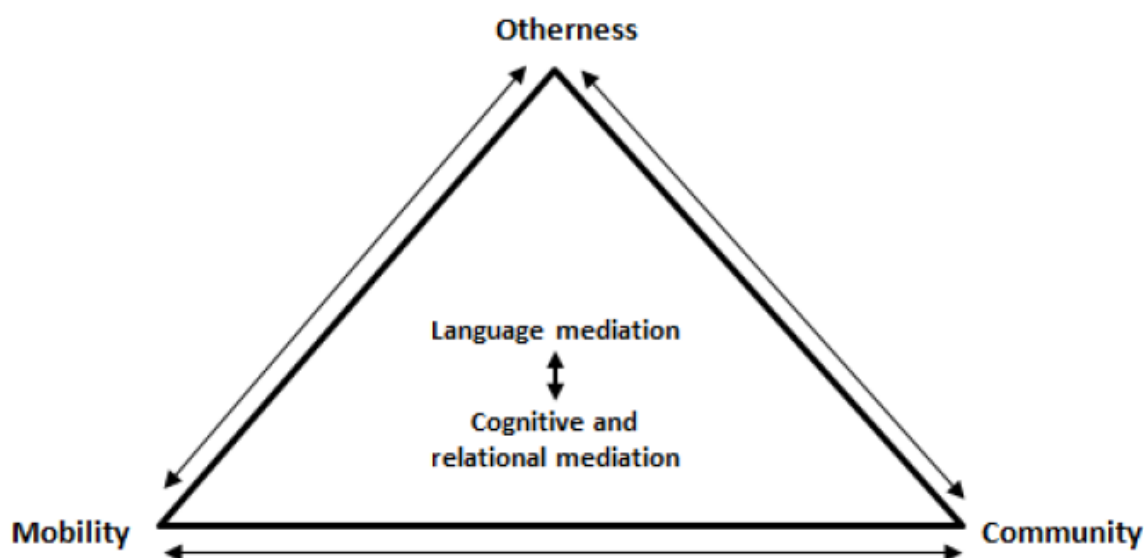


Figure 2. Key elements in our current society and mediation (Coste and Cavali, 2015, p. 36)

Therefore, for all the aforementioned reasons, mediation can be considered a translanguaging practice and a social activity. In that sense, Stathopoulou (2019, p. 418) claimed that, in the mediation practice, an interplay of linguistic codes is involved, which clearly emphasizes the relationship between the languages taken part in the process which are not considered separate. A suggestion by Swain and Lapkin (2013, as cited in North and Piccardo, 2016: p. 15) is that students use their mother tongue during collaborative dialogues so that they could generate complex ideas and mediate what they grasped from the original text before actually producing the final product in L2; once they have reached a high level of proficiency, they could be using the target language directly. Regarding the social character of mediation, Dendrinou (2016, p. 12) claims that mediation aims at interpreting social meanings which are going to be transferred to others, besides having the social component of reconciliation or compromise.

Stathopoulou (2016, p. 765) claims that the implementation of a programme focusing on a multilingual perspective of language didactics and favouring mediation practices would help learners to simulate, get used to activities and gain strategies they will be able to extrapolate to their reality, being multilingual linguistic situations. Furthermore, according to Dendrinou (2005, p. 62; as cited in Stathopoulou, 2016, p. 765), mediation activities combine language and culture within students' learning process and do clearly contribute to the development of their communicative competence. In that sense, they are developing mediation strategies which would be incredibly useful in their daily life.

Regarding strategies, the Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 126-129) includes mediation strategies divided into those to explain a new concept and those to simplify a text, each of them subdivided into other scales, and with descriptors for the different levels (A1-C2).

The CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 2) explains the objective of the document itself; although the CEFR is neither normative nor dogmatic, it serves as a guide for teachers and students, within the European countries and beyond, during the teaching-learning process to develop competences effectively, to promote plurilingualism and pluriculturalism and to provide a common basis for different courses and among countries too, that way facilitating mobility within Europe. Although this document has not been imposed on the European members, the Spanish government has followed the recommendations suggested at least for its OLSs, the main state-owned institutions where exclusively languages are taught in Spain.

2.2. Regulatory framework for teaching of mediation in Andalusian OLSs

Since 2001, the laws and regulations concerning the teaching and learning of languages at OLSs in Spain have been adapting to the proposals made by the Council of Europe. Regarding linguistic mediation, bearing in mind the introduction of mediation in the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001), and in anticipation of aforementioned suggestions on this specific language activity proposed in the Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2018), it has been included as such in the Royal Decree 1041/2017 (December 23rd) by which the basic syllabus for B1, B2,

C1 and C2 has been developed and updated for the OLSs in Spain. Within each level, chapter 5 is devoted to mediation activities, to be more precise, focusing on objectives, intercultural contents and evaluation criteria. The objectives are quite general, so that each autonomous community can expand the contents of each section.

Once the syllabus was established, Royal Decree 1/2019 (January 11th) adopted the basic principles for the evaluation of the official certification tests at B1, B2, C1 and C2; regarding mediation it was specified that at least two tasks should be included to assess mediation, although there is not a specific distinction between written and oral mediation on that aspect. Assumingly, it must be delimited by each autonomous community.

It was in 2019 when the Andalusian government passed Decree 499/2019 (June 26th) and the Order of July 2nd 2019 by which general aspects of the schools have been determined and the syllabus for the Andalusian OLSs has been devised. The objectives for the different levels are completely the same as the ones presented in the Royal Decree 1041/2017, the evaluation criteria for level B1 however are more specific, but for the other levels are completely the same. In addition, strategies to develop the competences are included in a different section together with the production and reception language activities.

Along the last school year (19/20), Andalusian OLSs have received a proposed draft of a decree for evaluation parallel to the Royal Decree 1/2019, but due to the sanitary circumstances it has not been passed. Nevertheless, due to the inclusion of written mediation tasks in the exam of the courses leading to a certificate, as included in the Decree 499/2019, there are some instructions given in the Resolution of 24th February 2020 and the Resolution of 19th June 2020 by which the official tests of the courses leading to obtaining a certificate are organized, the latter modifying the first one mainly on the dates.

The Resolution of 24th February 2020 establishes the following scale to assess the written tasks in the tests:

1. Fulfillment of the task, which is divided into four descriptors: adjustment to the task, selection and transmission of relevant information from the source text(s);

using linguistic functions from the source text(s), and length of the final text in order to fit the length specified in the direction line.

2. Structure of the text, divided into three descriptors: organization of the ideas into paragraphs well organised resulting into a coherent text, adjustment of the final text to register, conventions and formal requirements of the type of text that has been required, and the use of cohesion mechanisms such as cohesive devices to create a final cohesive text.

3. Mediation strategies, where two descriptors are analysed: variety of mediation strategies and effectiveness of the strategies in order to fulfill the task.

4. Linguistic aspects, divided into five descriptors: reformulation of grammatical structures into new varied ones which fit the task, reformulation of the vocabulary for new expressions suitable for the task, accuracy of the grammatical structures, accuracy of the vocabulary, and appropriate register.

With these guidelines an idea of the evaluation criteria and process could be figured out, although the specific regulations need to be passed and published in a Decree in accordance to Royal Decree 1/2019.

It can be seen that the guidelines make reference to written mediation, as this is the language activity which is going to be tested in this first attempt to assess mediation as an independent language activity in the tests leading to a certificate. Presumably, in next school year, oral mediation will be included in the process too, and the evaluation criteria might be similar to those established for written mediation, as the strategies implemented for mediation are analogous when writing and speaking.

Andalusian OLSs have modified their syllabus for all levels to include mediation as a new language activity, and it should be emphasized that linguistic mediation is mandatory to be applied at all the OLSs without distinction of languages or language level, always with the descriptors established at the beginning of the school year by each didactic department. bearing in mind the objectives and evaluation criteria established by law.

2.3. Prior studies on the teaching of mediation in Spain

In the context of language teaching, Arriba-García and Cantero-Serena (2004, p. 19) include mediation competence as part of the communicative competence into the Communicative Approach for the teaching of languages, as can be seen in Figure 3. In fact, these researchers point out that only the competence in mediation deals directly with contact between individuals, that is, the capacity to interact with others. All things considered, communication means contact, and any of the other competences refers to contact or interaction, so the competence in mediation will be key to consider a speaker competent in a language.

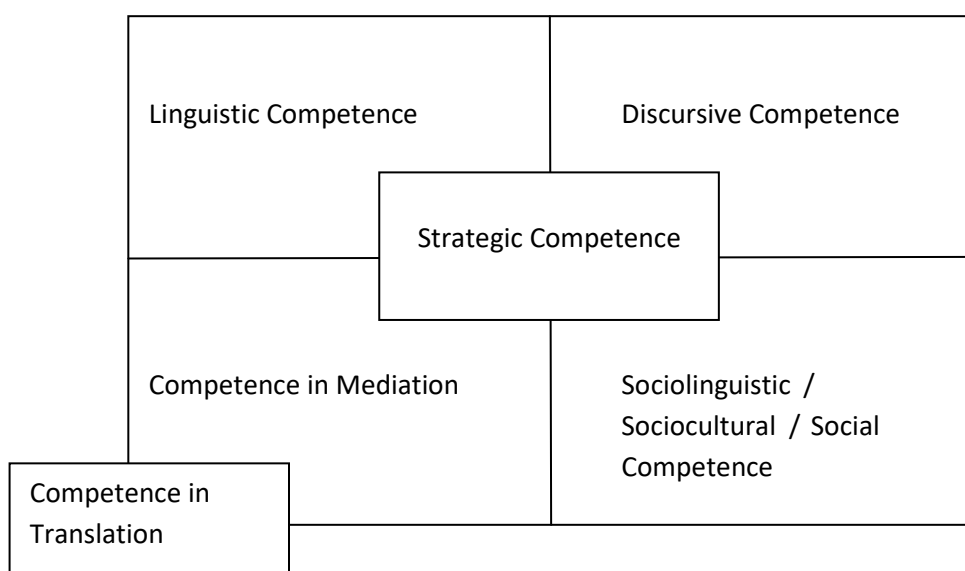


Figure 3. Competence in Mediation represented as part of the Communicative Competence (translated from Arriba-García & Cantero-Serena, 2004, p. 19)

Some articles about Teaching Spanish as a Foreign Language (TSFL) focus on linguistic mediation. Trovato (2013, p. 116) stresses that mediation is an integrating competence since it integrates various aspects of the so-called communicative competence; it can be easily observed that within the concept of mediation several skills are harmoniously merged, that is, reading comprehension and written production, oral production and comprehension and interaction. In that article, activities to enhance the competence in mediation when dealing with TSFL at university-level are included (p. 112-115). Equally, within the TSFL context, Cantero-Serena and De Arriba-García (2004, p. 10-18) also point out examples of oral and written mediation classified according to the mediation activities that are involved, for example, translating, summing up or paraphrasing.

Trovato (2015, p. 6) explains in detail the advantages of using role-plays to practise cultural and linguistic mediation within the TSFL context. It is pointed out that role-playing is an activity to engage and motivate students, they work as a team and the world of the classroom is broadened to include real situations, thus also including cultural aspects. Subsequently, Trovato (2020, p. 16) suggests an holistic rubric for assessment of mediation activities based on examples of role-plays.

An exploratory study was carried out in the area of TSFL on which four Chinese students who were doing the master to become Spanish teachers in Antonio de Nebrija University and eight Chinese students who were learning Spanish in some courses in that university. The teachers were acting as mediators between the eight students and some texts, designed for this project, including Spanish cultural references or a contrast between Chinese and Spanish cultures. They concluded that the students were highly motivated as there was a bridge between the Spanish and Chinese culture. Besides, students felt well-supported by teachers who spoke their own language and were familiar with their own culture (Barbado-Gómez & Guerra-Infante, 2014, p. 99-101).

In the area of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), an investigation was aimed at English students in the second year of baccalaureate from three high schools located in Murcia and Madrid to find out their attitudes towards linguistic mediation and whether their interest on mediation depends on their language proficiency. After analysing the data, it was concluded that most students did not know what mediation implied and they did not consider cultural aspects relevant for mediation. In addition, the results revealed that students considered the tasks performed to practise mediation can be extrapolated to their real life, whereas they did not think the same about other tasks performed in the English class, as they conceive them as mere class-linked activities. Finally, the results show there is not a direct connection between language proficiency and the ability to perform mediation tasks (Alcaraz-Mármol, 2019, p. 117-126).

OLSs are likely to become one of the only institutions in Spain which will be training adults in linguistic mediation, together with some training in the development of the intercultural competence, which would definitively place themselves in the forefront to be efficient communicators in a ever more

multicultural society, even acting as linguistic mediators at Town Halls, hospitals, police stations, health centres and the like.

As Calatayud- Díez, principal of EOI Elda, (2019, p. 19) pointed out, schools of the XXI century need to encourage discussions and participation of all groups, and co-operating they acquire knowledge and integrate others. which are essential values in our society.

