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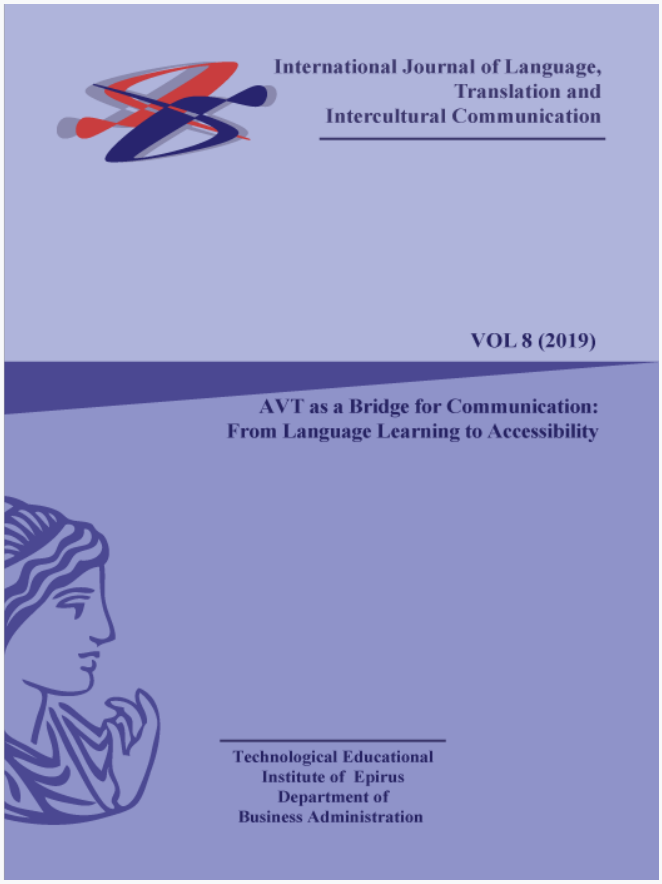

Intercultural Mediation and Accessibility in Heritage

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Intercultural Mediation and Accessibility in Heritage

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Abstract
This article aims to propose a strategy taking in consideration the accessibility of each European citizen to information in all its forms especially audio-visual Media and Heritage. It is known that interlingual mediators are playing a huge part in the world of Information and Communication with the involving difficulties of common core theory and training. Moreover, technology can be the ideal tool to enhance accessibility. Thus, mobile phone applications can offer sometimes both audio and visual content to Museum visitors as well as sign language and text. This part of our work clarifies the needs and the values of an adapted methodology for training.
In addition, this project gives to inter-cultural mediators the opportunity to work and to research on different applications and software programs in screen-titling, dubbing, re-speaking and screen-titling for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, audio description and to obtain a training at professional agencies as well as to present a final assistance of quality.

***Key words**: Inter-linguistic mediation, strategy, know-how, skills, and accessibility*

Introduction

The notion of inter-linguistic and intercultural mediation can be found in the 1970's and 1980's as a response to the crucial problem of migrants who were in need of access to public services and mainly medical, educational and legal services Rodvin & Spinzi, (2014). As both Rudvin and Spinzi mention " in this particular historical context the notion of 'mediation' emerged as a process in which a third party was commissioned to resolve communication obstacles between migrant and institution and more broadly to facilitate integration" (2014:58).

All disciplines in the inter-linguistic mediation need a targeted training especially in accessibility to information for all citizens. Training will synchronize communication between different communities and different target public. In fact, it will help mediators- interpreters to synchronize between their knowledge and their production in any occasion. Mediators will

develop by their training a greater capacity to sustain positive perspectives and to balance in between their passion and their profession. They will have an intuitive flow throughout their training to manage their stress and to regenerate it to overcome any challenge. Furthermore, inter-linguistic training in mediation will reduce the cognitive effort to become a pleasure in the outcome of any target performance.

