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## **MEDIATION IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**

In today's globally connected economy, students increasingly need to develop negotiation skills that can function effectively in multilingual environments, particularly in English as the common business language.

The challenge is significant: negotiation requires nuanced communication involving persuasion, compromise, and relationship management - all difficult enough in one's native language. When conducted in a second language, these interactions become exponentially more complex, especially when participants have varying proficiency levels.

As language teachers, the responsibility extends beyond teaching vocabulary and grammar. The task includes equipping students with **practical communication strategies** that will allow them to: - navigate cultural differences in negotiation styles; - clearly articulate their positions despite language limitations; - understand nuanced proposals from others who may be using imperfect English; - build rapport across language barriers; - resolve conflicts constructively when communication challenges arise.

This preparation is essential because today's students will almost certainly participate in global workplaces where these skills determine professional success. Language instruction that incorporates negotiation practice creates more capable global citizens ready for the communication demands of international environments.

The CEFR framework has evolved significantly with its 2018 update, expanding the concept of mediation beyond its previous narrower scope. Originally focused primarily on reception, interaction, and production with mediation largely referring to text mediation, the framework now embraces a much broader

understanding of what mediation entails in language learning. In 2018, CEFR introduced mediating **concepts** and **communication**. It also established **mediation strategies** as a new category. In mediation, the user/learner acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning, sometimes within the same language, sometimes from one language to another (cross-linguistic mediation). The focus is on the role of language in processes like creating the space and conditions for communicating and/or learning, collaborating to construct new meaning, encouraging others to construct or understand new meaning, and passing on new information in an appropriate form. The context can be social, pedagogic, cultural, linguistic or professional (CEFR Companion Volume, 2018, p. 103)

Treatment of mediation in the CEFR is not limited to cross-linguistic mediation (passing on information in another language) as can be seen from the following extracts: make communication possible between persons who are unable, for whatever reason, to communicate with each other directly; act as an intermediary between interlocutors who are unable to understand each other directly, normally (but not exclusively) speakers of different languages; both input and output texts may be spoken or written and in L1 or L2 (CEFR Companion Volume, 2018, p. 33).

We need to deal with mediation in this extended sense, which means that we want to prepare learners to be able to:

- mediate a text, e.g. **translate, interpret, summarise** (jigsaw reading : Student *A* reads first part of the text and gives a summary to Student *B*, who has read the second part of the text; summarising the plot of a short story);

- manage communication e.g. **rephrase, simplify, clarify**, etc. (giving a presentation on a topic; explaining a word or concept that is unfamiliar to their peers);

- **collaborate** with others and **facilitate** the conversation as a member of a group (students work together to match headings with paragraphs in a text; work on a project together - to produce a product or solve a problem (Goodier, 2020, p. 2).

Developing these interrelated competencies requires classroom activities that intentionally practice all three dimensions, moving beyond traditional language

instruction to incorporate more authentic collaborative scenarios where mediation naturally occurs.

### References

1. CEFR Companion Volume (2018): <http://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989>
2. Goodier, T. (2020). *Mediation in English Language Teaching*. OUP : Focus Papers. 4 p.