

MEDIATION TASKS ACROSS ELT RESOURCES: AN ANALYSIS WITHIN THE CEFR-CV FRAMEWORK

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ABSTRACT

Mediation is recognised as one of the four modes of communication defined by the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2001), alongside reception, production and interaction. It emphasises the need for learners to act as intermediaries, enabling effective communication across linguistic and cultural barriers, whether within the same language or across different languages. Despite its critical importance within plurilingual and intercultural school contexts, mediation has received little attention in English language education, particularly within the Portuguese context. To better understand how students' mediation skills might be improved, this study aims to document and analyse the integration of mediation tasks in two recently published English textbooks, drawing on the conceptual framework outlined in the *Companion Volume* (Council of Europe, 2020).

Keywords: mediation; CEFR; English language; textbooks; L2 didactics.

RESUMO

A mediação é reconhecida como um dos quatro modos de comunicação definidos pelo *Quadro Europeu Comum de Referência para as Línguas* (Council of Europe, 2001), juntamente com a receção, a produção e a interação. Sublinha a necessidade de os aprendentes atuarem como intermediários, facilitando uma comunicação eficaz para além de barreiras linguísticas e culturais, quer dentro de uma mesma língua, quer entre línguas diferentes. Apesar da sua importância crítica em contextos escolares plurilíngues e interculturais, a mediação tem recebido pouca atenção na aprendizagem da língua inglesa em contexto português. No sentido de colmatar esta lacuna, o presente estudo tem como objetivo documentar e analisar a integração de tarefas de mediação em dois manuais de Inglês recentemente publicados, usando como referência teórica o quadro conceptual definido no *Companion Volume* (Council of Europe, 2020).

Palavras-chave: mediação; QECR; língua inglesa; manuais escolares; didática de L2.

INTRODUCTION

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2001 – henceforth CEFR), has established itself as a cornerstone for language teaching and learning since its publication in 2001. Known for its structured level framework, which spans from Pre-A1 (beginners) to C2 (advanced), the CEFR provides a detailed picture of the learners' progress. This allows learners to track their progress and understand the specific skills they are developing. Likewise, teachers can use the CEFR levels as a guideline to tailor their instruction to the specific needs of their learners. Examiners also use CEFR levels to design assessments tasks that ensure consistency and allow for comparisons across programs and institutions.

Traditionally, language teaching and learning have focused on the four key skills – reading, writing, listening, and speaking – in combination with grammar and vocabulary. However the CEFR and, in particular, the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – Companion Volume* (Council of Europe, 2020 – henceforth CEFR-CV), adopt a somewhat different approach, by proposing four primary modes of communication (CEFR-CV, 2020: 136): reception, production, interaction, and mediation (Fig. 1).

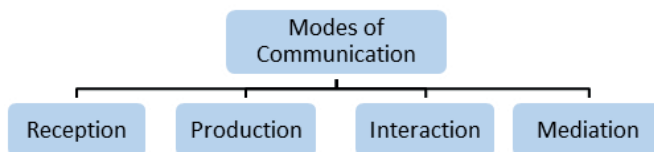


Fig. 1 – Modes of communication (adapted from Piccardo E. et al., 2011: 57).

Each mode of communication focuses on a distinct area of language use:

- *Reception* involves understanding and interpreting spoken or written language, by reading, listening or watching (see CEFR-CV, 2020: 47).
- *Production* refers to the ability to produce spoken or written language by speaking or writing or signing (see CEFR-CV, 2020: 60).

- *Interaction* involves interpersonal, collaborative, and transactional uses of language, facilitated through strategies like turn-taking and asking for clarification, whether through speaking or writing (see CEFR-CV, 2020: 70).
- *Mediation* differs from the above modes of communication by taking already existent content and making it accessible to learners who do not have direct access to it due to language barriers or other barriers (e.g., cultural, social) (see CEFR-CV, 2020: 90).

Mediation in the context of the CEFR and the CEFR-CV refers to the ability to act as intermediary by facilitating effective communication within the same language (intralinguistic mediation) or across different languages (cross-linguistic mediation). This means helping to create understanding between speakers who might not share the same cultural background (“mediating communication”) or making information accessible to others through rephrasing or summarising (“mediating text” and “mediating concepts”).

By categorising mediation as one of the four principal modes of communication, the CEFR, and particularly the CEFR-CV, recognise that language proficiency in a globalised society extends beyond the traditional four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Mediation involves communication skills aimed at diverse and intercultural contexts, where mere proficiency in vocabulary and grammar is not enough but must be complemented with the learner’s ability to use language in diverse linguistic, cultural and social contexts (CEFR-CV, 2020: 10).

