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Mediating Talk

Integrating Mediation Descriptors in Task-Based Language Teaching to Enhance Collaborative Speaking in B1 English as a Foreign Language Learners

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a didactic proposal grounded in the principles of Task-Based Language Teaching and designed around selected mediation descriptors, as outlined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Targeting B1-level English as a Foreign Language learners and based on the textbook Outlook 1 (Williams & Edwards, 2021), the proposal recognises mediation as an emerging fifth language skill that complements the traditional fourth. The approach incorporates tasks that encourage learners to co-construct meaning, relay information, and facilitate understanding across linguistic and cultural boundaries. By simulating real-life communicative scenarios, the activities promote collaborative speaking, foster pragmatic competence, and help bridge gaps in comprehension and cultural awareness. The aim is to make mediation a practical and observable component of language learning, reinforcing learners' ability to support communication, resolve misunderstandings, and adapt messages to diverse audiences. To this end, practical assessment strategies are also outlined to observe and measure learners' mediation skills in action. Ultimately, this proposal illustrates how integrating mediation can enrich the language classroom by aligning communicative competence with the demands of 21st-century interaction.

Key words: Mediation, Task-Based Language Teaching, collaborative speaking, English as a Foreign Language

RESUMEN

El presente trabajo presenta una propuesta didáctica basada en los principios del enfoque comunicativo por tareas y diseñada en torno a descriptores de mediación seleccionados, según lo establecido en el Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas. Dirigida a estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera de nivel B1 y basada en el libro de texto Outlook 1 (Williams & Edwards, 2021), la propuesta reconoce la mediación como una quinta destreza lingüística emergente que complementa las cuatro tradicionales. El enfoque incorpora tareas que animan a los estudiantes a co-construir significado, transmitir información y facilitar la comprensión a través de barreras lingüísticas y culturales. Al simular escenarios comunicativos de la vida real, las actividades promueven la expresión oral colaborativa, fomentan la competencia pragmática y contribuyen a salvar brechas de comprensión y conciencia intercultural. El objetivo es convertir la mediación en un componente práctico y observable del aprendizaje de lenguas, reforzando la capacidad del alumnado para apoyar la comunicación, resolver malentendidos y adaptar mensajes a audiencias diversas. Asimismo, se describen estrategas prácticas de evaluación para observar y medir en acción las habilidades de mediación de los estudiantes. En última instancia, esta propuesta ilustra cómo la integración de la mediación puede enriquecer el aula de idiomas al alinear la competencia comunicativa con las demandas de la interacción en el siglo XXI.

Palabras clave: mediación, enfoque comunicativo por tareas, expresión oral colaborativa, inglés como lengua extranjera

1. INTRODUCTION

> "It takes more than having two hands to be a good pianist. It takes more than knowing two languages to be a good translator or interpreter".
>
> François Grosjean

Traditionally, translation and interpreting have been viewed as professional language mediation activities (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020) performed by trained experts. Translation involves the conversion of written texts from one language to another, whereas interpreting refers to the oral transmission of spoken messages across languages. Both aim to ensure accurate and faithful communication between speakers of different linguistic backgrounds. However, this traditional, narrow view overlooks the broader communicative functions that mediation encompasses, especially in everyday interactions within plurilingual and pluricultural contexts (Council of Europe, 2020).

Translation and interpreting share the core function of bridging linguistic divides but differ in modality and interactional roles. On one hand, translation is a specialised, often background activity focused on precise transfer of written content without the translator's visible participation or alteration of discourse form. On the other hand, interpreting is an active, real-time oral mediation that requires interpreters to engage dynamically with speakers, managing linguistic, cultural, and communicative nuances—e.g., explaining cultural differences, simplifying language or adapting messages. Thus, interpreters embody a mediation role that goes beyond mere linguistic conversion to include cultural mediation and facilitation of information, often managing interactional and even conflictual aspects in dialogue settings.

Importantly, both translation and interpreting are subsets of the wider concept of language mediation, which recognises that any individual proficient in multiple languages can act as an informal mediator. This role transcends simple word-to-word transfer to involve sensitivity to linguistic subtleties, cultural meanings, and communicative intent. Such skills are particularly relevant in language learning contexts, where learners frequently encounter non-equivalence between languages and must develop plurilingual competence through socially situated, interactive processes (Vygotsky, 1978; Council of Europe, 2001, 2020). In this broader perspective, mediation includes not only professional translation and interpreting but also

everyday acts of adapting, recontextualising, and negotiating meaning across languages and cultures.

Therefore, while translation and interpreting are fundamental professional practices within language mediation, mediation itself encompasses a wider spectrum of communicative activities. It involves active participation, cultural conciliation, and the co-construction of understanding, reflecting real-world communicative needs beyond the formal transfer of meaning. This expanded view highlights the dynamic and interactive nature of mediation, where language users—especially learners and plurilingual speakers—engage in interpreting and translating as part of their communicative repertoire, shaping how messages are conveyed and understood across diverse contexts and audiences.

In summary, translation and interpreting are integral but distinct facets of language mediation; translation focuses on accurate written text transfer, interpreting on oral and interactive mediation, and both contribute to the wider, socially process of mediation that involves linguistic, cultural, and cognitive dimensions crucial for effective transmission in plurilingual settings.

1.1. Structure of the paper

This study is organised into several chapters that guide the reader through the rationale, theoretical foundation, empirical investigation, and didactic proposal. It begins with the abstract, followed by an introduction which outlines the structure of the paper, background and rationale, problem statement, research questions, objectives, and significance. The theoretical framework draws on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Communicative Language Teaching. The literature review is divided into three main subsections: speaking skills, Task-Based Language Teaching, and mediation. The methodology section describes the research context and the didactic proposal. The paper concludes with a summary of findings, followed by bibliographic references and appendices.

1.2. Background and rationale

Mediation is fundamentally a communicative skill, most commonly enacted through speech. Consequently, mediation is typically taught via speaking activities. However, despite its centrality to effective dissemination, mediation remains a challenging skill to develop (Qureshi, 2007; Akhter, 2021). This challenge is particularly pronounced in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, where speaking proficiency continues to be an area requiring

focused attention. Traditional classroom practices—often centred on controlled grammar exercises or scripted dialogues—frequently fail to offer learners authentic, meaningful opportunities to cultivate mediation skills.

This limitation becomes especially apparent at the B1 level, where learners are expected to communicate effectively in a variety of everyday and collaborative contexts (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020). Despite these expectations, conventional pedagogical approaches tend to prioritise vocabulary acquisition and grammatical accuracy over the development of interactive, communicative competence, leaving students underprepared for genuine interaction. In response, recent pedagogical trends have shifted towards more communicative, learner-centred methodologies.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) exemplifies this shift by engaging learners in authentic communicative tasks that foster fluency, autonomy, and meaningful language use. TBLT has gained significant global traction, particularly for its capacity to boost learner motivation and communicative performance (Ellis, 2008; Skehan, 1998). Nevertheless, there is still limited qualitative research examining its implementation in EFL speaking classrooms.

Simultaneously, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has evolved to include mediation descriptors, accentuating learners' abilities to collaborate, facilitate understanding, and co-construct meaning through translation and interpreting. These mediation competences closely align with the communicative objectives of TBLT, especially in collaborative speaking tasks that simulate real-life interaction.

Although TBLT and CEFR's mediation line up theoretically, research lacks on combining them to improve collaborative speaking via translation and interpreting in EFL. This study aims to address this gap by investigating how embedding CEFR mediation descriptors within a TBLT skeleton can support the development of collaborative speaking skills among B1-level EFL learners. Ultimately, this research seeks to inform instructional strategies that promote authentic interchange, intercultural competence, and cooperative learning in language education.

1.3. Problem statement

Notwithstanding the recognised importance of mediation as a communicative skill in EFL education, traditional methods often fail to give B1-level learners authentic opportunities to develop collaborative speaking and mediation competences. While TBLT and CEFR mediation descriptors emphasise factual interaction, research on integrating them to boost collaborative

speaking via translation and interpreting in EFL classrooms is lacking. Accordingly, learners are unready for authentic, intercultural communication which limits the effectiveness of language instruction at the B1 level.

1.4. Research questions

In response to this gap, the present study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How can CEFR mediation descriptors be integrated into TBLT framework to support the development of collaborative speaking skills among B1-level EFL learners?
2. What are effective classroom strategies and activities for fostering mediation, translation, and interpreting skills in EFL contexts?
3. How does the integration of mediation tasks impact learners' communicative competence, intercultural awareness, and autonomy at a B1 level?
4. How can the challenges B1-level EFL learners face in developing collaborative speaking and mediation competences be addressed through pedagogical design?

1.5. Objectives

Aligned with the research questions, the objectives are as follows:

1. To operationalise CEFR mediation descriptors within a TBLT framework for B1-level EFL learners.
2. To design classroom activities that encourage mediation, translation, and interpreting skills, with a focus on collaborative speaking.
3. To provide empirical and practical evidence for integrating mediation into EFL task design, offering actionable strategies and exemplar tasks for teachers.
4. To enhance learners' speaking accuracy, fluency, and linguistic complexity while enhancing intercultural awareness, and learner autonomy.

1.6. Significance of the study

This study contributes to the advancement of EFL pedagogy by addressing a persistent disconnect between traditional, form-focused instruction and the authentic, collaborative dialogue required of present-day language users. By systematically embedding CEFR's mediation descriptors—which stress facilitating understanding and co-constructing

meaning—in a TBLT shell, this research offers a concrete application of mediation in classroom practice.

The proposed model is anticipated to enhance B1-level learners' speaking accuracy, fluency, and linguistic complexity, while simultaneously promoting intercultural awareness, learner autonomy, and sustained engagement. Empirically, this study provides much-needed evidence regarding the systematic integration of mediation into task design. From a practical perspective, it delivers actionable strategies and exemplar tasks that enable teachers to align classroom interaction with the communicative demands of concrete contexts.

In a word, this paper aims to cultivate communicative competence and intercultural skills, thereby responding to the evolving needs of EFL learners and educators alike.

2. CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

"To communicate well in a language not one's own takes more than knowledge of words and structures; it takes a grasp of their relationship to the underlying culture".

Barry Lydgate

2.1. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and its relation to collaboration and mediation

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory points up learning is a social process where knowledge is constructed through interaction with others. Learning occurs first on the social level and then it is internalised individually. In the core of this theory, is the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, which refers to the gap between what learners can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance. In this zone, mediation—through tools, language, and social interaction—plays a critical role in scaffolding learning (Vygotsky, 1962).

In EFL classrooms, collaborative learning aligns directly with these principles by creating contexts where learners co-construct knowledge through meaningful interaction (Paudel, 2024; Alipour & Barjesteh, 2017). Group discussions, cooperative tasks, and problem-solving activities allow students to exchange ideas, negotiate meaning, and receive feedback from peers, all of which mediate linguistic development (Jordens, Usó-Juan, & Martínez-Flor, 2006;

Zhang, 2009). This social engagement supports fluency, accuracy, and communicative competence, while also developing social and cognitive skills such as critical thinking and active listening (Abbassi, 2016).

The psychological benefits of collaborative learning further reinforce Vygotsky's theory. Research shows it reduces anxiety and creates a low-stress environment—an essential condition for language acquisition as described by Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis. Learners in supportive group settings are more likely to take risks and participate actively in speaking tasks (Namaziandost, Homayouni, & Rahmani, 2020).

Linguistic theories also support this collaborative approach. Swain's (1985) Output Hypothesis argues that language production—particularly in interactive settings—is crucial for internalising grammatical forms and improving proficiency. Likewise, Nunan (1991) foregrounds that active participation in conversation is key to success in second language learning. These perspectives echo Piaget's (1929) emphasis on the role of social interaction in cognitive development and further validate collaborative learning as a mechanism for both linguistic and intellectual growth.

Moreover, collaborative learning reflects the principles of situated cognition (Greeno, 2011), which states that learning is inseparable from the context in which it occurs. Genuine tasks, such as group projects and debates, mirror original conversation scenarios, encouraging the practical use of language (Alrayah, 2018). This is additionally supported by TBLT approaches, which classify meaningful discussion over decontextualised drills (Alipour & Barjesteh, 2017).