The adding value of inter-linguistic training will increase optimal functioning capacity by producing an oral or written target material. It will also expand the ability of inter linguistic mediators to adapt to any change, to any oral or written source material written or oral to a target material in harmony and professionalism. European strategy in this field should exclude no one even if the costs are important. This involves our future generations:

"According to the 2011 census there are 9.4 million people with special needs in England alone, accounting for 18 per cent of the population. The spending power of those with access needs which accounts for 12.4 bn £ a year. So for museums not being accessible is not only excluding a fifth of the population but potentially missing out on much-needed revenue".[1]

1 A Strategy for Inclusion and Importance of Inter-linguistic Mediators in our World

It is important to understand the values of any society to be able to study its needs and the needs of its communities. As M, Rokeach (1973) explains a value is a norm of personal or social conduct of morality and ethics, of the political and the spirituality of each person, Milton Rokeach was a Psychotherapist who taught in many American schools. He was born in 1918 in Poland and he studied at Berkeley University in California, where he focused on Social Psychology, considered as a new discipline at that time and he found out that it was at the base of any social research in communication. It is an interesting field that is related to the influence of the cognitive process and the social process in the individual psychosocial relationships. His theory is divided into five different points:

- A human being possesses a small number of values,
- Each person possesses the same values, but to different degrees,

[1] Advisor.museumandheritage.com

- Values are organized into Systems,
- The origins of human values are from the society, the culture, the institutions and the individual's personality,
- These human values manifest their presence in every studied phenomenon in the Social sciences.

The future of intercultural mediation is raising more and more interest throughout the world because it is getting its importance from the values it gives to intercultural communication and to the human as an entity. Social mediators are also reinforcing the importance of offering assistance to all people in their societies. Web accessibility is evolving thanks to the intercultural communication and to mediators and is developing alongside different social services in relation to the needs of its audiences. Many disciplines like "visio-interpreting", remote interpreting, subtitling, dubbing, respeaking and audio description arose. These disciplines need social and intercultural mediators and are taught at universities. Young generations have passion for this kind of communication and mediation.

We would like to concentrate our research on the inclusion and the accessibility to the media and the heritage respecting the values and the needs of each targeted public. How can we succeed in offering mediation to all citizens in general and also to all who are in need (Deaf and hard of hearing, blind and visually impaired, migrants, refugees, children, elderly etc.)?

Europe is offering a strategy to improve the social inclusion and to conclude its objectives for 2020, which officially consider this inclusion as not only moral, but also as an economical advantage because the devices and services for such assistance are estimated as no less than 30 billion euros worth. Accessibility should be possible to all museums be it in presence or virtually.

Meanwhile the **European Federation of Hard of Hearing** EFHOH[2] Report declares that only 5% of EU public websites respond to this criteria and very few EU programs are

[2] https://www.efhoh.org/

subtitled or audio described for the blind. This explains why the presence of subtitling for the Deaf and hard of hearing in European countries is not very visible.

According to Di Giovanni (2018) "fifteen years ago, audiovisual translation (AVT) scholars first opening up to media accessibility research were eager to develop a knowledge of the target users (mainly deaf and blind) so as to be able to reflect on, and enhance, services for them. Today we seem to be increasingly moving towards the end users' active participation, with a positive reshuffling of the production-to-consumption cycle" (2018:156).

Multimedia production in each European country has to be taken into account: for example, in 2009, in the United Kingdom only, 35% of box releases needed translating and intra- linguistic subtitling for the Deaf and hard of hearing. Contrary to countries like Bulgaria, Belgium, Croatia, Estonia and Iceland, where more than 90% of films have to be translated. Concerning television, the percentage of programming time requiring dubbing or subtitling also differs from one country to another: it is very low in the UK (around 23%) and much higher in Dutch-speaking Belgium, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, where it is upwards of 90%.[3]

In Europe, only 5% of foreign works (films, fiction, documentaries and animation) are released in either dubbed, subtitled or voice-over versions. Digital inter-linguistic mediation varies from one country to another, depending on the target public (general public, cinema fans, young viewers, audience with accessibility problems). In the cinema, subtitling is used in 26 countries and in two regions in two countries (Dutch- speaking Belgium and German-speaking Switzerland), but also exists in certain dubbing countries like France or Germany; on television, subtitling is the technique used in fifteen countries and one region (Dutch-speaking Belgium). The European research recommends that the EU initiates a dialogue with teachers, researchers and media professionals, to increase the use of inter-cultural mediation and to help in inclusion of all EU citizens. Also to encourage the creation of networks of language teachers and professors at European level for the purpose of pooling best practices. (Ibid).