Despite this recent paradigm shift in language education, very few systematic studies exist within the Portuguese educational context that investigate how this new mode of communication is explored in English language textbooks. The goal of this study is to analyse mediation tasks in two English language textbooks using the CEFR-CV criteria. This study will help illustrate the range of mediation activities present in these textbooks and better understand how mediation can be explored within the English language curriculum.

1. MEDIATION WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE CEFR-CV

The incorporation of mediation into the CEFR-CV reflects a concerted effort to address the complexity of communication in plurilingual and intercultural environments (Council of Europe, 2020). Mediation in real-world scenarios often requires individuals to serve as intermediaries, facilitating communication between people who do not share a common language. In plurilingual and intercultural societies, mediation also entails managing and resolving misunderstandings and negotiating meanings.

However, when the CEFR was initially released in 2001, the concept of mediation had not been fully detailed, making it challenging for educators to incorporate it into language teaching. Mediation was also primarily associated with traditional activities such as translation and interpretation (Council of Europe, 2001: 136), overlooking other essential aspects of mediation, such as paraphrasing, summarising, and facilitating communication in educational or social contexts.

To address these limitations, the Council of Europe launched a project from 2014 to 2017 aimed at broadening the concept of mediation to include activities beyond translation and interpretation. The goals of this project included developing detailed descriptors designed to capture the full range of mediation skills (North & Piccardo, 2016). Additionally, the project highlighted the importance of intra-linguistic (within the same language) and cross-modal mediation (e.g., from spoken to signed language) (Council of Europe, 2020: 90).

1.1. CATEGORIES OF MEDIATION IN THE CEFR-CV

Mediation, as defined in CEFR-CV, is categorised into several distinct categories, each designed to address different communication gaps. As shown in figure 2, these activities can be categorised into mediating text, mediating concepts and mediating communication (Council of Europe, 2020: 91):

- *Mediating a Text* involves providing access to the content of a written or spoken text. This type of mediation helps individuals

understand texts that they might not be able to access directly due to linguistic, cultural, social or other barriers.

- *Mediating Concepts* focuses on facilitating the understanding of knowledge and ideas. This type of mediation is particularly relevant when learners are unable to access these ideas directly on their own.
- *Mediating Communication* involves enabling effective interaction between individuals with different linguistic, cultural, social backgrounds or standpoints.

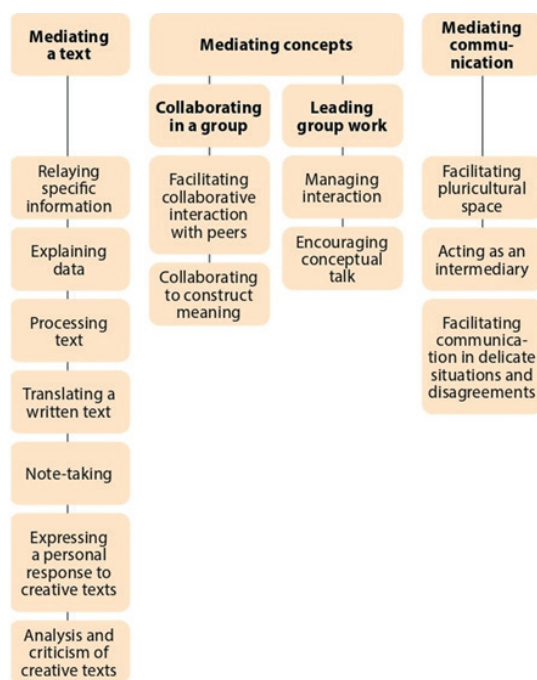


Fig. 2 – Mediation categories and activities (CEFR-CV, 2020: 90).

1.2. MEDIATION ACTIVITIES

Each of the categories of mediation outlined in the previous section comprises a range of key activities (see Fig. 2). Mediation activities are practical tasks, which may include simplifying complex texts, summarising content, and paraphrasing or clarifying spoken or written statements. In common, all are aimed at bridging communication gaps and ensuring comprehension among all participants. An overview of mediation activities, as proposed in the CEFR-CV (2020: 92-123), is shown below:

a) Activities for Mediating a Text

- *Relaying Specific Information* involves extracting relevant information from various texts such as announcements, instructions, guides, brochures, articles, and reports and communicating it clearly and accurately to someone who needs it.
- *Explaining Data* means interpreting and describing information presented in graphical formats like graphs, diagrams, and charts to help others understand the data.
- *Processing Text* entails summarising and condensing information and arguments from source texts into a more concise form, tailoring it to specific contexts and needs.
- *Translating Written Text* means converting written material from one language into another, while preserving the inherent meaning and context.
- *Note-taking* consists of recording key points and important details from spoken or written sources and organising information for future reference, study, or communication.
- *Expressing Personal Response to Creative Texts* encourages learners to engage with and analyse creative texts such as literature, art, or music.
- *Analysis and Criticism of Creative Texts* (including literature) involves critically evaluating and interpreting creative works, examining their structure, themes, and impact.