Chickering and Gamson (1987) also underline that cooperation, rather than competition, leads to meaningful learning—a view supported by findings that cooperative learning enhances both academic performance and language proficiency (Wei, 1997). However, effective implementation requires structured practices such as positive interdependence, individual accountability, and promotive interaction (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

2.2. Communicative Language Teaching as an umbrella for language and culture

Culture is a complex, multi-dimensional concept that resists simple definition, with interpretations varying across disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, and psychology. Classic definitions of culture span from Arnold's (1869) idea of culture as humanity's highest intellectual and artistic achievements to Tylor's (1877) larger sight including knowledge,

beliefs, arts, morals, and customs. Building on these foundational perspectives, Williams (1983) expanded the notion to a greater extent, describing culture as an entire way of living.

In the context of language education, it is common to distinguish between "Big C" Culture—e.g., art, music, literature, and film—and "little c" culture—e.g., everyday habits, customs, values, and beliefs—(Medina, 2025). The cultural iceberg analogy, based on Hall (1976) and Weaver (1993), supplementary illustrates that visible aspects of culture—such as products and practices—constitute only a small portion of a much larger, mostly invisible system of beliefs and values.

Importantly, the inseparability of language and culture is widely recognised. As Brown (2007) asserts, attempting to separate language from culture undermines the importance of both, as their meanings are deeply interconnected. Consequently, learning a foreign language inherently involves engaging with a new culture. The aims of teaching culture in EFL include increasing students' world knowledge, familiarising with target society behaviours, stimulating respect, and building intercultural skills (García, 2005).

Building on this, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) represents a paradigm shift from traditional, grammar-focused instruction toward a more holistic, learner-centred, and interactive pedagogy (Savignon, 1987; Richards, 2005). CLT sequences the development of communicative competence, which extends beyond grammatical accuracy to include sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic abilities (Canale & Swain, 1980; Richards, 2005; Sreehari, 2012). This approach underlines language as a tool for meaningful contact, encouraging authentic language use through interactive group work, task-based learning, and actual interface tasks (Littlewood, 2011; Thamarana, 2015; Nunan, 1991; Sreehari, 2012). Teachers act as facilitators and co-communicators, while learners are expected to be active participants and managers of their own learning (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Sreehari, 2012).

Nevertheless, despite these advances, while CLT fosters cultural awareness, the explicit development of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is often underemphasised. ICC refers to "the ability to interact effectively with people from cultures that we recognise as being different from our own" (Guilherme, 2000, p.297, as cited in Medina, 2025). It involves not only knowledge, but also the skills, attitudes, and reflective abilities required to mediate and adapt to cultural differences (Corbett, 2022; Sercu, 2005). In today's globalised world, where English functions as a *lingua franca*, the focus in language education should expand beyond linguistic proficiency to include intercultural skills. This shift challenges the traditional

notion of the “native speaker” as the ultimate model and instead advocate for a more inclusive, reflective approach that values intercultural understanding (Guilherme, 2000; Medina, 2025).

Furthermore, opportunities to develop ICC are present in initiatives such as Erasmus+ and eTwinning, which enable students to interact with peers from diverse backgrounds in authentic communicative situations. In the classroom, ICC can be fostered through observation activities—e.g., analysing videos—, stereotype-deconstruction tasks, and real projects that extend learning beyond the classroom (Alonso-Belmonte & Fernández-Agüero, 2015). Dema & Moeller (2012) further recommend using realia, cultural capsules, cultural assimilators, and digital resources to deepen intercultural engagement. Experiential activities such as role-plays, discussions, and technology-mediated exchanges are also effective in promoting critical reflection and avoiding stereotypes (Medina, 2025).

Crucially, the development of ICC is closely linked to the concept of mediation and collaborative learning. As discussed previously, mediation involves facilitating understanding and negotiating meaning across linguistic and cultural boundaries—a process that is inherently collaborative and central to communicative tasks. Integrating mediation strategies into communicative and task-based frames supports linguistic competence and strengthens learners’ intercultural and collaborative skills.

In essence, while CLT and authentic materials provide valuable cultural exposure, the deliberate integration of ICC and mediation is crucial for preparing students to navigate the complex intercultural realities of the modern world. This requires intentional pedagogical choices, including reflective tasks, authentic interactions, and the use of culturally rich resources. By fostering both linguistic and intercultural competence through collaborative and mediational approaches, educators can equip learners with the effective social skills, empathy, and critical thinking necessary for success across cultures.

Furthermore, these educational aims are strongly supported by Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory, which positions learning as a fundamentally social process shaped by integration, language, and cultural contexts. Vygotsky’s concepts of the Zone of Proximal Development and scaffolding underscore the importance of guided participation and collaborative dialogue in advancing learners’ cognitive and linguistic development. Meaningful interaction with peers or teachers enables learners to mediate understanding, co-construct knowledge, and internalise new skills.

In this view, language is not only a medium for communication but also a primary tool for thinking and learning, deeply intertwined with culture and social experience. In this way, the integration of CLT, ICC, and sociocultural principles offer a comprehensive framework for holistic and efficient language education.

3. CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

"Language is a potent force—more than the words alone, it can communicate a community's mindset, attitudes, and priorities".

Caroline Davies

3.1. Speaking skills in English as a Foreign Language

Speaking is the cornerstone of language proficiency, serving as both the clearest indicator of mastery and the primary means through which individuals articulate ideas and participate in meaningful interaction (Fauzan, 2014; Rao, 2019; Nunan. 2004). Its development relies on the integration of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and coherence, all of which must be practiced in true, interactive contexts to cultivate real communicative competence (Tarigan & Stevani, 2022; Jambari, Khaerina, Siswanto, et al., 2021; Alfonso & Lonigan, 2021; Zhussupova & Shadiev, 2023).

Interaction is central to this process. It is not only the object but also the means of language learning—a dynamic, social activity where learners engage in meaningful exchanges to co-construct linguistic competence (Council of Europe, 2020). Through interaction, language acts as a vehicle for social action. It helps individuals link utterances, navigate social contexts, and develop verbal and non-verbal skills, e.g., turn-taking, gestures, and facial expressions (Qureshi, 2007).

This interactive, oral activity encompasses speaking, listening, and understanding, and is shaped by the interplay of linguistic elements—morphology, lexicon, syntax, prosody, pragmatics, and discourse—alongside non-verbal cues (Council of Europe, 2020). The joint construction of meaning in conversation is essential for effective communication, especially in

EFL contexts, where learners often lack the immersive, spoken input available in mother tongue environments (Suchdeva, 2011; Anuradha, Raman, & Hemamalini, 2014).

In today's worldwide interconnected world, English serves as a trade language, making oral proficiency critical for navigating academic, professional, and social domains (Ganiyevna & Muhsin, 2019; Akhter, 2021). Employers increasingly value strong speaking skills for interviews, presentations, and workplace collaboration (Babiker, 2018). However, EFL instruction often undervalues speaking, focusing instead on reading and writing or relying on drills, which lead to challenges with fluency, accuracy and confidence (Qureshi, 2007; Ganiyevna & Muhsin, 2019).

To address these challenges, communicative and task-based teaching methods are underscored as they prioritise genuine interaction and practical language use (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Nunan, 1991; Willis & Willis, 2007). Yet, obstacles such as limited vocabulary, grammatical uncertainty, shyness, large class sizes, and cultural norms can hinder oral proficiency and motivation (Akhter, 2021; Dörnyei, 2001; Ur, 2012, Cortazzi & Jin, 1996).

Ultimately, speaking is not only a language skill but a vital life skill, enabling learners to engage, persuade, and connect across cultures. Its mastery supports academic achievement, professional advancement, personal growth, and social integration (Baker & Murphy, 2011; Akhter, 2021; Castro & Ramírez-Ávila, 2025; Rahmadani, Lengkanawati, Nurlelawati et al., 2024).

3.1.1. Complexity, accuracy, fluency, and interaction in speaking instruction

To support the development of strong speaking skills in EFL contexts is essential to understand the multidimensional nature of spoken proficiency. In this regard, the Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency (CAF) scheme provides a comprehensive foundation for both instruction and assessment, capturing linguistic and interactional demands of factual communication.

Speaking is a multifaceted skill and one of the clearest indicators of language mastery. It requires the real-time coordination of linguistic knowledge, cognitive processing, and social interaction (Bailey, 2003). To teach and assess this skill effectively, researchers and educators often draw on the CAF structure, which has become foundational in second language acquisition research (Skehan, 1998; Ellis, 2008; Housen & Kuiken, 2009).

Complexity refers to the use of varied, sophisticated language structures and vocabulary. It is typically divided into linguistic complexity—such as syntactic subordination and lexical diversity—and cognitive complexity, which relates to the mental effort required to produce

language (Biber, Conrad & Reppen, 1998; Housen & Kuiken, 2009). Spoken complexity is distinct from written complexity and tends to rely more on clause-based constructions (Biber, Gray & Poonpon, 2011).

Accuracy involves the correct use of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, aligned with target-language norms (Hammerly, 1991; Pallotti, 2009). However, accuracy is not only about correctness but also about appropriateness and social acceptability, which makes it context-dependent (Ellis, 2008; Polio, 1997).

Fluency concerns the smooth, natural flow of speech. It is often measured through macrolevel features, such as speech rate and pause length, and microlevel features, e.g. hesitations and self-repairs, which indicate cognitive load and processing (Lennon, 1990; Clark, & Tree, 2002; Tavakoli & Skehan, 2008). Fluency supports spontaneous communication, a key goal in communicative language teaching (Bailey, 2003; Oradee, 2012).

While not originally part of CAF, pronunciation, comprehensibility, and intelligibility are critical for effective spoken communication. Listener perceptions of these elements often correlate with overall fluency and grammatical control (Derwing, Munro, & Wiebe, 1998; Saito, Trofimovich, & Isaacs, 2016; Trofimovich & Isaacs, 2012).

Interaction—including turn-taking, responding appropriately, and maintaining conversational coherence—is equally vital (Bygate, 1987; Qureshi, 2007). Learners must adjust their speech based on context, audience, and cultural norms, making pragmatic competence an essential component of speaking instruction.

Pedagogically, instruction should bridge the space between structured classroom activities and spontaneous communication. As Harmer (2001) features, knowing language forms is not enough; learners must be able to process and use these forms in real-time interaction. Techniques such as role-plays, games, and group discussions promote authentic speaking practice (Derakhshan, Khalili, & Beheshti, 2016; Oradee, 2012).

In addition, a variety of speaking tasks—including imitation, responsive speaking, transactional, interpersonal dialogues, and extensive monologic speaking—support the development of both accuracy and fluency (Brown, 2007; Gower, Walters, & Phillips, 1983).

Despite its strengths, the CAF scheme is not without challenges. Definitions of its core constructs vary across studies, complicating their operationalisation and interpretation (Norris & Ortega, 2009; Robinson, Cadierno, & Shirai, 2009). Nonetheless, CAF remains a valuable

model for designing instruction and assessment that captures the multidimensional nature of spoken language performance (Yan, Kim, & Kim, 2018).

Fleshing out this perspective, it is important to consider the specific difficulties faced by learners at different proficiency levels when applying such bodyworks.

3.1.2. Challenges for B1 learners in developing speaking competence

Developing speaking competence at the B1 level in EFL contexts involves a range of interconnected challenges. Chief among these is limited exposure to English outside the classroom, which restricts opportunities for authentic communicative practice and impedes the development of fluency (Truong & Dang, 2017; Le, 1999 & Mai, 2014, as cited in Vu, & Nguyen, 2024). This issue is compounded by traditional instructional methods that prioritise confidence among learners (Abbassi, 2016; Nunan, 2004; Jordens, Usó-Juan, & Martínez-Flor, 2006; Zhang, 2009, Paudel, 2024).

Psychological barriers, such as fear of making mistakes, causes hesitation and anxiety during speaking tasks, while crowded classrooms and limited resources restrict learners' expression (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986). Teachers struggle to address diversity proficiency levels, complicating effective implementation of speaking activities (Tomlinson, 2014). Motivation also decreases when real-life communication contexts are absent (Le, 1999 & Mai, 2014, as cited in Vu, & Nguyen, 2024).

Research suggests that integrating problem-solving speaking activities can nurtur critical thinking and help bridge these gaps, offering B1 learners more meaningful practice (Encalada, 2022). Achieving B1 proficiency, as defined by the CEFR, is crucial for academic and professional advancement in increasingly globalised environments (Council of Europe, 2020).