Matt Riley director of "Visits Unlimited," which provides training on accessibility for many organizations including VisitEngland which has become an important application

[3]Our research for the EU on the impact of subtitling http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/studies/study_on_the_use_of_subtitling_en.php

suggests that the term "reasonable adjustment is used often mistakenly associated solely with the need to invest significant budget into a capital project to install a lift" (ibid).

2 The Needs of People with disabilities

People are human beings with multiple senses who are supposed to gain from 80–85% of their surrounding perception through vision (Politzer, 2008). Nevertheless, it can be argued that we live in absolutely visual world where information is mainly visually offered, but those who cannot use all their senses are able to form a credible representation of surroundings (Kermauner, 2014).

"Disabilities are an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task, ACCESSIBILITY FOR EVERYONE or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations". — World Health Organization.

That is not a clear description since "individuals may also have more than one impairment, which alone don't cause much difficulty, but together can create a more significant disability. For example, age may cause your eyesight to deteriorate, forcing you to enlarge screen text size, while arthritis might leave you with impaired coordination, making a mouse awkward to use, particularly with accuracy and at speed. The combination would have quite an impact on your ability to use the Internet" (Kalbag, 2017: 20).

People with disabilities for example need only one thing, which is to be, accepted everywhere in our societies. Their dream is to carry on doing what they enjoy to do and to have accessibility to any information and space for as long as they can. They like to enjoy cinema like anyone, to go to museums whenever they want and to enjoy theatre if they have the service for accessibility. Their aim is to participate in elections and to be functional citizens anywhere. Those mediation services are not offered in all spheres i.e.. medical, cultural, public spaces, museums or even in administration. Installing and investing some replica artifacts in museums for kinaesthetic learner "and visually impaired visitors as well as

hearing loops and appropriate signage"[4] might be done for a low cost. The blind and visually impaired are able to partially replace the missing sight with other senses, mainly by touch, as a contact sense, and hearing, as a distant sense (Hersh, 2008).

Inclusion is a priority for our societies and for the EU. When we speak about inclusion, we mean by that everybody, Deaf and hard of hearing, blind and visually impaired, refugees and any person who might encounter problems with accessibility to any form of information.

According to Romero Fresco "most of the work carried out so far in the theory and practice of Media Accessibility (MA) since the very first studies in the US in the 70s (Gates, 1971; Nix, 1971; Fischer, 1971) has focused on access to audiovisual content as opposed to access to creation. In the traditional and so far prevailing notion of MA, the target groups of this access have been the deaf and blind communities. Now, two emerging areas, interlingual respeaking and accessible filmmaking (AFM), illustrate the need to open the scope of MA to other groups, including the elderly, children, people with learning disabilities and people without disabilities who may need linguistic access to audiovisual content in a foreign language. Here, MA includes the modalities (dubbing, interlingual subtitling, voice-over translation, etc.) as well as target users of AVT" (2018:190).

Gian Maria Greco states that: "A closer look at the pervasive growth of accessibility in our society, especially in terms of how accessibility has entered and developed in various research fields, shows that these fields have been experiencing a three-fold shift. The first is that of a shift from particularistic accounts to a Universalist account of access, the second is a shift from a maker-centered to a user-centered approach, and the third is a shift from reactive to proactive approaches (2018: 211).

Who is our audience as audio-visual and intercultural mediators?

The answer is each person who claims the right to have access to any public space in facility and to obtain the information as anyone in any European language. Any assistance offered to any individual should be based on humanitarian principles and should be applicable to the collective.

If we do not offer what is necessary, there will always be large groups of suffering and frustrated people. These communities are paying their taxes as any citizen and they have rights. Marginalization can occur at any time, 80 million people are with special needs for a total of

[4] advisor.museumsandheritage.com

500 million individuals in Europe, 70% being in bad situations economically. But we all know that frustrated groups become desperate very quickly. It was for this reason that organizations such as the Jodi Mattes Trust, established in 2008, were set up to promote barrier-free access to all cultural collections. The Trust fosters encourage inclusion through the Jodi awards. Entering its 12th year, it celebrates the change its winners promoted to the cultural equality of disabled people through the use of accessible digital media[5].

It is not only offering the possibility to eat or to get an education, but also to be accepted in any activity and to feel that all people have the right to be important factors in the society. This is what we mean by social inclusion and accessibility to all services and heritage.

