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MULTIMODALITY AND MEDIATION IN THE POLICIES REGULATING THE OFFICIAL SCHOOLS OF LANGUAGES: THE CASE OF THE VALENCIAN COMMUNITY

Abstract. Since its recent implementation in the education curriculum as an independent language activity, mediation is currently the fifth language-related skill learnt and evaluated at the Official Schools of Languages in the Valencian Community (Conselleria d'Educació, Cultura i Esport, 2019a). Although this might be regarded as a positive change in line with new pedagogical trends (Catalayud-Díez, 2019) that foster plurilingual and pluricultural competence development (Council of Europe, 2020), the fact that mediation is approached as being purely linguistic does not correlate with the characteristics and needs of the 21st century, in particular, the call for multimodal literacies (Jewitt, 2008). The present study approaches mediation from the perspective of social semiotic multimodal analysis and its implications within the legislation regulating the Official Schools of Languages in the Valencian Community. Particularly, the fundamental goals of this study are (1) to find out how mediation is conceived in the legislation of the mentioned context, (2) whether multimodality is considered and, if so, (3) what multimodal aspects are acknowledged. As a first step, this study includes a literature review on the concept of multimodality and its relationship with mediation within the educational landscape. In addition, we performed a thematic analysis of the legal documents that regulate this official non-compulsory education context. Our findings revealed inconsistent terminology, misalignment between mediation guidelines and evaluation criteria, and both limited and incoherent references to multimodality. Therefore, a shift from the traditional way of approaching language skills towards a multimodal approach in this education context (Ciaramita, 2023) is key to conform to the linguistically diverse and technological society we live in (Alfonso-Lozano & Giralt-Lorenz, 2014).

Keywords: mediation; multimodality; non-compulsory education; Official School of Languages; language policies; language skills.

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Introduction

The ongoing nature of the society we live in has been accelerated by the impact of new technologies (Ho, et. al., 2011) and, as a result, both knowledge and communication are no longer stable, static, and uniform (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). Instead, we now resort to an increasing number of resources to convey meaning, which can be referred to as semiotic modes (Jewitt, 2008). Considering that, focusing only on alphabetical and linguistic literacy would be a choice that does not align with the needs of the digital age we live in (Lim et. al., 2022). In their call for multimodal literacies, Cope and Kalantzis (2009) highlighted that the concept of *multiliteracies* had to be also associated with the phenomenon of *multilingualism* due to globalisation.

Nowadays, English is widely regarded as the contemporary *Lingua Franca* (Fortanet-Gómez, 2013). Additionally, when it comes to the context of education in non-English speaking states, English is referred to as a Foreign Language. This is the case of the education context examined in the present study: Official Schools of Languages (henceforth, EOIs) in Spain. Official Schools of Languages are known and referred to as *Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas* in the official documents that constitute their legal framework, as these are written in Spanish or the regional language(s) of the different regions (e.g., Valencian in the Valencian Community). In this study, we use the English translation and its abbreviation *EOI* or its plural form with -s, which comes from the Spanish designation, in order to facilitate the reading process. EOIs are non-compulsory public education centres that are aimed at the teaching and certification of official, co-official, and foreign languages. Furthermore, they are organised according to the guidelines of the Council of Europe, the Spanish Ministry of Education, and their respective regional governments.

In light of the increasing plurilingual and pluricultural landscape, the Council of Europe argued that the traditional model of four discrete skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—was inadequate to fully “capture the complex reality of communication” (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 30) because the resources we employ to create meaning are multimodal (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). The Council of Europe (2018) outlined that mediation conceives the user as a social agent who co-constructs meaning according to

the circumstances of the communicative event. Therefore, mediation was incorporated in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (henceforth, CEFR) as the new fifth communicative language activity that any contemporary language user needs (Ciaramita, 2023).

Although mediation and multimodality are both pivotal and closely interconnected concepts in the fields of communication, education, and technology, they remain conceptually distinct. While mediation is a language activity in which a user and/or learner undergoes “processes like creating the space and conditions for communicating and/or learning, collaborating to construct new meaning, encouraging others to construct or understand new meaning, and passing on new information in an appropriate form” (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 90), multimodality is an approach based on the assumption that contemporary communicators convey meaning through “organised sets of semiotic resources”, where language is just one more mode of communication (Jewitt, 2008, p. 246).

Multimodal mediation is also closely linked to multilingualism. This is because developing multimodal literacy enhances the fluid use of mediation strategies, and in turn, effective mediation is very likely to involve not only various modes of communication, but also multiple languages. This phenomenon is known as translanguaging, that is, the presence and integration of multiple languages in the same communicative exchange (Lin, 2018). The focus of the present study is, however, on the various semiotic modes, emphasising how these modes should be developed alongside mediation to support effective communication. Indeed, mediation, either through translanguaging or not, can contribute to the preservation of linguistic diversity and the development of both plurilingual and pluricultural competence, as recognised in the latest CEFR Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2020).

What is more, multimodality is a field of study that is gaining recognition in the world of education, as multimodal literacy enables the design of real-life learning experiences that address the diverse needs of students (Lim et. al., 2022) and results in multiple advantages such as enhancing students’ communicative abilities (Cervera Moya, 2020) or contributing to persuasion in presentations (Valeiras-Jurado, 2021). Mediation, on the other

hand, is a relatively new area of study that has not been deeply explored, particularly in the context of Official Schools of Languages. Previous studies that analyse mediation in EOIs focus on its origins (Vila-Rubio, in Carreras-i-Goicoechea & Pérez-Vázquez, 2010); definition (Trovato, 2015); types of activities (De Arriba-García & Cantero-Serena, 2004a); design of activities (Sanz-Estève, 2020); strategies and abilities required (De Arriba-García & Cantero-Serena, 2004b); evaluation (Sánchez-Rodríguez, 2020); and stumbling blocks (Nadales-Bonilla & Valderrama-Molina, 2020). However, to our knowledge, none of the existing studies deals with the link between mediation and multimodality except for Ciaramita (2023), who analyses the role of mediation in language teaching and learning in Spanish and Italian secondary education contexts.

Therefore, considering the urge for education to evolve alongside society, and recognising the key roles of the English language, multimodality, and mediation in today's communication landscape, this study pursues three main objectives. Firstly, we will explore how mediation is conceptualised by European, national, and regional policymakers. Then, we will examine the role of multimodality within language policies. The following research questions will guide this study:

RQ1. How is mediation conceived in language policies regulating the Official School of Languages in the Valencian Community?

RQ2. Is multimodality taken into account by language policies in this context?

RQ3. If so, what multimodal aspects are considered?

Hence, the following subsections include a literature review section that establishes the state of the art, followed by a contextualisation of the study and an overview of the legal framework of the educational context. Finally, the results are presented, leading into a final discussion and conclusion.

Theoretical Background

Defining Mediation

According to Piccardo and North (2017), pioneers in the field of mediation in language teaching, mediation is crucial for shedding light on processes that occur at the intersection of the social and the individual. Unlike reception and production, which are key components of mediation and often involve interaction, mediation extends further by introducing the construction of new meaning, fostering a shared understanding through mutual comprehension (Piccardo et al., 2019). Despite that, and although it is widely-known that all mediation activities require the presence of a “third party” to intervene in a communicative exchange where there is a communication barrier, mediation is a complex concept to define and its definitions vary according to the examined context (Vila-Rubio, in Carreras-i-Goicoechea & Pérez-Vázquez, 2010, p. 25).