Nonetheless, systematic barriers such as limited access to native speakers, under-resourced language laboratories, and inconsistent motivation—often rooted in culturally specific attitudes toward language learning—continue to hinder progress (Hamid, Nguyen & Baldauf, 2015; Kirkpatrick, 2012; Noels, Clément & Pelletier, 2001). Addressing these multifaceted challenges requires comprehensive, context-sensitive pedagogical strategies that support learners in developing the necessary communicative competence for both academic and professional success.

Lastly, Speaking is a complex yet essential skill in EFL learning, ground not only in linguistic competence but also in broader academic, social, and professional development. Despite its importance, learners—particularly at the B1 level—encounter numerous instructional, psychological, and systematic obstacles. A robust instructive approach that integrates the CAF frame, fosters authentic interaction, and responds to contextual challenges is necessary to cultivate effective, confident speakers capable of navigating real-world communication.

In light of these needs, pedagogical models that prioritise meaningful use of language become increasingly relevant.

3.2. Task-Based Language Teaching as a pedagogical basis for mediation and collaborative speaking

TBLT emerged as a response to the need for real communication in the language classroom, shifting the focus from isolated language forms to meaningful, purposeful interaction (Jackson, 2022; Willis, 1996).

In this approach, the classroom becomes a dynamic space where communication happens through real-life activities, such as preparing dinner for guests or buying a beer. Rather than simply teaching grammar or vocabulary in isolation, TBLT organises, sequences, and implements learning around tasks that require learners to use language as a tool for achieving concrete outcomes (Long, 1985; Nunan, 2004).

This conceptualisation agrees with the view of language users as social agents who must act in specific contexts, as pointed up by the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020). The concept of "task" serves as the organising unit for objectives, content, methodology, and evaluation in the teaching-learning process (Zanón, 1990; Ellis, 2003). This positions TBLT within a stronger version of the Communicative Approach, which places communication at the heart of language teaching and views language primarily as a tool for social interaction (Hymes, 1972; Halliday, 1973).

According to Nunan (2004), tasks conceive this communicative philosophy in curriculum design and classroom procedures, underlying meaning over form and process over product. This process orientation is grounded in pragmatics—where language is seen as action—and in experiential learning, where students learn more effectively by performing and reflecting on communicative tasks (Willis & Willis, 2007).

TBLT also integrates the analytical construction of linguistic knowledge, recognising that learners acquire language through restructuring and reorganisation, not merely by following a linear syllabus (Ellis, 2009; Long, 2014). Hence, communication becomes the central goal of the curriculum, and communicative tasks become the means for achieving it. Therefore, learners learn to communicate by communicating, with tasks serving as meaningful workplans that involve factual language use, cognitive processes, and a final communicative product (Willis, 1996).

Willis's (1996) typology provided practical examples of task types such as making lists, categorising information, comparing items, solving problems, sharing experiences, or engaging in creative projects. Jackson (2022) identifies, also, jigsaw, information gap, problem-solving, decision-making, or opinion exchange. For effective task design, Estaire (2009) outlines a systematic process: choosing a relevant topic and final task, defining learning objectives, selecting appropriate language content, planning the sequence of communication and support tasks, and aligning assessment tools.

Besides, as pointed up by Michel (2023) and Van den Branden (2006), effective task design also takes into account: task complexity—e.g., topic familiarity, time pressure, cognitive load—, modality—e.g., spoken or written—, interaction patterns—e.g., individual, pair, group work—, opportunities for repetition and reflection, and adaptation to learners' proficiency levels and needs. Scaffolding and teacher support are crucial throughout, ensuring that tasks are challenging yet achievable.

Expanding on these principles, a real task should meet certain criteria: it should have a clear purpose, involve real communication, require integrated language skills, and culminate in a tangible product (Skehan, 1998; Ellis, 2003). When every learning element is based on the final task analysis, coherence is ensured between what learners do and the linguistic means they use to do it.

The value of this approach is reinforced by research in second language acquisition, which shows that language develops most effectively through relevant use and varied exposure (Lowie & Verspoor, 2022; Jackson, 2022). The approach is adaptable to diverse contexts and can be integrated with form-focused instruction as needed (Ellis, 2009). Teachers act as facilitator, guiding learners through tasks, providing scaffolding, and offering feedback, while learners are active participants engaged in problem-solving and negotiation of meaning (Willis & Willis, 2007; Long, 2014).

Last but not least, TBLT is a learner-centred, communicative approach that organises language instruction around meaningful, real-world tasks. By positioning communication as the means and the end of learning, TBLT motivates learners to engage in purposeful language use, thereby facilitating the integration of linguistic, cognitive, and social skills. Rooted in empirical research and consistent with the CEFR's conceptualisation of language users as social agents, TBLT promotes experiential learning through tasks that closely simulate authentic language use. Effective task design—considering factors such as task complexity, modality interaction patterns, and scaffolding—ensures pedagogical soundness and learner engagement. Eventually, TBLT adds to language acquisition by making learning significant, reflective, and interactive, empowering learners to develop communicative competence through active participation in meaningful communicative activities.

In this context, the concept of mediation offers a complementary perspective that further extends the communicative goals of TBLT.

3.3. Mediation in EFL: Theory, descriptors, and classroom practice

Mediation, as conceptualised by the CEFR, refers to the process through which individuals facilitate understanding, communication, and meaning-making between people who face linguistic, cultural, conceptual, or emotional barriers. In this role, language learners are not merely users of language but act as social agents, bridging gaps across cultures and contexts, to enable access to ideas, perspectives, and information (Council of Europe, 2020).

This broad perception places mediation in close relation to translation and interpreting. While translation and interpreting focus on transferring meaning across languages—translation in written form and interpreting in spoken form—mediation widens this process by also considering how messages are reshaped, explained, or contextualised to meet diverse communicative needs. In practice, effective mediation often involves skills central to both translation and interpreting, such as reformulation, simplification, and clarification of meaning.

Elaborating on this bottom concept, mediation is recognised as a natural component of everyday interactions, educational environments, and professional settings. It advocates for mutual comprehension and deeper conceptual understanding by encouraging learners to be attentive to the social and cultural dynamics of communication. Successful mediation requires the ability to adapt to others' communicative needs and to employ appropriate strategies for clarifying

meaning. In educational contexts, this often involves the integration of multiple communicative modes—spoken, signed, or written—and positions learners as facilitators of understanding. In this capacity, they support peers in navigating complex content, explaining ideas, and fostering collaborative learning, much like teachers or group leaders (Council of Europe, 2020).

3.3.1. Mediation in CEFR: Types and real-world relevance

To clarify its pedagogical set-up, the CEFR Companion Volume (2020) outlines three key mediation activities, each with direct or indirect links to translation and interpreting:

a. *Mediating a text* involves relaying information, summarising, and adapting content for others. It most directly intersects with translation, as it requires summarising, paraphrasing, and sometimes translating information to make it accessible to different audiences.
b. *Mediating concepts* facilitates collaborative interaction and co-construction of meaning. It frequently involves interpretative skills such as negotiation, simplification, and clarification—core competences in interpreting.
c. *Mediating communication* requires managing interactions, resolving misunderstandings, and bridging cultural or linguistic gaps. These activities mirror the work of interpreters, especially when dealing with intercultural communication and negotiation of meaning.

These types are underpinned by two prime dimensions that shape how mediation is considered in various contexts:

a. *Relational mediation* establishes productive collaboration, manages group dynamics, and supports teamwork.
b. *Cognitive mediation* develops, structures, and elaborates ideas through summarising reasoning and building on others' contributions.

These dimensions regularly overlap in authentic communication. For example, during group discussions, learners may simultaneously manage participation—i.e., relational mediation—, while also helping to structure collective thinking—i.e., cognitive mediation.

Beyond these core types, mediation also acknowledges interpersonal roles, such as leadership functions—e.g., guiding tasks, monitoring group work—, interpersonal and intercultural mediation—e.g., bridging viewpoints, managing tensions—, and informal conflict resolution—e.g., clarifying misunderstandings among peers. These roles further align with

translation and interpreting, particularly in contexts where cultural clarification, negotiation of meaning, or reformulation of nuanced content is required—skills central to both interpreting practice and collaborative mediation.

Type of mediation	Descriptor scale	Focus	Key concepts	Progression highlights
Mediating a text	Relaying information, summarising, adapting content.	Making information accessible to others.	Summarising, paraphrasing, translating, note-taking.	A2-B1: Conveys main points in simple language.
Mediating concepts	Facilitating collaborative interaction, co-constructing meaning.	Developing and structuring ideas together.	Framing tasks, co-constructing, solutions, clarifying thinking.	B1: Organises tasks, asks questions.
	Leading group work, encouraging conceptual talk.	Structuring and guiding group communication.	Leading discussions, checking understanding, building discourse.	B1: Gives instructions, asks higher-order questions.
Mediating communication	Mediating interpersonal / intercultural communication.	Bridging understanding between parties.	Managing misunderstandings, intercultural insights, empathy.	Applies across all levels; context-driven.
	Informal and conflict mediation.	Acting as intermediary, resolving disagreements.	Repeating, clarifying, suggesting resolutions.	A2+: Mediates in predictable situations; B1: Clarifies issues.

Table 1. CEFR mediation types: Descriptor scales and classroom focus

Source: Own elaboration based on Council of Europe (2020); Cambridge Assessment English (2022); ECML (2023); Macmillan English (2023)

As this table shows up, translation and interpreting-related skills are embedded throughout the CEFR mediation model. While "Mediating a text" most directly intersects with translation, "Mediating concepts" and "Mediating communication" involve interpretative skills such as negotiation, simplification, summarisation, and clarification—all of which are critical in both spontaneous and consecutive interpreting.

Type of mediation	Key real-world communication skills developed	Examples of application
Mediating a text	— Summarising and relying information. — Adapting messages for different audiences. — Explaining complex ideas clearly.	— Sharing news or updates at work. — Explaining instructions to a peer. — Summarising readings for a group.
Mediating concepts	— Facilitating group understanding. — Structuring and co-constructing ideas. — Encouraging participation and collaboration.	— Leading meetings or discussions. — Brainstorming solutions in a team. — Clarifying thinking in group tasks.
Mediating communication	— Managing interactions and resolving misunderstandings. — Bridging cultural or linguistic gaps. — Negotiating and reaching consensus.	— Acting as a mediator in conflicts. — Supporting intercultural dialogue. — Helping groups reach an agreement.

Table 2. How each type of mediation enhances real-world communication skills

Source: Own elaboration based on Council of Europe (2020); Johnson, Elliott, Sawyer, et al. (2023); Tresilian (2024); Shonk (2025)

Here, mediation is not only a theoretical skeleton but also a practical preparatory ground for translation and interpreting, offering learners foundational exposure to reformulation, adaptation, and intercultural interpretation.

These theoretical insights are increasingly supported by empirical research, which demonstrates the practical benefits of mediation-oriented instruction in EFL contexts.

3.3.2. Empirical evidence on mediation in EFL

Empirical studies confirm that mediation-oriented instruction in EFL classrooms improves students' fluency, interaction, and ability to process and reframe meaning—essential competences to translation and interpreting. For instance, Alcaraz-Mármol (2019) found that integrating linguistic mediation activities in secondary EFL classroom led to significant improvements in students' fluency and interaction. These gains are closely linked to the kinds

of competencies needed in translation and interpreting—namely, the ability to process meaning, reframe content, and adjust language use for different interlocutors.

Similarly, peer mediation tasks that emphasise reformulation, simplification, or clarification echo the interpretative process, where speakers must continuously adapt utterances to audience needs. This suggests that mediation tasks may function as effective precursors to more formal translation and interpreting instruction.

Mamo & Yigzaw (2015) demonstrated that structured peer mediation in Ethiopian universities resulted in notable gains for lower-performing students, bringing out the value of collaborative learning and the importance of scaffolding in EFL contexts.

These empirical findings point to clear implications for EFL teaching and learning, particularly in terms of how mediation—whether enacted by peers or teachers—can shape learner engagement, participation, and language development.

3.3.3. Implications for EFL teaching and learning

Teacher and peer mediation play a crucial role in scaffolding learner participation and facilitating meaning-making. Herazo and Sagre (2016) found that teachers who strategically employ discourse tools—e.g., questioning, elaborations, and recasting—beneficially support students in jointly constructing knowledge and sustaining commitment. In line with Vygotskian principles, effective mediation is adaptative to learners' needs and becomes more explicit when greater support is required.

