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**Language Assessment for Multilingualism:
Promoting linguistic diversity and intercultural communication**

ASSESSING TEST-TAKERS' TRANSLANGUAGING COMPETENCE: THE CASE OF THE GREEK NATIONAL EXAMS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

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Starting with....



- Do foreign language tests assess **learners' ability to move back and forth between languages** so as to communicate effectively?
- Do they assess their (multilingual) **competence in switching between languages** and **relaying** information from one language to another?
- Is there such a thing called '**multilingual testing**'?

Language testing internationally

- **Multilingual testing** is overlooked in the field of language testing and assessment
- Language testing is still dominated by the **monolingual paradigm** (Shohamy, 2011).
- Assessment policies and testing practices are based upon **monolingual constructs** rather than being oriented towards assessing **multilingual competencies** (Dendrinos, 2012; Shohamy, 2011)

Language testing internationally

- The examinations of international systems are administered **only in the target language**, while the reality, worldview and ideology described and construed in them (cf. Balourdi, 2012) follow **global patterns** that do not take into consideration the relevant features of the local community

National foreign language testing in Greece

- **National foreign language exams (KPG exams)**
assess the knowledge of the candidates in 6 different languages
 - common specifications and descriptors based on the 6 level CEFR scale of language competence
 - the innovative use of Greek to assess specific competences (across languages)

The innovation in the **KAP** exams

**Mingling-of-
languages
idea**

Monolingual
testing

Multilingual
testing



Mediation in the Greek national foreign language exams (KPG exams)

Mediation tasks involve....

- extraction of **information** from a source text in one language and **relaying** it in another language for a given communicative purpose
- interpretation of meanings articulated in source texts & **making of new meanings** in the target language expressed appropriately for the context of situation (Dendrinos, 2006)



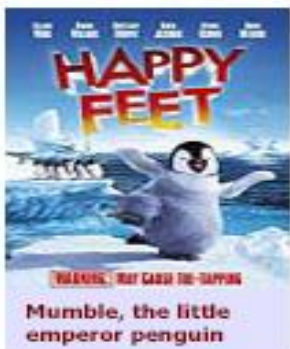
Το **HAIRSPRAY** είναι μια κωμωδία που μας μεταφέρει στη δεκαετία του 60, με τα περίεργα χτενίσματα, τα πολύχρωμα ρούχα, τα hits και την τρέλα της εποχής. Σε αυτό το περιβάλλον, μια χοντρούλα προσπαθεί να βρει το δρόμο προς τη διασημότητα...



Στο **SPIDERMAN 3**, ο Σπάιντερμαν χαίρεται την ηρεμία του και κάνει σχέδια να παντρευτεί την αγαπημένη του, η οποία όμως αντιμετωπίζει προβλήματα που θα την κάνουν να απομακρυνθεί – κάτι που επιδρά αρνητικά επάνω του. Ως προς την πραγματική δράση ένας νέος εχθρός ονόματι Sandman εμφανίζεται και μια μαύρη ουσία κυριεύει την ψυχή του Σπάιντερμαν...



Στη θαυμάσια αυτή ταινία, με τίτλο **PATATOYH** ο πρωταγωνιστής είναι ο Ρεμί, ένας αρουραίος που λατρεύει την καλή κουζίνα. Όταν τον διώχνουν από το σπίτι του, για καλή του τύχη καταλήγει στον υπόνομο κάτω από ένα πολυτελέστατο παριζιάνικο εστιατόριο. Η αγάπη του για το καλό φαγητό θα τον οδηγήσουν στο δικό του παράδεισο, που δεν είναι άλλος από την... κουζίνα. Εκεί θα γνωρίσει τον Λιγκουίνι, έναν φιλόδοξο νεαρό σερβιτόρο...



Στο **HAPPY FEET** ο μικρός Mumble είναι ένας πιγκουίνος αλλιότικος από τους άλλους. Ενώ θα έπρεπε να διαθέτει όμορφη και ρυθμική φωνή, αυτός γεννήθηκε χορεύοντας κλακέτες! Οι γονείς του φοβούνται πως δε θα καταφέρει ποτέ να βρει την αληθινή αγάπη χωρίς να ξέρει το 'Τραγούδι της Καρδιάς', ενώ οι συμμαθητές του τον κοροϊδεύουν λόγω της ιδιαιτερότητάς του.