EOI Elda participated in an Erasmus+ KA1 Project (2015-2017) with other institutions on which one of the objectives was to become familiar with the teaching and assessment of linguistic mediation. After this first incursion, an innovative Project titled "Linguistic mediation at EEOOI" has been coordinated by EOI ELDA together with teachers from other schools in Alicante, by which they have been assessing interlinguistic mediation in 7 groups of English at the levels B1.1. and B2.1, some mediation resources have been developed in 5 languages: German, French, English, Italian and Valencian and Spanish for foreigners, and, additionally, they have been designing a rubric for assessment of these resources. Thanks to this project, they have concluded that the results of the interlinguistic mediation of the seven groups have been much better than the results of other groups taking the traditional tasks of written and oral production. They have concluded that it is much easier for students to analyse and understand a text in their mother tongue with familiar cultural references and they produce more coherent texts with better quality. Besides, the tasks are highly motivating for them, due to the fact that they understand the whole source text and they see themselves as a necessary agent within the communicative process (Calatayud-Díez, 2019, p. 13).

Regarding teacher's training, the main objectives of this Project were to make teachers aware of the importance of cultural contents, making special emphasis on sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects, to set out new approaches including innovative methodologies, to validate the new resources to teach and assess linguistic mediation in the class, and to gradually include this language activity in the learning process (Escola oficial d'idiomes Elda, 2020).

Closer to our reality in Andalusia, Nadales-Bonilla and Valderrama-Molina (2020), both teachers at the OLS in Puente Genil, present to their judgement the possible difficulties and concerns for the implementation of mediation at OLS in

Andalucía. According to Nadales-Bonilla and Valderrama-Molina (2020, p. 6-9), five major problems can be differentiated when dealing with linguistic mediation at OLS: lack of awareness of the concept of mediation by the teachers, lack of a bank of resources for teachers, difficulties for designing mediation tasks, lack of time to deal with different types of tasks in class, and lack of knowledge about the assessment of mediation tasks.

2.4. Justification of the investigation

An overview onto the recent development of linguistic mediation has been provided from the moment it was introduced in the European documents up to the establishment of a new language activity in the Spanish legislation for OLSs and the subsequent Andalusian one.

The paucity of research into this specific topic, that is, methodology used by language teachers to teach linguistic mediation at OLSs in Spain, is blatantly obvious, due to its recent implementation process. What is more, apart from the aforementioned study carried out by some OLSs in Alicante, no other publications on linguistic mediation, either on methodology or on students' progress or assessment, have been found in Spain. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study with data collected directly from stakeholders carried out in Andalusia about linguistic mediation at OLSs.

This study is particularly relevant at this precise moment since linguistic mediation teaching is at its early stages and there has not been any study that identifies the different methodological trends employed by teachers when dealing with mediation, which is the main focus of this work.

3. THE PRESENT STUDY

3.1. Objectives

The core objective of this exploratory study is to map out the teaching reality at OLSs, thus identifying the main methodological approaches teachers have been adopting during the last school year to teach linguistic mediation as an independent language activity. According to Nunan (1991, p. 2), the major focus of methodology is on classroom tasks and on the management of all the actions organized by teachers with the aim of enabling learning and accomplishing the objectives. Therefore, the aforementioned overarching aim could be subdivided into:

- conceptualization of basic elements,
- time management and variety of tasks,
- the relevance of cultural aspects when dealing with linguistic mediation,
- teachers' challenges and training requirements, and
- students' motivation and their perspective of the tasks being carried out.

3.2. Research design characteristics

According to Bueno-González and Pérez-Cañado (2015: p. 4), following Nunan's (1991 and 1992) and Selinger and Shohamy's (1989), the present study could be classified as practical, as it is centered on the classroom. It is an example of a primary investigation, as it is derived from the primary source of information, and within it, it could be classified as survey research, as it includes questionnaires. According to the approach, it can be considered analytic as it focuses on investigating a cluster of factors which are part of a major system. It is inductive in nature, as it tries to establish general truths from particular instances. Overall, this study could be classified as a group study, as many subjects took part in the research. The method used herewith is a mixed method, that is, both a qualitative and quantitative analysis will be carried out, thus gaining in breadth of understanding, while offsetting the weaknesses of each analysis techniques used individually, "yielding an enriched, elaborated understanding of that phenomenon"

(Greene et al., as cited in Wisniewska, 2014, p. 281). As it has been stated before, it is a primary research, therefore, the data collection method is quasi-experimental, being classroom-based. It can be labeled as cross-sectional, as the data have not been gathered over a long period of time. Due to its nature, mixed qualitative-quantitative, the method of analysis would combine both interpretive and statistical methods.

3.2.1. Research instrument

This study was undertaken using a questionnaire designed specifically for this research. The main goal was to poll the teacher's view on linguistic mediation. The survey comprises one demographic/respondent background question to gain some information about the teachers; to be precise, about the language/languages they teach; opinion or value questions to know their perceptions about mediation and questions about experiences on their day-to-day teaching.

Following Davis (2011, p. 14), on the questionnaire two response formats were used, being open-response and closed-response. The questionnaire comprises eight open-response questions, which enable free expression of opinions and richness of the explanations of experiences, although they are time-consuming and prone to be skipped. The rest of the questions are closed-response ones, which could be differentiated between multiple response questions (three questions) and six Likert-scale questions. As McLeod (2019) states, this scale measures states of agreement, but it can also measure other variation, such as frequency, which is the aspect being evaluated with the six questions focused on periodicity, some of them include adverbs of frequency and others are scaled using percentages.

Bearing in mind the objectives suggested in the previous section, the questionnaire questions are classified into five main categories:

- concept of linguistic mediation (2 and 3),
- description of the process and regularity teaching mediation in the classes (4, 5, 6, 7 and 10),
- mediating cultural aspects (8 and 9),

- students' response to mediation (11, 12 and 14),
- challenges when dealing with linguistic mediation (13, 15, 16 and 17).

The survey was designed using GoogleForms (included in the Appendixes) as it was aimed to be distributed online to teachers all over the autonomous community. It must be highlighted that all the questions in the questionnaire need to be filled in to register the response.

An introduction was included on a separate cover page, where the survey's purpose and its importance was explained, anonymity was assured, the value of participation was stressed and identification of the person administering the survey was provided.

With the purpose of reviewing and identifying potential problems when understanding the questions, a piloting of the questionnaire was done. The initial questionnaire was administered to a small representative group: three teachers with different language profiles: an English teacher, a French teacher and a bilingual French-English teacher. They received an invitation to complete the questionnaire online, in exactly the same way as would be done for the live administration. The respondents' feedback was taken into account to refine some questions in terms of ambiguities, and reorder the questions more appropriately. The three complete answers enabled checking the reliability of the questions, so that the calculation of Cronbach's alpha was applied for two groups of closed-response questions dealing with frequency. For questions five, seven and ten, the coefficient is 0.875, and for questions six and eight, it is 0.697. With these results we could conclude that the questionnaire's internal consistency is acceptable.

3.2.2. Participants

Participants are teachers working at any OLSs within the autonomous community of Andalusia. A total of seventy-four teachers contributed with their answers to this research.

They were forty-two English teachers (58%), eighteen French teachers (24%), seven English-French bilingual teachers (10%), three German teachers (4%), one Italian teacher (1%), one Spanish teacher (1%), one English-Italian

bilingual teacher (1%) and one teacher teaching a different language to those included as options (1%) (cf. Chart 1).

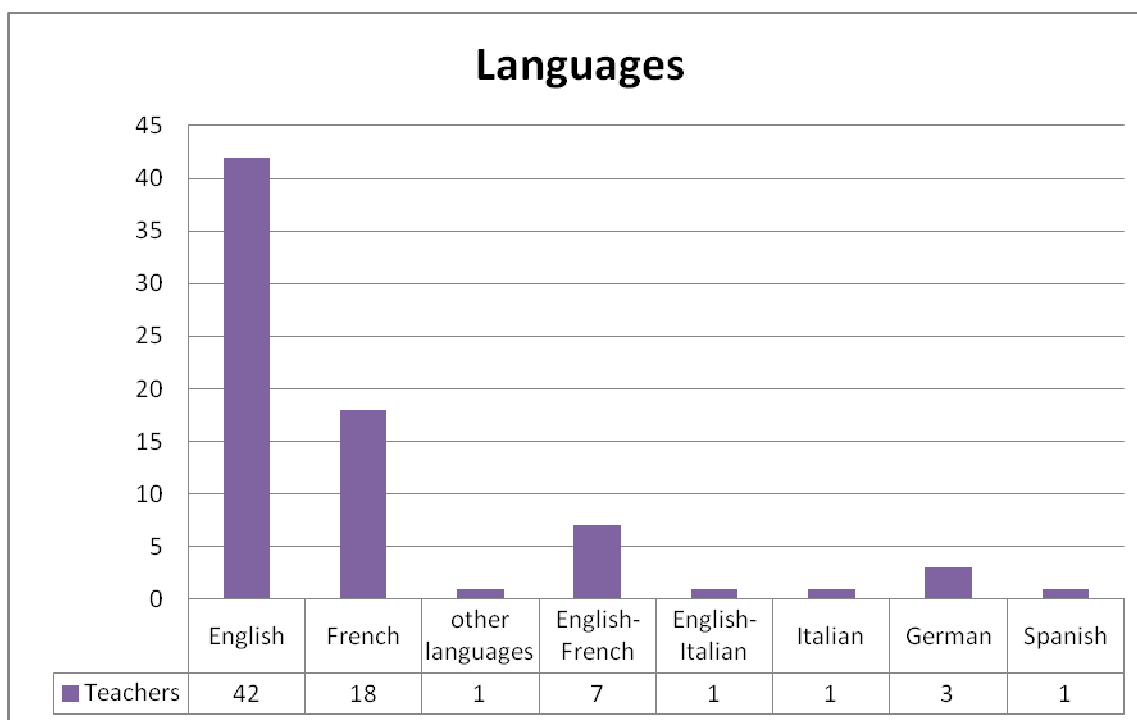


Chart 1. Participants in the study classified according to the language they teach.

Questions to delimit the participants, such as, age or sex, were not included in this questionnaire, since this research is not a direct comparison of methodologies between age groups, but the objective is more general and tries to offer an overview of the methodological guidelines.

All teachers were familiar with the current legislation which has come into force recently regarding the inclusion of mediation as a language activity to be taught and assessed.

3.2.3. Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed to all the OLSs in Andalusia at the end of March 2020. An introductory email was sent to all the OLSs, using the corporate email address which is regularly checked by the Directing Boards, where a detailed explanation of the investigation was included together with a petition to be forwarded to all the teaching staff. It was available for a month, and the level of

participation has been quite high, bearing in mind the exceptional health conditions we were going through during that specific harsh period of uncertainty.

To manage the data obtained from the questionnaire, the process has differed depending on whether the question is an open-response or closed-response one. On the one hand, open-response questions have been analysed and grouped using a computer program called Atlas.ti, which provides tools to code and annotate findings, therefore visualizing relations between the answers, an example could be seen in Figure 3. Rojas-Barreto (2019, p. 161-192) was taken as a reference to be familiar with the program and the results. The questions analysed are 2, 3, 9, 11, 12, 15, 16 and 17. Figure 4 shows a screenshot of the program, where the central part of the screen includes all the answers provided by the participants, and the column on the right includes the codes assigned automatically or manually to each answer in order to establish common patterns.

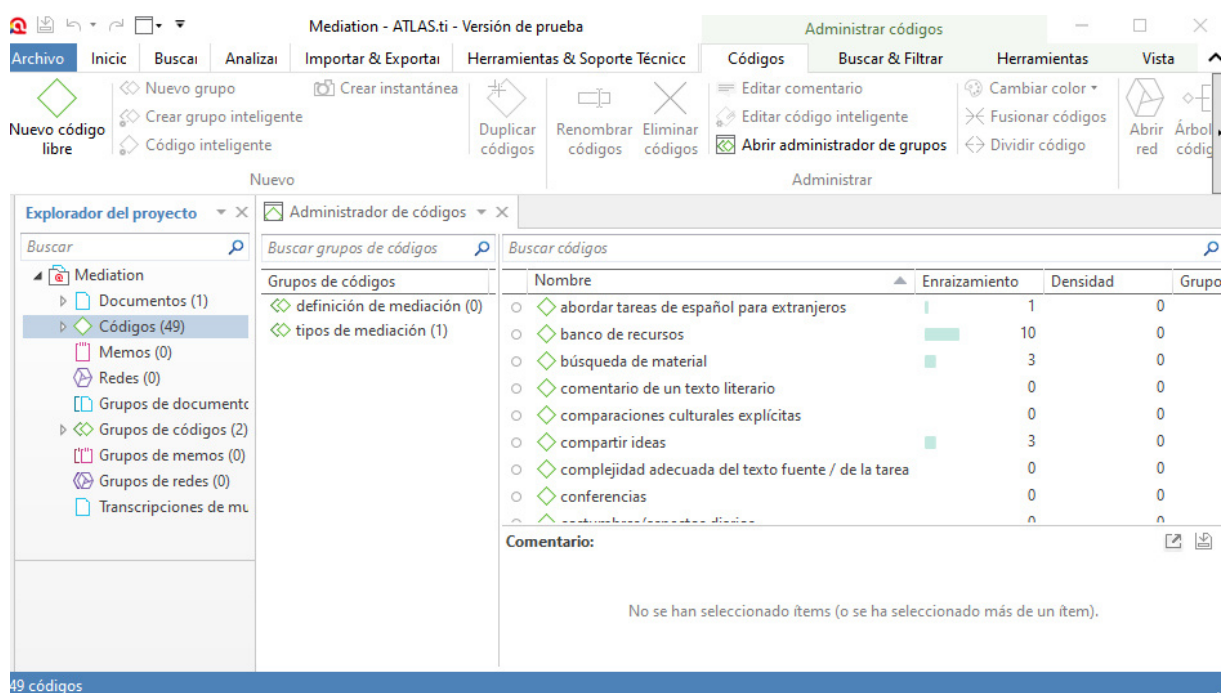


Figure 4. Atlas.ti: codes used to group the answers.