In Spain, mediation emerged in the mid-nineties in response to the developing pluricultural society (Fernández de Casadevante-Mayordomo, 2023) and the growing need for communicative facilitators to address potential language and communication barriers arising from increasing cultural and religious diversity (Trovato, 2015). Although mediation has always been an inherent part of human interaction, it was until the 1970s—coinciding with the growing visibility of migratory flows—that it began to be studied more intensively. Initially, the concept was primarily associated with translating and interpreting because of the urgent need to facilitate communication across linguistic boundaries. Nevertheless, its scope and function have evolved significantly over time (Nadales-Bonilla & Valderrama-Molina, 2020).

Similarly, when the Council of Europe published the CEFR in 2001, mediation was described as an oral or written activity that “made communication possible between persons who are unable, for whatever reason, to communicate with each other directly” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 14). Furthermore, the Council of Europe (2001) stated that mediation covered two main activities: translation and interpretation. However, among the mediation

examples presented to illustrate this activity, the presence of cultural cues was already implicitly acknowledged.

In fact, in 2018, the Council of Europe published an updated version of the CEFR in which they highlighted that the 2001 version of the CEFR “does not develop the concept of mediation to its full potential” (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 33), because mediation was mostly based on interpretation and translation and the main focus was on language. Consequently, the concept was reframed and the Council of Europe outlined that mediation takes place in a social, pedagogic, cultural, linguistic or professional context in which the user or learner becomes an indispensable social agent who facilitates connections and aids in the construction or transmission of meaning.

In addition, the 2018 version of the Companion Volume asserts that the mediation process can encompass a single language or different languages. This is a process that the Council of Europe names as *cross-linguistic mediation*, though linguistic studies which deal with discourse analysis in classroom settings refer to this process as *traslanguaging* (Lin, 2018). The latter was coined in Wales in 1994 when analysing the alternation between Welsh and English in a classroom setting and is currently used to refer to a multimodal process involving the alternation of different languages in the same communicative exchange. Translanguaging is commonly studied in conjunction with the theory of *trans-semiotizing*, a process where one semiotic mode is resemiotised into another mode (Lin, 2018). In fact, the 2020 version of the Companion Volume added that, while mediating, users may need to deal with more than one modality (e.g., from visual to spoken). This process is named as *cross-modal mediation*. The fact that the Council of Europe (2020) underpin the relevance of several communicative modes and the possibility to categorise mediation as *cross-modal* brings us to analyse the relationship between mediation and multimodal literacies.

Mediation and Multimodality: The Linking Bridge

Multimodality is a multifaceted concept that acknowledges language as one of an infinite set of resources used to communicate and create meaning (Jewitt, 2008). As suggested by Kress (2010), multimodal communication

involves the integration of various modes such as layout, gestures, and facial expressions that interact within specific social and cultural contexts. The New London Group (NLG) played a pivotal role in advocating for a multimodal shift in education, emphasising the need for pedagogy to address the social and cultural changes of the 21st century through a multimodal lens (Loerts, 2013). While multimodality can be understood as a theory, a perspective, or a methodological application (Jewitt, 2008), this study specifically adopts the social semiotic multimodal analysis approach, which views sign-making as a social process. Despite the depth of this field, the primary focus of this paper lies in exploring mediation and its intricate relationship with multimodality rather than the broader aspects of multimodality itself. As stated in the previous section, an illustrating example of the interwoven relationship between mediation and multimodality can be *cross-modal mediation*, a concept to be explored in the following paragraph.

Cross-modal mediation (Council of Europe, 2020) takes place recurrently and is conceptualised through the principle of resemiotisation, which is based on the assumption that, when one semiotic mode is interpreted, its information can be conveyed by means of a different semiotic mode or a combination of several modes (O'Halloran et. al., 2016). For instance, when a student does not understand a concept read from a book (i.e., written mode) and the teacher explains it aloud (i.e., spoken mode) accompanied by a mindmap (i.e., visual and written modes), cross-modal mediation takes place. In fact, O'Halloran et. al. (2016, p. 202) claim that the "product" of any process involving resemiotisation is a multimodal text. The fact that the noun *product* is used in relation to the communication process brings us to link current communication practices to Cope and Kalantzis' (2009, p. 177) "pedagogy of design", in which learners are considered to be active agents able to represent, transform, and design new meanings made up of multiple meaning-making resources. In fact, this conception of agents as active designers of multimodal messages is what constitutes the basis of both contemporary communication (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001) and the multiliteracies theory (Jewitt, 2008). Multiliteracies aim at adapting teaching and learning to the contemporary digitalized society by allowing educational curricula to be open to social and cultural requirements whilst

catering the diverse needs of contemporary learners (Lim et al., 2022).

In EOIs, learners are expected to understand, mediate, and (co-) produce complex multimodal texts according to the requirements of the communicative context. In the execution of such language activities, mediation is crucial to “linking to previous knowledge, adapting language, breaking down complicated information, amplifying a dense text and/or streamlining a text” (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 35). In fact, these processes are classified as *mediation strategies*, a section in the Companion Volume which follows the section *mediation activities*, including activities such as *mediating a text*, also known as *textual mediation* (Council of Europe, 2020). It must be highlighted, though, that, as we live in a multimodal society where language is just one communicative tool, it is inconceivable to refer to the concept of mediation without taking into account multimodal literacies (Ciaramita, 2023). Therefore, our primary interest lies in exploring whether the legislation acknowledges texts used when mediating as sources consisting of more than one mode, that is, texts made up of a range of multiple resources that are meshed into a coherent whole (Jewitt, 2008).

The present study will analyse the role of multimodality in the legislation regulating mediation language activities in the Official Schools of Languages located in the Valencian Community (Spain), a context described in the following section.

Contextualisation

In Spain, according to Organic Law 3/2020, English can be learnt as a FL since the second cycle of early childhood education. From that stage, English is the compulsory first foreign language in primary education, secondary education, and upper secondary education. Additionally, English is taught in non-compulsory official educational institutions such as universities, centres of adult education, and Official Schools of Languages (European Commission, 2024), the latter being the focal point of the present analysis. The Spanish State Registration of Education Centres (2019) recognises a total of 280 Official Schools of Languages distributed into 19 regions.

According to Cervera Moya (2020), students in this setting are adult learners from eighteen to eighty years old, and the student body is

characterised by being heterogeneous in terms of age, nationality, culture, socioeconomic status, and motivation. In accordance with Regulation 3/2019 (Conselleria d'Educació, Cultura i Esport, 2019b), at an EOI in the Valencian Community, one can learn the regional language (i.e., Valencian) and a wide variety of foreign languages such as English, French, German, Chinese, or Arabic.

If the focus is brought to the English Departments, language courses are divided into the three language proficiency levels (i.e., A, B, C) established by the Council of Europe (2020). Each of these levels consists of one or two subdivisions (e.g., C1 and C2) (Conselleria d'Educació, Cultura i Esport, 2019b) and two language course sublevels (e.g., 1C1 and 2C1).

Legal Framework

The mentioned public education centres of special regime are based on Royal Decree 1041/2017, 22nd of December, which sets the core curriculum for EOIs in Spain and is regulated by Organic Law 8/2013, 9th December and Decree Law 242/2019, 25th of October, which establishes and regulates the teaching and official curriculum of EOIs in the Valencian Community.

One of the main differences between the specified national decree and the regional decree law is that, whereas both detail B and C-levels, the latter is responsible for establishing the core curriculum for A-levels. Despite this, in both legal documents it is asserted that the curriculum of each level must be divided into general objectives and specific objectives, which must refer to the competences (e.g., syntactic competence) that are necessary to develop the different language activities (e.g., comprehension of oral texts) set by the law and the descriptors of quality that define the evaluation criteria of each language activity.

