

LANGUAGE ACTIVITY OF MEDIATION IN FL TEACHING

Mediation is an important part of any curriculum for the plurilingual and intercultural education. The foreign language mediation activity is a comparatively new field of research and work, which is still in the development phase and has only recently started to receive close attention. In 2013, the Council of Europe commissioned the development of the Extended Set of CEFR illustrative descriptors which includes new scales for mediation. The descriptors have been developed by an international team and linguistic departments of universities were offered an opportunity to participate in the validation of a new set of CEFR Descriptors for mediation by completing an online questionnaire during 2015.

Initially, in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001) “mediation” is defined as language activities which make communication possible between persons who are unable to communicate successfully with each other directly [3]. Mediation activities included interpretation, translation, paraphrase, summary and reformulation. It presupposed many new skills, competence levels from foreign language students: ability to switch smoothly from one language to another and to act as an intermediary for people who do not understand what is being communicated by reproducing orally information during an interaction, conversation, team work in a common language; ability to summarize orally or in written form in his / her own language or some other language within his / her repertoire information presented in different languages; to fill information gaps and /or interpret meanings for others who can not understand what is said or written; to reproduce or produce the text from an initial text in order to communicate its content, taking into account internal and external factors of intercultural communicative situations etc. Thus, the key notion implies code-switching, code-mixing and translanguaging.

At present, according to the latest Language Policy Unit publications [1; 2], the notion of mediation takes on a much wider scope, it has been theorized and extends the concept of mediation beyond that presented in the CEFR in 2001. Overall, mediation is interpreted as any procedure, arrangement or action designed in a given social context to reduce the distance between two (or more) poles of otherness between which there is tension [1]. The mediator facilitates access to knowledge, the grasping of concepts, the reduction of tensions, building bridges towards the new, the other [2]. The Extended Set of CEFR illustrative descriptors (draft version) includes descriptors for Cognitive Mediation, which refers to the process of facilitating access to knowledge and concepts that an individual may be unable to access directly on his /her own, and Relational Mediation, which can be

described as the process of creating and managing a positive, collaborative environment to enhance the effectiveness of mediation [2]. As the result of experts' work, we have mediation scales: **cooperating in discussion, linking to previous knowledge, generating conceptual talk, collaborating to construct meaning, etc.** Thus, mediation descriptors have nothing to do with code-switching and translanguaging.

The above-mentioned scales also have their own value, but the question of the adequate descriptors for the language activity of mediation arises. There is little hope left for the Final version of the Extended Set of the CEFR illustrative descriptors, which is promised to be published this year.

REFERENCES

1. Cavalli, M, Coste, D. (2015). Education, mobility, otherness. The mediation functions of schools. Council of Europe, Strasbourg. Retrieved from: coe.int/lang
2. CEFR Extended Set of Illustrative Descriptors: Focus on Mediation (2015). Retrieved from: coe.int/lang
3. Common European Framework of References for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. – 260 p.