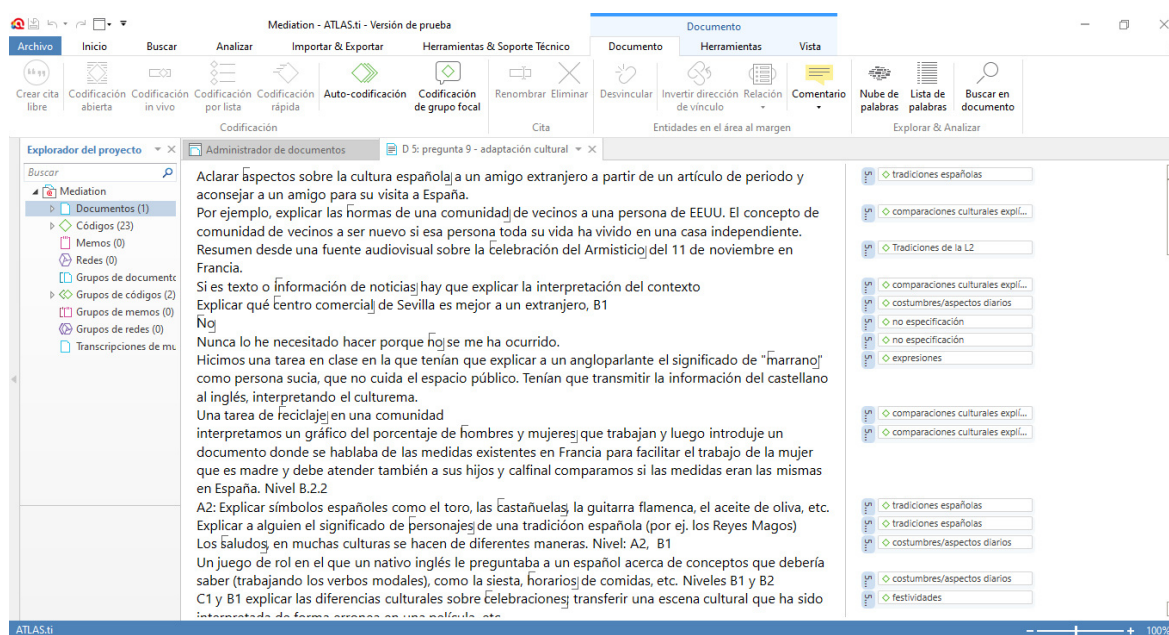


Figure 5. Atlas.ti: analysis of examples of linguistic mediation.

Some other questions (4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10) use the *Likert scale* to grade the statements focusing on frequency. In order to give some clarity to the results and calculate descriptive statistics, those options including frequency words have been transformed into percentages following a logical assumption, for example, when dealing with the scale always to never, 100 was assigned to always, 75 to almost always, 50 to normally, 25 to sometimes and 0 to never.

Questions 13 and 14 are multiple choice questions, but could not be classified under the *Likert-type scale* because their responses are not scored along a range. Therefore, they have been qualitatively analysed.

4. RESULTS

In this section, the results yielded are presented and evaluated according to the answers given by the teachers and the underlying implications for the methodological guidelines. In some questions, a comparative analysis with Atlas.ti has been performed to group the answers into categories, and in some others, the introduction of descriptive statistics seeks to show more clearly the distribution of the data. The results will be presented following the five main categories included in the section 'research instruments', that is, concept of linguistic mediation, description of the process and regularity teaching mediation in the classes, mediating cultural aspects, students' response to mediation, and challenges when dealing with linguistic mediation.

4.1. The concept of linguistic mediation

Regarding the concept of mediation, Chart 2 shows that all the participants agree on the fact that mediation involves an exchange of information in a specific situation to facilitate communication: the definition of mediation as 'facilitating communication between people' with 29 answers (39%) and 'exchanging information adapting the message to a particular situation' with 28 answers (38%) are the most frequent ones.

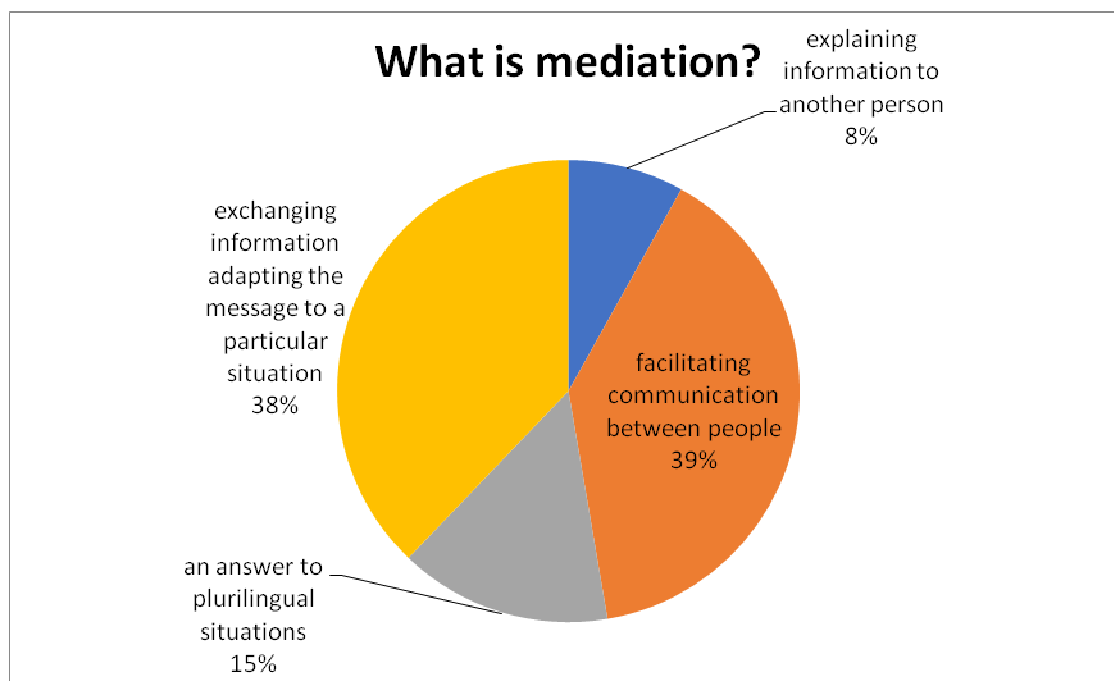


Chart 2. Answers to question 2: concept of mediation.

Dealing with the types of mediation, three codes stand out for the participants; firstly, those who distinguish between oral and written mediation, a total of 19 teachers (26%); secondly, those who differentiate between intralinguistic and extralinguistic mediation, a total of 18 teachers (24%); and those who combine both of the two aforementioned groups, that is, oral, written, intralinguistic and extralinguistic mediation, a total of 13 teachers (18%). It is assumed that these four categories are defined by the participants, due to the fact that these kinds of mediation are clearly differentiated in the daily teaching practice, so that the tasks undertaken conform to simple features to describe them. However, the Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2018) discriminates between three scales: mediating a text, mediating a concept and mediating communication, that is exactly what 2 participants (3%) have made reference to on their typology. The categories 'summarising, translating, explaining...' suggested by 7 participants (10%) and 'extension and simplification of the message' proposed by 1 participant (1%) are also included in the Companion, but as communicative strategies or subcategories within the aforementioned scales. Finally, 9 participants (12%) make reference to other types of mediation including the cultural one, this aspect is deemed particularly relevant in most mediation tasks, and it was one of the types of

mediation considered by North and Piccardo (2016, p. 8), as stated in the 'literature review' section. Chart 3 offers a general overview on the answers provided.

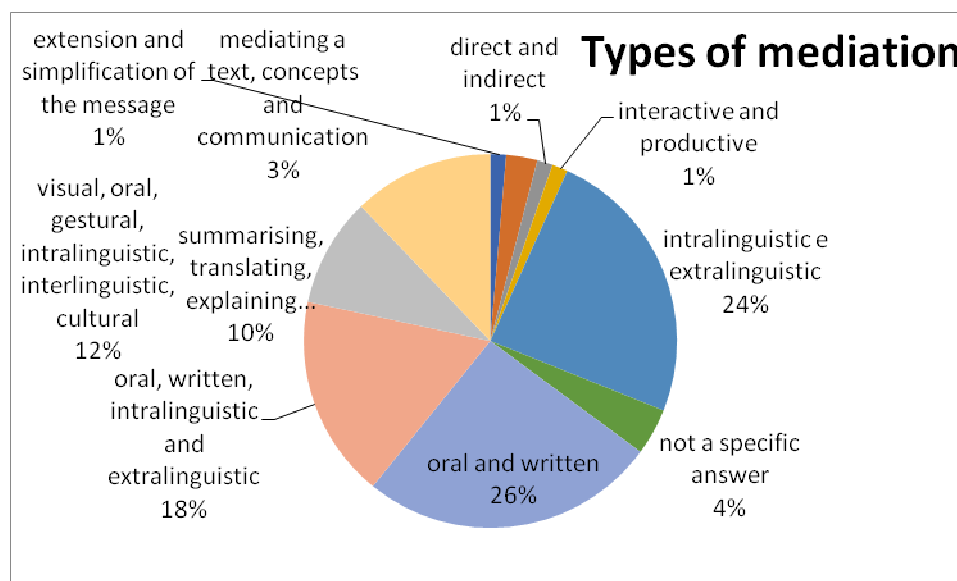


Chart 3. Answers to question 3: types of mediation.

4.2. Description of the process and regularity teaching mediation in the classes

In order to cast some light on the process of teaching mediation in terms of frequency of mediation tasks in class, five questions are analysed in detail. As mentioned before, all these questions use the Likert scale making reference to the regularity, although some of them make use of different types of scales (some numerical and others describing the frequency with words).

In relation to the frequency of mediation tasks in the class, the scales vary from 'in every lesson' to 'less than once a month'. In order to analyse the results, it must be taken into account that, in the OLSs, there are two lessons every week with a duration of two hours and fifteen minutes each. Therefore, 'once a week' means every two lessons, 'once every two weeks' means every four lessons and 'once a month' implies using a mediation task every eight lessons. From the results, it can be inferred that most teachers (24) use mediation tasks in their classes once every two weeks, which represents 32%. The frequency of use of once a month and once a week offer similar results, in the first case it is 19 teachers (26%) and 18 teachers on the second one (24%). The end points options are used by less teachers, for

example, teachers who use mediation tasks in every lesson are 11 (15%) and teachers using them less than once a month are only 2 (3%). The results could be seen in Chart 4.

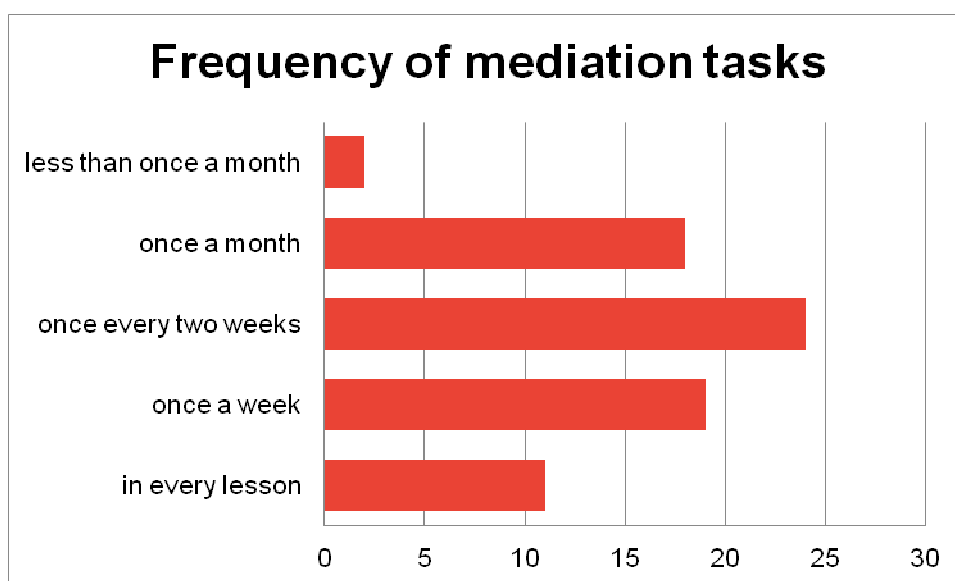


Chart 4. Answers to question 4: frequency of mediation tasks in class.

Taking into account the number of classes per week and to obtain descriptive statistics, numbers have been assigned to the frequencies: 'in every lesson' corresponds to 100, 'once a week' is 50 (being exactly half of the first one), consequently 'once every two weeks' is 25, 'once a month' is 12 and 'less than once a month' is 5. The results are included in Table 1.

Mean	38.9
Median	25.0
Standard deviation	29.5

Table 1. Descriptive statistics - Frequency of mediation tasks.

The mean is between using mediation tasks in the classroom once a week and once every two weeks. The high value of the standard deviation (29,5) compared with the mean suggests that there are not unified criteria regarding the frequency when using this new language activity in class, whereas the other language activities (reception, production and interaction) are more standardised and are included generally in every lesson. Probably, given enough time, the same standardisation is likely to be implemented and exhibit a lower variation of frequency among teachers.