3 Only Few EU Programs To Offer Subtitles or Audio Description On EU Media Products

Europe aims to be an example in its social policy and this could be a good strategy, if our societies get involved in these principles in becoming more giving, generous and compassionate and not only controlling and negative. We know that when positive changes occur in our lives as individuals it may also influence our thinking and our communities.

What happens when different communities embrace their principles and exchange them with each other? It is essential to provide people with specific needs the right information for their task. For a part of intercultural mediators challenge would be to understand the needs of the targeted public. "We also need to understand the type information they need, its extent and the form in which it is to be delivered". Hersh (2008 : 90).

Legislations and conventions from the United Nations to the European Union impose the protection and guaranty human rights for all including mediation and communication for inclusion. In the Chart (the fundamental rights of the European Union) and Lisbon Treaty article 1 mentions that the human dignity is fundamental and inviolable and article 26

[5] The Jodi Awards was set up in honour Jodi Mattes, who worked at the British Museum, and was a tireless campaigner for equal services to disabled people.

mentions the respect of the autonomy to each person with disabilities and the social and professional integration to all in order to participate actively in the society.

Marcus Weisen, who was the Trust's first director[6], gave a keynote speech at the Destinations for all conference public in Montreal and took the audience on a journey through his three- decade long pursuit of a more equal cultural landscape. He says "that there are still lessons to be learnt from projects he worked on including for the Royal National Institute for the Blind, which initiated the European Cities within Reach project in 1992-93. The project resulted in cultural city guides for Venice, Paris and London for the visually impaired, which came in three languages with more than 1,500 large-print, audio and Braille guides being sold, which he says demonstrates a demand for information."[7]

4 The Impact of Training Intercultural Mediation and Media

I think the next few years are going to be really exciting for audio-visual media and heritage accessibility. The quality of sound and picture are continuously getting better and better, there will be a lot more opportunities in offering access by live subtitling for the Deaf and hard of hearing and audio description for the blind and visually impaired, sign language by internet in the theatre or with Text-to-Speech technology etc.

Web accessibility and applications are becoming the most exciting media for all. After over a decade a lot of changes were produced including flexibility, which offers huge advantages and has made the quality of access far greater than before. Mary Carrol[8] a Managing Director of "*Titelbild Subtitling and Translation GmbH*", emphasizes in a conference for MuTra in Berlin (January 2008), that subtitling needs a training in a professional environment. As a media translation consultant and subtitling trainer, she focuses her training on a model (step by step) where the trainee is put in condition and will start working on a professional program immediately. She offers intensive courses for groups or

[6] Marcus Weisen is an international consultant on museum accessibility.

[7] Advisor.museumsandheritage.com

[8] Mary Carol is a member of the Transforum Coordination Committee for Translation Practice and Theory in Germany; member of BDÜ, the German Federal Association of Interpreters and Translators; member of the Languages and the Media conference steering committee.

individuals. M. Carrol is author of various articles and publications on subtitling and screen titling and a co-author of *Subtitling, Transedit*, (1998) and has her own typology on training in subtitling as a form of inter-linguistic mediation mode. She is a member of ESIST, the European Association for Studies in Screen Translation where norms on subtitling were established for the first time.

Joan Greening's training, an audio-visual trainer who has worked professionally in the field of disability for over 25 years working with a wide cross section of people with special needs including people with sensory impairments, physical disabilities, learning disabilities and mental health survivors. She has worked in the broadcast media and disability for the past 14 years. At Royal National Institute for Blind People (RNIB) she works with the relevant industry sectors to develop audio description services for television, home entertainment and cinema. She assists in the development of accessible digital television, digital film and DVD, ensuring that people who are blind or partially sighted enjoy the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities as those who are sighted.

Aline Remael teaches at the Higher Institute for Translation and Interpreting of the Hogeschool Antwerpen (HIVT-HA) and at the University of Antwerp (UA). The topic of her doctoral dissertation was film adaptation as translation, with special attention to the shifting narrative functions of film dialogue in the transition from literature/theatre to screenplay and film. Today her main research interest is audio-visual translation (subtitling and subtitling- commentary combinations in documentary film, subtitling for the hearing impaired and audio description). She is currently involved in a research project on intra-lingual Dutch subtitling and an experiment in AD with Het Poleis (Antwerp youth theatre). She is chief editor of her department's journal Linguistica Antverpiensia New Series, which publishes thematic issues on translation.