Beyond supporting comprehension and interaction, mediation has also been shown to influence learners' preparedness to communicate. Jamalvandi, Jafarigohar, Jalilifar, et al. (2020) illustrated that teacher-led scaffolding and the implementation of thoughtfully designed tasks can strengthen a more supportive and engaging classroom environment. Such a dynamic, context-sensitive approach to mediation is essential for promoting both communicative participation and language development.

Collectively, these findings affirm that mediation, as defined by the CEFR and corroborated by empirical research, constitutes a multifaceted skill integral to language education. Whether enacted through peer interaction or teacher facilitation, mediation equips learners with the communicative, cognitive, and intercultural competencies necessary for success in academic, professional, and social contexts (Council of Europe, 2020; Alcaraz-Mármol, 2019; Mamo &

Yigzaw, 2015; Herazo & Sagre, 2016; Dao & Iwashita, 2018; Jamalvandi, Jafarigohar, Jalilifar et al., 2020).

Furthermore, mediation, translation, and interpreting may be regarded as complementary skills within the broader landscape of language education. While translation and interpreting primarily involve the transfer of meaning between languages in written or spoken forms, mediation extends beyond linguistic equivalence to include the adaptation of messages for diverse audiences and the management of social, cultural, or conceptual barriers. Robust mediation skills intensify translation and interpreting by fostering adaptability, intercultural awareness, and the ability to clarify or restructure content in response to the communicative demands. Through mediation, meaning is preserved even when content is transformed—often through strategies such as transposition, simplification, or reformulation—techniques that are likewise cultivated in translation and interpreting training.

In the long run, this integrative perspective positions mediation, translation, and interpreting not as isolated practices, but as interconnected communicative strategies. Each contributes to the development of multilingual and multicultural competence, enabling learners to navigate diverse communicative settings with confidence and effectiveness. In doing so, it gives to both individual growth and collective understanding.

3.3.4. Applying CEFR mediation descriptors in TBLT in a B1 level

Refining on this interconnected approach, the integration of CEFR mediation descriptors into TBLT represents a dynamic convergence of communicative pedagogy and structured assessment. Rooted in a socio-constructivist skeleton, mediation underscores meaning-making and positions the learner as a social agent, aligning closely with TBLT's focus on interaction and authentic language use (Council of Europe, 2020; Luís, 2024).

A strong form of TBLT, as outlined by O'Dwyer, Imig, & Nagai (2014), builds sustained authenticity through sequences of interconnected tasks that encourage language recycling, learner reflection, and cyclical learning. This mirrors the CEFR's action-oriented model, which situates language use within real-world communicative tasks (Luís, 2024). Recent literature on CEFR implementation and curriculum design additionally emphasise the need to integrate learning goals in ways that are transparent and attainable. Besides, the inclusion of learning-oriented assessment—encompassing reflection, self-assessment, and goal-setting—further strengthens learner autonomy and engagement (Carless, 2008; Gipps, 1994).

Empirical studies reinforce the practical value of this integration. For instance, Dao & Iwashita (2018) found that teacher mediation in TBLT classrooms was most fruitful when it was adaptative, collaborative, and aligned with learners' Zone of Proximal Development. These scaffolding enabled students to gradually progress from guided interaction to independent language use. Similarly, Castel & Delgado (2021) show how CEFR-oriented mediation tasks can be harnessed to design culturally rich and communicatively meaningful lessons in EFL contexts. Nonetheless, for such integration to be maximally effective, it requires contextual sensitivity, purposeful topic selection, and interdisciplinary planning.

Type of mediation	Descriptor scale	Relevance to TBLT & speaking development	Suggested TBLT applications
Mediating a text	Adapting language	Enhances audience awareness and spoken clarity, especially when rephrasing or simplifying communication.	Peer teaching, storytelling, summarising.
	Breaking down complicated information	Develops logical structuring and sequencing in spoken output.	Process explanations, instructional dialogues, structured oral presentations.
Mediating concepts	Facilitating collaborative interaction with peers	Develops spoken interaction skills for managing group tasks, turn-taking, and coordinating peer contributions.	Group problem-solving, consensus-building tasks.
	Collaborating to construct meaning	Fosters co-construction of knowledge through clarification, summarising and exploratory talk.	Project-based learning, brainstorming, discussions.
	Encouraging conceptual talk	Promotes deeper reasoning and inquiry through guided questioning and reflective discussion.	Peer-led inquiry tasks, reflective group discussions.
Mediating communication	Managing interaction	Strengthens discourse management and spoken leadership in group contexts.	Task leadership roles, chairing group discussions, workshop facilitation.
	Mediating communication	Supports flexible, adaptative language to bridge gaps in	Information-gap tasks, role-plays involving

		understanding—essential in mixed-level TBLT contexts.	clarification or negotiation.

Table 3. Mediation types, descriptor scales, and their relevance to TBLT and speaking development

Source: Own elaboration based on Council of Europe (2020); Cambridge Assessment English (2022.); Ellis (2003); North & Piccardo (2019); Willis & Willis (2007)

Therefore, the integration of CEFR mediation descriptors into TBLT represents a coherent and pedagogically sound approach to language teaching. Both bodies point up authentic communication, collaborative meaning-making, and learner autonomy, situating the students as active social agents engaged in purposeful interaction. By combining them, educators can support the development of speaking, interaction and intercultural competence in ways that are weighty and measurable.

To realise this potential in practice, effective mediation—whether facilitated by teachers or peers—demands adaptability, contextual relevance, and alignment with learner's development needs. When implemented thoughtfully, this integrated model not only magnifies communicative competence but also develops deep engagement, reflective learning, and the acquisition of transferable real-world skills.

3.3.5. Mediation strategies, relevance, and classroom applications

Refining this foundation, the CEFR drafts specific mediation competences for B1-level learners that directly support the development of translation and interpreting skills. They encompass a range of interactive and communicative strategies aimed at enriching collaboration and mutual understanding. At this level, learners are expected to:

a. Contribute to group work by asking and answering questions, making suggestions, inviting others' views, and organising collaborative tasks with clear instructions.
b. Convey the main points of texts on familiar topics.
c. Introduce individuals from diverse background with cultural sensitivity.
d. Act as intermediaries in informal exchanges by summarising essential ideas.
e. Manage group tasks, promote conceptual clarification, and encourage deeper thinking through relevant questioning.
f. Support inclusive and respectful discussions, demonstrating intercultural empathy and resolving disagreements through clarification and paraphrasing.

g. Aid comprehension of new concepts by using structured explanations, relatable examples, and simplifies language.

These competencies position B1 learners as effective facilitators of communication across diverse contexts. To support the development of these skills, classroom activities should be practical and interactive, enabling learners to ease communication, clarify meaning, and promote collaborative understanding.

To systematically illustrate how mediation strategies can be integrated into B1-level speaking instruction within a TBLT approach, four tables are presented below. Each table serves a distinct function in building from theoretical foundations to practical classroom application.

Table 1 outlines the CEFR mediation strategies, corresponding descriptors scales, key concepts, and progression highlights, providing the theoretical bases for B1 mediation skills.

Thematic area	Descriptor scale	Focus	Key concepts	Progression highlights (B1)	Suggested classroom application
Linking to previous knowledge	Facilitating understanding by connecting new and known information.	Supporting understanding via connections.	Posing questions, making comparisons, giving examples.	Uses familiar comparison to help others relate new ideas to what they already know.	— Group discussion: Students relate to new vocabulary or concepts to their own experiences; — Speaking task: Students explain a new topic using examples from daily life.
Adapting language	Adjusting delivery to aid understanding.	Making language accessible.	Paraphrasing, simplifying, changing register.	Paraphrases the main points for clarity.	— Paraphrase relay: Students listen to a

					text and then restate the main points in simpler language; — Role-play: Explain a process to a peer using vocabulary and structures.
Breaking down information	Making complex ideas digestible.	Step-by-step explanation, logical sequencing.	Listing points, using bullet points, sequencing ideas.	Can list points and sequence information clearly.	— Note-taking: Students listen to a short talk and write a list of key points, then present them orally; — Task instruction: Students practice giving clear, step-by-step instructions for a group activity.

Table 4. CEFR mediation strategies, descriptor scales, and classroom implementation

Source: Own elaboration based on Council of Europe (2020); North & Piccardo (2017); Piccardo, North, & Goodier, (2019); Little & Figueras, (2022)

Table 2 demonstrates how these mediation strategies are relevant to both speaking skills and the TBLT anatomy, offering concrete classroom application suggestions.

Mediation strategy	Relevance to speaking	Relevance to TBLT	Classroom application
Asking / Answering questions	Encourages active participation and clarifies understanding.	Promotes negotiation of meaning in tasks.	"Information gap" activities where learners ask and answer questions to complete a task.
Making suggestions and inviting views	Fosters collaborative dialogue and idea sharing.	Supports group decision-making in tasks.	Role-play scenarios where learners brainstorm solutions and invite peer input.
Organising collaborative tasks	Develops leadership and coordination skills.	Essential for group-based task competition.	Rotating "group leader" roles are assigned to guide task steps and manage time.
Summarising main points	Trains learners to transfer and communicate key information.	Ensures shared understanding before moving to next task stage.	Learners summarise reading / listening texts for their peer in their own words.
Clarifying and paraphrasing	Prevents misunderstandings and resolves confusion in conversation.	Supports task progression by ensuring all members are on the same page.	Practice paraphrasing classmates' statements or instructions.
Demonstrating intercultural empathy	Builds respect among multicultural interactions.	Enhances groups cohesion and effectiveness in diverse task groups.	Analysis of stories from different cultures followed by discussion on perspectives and values.
Using structured explanations and examples	Aids comprehension of new concepts and vocabulary.	Facilitates task instructions and scaffolding.	Learners break down instructions into steps and illustrate with examples.
Managing disagreements	Promotes respectful, solution-oriented communication.	Maintains positive group dynamics and task focus.	Problem-solving discussions where learners resolve a disagreement using mediation strategies.

Table 5. Mediation strategies, relevance to speaking and TBLT, classroom applications

Source: Own elaboration based on Ellis (2003); Willis & Willis (2007); Bygate, Skehan, & Swain (2013); Council of Europe (2020)

Table 3 maps mediation strategies to specific CEFR descriptors and TBLT-types activities, bridging theory and practice by showing how these strategies fill in task design.

Mediation strategy	CEFR descriptor (B1)	Relevance to speaking	TBLT-type activity example
Linking to previous knowledge	Uses familiar comparisons to help others relate new ideas.	Activates background knowledge, supports discussion.	Task: In groups, explain a new concept using analogies from daily life.
Adapting language	Paraphrases main points for clarity.	Ensures message is accessible to all group members.	Task: Listen to a text, then restate the key points in simpler language for a peer.
Breaking down information	Lists points and sequences information clearly.	Organises speech, aids understanding in group settings.	Task: Give step-by-step instructions for a collaborative project.

Table 6. Mediation strategies, CEFR descriptors, and TBLT relevance

Source: Own elaboration based on Council of Europe (2020); Samuda & Bygate (2008); González & Ortega (2014); East (2017)

Table 4 presents practical speaking activity types for each mediation strategy, giving teachers ready-to-use ideas for classroom application.

Mediation strategy	Speaking activity type	Classroom application
Linking to previous knowledge	Comparative explanation	Learners relate new vocabulary to personal experiences in a group discussion.
Adapting language	Paraphrasing relay	Students take turns simplifying complex statements for classmates.
Breaking down information	Sequenced group instructions	Learners give and follow step-by-step directions in a collaborative task.

Table 7. Speaking activity types for mediation strategies

Source: Own elaboration based on Thornbury (2005); Ur (2012); Newton, & Nation (2020); Council of Europe (2020)

It is important to note that Tables 1, 3 and 4 present mediation strategies as broader thematic areas aligned with CEFR descriptor scales. These include linking to prior knowledge, adapting language, and breaking down information. These tables provide a conceptual configuration that

sketches the mediation competencies B1 learners are expected to develop. In contrast, Table 2 focuses on more specific, practical mediation strategies—such as asking and answering questions, summarising, and managing disagreements—that operationalise these larger themes into observable communicative actions within speaking activities. This distinction allows for clear connection between CEFR-based mediation theory and practical classroom implementation.

Table	Type of mediation strategies	Purpose
1, 3, 4	Broader thematic / conceptual CEFR-aligned.	Conceptual framework and progression.
2	Specific practical / communicative classroom-based.	Operationalisation and classroom practice.

