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MULTILINGUAL MEDIATION AND PRAGMATIC ADAPTATION IN INTERCULTURAL BUSINESS COMMUNICATION TRAINING

The article substantiates a methodology for developing multilingual mediation and pragmatic adaptation as interrelated skills of future managers. The problem is that translation, terminology work, and business correspondence are often assessed primarily for linguistic correctness, whereas semantic equivalence, tone, degree of directness, audience, genre, and communicative consequences receive less attention. The study aims to define the operations of mediation and adaptation and design a didactic model for their development in foreign-language training. The methods included theoretical analysis, structural-component modeling, pragmatic analysis of professional messages, and pedagogical task design. Multilingual mediation is conceptualized as explaining, rephrasing, bilingual summarising, clarifying terminology, neutrally representing positions, and establishing shared meaning. Pragmatic adaptation is defined as changing tone, directness, formality, detail, structure, and linguistic resources according to recipient, purpose, channel, and status relations without distorting professional content. A six-step cycle is proposed: recognize, compare, explain, adapt, verify, and justify. The article presents a task set based on a misunderstanding about an international project deadline: comparison of a Ukrainian source message, machine translation, and an AI-generated version; development of a terminology table; preparation of internal and external message versions; a mediation note; and a revision log. Assessment criteria cover semantic accuracy, pragmatic appropriateness, neutrality, terminological consistency, and accountability for digitally mediated text. The proposed methodology treats multilingual resources not as signs of language deficiency but as instruments for professional reasoning, coordination, and risk reduction.

Key words: *multilingual mediation, pragmatic adaptation, intercultural business communication, future managers, translation, digital language tools, training.*

(статтю подано мовою оригіналу)

Business communication across languages is often described as a translation problem, yet managers rarely need only a linguistically equivalent text. They need the recipient to understand the same commitments, constraints, deadlines, responsibilities, and next steps. A literal rendering can preserve lexical meaning while altering pragmatic force: a request may become a demand, a tentative estimate may sound like a guarantee, an explanation may appear defensive, and an internal technical term may be incomprehensible to an external partner. In these situations, professional success depends on two related abilities: mediation of meaning and adaptation of the message.

Multilingual mediation is necessary because participants may not share the same language resources, professional terminology, or assumptions. The manager may need to explain an English term in Ukrainian, summarise a Ukrainian discussion for an international partner, compare two versions of a contract clause, or restate both parties' positions without escalating disagreement. Pragmatic adaptation is necessary because the same content cannot always be communicated through the same wording. An internal risk report, a partner update, and a customer notice may contain the same factual core but require different detail, directness, and structure.

Foreign-language courses commonly include translation, vocabulary, correspondence, and presentation tasks. However, these elements do not automatically form mediation and adaptation skills. A learner may produce a grammatically accurate email but fail to indicate uncertainty; may translate "customs inspection" inconsistently; or may use an AI-generated apology that sounds polished but promises actions the organization has not approved. A methodology is needed that makes semantic, pragmatic, and ethical decisions explicit and assessable.

The contemporary multilingual perspective rejects the idea that speakers operate through completely separate language systems. Translanguaging research shows that learners and professionals draw on an integrated repertoire to understand, compare, explain, and create meaning [8]. Ukrainian scholarship similarly treats translanguaging as a resource for foreign-language learning and metalinguistic awareness [7]. For management education, this means that movement between Ukrainian and English can be methodologically productive when it serves a defined operation, such as terminology clarification, comparison of pragmatic effect, or preparation of a bilingual record.

The CEFR Companion Volume places mediation alongside reception, production, and interaction and describes it as creating conditions for access to meaning, explaining, processing, and facilitating communication [9]. This broader understanding is especially relevant to managers. They mediate not only language but also professional knowledge, organizational positions, and expectations. A manager who summarises a meeting for two audiences or neutrally represents the positions of conflicting parties performs mediation even when no literal translation occurs.