b) Activities for Mediating Concepts

- *Facilitating Collaborative Interaction with Peers* is about breaking down complex ideas into simpler components, providing explanations, and fostering an atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable contributing to the discussion.
- *Collaborating to Construct Meaning* is often conducted through group work or mentoring, and involves sharing insights, asking questions, and collectively exploring concepts to deepen everyone's understanding.
- *Managing Interaction* involves skills such as turn-taking, clarifying points, summarising discussions, and ensuring a productive and inclusive environment where all are able to contribute.
- *Encouraging Conceptual Talk* motivates participants to think critically, ask questions, explore different perspectives, and engage with complex ideas.

c) Activities for Mediating Communication

- *Facilitating Pluricultural Space* focuses on creating and maintaining an environment where participants from diverse cultural backgrounds can communicate effectively.
- *Acting as Intermediary* involves stepping in to bridge gaps and facilitate mutual understanding between parties.
- *Facilitating Communication in Delicate Situations* requires handling sensitive topics or conflicts with care and diplomacy.

1.3. CROSS-LINGUISTIC AND INTRA-LINGUISTIC MEDIATION

The CEFR-CV also recognises that mediation can take place between speakers of different languages or within the same language but among speakers with varying degrees of proficiency, speaking different varieties or registers or with different cultural backgrounds. Mediation is therefore further classified into cross-linguistic mediation and intralinguistic mediation (CEFR-CV, 2020: 250):

- *Cross-linguistic mediation* involves relaying information from one language to another. The mediator acts as an intermediary, ensuring

that messages are accurately conveyed and understood across language boundaries.

- *Intralinguistic mediation* involves adapting or rephrasing information to make it accessible to individuals who may have difficulty understanding the original message due to linguistic, cognitive, or contextual factors.

1.4. DESCRIPTORS

Beyond outlining the various mediation categories and mediation activities, the CEFR-CV provides detailed descriptors that outline the progression of mediation skills for each mediation category according to each CEFR level (A1-C2) (CEFR-CV, 2020: 93-123).

In this section, we briefly illustrate the descriptors for “Overall mediation”, namely skills that are common to all mediation categories (CEFR-CV, 2020: 90-91). Table 1, below, offers a summarised overview of the descriptors illustrating how mediation skills should progress from basic to advanced levels. At the initial levels, the descriptors define manageable tasks, such as conveying simple and predictable information (for A1) or playing a supportive role in the interaction and conveying ideas contained in simple texts (for A2). At the more advanced levels, such as B2, mediation is described as working collaboratively with people from different backgrounds, conveying detailed information or proposing solutions (for B2). At C1 level, for example, mediating involves maintaining positive interaction, interpreting different perspectives or managing ambiguity” (for C1) (CEFR-CV, 2020: 91-92).

CEFR Level	Descriptor
C2	"Can mediate effectively and naturally, taking on different roles (...), identifying nuances and undercurrents and guiding a sensitive or delicate discussion."
C1	"Can act effectively as a mediator, helping maintain positive interaction by interpreting different perspectives, managing ambiguity, anticipating misunderstandings and intervening diplomatically (...)."
B2	"Can establish a supportive environment for sharing ideas and facilitate discussion of delicate issues, showing appreciation of different perspectives, encouraging people to explore issues and adjusting sensitively the way they express things (...)."
	"Can work collaboratively with people from different backgrounds, creating a positive atmosphere (...). Can convey detailed information and arguments reliably (...)."
B1	"Can collaborate with people from other backgrounds, showing interest and empathy by asking and answering simple questions (...)."
	"Can introduce people from different backgrounds, showing awareness that some questions may be perceived differently, and invite other people to contribute their expertise and experience as well as their views (...)."
A2	"Can play a supportive role in interaction (...). Can convey relevant information contained in clearly structured, short, simple, informational texts (...)."
	"Can convey the main point(s) involved in short, simple conversations or texts on everyday subjects of immediate interest (...)."
A1	"Can convey simple, predictable information of immediate interest given in short, simple signs and notices, posters and programmes (...)."

Table 1 – CEFR Descriptors for Overall Mediation (CEFR-CV, 2020: 91-92).

The CEFR-CV also provides specific descriptors for each of the three mediation categories and their corresponding activities, however, for reasons of space, they will not be covered in this study.

