SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW: MEDIATION IN THE CONTEXT OF ESAP

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Mediation as an extra skill in non-specialist language courses: a case study with Psychology students

Paola Brusasco

G. d'Annunzio University of Chieti-Pescara

OUTLINE

- A few preliminary reflections: Mediation, Translation, ELT

- My case study: who, what, where, why?

- How?

- Concluding remarks: weaknesses, strengths, doubts

TRANSLATION vs MEDIATION: DISTINCTION COLLAPSED?

Newmark: "Translation mediates cultures" (1995:2)

Steiner: "The translator is a bilingual mediating agent between monolingual communication participants in two different language communities" (1975: 45)

Hatim and Mason: "The notion of mediation is a useful way of looking at translators' decisions regarding the transfer of intertextual reference" (2013: 128)

- **Bi-cultural vision** (see and solve disparity between sign and value across cultures)
- **Critical readers**

TRANSLATION vs MEDIATION: DISTINCTION COLLAPSED?

The first word in this sentence is made up of **three letters**.

- *La prima parola di questa frase è formata da <u>tre lettere</u>. (*nonsense*)*

- *La prima parola di questa frase <u>in inglese</u> è formata da <u>tre lettere</u>.* (referring back to Source Text)

- *La prima parola di questa frase è formata da <u>due lettere</u>.* (independent, mediated Target Text)