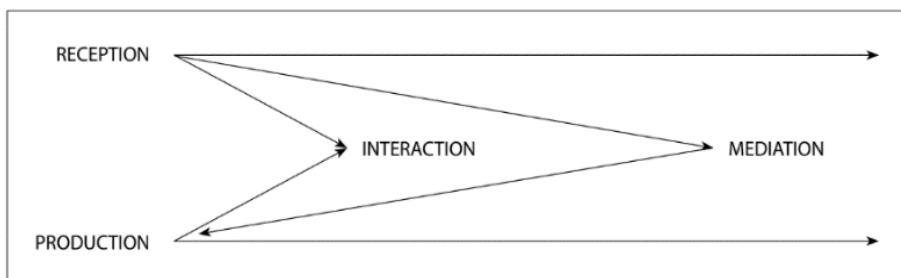
In addition to the specified legislation, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is a fundamental tool for EOIs. This document was published by the Council of Europe in 2001 (though the last update of its Companion Volume took place in 2020) and its main aims are to: (1) protect European linguistic and cultural richness; (2) facilitate

communication among European citizens; and (3) ensure transparency and coherence in national policies related to the teaching and learning of European modern languages.

The CEFR (2020) divides both communicative language activities and strategies into four main categories: reception, production, interaction, and mediation. The fourth category presented as a key communicative language activity and strategy is mediation, which “involves both reception and production plus, frequently, interaction” (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 34). In other words, as illustrated in Figure 1, the four communicative language activities are interrelated, and the curriculum must place special emphasis on mediation because it is the one that needs to be frequently combined with the other three.

Figure 1

The Relationship Between Reception, Production, Interaction, and Mediation



Note. From Council of Europe (2020, p. 34)

Having introduced the significant role of mediation and multimodality in the communication process, contextualised the setting of the present study, and outlined the legislation framework, the following section (i.e., Methodology) will now focus on the corpus and methodology employed in the study.

Methodology

In this section, the methodology employed to obtain the data of this study will be introduced and the documents that constitute the corpus will be

presented. Then, the focus will be brought to the thematic analysis carried out with the software for qualitative data analysis: ATLAS.ti 24.

The Corpus

The corpus of this study consists of four main legal documents which constitute the legal framework regulating language courses in Official Schools of Languages in the Valencian Community:

1. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Language, Teaching, Assessment (2001);
2. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Language, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume (2020);
3. Royal Decree 1041/2017, 22nd of December (2017); and
4. Decree Law 242/2019, 25th of October (2019).

Furthermore, two additional documents were considered to compare guidelines and evaluation criteria. These are the official evaluation charts used in the Valencian Community to evaluate (v) oral mediation tasks and (vi) written mediation tasks.

The selection of these six documents was made on the basis of their relevance in the organisation of language courses and examinations. The documents are open-access and are available on the official websites of each institution. Whereas the first two documents are available in the language of the present study (i.e., English), the other four documents have been analysed in Spanish because they have not been published in English.

Thematic Analysis

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis involves examining a data set by assigning codes to chunks of the text in order to identify recurring themes and patterns of meaning that are considered to be key ideas (i.e., themes) related to the research questions of a study. In this

study, data has been coded inductively. The study is corpus-driven and themes have been identified, coded, and analysed at an explicit level (i.e., semantic thematic analysis).

We have divided the study into the six different phases suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006): 1) familiarising ourselves with our data; 2) generating initial codes; 3) searching for themes; 4) reviewing themes; 5) defining and naming themes; and 6) producing the report. In each of these phases we have:

1. Exported the data set to ATLAS.ti 24 in order to identify key ideas and patterns that were coded and marked;
2. Generated a non-refined code system including the potential themes that align with the research questions based on the re-reading and note-taking processes of Phase 1;
3. Defined codes by writing brief descriptions to avoid misleading interpretations, classified codes into Code Groups together with their potential main themes (i.e., name of a Code Group) and subthemes, and assigned a code or more to the initially marked paragraphs, sentences, or individual terms on ATLAS.ti 24;
4. Revised the codes assigned during Phase 3, as well as validated, redefined, and/or discarded themes whenever necessary;
5. Re-examined the highlighted data for each theme thoroughly to ensure that the collated data was consistent with the core of each theme and that the names assigned to themes were precise enough; and
6. Analysed the refined and classified themes and data to interpret the results and answer the research questions.

In brief, this cyclical process involved reading the corpus repeatedly and analysing the data in increasing depth in order to identify key points and adapt the code system whenever required, turning out to be a result itself. The code system and results of the study will be presented in the following section.

Results and Discussion

The objective of the present study was to investigate the legal approach towards mediation in official non-compulsory language education centres of the Valencian Community and find out to what extent current policies consider multimodality and multimodal elements. In this section, we will discuss both the code system created to analyse the corpus and the overall results obtained from the thematic analysis.

Code System

As shown in Table 1, the code system created for this study consists of seven Code Groups and the titles of these Code Groups are related to the main themes analysed. In addition, each Code Group consists of several subcategories that can be referred to as subthemes. The code system is a result itself because it has been created purposefully and shaped throughout the whole thematic analysis process, unveiling the key results related to the three research questions of this study.

Table 1

Code System

CODE SYSTEM	
CODE GROUPS	SUBCATEGORIES WITHIN CODE GROUPS
1) COMPETENCES	1.1) Linguistic competence
	1.2) Pragmatic competence
	1.3) Sociolinguistic competence
2) MEDIATION	2.1) Mediation activities
	2.2) Mediation strategies
3) MEDIATION LEVEL DESCRIPTOR	3.1) Mediation general level descriptors
	3.2) A2 Level descriptor
	3.3) B1 Level descriptor
	3.4) B2 Level descriptor
	3.5) C1 Level descriptor
	3.6) C2 Level descriptor

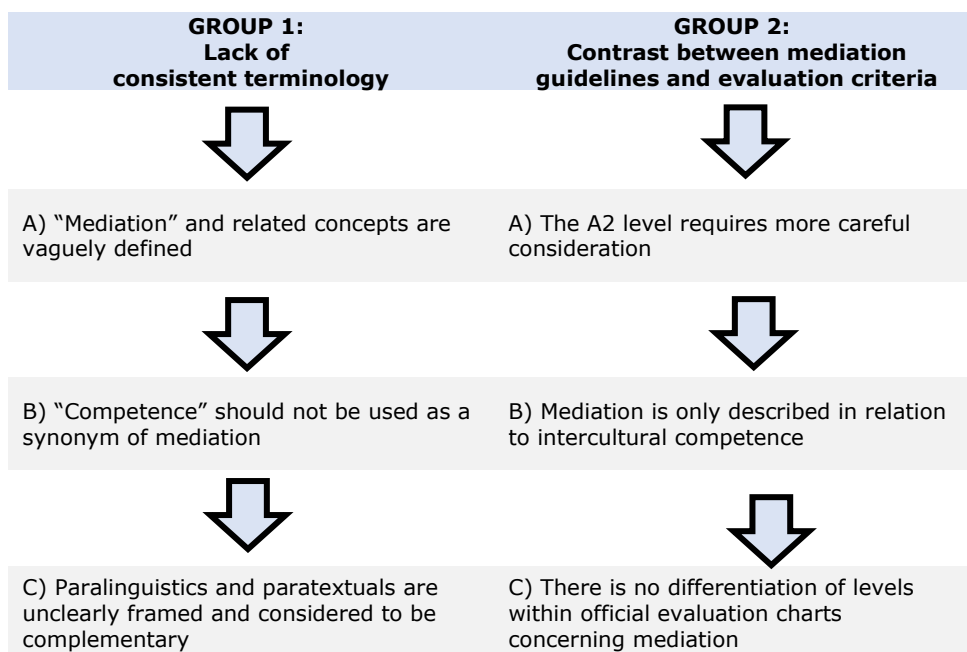
CODE SYSTEM	
CODE GROUPS	SUBCATEGORIES WITHIN CODE GROUPS
4) MEDIATION RUBRIC DESCRIPTOR	4.1) Mediation general rubric descriptors
	4.2) A2 Rubric descriptor
	4.3) B1 Rubric descriptor
	4.4) B2 Rubric descriptor
	4.5) C1 Rubric descriptor
	4.6) C2 Rubric descriptor
5) SYNONYMS OF MEDIATION	5.1) Language activity
	5.2) Language competence
	5.3) Mode of communication
	5.4) Part of the exam/test/evaluation
6) RELATED CONCEPTS	6.1) Ability
	6.2) Competence
	6.3) Skill
	6.4) Strategy
7) REFERENCES TO MULTIMODALITY	7.1) Body language
	7.2) Linguistic mode
	7.3) Modes
	7.4) Paralinguistics
	7.5) Visuals