Research on multilingual higher education and internationalization at home indicates that intercultural learning develops when learners use language resources in purposeful interaction rather than simply encountering linguistic diversity [3; 14]. Virtual exchange and collaborative online international learning can strengthen cultural, language, and digital competences when tasks require joint meaning-making, structured cooperation, and reflection [12; 13]. These findings support a methodology in which mediation is embedded in a professional problem and produces an outcome needed by another participant.

Professional foreign-language education also emphasizes authentic genres and audience awareness. Recent Ukrainian studies recommend professional texts, business communication tasks, situational modeling, professionally oriented course design, and case-based work for non-language majors and future managers [1; 2; 4–6; 16]. Yet genre authenticity requires more than copying a format. Learners must understand how the communicative purpose, power relations, and the recipient's information needs shape the text.

Digital tools have made multilingual professional communication faster, but have increased the need for verification. Generative AI can produce multiple versions, simulate recipients, or reformulate tone, but professional and intercultural appropriateness are not guaranteed [10]. Ukrainian studies of AI in education likewise stress critical use and human responsibility [11; 15]. A mediation methodology should therefore include the comparison of tool outputs, the identification of semantic additions or omissions, and the documentation of the learner’s final decision.

The **aim of the study** was to define multilingual mediation and pragmatic adaptation as teachable professional actions and to design a task-based methodology for their development in the foreign-language training of future managers. The study addressed three questions: Which component operations constitute mediation and adaptation? How can a single professional situation generate several interconnected tasks? Which criteria make the quality of a multilingual and pragmatically adapted product observable?

The methods included theoretical analysis of multilingual education, intercultural communication, professional language learning, and digital language tools; structural-component modeling of mediation and adaptation operations; pragmatic analysis of alternative message versions; and pedagogical design of a task set. The source materials consisted of bilingual professional texts, machine-translated variants, AI-generated messages, role descriptions, terminology tables, message templates, mediation prompts, and revision logs developed for the pedagogical system. The design was tested for semantic continuity, professional plausibility, audience differentiation, and assessability.

The analysis identified six operations of multilingual mediation. The first is access: making professional content understandable to a participant who lacks the relevant linguistic or specialist resources. The second is clarification: identifying ambiguous terms, dates, responsibilities, or modal meanings and asking questions that establish the intended interpretation. The third is rephrasing: expressing the same professional meaning through another linguistic form without adding or deleting commitments. The fourth is summarising: selecting and structuring the information required by a particular audience. The fifth is perspective representation: presenting the positions of different parties in a neutral, symmetrical manner. The sixth is agreement fixation: converting interaction into a shared record of decisions, responsibilities, deadlines, and unresolved issues.

These operations show why mediation is broader than translation (Table 1).

Table 1

Operations of Multilingual Mediation

Operation	Professional question	Typical task	Evidence
Access	What does the recipient need in order to understand the issue?	Explain a specialist term or process in accessible language	Audience-appropriate explanation
Clarification	Which word, date, responsibility, or assumption is ambiguous?	Formulate neutral questions and define terms	Clarification list and verified meaning
Rephrasing	Can the same meaning be expressed more clearly or neutrally?	Restate a partner’s position without evaluation	Accurate paraphrase
Summarising	Which information is relevant to this audience?	Prepare Ukrainian internal and English external summaries	Two purpose-specific summaries
Perspective representation	How can both positions be represented without blame?	Write a mediator note for two parties	Neutral, symmetrical account
Agreement fixation	What has been decided, by whom, and by when?	Create a bilingual action table after a meeting	Shared record of actions and unresolved points

Note. The operations may occur within one task and should be assessed in relation to the professional purpose

Translation may be one resource, but mediation also involves selection, explanation, and coordination. A word-for-word bilingual message can be a poor mediation product if the recipient cannot identify the action required. Conversely, a concise English summary of a long Ukrainian discussion may be effective if it preserves the professional meaning, identifies uncertainty, and makes responsibilities transparent. The quality criterion is not formal similarity alone but functional access to shared meaning.

