

**PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
FORUM**



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**Linguistic mediation  
for higher education  
language instructors  
and students**

The Forum is hosted and co-organised by the **Faculty of Linguistics, National Technical University of Ukraine “Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute”**

**How and why university students linguistically mediate  
with each other. Findings from the MUDExI Case Study**

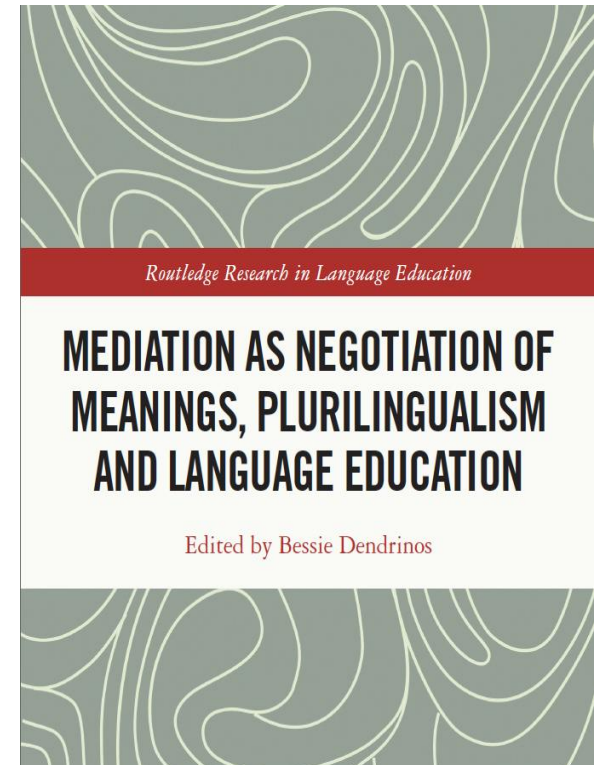
**Bessie Dendrinou, ECSPM President**

# THE CONTEXT OF THE CASE STUDY

- The Case Study on “Linguistic Mediation in HE” was Action 2 of a project with the acronym MUDExI (*Multilinguisme dynamique, terreau de l'excellence inclusive dans l'enseignement supérieur*).
- The project was funded by AUF (L'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie) and led by the University of Strasbourg, in charge of ANIME – an Academic Network on Inclusiveness, multilingualism and Excellence involving 14 partner universities, located in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America.
- The purpose of the MUDExI project (2022-2024) was to investigate, define and test university practices based on the model of dynamic multilingualism.
- The MUDExI consortium was composed of 5 partners: the ECSPM and the Universities of Sofia St Kliment Ohridski (Bulgaria), Babes Bolyai (Romania), Ngaoundéré (Cameroun), and Sao Paulo (Brazil).

# WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE CASE STUDY (CS)?


- Knowing that **we all mediate** in our daily lives, but also that we **can develop our ability** to do so through guidance, teaching, and with help from others, **the purpose of the CS was to investigate:**
  - **how** university students **mediate in social contexts** **cross-linguistically** and **intralinguistically**
  - **how** university students **mediate** in their **academic** context
- To provide evidence about linguistic mediation being socially situated practice, as argued and substantiated in Dendrinos (2024)





# WHAT DID THE CASE STUDY EXPLORE?

- **How and why** university students **mobilise their linguistic repertoire** when they communicate with each other **in the academic context** – universities being multilingual spaces.
- **What type of mediation tasks** university students perform, **for what communicative and educational purposes** and **on which occasions**.
- **How** university students **perform linguistic tasks** and **what is required** of them to mediate efficiently.