In respect to the time devoted to oral mediation and written mediation in class, the results obtained show direct parallelism (Chart 5), as it can be seen that in both cases the most selected option (mode) is the same (60%-40%).

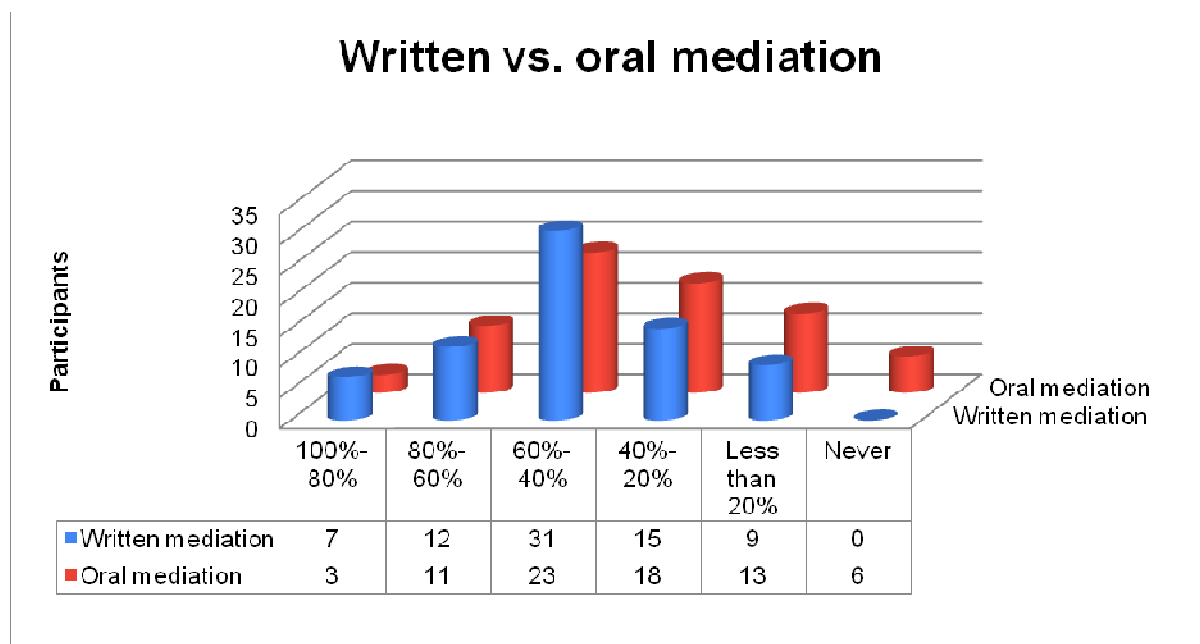


Chart 5. Answers to question 5: frequency of oral and written mediation tasks in class.

In order to make a more detailed comparison, descriptive statistics of both types of mediation was calculated using the number in the middle of the interval, that is, for the option 100%-80% the value used for the statistics was 90, and so on. The results are included in table 2.

	Written mediation	Oral mediation
Mean	48,1	38,6
Standard deviation	22,2	24,2

Table 2. Descriptive statistics - Frequency of mediation tasks (written vs. oral).

There appears to be a difference between the means, in the case of written mediation it is clearly in the middle of the distribution. However in the case of oral mediation, it is more towards using it less frequently than the written one. The distribution of the data shows a similar standard deviation, which means that there is a similar dispersion of answers.

With regard to the issue of dealing with more than one language activity at a time, focusing on the combination with mediation, the data gathered are included in Chart 6.

Mediation and other language activity

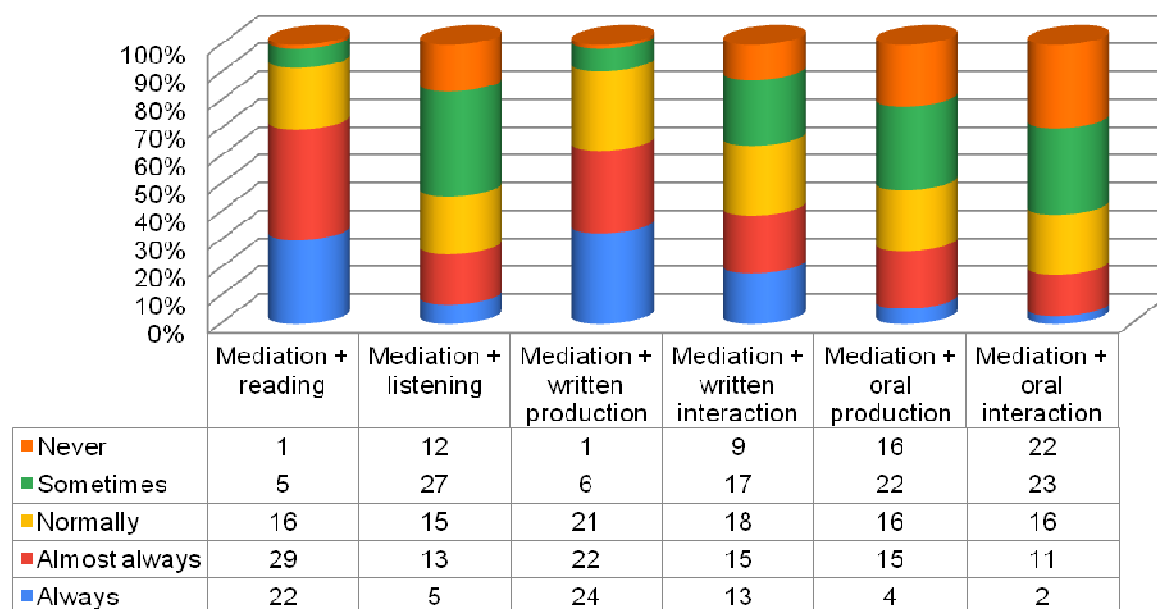


Chart 6. Answers to question 6: frequency of teaching mediation with other language activities.

In order to obtain the descriptive statistics certain values have been assigned to the frequency: 'always' (100), 'almost always' (75), 'normally' (50), 'sometimes' (25) and 'never' (0).

As can be clearly observed in the chart, mediation tasks are often combined with the reading comprehension activity (means=73) and the written production one (means=71). In fact, if we combine the two most frequent options ('always' and 'almost always'), the combination with reading comprehension amounts to 69% and the combination with written production represents 62%.

On the other extreme, we can see that the combination with the listening comprehension activity (means=40), the oral production activity (means=39) and the oral interaction activity (means=32) are less frequent. In fact, the combination of mediation and oral interaction activities is never used by a total of 22 participants (30%) and just sometimes by 23 participants (31%), both of them representing 61% of the participants. The combination mediation and listening comprehension activities behave similarly, as the options with less frequency of use represent 53%

of the stakeholders. Finally, to the same group, the combination mediation and oral production representing 51% corresponds to the options with less frequency of use.

The highest standard deviation goes to the combination between mediation and written interaction activities (32), which implies that the answers are quite dispersed, so the participants do not show a common tendency. The percentages are 12% (never), 18% (always), 21% (almost always), 24% (sometimes) and 25% (normally).

Relating to the frequency of different kinds of mediation tasks in classes, the data are included in two charts because of their size (Chart 7 and 8). In order to calculate the descriptive statistics a mid number in the interval of frequency has been assigned, for instance, for the interval '60%-40%', the reference figure is 50.

Bearing this in mind, for tasks where the main purpose is relaying specific information, the mean is 63, that is to say that for most participants, this task is normally put into practice. In fact, there are no answers for the option 'never', and between the options '100%-80%' and '80%-60%' the answers are way above half of the participants (27% and 32%, respectively).

With respect to the task which is centered on explaining data from graphs or charts, the answers are distributed equally in the different frequency intervals (around 20%) except for the option 'never' (4%).

Regarding the task dealing with processing a text, three intervals stand out, firstly the answers within the interval '80%-60%' (28%), and then the options with less frequency, 'never' (7%) and 'less than 20%' (7%), the other options include similar percentages (around 20%).

Concerning the task for extending information, there is not unanimity about the frequency of this kind of task. It can be highlighted that the option 100%-80% is only chosen by 8% of the teachers.

Apropos the task of translating, it can be seen a change of trend towards answers with less frequency of use (mean=29, mode=10). In fact, 69% of the participants have used translating tasks with a frequency under 40%. The percentage for 'always' and 'never' do clearly stand out, being 4% and 22%, respectively.

The next three kinds of tasks which are going to be analysed, 'note-taking', 'expressing personal response to creative texts' and 'analysis and criticism of creative texts' have in common that the most common chosen frequency is 'never'. In the case of 'note taking' the difference with the other frequencies is not very significant, as it can be placed around 20%, except for the options '60%-40%' (9%) and the option '100%-80%' (5%). 68% of the participants would use it with a frequency lower than 40%. As for the task where students are asked to express a personal response to creative texts, the option 'never' represents 42% and together with the option 'less than 20%' (20%) are the most chosen options, on the contrary 1% of the answers for 100%-80% and 8% to 80%-60%. The task which clearly is less represented in the classes is the one which involves analysis and criticism of creative texts (mean=14, median=0). In this case, the option 'never' surpasses half of the answers (54%) and the curve is sharply decreasing to get to 1% for the option '100%-80%'.

In connection with the task focused on facilitating pluricultural understanding, the extremes 'never' and '100-80%' receive the lowest number of answers (8%), whereas the other options offer a similar amount of answers, around 20%.

To conclude with the tasks, that one dealing with adapting language to the receiver (mean=50), the option '100%-80%' goes up to 19%, the options '80%-60%' and '40%-20%' coincide at 23%, and the option 'never' is 4%. These answers show that there exists a considerable disparity between teachers on the frequency for this task.

Frequency of kinds of tasks

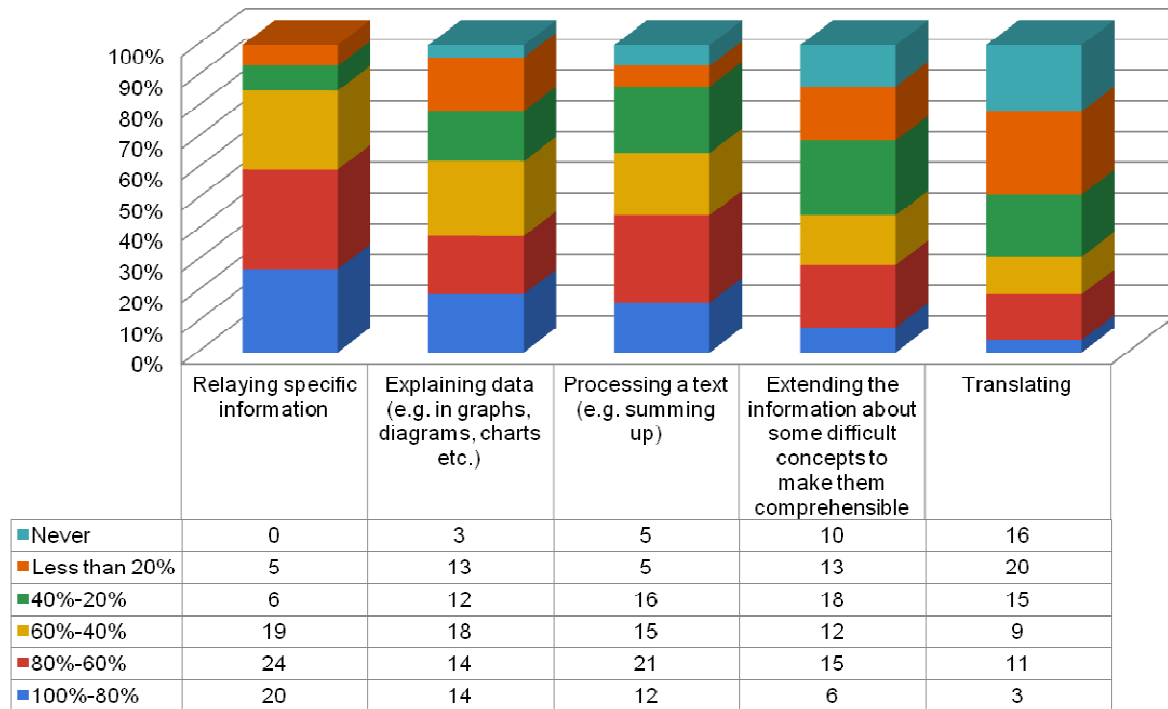


Chart 7. Answers to question 7: frequency of kinds of tasks to practise mediation (I).

