COMPLEMENTING THE CEFR: Developing Objective Criteria to Assess Interlingual Mediation Competence

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This presentation:

- deals with an unexplored area of applied linguistics, that of cross-language mediation
- reports on findings of a longitudinal research project which explored the complex nature of interlinguistic mediation
- suggests a framework for the development of mediation-specific can-do statements
Research aim

• to acquire an understanding of the mechanisms of cross-language mediation in a testing context
• to investigate what strategies lead to successful mediation performance
Motivation for the research

- Despite the fact that the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001) has put mediation forward as an important aspect of language users’ proficiency, it provides **no illustrative descriptors**

- broader need to contribute towards a multilingual approach to language teaching and testing
Motivation for the research

Mediation

Intercomprehension

Translanguaging

Metrolingualism

Cross-languaging

Code-meshing

polylanguaging
Motivation for the research

Contemporary multilingual contexts:

- Unavoidable mixing/ fusion of languages
- Speakers are continuously called upon to act as interlingual mediators

▶ what **skills** and **strategies** somebody needs to be able to mediate effectively in these contexts?
What is cross language mediation? (1)

- is a form of **translanguaging**: Translanguaging makes it clear that there are no clear-cut boundaries between the languages employed (Stathopoulou, 2013)

  - Involves **interplay** of languages
  - Involves a 'hybrid practice of languaging‘ (Garcia, 2011)
What is cross language mediation? (2)

- a social activity

- Its products cannot be seen in isolation from the situation in which they are produced.
- Mediators employ knowledge they have developed through social experience (i.e., their knowledge of discourse conventions & their socio-cognitive knowledge of language’s possible effect on an audience).
What does the process of mediation involve?

- extraction of information from a source text in one language and relaying it in another language for a given communicative purpose.
- Interpretation of meanings articulated in source texts & making of new meanings in the target language expressed appropriately for the context of situation (Dendrinos, 2006).
Mediation in the Greek national foreign language exams (KPG): an innovation

The mingling-of-languages idea

Monolingual testing → Multilingual testing
Η "Γαλάζια Σημαία", σύμβολο ποιότητας σε περίπου 40 χώρες σήμερα απονέμεται με αυστηρά κριτήρια σε οργανωμένες ακτές και μαρίνες που διαχειρίζονται παράκτιοι Δήμοι, ξενοδόχοι και άλλοι φορείς. Το 2008 η Ελλάδα έχει 430 βραβευμένες ακτές και 8 μαρίνες που κέρδισαν τη "Γαλάζια Σημαία".

ΚΡΙΤΗΡΙΑ ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΑΠΟΝΟΜΗ ΤΗΣ "ΓΑΛΑΖΙΑΣ ΣΗΜΑΙΑΣ"

Περιβαλλοντική εκπαίδευση και πληροφόρηση
• Πληροφορίες για το παράκτιο οικοσύστημα και το ευαίσθητο φυσικό περιβάλλον στον παράκτιο χώρο.
• Πληροφορίες για το Διεθνές Πρόγραμμα «Γαλάζιες Σημαίες» στον Πίνακα Ανακοινώσεων της ακτής.
• Έντυπες πληροφορίες και αναρτημένες οδηγίες συμπεριφοράς για την ακτή.
• Δραστηριότητες που να προβάλουν ενεργά τη προστασία του φυσικού περιβάλλοντος της ακτής.

Ποιότητα νερών κολύμβησης
• Ποιότητα των νερών κολύμβησης, που να επιβεβαιώνεται με δειγματοληπτικές μετρήσεις.

Περιβαλλοντική Διαχείριση
• Περιοδικός καθαρισμός ακτής από σκουπίδια, αποτσίγαρα κλπ.
What does the ability to mediate involve?

- Linguistic competence in L1 & L2 - Ability to use the competences and skills in both Ls
- Ability to move between Ls, select messages, convey them appropriately & use different types of mediation strategies
Context of the research

• The Greek national foreign language examinations leading to the state certificate of language proficiency (KPG)
• assess the knowledge of the candidates in 6 different languages
  o 4 modules
  o (common) specifications and descriptors based on the 6 level CEFR scale of language competence
  o the innovative use of Greek to assess specific competences (across languages)
Research organisation & outcomes

**STAGE 1**
- **Task analysis**
  - (KPG Task Database)
  - Typology of written mediation tasks

**STAGE 2**
- **Textual analysis**
  - (KPG English Corpus)
  - Inventory of written mediation strategies (IWMS)

- How do mediation test tasks differ across proficiency levels?
- Which mediation strategies lead to successful mediation performance?
Towards model development

