The Evaluation of Linguistic and Cultural Mediation from Greek to Spanish and Italian

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Abstract   Although EU policies promote multilingualism, language education and assessment largely remain monolingual. The KPG exam suite is a notable exception, incorporating cross-linguistic mediation as a key construct in six languages. This study analyses how mediation is operationalised in B and C level writing and speaking tests and examines Spanish and Italian B-level tasks for consistency across languages and levels. Findings indicate clear differentiation by proficiency level, supporting construct validity, while target language had no differentiating effect.

Keywords   Multilingualism. Multilingual assessment. Glocal testing. Cross-linguistic mediation. Written production.

1   Introduction

The processes of globalization, as they have been developing in recent years on economic, social, and cultural levels, combined with rapid technological advancements, have imposed new realities, including in the field of foreign language teaching. This new reality has highlighted the need for more flexible and pluralistic linguistic skills that challenge the monolingual ethos, in a world where, anyway, monolingualism tends to be the exception rather than the rule (see Calvet 2001) and plurilingualism has become the new norm for linguistic and sociolinguistic analysis (May 2013, 1).

1.1   The Plurilingual Approach

A distinction must be made between multilingualism and plurilingualism. Multilingualism refers to the coexistence of multiple languages within a given society or territory, whereas plurilingualism describes an individual's capacity to mobilise and combine the languages in their repertoires flexibly depending on context (Council of Europe 2001; 2020). Throughout this paper we therefore use the term "plurilingual approach" to underline our focus on learners as social agents who draw on their full linguistic resources when performing mediation task

In this context, the plurilingual approach provides a framework that "values cultural and linguistic diversity at the individual level" (Council of Europe 2001, 160). Unlike the traditional notion of multilingualism, it "refers to an individual's ability to use all their linguistic resources flexibly, creatively, and effectively depending on communicative circumstances" (Stamou 2022, 57), assuming a broad communicative competence "to which the entire linguistic knowledge and experience contribute, and in which languages are interrelated and interact" (Council of Europe 2001, 1.3). This perception challenges the traditional goal of the idealized native speaker as a reference point for the competence of a foreign language user, replacing it with that of the multilingual language user.

On the other hand, the awareness of linguistic and, consequently, cultural diversity by the language user – since the concept of plurilingualism can only be understood within the broader framework of pluriculturalism – contributes to the simultaneous development of intercultural competence.

1.2 Mediation Competence

In this framework, linguistic mediation becomes a powerful tool for promoting plurilingual competence and its concomitant pluricultural competence, while also providing fertile ground for the development of intercultural skills.

Linguistic mediation is understood as a social practice of communicative intervention (Dendrinos 2006), through which communication is facilitated between individuals who, in the absence of mediation, would not be able to communicate directly due to linguistic and cultural barriers. In mediation activities, the mediator is called to act as an intermediary between interlocutors who cannot understand each other, facilitating access to certain information in an original text (spoken, written, or multimodal), sometimes between languages (interlingual mediation), other times within the same language, either between different modalities (e.g., from spoken to sign language or vice versa) in intermodal communication, or between different varieties of the same language (intralingual mediation).

1.3 Close to Real Life

The achievement of mediation activities is reinforced by the fact that it is a natural process for real-life communication outside the classroom, thus belonging to those activities that are performed in the real world. Indeed, as plurilingual speakers, we are often compelled to act as mediators between two parties in our everyday interactions. In fact, this is what we do when it is necessary to clarify, interpret a message, summarize a text, or simply make information accessible that a friend, colleague, or relative cannot understand.

Therefore, mediation activities, which (re)process an existing text, hold a significant place in the smooth linguistic operation of our societies (Council of Europe 2001, 2.1.3.) and for this reason promote communicative teaching and are considered essential for the pedagogical practice (Beacco et al. 2016, 53), as they are involved in the acquisition and construction of knowledge.

2 Mediation in the CEFR

Mediation is a relatively new term in the field of foreign language education: it began to be recognized in 2001 with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe 2001), which introduced a descriptive system of communicative language activities and strategies that replaced the traditional model of the four skills (listening and reading comprehension,

speaking, and writing). Activities are organized around four modes of communication: reception, production, interaction and mediation.