So far, we have shown how mediation, as a mode of communication, has been conceptualised within the CEFR and the CEFR-CV: we have outlined categories of mediation (section 1.1.) and their associated mediation activities (section 1.2.); we have also addressed the distinction between cross-linguistic and intralinguistic mediation (section 1.3.), and illustrated broadly mediation descriptors (section 1.4.). We now turn to the research questions guiding this study.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Although it is well-known that textbooks play a crucial role in shaping classroom practices (Richards, 2001), the explicit inclusion of mediation tasks

within English language textbooks remains a rather unexplored topic within the Portuguese educational context. Textbooks not only guide the instructional framework but also influence the types of activities and skills emphasised in the classroom (Masuhara & Tomlinson, 2008). Understanding how mediation tasks are integrated into these educational resources is essential for fostering effective communication skills in language learners.

The *Harmonize* Series from Oxford University Press, published in 2023, has recently been introduced in Portugal: *Harmonize Starter*¹ (A1/A1+) was certified in 2024 for the English language curriculum in Portugal, while *Harmonize 1* will be certified in 2025. Given their imminent adoption by Portuguese English language teachers, it is timely to examine how these textbooks incorporate mediation tasks to better support English language learning in Portuguese schools. This study seeks to answer the following question: *To what extent do the mediation tasks presented in Harmonize Starter and Harmonize 1 align with the categories and activities outlined in the CEFR-CV framework?*

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study adopted an exploratory qualitative content analysis approach to gain a detailed understanding of mediation tasks. Through this approach we uncover underlying meanings (Elo and Kyngäs 2008) and focus on the interpretation of the content of texts (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). It is therefore appropriate for categorising mediation tasks based on their content. Finally, qualitative content analysis also leaves room for ambiguity (Mayring 2014). This flexibility is important because the categorisation of mediation tasks themselves can allow for more than one interpretation.

¹ In Portugal, *Harmonize Starter* is named as *Harmonize 5*, and *Harmonize 1* is expected to be called *Harmonize 6*.

2.2. DATA COLLECTION

The data for this study consisted of mediation tasks collected manually from two English language textbooks within the *Harmonize* Series, published by Oxford University Press. This series, aimed at teenage learners, covers six textbooks ranging from A1 to B2 proficiency levels. For our analysis, we selected two textbooks from this series: *Harmonize Starter* (henceforth HS), authored by Robert Quinn, and *Harmonize 1* (henceforth H1), authored by Rob Sved and Nicholas Tims, both published in 2023. HS aligns with the CEFR A1/A1+ level and contains 16 mediation tasks, while H1 corresponds to the A1+/A2 level and includes 24 mediation tasks. Table 2 provides a summary of these key features. The full list of mediation tasks collected from these textbooks, which form the empirical basis of this study, are included in Appendix A and Appendix B.

Title	<i>Harmonize Starter</i>	<i>Harmonize 1</i>
Textbook writer(s)	Robert Quinn	Rob Sved and Nicholas Tims
Publisher	Oxford University Press	Oxford University Press
Year of Publication	2023	2023
CEFR Level	A1/A1+	A1+/A2
Number of mediation tasks	16	24

Table 2 Overview of textbooks analysed in this study

2.3. DATA ANALYSIS

For the sampling, classification and description of the mediation tasks, we followed a systematic approach to ensure a comprehensive understanding of how these tasks align with the CEFR-CV framework. The following steps outline our methodology:

- a. Sampling of mediation tasks: We began by manually compiling a list of all mediation tasks from the HS and H1 textbooks. The

textbooks facilitate this process by clearly labelling mediation tasks with the word “Mediation”. Only tasks explicitly identified as such were included in the analysis. The complete corpus, containing all mediation tasks that serve as the empirical basis for this study, is provided in Appendix A and Appendix B, where each task has been numbered for ease of reference.

- b. Classification by mediation categories: Each identified mediation task was categorised according to the categories surveyed in section 1.1. (i.e., Mediating a Text, Mediating Concepts, Mediating Communication). This classification helped understand how the tasks align with the broader framework of mediation activities outlined by the CEFR-CV.
- c. Classification by mediation activities: Each task was further classified into the activities laid out in section 1.2. This step provided a more detailed analysis of the tasks, highlighting the specific skills and competencies that students are expected to develop.
- d. Description of tasks: To gain an overall view of the learner expectations, we examined the specific instructions within each task. This examination allowed us to identify the types of activities students are required to perform (e.g., summarising, paraphrasing, explaining).

The results of this analysis are presented in the following section, highlighting key findings and their implications for language education.

3. RESULTS

This analysis aimed to address the research question: To what extent do the mediation tasks presented in *Harmonize Starter* and *Harmonize 1* align with the categories and activities outlined in the CEFR-CV framework? The results indicate that both textbooks effectively incorporate a comprehensive array of mediation tasks, which closely align with the mediation categories and activities detailed in sections 1.1. and 1.2. In the following section, we present our findings in detail, providing representative examples from each category and activity, drawn from the compiled list of mediation tasks included in the Appendix.