Table 8. Summary table

Source: Own elaboration

By progressing from conceptual alignment (Table 1) to practical classroom (Table 4), these tables collectively offer a comprehensive toolkit for integrating mediation into B1 speaking instruction.

At heart, mediation strategies—when linked to clear descriptor scales and integrated into TBLT—cultivate not only language proficiency but also essential 21st-century skills, e.g., collaboration, critical thinking, and adaptability. Through explicit teaching and practice, learners can be equipped to become helpful communicators and facilitators in diverse contexts.

In this regard, translation and interpreting emerge as powerful, though sometimes undervalued, mediation strategies. While frequently perceived as outdated or advanced, both are integral to the CEFR's mediation model and serve as effective tools for developing communicative competence and intercultural awareness. Specifically, "Mediating a text" aligns with translation, requiring learners to summarise, paraphrase, and adapt content for different audiences. In contrast, "Mediating concepts" and "Mediating communication" draw on interpreting-related processes, including negotiation, simplification and clarification.

Translation fosters metalinguistic consciousness by prompting learners to reflect on vocabulary, grammar, and meaning across languages. This deepens their understanding of language structure and cultural nuance, supporting more precise and creative expression. Furthermore,

translation provides a scaffold for learners to experiment with complex ideas in the target language, thereby building confidence and linguistic flexibility.

Interpreting, closely related to translation, cultivates fluency, memory, and real-time adaptability. It requires spontaneous negotiation of meaning and culturally sensitive message adaptation—essential skills for effective communication in everyday and professional contexts. Crucially, both practices go beyond linguistic accuracy, demanding learners to engage with cultural context and adjust language use for diverse communicative purposes. In doing so, they embody the CEFR's conception of mediation as the bridging of understanding across speakers and cultures.

Empirical research substantiates the value of mediation-oriented instruction in EFL settings, demonstrating positive impacts on fluency, interaction and learners' ability to process and reframe meaning. Peer and teacher mediation—especially reformulation, simplification, and clarification—echo interpretative processes and provide strong foundations for translation and interpreting tasks.

When integrated into TBLT, CEFR mediation descriptors amplify these benefits by cultivating authentic communication, collaborative meaning-making, and learner autonomy. This synergy supports the development of speaking, interaction, and intercultural competence in meaningful and measurable ways. Effective mediation—whether facilitated by teachers or peers—demands adaptability, contextual sensitivity, and alignment with learners' developmental needs, ultimately supporting reflective learning and the acquisition of transferable skills.

In sum, mediation, translation, and interpreting should be seen as interconnected communicative strategies that enrich language education. Mediation builds up translation and interpreting, equipping learners with the adaptability, intercultural competence, and interpretative skills needed to navigate diverse communicative contexts with confidence and clarity.

4. CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

"No glass renders a man's form and likeliness so true as his speech".

Ben Johnson

This study seeks to identify and suggest effective pedagogical strategies and activities to enhance collaborative speaking skills among B1-level EFL learners. Rather than testing a hypothesis or measuring direct outcomes, the research explores how CEFR mediation descriptors can be meaningfully integrated into TBLT. The ultimate goal is to abet learner interaction, oral participation, and autonomy.

4.1. Context

4.1.1. Legislation framework

The teaching of EFL at the Baccalaureate stage is regulated by a multi-layered legislative frame to ensure coherence and alignment with broader educational policies:

a. Supranational level – Europe

At the European level, the CEFR serves as the guiding basis for the teaching and assessment of foreign languages. This document establishes a common scale of language proficiency levels and for first-year Baccalaureate students, the general objective is to reach a B1 level. This level entails the ability to understand and express oneself in intermediate everyday situations, both orally and in writing (Council of Europe, 2020).

b. Macro level – National: Spain

Within the Spanish context, the current legislation governing the educational system is the Organic Law (Ley Orgánica) 3/2020, of December 29, which amends Organic Law (Ley Orgánica) 2/2006, of May 3, on Education. This law provides the general support for curriculum design and the organisation of teaching. Specifically, the Royal Decree (Real Decreto) 243/2022, of April 5, regulates the structure and minimum curriculum requirements for Baccalaureate nationwide, establishing objectives, key competences, content, and assessment criteria.

c. Meso level – Regional: Autonomous Community of Castile and Leon

In the autonomous community of Castile and Leon, curricular development is specified by Decree (Decreto) 40/2022, of September 29, which sets out the organisation and curriculum for Baccalaureate in this region. This decree adapts the general principles of national legislation to the regional context, incorporating specific features that address the national educational needs of students in Castile and Leon.

d. Micro level – Institutional: High School

At the high school level, the effective implementation of the curriculum is carried out through the didactic programming developed by the EFL department. This programming specifies the objectives, content, methodologies, and assessment criteria established at higher levels, adapting them to the classroom reality and the students at the high school. In this way, coherence is ensured between the upper legislative framework and daily educational practice.

4.1.2. Setting

The didactic proposal is grounded in the experience gained during a recent teaching traineeship at IES "Diego de Praves", a public secondary school in the Pajarillos Altos district, northwest Valladolid. The school is notable for its rich sociocultural diversity, with residents from over 40 nationalities in the surrounding neighbourhoods. IES "Diego de Praves" offers both Secondary Education and Vocational Training Cycles. It also participates in the European eTwinning Programme, which promotes international collaboration through joint online educational projects.

4.1.3. Profile

The focus in on a first-year Baccalaureate class with an approximate B1 proficiency level according to the CEFR. The class consists of 16 students—10 girls and 6 boys, aged 16-17—who demonstrate a positive, friendly, and open classroom dynamic. This environment is suitable to TBLT and communicative speaking activities. While no curricular adaptations are currently required, it is important to note that one student stutters.

4.2. Objectives and Competences

Category	**Description**
Stage objective	f) Express themselves fluently and correctly in one or more foreign languages.
Cross-curricular content	— Education for proactive school coexistence aimed at respecting diversity as a source of enrichment. — Techniques and strategies for public speaking to encourage self-confidence, emotional management, and social skills. — Prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts, especially in social life.

Key competences	• **Linguistic Communication Competence (LCC)** — Broaden communicative capacity in the foreign language. — Develop expression, comprehension, interpretation, evaluation, and interaction. — Recognise and use personal linguistic repertoires. — Detect discriminatory uses of language. — Encourage communicative practices for democratic citizenship with a cooperative, ethical, and respectful attitude. • **Plurilingual Competence (PC)** — Understand and respect linguistic and cultural diversity. — Compare languages and varieties in students' repertoires. — Expand linguistic repertoires and experiment with transfers between languages. • **Personal, Social, and Learning-to-Learn Competence (PSLLC)** — Manage intercultural situations and recognise / manage conflict. — Recognise progress and difficulties in learning. — Foster self-regulated learning and personal dedication. • **Citizenship Competence (CC)** — Reflect on ethical problems. — Respect cultures and beliefs. — Reject prejudices, stereotypes, and discrimination. — Promote active, intercultural, and multicultural citizenship.
Specific competences	• **(3) Interaction** — Construction of discourse through interpersonal, cooperative, and transactional communication. — Includes linguistic courtesy, digital etiquette, verbal / non-verbal communication, and adaptation to dialogic genres.

	— Covers cooperation, turn-taking, questioning for clarification / confirmation. — Prepares students for democratic, responsible, respectful, safe, and active citizenship. • **(4) Mediation** — Students act as social agents, building bridges and helping to construct or express messages dialogically. — Involves cooperative work across languages, modalities, and registers. • **(6) Interculturality** — Experience, analyse, and value linguistic, cultural, and artistic diversity. — Promotes empathy, respect, critical appreciation, and responsible action. — Prevents distortion by stereotypes and prejudices, promoting responsible citizenship.
Curriculum content	**A. Communication** — Comprehension, production, interaction, and mediation. — Search for information sources and management of consulted sources. **C. Interculturality** — Cultures conveyed through the foreign language. — Value as enrichment and for relating to others. — Develop attitudes of interest in understanding / appreciating other languages, varieties, and cultures.
Assessment criteria	— 3.1.: [Criterion details as per curriculum] — 3.2.: [Criterion details as per curriculum] — 4.1.: [Criterion details as per curriculum] — 4.2.: [Criterion details as per curriculum] — 4.3.: [Criterion details as per curriculum] — 6.1.: [Criterion details as per curriculum]
Learning situation	— Students use the textbook Outlook 1 (Williams & Edwards, 2021). — For the first four units, a mediation-TBLT activity is suggested to connect theory with real-world practice.

	— This approach brings the utility of classroom knowledge to actual, authentic situations, demonstrating practical application.

Table 9. Structured overview of objectives, competences, content, and assessment in EFL

Source: Own elaboration based on Royal Decree (Real Decreto) 243/2022; Decree (Decreto) 40/2022

4.3. Didactic proposal

The textbook published by Burlington Publishing serves as both a basis and a guiding groundwork for the design of classroom activities. Given the textbook's pervasive presence in the classroom, it was considered essential to incorporate its content and structure when developing this didactic proposal.

To facilitate this process, a sample unit was obtained from the official website of Burlington Publishing. The sample provided access to the book's index, which offers an overview of its organisational structure. For the first four units, a table was created to systematically organise the information regarding the various sections included, such as vocabulary, reading, speaking, writing, and life skills.

In this analysis, the topic presented in the "Vocabulary" section was identified as the primary theme of each unit. Consequently, mediation activities were designed to align with this central topic. Moreover, efforts were made to establish a connection between the vocabulary topic and the theme suggested in the "Life Skills" section. This approach was based on the interpretation that the life skills included play a significant role in contextualising language learning and may facilitate connections to real-world situations.

Therefore, the textbook provides thematic context and links classroom learning with daily-life application, ensuring the didactic intervention facilitates the transfer of knowledge and skills to everyday situations.

In the light of this, mediation activities offer practical ways for students to apply textbook knowledge in real-life scenarios. These tasks reinforce learning while promoting meaningful communication, effectively bridging classroom theory and authentic use.

Hereunder, the activities are presented:

4.3.1. Activity 1 "The Spanish educational system explained to a British friend"

This activity is designed to facilitate learners' ability to explain the Spanish educational system to an English-speaking peer unfamiliar with it. The activity promotes both linguistic competence and intercultural awareness. Learners are encouraged to clarify information, adapt language to audience needs, and engage in meaningful cross-cultural dialogue.

The activity targets the integration of multiple language skills within a mediation context. Learners will develop:

Vocabulary	Grammar	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing	Like Skills
Education	PPS, PS, PPS, PPC	An article	A presentation / An interview	Education	PPS, PS, PPS, PPC	An article

Table 10. Content of unit 1

Source: Own elaboration based on Outlook 1 (Williams & Edwards, 2021)

The activity initiates with the introduction of the topic: The Spanish educational system. To activate background knowledge and aid intercultural consciousness, an infographic comparing the Spanish and British educational systems is presented. This visual support aids comprehension and offers a basis for comparative discussion.

Learners are provided with relevant lexical and grammatical input and engage in the thinking routine "Creative Question Starts". This routine scaffolds the generation of open-ended, exploratory questions using prompts such as *Why…? What if…?* or *How would it be different if…?* Working collaboratively in small groups, students formulate as many questions as possible. Sample questions include:

a. Why do Spanish students have a long summer holiday?
b. What if school started at 10 a.m. instead of 8 a.m.?
c. How would it be different if all schools were public?

Following group work, learners share their most insightful questions with the class, which are recorded and discussed to determine their relevance and potential interest for a non-Spanish audience.

The central phase of the activity involves a mediation task in which students' structure and deliver an explanation of the Spanish education system. Using the selected questions as organisational prompts, students work in pairs to role-play a dialogue: on one hand, one learner assumes the role of the Spanish friend, tasked with explaining the system in accessible and

culturally appropriate terms; on the other hand, the other plays the British friend, asking for clarification, drawing comparisons, and engaging in intercultural dialogue. Learners swap roles with another pair, allowing for repetition and refinement of their mediation strategies. During this phase, emphasis is placed on:

a. Adapting language for clarity
b. Paraphrasing complex contents
c. Checking understanding
d. Drawing intercultural comparisons

After the role-play, learners engage in small-group reflection on their performance. They consider:

a. Challenges encountered during the explanation.
b. Unexpected or thought-provoking questions raised by their partner.
c. Effectiveness of the question-generation routine in enhancing understanding.