Frequency of kinds of tasks

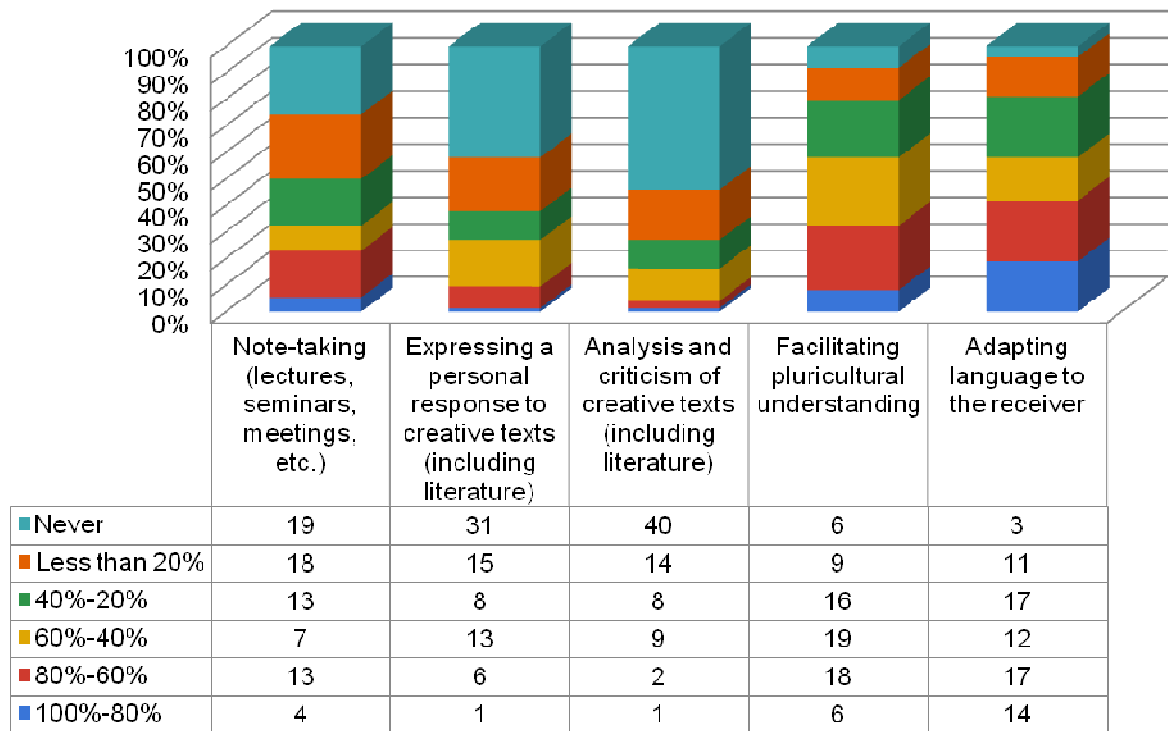


Chart 8. Answers to question 7: frequency of kinds of tasks to practise mediation (II).

In respect to the language/languages which are involved in the mediation task, that is, the frequency of interlinguistic and intralinguistic tasks. In chart 9 a comparison between both combinations of languages can be seen side by side. The facts undoubtedly indicate that most of the tasks involve only the second language, whereas tasks which involve the mother tongue and the second language are far less common. In the case of intralinguistic tasks, 36% of the respondents chose the options 100%-80% and together with the second option '80%-60%' (38%) represent almost 75% of the answers, which entails that it is the most common combination, whereas this two options for interlinguistic tasks represent 30%, and the frequency below 40% represent 42% of the total responses.

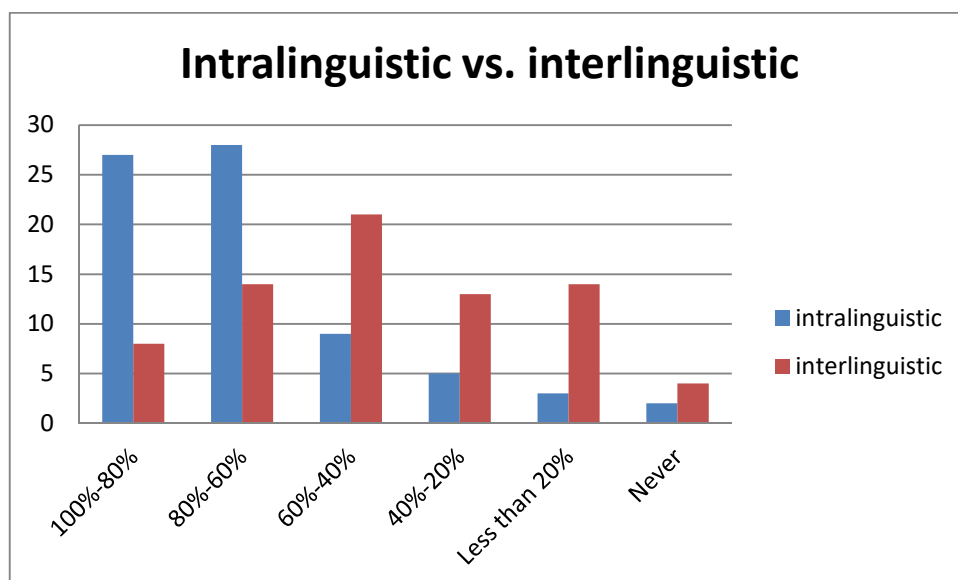


Chart 9. Answers to question 10: frequency of intralinguistic and interlinguistic tasks.

4.3. Mediating cultural aspects

The outstanding importance of cultural aspects in mediation tasks is clearly underlined. The results could be seen in Chart 10. In fact, between the answers analysed for the first two options of frequency (always and normally), it reaches 49% of the respondents. On the opposite site, for low frequencies (never and hardly ever) the responses are reduced to a mere 10%. From these data we can infer that cultural aspects are comprised within most mediation tasks, this fact seems patently

obvious if the mediation task involves two languages (interlinguistic); however, the same could happen when dealing with an intralinguistic task (L2) if the original text focuses on ideas related to the L1 culture.

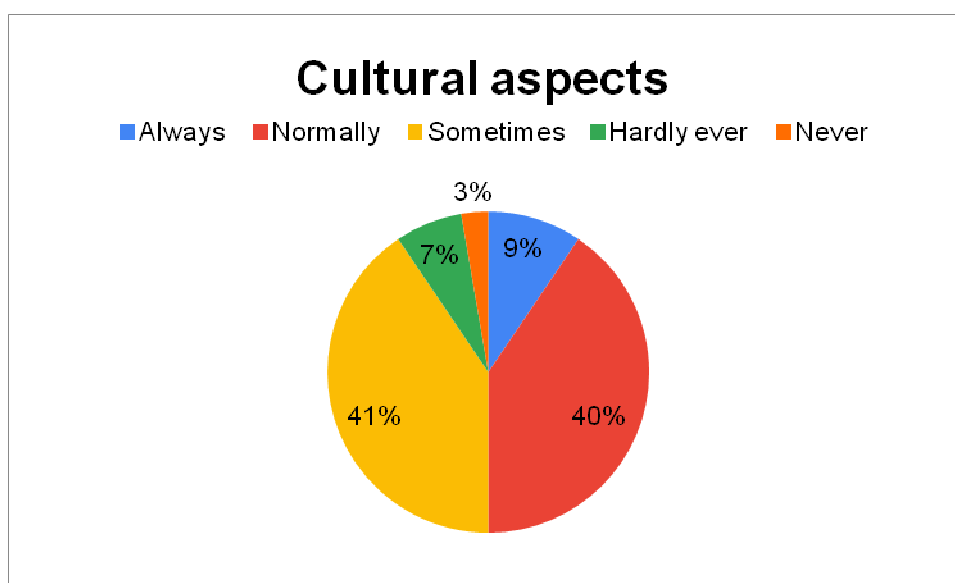


Chart 10. Answers to question 8: frequency of cultural aspects.

In connection with the cultural aspects normally included in mediation tasks, the diverse answers provided could be encompassed in 9 categories and one which is not specific, since some respondents have not given an example. The data could be seen in chart 11. The categories which express higher percentages are traditions / routines (21%) and cuisine (21%). There are two other categories about traditions, but their answers are tightly defined and included in Spanish traditions (8%) and L2 traditions (11%); if the category traditions is grouped under one same category, it would represent 40% of the examples provided. The category 'explicit cultural comparisons' comes to 13% of the examples provided and 'expressions' stands out with 8%. From these data, it can be inferred that the most relevant cultural aspects which are present in mediation tasks are those dealing with traditions and routines.

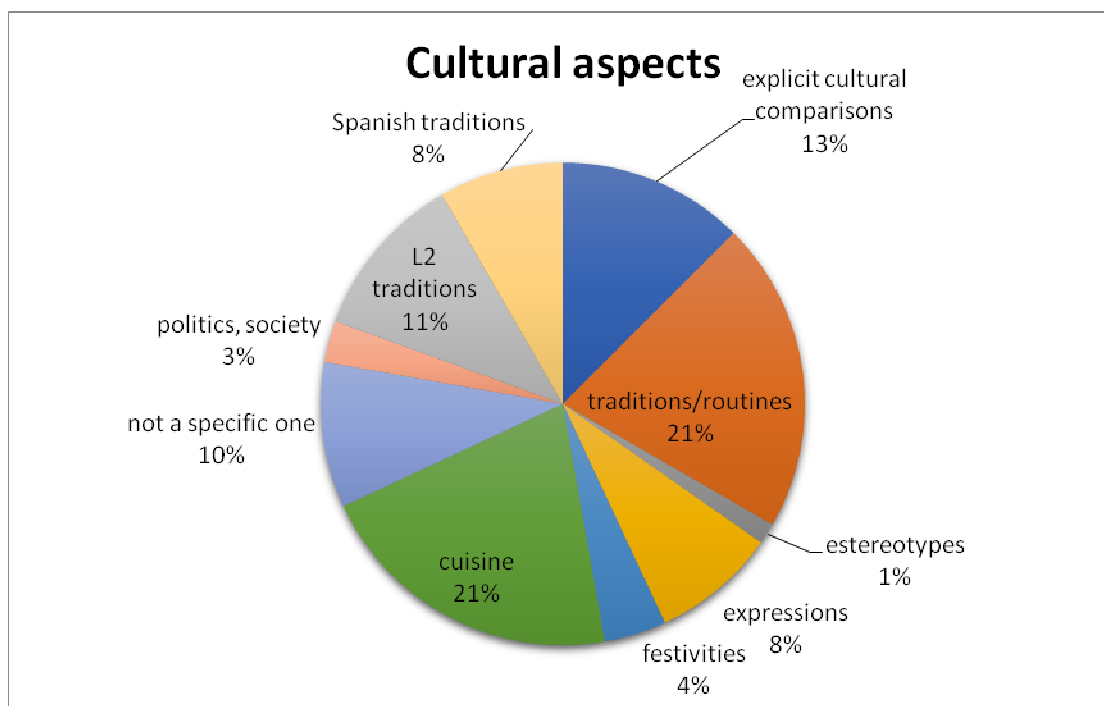


Chart 11. Answers to question 9: kind of cultural aspects normally included in mediation tasks.

4.4. Students' response to mediation

With reference to the opinion of students about mediation as a recently included language activity, the results are included in chart 12. The most common response recognises its usefulness of the tasks, but does not display any originality, as these tasks have been carried out in the past, although they did not receive a specific name (66%). 23% of the answers consider mediation tasks very useful as they can transfer them to their real life, on the contrary, those who see a lack of utility in the answers amount to 11%. It can be surmised that this language activity seems to be relevant and necessary by most students.

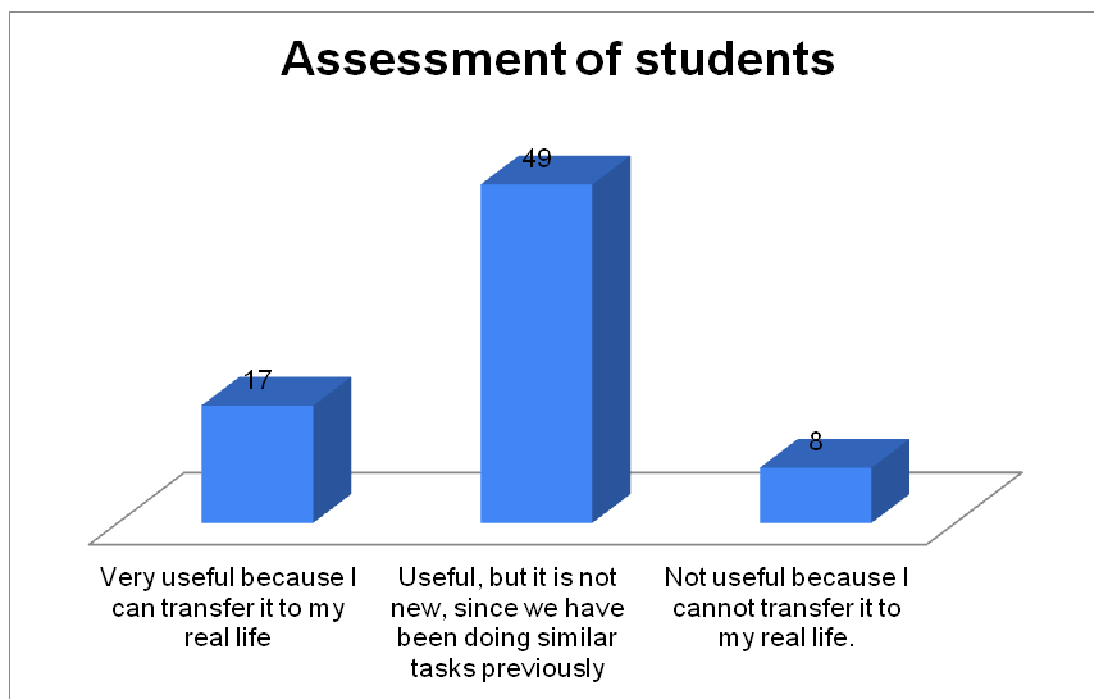


Chart 12. Answers to question 14: opinion of students about mediation tasks.