Training audio-description with Bernd Beneck who knows the art of translating the image. In his workshops, Beneck (2004) gives some basic knowledge in creating audio description, brief introduction into the topic with examples from different countries (What is audio- description? Where does it come from?) What kind of guidelines may be necessary to transform information from the image to a text? Training abilities in audio description. Small groups of 3 people will do the description for the beginning of a short movie (in English). The results are presented and discussed with the whole auditorium in relation to

the guidelines discussed. The description done by professional describers is watched and discussed. He explains that "audio-description is the technique used for making theatre, movies and TV programs accessible to blind and visually impaired people, it is an additional narration which describes the action, body language, facial expressions, scenery and costumes. The description fits in between the dialogue and does not interfere with important sound and music effects," Beneck (2004:78). Elisa Perego (2018: abstract), mentions how the results of museum audio descriptions "show that scripted and recorded museum AD texts comply with recommendations only partially. They guarantee vivid, imaginative and diverse language as well as substantial text informativity through the combination of high lexical diversity and the extensive use of descriptive adjectives as well as substantial lexical density. In spite of the use of short words, however, museum Ads seem more lexically and syntactically complex than expected, with their use of opaque technical terms, heavy adjective phrases and long sentences, … whereas audience reception research will contribute to determine the real degree of usability of these new text types" (ibid).

Adriana Serbian (2004), enumerates in her typology the types of inter-linguistic mediation as follows: « Inter-lingual translation, subtitling, dubbing, voice-over and intra-lingual (monolingual), subtitling for the hearing impaired and the Deaf, audio description for the blind, live subtitling (e.g. news broadcasts), sur-titling for opera and the theatre ».

Then she describes each discipline: subtitling as an oral text to a written text. She adds that the "advantages: are not expensive and does not take a very long time, original soundtrack is preserved in subtitling and may have an interesting role as for language learning. It is best tool for the hearing impaired and the deaf, for immigrants and tourists" (Ibid). Concerning the disadvantages: Serban includes that subtitles 'contaminates' the image, and that there is a greater loss of information due to compression. The attention of the audience is split between the image, the soundtrack and the subtitle. Concerning Dubbing as "an oral text to oral text", she mentions the " advantages: that dubbing does not distract attention from image, is better for children and for people with poor reading skills. There is less reduction of the original dialogue compared to subtitling." As to the disadvantages: "dubbing is expensive and takes more time of preparation, loss of the original soundtrack, the voices of dubbing are different". She mentions an important aspect that the actors can become repetitive after a while.

A. Serban considers voice-over to be inexpensive and not excessively time-consuming, "it may be appropriate to some audio-visual genres (such as documentaries, particularly when it comes to translating the narrator's part). For the disadvantages of the voice-over: "it 'contaminates' the original soundtrack, if used in genres such as feature films it may create confusion as to who is speaking". According to subtitling for the hearing impaired, it should indicate relevant noises in the subtitles (music, phone or doorbell ringing, footsteps, shouting). Otherwise, scenes may become incomprehensible for them. Serban emphasizes that the mediators should make it easier to understand who is speaking (especially if off-screen): the use of color-codes and/or change the position of the subtitles according to the place of the speaker on the screen. Adaptation involves many issues:

If we understand the needs of our audience, then we can offer a great service. There are so many norms and constraints in such disciplines, but if we offer a good training and clear principles to our trainees we can expect a good quality of mediation skills. There are so many types of deafness and degrees of blindness, but we have to bear in mind that this might occur to any one of us at a certain age. So all the population might suffer from this disability by aging and might need this kind of assistance.

In Europe education is much more central than anywhere else, but we still need to give due importance to intercultural communication and mediation as far as accessibility is concerned. I will give the example of MacDonald Euan[9] who started compiling a local directory of accessible places to visit and thought there must be thousands of people who could benefit from this and decided to launch a website. The result is hundreds of on the ground reviews of visitor attractions, including dozens of museums, by people with disabilities, which is growing daily.

Our Myth for the meanwhile is to have a universal code or even universal sign language, but before that let us encourage intercultural mediation with the support that we have already, which is a minimum for beginning. We can use free Programs from internet and begin our work immediately.