Mediation in Language Policies of Valencian EOIs

In this section, results related to RQ1 will be analysed. Figure 2 portrays a differentiation between two groups of results that have been divided into two different thematic units related to RQ1: (1) Lack of consistent terminology and (2) Contrast between mediation guidelines and evaluation criteria. As Figure 2 shows, each group consists of several subcategories. Both the groups in the figure below and their subcategories will be detailed and discussed in the following sections. Particularly, the first section deals with the lack of consistent terminology, whereas its subsequent section analyses the contrast between mediation guidelines and evaluation criteria.

Figure 2

An Overview of Results from Group 1 and 2



Lack of Consistent Terminology

One of the main purposes of this study was to find out how mediation is referred to and described by language policies regulating EOIs. Consequently, we created the following three Code Groups: 2 (mediation), 5 (synonyms of mediation), and 6 (related concepts). Additionally, Code Group 1 in the code system (competences) will be analysed together with Group 1 of results because it originated when trying to frame the concept of mediation. We realised that, even though neither mediation nor competence are precisely outlined and differentiated from each other in their definitions, they consist of clearly distinguished subcategories, which have been also incorporated into our code system. The fact that improvement in precision is needed can be seen in the following quotation translated from page 127777 in the national decree:

In addition to the classification of GENERAL COMPETENCE, which will include the ACTIVITIES of comprehension of oral and written texts, production

and co-production of oral and written texts, and mediation for each level, it will also be possible to certify PARTIAL COMPETENCES corresponding to one or more of these LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, 2017, translated by Cervera Moya).

The quotation states that language activities include the comprehension of oral and written texts, the (co-)production of oral and written texts, and mediation. Despite this, the meaning of the word *competence* has not been clarified. In fact, it is understood that *general competence* is made up of the different language activities presented. Not until we reach Annex I of the same document do we find a distinction between some of these concepts:

For each level and LANGUAGE ACTIVITY (comprehension of oral and written texts; production and co-production of oral and written texts, and mediation), what the students will be able to do in various contexts and situations (OBJECTIVES), the COMPETENCES and content—knowledge, skills or abilities, and attitudes—that they will need to acquire and develop for this (COMPETENCES and contents), and the level of proficiency with which they will be able to perform each ACTIVITY (Evaluation criteria) (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, 2017, p. 127780, translated by Cervera Moya).

Except for language activities, other terms used in the previous quotation from the national decree remain unclear. In fact, *competences* have not been even distinguished from *contents*. Besides, other concepts like *destrezas* in the original version (see Appendix 1), which have been translated as *skills* or *abilities* in the previous quotation, are introduced (though not defined), which becomes even more challenging. Similarly, on page 35 of the Companion Volume, the Council of Europe (2020) approaches mediation as an activity and underscores that it can be compared to what was known as a *skill* in the past. Despite that, another possible synonym of mediation is presented: “mode of communication”. This can be seen in the following quotation:

As mentioned in discussing the CEFR descriptive scheme above, mediation was introduced to language teaching and learning in the CEFR in the move away from the four skills, as one of the four modes of communication, namely reception, production, interaction and mediation (see Figure 2). Very often when we use a language, several activities are involved; mediation combines reception, production and interaction (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 35).

As several concepts turned out to be so close to the concept of mediation, we created Code Group 5 to analyse potential synonyms and distinguish them from related concepts (Group 6). On the one hand, Code Group 5 (synonyms of mediation) includes (5.1) *language activity*, (5.2) *language competence*, (5.3) *mode of communication*, and (5.4) *part of the exam/test/evaluation*. Out of these subcategories, *language activity* is the most recurrent tag used to name mediation. There are at least 48 quotations including the concept *language activity*, whereas less than 10 quotations have been associated with each of the remaining possible synonyms.

A key finding has been detected when it comes to the evaluation system: one of the categories included in the official evaluation charts from certification exams includes the concept of *mediation competence* as one of the main areas to be evaluated. Conversely, this concept has not been found in the rest of the documents. Instead, the two European documents pay attention to mediation activities (e.g., acting as an intermediary in an informal situation) and mediation strategies (e.g., linking to previous knowledge), which are Subcategories 2.1 and 2.2 (i.e., respectively) of Code Group 2 (mediation). Thus, the highlighted finding of *mediation competence* can turn out to be controversial. If it is an independent language activity, and it is evaluated separately from other language activities such as the comprehension of written texts, why does *mediation competence* appear only in the evaluation chart? Why is mediation approached as a competence in the evaluation chart as in the Valencian Primary and Secondary Education curricula? As opposed to the legal framework of EOIs, Decree 106/2022 from the 5th of August and Decree 107/2022 from the 5th of August, which regulate primary and secondary

education curricula in the Valencian Community, recognise mediation as a competence to be developed in unison with the rest of competences, either linguistic or non-linguistic.

On the other hand, Code Group 6 includes concepts related to the concept of mediation: (6.1) *ability*, (6.2) *competence*, (6.3) *skill*, and (6.4) *strategy*. It must be underscored that these four concepts were initially part of Code Group 5 (synonyms of mediation). Nevertheless, during the refining phase of our thematic analysis, it was observed that these subcategories are not synonyms of mediation despite having a close relationship. Instead, Code Group 6 consists of concepts that are related to mediation. Firstly, as seen in the following quotation and according to Huang (2022), *ability* can be understood as the *capability* to do something: "Progress in language learning is most clearly evidenced in the learner's ability to engage in observable language activities and to operate communication strategies" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 57).

Then, Subcategory 6.2 (competence) led to the creation of Code Group 1 (competences), which consists of three main subcategories that will be examined in the following paragraph. When it comes to Subcategory 6.3 (skills), it has been acknowledged that, whereas this concept was used as a synonym of mediation and other language activities (e.g., oral production) in the past and, because of that, it is sometimes used to approach mediation, this should be avoided unless the adjective *traditional* is used before the noun *skill*. If this were not the case, the imprecise use of the term *skill* could lead to, at least, two different interpretations: *traditional skill* or what the Council of Europe (2001, p. 160) defined in 2001 as a "cognitive factor" that influences a learner when doing a task. Finally, the last subcategory of Code Group 6 in the code system (strategy) is related to Code Group 2 (mediation), which has been divided into two different subcategories: (2.1) mediation activities and (2.2) mediation strategies.

Moving on to Code Group 1 in the code system (competences), the concept of *competence* itself is not precisely defined, and there is a lack of cohesion in its use and definition. This can be linked to the fact that, as acknowledged by Kiessling and Fabry (2021), there is no uniform definition of the overall concept of *competence*. In modern linguistics, the term *competence*

was introduced by Noam Chomsky in 1965, who used it to describe the user's knowledge of grammatical rules. However, when it comes to the discipline of linguistics and the context of education in the contemporary era, if language is understood as a tool for communication (Rabiah, 2018) and the teaching-learning approach is communicative rather than grammatically focused, the concept of competence must be referred to as communicative language competence (Council of Europe, 2020). This concept was coined by Hymes in 1972, who strongly opposed to Chomsky's exclusively grammatical approach and stood up for the need to incorporate the sociocultural dimension (Hymes, 1972). Eight years later, Canale and Swain analysed the concept of *communicative competence* and proposed three different components necessary to make it possible: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). In addition, Canale (1983) suggested that discourse competence had to be added to the 1980 model because cohesion and coherence are two key components of communication that cannot be overlooked in the understanding of communicative competence.

