

# WRITTEN MEDIATION TASK DESCRIPTION & ANALYSIS

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# 'Mediation' between languages....

.....an unexplored area

Mediating activities and strategies [...]  
No illustrative scales are yet available. (CEFR, 2001: 88)

“[The CEFR] provides validated, scientifically calibrated *descriptors* of [the] different aspects of its descriptive scheme, except for intercultural competences and mediation. (North, 2011:6)

What users complain about in relation to the CEFR descriptors are [...]: The **absence of descriptors** for socio-cultural aspects and reading literature (both tried) and for **mediation (not attempted)**. (North, 2007: 657)

# Mediation in the KPG exams

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## Defining mediation

- It entails **relaying of messages** from one language to another for a given communicative purpose
- It is a **social practice**, involving
  - (a) the interpretation of meanings articulated in source texts & (b) the making of new meanings in the target language expressed appropriately for the context of situation in which they are embedded.

(Dendrinos, 2006)

# Mediation in the KPG exams

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## Testing mediation

- The KPG exam battery tests *oral* and *written* mediation from B1 level onwards.

# Mediation in the KPG exams

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## Assessing mediation performance

- Candidates are required to have the necessary competences & skills to:
  - **understand** (multimodal) texts in Greek
  - selectively **extract information** from the Greek source text and use it to produce a message in the target language

# Aim of the presentation

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- ✦ to present the results derived from the systematic analysis and description of the **written mediation tasks** included in the national exams for language proficiency (KPG).



- ✦ What **differentiates** mediation tasks across levels?

# Why task description and analysis?

- Language output is dependent on the task which triggers it (cf. Bae and Bachman, 2010; Tavakoli, 2009; Kuinen and Vedder, 2008; Carr, 2006; Iwashita, McNamara and Elder, 2001; Way et al, 2000; Li, 2000; Robinson, 2001, 1995; Foster and Skehan, 1996; Skehan and Foster, 1997; Skehan, 1996, 1998, 2001; Koda, 1993; Bachman, 1990)

*Task characteristics inevitably influence test scores to some extent and for that reason it is essential to understand the effect of that influence*  
(Bachman and Palmer, 1996: 45)

# Why task description and analysis?

To answer to the following question:

- What language is likely to be produced by candidates of different proficiency levels?



- What **types of mediation tasks** are appropriate for each level of competence?

See complete tasks in  
the handout

## Mediation tasks across levels

Imagine your friend Chloe, who has been complaining about feeling down, asks you for help. Using information from the text below, send her an **email** (about 100 words). **Tell her what she can do**, so as to feel better. Sign as Alex.

**B1**, May 2010

You and your friend Martin have decided to spend part of your summer vacation doing volunteer work. Use information from the site below and write an **email** (150 words) to Martin. Try to **convince** him that it's a good idea for the two of you to take part in the Syros project of the Greek Ornithological Society.

**B2**, May 2007

Imagine you have been involved with the work of "SOS Villages Greece" and that you have been asked to write a brief **report** (190-200 words) for SOS Villages International. The aim of the report is to **promote** the work being done in Greece by the particular organization, and to **stress its importance**. Your report may help "SOS Villages Greece" to get some funding from abroad.

**C1**, November 2006

# Task description in terms of:

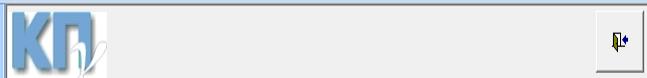
Parameter	Examples
<b>Topic</b> what is the text about?	<i>environment, friendship, animals</i>
<b>Discourse environment</b> where?	<i>magazine, newspaper, leaflet</i>
<b>Text-type</b> what type of text?	<i>article, email, report</i>
<b>Generic process</b> what text process?	<i>describe, argue, narrate, explain, instruct</i>
<b>Communicative purpose</b> for what purpose?	<i>to urge, advise, disagree</i>
<b>Role relationships</b> who is writing to whom?	<i>friend - friend, student - teacher</i>

Home Create External Data Database Tools

View Paste Copy Format Painter Views Clipboard Font Rich Text Records Sort & Filter Window Find

**Read-Only** This database has been opened read-only. You can only change data in linked tables. To make design changes, save a copy of the database. Save As ...