Relating to examples of activities performed in the class, they have been classified into those activities which had a positive response from students and activities with a negative response. The data are included in Chart 13 and 14. The answers analysed with the program Atlas.ti have been of great diversity, and those with a more significant representation regarding a positive response are: cultural adaptations (10%), explaining and reformulating infographics (12%), interpreting graphics and images (13%) and summarising and explaining (19%). On the other side, for the negative response, 32% of the respondents highlighted that all the activities proposed to students have had a positive feedback, from the rest answers outstanding on this negative side are: summarising and explaining (12%) and interpreting graphics and images (10%), it is surprising that the same kind of activities were also included on those with a positive response, which makes us think that the specific task proposal has much to do with the response. On the contrary, students who show a negative response to explaining and reformulating infographics is reduced to only 3%.

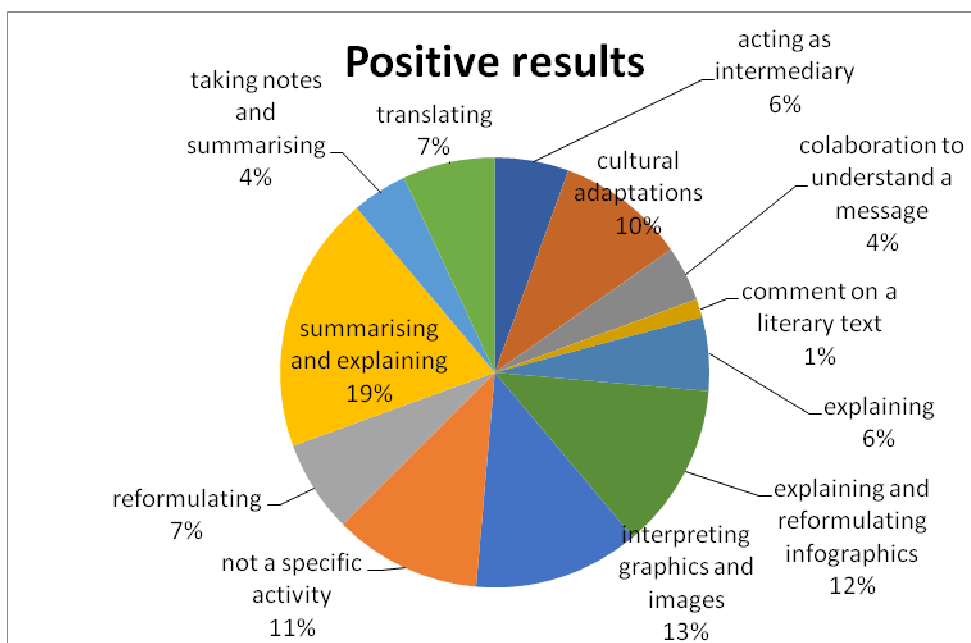


Chart 13. Answers to question 11: positive opinion of students about tasks.

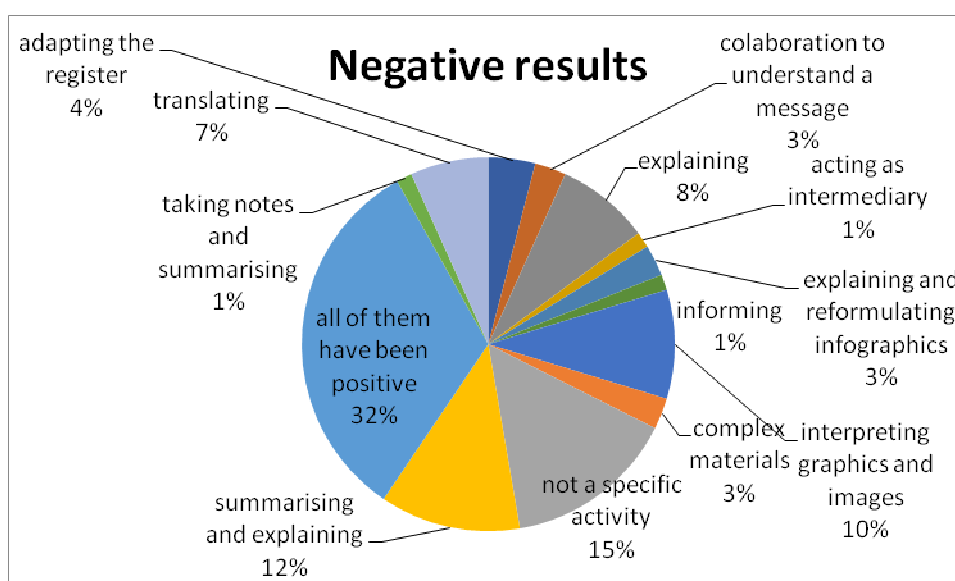


Chart 14. Answers to question 12: negative opinion of students about tasks.

4.5. Challenges when dealing with linguistic mediation

Concerning the difficult aspects for teachers when dealing with written mediation tasks, the answers could be seen in Chart 15. What is found more difficult is designing tasks (42%), offering a variety of them (22%) and assessing

(16%), while, on the contrary, the less difficult aspect for teachers is adjusting the material and task to the level (9%).

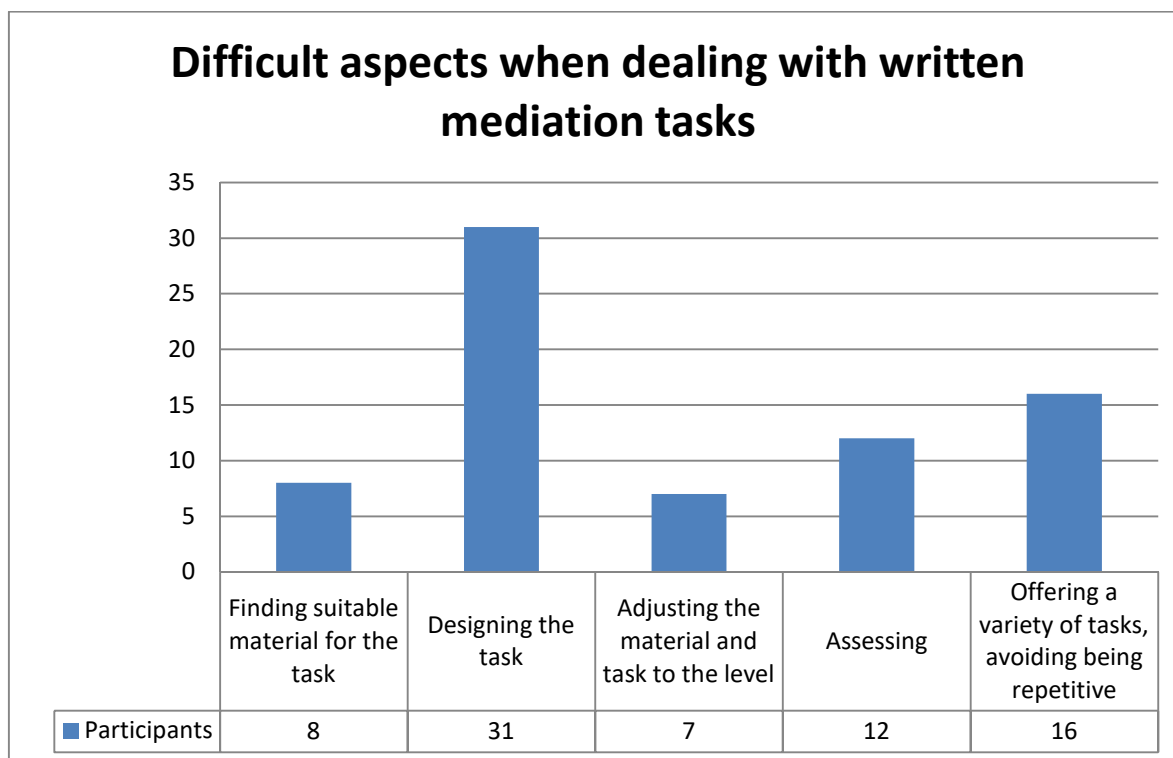


Chart 15. Answers to question 13: difficult aspects of written mediation tasks.

With regard to the aspects which must be taken into account before designing a mediation activity, the responses have been analysed with the program Atlas.ti, and the results could be seen in Chart 16. The more relevant aspects deal with having a clear task objective or writing a clear direct line (33%), usefulness of the task in students' real life (26%) and the language level at which the activity is aimed (22%). Other aspects such as evaluation criteria (4%), offering enough time to perform the task (5%) or appropriate complexity of the task (3%) are also included, but the number of participants choosing these options are not quite representative.

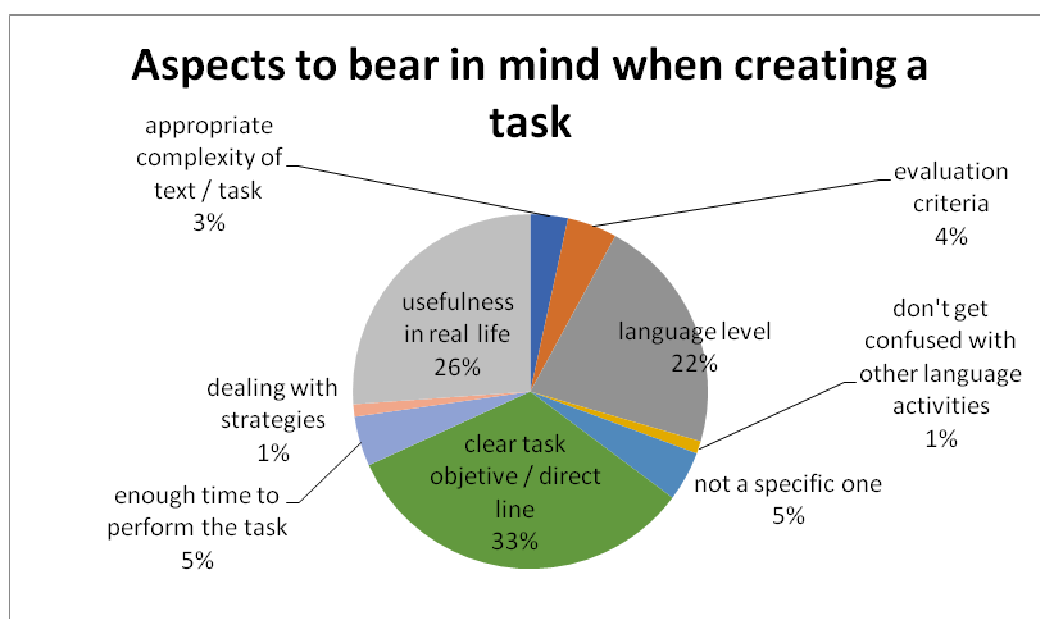


Chart 16. Answers to question 15: aspects to take into account before designing mediation tasks.

As to whether teachers use authentic or adapted material, and when using authentic one, providing examples, teachers have given several representative examples that could be assigned to different categories. Therefore, those answers with more than one example have been distributed and assigned to different codes within the program Atlas.ti.

There is a wide variety of authentic material, although some teachers prefer adapted material (4%) and some others claim to be using authentic and adapted material (4%). In some cases, the selection of authentic material is assumingly directly linked to the kind of activity proposed to students, for example when teachers opt for statistics and graphics (6%), images, posters or photos (9%) and maps and drawings (4%), students are likely to be asked to interpret data or images. The most used type of materials are articles or pieces of news (12%) and leaflets or commercials (12%), which could be used to design a variety of mediation tasks, for example, summarising, explaining or selecting information. Infographics (11%) are also one of the preferred options, thanks to which students could be asked to explain information, extend information giving more details or interpret some graphics. Some teachers opt for audiovisual resources like interviews, documentaries or film synopsis (8%) and web pages like TripAdvisor (7%), which could also lend themselves to a diverse kind of tasks. The complete list of material could be seen in Chart 17.