Pragmatic adaptation changes how professional content is expressed so that it functions appropriately for a particular recipient and situation. The content core must remain stable, but six parameters may change: tone,

directness, formality, detail, structure, and linguistic complexity. A manager may need a detailed internal report with explicit risks, a concise partner update focused on consequences and options, and a customer notice that explains the impact without disclosing confidential information. Treating one version as universally correct ignores the relationship between genre and professional responsibility.

Adaptation is not euphemistic concealment. A message about a delay should not become so polite that the recipient cannot understand the problem. Likewise, softening a disagreement does not require abandoning the organization's position. The method, therefore, distinguishes between pragmatic adaptation and semantic distortion. Learners must preserve verified facts, uncertainty, responsibility, and constraints while revising the way these elements are organized and framed.

The proposed methodology follows the cycle recognise, compare, explain, adapt, verify, and justify. In the recognition step, learners identify the professional purpose, recipients, factual core, uncertain information, terminology, and potential pragmatic risks. In the comparison step, they examine parallel versions: source and translation, human and machine variants, or internal and external messages. In the explanation step, they articulate what changed and why the change matters. In the adaptation step, they create a version for a defined audience. In the verification step, they check meaning, terminology, tone, genre, and commitments. In the justification step, they document accepted, rejected, or modified suggestions.

The cycle is designed to make invisible judgment visible. Without explanation and justification, a teacher may see a successful final text but cannot determine whether the learner understood the pragmatic problem or simply accepted an AI suggestion. A revision log records the original fragment, the change, the reason, and the decision. This record also supports formative feedback and portfolio assessment.

The task set is based on an international project in which a Ukrainian team reports that delivery "should be possible by Friday". The phrase is translated and subsequently reformulated by an AI tool as a firm commitment. An additional customs inspection delays the work. The partner interprets the earlier message as a guaranteed deadline and sends a categorical complaint. The educational problem combines lexical meaning, modality, terminology, tone, responsibility, and divergent expectations about agreement (Figure 1).