3.1. MEDIATING A TEXT

HS and H1 include a variety of tasks that ensure students can handle different textual materials and contexts. The analysis identified three CEFR-CV activities: Translating a Written Text (section 3.1.1), Processing Text (section 3.1.2.), and Expressing a Personal Response to Creative Texts (section 3.1.3.).

3.1.1. TRANSLATING A WRITTEN TEXT

Translating a Written Text involves tasks that require students to translate and convey information in their own language to ensure comprehension. This includes describing people, explaining activities, and summarising information (HS – Tasks 1, 5, 9) as well as explaining game rules, summarising advertisement details, explaining food choices and narrating stories (H1 – Tasks 2, 9, 15, 17). Below are two specific examples from each textbook:

- In HS, Task 1, students are asked to translate the key details about a person for a friend who does not speak English. This requires them to identify and translate descriptive information about their appearance, enhancing their ability to convey detailed information across languages.
- In H1, Task 2, students are asked to explain how a game works to a friend in another language. This task involves paraphrasing procedural information (setting up the game, taking turns) and explaining processes and instructions effectively across languages.

3.1.2. PROCESSING TEXT

Processing Text tasks focus on summarising important information and require learners to summarise textual information, explain projects and activities. Examples of these activities can be found in HS (Tasks 2, 10, 12, 14, 16) and in H1 (Tasks 3, 5, 6, 12, 19). Examples from each textbook include the following:

- In HS, Task 10, students are asked to describe Ahmed to an English-speaking friend. This requires students to identify important details about his extracurricular activities and then present them, learning to convey relevant information.
- In H1, Task 6, students read Sunil's description and answer questions about prize day at his school. This task involves extracting key information about the event (e.g., types of awards, how students celebrate, etc.) and communicating them effectively.

3.1.3. EXPRESSING A PERSONAL RESPONSE TO CREATIVE TEXTS

Expressing a Personal Response to Creative Texts includes tasks that encourage students to articulate their personal choices. This activity prompts them to share personal preferences and respond to creative works, as seen in HS (Task 3) and H1 (Task 21):

- In HS, Task 3, students are asked to describe their favourite avatar, encouraging them to engage with creative design and explain their preferences. This task fosters their ability to articulate personal choices and connect with visual and artistic elements.
- In H1, Task 21, students describe their thoughts on a new song by Mickey and the Moons, prompting them to engage with the artistic content and express personal reactions to music.

3.2. MEDIATING CONCEPTS

The Mediating Concepts tasks in HS and H1 focus on facilitating collaborative interaction with peers and supporting the communication of complex information. Our analysis identified tasks that align with all activities within this category: Facilitating Collaborative Interaction with Peers (section 3.2.1.), Collaborating to Construct Meaning (section 3.2.2.) and Encouraging Conceptual Talk (section 3.2.3.).

3.2.1 FACILITATING COLLABORATIVE INTERACTION WITH PEERS

Facilitating Collaborative Interaction with Peers includes tasks that require students to research and present information, as well as discuss cultural and social topics. Examples of this activity can be found in HS (Tasks 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15) and H1 (Tasks 1, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 16, 20, 23, 24). Below are two specific examples from each textbook:

- In HS, Task 7 requires students to research special days celebrated in different countries and share their findings with the class. This activity fosters peer learning and cultural exchange by encouraging discussions about traditions and customs, promoting an understanding of global diversity and developing students' ability to communicate cultural knowledge.
- In H1, Task 4 asks students to work in groups to find interesting facts about schools in other countries, which they then present to the class. This promotes collaborative learning and discussions about educational systems around the world. It encourages teamwork, research skills, and cultural awareness, helping students to appreciate and compare different educational contexts globally.

3.2.2 COLLABORATING TO CONSTRUCT MEANING

Collaborating to Construct Meaning includes tasks that engage students in discussions aimed at sharing perspectives and building a shared understanding of a topic, as seen in H1, Tasks 10, 11, 20, 22. An example of this is shown below:

- In H1, Task 20, students are asked to discuss their impressions and share opinions about Courtney Hudwin's talent. This activity encourages them to listen to different perspectives and exchange ideas, fostering collaborative meaning-making and enhancing their ability to engage in thoughtful discussions.

3.2.3 ENCOURAGING CONCEPTUAL TALK

Encouraging Conceptual Talk aims to stimulate discussions on researched topics, promoting deeper understanding. In HS, students are encouraged to engage with new information conceptually through Tasks 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15; in H1, this is achieved through Tasks 18, 20, 22, 23. Examples of this activity include the following:

- In HS, Task 15, students are asked to discuss information about a Caribbean island. This activity stimulates conceptual discussions about geographical features, cultural aspects and the significance of the island's traditions and customs, fostering a deeper understanding of diverse global contexts.
- In H1, Task 22, students discuss their experiences in New York. This task encourages conceptual discussions about travel experiences, cultural encounters, promoting a richer appreciation of cultural diversity and global awareness.