Even though the legal framework regulating EOIs in the Valencian Community seems to have been inspired by Canale and Swain's concept of communicative competence, the classification of competences presented by the European, national, and regional documents do not match the four components in this model.

One of the main findings regarding the concept *competence* and its derived subcategories is the fact that the regional and national decrees do not align with the categorisation and classification of the European documents published by the Council of Europe. On the one hand, the national and regional decrees present seven types of competences and include the concept *content* in their titles. In addition, none of them includes the main heading of *communicative competence* and *mediation competence* is not taken into account as in the official evaluation charts. This can be seen on page 46878 from the regional decree, where competences are presented in the regional language. When translated by Cervera Moya into English, these are:

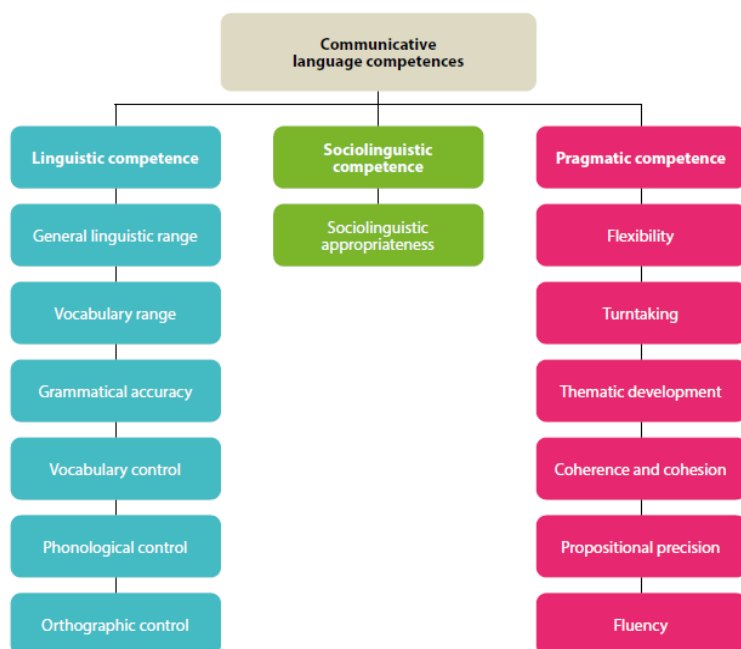
- (i) Sociocultural and sociolinguistic competence and content

- (ii) Strategic competence and content
- (iii) Functional competence and content
- (iv) Discursive competence and content
- (v) Syntactic competence and content
- (vi) Lexical competence and content
- (vii) Orthographic and phonetic-phonological competence and content

Conversely, since 2001, the Council of Europe embraces three main subcategories under the category *communicative language competences*: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and pragmatic competence. This can be seen in the figure below, which consists of a mind map of the latest Companion Volume portraying these three main subcategories deriving from the main head “communicative language competences” and together with their own components:

Figure 3

Communicative Language Competences



Note. From Council of Europe (2020, p. 129).

The present study has focused on the main classification of the Council of Europe. Despite that, during the third phase of the thematic analysis (see Thematic Analysis), the seven categories of the national and regional decrees have been classified into the three main categories of the Council of Europe, indicated in Figure 3. In addition to these seven categories, plurilingual and pluricultural competence has been added to sociolinguistic competence, even though it does not appear together with the rest of the competences in the documents of the corpus. In this study, we have considered that both the regional decree and the Companion Volume (2020) define it as a relevant competence to be developed in unison with the rest of the competences. Furthermore, Chapter 4 of the 2020 Companion Volume has been taken into account, which merges the concepts *plurilingualism* and *pluriculturalism* into a single competence. Recognising this competence as a subcategory of sociolinguistic competence ensures that plurilingualism and pluriculturalism are not overlooked and, as a result, the underlying similarities and differences between languages and cultures are acknowledged. In fact, plurilingual and pluricultural competence is indispensable when it comes to mediating between users who do not share a common language, dialect, or variety (Council of Europe, 2020).

Table 2

Unifying Approaches Towards the Classification of Competences

Unifying approaches towards the classification of competences		
Linguistic competence	Pragmatic competence	Sociolinguistic competence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syntactic competence • Lexical competence • Orthographic and orthoepic competence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic competence • Discursive competence • Functional competence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence • Plurilingual and pluricultural competence

The detailed reorganisation was crucial when analysing the corpus with ATLAS.ti 24 because, due to the use of different terminology, categorisation, and classification of competences, it would not have been possible to carry out

the analysis in a precise way. In fact, the resulting classification (see Table 2) can be interpreted as a linking bridge between the different documents in the corpus when it comes to the concept *competence* because it links the European approach to the national and regional one, without overlooking any subcategory. This focus on competence was necessary in order to find out that, so far, except for official evaluation charts in certification exams, competence is not considered to be a synonym of mediation in the context of Official Schools of Languages in the Valencian Community. Furthermore, this analysis and classification are crucial in understanding an upcoming section dealing with Group 2 of results, which reveals that the national and regional decrees present mediation in relation to a single competence.

The last section of the first group of results related to RQ1 puts forward the fact that the terminology used in the corpus of this study remains unclear even when dealing with paralinguistics and paratextuals. This can be illustrated with a translated extract by Cervera Moya from pages 127785-127786 of the national decree:

To compensate for linguistic deficiencies through linguistic (...), paralinguistic, or paratextual procedures (e.g., asking for help; pointing out objectives, using deictics or performing actions that clarify meaning; using culturally relevant body language (gestures, facial expressions, postures, eye or body contact, proxemics), or using extralinguistic sounds and conventional prosodic qualities).

As seen in the quotation above, the examples provided to illustrate the meaning of paralinguistics and paratextuals are varied and intermixed. It is not clear whether paralinguistics and paratextuals are the same concept and whether the examples provided are related to one concept or the other. Instead, examples are presented as belonging to both. However, this approach to paralinguistics and paratextuals does not correspond to what linguistic studies have demonstrated so far.

On the one hand, paratextuals, also known as paratexts, are the elements that surround a text used to evoke a sense of transition, ambiguity, or threshold (Genette, 1997). Paratextuals invite readers to engage

with the text in a deeper and more complex manner because they can carry pragmatic meaning. In fact, texts are so dependent on paratexts that, according to translators such as Yuste (2012), the term *paratranslation* has emerged recently in translation studies. This approach goes beyond the written word and, although not stated explicitly by Yuste (2012), texts are analysed from a multimodal perspective because more than one mode (e.g., written text, visuals, and layout) is involved in the written and interpretation process of a text (Villanueva-Jordán, 2021). Therefore, even though there are not appropriate examples and definitions of paratextuals in the legal framework examined, it is positive that concepts dealing with multimodal elements like paratextuals are taken into account because, when carrying out a language activity (e.g., mediation), considering other modes aside from the written one allows for an accurate interpretation that captures the multimodal reality (Kress, 2010). In fact, this can be also applied to paralinguistics, the concept to be analysed in the following paragraph.