AV TRANSLATION vs MEDIATION: DISTINCTION COLLAPSED?
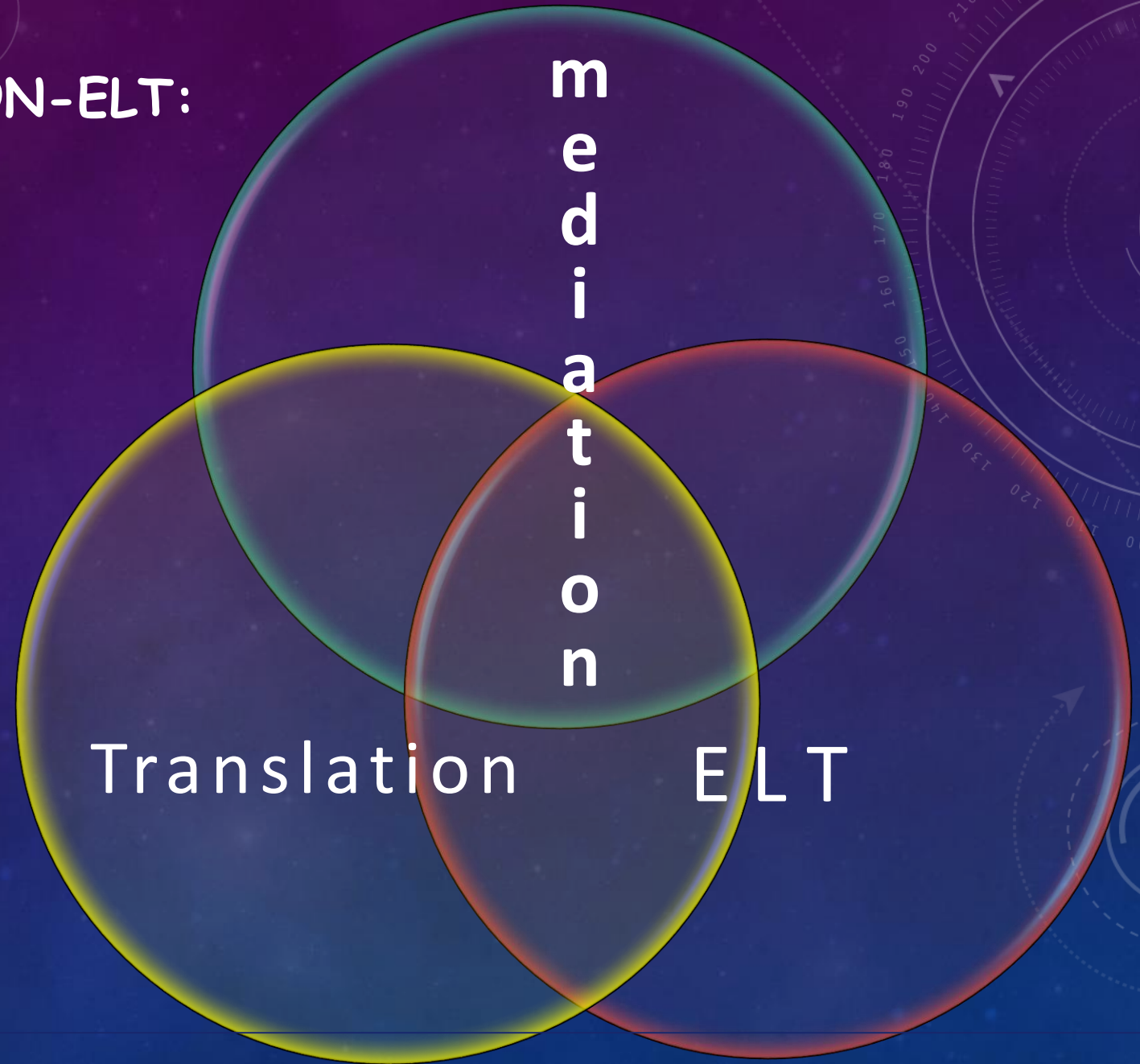(a still from *Vicky and Sam*)
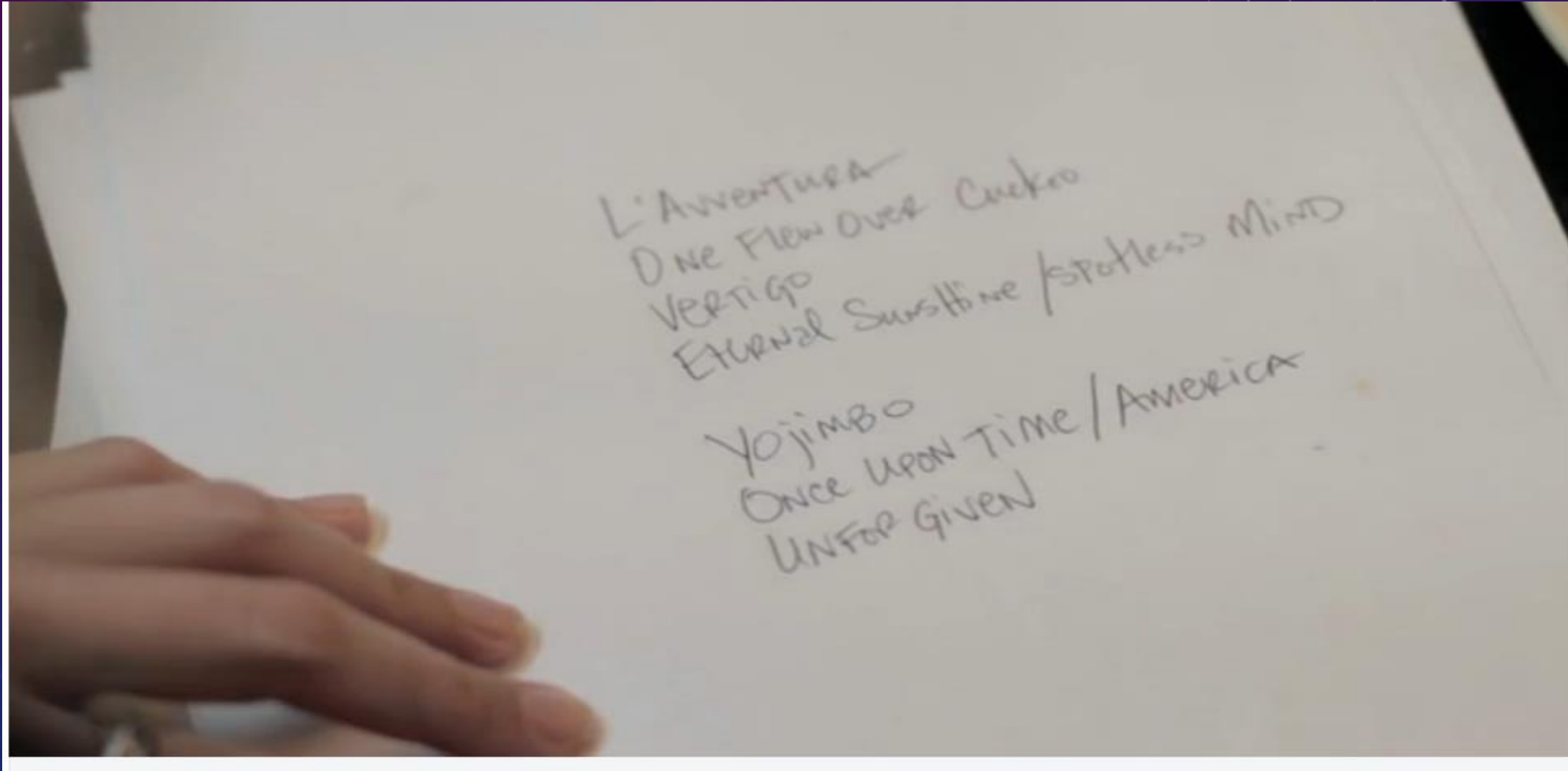
ELT vs MEDIATION – DISTINCTION COLLAPSED?