3.3. MEDIATING COMMUNICATION

The category Mediating Communication helps learners develop the ability to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps, making communication more inclusive, promoting empathy, cultural awareness and social competence. In this study, we identified activities specifically related to *Facilitating Pluricultural Space*.

3.3.1. FACILITATING PLURICULTURAL SPACE

This activity involves facilitating effective communication between individuals who may not share the same linguistic or cultural backgrounds, fostering inclusive dialogue and encouraging empathy and cultural sensitivity. We identified a wide range of activities that align with *Facilitating Pluricultural Space*, as demonstrated in Tasks 1, 5, 8, 9 (HS) and Tasks 2, 8, 9, 14, 15, 17 (H1), many of which were already classified under other mediation activities. Two illustrative examples from each textbook include:

- In HS, Task 8, learners are asked to explain the school layout to a new English-speaking student. This activity helps develop intercultural communication skills by requiring students to clearly describe spatial details in a way that is accessible to someone from a different linguistic and cultural background.
- In H1, Task 15, students explain the food choices available at the café to a vegetarian friend who does not speak English. This activity enhances cross-cultural communication skills by having students consider dietary restrictions and preferences while ensuring that their explanations are comprehensible and culturally sensitive.

3.4. SUMMARY

Table 3 provides a detailed overview of how the mediation tasks in the HS and H1 textbooks align with the CEFR-CV framework's mediation categories and activities. The analysis illustrates the distribution of tasks across the three main mediation categories: Mediating a Text, Mediating Concepts, and Mediating Communication. Within each category, specific tasks are further classified according to the activities defined by the framework. Overall, the mediation tasks included in each textbook support students in developing mediation skills that are directly relevant to intercultural and plurilingual communication.

Category (CEFR-CV, 2020)	Activity (CEFR-CV, 2020)	Task Description	HS	H1
Mediating a Text	Translating a Written Text	Describing people; explaining activities; summarizing information to a person who doesn't speak English.	1, 5, 9	2, 9, 15, 17
	Processing Text	Summarizing important information; describing profiles; explaining projects and activities.	2, 10, 12, 14, 16	3, 5, 6, 12, 16, 19
	Expressing Response to Creative Texts	Describing choices and preferences related to creative content.	3	21
Mediating Concepts	Facilitating Collaborative Interaction with Peers	Researching and presenting information; discussing cultural and social topics.	4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15	1, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 16, 20, 23, 24
	Collaborating to Construct Meaning	Engaging peers in discussions to jointly understand and interpret information.	--	10, 11, 20, 22
	Encouraging Conceptual Talk	Stimulating discussions, by analysing information on researched topics.	4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15	18, 10, 20, 22
Mediating Communication	Facilitating Pluricultural Space	Ensuring comprehension across linguistic and cultural barriers, by explaining concepts or situations.	1, 5, 8, 9	2, 8, 9, 14, 15, 17

Table 3 Distribution of mediation categories and activities across *Harmonize Starter* and *Harmonize 1*

4. DISCUSSION

Having presented the results of our analysis, the following section discusses the key findings summarised in Table 3, focusing on the contributions of the textbooks (section 4.1.) and critically evaluating the framework itself (section 4.2.).

4.1. TEXTBOOK CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIATION SKILLS

One important finding is that these textbooks go beyond simple text mediation tasks, such as translating and summarizing, by also including tasks that encourage students to mediate communication and concepts. These tasks foster

collaborative learning, allowing students to exchange knowledge while also building empathy, teamwork, and cultural awareness.

Another related finding is the balanced distribution of mediation tasks across both textbooks, indicating that core competencies in mediation can be developed progressively, beginning at lower proficiency levels. These two textbooks demonstrate that mediation is not a skill reserved only for advanced learners. Rather, students at lower levels can be given essential tools for intercultural understanding as they progress.

A further strength of both textbooks is the explicit labelling of mediation tasks, which is particularly helpful for lesson planning. For teachers, having mediation activities clearly marked within the textbooks reduces the need to search for these skills. It makes it easier to plan lessons that specifically target mediation, supporting teachers in incorporating these essential skills into their classroom practice.

4.2. THE OVERLAPPING FUNCTIONS OF MEDIATION TASKS

Turning now to the CEFR-CV framework, one key observation from Table 4 is that certain mediation tasks cannot be classified strictly within a single category or activity, as they appear to fulfill multiple mediation goals.