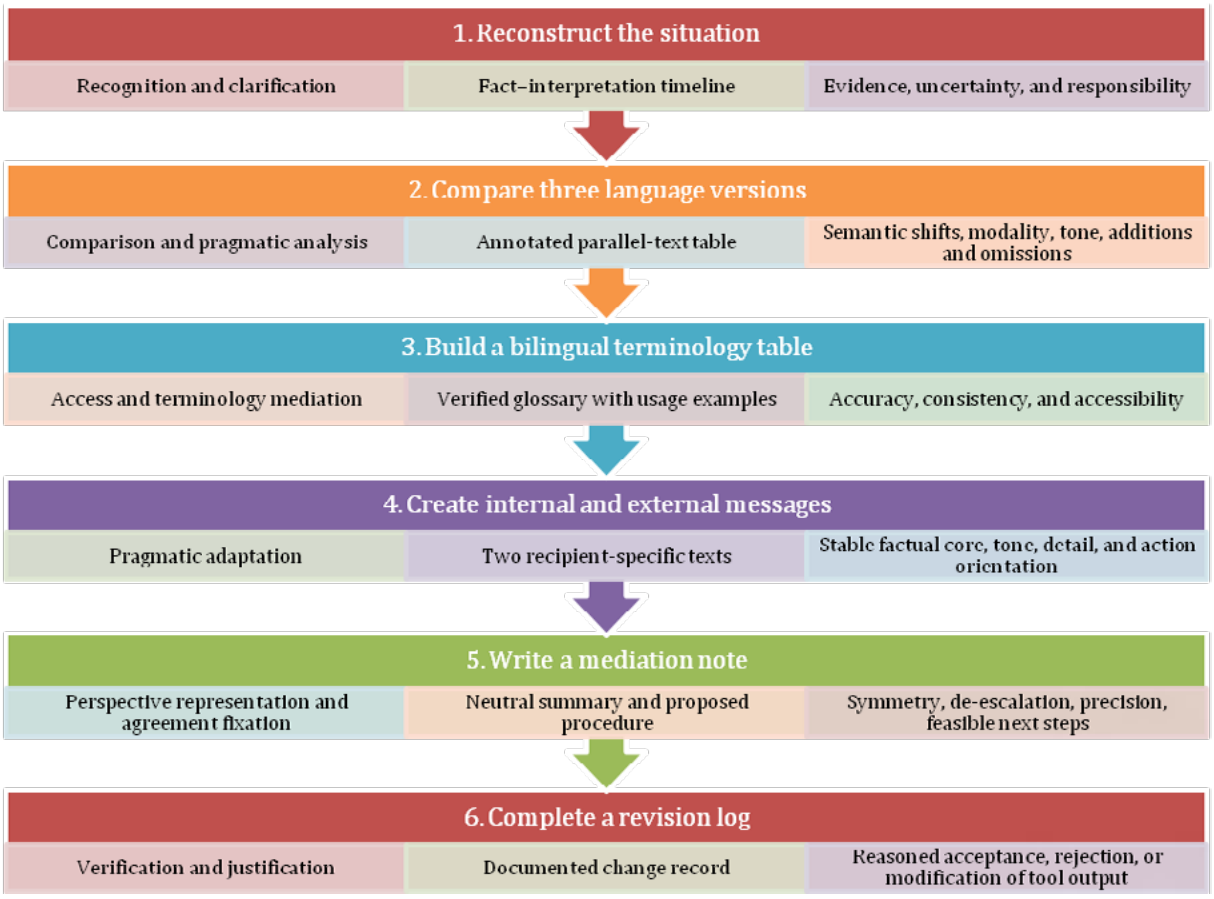


Figure 1. Task Sequence for the Deadline Case

Task 1 requires learners to reconstruct the factual timeline and separate verified facts from interpretations. They identify what each party knew, what was communicated, which statements were tentative, and which information was delayed. Task 2 compares the Ukrainian source, a machine translation, and an AI-generated version. Learners

mark omissions, additions, changes in modality, and shifts in directness. Task 3 develops a terminology table for expressions such as “delivery deadline”, “customs inspection”, “partial delivery”, “revised schedule”, and “confirmed commitment”. Each term is defined in both languages and placed in a professional sentence.

Task 4 requires two adapted messages. The internal Ukrainian message addresses causes, responsibility, risk, and immediate action. The external English message acknowledges the partner’s concern, states verified facts, avoids transferring blame, proposes options, and asks for confirmation of the preferred solution. Task 5 is a mediation note that neutrally represents both positions: the partner relied on a message that was interpreted as a commitment, while the project team intended it as a provisional estimate. The note identifies the shared problem and proposes a procedure for confirming future deadlines. Task 6 is the revision log documenting changes to the automated versions.

Semantic accuracy is assessed through preservation of facts, constraints, uncertainty, and commitments. A high-quality product does not invent causes, dates, or promises and does not omit information necessary for a decision. Terminological consistency is assessed across documents and languages. Pragmatic appropriateness concerns tone, directness, formality, and action orientation for the specified recipient. Neutrality is particularly important in mediation: the text should represent both positions without attributing blame or intention beyond the available evidence.

Digital accountability is assessed through the verification process. Learners identify which parts of the machine or AI output were retained, modified, or rejected; explain risks; and confirm that confidential data were not introduced into inappropriate tools. The final product must be attributable to human judgment. These criteria shift the assessment from surface correction to professional decision-making.

Peer review is useful when reviewers receive separate roles. One reviewer checks the factual core, another checks the terminology, another checks the pragmatic effect, and another checks the audience relevance. This division prevents feedback from becoming an undifferentiated impression. After review, the author revises the message and explains which comments were accepted. The process models workplace revision and shows that mediation is distributed across participants and artifacts.