**Phase 1**
- Analysis of **53** B2 level scripts
- Conceptualization & generation of categories

**Phase 2**
- Analysis of **600** B1, B2 & C1 scripts
- Evaluation & refinement of categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B1</th>
<th>B2</th>
<th>C1</th>
<th>No of words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.950</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>9.000</td>
<td>18.000</td>
<td>18.000</td>
<td>45.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL NUMBER</strong></td>
<td>9.000</td>
<td>25.950</td>
<td>18.000</td>
<td><strong>52.950</strong></td>
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</table>
The model: what mediation involves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE A MEDIATION STRATEGIES</th>
<th>TYPE B MEDIATION STRATEGIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Creative blending between extracted and extra-textual information</td>
<td>3b Summarising the whole text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1a text level (NOT required by the task)</td>
<td>3b1 sentence level: sentence inserted transferring the gist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b text level (required by the task)</td>
<td>3b2 text level: main ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1c sentence level (NOT required by the task)</td>
<td>3b3 text level: main ideas + extracted concluding statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1d sentence level (required by the task)</td>
<td>3b4 text level: main ideas + inserted concluding statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Combining information</td>
<td>3b5 text level: topic sentence extracted + main ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a text level</td>
<td>3b6 text level: topic sentence extracted + main ideas + extracted concluding statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b sentence level</td>
<td>3b7 text level: topic sentence extracted + main ideas + inserted concluding statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Summarising</td>
<td>3b8 text level: topic sentence inserted + main ideas + inserted concluding statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a Summarising part of the text</td>
<td>3b9 text level: topic sentence inserted + main ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a1 sentence level: sentence extracted transferring the gist</td>
<td>4 Reorganising extracted information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a2 text level: main ideas</td>
<td>4a text level (paragraphs, sentences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a3 text level: main ideas + extracted concluding-general statement</td>
<td>4b sentence level (clauses, words)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a4 text level: main ideas + inserted concluding-general statement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a5 text level: sentence inserted transferring the gist &amp; inserted concluding-general statement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a6 text level: sentence inserted transferring the gist + extracted concluding statement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a7 text level: topic sentence extracted + main ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a8 text level: topic sentence extracted + main ideas + inserted concluding statement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a9 text level: topic sentence inserted + main ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a10 text level: topic sentence inserted + main ideas + extracted concluding statement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a11 text level: topic sentence inserted + main ideas + inserted concluding statement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Reorganising extracted information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a text level (paragraphs, sentences)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4b sentence level (clauses, words)</td>
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</table>

5 Condensing (at sentence level) by combining two (or more) short sentences into one (sentence fusion)
6 Expanding
5a Breaking one sentence into two (or more) simpler ones
6b Piece of information followed/preceded transferring the gist
6c Piece of information followed/preceded transferring the same meaning
7 Paraphrasing
7a Syntax-level paraphrasing (including lexico-syntactic paraphrasing)
7b Syntax-level paraphrasing (transforming bullets into continuous text)
7c Phrase-level paraphrasing
7d Word-level paraphrasing
Quantitative & qualitative analysis

• To what extent do task parameters and requirements affect written mediation-strategy use?

• Which strategies (and to what extent) differentiate successful from less successful mediation scripts?

• Which strategies (and to what extent) differentiate scripts of different proficiency levels?

• To what extent does the linguistic realisation of mediation strategies in low level mediation scripts differ from the linguistic realisation of the strategies traced in high level scripts?
  - logico-semantic relations holding between clauses through which certain mediation strategies are realized
  - lexico-grammatical patterns which differentiate syntax, phrase and word-level paraphrasing
Contribution & usefulness of the study

The study constitutes a starting point for the development of descriptors and the creation of standardized measures for reliable assessment of mediation competence.

- mediation strategies needed for learners of different levels when being involved in different mediation tasks
- the language to be used by learners at each proficiency level (Stathopoulou, 2013a, 2013b)
Towards the development of can-dos: What to consider

- The mediation strategy and task interdependence finding: mediation performance is context and task specific

necessity for the development of levelled mediation-specific descriptors, taking into account both task requirements and actual performance
Complementing the CEFR: A suggestion...

The resulting descriptors should **specify**

a) what language users of specific levels should be able to do,

b) through what language to do it and

c) in which types of mediation tasks.

should be **articulated as**

task-dependent communicative production
What’s next?

Lexicogrammatical description of mediators' language production through the use of computational tools will contribute to the creation of language-specific descriptors, which will add grammatical and lexical details of the target language to CEFR’s functional characterisation of the different levels (Hawkins and Filipović, 2012: 5), offering linguistic, semantic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic criteria.
Why is it important to have can-do statements for mediation?

- absent from the CEFR and other international curriculum documents
- They will inform the development of language courses, test materials, syllabi and language studies curricula aiming at the development of learners’ mediation skills and multilingual competence
Usefulness of the study in the Greek context

So far, certain results have been creatively exploited for the grading of **illustrative descriptors** relevant to mediation in the new *Greek Curriculum for Foreign Languages*, which among other things, demonstrates what learners of different levels are expected to do when mediating

[http://rcel.enl.uoa.gr/xenesglosses/]
TRANSLANGUAGING AND CROSS-LANGUAGE MEDIATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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