Paralinguistics, also referred to as *paralanguage*, is an area of linguistics concerned with the non-linguistic messages that users of a language communicate when non-verbal qualities of our voice are produced in the following cavities: supraglottal, laryngeal, and infraglottic (Poyatos, 1993). As remarked by Poyatos (2018), any vocal emission produced or conditioned by our phonatory organs (e.g., rhythm, cough, momentary silence) is considered to be a paralinguistic element that cannot be separated from the verbal message and the movements or static positions involved (i.e., kinesics) in the communicative event.

In brief, paratextuals and paralinguistics are two different concepts that relate to the written and the spoken modes that can be classified as non-verbal elements (Hess, 2016) together with other categories implicitly mentioned in the previous quotation: body language and kinesics. However, these are four different categories of non-verbal communication. Therefore, examples in the last quotation such as gestures or facial expressions belong to the category of body language, whereas posture has to do with the category of kinesics, and other examples such as extralinguistic sounds have to do with the category of paralinguistics. In fact, if the mentioned quotation is re-read, one can note that there are no explicit examples of paratextuals.

Apart from proving that the lack of consistent terminology persists when it comes to non-verbal elements, Code Groups 3 and 4, which deal with mediation level descriptors and mediation rubric descriptors, have allowed for the identification of another underlining result. This result can be also inferred from the last quotation from the national decree, which portrays the fact that paralinguistics and paratextuals are considered “complements” of verbal messages and acknowledged to be used merely as clarifying and compensating elements of verbal and linguistic messages. This opposes Poyatos’ basic triple structure of human communication, described as the inseparable link between words, paralanguage, and kinesics. This idea agrees with current multimodal studies that acknowledge communication as the sum of multiple semiotic modes (Stein, 2000). Furthermore, apart from recognising that paralinguistics and kinesics can be used when a specific word is not remembered or known, Poyatos (2018) remarked that non-verbal elements can play at least ten different functions in a communicative exchange. Among these functions, we can underline the use of non-verbal elements to substitute, contradict, and/or add information to what we know as the verbal and linguistic message. Taking that into account, it can be stated that multimodality is essential in contemporary communication (Cocchetta, 2018).

So far, we have analysed and discussed the first group of results related to RQ1, illustrating that a more precise and consistent approach to key terminology is possible and necessary. The following section will focus on the second group of results related to RQ1.

Contrast Between Mediation Guidelines and Evaluation Criteria

Code Groups 3 and 4 in the code system deal with mediation level descriptors and mediation rubric descriptors. The main aim of creating these two code groups was to find out whether there was a parallelism between mediation guidelines and evaluation criteria. As previously illustrated in Figure 2, data gathered from Code Groups 3 and 4 reveal that the description of mediation and its guidelines do not fit with the criteria taken into account to evaluate the mentioned language activity.

Firstly, it has been found out that the A2 level requires more careful consideration. As detailed in the contextualisation of this study (see Contextualisation), language courses at Official Schools of Languages are divided into five main language proficiency levels that are regulated by the national and regional decrees. Even though both decrees are expected to establish a curriculum with the basic requirements for each language proficiency level, key differences have been identified. On the one hand, the national decree states that such a document is vital to ensure a standardised curriculum and evaluation system around Spain. However, it is underscored that, when it comes to the A2 level, the onus is on the government of each community to elaborate its own curriculum, which can be interpreted as a contradictory fact. If each community sets its own requirements for the A2 level, the objectives can vary from one community to another. Thus, this level cannot be considered standardised. On the other hand, if the A2 level section in the regional decree is examined and compared to other levels, it becomes clear that there is no bullet point describing the general mediation aim to be achieved. In other words, the regional decree includes a summary of the main objectives to be achieved in each language proficiency level before analysing the level and the different language activities in depth. In the mentioned summary of the levels B1, B2, C1, and C2, there is one bullet point dealing with the general mediation goal of each level. Conversely, none of the bullet points summarising the main goals of the A2 level includes the verb *mediar*, which can be translated as *mediate*, as with the rest of the levels. If mediation is considered as a language activity to be evaluated at the A2 level, it should also be assigned its own overall goal.

Secondly, the analysed documents concerning EOIs curricula present mediation only in relation to intercultural competence. Particularly, as seen on page 127793 from the national decree, mediation consists of the following subsections: aims, intercultural competence and contents, and evaluation criteria. In contrast, other language activities such as the production and co-production of written texts include additional subsections as, for instance, sociocultural and sociolinguistic competence and contents or strategic competence and contents. This finding and comparison to other language activities lead us to question whether it is sufficient to describe mediation in

relation to a single competence if the general description of mediation includes elements related to other competences (e.g., pragmatic competence) and the official charts used to evaluate mediation in certification exams include more competences to be evaluated (e.g., linguistic competence). Furthermore, why is intercultural competence not explicitly included in the mediation evaluation chart and, instead, it is categorised as sociolinguistic competence as in the 2020 Companion Volume if the national and regional decrees do not use the latter designation? What is more, why does the official evaluation chart unify pragmatic and sociolinguistic competences under the same heading (i.e., “competencia pragmática y sociolingüística”) if this is not specified in the national and regional decrees? Finally, why is pragmatic competence included in the evaluation chart in order to be evaluated if this competence is not a subcategory described in the section of the curriculum that deals with mediation?

The third and last result of both RQ1 and the second group of results will now be presented. Compared to other four language activities included in the curricula of EOIs in the Valencian Community, official evaluation charts concerning mediation include no differentiation of language proficiency levels. Whereas national and regional decrees specify the different mediation objectives and evaluation criteria for each language proficiency level, the official evaluation charts of oral and written mediation are exactly the same for all the levels. Considering that the official evaluation charts for other language activities (i.e., production and co-production of oral texts) are adapted to the needs of each language proficiency level, we question whether it is suitable to do something different with mediation. Apart from that, on page 127777 from the national decree, it is acknowledged that the regional decree must be taken as the main reference in order to design and evaluate certification exams. Thus, if official evaluation charts must be created in accordance with regional education policies, why do they not align with the evaluation criteria and categorisation of the regional decree? Last but not least, as underlined on page 46869 from the regional decree, language courses must focus on enhancing communicative competence through the action-oriented approach established by the Common European Framework of

Reference for Languages. This assertion is significant because the action-oriented approach implies:

a “proficiency” perspective guided by “can do” descriptors rather than a “deficiency” perspective focusing on what the learners have not yet acquired. The idea is to design curricula and courses based on real-world communicative needs, organised around real-life tasks and accompanied by “can do” descriptors that communicate aims to learners (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 28).

Then, considering that official evaluation charts used in certification exams of the Valencian Community deal both with the candidate’s positive achievements and negative “deficiencies”, it cannot be concluded that current evaluation charts are designed according to the principles of the action-oriented approach. However, it would be worth considering the need to re-design the mentioned charts because can-do descriptors allow for the evaluation of the user’s performance in a language activity (Council of Europe, 2020) and, as claimed by Canale and Swain (1980), competence cannot be directly measured. Instead, Canale and Swain stand up for the need of using evaluation tools that are designed in a way that capture the actual demonstration of one’s knowledge while performing a communicative activity. Consequently, can-do descriptors are vital to know exactly what a user or learner is able to do. As a way of illustration, the can-do statement below is concerned with what a C2 user is expected to do while performing a mediation activity which requires the explanation of data from a graph:

Can interpret and describe clearly and reliably (in Language B) various forms of empirical data and visually organised information (with text in Language A) from conceptually complex research concerning academic or professional topics (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 97).

In brief, the results of RQ1 have identified the use of inconsistent key terminology among the main documents that constitute the legal framework of Official Schools of Languages. Besides, the definition of mediation and its

guidelines do not align with the evaluation criteria, turning out to be a handicap for the teaching-learning process and the quality of its outcomes. Thus, unless legislation is reframed, misconceptions will persist inside and outside the language classroom.