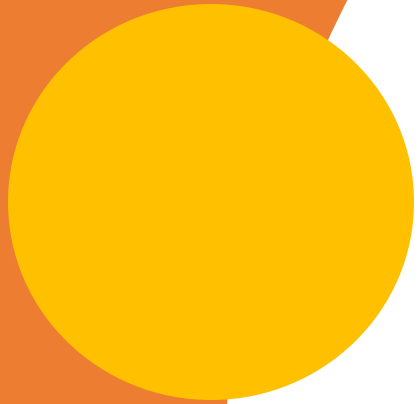
A photograph of three young adults sitting on a staircase outdoors. On the left, a man with long dark hair and a beard, wearing a white shirt, is looking towards the center. In the middle, a woman with long brown hair, wearing a black t-shirt and white pants, is looking towards the right. On the right, a woman with long dark curly hair, wearing a light blue sleeveless top, is looking towards the center. The background shows a metal railing and a building facade.

## WHAT DID THE CASE STUDY INTENT TO REVEAL?

- If university students' **active participation** in this Case Study helped them:
  - **become aware** of the social and **educational meaning** of their mediation practices
  - **use these practices** for **exchange of knowledge production and transmission** with each other.

# THE 2 PHASES OF THE CASE STUDY

- **Phase 1:** Nearly 300 students from 8 universities in Europe, Asia, South America and Africa<sup>3</sup>) volunteered to respond to a Survey-Questionnaire (S/Q) and provided information about:
  - their linguistic profile, i.e., languages they speak, where and how they use them
  - the types of cross-linguistic (and intralinguistic) mediation tasks they perform when with family and friends, and when with their university peers.
- **Phase 2:** About 30 students (from 4 universities in Europe) from among those who participated in Phase 1 volunteered for the second phase to:
  - perform mediation tasks with their peers at university,
  - complete a Verbal Protocol Form for each mediation task performed.



# Findings from phase 1

Responses to the survey questionnaire



# Respondents' linguistic profile

- The **total number of student population** who responded to the Survey-Questionnaire speaks more than **50 languages**:
  - Some are languages **spoken at home or with family and friends**
  - Some are languages **used at university and/or the society** in which students are studying or living temporarily/permanently
  - Some are languages they **learnt as foreign languages** and used them **for their studies** and/or for **international communication**.



# How respondents used their language resources

- **Respondents with a different MT** from the language of the university **used their MT at home** – rarely at university, and not for academic purposes.
- **The languages** the respondents **used** in social events, social media activities, and on the internet **were often not English or their university's official language**
- Respondents reported that **they mix the languages that they know** (producing hybrid forms) and/or switch from one language to another **in their everyday life and sometimes with their peers at university** but **not for their academic work**.
- The biggest percentage of respondents reported that they **use more than one language** in their daily lives **for both private and public communication**.

# Respondents' cross-linguistic mediation for others

- Respondents reported that **they mediate for others**, helping them by:
  - Interpreting/explaining what someone has said
  - relaying/rendering messages written or spoken
  - translating parts of an oral or spoken text
  - speaking or writing on someone else's behalf in language A with information from language B
  - filling in a form in language A with information in language B

# Respondents' cross-linguistic mediation for themselves

- Respondents reported that they mediate for themselves by reading or listening to something in language A and doing something else in Language B. For example by:
  - **using information** from a news article in, say, French to write a report in Italian
  - **rendering**, say, in English the basic idea of a book or a talk in Spanish
  - **summarising**, say, in Swedish a speech in German

# Respondents **intra-linguistic mediate** to help out


- Respondents reported that they mediate within the same language, when others are in need of:
  - **understanding**, for example, a scientific text by using simple, non-specialised language
  - **comprehending** instructions, directions, guidelines, procedures by using plainer or more detailed explanations and examples
  - **grasping the gist** of a whole or parts of an oral or written text
  - **filling out a formal document**, an application form, or a survey (and not knowing how)

# Respondents **intra-linguistic mediate** to support others

- Respondents reported that they mediate within the same language when others need them to:
  - **speak on their behalf** in a difficult, awkward, problematic situation
  - **write on their behalf** an official document, a formal letter, a petition
  - **take notes** for them or highlight key points in a text
  - **share** their ideas, concepts, theoretical positions
  - **report** facts and figures or data from a paper, a book chapter
  - **explain** ideas, positions from a lecture or teaching session
  - **explicate** or expand on information presented in a chart, graph, diagram, infographic
  - **render orally** a situation, ideas, concepts, or feelings conveyed **non-verbally** (say, through image, sound, gesture, movement).