Thus, mediation is explicitly mentioned for the first time as one of the four basic communicative activities for teaching, learning and assessing a foreign language.

However, despite the fact that the CEFR lays the groundwork for the concept of linguistic mediation as a communicative activity, its first reference does not sufficiently clarify the term and "makes the boundaries between mediation and translation-interpretation quite blurry" (Dendrinos, Stathopoulou 2013, 142).

This gap was addressed by the new version of the CEFR, entitled *CEFR Companion Volume* (2020), aimed at describing aspects not in*corpora*ted in the 2001 edition, deepening the concept of mediation and offering a more nuanced perspective by interpreting it as "any process, organisation, or action aimed at reducing the distance between two (or more) poles of difference" (Coste, Cavalli 2015).

At the same time, the CEFR provides validated and scaled descriptive indicators for mediation (the development of which was the largest and most complex part of the work), identifying what is expected from a learner at each level of language proficiency. Specifically, it includes 19 scales of indicative descriptors for mediation activities and five scales for mediation strategies.

The CEFR emphasizes the role of the learner as a social agent, a fact evident in the definition of mediation:

> In mediation, the user/learner acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps in the construction or transmission of meaning [...] The focus is on the role of language in processes such as creating the space and conditions for communication and/ or learning, collaborating in the construction of new meaning, encouraging others to construct or understand new meaning, and transferring new information in an appropriate form (Council of Europe, 2020, section 3.4).

From this definition, it can be inferred that mediation operates in three areas, reflecting the three distinct types of mediation with their characteristics, as shown in Table 1:

1. Text Mediation (informational): Providing new information.
2. Concept Mediation (collaborative): Managing and participating in the construction of new meanings and knowledge.
3. Communication Mediation (social): Facilitating communication and mutual understanding.

Table 1 The Three Types of Mediation According to the CEFR (2020). Adapted from Sánchez Cuadrado 2022, 17-18

TEXT MEDIATION	CONCEPT MEDIATION	COMMUNICATION MEDIATION
TEXTUAL / INFORMATIONAL	KNOWLEDGE / COLLABORATIVE	SOCIAL / COMMUNICATIVE
FOR OTHERS	WITH OTHERS	BETWEEN OTHERS
Facilitates access to information	Facilitates the construction of knowledge	Facilitates communication between individuals

These three distinct aspects of mediation align with the action-oriented approach adopted by the CEFR, which is connected to Halliday's view of language as a dynamic system of meanings, realized through specific choices in the lexicogrammatical system of the language (Lykou 2000). Halliday's three functions (1975) – representational, interpersonal, textual – permeate the various uses of language and are concretized in the three types of mediation **[tab. 2]**.

Table 2 Halliday's Functions in the Three Types of Mediation. Adapted from Table 3 – Macro-functional Basis of the CEFR Categories for Communicative Language Activities

	Mediation	Functions
Use of creative, interpersonal language	Communicative Mediation	Representational interpersonaltextual
Use of transactional language	Textual Mediation	Representational interpersonaltextual
Use of language for evaluation and problem	Concept Mediation	Representational interpersonaltextual

As North and Piccardo (2016, 15) note, what is evident is the interaction between the individual and social dimensions of mediation, which reflects Halliday's distinction between the representational and interpersonal functions of language, thus highlighting the fundamental distinction between language as a representation of thought and as a tool for communication.

In conclusion, mediation activities are carried out by social agents within a communicative context, taking into account the conventions and constraints imposed by that context.

Recent empirical work has increasingly addressed the assessment of mediation competence. Stathopoulou (2014; 2016; 2019) provides quantitative data on written mediation in the English KPG exams, while Kohler (2015) presents classroom-based evidence from German and Italian that foregrounds the teacher's role as mediator. Shohamy

(2011) and Canagarajah (2012) advocate assessment models that recognise translingual practices, emphasising construct validity beyond monolingual norms. Their findings collectively stress the need for test designs that capture both language-specific and cross-linguistic dimensions of mediation – an issue this study tackles for Italian and Spanish.