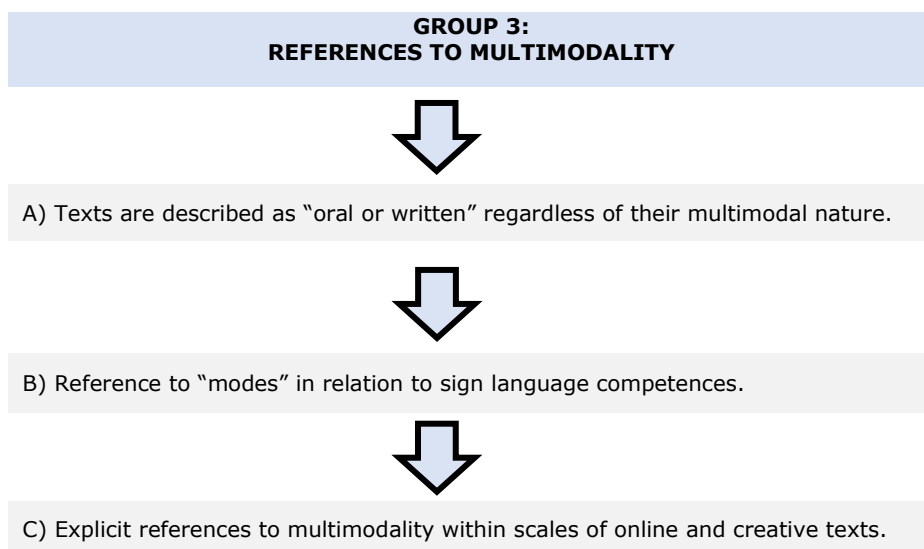
Multimodality in Language Policies

RQ2 is the following: Is multimodality taken into account by language policies in this context? In order to answer this question, the qualitative and quantitative results from ATLAS.ti 24 have been taken into account and summarised (see Figure 4).

The analysis of the subcategories illustrated in Figure 4 below are divided into two sections: the current one and the following section (i.e., The Presence of Multimodal Aspects in the Corpus), which deals with RQ3. This is due to the fact that RQ2 and RQ3 are inextricably linked. Thus, whereas subcategory A in Figure 4 is deeply analysed in this section, the focus on subcategory C takes place in its subsequent section.

Figure 4

An Overview of Results from Group 3



To begin with, Code Group 7 was created to provide an answer to RQ2 and RQ3. Code Group 7 was aimed at analysing possible references to multimodality, as well as the lack of these references, and was divided into five different subcategories: 7.1) Body language, 7.2) Linguistic mode, 7.3) Modes, 7.4) Paralinguistics, and 7.5) Visuals.

Firstly, whereas Subcategory 7.2 enabled us to identify the references of mediation as a purely linguistic activity, Subcategory 7.3 was added when other modes (i.e., non-linguistic) were concerned. These two subcategories allowed us to identify a steady reference to the adjectives *oral* and *written* when referring to texts regardless of their multimodal nature. As a way of illustration, the quotation below, which deals with the main objectives of mediation activities at the B1 level, refers to oral or written texts and the examples provided in parenthesis are not monomodal sources (e.g., leaflets, presentations, news):

To orally convey to third parties the general idea, main points, and relevant details of information related to everyday matters and topics of general, personal, or current interest included in oral or written texts (e.g., instructions or notices, leaflets, brochures, correspondence, presentations, conversations, news) (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, 2017, p. 127793, translated by Cervera Moya).

In this study, we have used specific tags to identify references to multimodality, which have to do with Subcategories 7.1, 7.4, and 7.5 in the code system. These subcategories are: body language (e.g., gestures), paralinguistics (e.g., pauses), and visuals (e.g., graphics). They have enabled us to observe that the most considered subcategory in the documents is Subcategory 7.5 (visuals), as there are at least 106 quotations associated with visuals, followed by at least 87 quotations dealing with paralinguistics (Subcategory 7.4) and, finally, at least 20 quotations including references to body language (Subcategory 7.1).

In brief, it is highly beneficial that the documents in the corpus account for multimodal elements that allow for the incorporation of real-life tasks in the language classroom. However, as texts are named as *oral* or *written*, it appears

that agents implied in the teaching-learning process remain unaware that such elements are increasingly multimodal (Kessler, 2022, p. 551). Therefore, as put by Tardy (2005), multimodality should be considered as an essential element not only of teaching and pedagogy, but also of education policy. In fact, exploring possible strategies and guidelines for multimodal mediation, including specific strategies for integrating multimodality into lesson planning or assessments, is the central focus of our ongoing and future research.

The Presence of Multimodal Aspects in the Corpus

Finally, RQ3 looked into the specific references to multimodality within the corpus. Subcategory 7.3 (modes) has allowed for the analysis of non-linguistic modes and explicit references to multimodality. When it comes to non-linguistic modes, apart from the three references of non-verbal communication introduced in the previous section, the analysis of the 2020 Companion Volume has allowed for the identification of a relationship between modes and sign language competences. This means that, in the section dedicated to sign language competences, the Council of Europe (2020) has considered the need to deal with more than one mode and make the descriptors of this category *modality-inclusive*. For instance, although it is ascertained that the movements of hands and arms (i.e., gestures) are usually the main articulators of sign languages, other non-verbal elements like facial expressions or head movements are considered to influence the message to be conveyed. Furthermore, as seen in the following quotation from the B2 level, descriptors of sign languages repertoire recognise the possibility of adapting a message from one mode (e.g., written) to another (e.g., visual): "Can paraphrase lexical elements by using productive elements, e.g., by using depicting signs and other classifier constructions." (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 146).

The idea of adapting a message and creating a new one by means of other semiotic choices and resources can be related to the principle of resemiotisation and intersemiotic translation, two principles based on Kress' social semiotics that acknowledge other semiotic resources (i.e., apart from

language itself) as indispensable elements in the meaning-making process (O'Halloran et. al., 2016). In addition, even though resemiotisation is not explicitly recognised, this idea is reinforced in the 2020 Companion Volume when dealing with the section of mediation. Specifically, it is indicated that, when mediating, apart from adapting a message and conveying meaning within the same language (e.g., from English to English), communication and mediation can be also defined as *cross-linguistic* (e.g., from English to Spanish) and/or *cross-modal* (e.g., from written to oral). It can be pointed out that, although multimodality and resemiotisation are not explicitly mentioned when dealing with mediation activities, the latest Companion Volume is aware of the influence of several semiotic resources when creating meaning.

Finally, the scales concerning online and creative texts in the latest Companion Volume explicitly address multimodality. This can be seen in the following quotation: "A rigid separation between written and oral does not really apply to online transactions, where multimodality is increasingly a key feature and resource." (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 86). The Council of Europe acknowledges that multimodality is a phenomenon that cannot be overlooked in online activities (e.g., blogging) and creative texts (e.g., theatre). Nevertheless, whereas online transactions and creative texts are considered to be multimodal activities in the 2020 Companion Volume, mediation and other language activities have not been yet reconsidered as so. Therefore, even though it looks as if European lawmakers have started to consider the relevance of multimodal literacies, a step forward is not only possible, but also necessary.

Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

The objective of this paper was threefold. Our first objective was to examine the way mediation is conceived in the legal framework regulating Official Schools of Languages in the Valencian Community. Secondly, it was our goal to find out whether multimodality is taken into account by language policies and, finally, determine what multimodal aspects are contemplated in the documents that constitute the corpus of this study.

Considering the quantitative and qualitative results of our

investigation, findings related to RQ1 suggest that the terminology associated with the key concepts of this study is not used consistently, and that there is insufficient parallelism between mediation guidelines and evaluation criteria. Regarding RQ2, we have shed light on the fact that, although the examined documents include examples of multimodal sources and elements, they disregard their multimodal nature and focus primarily on the linguistic mode. Finally, the results of RQ3 put forward the fact that there are explicit references to multimodality when it comes to the scales of online and creative texts in the latest Companion Volume.