For example, some tasks span two categories, such as Tasks 2, 9, 15, and 17 (in H1), which we associated with Mediating a Text (Translating a Written Text) and Mediating Communication (Facilitating Pluricultural Space). In our view, translating or explaining information is not solely a textual exercise but also serves broader communicative goals, enhancing students' ability to mediate across linguistic and cultural contexts. Similarly, certain tasks span multiple activities within a single category, such as Tasks 10, 20, and 22 (in H1) within the category Mediating Concepts. These tasks not only prompt students to research information but also encourage them to interpret that information collectively and engage with peers in deeper conceptual discussions.

This difficulty in applying the CEFR-CV framework presented an unexpected challenge—one we did not initially set out to examine. Our

findings suggest that the broad scope of some categories as well as the overlap among certain categories and activities may also pose a significant challenge for educators aiming to apply the CEFR-CV descriptors to the multi-layered nature of mediation tasks. This strongly suggests there may be a need for additional guidance and training to help teachers get acquainted with and apply the framework effectively.

4.3. SUMMARY

In sum, the inclusion of mediation tasks in the studied textbooks reflects a growing recognition of the need to equip language learners with skills beyond the traditional language competencies. However, while the *Harmonize* textbooks make an important contribution, the study's findings suggest some limitations within the CEFR-CV framework used in this analysis which may be too rigid to fully capture tasks requiring overlapping skills.

5. LIMITATIONS

While this study successfully achieved its primary goal - examining whether the mediation tasks in the *Harmonize Starter* and *Harmonize 1* align with the CEFR-CV framework – two key limitations should be acknowledged.

First, the analysis was restricted to two textbooks within the *Harmonize* series, specifically targeting beginner and elementary levels. This limited scope does not provide a comprehensive understanding of how mediation tasks are integrated across the entire *Harmonize* series or in other English language teaching materials. Future studies could expand the analysis to include the full *Harmonize* series and a broader selection of textbooks across different publishers. Such an expanded scope would also provide deeper insights into how well the CEFR-CV descriptors support mediation skill development across varying proficiency levels.

Another limitation involves the adopted methodology. The qualitative content analysis used in this study inherently includes some degree of subjectivity, which may affect the categorization and interpretation of

mediation tasks. Since the classification of tasks was based on my perspective, other classifications might be possible, especially given the challenge of restricting certain tasks to a single category or activity. Some tasks appear to involve multiple skills, potentially fitting within various CEFR-CV categories and activities. This overlap reveals a potential limitation within the CEFR framework itself. Future research could explore ways to adapt or expand the rigid structure of the framework to better capture such overlapping properties.

6. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Mediation, as defined in the CEFR and the CEFR-CV, plays a crucial role in enabling effective communication and understanding across linguistic and cultural barriers. Recognized as one of the four primary modes of communication, mediation emphasizes the need to address the complexities of real-world interaction, moving beyond the traditional language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing to include activities that foster interaction in plurilingual and intercultural contexts.

In response to the growing importance of mediation, this study investigated the integration of mediation tasks within two English language textbooks from Oxford University Press. Through a qualitative content analysis, we identified and categorized these tasks, demonstrating that both textbooks are fully aligned with the CEFR-CV framework by embedding mediation activities. By engaging in tasks that extend beyond traditional skill development, learners not only strengthen their linguistic capabilities but also cultivate intercultural competence and develop collaborative skills. Future research can build on these findings by exploring the long-term effects of mediation tasks on learners' development of intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 2021). Additionally, examining the perceptions of both students and teachers toward mediation tasks would provide insights into how these activities also enrich the language learning experience.

Finally, although the inclusion of mediation tasks in these textbooks is promising, the CEFR-CV descriptors require teachers not only to understand the cultures involved but also to support learners in appreciating diverse cultural

perspectives and engaging in effective intercultural communication within the classroom. For example, the category Facilitating Pluricultural Space (CEFR-CV, 2020: 115) includes descriptors such as “Can support an intercultural exchange” (A2), “Can support communication across cultures” (B1), and “Can clarify misunderstandings and misinterpretations during intercultural encounters” (B2). For teachers, then, the effective integration of mediation in classrooms ultimately depends on receiving training in intercultural communication.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A and B below contain the full list of mediation tasks from *Harmonize Starter* and *Harmonize 1* as they appear in the textbooks.