3 The Evaluation of Mediation Competence

The evaluation of mediation has only recently begun to be introduced into the field of language education. A representative example of evaluating mediation in Greece is the State Certificate of Language Proficiency (SCLP) exams, which, from their inception in 2003, in*corpora*ted interlingual mediation activities in both spoken and written forms. Starting with a Greek text, candidates are expected to act as mediators, simultaneously performing a series of functions, namely:
- Adapting to the needs of the message recipient and the communicative context
- Understanding a wide range of linguistic, expressive, sociocultural, and pragmatic elements
- Negotiating meaning with mutual understanding
- Interacting and simultaneously producing a new message.

In short, it is a threefold process that consists of:
1. Selecting appropriate information from a source text
2. Constructing new meaning

Transforming the source text into another, adapting it to the communicative context and using the appropriate techniques (explanation, reformulation, paraphrasing, summarization).

The evaluation of mediation competence represents a significant challenge for certification system organizers as well as for examiners tasked with assessing this relatively new skill. Therefore, there is a need to ensure the validity and reliability of measurement instruments in general and of tests that include mediation in particular.

Certification systems that assess candidates' mediation competence help address a problem, as expressed by McNamara and Shohamy (2016), namely, that language proficiency certification exams tend to be considered outdated unless they are adapted to the needs of our globalized world.

Although numerous studies have been conducted focusing on validity and reliability issues of the KPG exam system, most of these studies (see for example Karavas, Mitsikopoulou 2019) are limited to the English exam. Stathopoulou (2009; 2014; 2016), a

member of the Research Centre for Language Teaching, Testing and Assessment of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (responsible for the development of the exams in English), has carried out extensive and substantial research on written mediation tasks of the English exam. Despite the proliferation of research focusing on the English exam, no studies have been conducted involving all languages tested in the system. One of purposes of this paper, as mentioned in the introduction, is to present the results of an analysis of written mediation tasks across Spanish and Italian language. More specifically, members of the CEB responsible for the Italian and Spanish exams decided to conduct a cross-language analysis of cross linguistic mediation tasks of the B-level writing production exam. The purpose of this analysis was to investigate the extent to which the aforementioned languages follow the mediation task specifications, to identify whether and to what extent mediation tasks differ at B1 and B2 levels and to confirm whether and to what extent there is consistency in the assessment of written mediation tasks across exam periods. The analysis was focused on the B-level written exam since this is by far the most popular level chosen by candidates since the first administration of the KPG exams.

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. To what extent do the mediation tasks in Spanish and Italian conform to the same design specifications?
2. Do the tasks demonstrate level-specific differentiation between B1 and B2?
3. Is there consistency in the linguistic and communicative features of mediation tasks across examination sessions?

4 Research Methodology

For the purpose of this study, the team initially analysed 98 written mediation tasks, used in 12 examination periods (2014-19) for the Spanish and Italian language ability assessment of the written production. The descriptive analysis of the written mediation tasks focused on the following variables: These variables were chosen because they operationalise the CEFR mediation descriptors and the KPG specifications (NKUA, AUTH 2016), capturing both functional (communicative acts, roles) and formal (text type, topic) dimensions needed for a cross-language comparison.

- Language
- Examination period
- Source text topic
- Source text type
- B1 Expected text type
- B2 expected text type

- B1 communicative act(s)
- B2 communicative act (s)
- Transmitter's role
- Receiver's role

The following stage concerned the construct validity of the variables set and the representation quality control of each variable, with the exploratory method of Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA). This method permits the association between two or more categorical variables in order to explore the relations between them, presenting them in a multiple contingency table.[1] It also indicates the contribution of each variable and sample unit (in this case the mediation task of each language) to the profile representation of the phenomenon of interest (Franco 2015). One of the main indicators of variables' quality representation is the inertia, which is the "weighted sum of squared distances of a set of points to their centroid" (Greenacre 2007, 265). The inertia indicates, in effect, the amount of variance in a data set.

The pilot application of the MCA method revealed a low contribution of the first two examination periods (May 2014 and November 2014) to the mediation tasks profile. This could be due to the change of the KPG system specifications from 2015 onwards, when it was decided that all languages use the same source mediation text for the mediation task. For this reason, these two periods were not included in the sample. The pilot study also specified the contribution of each variable to the tasks profile composition, through their representation quality. This procedure showed a zero or low contribution of some communicative acts and more precisely the communicative acts of "present, persuade, suggest, advise" and "narrate, promote, request, wish, compare, express opinion". In the case of the first group, this fact could be explained by their observed similar function with other communicative acts of the variables set and in the case of the second, by their low frequency of occurrence (lower than 10% of "yes" value, representing the existence of the relative act, as these variables are binary "yes" – "no").