Internet is making communication possible between any group; why not use this technology to offer accessibility to all by all means. If we check the map of sign language in Europe, it is recognized on a constitutional level in very few countries, but is not recognized

[9] Euan's Guide which was set up by Euan MacDonald who was motor neurone disease

in all EU countries, this map is from www.eud.eu/EUD_Sign_Language-I-239.html can give us a clear idea about the needs in this field.

As audiovisual mediators, we are involved in translation/interpretation issues like spoken to written language, time/space Constraints, cohesion etc. Whatever we interpret, audio-visual products, we translate auditory channels and visual channels, we also adapt verbal auditory elements and verbal visual elements with subtitling for the Deaf like dialogues, music, accent etc. In Audio description we interpret non-verbal visual elements like gestures, facial expressions and body movements and surroundings like in Museums etc. We need to be trained to adapt and to avoid time constraints: to keep a subtitle minimum 1,5 to 2 seconds and maximum display for 6,5 to 7 seconds. The European norms are not alike, but nearly, all professional companies agree to forbid more than two lines (34-37 letters/line), per screen. They all agree not leave a subtitle during the cuts and to give a special care to cultural references, cross-cultural politeness and to intertextuality.

In Subtitling for the Deaf the use of Colors and labels is very important, but the chart is different from one country to another. There is a chart for the BBC in England, another one for "Dubbing brothers" in Paris, a different one at the RTBF in Belgium or ART etc. How about synchronizing our efforts to get one European chart for example?

Following correct rules of grammar and punctuation as well as to transcribe what is said whenever possible in synchronization. A great attention has to be paid to reading speed, synchronicity, line breaking and segmentation. Longue subtitles should not be kept on the screen.

Conclusion

Mediation has been known since the beginning of time, but recently few of have tried to figure out ways to bring it to communication and translation to become a profession. To work as a mediator in inter-linguistic communication brings a sense of joy and curiosity to many students. It brings a relief to both partners who are interested by this mediation. Our open Universe needs to make information accessible to all, in a world full of knowledge, adventure

and possibilities. When the responsibility is taken to become a mediator, he/she accepts to bring not only mental or intellectual help, but to feel it from the heart especially if he/she succeeds in the mission of responding to the needs of a target public.

A mediator should learn the art of negotiation because he will discover that he/she can affect all fields. He/she will discover different technological tools, not only the ones that he/she uses in transferring a message from one language to another, but also from one culture to another. A mediator is needed for oral, written or on-screen intervention, so he/she needs adequate training to be able to offer the needed social service using the needed tools.

Historically, people used to live in small, interconnected communities with very specific needs. Nowadays, we have a very different reality. Things have changed radically, with the advent Internet and related technologies into the Universe, the Universe has become a village and we need intercultural mediators in every area. As for trainers, they have to train their minds to see an open Universe of intercultural communication accessible to all communities and to all cultures. It is urgent to change the foundation and to unlock the teaching methods, to offer digital training as a catalyst to awaken and bring out creativity in their trainees. In start we must develop a new understanding of the role of mediator as a facilitator of communication using different technological tools.

Setting up a related theory may be considered as general practice in the natural sciences, but in inter-linguistic mediation research, literature shows that it has largely neglected any standards for writing academic papers. Some concluding remarks of Standop (1998) will help to roughly categorize the above postulates with respect to the structural set-up. To study the interaction of situative and cognitive parameters in inter-linguistic mediation as opposed to audio-visual translation. To analyze theoretical audio-visual translation studies as opposed to intercultural communication studies, more complex features in training, as for example indoor and/or outdoor. These results from several different parameters, which lie in the nature of immediate communicative processes uncovering such special patterns in the communication and in the discussion of the possibilities, would be a gap in the research. We have to recognize each pattern and put them all into practice in the given situation.

In conclusion, if we synchronize our efforts in training and in offering a harmonized curriculum, this will offer an intercultural mediation of a good quality and suitable for all. Inter-cultural Mediation presents strong potential in educational contexts, it can reduce the

anxiety experienced by foreign language learners, and it can also serve as a useful support, in its intralinguistic version. It can be used to offer a brief description at museums and heritage attractions for visually impaired to enable them to take decisions to whether they wanted to visit or not. Inter-cultural mediation can help the hard of hearing, children and immigrants to have access to the language of their host country and to acknowledge the Heritage of Europe.

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