- All Access Objects
- Tables**
- Paste Errors
  - tblexamination
  - tbloralactivity1
  - tbloralactivity2
  - tbloralactivity3
  - tbloralcomprehension
  - tbloralmediationtext
  - tbloralopticaltext
  - tbloraltext
  - tblreadingcomprehension
  - tblreadingcomprehensiontext
  - tblwritingactivity1
  - tblwritingactivity2
  - tblwritingmediationtext
  - tblwritingtext
  - tlanguage
  - tlevel
  - tmodule
  - tmactivitygoals
  - tmaddressee



**ΑΝΑΖΗΤΗΣΗ ΕΞΕΤΑΣΕΩΝ**

Ημερομηνία:

Γλώσσα:

Επίπεδο:

Αναζήτηση

Αποτελέσματα αναζήτησης

Ημερομηνία εξέτασης	Γλώσσα	Επίπεδο
1/5/2007	Αγγλικά	B2
1/11/2006	Αγγλικά	B2
1/5/2006	Αγγλικά	B2
1/11/2005	Αγγλικά	B2
1/4/2005	Αγγλικά	B2
1/11/2004	Αγγλικά	B2

Record: 1 of 1 No Filter Search

# Data

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- 35 written mediation tasks
- 14 examination periods
- B1, B2 and C1 level tasks

# Mediation task description has led us...

## **to predict**

...what type of language Greek users of English (of different levels) may produce.

## **to develop**

a list of **descriptors**

- ultimately determine what types of mediation tasks can be used in order to measure mediation competence across levels

# 1. Topics

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The **B1** level Greek user of English is likely to relay information about ...

personal and everyday topics

The **B2** level Greek user of English is likely to relay information about ...

more of general interest related to everyday life

The **C1** level Greek user of English is likely to relay information about ...

more specialized, sophisticated and abstract topics

## 2. Text-types and generic processes

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The **B1** level Greek user of English is likely to produce ....

texts of a familiar text-type (*email*) fulfilling a limited number of generic processes (e.g., *describe, explain*)

The **B2** level Greek user of English is likely to produce ...

texts of various types (e.g., announcements, film presentations, articles) which may fulfill multiple generic processes (e.g., describe and explain)

The **C1** level Greek user of English is likely to produce ...

texts of a wide range of types (e.g., *report, text for a leaflet, letter*) fulfilling generic processes which require the use of complex grammatical structures (e.g., *arguing, which involves reasoning, evaluation & persuasion*)

# 3. Discourse environments

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The **B1** level Greek user of English is likely to produce ...

language related to the personal domain (private discourse)

The **B2** level Greek user of English is likely to produce ...

texts appearing in different discourse environments (e.g., school newspaper, leaflet, magazine, webpage)

The **C1** level Greek user of English is likely to produce ...

texts appearing in a wider range of discourse environments (e.g., radio, newspaper, university prospectus)

## 4. Communicative purposes

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The **B1** level Greek user of English is likely to ...

perform some basic communicative acts (e.g., *informing, explaining*)

The **B2** level Greek user of English is likely to ...

perform a greater variability of communicative acts

The **C1** level Greek user of English is likely to ...

produce texts in which s/he may *express doubt, evaluate, promote* etc

# 5. Communicative roles

The <b>B1</b> level Greek user of English is likely to ...	The <b>B2</b> level Greek user of English is likely to...	The <b>C1</b> level Greek user of English is likely to ...
address only 'personally known' audiences (e.g., <i>friends</i> )	address a variety of audiences (e.g., <i>magazine or newspaper readers, editors, customers</i> )	address a wide range of audiences (but <u>not</u> 'personally known') (e.g., <i>book, newspaper, magazine reader etc</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/> The style of the target text is likely to be: -informal and personal	<input type="checkbox"/> The style of the target text is likely to be: -semi-formal or informal -personal or impersonal	<input type="checkbox"/> The style of the target text is likely to be - semi-formal or formal - mainly impersonal

# Summing up: What differentiates mediation tasks?

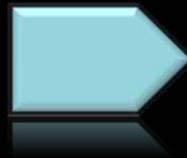
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## LINGUISTIC REQUIREMENTS

- Topic familiarity or abstractness
- Genre variability
- Variety of discourse environment
- Variety of communicative goals to be met
- Role relationships and type of interaction between interlocutors

....and **MEDIATORY  
REQUIREMENTS....**

**TASK  
ANALYSIS**



**SCRIPT  
ANALYSIS**

predicting language

analyzing performance

# Implications

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- The results of the **written mediation task description**
  - a. contribute to an understanding of what types of tasks are **appropriate for each level**
  - b. lead us to decide through what types of tasks **mediation performance can be tested** at each level.
- The **'can-do' statements** may:
  - a. help **test designers**
  - b. constitute a basis for **syllabus** design
  - c. prove useful for **teachers** preparing students for the KPG exams
  - d. facilitate students/candidates

# Usefulness of the work

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So far, these 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/>)

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