In order to explore the associations between variables across languages, the MCA method was used with the CHIC Analysis V1.1 software (Markos, Menexes, Papadimitriou 2010). This method allows the exploitation of the intrinsic structure of the research data, bringing to the surface the most important associations, without a priori hypotheses or assumptions. The results of this analysis are presented in simple lower-dimensional displays (in this case two), indicating the similarity between the values of the categorical values,

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1 Franco 2015; Greenacre 2007; Greenacre; Blasius 2006; Husson, Josse 2014.

according to their proximity (Husson, Josse, 2014). In particular, MCA aims at the assessment of the relationships between the variables and the delineation of the statistical units (in this case, of the mediation tasks) using the most characteristic values. As a result, a typology of the statistical units according to their similarities is developed.

5 Results

According to the findings of the data analysis conducted, the target language does not seem to be a differentiation factor of the mediation tasks. This fact leads to the conclusion that the task developers of KPG's different languages have the same perceptions about the characteristics of the mediation tasks and the common texts they use delimits their choices.

The communicative acts[2] that candidates are expected to fulfil in their mediation text (as stated in the task instructions) across languages indicate a common tendency, focusing on five processes: explain, argue, inform, invite and describe [tab. 3]. The act of informing presents the highest frequency of all (42), representing the 38.2% of all the communicative acts of the sample. The act of "explaining" is also relatively high (19.1% – 21), which is near the percentage of the act "argue". Lower but significant percentages were also identified for the acts of inviting (9,2%) and describing (5.4%). This seems to be expected since the CEFR includes mainly the acts of explaining, arguing, informing (reporting) and describing in the written mediation descriptors of B1 and B2 levels. The act of inviting appears in B1 and B2 CEFR descriptors with a different meaning (e.g., invite someone to speak) and not with the one we find it in KPGs mediation tasks (invite someone to somewhere). The limited presence of it seems to tend to represent the B1 – level and to equilibrate possible higher observed difficulty in the pilot study of the tasks.

An important point worth noting is the restricted presence of the act 'describe' which appears to be crucial for the B-levels. The exploratory analysis though indicated a connection between the acts *inform* and *describe*, which could mean a semantic overlap in practice. In this way, the process of describing seems to be examined in combination with informing. It is also interesting to point out the presence of some acts in the tasks of a particular language, such as the act of *requesting* in Italian and the one of *suggesting* in Spanish. This could be perceived as a differentiation, which does not create

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2 We can see all the communicative acts initially included in the survey, in order to indicate the tendency to the use of the first five (5) in the different language tasks [tab. 1].

a tendency though, as indicated by the exploratory analysis of the relative data that follows.

Table 3 Communicative acts* languages crosstabulation

		Explain	Argue	Inform	Invite	Describe	Suggest	Request	Compare	Wish	Express opinion
Italian	Count	9	5	13	1	3	1	3	1	1	2
	Row N %	42.9%	29.4%	31%	10%	50%	16.7%	75%	100%	100%	100%
Spanish	Count	3	5	7	4	1	3	1	0	0	0
	Row N %	14.3%	29.4%	16.7%	40%	16.7%	50%	25%	0%	0%	0%
Total	Count	21	17	42	10	6	6	4	1	1	2
	Table N %	19.1%	15.5%	38.2%	9.2%	5.4%	5.4%	3,6%	0.9%	0.9%	1.8%
	Row N %	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The crosstabulation between source text type and target text type across languages **[tab. 4]** indicated a common tendency between the mediation tasks of the different languages. More precisely, the source text types revealed by the analysis were two, the article and the information leaflet. The expected text types to be produced by candidates were mainly articles and email messages since the frequency of the article, as target text type, is 20 (37%) and the one of the email 24 (42.9%). The cumulative relative frequency of the target text types is almost 80%, which means that 80% of the target text types across different language's mediation tasks is composed by articles and email messages. A relatively high frequency of the blog post as target text type, in Spanish (4) is noticed, but they constitute differentiations concerning the specific languages, which cannot affect the general pattern.