This is followed by a whole-class exchange, during which students share key insights and interesting cultural differences identified during the task. The teacher provides formative feedback on both language use and mediation strategies, stressing successful instances or paraphrasing, clarification, and adaptation.

This activity exemplifies a mediation task as learners are required to make information accessible to someone from a different cultural or linguistic background. Mediation is achieved by:

a. Clarifying and simplifying concepts unfamiliar to the interlocutor.
b. Driving cultural knowledge gaps by contextualising the Spanish system in terms comprehensible to a British peer.
c. Using interaction to co-construct meaning, including comparing educational experiences and expectations.

The inclusion of an inquiry-based questioning routine encourages learners to examine the educational system from multiple perspectives and cultivates deeper engagement with the content.

By the end of the activity, learners will have:

a. Gained greater familiarity with the structure and characteristics of the Spanish and British educational systems.
b. Practiced using language to convey abstract and culturally embedded concepts clearly.
c. Developed the ability to mediate information effectively for an international audience.
d. Strengthened intercultural communicative competence through comparative dialogue and reflection.

4.3.2. Activity 2 "Understanding technology"

This activity is designed to develop learners' ability to explore, interpret, and communicate information about everyday technological tools and solutions. The task points up learners' capacity to adapt, summarise, and clarify product-related information for a peer audience. Using the authentic context of *MediaMarkt's* product catalogue, students engage in collaborative problem-solving and information-sharing, simulating the kinds of interactions involved in helping someone choose appropriate technology for everyday use.

The activity integrates vocabulary, grammar, skills development, and life competencies associated with a thematic focus on technology in everyday life:

Vocabulary	Grammar	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing	Life Skills
Technology	FC, FPS	A blog entry	A podcast / A museum tour	Speculating / A personal interview	An opinion essay	Using a catalogue

Table 11. Content of unit 2

Source: Own elaboration based on Outlook 1 (Williams & Edwards, 2021)

To activate curiosity and prepare students, the teacher introduces a selection of visuals from the *MediaMarkt* catalogue, displaying various gadgets and digital tools (e.g., smart watches, wireless, earbuds, smart trackers, digital assistants). The "See-Think-Wonder" thinking routine is used to structured students' engagement:

a. See: Students describe what they notice in the images—devices, interfaces, or features.
b. Think: Students share what they think is the function or purpose of each item, making inferences based on design or context.
c. Wonder: Students pose questions about how the items work, what problems they might solve, or why someone would need them.

First, learners respond individually in writing; then they share their responses in pairs, followed by a small group discussion. Then, the teacher leads a brief discussion on the role of technology in daily life and how tools such as those from the catalogue help organise, simplify, or upgrade everyday routines. This helps contextualise the mediation task and builds awareness of how form and function relate in tech design.

In small groups, students browse the *MediaMarkt* catalogue—either printed or digital—and identify technology items that support everyday life. They are guided by the following questions:

a. What is the item's main purpose?
b. How does it help users organise or lift their daily routine?
c. What specific need does it address (e.g., charging, locating, monitoring, connecting)?

Students document their findings using notes that include product features, user benefits, and key functional descriptions,

Each group selects one item to present to the class. They prepare a short, peer-friendly explanation of the item. The explanation should:

a. Provide a concise summary of the item's main features.
b. Explain how it solves a technology-related problem.
c. Highlight why the product might be preferable to other options.

The explanation should be clear, well-structured, and tailored to a general audience, stressing everyday relevance. Students practice simplifying terminology, structuring information logically, and anticipating potential questions or misunderstanding.

Groups present their explanation to the class. During each presentation, peers are encouraged to ask questions or express confusion. Presenters respond by rephrasing, clarifying, or providing examples, applying mediation strategies such as:

a. Reformulating technical terms in simpler language.
b. Drawing analogies to familiar contexts.
c. Summarising and emphasising key points.

After the presentations, the class reflects on the task experience through guided discussion questions:

a. Which products were easier or harder to explain?

b. What strategies helped make explanations clearer?
c. What did you learn about adapting technical information for a non-specialist audience?
d. How did your understanding of the item improve through explaining it to others?

The teacher provides formative feedback on each group's use of mediation strategies, clarity of explanation, audience consciousness, and ability to facilitate understanding. If time allows, groups can refine their presentations based on peer and teacher feedback.

This activity develops communicative mediation skills as students comprehend, report on product descriptors and transform technical information into accessible, audience-friendly message. By engaging with authentic materials and simplifying or rephrasing content, students learn to mediate meaning in veridic situations. The "See-Think-Wonder" routine enhances cognitive engagement, encouraging observation, interpretation, and inquiry—skills essential for comprehension and explanation. Furthermore, the task supports the development of critical thinking, digital literacy, pragmatic competence, and interpersonal communication, all essential for effective mediation in 21st-century contexts.

By the end of the activity, learners will have:

a. Develop mediation skills by summarising, rephrasing, and adapting product information.
b. Use technology-related vocabulary and future tenses accurately in context.
c. Apply critical thinking to explore and interpret content.
d. Engage in collaborative communication to clarify meaning, respond to questions, and reach shared understanding.

4.3.3. Activity 3 "How to return a product on Amazon via a WhatsApp voice message"

This activity aims to develop learners' mediation skills by engaging them in a real-world communicative task: Recording a WhatsApp voice message explaining how to return a product on Amazon. The task focused on guiding a listener—potentially from a different cultural background—through a practical digital procedure in a clear, accessible, and supportive manner.

The activity integrates a range of language skills with an emphasis on clear oral communication for mediation purposes. Learners are expected to:

Vocabulary	Grammar	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing	Life Skills
Consumerism	Defining and non-defining relative clauses	A magazine article	A conversation / An interview	Describing spending habits / reaching a decision	A for and against essay	Ordering online

Table 12. Content of unit 3

Source: Own elaboration based on Outlook 1 (Williams & Edwards, 2021)

To activate prior knowledge and promote reflective thinking, the activity begins with the "Think-Pair-Share" routine. This collaborative thinking strategy is designed to encourage active reasoning, multiple perspectives, and idea refinement through social interaction:

a. Think: Individually, learners consider what they already know or assume about returning a product on Amazon. They write down a tentative list of steps and any tips they would offer a first-time user.
b. Pair: Students work in pairs to compare their lists. Through dialogue, they identify essential steps, potential points of confusion, and helpful advice for someone unfamiliar with the process. New ideas from the discussion are incorporated into each student's notes.
c. Share: Pairs then present their most important steps and best tips to the whole class.

The teacher synthesises these into a consolidated list of key actions and helpful advice, which is recorded on the board as a class reference. Concurrently, useful vocabulary and functional phrases are reviewed and bring out, including expressions such as *first, you need to… after that, click on… make sure you… if you have any problems, you can…* These linguistic tools support students in constructing coherent and helpful explanations during the task.

Learners revisit the class-generated list and their individual notes. In pairs, they organise the steps into a clear, logical sequence, deciding how to simplify or rephrase any complex instructions. They rehearse the oral explanation aloud, with attention to tone, pacing, and listener comprehension.

Using a smartphone, each learner records a 1–2-minute WhatsApp-style voice message addressed to a friend. The message must provide a step-by-step explanation of how to return a product on Amazon, using accessible language and a friendly, supportive tone. Recordings are uploaded to the class platform (e.g., Microsoft Teams).

Students listen to their own recordings and evaluate their performance using criteria such as:

a. Content: Are all essential steps included and clearly explained?
b. Language: Is the vocabulary appropriate and the use of linking effective?
c. Mediation: Does the message adapt and clarify the original information?
d. Delivery: Is the pronunciation clear? Is the tone friendly and helpful?

This stage promotes learner autonomy and critical reflection on effective communication strategies.

In small groups, students discuss their experiences during the task. Reflection prompts include:

a. What aspects of the explanation were challenging?
b. Which strategies helped make the instructions clearer?
c. Did you need to adapt or simplify any information?
d. How might the message be improved for a real recipient?

As an optional extension, students may share their recordings with a partner for peer feedback. The teacher provides formative feedback by listening to a selection of recordings and commenting on clarity, completeness, mediation strategies, and tone.

This activity exemplifies a mediation task in which learners reformulate and simplify complex written information into an accessible spoken format tailored to a specific receiver. Learners act as mediators by anticipating possible points of confusion, simplifying instruction, and using supportive language. Through the "Think-Pair-Share" routine and subsequent peer interaction, learners negotiate meaning, refine their ideas, and co-construct knowledge. These processes assist the communicative and strategic skills necessary for successful mediation, as defined in the CEFR. Moreover, the task integrates digital literacy and pragmatic competence, as it mirrors the authentic communicative act of sending a helpful voice message via WhatsApp—an increasingly common form of interpersonal communication across cultures.

By the end of the activity, learners will have:

a. Developed the ability to explain a practical digital process step-by-step in clear and accessible spoken English.
b. Practiced structuring procedural discourse using appropriate sequencing language.
c. Strengthened mediation skills, particularly the adaptation and clarification of information for a target audience.

d. Improved pronunciation, tone, and audience-awareness in a real communication format, and enhanced intercultural communicative competence and digital communication skills.

4.3.4. Activity 4 "Planning a festival visit with a friend"

This activity is designed to enhance learners' communicative and mediation skills through a collaborative, real-life simulation: Planning a local festival visit with a friend who is unfamiliar with the event. The task spotlights the need to explain cultural practices clearly, adapt communication to suit a non-local audience, and jointly plan an experience through dialogic interaction.

This task integrates language development in vocabulary, grammar, receptive and productive skills, and mediation strategies. Learners engage with the following linguistic objectives:

Vocabulary	Grammar	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing	Life Skills
Entertainment	Modals and modal perfects	An online Forum	Monologue / A lecture	Discussing options / Speculating about a picture	A film review	Making plans

Table 13. Content of unit 4

Source: Own elaboration based on Outlook 1 (Williams & Edwards, 2021)

The teacher introduces the local festival context, supported by authentic multimedia input—brief written descriptions, images, or a short video—to establish a shared knowledge base. To urge active engagement and multiple perspective-taking, students complete the "Compass Points" thinking routine, which scaffolds the exploration of attitudes, concerns, and knowledge gaps. The compass directions guide students through the following reflective questions:

a. E = Exited: What excites you about this festival? What are you looking forward to?
b. W = Worrisome: What are your concerns or worries about attending the festival?
c. N = Need to Know: What information do you need to gather before inviting your friend?
d. S = Suggestion: What is your current plan, and what next steps will you take?

Students complete this thinking routine individually, followed by small-group discussions to exchange perspectives. A whole-class sharing session consolidates ideas, with the teacher

facilitating discussion and noting key festival features, possible challenges, and cultural references that may require explanation.

Working in pairs, students select a local or culturally significant festival and identify two to three key events to highlight (e.g., a music performance, a traditional dance, a film screening). They discuss what makes these events interesting, how to describe them to someone unfamiliar, and any practical considerations (e.g., time, location, ticketing).

Pairs script a videocall conversation between two characters: A local resident and a visiting friend. The local partner explains the selected events, adapting explanations to accommodate the visitor's unfamiliarity with the cultural context. The visiting friend asks questions, seeks clarification, and expresses preferences or concerns. The conversation culminates with a jointly agreed-upon plan for attending specific festival events together. The dialogue should demonstrate:

a. Cultural clarification
b. Use of modal language for suggestions and preferences
c. Turn-taking, negotiation, and consensus-building

Students rehearse the dialogue with a focus on clarity, spontaneity, and audience-consciousness. Particular attention is paid to mediation strategies such as:

a. Paraphrasing cultural concepts
b. Simplifying or explaining unfamiliar vocabulary
c. Checking for understanding

Optionally, some selected pairs perform their dialogues to the class or record their videocalls.

Then, students regroup to reflect on their performance and communicative strategies. Key discussion prompts include:

a. What was easy or difficult about explaining the festival events?
b. What cultural references needed clarification?
c. How did you negotiate differences and make decisions collaboratively?
d. What mediation strategies did you use (e.g., simplifying, comparing, checking understanding)?

The teacher facilitates an open discussion and provides formative feedback on the use of mediation strategies, clarity of cultural explanation, language use, and interactional competence.

This activity qualifies as a mediation task because learners are required to explain culturally embedded concepts and events to a peer who lacks contextual knowledge. In doing so, they bridge cultural and informational gaps by adapting their language, anticipating misunderstandings, and providing accessible explanations. The use of dialogic format reinforces the interactive dimension of mediation, where both parties ask, clarify, and negotiate meaning. Furthermore, the "Compass Points" thinking routine encourages critical reflection and perspective-taking—main components of successful cross-cultural mediation. The simulation of a videocall adds an element of digital and pragmatic literacy, training learners to use real communication formats.