Ecological language pedagogy:

"foster a critical understanding of the multiple worlds of discourse that coexist in any language classroom and arise from the interaction between teacher and students and among students as members of a community" (Kramsch 2009, in Laviosa 2014:61)

MEDIATION-TRANSLATION-ELT:
SHARED SPACES

P. Brusasco, Mediation as an extra skill in non-specialist language courses: a case study with Psychology students

MY CASE STUDY: WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHY?

- Who?   Students: 1st-year Psychology students; obligatory exam > vocabulary + reading + General English; low L2 level and motivation;

             Me > TS + EFL teaching

- What?   teaching material as previously published in syllabus: Grammar book + texts
                                                                from the web;

- Where?   traditional university classroom (amphitheatre, rows of seats, laptop, projector, screen, loudspeakers)

- Why?   Increase motivation; help Ss to cope with potential real-life situations; enhance L + mediating skills; low L level BUT assumed empathy + emotional intelligence

                    WHAT (2)? Informative texts; interlingual + intralingual mediation activities

HOW?
DOMAIN: PSYCHOLOGY (1)

INFOGRAPHICS TO SIMPLIFY

HOW? (2)

SHORT TEXT TO ICONIZE OR PARAPHRASE
+ DOMAIN-SPECIFIC APPROPRIATE TERMINOLOGY

WORDS MATTER

WHAT DO YOU SAY WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH?

When it comes to mental health and mental ill health, the words we use matter more than we think. The way we talk about mental health and people experiencing mental distress can reinforce negative stereotypes and be stigmatising, without us even realising it.

Language is a powerful tool for creating awareness and fighting stigma, so here are a few tips on how to be mindful of the words we use and how to avoid causing offence when we don't mean to. We have tried to pick terms that are non-stigmatising, but we understand that each person is unique, and some people may not identify with the language chosen here.

BE CAREFUL WITH LABELS: DO NOT REFER TO PEOPLE AS THEIR CONDITIONS

A person living with a mental health problem is much more than their experience or diagnosis. You could not describe yourself with a single word, could you? Avoid the use of diagnostic language when referring to people: A diagnosis does not represent a person's whole identity!

YES to:
" A person with a mental health problem "
" A person living with mental ill health "
" Mental health service users "
" Person with lived experience "
" Expert by experience "

NO to:
" A psycho "
" He/she is a schizophrenic " / " A depressive "
" The mentally ill/sick "
" People with mental disorders "
" The mentally diseased/disordered "

HOW? (3)

ORAL GROUP-WORK TO DISCUSS CONTENTS AND FIND PRACTICAL HOW-TO EXAMPLES FOR EACH BUBBLE; CONTENT SIMPLIFICATION AND REDUCTION TO NOTES TO BE SWAPPED WITH OTHERS (INFORMATION GAP)

EXAMPLES OF STUDENTS' NOTES OR SENTENCES
(as delivered – errors and lack of clarity untouched)

YELLOW BUBBLE

- The board level should consider mental health and wellbeing of employees also improving it's measurement.

- Talk to the management and board level about the possible ways of measuring the mental health.

- Should need to maintain wellbing into workplace and take back to board livel.

- Boards around the world should develop ways to check workers' mental health and resolve any problems that they found.

- Use a measurement scale and find a balance between the two level.

HOW? (4)

KEY WORDS + INFORMATION RETRIEVAL; SUMMARIZE AS BULLET POINTS

THINGS THAT MATTER

The manager's attitude towards the employee is the single most important factor that has a substantial impact on workers' mental health. Having a good manager can help employees to cope better with work-related stress or mental ill health.

REWARD IS CRUCIAL
It may be linked to salary, but more broadly refers to the respect and esteem in which the person is held in the workplace.

FAIRNESS IS KEY
Positive feelings of equity and fairness lead to increased satisfaction and motivation as well as commitment to work.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE IS DECISIVE
Tensions between home and work have consequences for a person's mental health. Conflicting demands of work and home, a lack of support in the workplace for personal commitments, or a lack of support at home for work commitments can increase the risk of developing a mental health problem.