The information leaflet, as source text type, appears to be associated with the email message, as target text type. The email's frequency is 10, which constitutes 41.7% of the target text types across languages. The brochure and the article (5 and 4 respectively), also appear with relatively high frequency but they do not appear in all language tasks. We could claim that probably this indicates a distinction between languages, but the high frequency of the email message permits the conclusion there is a common practice across different languages.

Table 4 Source text type* target text type across languages crosstabulation

						Language		
						Italian	Spanish	Total
Source Text type	Article	Target Text type	Announcement		Count	1	0	1
					Column N %	100%	0%	100%
			Article		Count	6	2	20
					Column N %	30%	10%	100%
			Blog post		Count	1	4	6
					Column N %	16.7%	66.7%	100%
			Email message		Count	6	7	24
					Column N %	25%	29.2%	100%
			Information leaflet		Count	0	0	3
					Column N %	0%	0%	100%
			Professional letter		Count	0	1	2
					Column N %	0%	50%	100%
			Total		Count	14	14	56
	Information leaflet		Article		Count	1	0	4
					Column N %	25%	0%	100%
			Blog post		Count	1	1	3
					Column N %	33.3%	33.3%	100%
			Brochure		Count	2	2	5
					Column N %	40%	40%	100%
			Email message		Count	1	3	10
					Column N %	10%	30%	100%
			Personal letter		Count	1	0	1
					Column N %	100%	0%	100%
			Professional letter		Count	0	0	1
					Column N %	0%	0%	100%
			Total		Count	6	6	24

Regarding the differentiation of the mediation tasks across proficiency levels, the descriptive analysis demonstrated a clear progression from B1 to B2 level [tab. 5]. In particular, in most of the cases of the B1 mediation tasks an email message is required (85% of the B1 level tasks). Other text types, such as announcement, blog post, information leaflet and personal letter appeared in the B1 level mediation tasks to a very limited extent and their presence does not seem to contribute significantly to the profile of the B1 level mediation tasks. The most frequent text type of B2 level mediation tasks required is the article (60% within B2 level) but the presence of blog post (17.5%) and brochure (12.5%) also appears significant. Generally speaking, it seems that the expected text type at B1 level is the email message and at B2 level mainly the article.

Table 5 Target text type* language level crosstabulation

| | | Level | | | | | | | | Total | | | |
| | | B1 | | | | B2 | | | | | | | |
		Count	% within Level	% within Outcome Text type	% of Total	Count	% within Level	% within Outcome Text type	% of Total	Count	% within Level	% within Outcome Text type	% of Total
Outcome Text type	Announcement	1	2.5%	100%	1.3%	0	0%	0%	0%	1	1.3%	100%	1.3%
	Article	0	0%	0%	0%	24	60%	100%	30%	24	30%	100%	30%
	Blog post	2	5%	22.2%	2.5%	7	17.5%	77.8%	8.8%	9	11.3%	100%	11.3%
	Brochure	0	0%	0%	0%	5	12.5%	100%	6.3%	5	6.3%	100%	6.3%
	Email message	34	85%	100%	42.5%	0	0%	0%	0%	34	42.5%	100%	42.5%
	Information leaflet	2	5%	66.7%	2.5%	1	2.5%	33.3%	1.3%	3	3.8%	100%	3.8%
	Personal letter	1	2.5%	100%	1.3%	0	0%	0%	0%	1	1.3%	100%	1.3%
	Professional letter	0	0%	0%	0%	3	7.5%	100%	3.8%	3	3.8%	100%	3.8%
Total		40	100%	50%	50%	40	100%	50%	50%	80	100%	100%	100%

In relation to the communicative acts, candidates are required to fulfil in their target texts at each language level, the data analysis revealed a high frequency of "inform" at B1 level and an approximate distribution of appearance of "explain", "argue" and "inform" at B2 level. Generally, in Table 6 we notice the presence of a variety of communicative acts, in both levels of the present survey but the central tendency in each of the levels can be interpreted as an indicator of distinction between them. It is important to observe the quality aspect of B1 and B2 level distinction, which leads to the conclusion that the mediation tasks of B2 level seem to be more sophisticated, requiring from the candidates more demanding acts, like *explain* and *argue.*