By the end of the activity, learners will have:

a. Gained confidence in explaining local cultural practices to a non-local audience.
b. Practiced collaborative decision-making through dialogue.
c. Applied mediation strategies in an interactive, task-based context.
d. Developed perception of cultural sensitivity in planning shared experiences.
e. Improved spoken fluency, clarity, and pragmatic use of language for interpersonal communication.

4.4. Resources

To effectively implement the series of mediation-based activities described, a variety of materials and resources are required. These have been organised into distinct categories to facilitate planning, preparation, and delivery. The categories include "Instructional and learning materials", "Technology resources", "Collaboration and presentation tools", and "Assessment and feedback resources":

a. Instructional and learning materials
    a. Infographic comparing Spanish and United Kingdom systems (Appendix 7.1.)
    b. *MediaMarkt* technology catalogue (digital or printed) (Appendix 7.2.)
    c. Screenshots or instructions of Amazon's product return process (Appendix 7.3.)
    d. Background videos, images, or leaflets about local festivals (Appendix 7.4.)
    e. Thinking routines templates (Appendix 7.6.)

f. Student task cards (Appendix 7.7.)

b. Technology resources
    a. Digital devices (e.g., computers, smartphones) for research, and recording
    b. Voice recording apps or software (e.g., smartphone recorder)
    c. Platforms for uploading and sharing content (e.g., Microsoft Teams)
    d. Access to internet for viewing videos, infographics, or online content
c. Collaboration and presentation tools
    a. Chalkboard for brainstorming ideas
    b. Note-taking materials (i.e., paper or digital) for individual and peer reflections
    c. Presentation tools (e.g., Canva, PowerPoint) for presenting the activities
d. Assessment and Feedback resources
    a. Teacher's rubric or checklist for mediation tasks (Appendix 7.8.)
    b. Peer feedback forms or guidelines for constructive commenting on recordings and presentations (Appendix 7.9.)
    c. Self-assessment prompts (Appendix 7.10.)
    d. Activity-specific checklist (Appendix 7.11.)

This structure approach ensures that pedagogical and technical needs are met for a successful learning experience.

4.5. Assessment criteria

In line with the varied assessment approaches proposed—namely teacher observation during task preparation and performance, co-evaluation through peer feedback forms or rubrics, and self-assessment using checklists or reflective prompts—the integration of self-assessment and peer-assessment strategies play a significant role in fostering students' personal development. These strategies not only encourage learner autonomy and critical reflection, but also enable a more comprehensive evaluation process. Specifically, the use of these tools supports the assessment of both the final outcomes and the underlying processes and attitudes that contribute to students' overall growth and engagement.

5. CONCLUSIONS

> "Translation is not a matter of words only; it is a matter of making intelligible a whole culture".
>
> Anthony Burgess

Mediation reveals that even the most straightforward and intuitive communicative act—such as explaining a concept to someone unfamiliar with it or coordinating a shared plan—is, in fact, a significant moment of linguistic and cultural negotiation. While these actions may appear ordinary, they are fundamental to human interaction. However, as this study has demonstrated, integrating such natural practices into the EFL classroom presents considerable challenges. It demands pedagogical intentionality, strategic task design, and a reconceptualization of language use as a socially implanted and dynamic process.

In everyday life, individuals are engaged in ongoing efforts to understand others and to be understood themselves. This process unfolds across personal, academic, and professional domains, where meaning is co-constructed through the exchange of perspectives, experiences, and knowledge. Although mutual understanding may occur more readily within culturally or linguistically homogeneous communities, globalisation has greatly expanded both the scope and complexity of communicative encounters. Today's learners must be prepared to navigate interactions that traverse not only linguistic boundaries, but also divergent worldviews, cultural references, and communicative norms.

Within this context, mediation emerges as a vital competence, reflecting the inherently pluralistic and situated character of language. It underscores the reality that what is self-evident to one speaker may be entirely opaque to another, and thus requires a willingness to adapt, clarify, and negotiate meaning. Translation and interpreting, from this perspective, are not merely professional activities but paradigmatic forms of mediation, enabling engagement across linguistic and cultural divides. Their increasing relevance in a media-structured, globally connected world highlights the necessity of cultivating these skills within educational settings.

By placing CEFR mediation descriptors within a TBLT framework, this research has demonstrated a practical approach to foster these competences in the EFL classroom. Such

integration supports the development of speaking skills not only in terms of linguistic accuracy and fluency, but also in relation to interpersonal effectiveness, intercultural awareness, and cognitive flexibility. Mediation tasks—whether involving reformulation, explanation, negotiation, or summarisation—encourage learners to view language as a tool for cooperation and understanding, rather than merely as a system of rules.

In conclusion, this paper advocates for a broader, socially grounded conception of communicative competence, wherein translation, interpreting, and mediation function as interconnected strategies for meaning-making in plurilingual contexts. These practices are not intended to erase differences, but to bring them into productive dialogue. In doing so, they embody the educational imperative of preparing learners not only to speak a language, but to use it thoughtfully, ethically, and effectively in a world that increasingly demands clarity and empathy.

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7. APPENDICES

7.1. Appendix 1. Comparison of Spanish and Great Britain educational systems

Appendix 1 presents an infographic that visually compares key aspects of the Spanish and British systems. This resource provides a brief overview, facilitating a comparative analysis that supports the Section 4.3.1. of this paper.

Age	GB British System	ES Spanish System
3-4	Nursery (Foundation Stage)	1º Educación Infantil
4-5	Reception (Foundation Stage)	2º Educación Infantil
5-6	Year 1 (Key Stage 1) Primary Education	3º Educación Infantil
6-7	Year 2 (Key Stage 1) Primary Education	1º Educación Primaria
7-8	Year 3 (Key Stage 1) Primary Education	2º Educación Primaria
8-9	Year 4 (Key Stage 2) Primary Education	3º Educación Primaria
9-10	Year 5 (Key Stage 2) Primary Education	4º Educación Primaria
10-11	Year 6 (Key Stage 2) Primary Education	5º Educación Primaria
11-12	Year 7 (Key Stage 3) Secondary Education	6º Educación Primaria
12-13	Year 8 (Key Stage 3) Secondary Education	1º ESO
13-14	Year 9 (Key Stage 3) Secondary Education	2º ESO
14-15	Year 10 (Key Stage 4) Secondary Education	3º ESO
15-16	Year 11 (Key Stage 11) Secondary Education	4º ESO
16-17	Year 12 (Key Stage 5) 1º AS Level	1º Bachillerato
17-18	Year 13 (Key Stage 5) 2º A Level	2º Bachillerato

Table 14. Infographic comparing Spanish and British educational systems

Source: Own elaboration based on British Council (n.d.)

7.2. Appendix 2. *MediaMarkt's* digital technology catalogue

Appendix 2 includes a current digital technology catalogue from *MediaMarkt*. This document serves as an authentic example of consumer technology offerings in Spain, which are analysed in Section 4.3.2.

Figure 1. Screenshot of MediaMarkt's digital catalogue

Source: MediaMarkt (2025)

The digital catalogue is accessible at the following link: https://specials.mediamarkt.es/tools/folleto/peninsula/20250702/index.html

7.3. Appendix 3. Instructions of Amazon's product return process

Appendix 3 contains the official instructions for Amazon's product return process, available both English and Spanish. This appendix is used in Section 4.3.3. to examine procedural texts and cross-cultural differences in online retail practices.

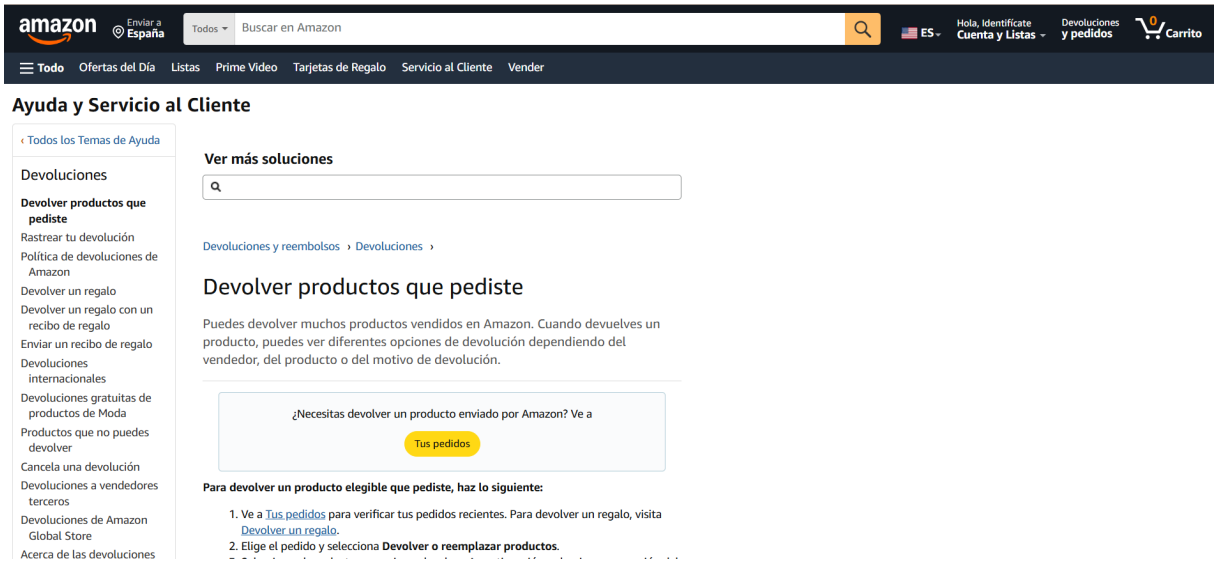


Figure 2. Screenshot of Amazon's product return process

Source: Amazon (2025)

The instructions can be accessed via the following link: https://www.amazon.com/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=G6E3B2E8QPHQ88KF&language=es_US

7.4. Appendix 4. Information sourced about *Valladolid's* local festivals

Appendix 4 provides information sourced from local websites regarding festivals in Valladolid. This material is used in Section 4.3.4. to contextualise local traditions and their significance within the broader cultural landscape.

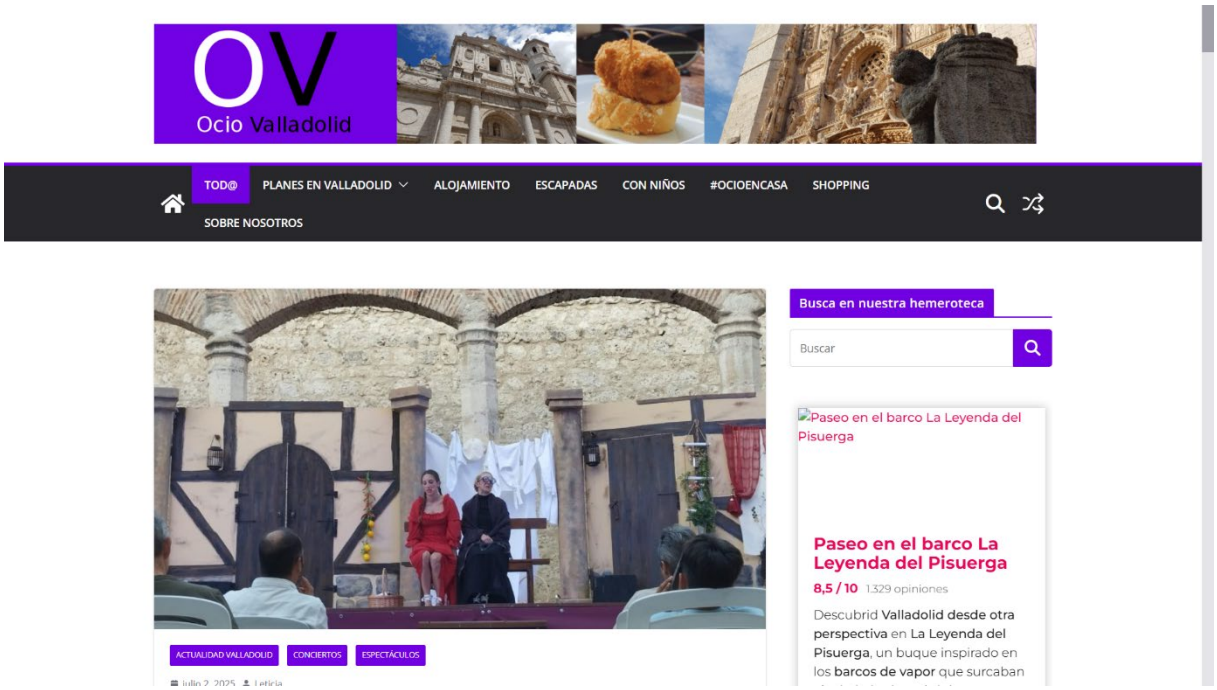


Figure 3. Screenshot of the web page "Ocio Valladolid"

Source: Noticias de Valladolid (2025)

For further reference, consult the information at the following web address: https://ociovalladolid.com/noticias-de-valladolid/

Figure 4. Screenshot of the section "Festivales"

Source: Conciertos Valladolid (2025)

For further reference, consult the information at the following web address: https://conciertosvalladolid.es/festivales-en-valladolid/

7.5. Appendix 5. About thinking routines

Appendix 5 offers an overview of thinking routines developed by Project Zero at Harvard Graduate School of Education.