APPENDIX A: *HARMONIZE STARTER* MEDIATION TASKS

TASK 1	Imagine your friend doesn't speak English. Use your own language to describe one of the people in the forum. (p. 12)
TASK 2	Tell an English-speaking friend about three things that are important to Ellie. (p. 17)
TASK 3	Choose your favourite avatar and describe it to an English-speaking friend. (p. 24)
TASK 4	Choose one of the films from the article. Look online and find information about another character in the film. What does he or she look like? Tell the class. (p. 27)
TASK 5	Imagine your friend doesn't speak English. Use your own language to tell your friend about two popular free-time activities in Bea's blog. Explain how much time American teenagers spend doing the activities. (p. 39)
TASK 6	Look online and find out about another well-known race. Tell the class where it happens and what the athletes do. (p. 40)
TASK 7	Look online and find out about another special day which schools celebrate in other countries. Tell the class when it is and what students do. (p. 51)
TASK 8	Imagine an English-speaking student is visiting your school. Use your floor plan from exercise 3 to explain where three places are in your school. (p. 52)
TASK 9	Imagine your friend doesn't speak English. Use your own language to tell your friend about one of the clubs or classes at the Riverside Community Centre. (p. 60)
TASK 10	Describe Ahmed to an English-speaking friend. Tell your friend three facts from Ahmed's profile. (p. 67)
TASK 11	Look online and find out about another unusual or famous home somewhere in the world. Tell the class two interesting facts about it. (p. 73)
TASK 12	Tell an English-speaking friend about the Leeds housing project (LILAC). Tell them about the outdoor areas and other common areas. (p. 75)
TASK 13	Look online for more information about the Fremantle Markets in Perth. Choose one stall at the market and tell your class three facts about it. (p. 87)
TASK 14	An English-speaking friend asks about Lenny and Ruby's podcast. Tell them two good things and two bad things that they say about food courts. (p. 89)
TASK 15	Look online and find out about a different Caribbean island. Tell the class three important facts about the island. (p. 99)
TASK 16	Your English-speaking friend is going to visit Broadstairs this summer. Tell your friend about three fun or interesting things to do there. (p. 101)

APPENDIX B: *HARMONIZE 1* MEDIATION TASKS

TASK 1	Choose one of the places in the text. The Library of Birmingham, Higham's Beach or West Edmonton Mall. Look online and find three more facts about the place. Tell the class. (p.13)
TASK 2	A friend doesn't speak English. Explain in your own language how the game works. (p.14)
TASK 3	Imagine you are describing Kelly to an English-speaking friend. Use the profile in Exercise 1 to help you. (p. 17)
TASK 4	Look online and find three interesting facts about schools in other countries. Tell the class. (p. 22)
TASK 5	Which club in the posters do you want to go to? Tell your English-speaking friend about one club you like. Say when and where the club meets. (p. 27)
TASK 6	Read Sunil's description. Then imagine you are at Sunil's school. A friend asks you some questions about prize day. Write answers to the questions. (p. 29)
TASK 7	Look online and find out about another version of football. Tell the class three facts about it. (p. 37)
TASK 8	Imagine you are playing cornhole with an English-speaking friend. Give them three tips to help them. (p. 39)
TASK 9	Your friend doesn't understand English. Explain the three most important details in the advertisement to them in your own language. (p. 41)
TASK 10	Look online and find out another interesting fact about fashion. Tell the class in the form of a question. Can they guess the answer? (p. 47)
TASK 11	In your group, share information about Arabella and write the correct names next to each sentence. Sometimes more than one name is possible. (p. 48)
TASK 12	Tell an English-speaking friend one fact from the podcast about each colour, red, black and blue. Use the photos to help you. (p. 51)
TASK 13	The photo of Cooper is from the book Daily Bread by a photographer, Greg Seagal. Look online and find more of Greg's photos. Print one to show your class. Describe the person's diet in three sentences. (p. 58)
TASK 14	Imagine Louis, Nina and Joe are at your house for dinner. Tell your English friend which foods in the photos each guest can't/mustn't eat. Which food from A to F do you decide to give your guests? Louis is pescatarian. Nina is a vegan. Joe is allergic to milk and nuts. (p. 61)
TASK 15	Imagine you are visiting this cafe with a vegetarian friend. Your friend doesn't speak English. Explain what food your friend can choose in your own language. (p. 64)
TASK 16	Share your information with your partner and answer the questions in exercise 4. (p. 70)

TASK 17	Your friend doesn't speak English. Use your own language to tell them the story and what you like about it. (p. 73)
TASK 18	Imagine you visited Madagascar. Write a short message to an English-speaking friend about the wildlife you saw. (p. 75)
TASK 19	Without looking at the page, try to remember the details of all nine facts. Tell them to your partner in your own language. (p. 82)
TASK 20	Look online and find Courtney Hudwin's performances on <i>America's Got Talent</i> . Tell your class your opinion about her songs. (p. 85)
TASK 21	Imagine you are with an English-speaking friend. Tell them about the new song by Mickey and the Moons. (p. 87)
TASK 22	Imagine you went to New York recently. Tell an English-speaking friend about three places you visited and why you enjoyed them. (p. 94)
TASK 23	Imagine you are chatting to a friend about the text you read on page 96. Choose one of the forms of transport and say what you learned about it. Your partner asks questions. (p. 97)
TASK 24	Look online and find three facts about another place in Dublin that is interesting for people of your age to visit. Tell your class about it in your own language. (p. 99)