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DESIGNING TASKS FOR MEDIATION ACROSS LANGUAGES IN SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES COURSES IN UZBEKISTAN

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A B S T R A C T

This study proposes a cross-linguistic mediation task to assess how students in social science and humanities courses in Uzbekistan use sources in multiple languages to produce a message tailored to a specific audience. A focused analysis of the CEFR Companion Volume, guidance on mediation task design and evidence-centered assessment informs a prototype built around a simulated museum visit. Students compare Uzbek, Russian and English sources, prepare an English notice for visiting students and document decisions about source authority, conflicting instructions and uncertainty. An analytic rubric distinguishes factual accuracy, coordination of sources, adaptation to the audience and handling of uncertainty. Two illustrative responses demonstrate how a fluent notice can misrepresent registration conditions and how a brief source note can make the reasoning behind an accurate notice visible. The outcome is a task and scoring procedure for formative classroom use. The prototype has yet to be tested with students.

K E Y W O R D S

Plurilingual competence, cross-linguistic mediation, source evaluation, task design, formative assessment, higher education, Uzbekistan

INTRODUCTION

Undergraduates in social science and humanities programmes often work with documents written for different audiences and purposes. A local notice may state a procedure, a previous message may report an exception, and a partner institution may ask for a concise explanation in another language. In such situations the student has to determine which information still applies, decide what the recipient needs and convey the result in a usable form. A classroom task that asks students to translate a single source gives the teacher limited evidence about these decisions.

Earlier work on multilingual higher education in Uzbekistan examined policy, institutional practices and teacher preparation (Omanov, 2025). Subsequent work linked students' repertoires with mediation, authentic texts and criterion-based assessment (Omanov, 2026a, 2026b). This study addresses a narrower assessment question. What evidence in a student's work shows that information from several languages has been evaluated and reshaped for a specific recipient? The objective is to develop a reproducible task prototype and a scoring procedure that answer that question at the level of observable performance.

The national context informs the choice of languages. Article 33 of the Law on Education refers matters concerning the use of languages of instruction to the law on the state language, and Presidential Resolution PQ-5117 addresses the promotion of foreign language learning (Republic of Uzbekistan, 2020, 2021). Studies of English in Uzbekistan give historical context for its educational role (Hasanova, 2007). The Uzbek, Russian and English combination used below is a design choice for the intended setting. Decisions on source languages in a specific class should reflect the resources available to that group.

Methods

The study used focused document analysis and task prototyping. The Council of Europe's CEFR Companion Volume (2020) and the METLA teaching guide (Stathopoulou et al., 2023) were selected for their descriptors and procedures for setting up mediation tasks. Cenoz and Gorter (2021) informed the planned use of students' language resources. Mislevy et al. (2003) informed the links between the intended ability, the student work that would support an inference about it and the features of the task needed to elicit that work. Uzbekistan's legal documents and prior publications were used to situate the design.

The analysis had three steps. First, the documents were read for three operations relevant to written mediation: identifying information that a recipient needs, processing information across languages and adapting the message to the recipient. Second, each operation was translated into a deliverable or requirement. A public notice captured the student's decisions about content and audience, and a short decision record documented source use. Third, contrasting responses were written and scored to check whether the criteria could distinguish different kinds of performance. The documents were selected for their relevance to the design question. The two responses were constructed for illustration, and the design phase involved no participant data.

Results

Task scenario and source packet

The student is a university volunteer helping an international group register for a museum visit. The coordinator needs an English notice that the group can act on. The source packet in Table 1 is fictional and can be copied directly for classroom use. Document dates and source roles are essential parts of the task.

Table 1. Source packet for the museum visit

Source and status	Text supplied to students
A. Museum coordinator's Uzbek notice 12 October, current	18-oktabr kuni muzeyga tashrif soat 10:00 da boshlanadi. Har bir talaba 15-oktabr kuni soat 17:00 gacha onlayn shakl orqali ro‘yxatdan o‘tishi kerak. Guruh bitta ro‘yxat bilan ro‘yxatdan o‘ta olmaydi. Tashrif kuni talabalik guvohnomasini olib keling. Tarjima bo‘yicha yordam so‘rov asosida ko‘rib chiqiladi.
B. Student volunteer's Russian message 8 October, provisional	Предварительный план: староста отправляет один список на всю группу до 16 октября. На входе нужен студенческий билет. Возможность перевода уточняется.
C. Visiting tutor's English message 13 October, audience request	Our visiting students need a phone-friendly notice. Please tell them what they need to do and by when, what to bring and whether they can count on interpreting support. If support is still uncertain, tell them who to ask and what to do while they wait.

A viable response needs information from the current coordinator's notice and the tutor's message. The volunteer's earlier message provides a plausible competing instruction and agrees on one detail, the student ID. Dates alone are insufficient to resolve the discrepancy because the most recent text is an audience request. Students must consider date, role and purpose together. The uncertainty about interpreting support also requires a different response from the registration conflict. One can be resolved from the packet, whereas the other calls for a limited, clearly marked statement and an appropriate follow-up.

Classroom procedure and expected products

Allow 40 minutes for a formative lesson with English around B1–B2 as the working range for the output. This range is a planning assumption. Give students eight minutes to read and mark the sources, seven minutes to compare the instructions in pairs, 20 minutes to write individually and five minutes to check their notice against the sources. Students may make planning notes or discuss the sources in any shared language. If the task is used to collect a baseline for independent performance, conduct the comparison individually and keep time and access to dictionaries consistent for the group.