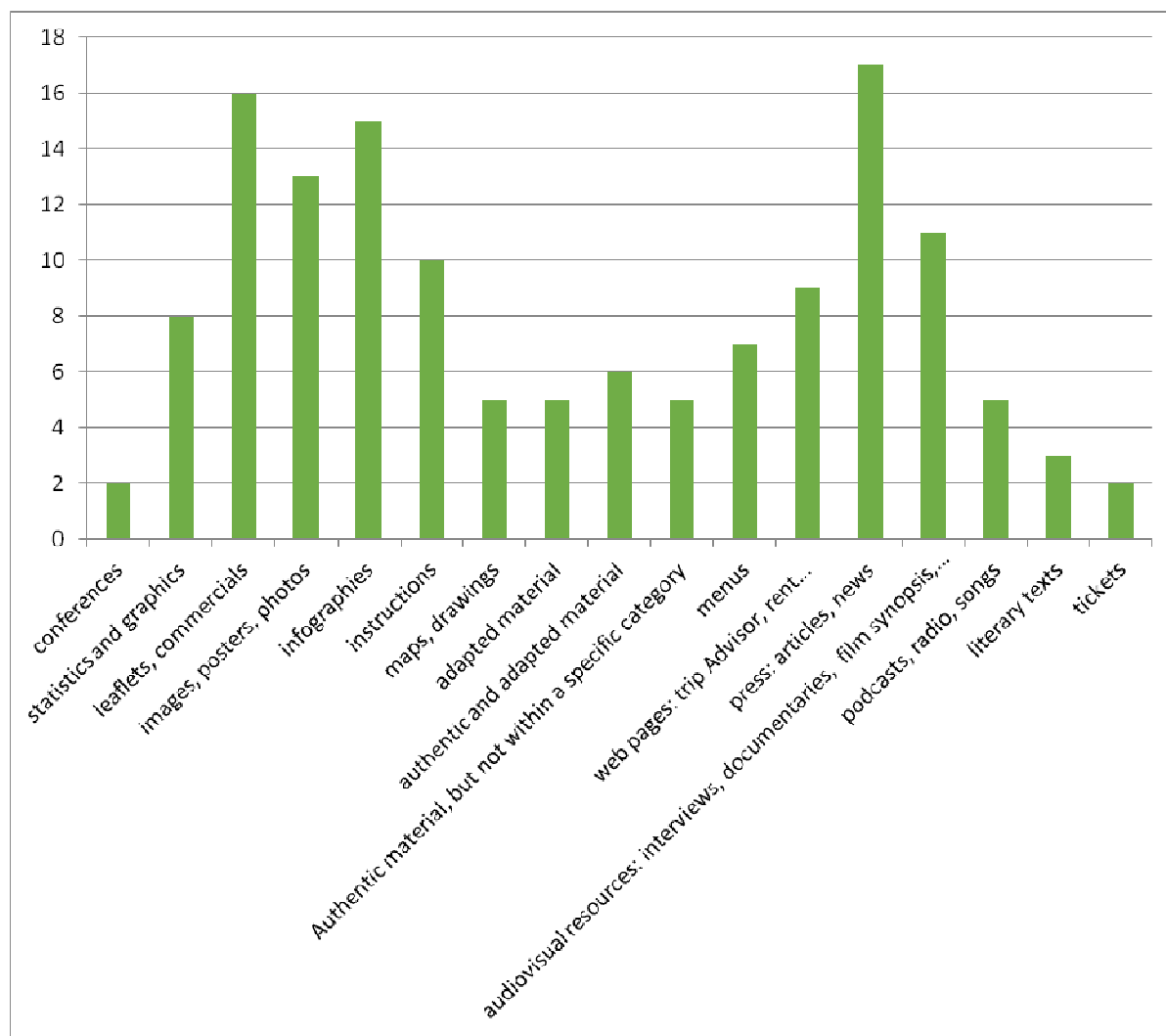


Chart 17. Answers to question 16: authentic material used for mediation tasks.

Finally, in respect to the possible necessity of receiving some training about mediation, the results are included in Chart 18. On the one hand, 9% of the respondents believe more training is not required. On the other side, two of the most demanded training aspects are creating tasks (29%) and assessment (26%). Another idea suggested by an important number of participants is the creation of a resource bank (11%).

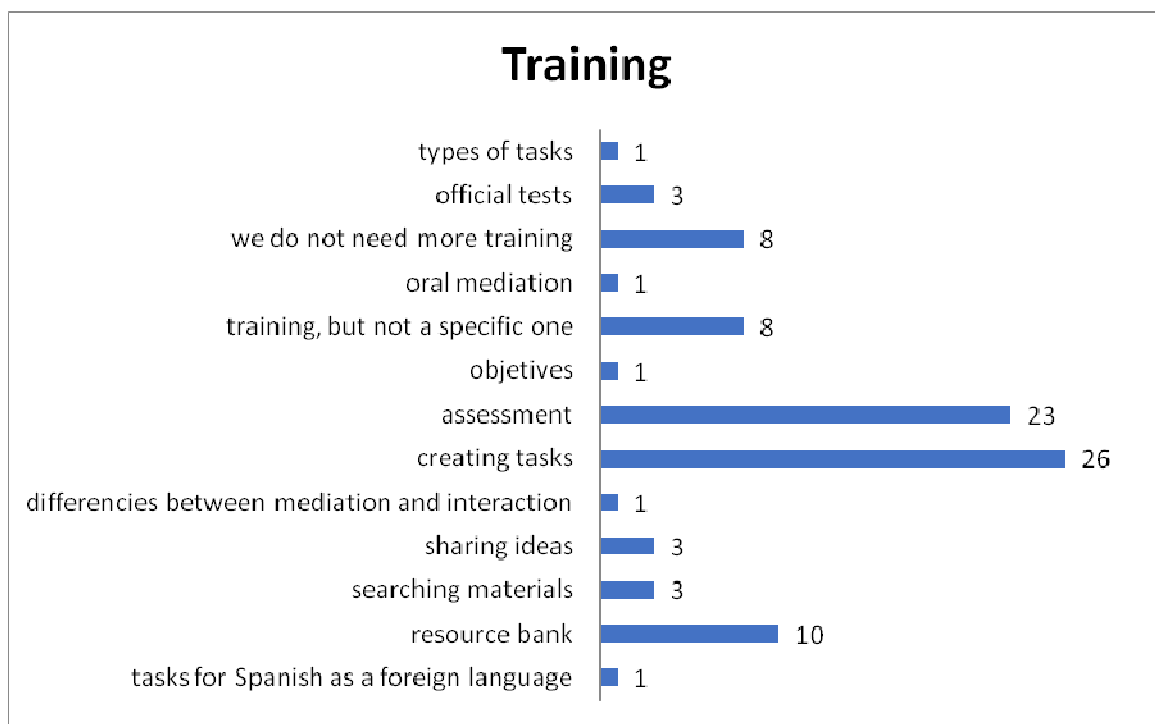


Chart 18. Answers to question 17: training needs.

4.6. Summary

The concept of linguistic mediation	
Concept	'facilitating communication between people' --> (39%) 'exchanging information adapting the message to a particular situation' --> (38%)
Types of mediation	oral / written mediation --> (26%) intralinguistic / extralinguistic mediation --> (24%) oral, written, intralinguistic and extralinguistic mediation --> (18%)
Description of the process and regularity teaching mediation in the classes	
Frequency of mediation tasks	once a week --> (24%) once every two weeks --> (32%) once a month --> (26%)
Frequency of written and oral mediation tasks	Written mediation: 80% - 60% --> (16%) 60% - 40% --> (42%) 40% - 20% --> (20%)
	Oral mediation: 80% - 60% --> (15%) 60% - 40% --> (31%) 40% - 20% --> (18%)
Frequency of mediation with	Reading comprehension Almost always --> (39%) Always --> (30%)

other language activity	Listening comprehension		
	Sometimes --> (36%) Normally --> (20%)		
	Written production		
	Always --> (32%) Almost always --> (30%)		
	Written interaction		
	Normally --> (24%) Sometimes --> (23%)		
	Oral production		
	Sometimes --> (30%) Never --> (22%)		
	Oral interaction		
	Sometimes --> (31%) Never --> (30%)		
Frequency of kinds of mediation tasks		Most common frequencies	
	Relaying specific information.	80%-60% --> (32%) 100%-80% --> (27%)	
	Explaining data from graphs or charts	60%-40% --> (24%) 100%-80% --> (19%) 80%-60% --> (19%)	
	Processing a text	80%-60% --> (28%) 40%-20% --> (22%)	
	Extending information	40%-20% --> (24%) 80%-60% --> (20%)	
	Translating	Less than 20% --> (27%) Never --> (22%)	
	Note-taking	Never --> (26%) Less than 20% --> (24%)	
	Expressing personal response to creative texts	Never --> (42%) Less than 20% --> (20%)	
	Analysis and criticism of creative texts	Never --> (54%) Less than 20% --> (19%)	
	Facilitating pluricultural understanding	60%-40% --> (26%) 80%-60% --> (24%)	
	Adapting language to the receiver	80%-60% --> (23%) 40%-20% --> (23%)	
Frequency of	Frequency	Intralinguistic	Interlinguistic

interlinguistic and intralinguistic tasks	100%-80%	(36%)	(11%)
	80%-60%	(38%)	(19%)
	60%-40%	(12%)	(28%)
	40%-20%	(7%)	(18%)
	Less than 20%	(4%)	(19%)
	Never	(3%)	(5%)
Mediating cultural aspects			
Cultural aspects in mediation tasks	Always --> (9%) Sometimes --> (41%)	Normally --> (40%)	
Examples of cultural aspects (most frequent)	Traditions and routines --> (21%) Cuisine --> (21%) Explicit cultural comparisons --> (13%) L2 traditions --> (11%) Spanish traditions --> (8%)		
Students' response to mediation			
Students' opinion	Usefulness of the tasks, but does not display any originality --> (66%) Very useful as they can be transferred to real life --> (23%) Lack of utility --> (11%)		
Students' reactions to tasks (some examples)		Positive	Negative
	cultural adaptations	(10%)	-
	explaining and reformulating infographics	(12%)	(3%)
	interpreting graphics and images	(13%)	(10%)
	summarising and explaining	(19%)	(12%)
Challenges when dealing with linguistic mediation			
Most common difficulties	Designing tasks --> (42%) Offering a variety of tasks --> (22%) Assessing --> (16%)		
Most common aspects to take into account when designing a task	Clear task objective / direct line --> (33%) Usefulness in real life --> (26%) Language level --> (22%)		
Resources	Adapted --> (4%)		
	Adapted and authentic --> (4%)		
	Authentic --> (92%)	statistics and graphics --> (6%)	

		images, posters or photos --> (9%) maps and drawings --> (4%) articles or pieces of news --> (12%) leaflets or commercials --> (12%) infographics --> (11%) audiovisual resources --> (8%) web pages --> (7%)
Most demanded training needs	Creating tasks --> (29%) Assessment --> (26%) Creation of a resource bank --> (11%)	

5. DISCUSSION

This section is going to be devoted to explaining the main findings, bearing in mind the objectives stated at the beginning of the process and putting forward some plausible arguments based on the data analysed.

It is now possible to state that teachers have a common assumption of what linguistic mediation implies, although there are some discrepancies on the point connected to the types of mediation. As a matter of fact, some teachers confused types with strategies or kinds of mediation tasks, which could be considered wrong in theory; however, on a daily basis, it would prove reasonably acceptable, although it might happen that they are not familiar with all strategies or tasks, as they listed a limited number of them. Therefore, we can conclude that teachers should review these concepts included in the national / regional Decrees or in the descriptors established at the beginning of the school year by their didactic department, so that they could be more aware of the key stages they are passing through when designing a mediation task for their students. In addition, some teacher training would be necessary to clarify the necessary concepts and assure common standards when applying them into the designing of class to be used in class. The training could be organised by means of setting out an in-house course or an online one devoted to unifying criteria and clarifying basic knowledge.

The evidence from this study suggests that teachers do not coincide with the frequency of mediation tasks employed in class. In fact, based on the data, it could be said that the frequency is quite low, as only 39% of the teachers perform a mediation task at least once a week, and 29% include one in their lessons every month or even longer. From these data, it can be inferred that more than a quarter of teachers (61%) still do not conceive this language activity as important as the other four, which are specifically practised at least once a week. Another possible explanation could be that teachers include mediation as part of other language activities tasks, and they do not consider them as a pure mediation task. However, it is assumed that, with time, there will be a standardisation of the methodology, as the one existing for the other well-consolidated language activities. In order to

improve the adoption of mediation, this difficulty could be overcome, as with the case of concepts, through adequate training.

Even though tasks are devoted in similar terms to written and oral mediation, there is a slight predominance of written mediation tasks. These results are obvious when the instructions provided to the schools by the competent authorities are taken into account, as they specify that only written mediation tasks will be included in the official exams. In this sense, it should be highlighted that all teachers spend some time dealing with written mediation tasks in class, as there were not any answers for the option 'never'. Nevertheless, teachers are devoting some time to oral mediation tasks too, as their general goal is that students implement strategies which are aimed at enhancing mediation language activity in general, without making distinctions between oral and written. However, although the instructions only make reference to written mediation, the implementation of oral mediation tasks remains at the teacher's discretion. This could cause issues in scenarios where time constraints appear, where the teacher would focus mainly on written mediation rather than oral, despite the advantage of oral tasks being less time consuming. This conclusion has been derived from the legally binding instructions issued in 2019, so a modification of the instructions should take place to change this issue. In general, teachers' final goal is that students reach a high competence in mediation, both written and spoken.

Additionally, a compelling example of the aforementioned issue can be found in reading within the instructions that the written tasks in the exam will be intralinguistic-centered. The data support this trend in teaching, as intralinguistic tasks are preferred to interlinguistic ones. This might be favoured due to the fact that intralinguistic mediation is more challenging for students, in the sense that they would have to pursue more strategies, since they have a text already in the target language that they would be asked to reformulate under certain tasks requirements, and they are required to avoid being stuck to the original text. While intralinguistic mediation tasks will significantly enhance students' communicative competence, interlinguistic mediation creates a bond between both languages and is a far more realistic approach in students' daily personal and professional life. Once again, a change on this trend requires changes in the law applied at OLSs.

Regarding frequency, as far as kinds of mediation tasks are concerned, most teachers have employed 'relaying specific information' and 'processing a text' to put into practice mediation tasks in their classes, while a general consensus emerges about the reluctance to use 'translating', 'note-taking', 'expressing a personal response to creative texts' and 'analysis and criticism of creative texts', mainly due to the fact that they do not offer guarantees to develop the competences. Although the percentages are indicative, the four kinds of activities which are not commonly used could be particularly suitable for C1 or C2, and a lot of mediation strategies are put into practice through them, which can be highly useful at this level of absolute mastery of the language. However, it could be necessary to study and examine different possibilities to grade all kinds of mediation tasks, so that they could be performed with all levels, above all providing examples where this flexibility could be observed. Once again, teacher training is considered essential to achieve this objective. The frequency of the other tasks does not indicate a common clear preference, leaving it to the teacher's discretion.