# PHASE 1 CONCLUSION

Respondents **mediate differently** when they are **with their university peers** (communicating about issues that have to do with their academic life), as opposed to when they are **with family or community members and friends** (and are dealing with affairs of everyday social life).



# ABOUT phase 2

DESIGN, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS



## Design of Phase 2

- The findings and the conclusion of Phase 1 served as a basis for the design of Phase 2, which **involved 30** of the **students** who had participated in Phase 1, and who served both:
  - as subjects of research, who were asked to **perform 10 cross- and intra-linguistic mediation tasks** each, over a period of 20-30 days.
  - as junior researchers who were asked **to complete a Verbal Protocol Form (VPF)** as soon as they had completed each mediation encounter.



# Instrument used

- The **Verbal Protocol Form** was designed for junior researchers to record (in EN or FR):
  - the **context** of each mediation encounter
  - the linguistic and non-linguistic **resources** used during the mediation encounter
  - the **interaction process** and types of **meanings negotiated**
  - the **accommodation techniques** used
  - the **input** (source texts) and **output**
  - **how** the **outcome benefitted** the parties involved in the encounter

# Data collected

- The data collected and analysed consists of **114 mediation encounters**, recorded by the junior researchers in the VPF.



# Main conclusions from Phase 2

- University **students mediate with one another** (using their entire linguistic and non-linguistic repertoire to interact with their peers) in order **to facilitate learning and daily life at university.**
- In mediating for/with their peers, intra- and cross-linguistically, students:
  - **help one another learn** by sharing linguistic or content knowledge, individual experiences, opinions, views, etc. They are involved in *peer learning*
  - **work with each other to gain knowledge** or develop skills by solving problems, completing tasks, processing and synthesizing views and opinions, locating data, material or evidence to support opinions, learn new concepts, reframe ideas. They are involved in *collaborative learning*.

# Phase 2: Findings from initial analysis

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- University students' **Collaborative Peer Learning (CLP) mediation encounters** do not involve orderly Q&A exchanges, nor of speaker-centred, unidirectional language activities.
- The **mediation encounters** recorded all involve a **two-way process** during which meaning is constructed between interlocutors who are sharing knowledge, attempting to resolve communication gaps, while also developing their language awareness and literacy skills.
- This **process implicates complex communication practices** that require the use of students' entire repertoires and their linguistic, sociolinguistic and cultural awareness.
- All **students** involved in the encounter may **profit from the interaction** in different ways (not just the party to whom information, advice, is provided via the mediation act).

# Conclusions and inferences



- Cross- and intra-linguistic **mediation** between learners **is a means** (i.e. a facilitator) to an end (i.e. to learning), **not an end** in itself.
- When mediation is a **learning facilitator**, emphasis is shifted from the linguistic performance of the mediator to the interaction process of the mediation encounter.
- The **mediator is affected** by his/her own mediation performance and by how it affects the recipient.
- Both **mediator and recipient are constructing meaning** that makes sense to them and is, therefore, **crucial to learning**.

# Collaborative Peer Learning Mediation

- It is meaningful for students when they themselves or their peers need to work in more than one language, genres or semiotic modes to:
    - understand information (about the modus operandi at university)
    - comprehend instructions and guidelines
    - grasp new concepts, course content, ideas, standpoints, attitudes
    - address misunderstandings
    - clarify misconceptions
    - interpret messages for oneself or for their fellow students
  - It is useful for them when:
    - they are preparing or working on an assignment
    - they are to select or choose a project
    - they require technical assistance or support
    - when they socialize with other students, exchanging information and experiences.
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Дякуємо за участь у цьому форумі

Thank you for being part of this Forum

Ευχαριστούμε που συμμετείχατε