The methodology requires a professionally credible source text and a clearly defined audience. If the source is vague or the recipient is unspecified, adaptation becomes subjective. Learners also need access to terminology resources and explicit criteria. At lower language levels, the complexity of the professional problem can be preserved while linguistic support is increased through glossaries, sentence starters, and model structures. The teacher should avoid correcting every language error before discussing meaning, because this may reduce the task to a grammar exercise.

The methodology does not claim that bilingual comparison automatically produces intercultural sensitivity. The educational effect depends on the questions asked and the need to justify decisions. Nor does it treat AI-generated variants as authentic representatives of a culture. They are alternatives to be analyzed. Authentic professional materials, interaction with real partners, and delayed-transfer tasks remain necessary to test whether learners can use mediation and adaptation beyond the original case.

Conclusions. Multilingual mediation and pragmatic adaptation are distinct but interdependent professional actions. Mediation creates access to meaning, clarifies terms, represents perspectives, and fixes agreement; adaptation modifies tone, directness, formality, detail, structure, and complexity for a particular recipient while preserving the factual core. Their development requires more than translation accuracy.

The proposed six-step cycle and integrated task set make these actions observable through parallel-text analysis, bilingual terminology work, dual-audience messages, mediation notes, and revision logs. Assessment covers semantic accuracy, pragmatic appropriateness, neutrality, terminological consistency, and digital accountability. The methodology can be embedded in professional foreign-language courses, negotiation modules, project work, and digital communication training. Future studies should examine how learners transfer these operations to live interaction and how different language-proficiency levels influence the balance between multilingual support and independent professional performance.

Use of Artificial Intelligence. During the preparation of the manuscript, AI (Grammarly) was used as an auxiliary tool for the technical review of selected author-written text fragments at the levels of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The AI tool was not used to generate the substantive parts of the article, including the formulation of the aim, methodology, results, discussion, conclusions, or references. All language corrections suggested by the AI tool were verified by comparing them with the original text, checking terminology, content accuracy, and consistency with the cited sources. The use of AI did not affect the research results, their interpretation, or the conclusions.

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Смужаниця Д. І. Мультилінгвальна медіація і прагматична адаптація в навчанні міжкультурної ділової комунікації

У статті обґрунтовано методику розвитку мультилінгвальної медіації та прагматичної адаптації як взаємопов’язаних навичок міжкультурної комунікації майбутнього менеджера. Проблема полягає в тому, що переклад, робота з термінологією та ділове листування нерідко оцінюються переважно за мовною правильністю, тоді як смислова еквівалентність, тон, рівень прямоти, адресат, жанр і наслідки повідомлення залишаються поза увагою. Метою дослідження є визначення операцій медіації й адаптації та розроблення дидактичної моделі їх формування в іншомовній підготовці майбутніх менеджерів. Використано теоретичний аналіз, структурно-компонентне моделювання, прагматичний аналіз повідомлень і педагогічне проєктування завдань. Мультилінгвальну медіацію подано як пояснення, перефразування, двомовне підсумовування, уточнення термінів, нейтральне представлення позицій і фіксацію спільного смислу. Прагматичну адаптацію визначено як зміну тону, прямоти, формальності, деталізації, структури й мовних засобів відповідно до адресата, мети, каналу та статусних відносин без викривлення професійного змісту. Запропоновано цикл «розпізнати, зіставити, пояснити, адаптувати, перевірити, обґрунтувати». Наведено комплекс завдань на основі непорозуміння щодо строків міжнародного проєкту: зіставлення українського джерела, машинного перекладу й ШІ-варіанта; укладання термінологічної таблиці; створення внутрішніх та зовнішніх версій повідомлення; медіаційна записка; журнал змін. Розроблено критерії оцінювання смислової точності, прагматичної доречності, нейтральності, термінологічної послідовності та відповідальності цифрового опосередкованого тексту.

Ключові слова: *мультилінгвальна медіація, прагматична адаптація, міжкультурна ділова комунікація, майбутні менеджери, переклад, цифрові мовні засоби, професійна підготовка.*

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