We could also conclude that the language activities prone to combine with mediation are reading comprehension and written production, as more than 60% of the teachers always / almost always associate them with mediation. As a consequence, students would seemingly be asked to read some information which they should read and analyse (reading comprehension) in order to write another text (written production) using some of the mediation strategies depending on the task. This could be linked with the idea most teachers agree with of employing tasks involving 'relaying specific information' and 'processing a text', as both kinds of activities may involve the reading comprehension and the written production language activities. Although there is not an agreement about the written interaction language activity, a representative number of teachers agree on its suitability too. On the other hand, teachers coincide with the reluctance of using mediation with listening comprehension, and to a lower extent, with oral production/interaction language activities. As a matter of fact, this reluctance might be due to the less possibilities experienced during the reduced amount of time working with mediation, and eventually some other tasks to combine these language activities with mediation could be found out and applied. In that sense, this evidences a necessity

to adapt the methodological approaches to seamlessly integrate in similar terms the four well-established language activities with mediation.

The data suggest that most teachers include cultural aspects in mediation tasks, as culture and mediation are indissolubly connected (as stated in section 3.1.). Some predominant topics are traditions (40%) and cuisine (21%), as they offer a substantial number of examples to work with. However, other topics are also relevant, such as, explicit comparisons (13%), idiomatic expressions (8%) or festivities (4%). All these examples have in common that they could be described as part of our daily life and they require a detailed explanation when mediating, being essential to satisfactorily understand the full content provided in the original text. The topics exemplified could be adapted to all levels, except for the idiomatic expressions, which might require higher proficiency to express irony or a play on words. The relevance of these cultural aspects become even more evident when dealing with interlinguistic mediation, which could also be encouraged to be used in the classrooms in an attempt to emphasize the usefulness of linguistic mediation on a daily basis.

Regarding the material, it can be concluded that nearly in its entirety, teachers include authentic material to design their mediation tasks. The most common type of resources could be directly connected to the most frequent kinds of mediation tasks, for instance, articles, leaflets and images, or infographics are prone to designing activities where students would have to relay specific information or process the text. On the other hand, conferences and literary texts are minimally used resources, and it harmonizes with the reluctance of using tasks involving note-taking, expressing personal response to creative texts, and analysis and criticism of creative texts. A possible explanation of the limited use of some material could be explained by the lack of knowledge on how to make use of these resources or because of the lack of bibliographic material, and it could be solved by creating a bank of resources or specific books/magazines where teachers could get inspired.

All the aforementioned issues regarding the limitations created by the instructions, the variety of tasks, the lack of materials and the lack of training is reflected in the teachers' opinion that the most difficult aspects are fundamentally confined to the designing of tasks (64%), including designing (42%) and variety of

activities (22%), and to a lesser degree, assessment (16%). Furthermore, these two aspects coincide exactly with what the teachers demand for their training: creating tasks (29%), assessment (26%) and resource bank (11%). Teachers also agree that when creating a task, certain ideas must be taken into consideration beforehand: task objective, usefulness of the task in the students' real life and students' level.

This study has found that generally students consider mediation as a useful language activity which could be applied into their real life, although some of them cannot conceive that mediation would be considered a novelty, as they have previously been practising these kind of tasks at the school but without being aware of the process; therefore, as they see it, it could be stated that a label has been applied to what they have been taught before. In this same line, it should be highlighted that most students provide teachers with a positive feedback after a mediation task, but there is not a broad uniformity in the kind of tasks they consider more positive or negative; for instance, when asked about positive feedback, the highest percentage is 19 and corresponds to 'summarising and explaining', whereas when asked about negative feedback, the same category represents the highest percentage (12%). It can be concluded that the positive or negative feedback for the task depends on other aspects apart from the kind of task, such as the objectives, the direct line, the topic, the application in real life or the resources being employed in the concrete task.

6. CONCLUSIONS: LIMITATIONS AND LINES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The main objective of this study was to map out the methodological strategies implemented to teach mediation at the OLSs. In order to cover this general objective, five subgroups were formed and there were seventeen questions covering the subgroups through a detailed questionnaire distributed to teachers working at the OLSs in Andalusia. Once the questionnaires were filled in, the results were extracted and analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively, using software for qualitative analysis of large bodies of textual data and also to make statistical analysis.

Focusing on the main objective, an important implication that can be derived from this study is that teachers are facing this new language activity from different angles but with common objectives. The general methodological trends are similar, and some general implications can be inferred, but the specific applications in class depend on each teacher, such as frequency, combination of languages activities, frequency of oral and written or intralinguistic and extralinguistic mediation tasks. Moreover, the concepts of mediation types, strategies and kinds of tasks need to be clarified in order to have a consistency when teaching students what they are expected to achieve and how to enhance their communicative competence through linguistic mediation. On their part, most students recognize the usefulness of this language activity, although they do not have a common opinion of the most effective tasks for them. It could be inferred that this convenience depends on the kind of tasks and concrete examples introduced by the teacher. The usefulness of the tasks is one of the aspects teachers agree to take into consideration before designing a task, apart from the objective and students' level. Additionally, teachers mostly consider they need training on designing tasks.

The results have also revealed that teachers tend to include cultural aspects, which have been defined as key when dealing with mediation tasks, mainly those connected to traditions, either cultural aspects of L1 or L2. It could be assumed that, given enough time, the diversity of approaches to teach linguistic mediation will slowly get weeded out, and these approaches will be far more standardised for the sake of improving the teaching learning process in our multilingual society.

6.1. Limitations of the study

The main inconvenience found while conducting this study was the Covid-19 sanitary crisis and the consequent lockdown of our institutions, as the contact with schools has been difficult to maintain. After sending the e-mail to the directing boards once the lockdown had already been imposed, some colleagues assured that they had not received any communication from their director about the questionnaire. It is possible that, due to these circumstances, all teachers in the community have not received the precise information and in due time to fill in the questionnaire. Consequently, the size of the sample has not been as large as it was intended at the beginning of the study.

The fact that linguistic mediation has recently been implemented as a language activity at OLSs turns this study into the only one carried out so far and will serve as a base for future studies. However, this innovative research suffers from drawbacks, as there are no previous studies about this language activity in the context and there is not much accumulated background in the teaching toolbox.

Linked to the latter, this study only covered last school year, and it would be required to observe the evolution of trends to put together an accurate balanced picture of the methodological guidelines after specifically teaching and assessing this language activity; consequently, transforming it into a longitudinal research rather than a cross-sectional one.

Finally, the study factored in some methodological triangulation, but it was not possible to be carried out. Apart from questionnaires, group interviews were planned with some teachers to complement and enrich their responses to questionnaires, but the sanitary crisis has hindered their execution. Additionally, classroom observation could have also been made and would have provided straightforward facts about students' perspectives.

6.2. Lines for future research

In line with the foregoing, and focusing on the descriptive approach of methodologies, it would definitely be meaningful to include more types of triangulation through the use of diverse data collection procedures, for instance, classroom observation to observe behavioural patterns to sustain the theory,

questionnaires similar to the one distributed, and group interviews to gain more information from teachers and their actual methodological guidelines, and be able to contrast the results from the interviews with more quantifiable data.

What is more, it would be particularly interesting to work with a more numerically representative sample, and even extend the research to students, as they are directly involved in the teaching-learning process. At this point, tests could be included as a data collection procedure in order to corroborate or reject the methodological effectiveness depending on the assessment results. Besides, a students' control group could also be formed with the idea of teaching mediation following classical guidelines, while the experimental group could be using more recent methodological trends, and, the application of pre-tests and post-tests, after a considerable amount of time, would allow us to reach a conclusion on the effectiveness of the methods. With the assessment data obtained from the control and the experimental groups, diverse statistical techniques, such as ANOVA and T-Test, could be implemented to establish the existence of crucial differences between the groups, and undertake a quantitative analysis together with a qualitative one, which could be based on the data obtained through class observation or questionnaires.

Thanks to the novelty of this line of research in the Spanish context, many projects could be based on linguistic mediation. So far intralinguistic mediation is predominant because of the government suggestions for the exams, but a research project exploring the nature of interlinguistic mediation would be highly advisable to promote multilingualism, and prove students that mediation is undoubtedly part of their daily life. As aforementioned, the same procedure could be undertaken with the same stakeholders (teachers and students), different data collection procedure, as well as diverse statistical techniques to carry out a mixed-analysis.

So far there has not been a distinction between language levels, and it is necessary to include as a future line of research the actual difference of mediation tasks across proficiency levels and the expected answer produced by candidates of different levels. This would be necessary to standardise objective evaluation criteria, so that they do not radically differ among teachers, and to give some ideas to students of what they are reasonably required to perform at different levels with examples.

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8. APPENDIX

8.1. Questionnaire

25/9/2020

Mediación lingüística

Mediación lingüística

Esta encuesta sobre mediación lingüística va a ser utilizada para un trabajo final de máster, agradezco mucho tu colaboración. Tus datos no van a ser publicados. La encuesta estará disponible hasta el 20 de abril.

***Obligatorio**

1. Dirección de correo electrónico *

2. 1. ¿Qué idioma(s) impartes? *

Selecciona todos los que correspondan.

- ☐ alemán
- ☐ español
- ☐ francés
- ☐ inglés
- ☐ italiano
- ☐ otros

3. 2. ¿Qué entiendes por mediación lingüística? *

4. 3. ¿Qué tipos de mediación lingüística puedes distinguir? *

5. 4. Indica con qué regularidad estás trabajando específicamente esta actividad de lengua en clase. *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- ☐ en todas las clases
- ☐ una vez a la semana
- ☐ una vez cada dos semanas
- ☐ una vez al mes
- ☐ con menos frecuencia

6. 5. ¿Qué tiempo dedicas a tareas de mediación escrita y oral, respectivamente? Indica el porcentaje teniendo en cuenta únicamente esta actividad de lengua. *

Marca solo un óvalo por fila.

	100%-80%	80%-60%	60%-40%	40%-20%	Menos de 20%	Nunca
Mediación escrita	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mediación oral	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. 6. Cuando trabajas la mediación escrita, ¿qué otra(s) actividad(es) de lengua incluyes en el proceso? *

Selecciona todos los que correspondan.

	Siempre	Casi siempre	Normalmente	A veces	Nunca
Comprensión de textos escritos	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Comprensión de textos orales	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Producción de textos escritos	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Producción de textos orales	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Coproducción de textos orales	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Coproducción de textos escritos	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. 7. Indica si has realizado las siguientes actividades para trabajar la actividad de mediación escrita incluyendo la asiduidad con la que las pones en práctica. *

Marca solo un óvalo por fila.

	100%-80%	80%-60%	60%-40%	40%-20%	Menos de 20%	Nunca
Transmitir información específica	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Explicar datos (gráficos, diagramas, cuadros)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Resumir/recapitular de diferentes fuentes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ampliar información sobre conceptos complejos para hacerlos comprensibles	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Traducir	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tomar notas (conferencias, reuniones...)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Expresar una respuesta personal a textos creativos, incluidos los literarios	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Analizar y criticar textos creativos (incluidos literarios)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Facilitar el entendimiento intercultural entre diferentes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Adaptar el lenguaje al destinatario	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. 8. ¿Sueles incluir aspectos culturales en las tareas de mediación? *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- ☐ Siempre
- ☐ Normalmente
- ☐ A veces
- ☐ Casi nunca
- ☐ Nunca

10. 9. ¿Podrías poner algún ejemplo de tarea de mediación en la que sea necesario realizar adaptación cultural? En caso de haber realizado la tarea, indica el nivel(es) con el/los que la pusiste en práctica. *

11. 10. Centrándonos en las lenguas que intervienen en el proceso, indica la combinación que sueles emplear. *

Marca solo un óvalo por fila.

	100%-80%	80%-60%	60%-40%	40%-20%	Menos de 20%	Nunca
Intralingüística (L2-L2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Interlingüística (L1-L2 / L2-L1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. 11. Menciona una actividad que hayas realizado en clase y tras la que hayas visto una respuesta muy positiva por parte el alumnado, indica el motivo. *

13. 12. Menciona una actividad que hayas realizado en clase, pero pienses que no ha sido nada provechosa y el motivo. *

14. 13. ¿Cuál de los siguiente aspectos consideras que es más complicado a la hora de trabajar la mediación escrita? *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- ☐ Buscar material apropiado para elaborar la actividad
- ☐ Diseñar la actividad
- ☐ Intentar abarcar una variedad de actividades, que no sea un proceso repetitivo.
- ☐ Evaluar
- ☐ Adecuar el material y la actividad al nivel que se imparte.

15. 14. ¿Cuál crees que es la valoración del alumnado respecto a esta nueva actividad de lengua? *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- ☐ Muy útil porque puedo trasladarla a mi realidad.
- ☐ Es útil, pero no es una actividad novedosa, ya que hemos realizado actividades similares en cursos anteriores.
- ☐ No es útil porque no me veo en situaciones similares en mi vida real.

16. 15. ¿Qué aspecto(s) destacarías que se debe(n) tener en cuenta al diseñar una actividad de mediación? *

17. 16. ¿Utilizas material auténtico cuando creas tus actividades de mediación? Incluye algún ejemplo. *

18. 17. ¿Crees que necesitas formación específica en mediación? ¿Qué aspectos incluirías en esta formación? *