PAY ATTENTION TO INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS
Inadequate, inconsiderate or un-supportive supervision, poor rela-tionships with co-workers, bullying, harassment and isolation increase the risk of a mental health problems. There is also some evidence of a relationship between supervisory style (e.g. authoritarian, laissez-faire) and employee satisfaction.

LOOK AT THE WORKPLACE CULTURE
The organisational culture of the workplace – communication, leadership and clarity of role and structure of the workplace – can greatly affect the mental health of employees.

EXAMPLE OF STUDENTS' INFORMATION RETRIEVAL + BULLET POINTS

MENTAL HEALTH ON THE WORKPLACE

Ideally, employees need

- reward (salary; respect)

- fairness (equity of treatment and workload)

- work-life balance (sustainable demands at work and at home)

- adequate interpersonal relationships

- an effective workplace organization + collaborative atmosphere

HOW? (5)   TEXT SOURCE:
HTTPS://WWW.APA.ORG/TOPICS/IMMIGRATION/IMMIGRATION-PSYCHOLOGY

- **What is the psychological experience of immigration?**

- **a. Social context of reception**

- **Socioecological model**
Ecological approaches acknowledge that behavior does not occur in a vacuum but is affected by the larger culture and society, as well as the local community and its institutions. Thus, the social climate and receiving environment into which immigrants arrive help shape their experience in and adaptation to America. Also, today's immigrants may adopt American culture without losing the connection to their native culture, and thus enjoy the advantages of biculturalism.

- **Assimilation versus multiculturalism**
The arrival of a new racially diverse wave of immigrants to the United States has highlighted the distinctions between assimilation ("the melting pot") and multiculturalism ("the salad bowl"). Those in favor of "cultural assimilation" believe the best approach is for immigrants (and other minority groups) to rapidly blend into the dominant culture. They contend adopting the norms and rules of the dominant culture will eliminate ethnic differences and thus prejudice will be drastically reduced.

- [...]

READING COMPREHENSION + KEY INFO IDENTIFICATION

Read parts a-c and find the paragraphs to which these notes refer.

- Immigrants' difficulties and strengths in relation to educational goals

- Immigrant children are often diagnosed with learning disorders

- The influence of first language skills

- Attitude of schools towards immigrant children

- Literacy in L1 helps the acquisition of an L2

- Factors affecting students' performance

- Adjustment difficulties mistaken for mental disabilities and viceversa.

- How financial conditions affect performance at school

- The comparison with US students

- Cultural inadequacy of tests ⟶ FOLLOWED by debate on how to improve tests (in L1)

HOW? (6)
TEXT: UNDERSTANDING ALCOHOL USE DISORDERS AND THEIR TREATMENT
(HTTPS://WWW.APA.ORG/HELPCENTER/ALCOHOL-DISORDERS)

Ss read informative sections + prepare questions/suggestions for individual with alcohol problems on the basis of the guide below

How can a psychologist help?

- Psychologists who are trained and experienced in treating alcohol problems can be helpful in many ways. Before the drinker seeks assistance, a psychologist can guide the family or others in helping to increase the drinker's motivation to change.

- A psychologist can begin with the drinker by assessing the types and degrees of problems the drinker has experienced. […] Individuals with drinking problems improve their chances of recovery by seeking help early.

- Using one or more of several types of psychological therapies, psychologists can help people address psychological issues involved in their problem drinking. […] Additional therapies include 12-Step facilitation approaches that assist those with drinking problems in using self-help programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).

- […]

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS   +

✚ Generally speaking, students are curious. Unusual activities grounded in their future specialization seem to make most of them more eager

✚ Overall, they have learnt many words in the field of psychology

✚ Good students show very active participation

✚ Their reading skills seem to be more focused and effective (exams will tell)

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS   -

– Weak students are afraid of performance. Grammar exercises feel more reassuring

– The acquisition of mediation skills is going to be difficult to assess:

1. The testing mode was published by previous Language lecturer (written: grammar + reading comprehension)

2. Ss can take the exam over 1 year (although Ss who attend entire course tend to take it immediately)

3. Difficult to separate attenders from non-attenders (in our system attendance is free and cannot be registered)

4. As the exam does not involve interlingual mediation skills, I had to foreground reading (mediation skills added)

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Thank you!

paola.brusasco@unich.it