Consequently, to address the existing challenges related to RQ1, we suggest reframing education policies so that European, national, and regional laws refer to key terminology in a consistent manner. In addition, there is a need to re-evaluate the way in which mediation is approached so that there is a correlation between guidelines and evaluation criteria. Lastly, given that the results of RQ2 demonstrate the presence of multimodal elements in the examined legislation, and that the results of RQ3 reveal explicit references to multimodality in some scales, why is mediation not reconsidered as a multimodal activity? Integrating multimodality into the syllabus can enhance learners' communicative competence (Cocchetta, 2018), which is one of the main goals of the Council of Europe (2001; 2020) and moves away from "one-size-fits-all" approaches that do not cater the needs of the diverse student body and their learning styles (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p.188).

Regarding limitations, it is important to note that the Council of Europe has not updated the original CEFR since 2001, in contrast to its Companion Volume, which has undergone more recent revisions. Similarly, the regional decree has not been updated since its publication in 2019, when mediation was introduced for the first time. Additionally, the national royal decree dates back to 2017. Therefore, an update and/or modification of both the regional and national decrees could be reconsidered, particularly since the 2020 Companion Volume is the official document which recognises multimodality for the first time in language education and includes updated scales for mediation activities. These improvements could lead to a more cohesive and standardised education and evaluation system around Europe. Therefore, future research could focus on analysing similar education contexts to see whether there is

a closer relationship between more updated laws and multimodal literacies. Indeed, replicable methodology can overcome limitations regarding the scope of the study and pave the way for future studies either in the described context or different educational scenarios in Spain and/or Europe. Nevertheless, our main goals in our ongoing and future research include the identification of the gaps in education policy that impact both teaching practices and student outcomes. Ethnographic studies with teachers will shed light on the challenges derived from the mentioned gaps, and subsequent studies can focus on how to overcome them in order to successfully integrate multimodal mediation in the language classroom.

To conclude, the findings of the present analysis are significant to outline the fact that mediation should be properly examined and reconsidered by language policy makers and educators, particularly since its key role in contemporary communication and advantages in the education landscape. There is an urgent need for research on both mediation and multimodality. This study is part of a larger research project aimed at developing a unified approach to multimodal mediation within the context of Official Schools of Languages—one that aligns with European standards proposed by the Council of Europe and fosters an inclusive teaching-learning environment that meets the needs of today's language users and students.

Declarations

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Conflicts of interest/Competing interests: Not applicable.

Data availability (data transparency): The documents that make up the dataset for this study are open-access and can be accessed through their official institutions' websites, as outlined in the methodology section.

Authors' contributions:

Julia Cervera Moya contributed to study conception and design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of results, and manuscript preparation.

Julia Valeiras-Jurado contributed to study design, analysis and interpretation of results and manuscript preparation.

Both authors have reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript and agree to be held accountable for the content.

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Appendix 1: Original Version of Quotations

Section	Original version of quotations
Lack of Consistent Terminology	Además de la clasificación de COMPETENCIA GENERAL, que incluirá las ACTIVIDADES de comprensión de textos orales y escritos, de producción y coproducción de textos orales y escritos, y de mediación para cada nivel, se podrán certificar igualmente COMPETENCIAS PARCIALES correspondientes a cada una o más de dichas ACTIVIDADES DE LENGUA. (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, 2017, p. 127777).
Lack of Consistent Terminology	Para cada nivel y ACTIVIDAD DE LENGUA (comprensión de textos, orales y escritos; producción y coproducción de textos, orales y escritos, y mediación) lo que el alumnado será capaz de hacer en diversos ámbitos y situaciones (OBJETIVOS), las COMPETENCIAS y contenidos - conocimientos, destrezas y actitudes - que habrá de adquirir y desarrollar para ello (COMPETENCIAS y contenidos) y el grado de dominio con el que podrá desenvolverse en cada ACTIVIDAD (Criterios de evaluación). (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, 2017, p. 127780).

Section	Original version of quotations
Lack of Consistent Terminology	Compensar carencias lingüísticas mediante procedimientos lingüísticos (...), paralingüísticos o paratextuales (p.e. pedir ayuda; señalar objetivos, usar deícticos o realizar acciones que aclaren el significado; usar lenguaje corporal culturalmente pertinente (gestos, expresiones faciales, posturas, contacto visual o corporal, proxémica), o usar sonidos extralingüísticos y cualidades prosódicas convencionales) (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, 2017, pp. 127785-127786).
Multimodality in Language Policies	Transmitir oralmente a terceros la idea general, los puntos principales, y detalles relevantes de la información relativa a asuntos cotidianos y a temas de interés general, personal o de actualidad contenida en textos orales o escritos (p.e. instrucciones o avisos, prospectos, folletos, correspondencia, presentaciones, conversaciones, noticias) (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, 2017, p. 127793).

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MULTIMODALUMAS IR TARPININKAVIMAS OFICIALIŲJŲ KALBŲ MOKYKLŲ POLITIKOJE: VALENSIJOS REGIONO ATVEJIS

Anotacija. Tarpininkavimas šiuo metu yra įtrauktas į ugdymo programas kaip savarankiška kalbinė veikla, arba penktasis kalbinis gebėjimas, kurio mokomasi ir kuris vertinamas Valensijos autonominės srities oficialiosiose kalbų mokyklose (Conselleria d'Educació, Cultura i Esport, 2019a). Tai galima laikyti teigiamu pokyčiu, atitinkančiu naujas pedagogines tendencijas (Catalayud-Díez, 2019), skatinančias daugiakalbiškumo ir daugiakultūriškumo kompetencijų ugdymą (Europos Taryba, 2020). Tačiau faktas, kad į tarpininkavimą žiūrima kaip į grynai lingvistinį gebėjimą, neatitinka XXI a. ypatumų ir poreikių, ypač raginimo ugdyti multimodalinį raštingumą (Jewitt, 2008). Šiame tyrime tarpininkavimas nagrinėjamas iš socialinės semiotinės multimodalinės analizės ir jos implikacijų perspektyvos, tiriant teisės aktus, reglamentuojančius Valensijos bendruomenės oficialiųjų kalbų mokyklų veiklą. Taigi pagrindiniai šio tyrimo tikslai yra šie: 1) išsiaiškinti, kaip tarpininkavimas suprantamas minėto konteksto teisės aktuose, 2) ar atsižvelgiama į multimodalumą ir, jei taip, (3) kokie multimodalumo aspektai pripažįstami. Pirmiausia apžvelgėme literatūros apie multimodalumo sąvoką ir jos ryšį su tarpininkavimu švietimo srityje. Atlikome teisinių dokumentų, reglamentuojančių šį oficialų neprivalomojo švietimo kontekstą, teminę analizę. Mūsų išvados atskleidė nenuoseklų terminologijos vartojimą, tarpininkavimo gairių ir vertinimo kriterijų nesuderinamumą bei ribotas ir nenuoseklias nuorodas į multimodalumą. Todėl šiame švietimo kontekste labai svarbu pereiti nuo tradicinio požiūrio į kalbinius gebėjimus prie multimodalinio požiūrio (Ciaramita, 2023), kuris atitiktų šiuolaikinės lingvistiškai įvairios ir technologiškai apsišvietusios visuomenės, kurioje gyvename, poreikius (Alfonso-Lozano ir Giralto-Lorenz, 2014).

Pagrindinės sąvokos: tarpininkavimas; multimodalumas; neprivalomasis ugdymas; oficialioji kalbų mokykla; kalbų politika; kalbiniai įgūdžiai.