PZ's Thinking Routines Toolbox is a resource developed by Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. It provides a collection of simple, flexible routines designed to scaffold and support student thinking across all ages and disciplines. The routines are intended to make students' thinking visible, deepen, understanding, and endorse metacognition.

A thinking routine is a set of questions or brief sequence of steps that guide learners through processes such as observation, analysis, reasoning, and reflection. It helps students organise their ideas, reason carefully, and reflect on how they make sense of information.

These routines are designed to be adaptable and used at any point in a lesson—whether introducing a topic, exploring ideas in depth, or reflecting on learning.

The toolbox organises routines into several categories, each supporting different aspects of thinking:

Category	Description
Core thinking routines	Simple routines for use across disciplines and age groups.
Introducing & exploring ideas	Spark curiosity and help articulate initial thinking.
Digging deeper into ideas	Build deeper understanding through analysis and evaluation.
Synthesising & organising ideas	Help students draw conclusions and distil the essence of topics.
Investigating objects and systems	Encourage close observation and analysis of objects or systems.
Perspective-taking	Explore multiple viewpoints and consider controversies or dilemmas.
Considering controversies, dilemmas, and perspectives	Promote students to explore and examine diverse perspective within complex issues.
Generating possibilities & analogies	Foster creative thinking and analogy-making.
Exploring art, images, and objects	Use visual materials to prompt thinking.
Global thinking	Encourage connections to broader, global contexts.

Table 15. The seven categories of PZ's thinking routines

Source: Own elaboration based on Harvard Project Zero (n.d.)

The thinking routines used during the activities are part of the following categories:

Thinking routine	Category (Project Zero)	Description
Creative Question starts	Introducing & exploring ideas	Helps learners practice developing good questions and sparks curiosity for further exploration.
See-Think-Wonder	Introducing & exploring ideas	Encourages careful observation and sets the stage for inquiry and discussion.
Think-Pair-Share	Core thinking	A foundational routine used for sharing ideas and building collaborative thinking.
Compass Points	Introducing & exploring ideas	Helps learners explore various sides of a proposition or idea before expressing an opinion.

Table 16. Classification of the thinking routines used according to their category

Source: Own elaboration based on Harvard Project Zero (n.d.)

The toolbox is accessible online and allows users to filter routines by teaching subject, learning goal, or routine name. Each routine includes a description, purpose, and suggestions for classroom application.

In summary, PZ's Thinking Routines Toolbox is a comprehensive, research-based resource for educators seeking to encourage deeper thinking, engagement, and reflection in learners. Its routines are practical adaptable, and grounded in decades of educational research.

7.6. Appendix 6. Thinking routines templates

Appendix 6 contains the templates designed for classroom implementation of four specific thinking routines: "Creative Question Starts", "See-Think-Wonder", "Think-Pair-Share", and "Compass Points". These templates are referenced in Section 4.4. as practical tools to scaffold student engagement and analytical thinking.

- *Creative Question Starts*

Instructions: Use one of the questions starters below to form an interesting and thought-provoking question about the topic.

Starters:

- ❖ Why…?
- ❖ What if…?
- ❖ How would it be different if…?
- ❖ What are the reasons…?
- ❖ Suppose that…?
- ❖ What would change if…?
- ❖ What might happen if…?

Your creative questions:

1. .....
2. .....
3. .....
4. .....
5. .....
6. .....
7. .....

What makes the questions interesting or useful?

.....

.....

- *See-Think-Wonder*

Instructions: Look closely at the object, image, or information and respond in each section.

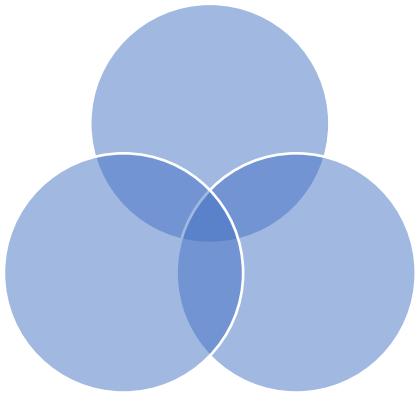
See 🔎	Think 🤔	Wonder ❓
What do you notice? (List observations)	What do you think is going on? (Interpret meanings)	What does it make you curious about? (Ask questions)

- *Think-Pair-Share*

Instructions: Look at the information and respond in each section.

Think 🖍️	Pair 🤝	Share 📣
What do I think and know about the topic?	What did my partner and I discuss together?	What idea will I share with the whole group?

Optional: Draw a Venn Diagram below to compare ideas with your partner.



- *Compass Points*

Instructions: Fill in each direction with your thoughts:

  - E = Exited

What excites you about this festival? What are you looking forward to?

.....

.....

  - W = Worrisome

What are your concerns or worries about attending the festival?

.....

.....

  - N = Need to know

What information do you need to gather before inviting your friend?

.....

.....

  - S = Suggestion

What is your current plan, and what next steps will you take?

.....

7.7. Appendix 7. Student task cards

Appendix 7 contains the student task cards used throughout the instructional sequence. These cards outline the task of the four activities.

Activity 1	
Task	Explain the Spanish education system to a British friend.
Your mission	Use simple English to explain the key parts of the Spanish education system.
Materials	Use a comparison chart, if needed.
Speech organisation	Use phrases as "Primary school starts when…", "It's different because…".
Tip	Use the infographic or make your own diagram.
Pair up	One is Spanish, one is British. Then, swap roles and explain again.

Table 17. Student task card of activity 1

Source: Own elaboration

Activity 2	
Task	Choose a tech product and explain it to your classmates.
Your mission	Use clear, simple English to describe what the item does and why someone would want it.
Speech organisation	Use phrases as "It helps you to…", "This is useful because…".
Tip	Look at the picture, think about its use, and ask questions such as "What problem does it solve?"
Team up	In groups, pick a product and explain it to the class. Answer their questions.

Table 18. Student task card of activity 2

Source: Own elaboration

Activity 3	
Task	Record a voice message explaining how to return a product on Amazon.
Your mission	Guide step-by-step a friend who has never return a product on Amazon.
Speech organisation	Use phrases as "First, go to your orders…", "Then click on…", "Make sure to…".
Tip	Practice with a partner before recording.
Record	A 1-2 minutes voice message. Use clear, helpful language.

Table 19. Student task card of activity 3

Source: Own elaboration

Activity 4	
Task	Plan a visit to a local festival with a friend who is not from your town.
Your mission	Choose a few events and explain what they are. Help your friend understand and decide what to do together.
Speech organisation	Use phrases as "There is a concert at…", "We could go see…", "It's traditional because…".
Tip	Use the Compass Points tool to think about your plan.
Pair up	One is local, one is visitor. Plan your day in a video call simulation. Then, swap roles and plan again.

Table 20. Student task card of activity 4

Source: Own elaboration

7.8. Appendix 8. Teacher assessment rubric

Appendix 8 presents the teacher assessment rubric developed for evaluating student performance on the targeted activities. This rubric presents the criteria and performance levels used to ensure consistent and objective assessment. Its inclusion offers transparency regarding the evaluative framework and supports the reliability of the study's findings.

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Needs improvement (1)
Language use	Uses a wide range of vocabulary and accurate grammar.	Minor errors, but appropriate vocabulary and grammar.	Limited vocabulary or noticeable grammar mistakes.	Frequent errors that impede understanding.
Mediation strategies	Consistently adapts, paraphrases, and clarifies effectively.	Often adapts or clarifies with success.	Sometimes unclear; limited adaptation.	Rarely attempts to clarify or adapt content.
Task fulfilment	Fully completes the task with relevant and well-organised content.	Completes the task with some minor gaps.	Partially completes the task.	Does not complete the task or goes off-topic.
Collaboration / Interaction	Engages fully; supports and builds on others' contributions.	Participates actively with some collaborative effort.	Basic participation; limited interaction.	Minimal or no participation.

Cultural and audience awareness	Highly aware; adapts content appropriately for audience.	Some evidence of audience awareness.	Minimal audience awareness.	No evidence of audience consideration.

Table 21. Assessment rubric for evaluating student's performance

Source: Own elaboration with the help of ChatGPT

7.9. Appendix 9. Peer feedback form

Appendix 9 provides the peer feedback form employed during collaborative activities. This instrument is designed to facilitate structured peer assessment, enabling students to reflect on their classmates' contributions and provide constructive feedback. The form supports the development of evaluative and metacognitive skills, as discussed in Section 4.5.

Peer's Name/Group: .....

Activity Name: .....

1. One thing my partner did well was:

.....

2. One thing he/she could improve is:

.....

3. A mediation strategy he/she used well was (e.g., paraphrasing, simplifying, asking for clarification):

.....

4. Something I did not understand or needed more clarification about:

.....

5. Overall, I would describe his/her communication as:
    a. ☐ Clear
    b. ☐ Mostly clear
    c. ☐ Unclear
    d. ☐ Confusing

7.10. Appendix 10. Self-assessment prompts

Appendix 10 includes the self-assessment prompts administered to students following key tasks. These prompts encourage learners to reflect on their own performance, challenges encountered, and strategies employed. The use of self-assessment is integral to fostering learner autonomy and reflective practice, as explored in Section 4.5.

Name: .....

1. What did I do well in this task?

.....

2. What was the hardest part for me?

.....

3. Did I explain or adapt something for my partner? How?

.....

4. Was my message clear and well-structured? What would I change?

.....

5. Did I think about my audience's background or needs?
    a. ☐ Yes, a lot
    b. ☐ A little
    c. ☐ Not really
6. One new skill or strategy I used today was:

.....

7.11. Appendix 11. Activity-specific checklist

Appendix 11 contains activity-specific checklists designed to guide students through complex tasks. These checklists break down activities into manageable steps, clarifying expectations and supporting self-monitoring. Their use aims to enhance task completition rates and promote independent learning, as references in Section 4.5.

Activity 1	
✓	Criteria

☐	I created multiple open-ended questions using prompts as “Why…?” “What if…?”
☐	I used clear language adapted for a non-Spanish audience.
☐	I participated in group sharing and cultural comparison.
☐	I played both roles in the mediation dialogue.
☐	I reflected on the process and shared insights.

Table 22. Checklist of activity 1

Source: Own elaboration

Activity 2	
✓	Criteria
☐	I carefully observed and described tech product visuals.
☐	I inferred possible uses and user needs.
☐	I asked relevant and curious questions.
☐	I used peer-friendly explanations of tech products.
☐	I engaged in Q&A using mediation strategies.

Table 23. Checklist of activity 2

Source: Own elaboration

Activity 3	
✓	Criteria
☐	I thought independently about Amazon’s return process.
☐	I compared ideas with a partner and refined steps.
☐	I delivered a clear and supportive voice message.
☐	I simplified instructions using sequencing phrases.
☐	I reflected on communication effectiveness.

Table 24. Checklist of activity 3

Source: Own elaboration

Activity 4	
✓	Criteria
☐	I explored all four compass directions (E, W, N, S) thoughtfully.
☐	I explained festival events in accessible language.
☐	I demonstrated negotiation and shared planning.

☐	I used mediation strategies (clarifying, checking understanding).
☐	I reflected on cultural explanation and decision-making.

Table 25. Checklist of activity 4

Source: Own elaboration