Ask each student to write a phone-friendly English notice of 65–95 words. It should state when the visit begins, what each student must do and by when, what to bring and how to handle the request for interpreting. Ask for a separate decision record of two or three sentences in English or another language shared with the assessor. The record should identify which registration instruction was used and why, and name one thing the student changed in response to the tutor's message. The record may identify the texts by letters A, B and C. Source labels belong in the decision record. The notice should read as a message to the visiting students.

Scoring procedure and illustrative responses

Use the notice for factual accuracy, audience adaptation and uncertainty. Use the decision record for the coordination of sources. Each criterion is scored from zero to two. Table 2 defines what earns each score. Record the four criterion scores alongside the total out of eight to show where revision is needed.

Table 2. Analytic rubric for the museum visit task

Criterion	0 points	1 point	2 points
Factual accuracy	Individual online registration or the deadline is missing or incorrect.	Correct individual online registration and deadline, with an omission or error in the visit time, date or ID requirement.	Correct registration procedure, deadline, visit date and time, and student ID requirement.
Coordination of sources	Sources are unidentified, or the rejected instruction is treated as authoritative.	Sources are identified, but the reason for resolving the conflict or the link to the audience request is missing.	Explains why A supersedes B for registration and identifies a decision shaped by C.
Audience adaptation	Intended readers would struggle to locate or understand what to do.	The action is understandable, with avoidable detail or a difficult sequence.	Uses plain language and a short, scannable sequence suitable for visiting students.
Handling uncertainty	Guarantees support or omits the issue.	Flags the uncertainty but gives no workable next step, or makes the action to take while waiting unclear.	States that interpreting is subject to confirmation, directs students to the coordinator and keeps registration on track.

A material error is scored once under its primary criterion. For example, an incorrect registration deadline lowers factual accuracy. An audience score should reflect clarity of presentation, and the uncertainty score should reflect how interpreting support is represented. Errors in English matter for this rubric when they obscure the intended message. The task yields evidence of written mediation in this setting and supports criterion-specific feedback.

Illustrative response A Museum visit for exchange students. The visit starts at 10:00 on 18 October. Each student must register using the online form by 17:00 on 15 October. Please bring your student ID on the day. If you need interpreting support, ask the museum coordinator when you register. Requests are considered individually and support is subject to confirmation. Please complete the form by the deadline while you wait for a reply.

Decision record A I used A because the museum coordinator's 12 October notice gives the current procedure, whereas B is a provisional message from a volunteer. I put the deadline in the first paragraph and explained what to do while waiting for interpreting support because C asks for a message visitor can use on a phone.

This response earns 8/8 (criterion scores 2, 2, 2 and 2). For classroom feedback, the teacher can point to the distinction between the confirmed deadline and the unresolved support request.

Illustrative response B Museum visit on 18 October. Please arrive by 10:00 and bring your student ID. Ask your group leader to send one registration list for everyone by 16 October. The museum will provide an interpreter, so you can finish your plans once your group leader has sent the list. Please share this message with the other visiting students so everyone receives the same information.

Decision record B I used B because it covers registration and the student ID. I used C to keep the notice short.

This response earns 2/8 (criterion scores 0, 0, 2 and 0). Its structure is easy to scan, but the student chose a provisional instruction and introduced a guarantee of interpreting. In a revision task, the student would first correct the reader's action and then record which evidence changed it.

Discussion

The task makes two kinds of evidence available to the teacher. The notice shows whether the student can produce a useful text for a recipient. The decision record shows how the student handled competing instructions, including information that was deliberately left out. A correct notice could result from reading A alone. A record that explains the status of B and links a decision to C gives stronger evidence of cross-linguistic coordination. Conversely, a record that explains the conflict well can help the teacher locate a problem in the final formulation when a student's notice is misleading.

The task draws on the CEFR's action-oriented treatment of mediation, in particular processing texts and making information accessible for others (Council of Europe, 2020). It uses METLA's emphasis on specifying the recipient, the purpose and the texts (Stathopoulou et al., 2023). The staged use of languages is consistent with planned pedagogical translanguaging (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021). These frameworks explain the design of the task. Any mapping of the rubric scores to CEFR levels would require a separate standard-setting process.

The format can be transferred to other courses by preserving the source relationships and changing the genre. Tourism students could compare a current venue notice with an older itinerary, journalism students could reconcile a revised municipal release with a preliminary report, and teacher-education students could write an accessible notice from several school documents. Each adaptation should

retain a discrepancy that can be resolved from the materials, an uncertainty requiring follow-up and a clearly specified recipient. For groups with different repertoires, teachers can substitute a locally relevant language, provide an agreed glossary or offer alternative versions of a source. During a formal comparison of scores, differences in source length, lexical difficulty and available support would need to be documented.

The illustrative scoring establishes how the rubric is intended to work. The prototype has yet to be piloted. A first pilot could combine brief interviews on how students interpreted the source roles with independent scoring by two teachers. Disagreement by criterion could guide revision of the scoring descriptors. A parallel task with different texts and the same decision demands would allow researchers to test whether student performance carries over beyond this example. Baseline and follow-up work, with comparable texts and instructions, would be needed to study development over time.

Conclusion

A cross-linguistic mediation task for Uzbekistani undergraduates can turn everyday contact with several languages into evidence of academic decision-making. The museum example asks students to resolve a conflict, communicate what the audience needs and identify who can confirm a remaining uncertainty. Pairing the public notice with a brief decision record enables feedback on both the written product and the use of sources. The proposed task and rubric are suitable for a formative classroom trial, where the quality of the evidence and the consistency of scoring can be investigated.

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