Table 6 Communicative acts * language levels (B1-B2) Crosstabulation

Level			
		B1	**B2**
Describe	Count	4	2
	Row N %	100%	100%
	Column N %	66.7%	33.3%
Explain	Count	5	16
	Row N %	100%	100%
	Column N %	23.8%	76.2%
Argue	Count	3	14
	Row N %	100%	100%
	Column N %	17.6%	82.4%

Level		B1	B2
Inform	Count	32	10
	Row N %	100%	100%
	Column N %	76.2%	23.8%
Suggest	Count	4	2
	Row N %	100%	100%
	Column N %	66.7%	33.3%
Request	Count	4	0
	Row N %	100%	0%
	Column N %	100%	0%
Invite	Count	9	1
	Row N %	100%	100%
	Column N %	90%	10%
Wish	Count	0	1
	Row N %	0%	100%
	Column N %	0%	100%
Compare	Count	0	1
	Row N %	0%	100%
	Column N %	0%	100%
Express opinion	Count	1	1
	Row N %	100%	100%
	Column N %	50%	50%

The relation analysis between language level and transmitter's – receiver's role in the required text of the mediation tasks indicated an evident distinction among B1 and B2 level **[tab. 7]**.

In most B1 level mediation tasks, the candidate had to assume the role of the friend (82.5% – 33/40 tasks) while in those of B2 level the one of the authors of the text (80% – 32/40 tasks). A limited but rather significant contribution to the B2 level pattern has the social media user, which appears in 20% of the mediation tasks. It is interesting to note the high central tendency of the transmitter's role across levels, perhaps revealing that task developers of all languages agree about this facet of the relative tasks.

Table 7   Level * Transmitter's Role Crosstabulation

			Transmitter's Role				Total
			Author of text	Friend	Relative	Social media user	
Level	B1	Count	3	33	2	2	40
		% within Level	7.5%	82.5%	5%	5%	100%
		% within Transmitter's Role	8.6%	100%	100%	20%	50%
	B2	Count	32	0	0	8	40
		% within Level	80%	0%	0%	20%	100%
		% within Transmitter's Role	91.4%	0%	0%	80%	50%
Total		Count	35	33	2	10	80
		% within Level	43.8%	41.3%	2.5%	12.5%	100%
		% within Transmitter's Role	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

A similar picture emerges from the data concerning the receiver's role **[tab. 8]**. At B1 level, the friend's role (82.5% – 33 tasks) predominates, while at B2 level tasks the most frequent addressee is a non-specifically defined reader (75% – 30 tasks). This fact was expected if we consider that the most frequent text type at B2 level is the article, addressed to the general public.

Table 8   Level * Receiver's Role Crosstabulation

			Receiver's Role					Total
			Friend	Reader of text	Relative	Social media user	Superior	
Level	B1	Count	33	3	2	2	0	40
		% within Level	82.5%	7.5%	5%	5%	0%	100%
		% within Receiver's Role	100%	9.1%	100%	20%	0%	50%
	B2	Count	0	30	0	8	2	40
		% within Level	0%	75%	0%	20%	5%	100%
		% within Receiver's Role	0%	90.9%	0%	80%	100%	50%
Total		Count	33	33	2	10	2	80
		% within Level	41.3%	41.3%	2.5%	12.5%	2.5%	100%
		% within Receiver's Role	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The use of the Multiple Correspondence Analysis method indicated in a clearer way the emerging conclusions from the descriptive analysis. As shown in Chart 1, the exploratory data analysis leads to three clouds of values, representing the profile of the mediation tasks analysed. Specifically, cloud 1 includes the values B2 level (LevelN-2), act of informing not representative (InformN-1), reader of text (ReceiverN-2), author of text (SenderN-1) and article as target text (Type2N-2). Cloud 2, consists of the values B1 level (LevelN-1), friend as transmitter's and receiver's role (SenderN-2 and ReceiverN-1), act of informing representative (InformN-2), email message as target test (Type2N-5). Cloud 3 contains the values social media user as sender's and receiver's role (SenderN-4 and ReceiverN-4), blog post as target text and relations with other people as topic.