Mediation in the Greek national foreign language exams (KPG) : an example

■ THE TASK

Imagine you are part of a team preparing the **WHAT'S ON** guide for English-speaking visitors to your city. Below is the film section presenting in Greek the films which are now playing. Use the information in Greek to write a text in English (about 150 words) **recommending** one film for children and one for teenagers

Mediation.. as translanguaging practice

- Involves interplay of languages
- Involves a 'hybrid practice of languaging' (Garcia, 2011)
- Translanguaging makes it clear that there are no clear-cut boundaries between the languages employed (Stathopoulou, 2013)

Translanguaging describes the use of literacy practices to “move back and forth with ease and comfort between and among different languages and dialects, different social classes, and different cultural and artistic forms” (Guerra, 2004: 8).

A glocal testing system & the introduction of mediation tasks

- Languages are not seen as separate systems in the mind of the language user: there are no clear-cut boundaries between them.
- Languages are treated **equally**

A global testing system & the introduction of mediation tasks

- WHAT IS NOT ASSESSED:

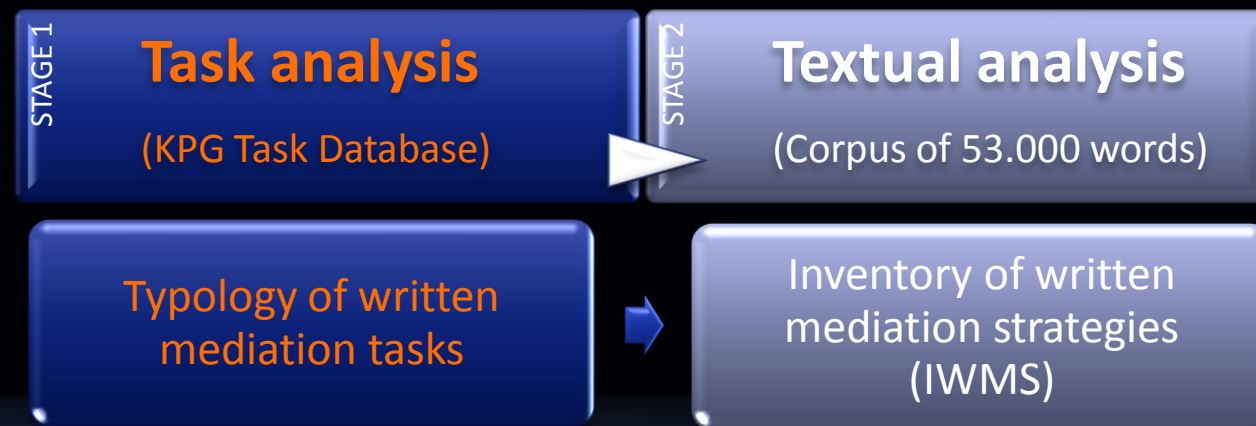
Learners' linguistic competence and language proficiency in *one* language

- WHAT IS ASSESSED: Learners'

- ability to move back and forth between languages
- ability to simultaneously draw on different linguistic and cultural resources from a variety of contexts.
- **multilingual competence** by focusing on the user rather than the language as an abstract system (Dendrinos, 2011)

Researching mediation

- **Aim:** to investigate **what mediation is** by identifying successful **mediation strategies** in scripts produced by users of English when performing KPG written mediation tasks



Quantitative and qualitative analysis

- Quantitative analysis brought to the surface indications of differentiated strategy-use across tasks of **different proficiency levels**
- Qualitative analysis showed to what extent the linguistic means, through which mediation strategies are realized, differs as the level increases.

Contribution & usefulness of the study

- The study constitutes a starting point for the development of **descriptors** and the creation of standardized measures and clear benchmarks for reliable assessment of mediation competence



- ◆ **mediation strategies** needed for learners of different levels when being involved in different mediation tasks
- ◆ the **language** to be used by learners at each proficiency level (Stathopoulou, 2013a, 2013b)

Introduction of mediation tasks in a testing battery: the backwash effect...

Learners will make sense of the **multilingual linguistic landscape** they live in (Gorter, 2006)

- ▷ “linguistic homogenization through the spread of English (Hambye and Richards, 2012: 175) will be avoided
- ▷ **linguistic diversity** will be promoted
- ▷ **polyphony** will be appreciated

Finishing off ...

Multilingualism in the field of language testing?

What it means to know a language in today's multilingual and multicultural societies?



How to assess multilingual competence?



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