The composition of these groups indicates that the mediation tasks analysed are divided into two groups with distinguishing features the language level and one which contains traits of the tasks which are not associated with it. More precisely, from this analysis three secondary profiles of the mediation tasks result, indicating an evident differentiation between the two language levels analysed and one independent from the language level. The position of the points, representing the language levels, in the centre of the cloud and on the axis, indicates their main role in the distinction of the two groups. In addition, their distance from the balance point of the axes (0) and between them shows the variance among the two task groups. The third group is a sub-profile of minor importance, since its position is not near the axes. We have to say though that this group contains common features of the two levels, which makes sense, since the B1 and the B2 levels belong to the same basic level (B).

An important fact is that in this chart any value corresponding to a certain language did not appear, which means that the language is not a discriminant feature. Finally, the absence of a session point in the graph, can be interpreted as indicator of consistency of the tasks across examination sessions.

Chart 1
Multiple Correspondence
Analysis graph
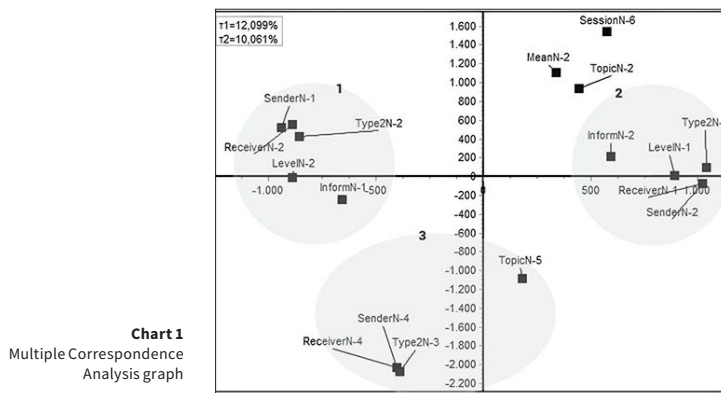
6 Discussion

This paper attempted to delineate the construct of cross-linguistic mediation and how it is assessed in the KPG exam suite across languages. In order to assert whether and to what extent the Spanish and Italian languages included in the KPG exam suite adopted the same specifications for the development of cross-linguistic mediation tasks, a cross-language analysis of mediation tasks of the B-level writing production exam was carried out. The results of this analysis would provide evidence of the construct validity of one aspect of the writing production exam. More specifically, the study presented constituted an effort to delineate the linguistic features of the mediation tasks and to reveal their differentiating traits. Considering that after the examination session of 2015A the mediation task developers shared common texts, a secondary research question was whether this practice affected the tasks characteristics or not. Another crucial secondary question was if there was consistency of the mediation tasks across the examination sessions.

The analysis of the tasks indicated a significant differentiation of the tasks according to their language level, which can be interpreted as an indicator of validity. The text types requested for each of the language levels agree with the KPG specifications (see National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki 2016) and confirm to an important extent the findings of relative studies (Stathopoulou 2014). The communicative acts required from the candidates for written mediation, contribute to the level distinction, as well as the sender's and the receiver's role.

Regarding the target language of the mediation task, we can conclude that it is not a factor of distinction, at least of their linguistic

features. This resulted from the descriptive data analysis and was confirmed by the exploratory analysis.

Furthermore, the findings of the research permit the conclusion there is a strong consistency in the mediation tasks across examination sessions, a fact that allows the assumption the tasks satisfy the requirement of fairness.

7 Conclusion

Based on the aforementioned results, it could be concluded that a multilingual examination suite, such as KPG, can provide consistent exams, which share common specifications and do not differ depending on the language assessed. This fact confirms the assumption that the impact of the language characteristics on test task does not constitute a limiting factor to the establishment of a multilingual examination system. The requested communicative acts as well as the types of texts used for each language level contribute to the level distinction with consistency as well, a fact that strengthens the reliability and validity of the examinations.

A limitation of the study could be the need for further investigation of the non-level specified profile (3), resulting from MCA analysis. In addition, the analysis of the mediation tasks of the C1 and C1 levels could provide valuable data and the possibility of completing the KPG's mediation task profile.

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