

Mediation for plurilingual competence: synergies and implications

Enrica Piccardo

enrica.piccardo@utoronto.ca

Plan of the presentation

Mediation: potential of a nomadic notion

Broadening and deepening the perspective: completing the CEFR descriptive scheme

Mediation and plurilingualism: a dynamic view

Making the invisible visible: implications of a new vision for language education

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Mediation is an all-embracing “nomadic” notion (Lenoir, 1996)

- **Diplomacy, conflict resolution, commercial**
→ arbitration, counselling, guidance
- **Philosophy**
→ abstract operation through which knowledge is acquired (Hegel)
→ form of relation between opposing domains and forces in society (Marx & Engels)
- **Psychology/education**
→ social interaction/mediation: a fundamental role in development of cognition (Vygotsky)

Mediation and Language/Culture

- interdependence of individual & collective, cognitive & social, intra- & interpersonal: higher mental functions are mediated by psychological & cultural tools, especially language (Vygotsky's theory)
- a dynamic process of meaning making through 'languaging' (Swain, 2006) and 'plurilanguaging' (Lüdi, 2015; Piccardo, 2018) both individually and socially
- cultural process of creating a shared safe 'third space' (> symbolic competence: Kramsch, 2002) and of acting in a plural area to bring people together and recognize and negotiate difference (> intercultural mediation: Zarate, 2003)

Mediation is crucial to meaning-making

Through mediation we can reconceptualize language as:

- “an activity” (Thorne & Lantolf, 2007;171)
- “an emergent dynamic process of shared meaning, which creates and transforms itself through interactions of individuals with their environment” (Aden, 2012: 275)
- a complex dynamic system (Larsen-Freeman, 1997, 2002)
- “socialization into communities of practice” (Kramsch, 2002: 6)
- a process that allows overcoming separation between individuals and culture/society (Engeström, 1999)

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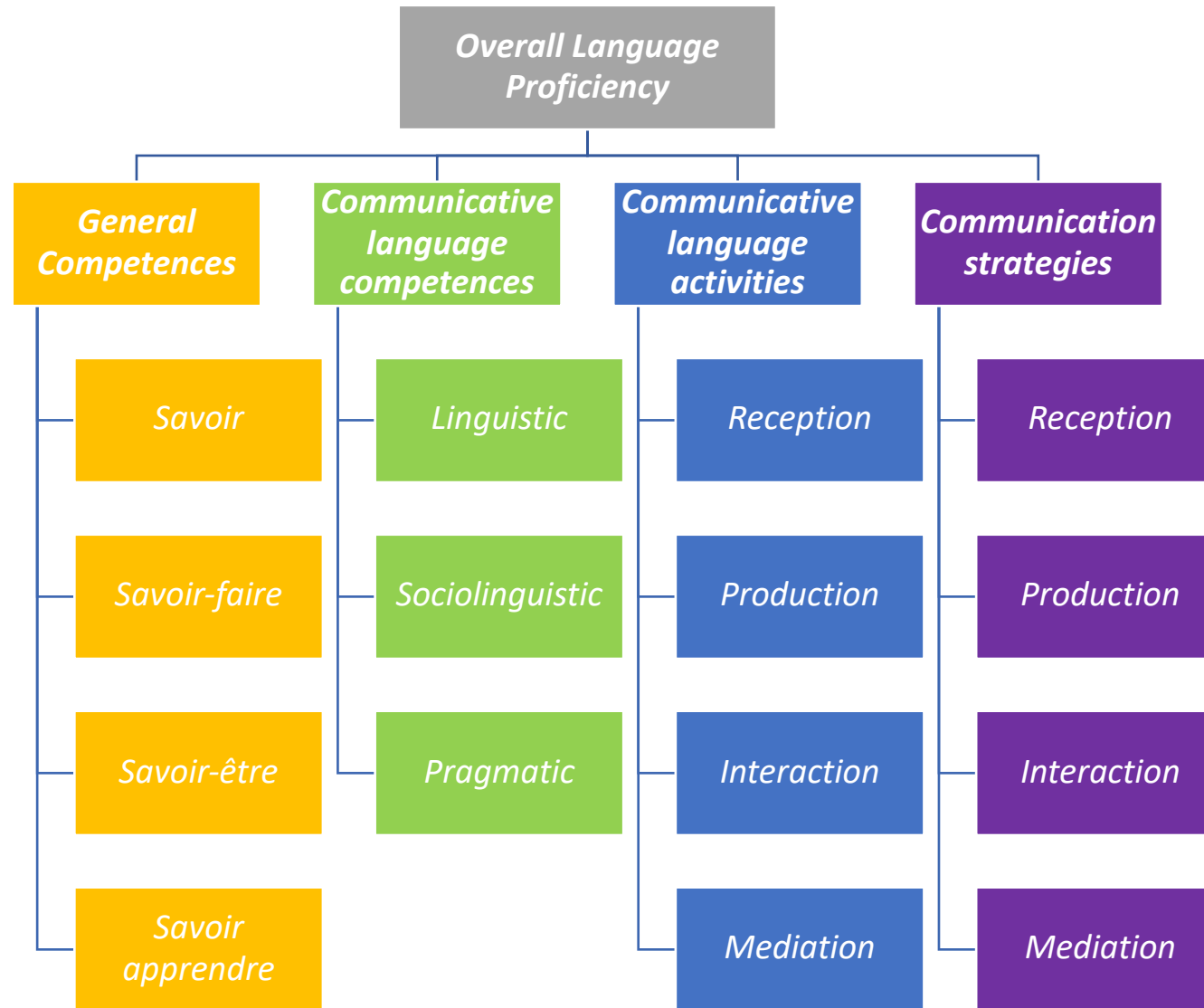
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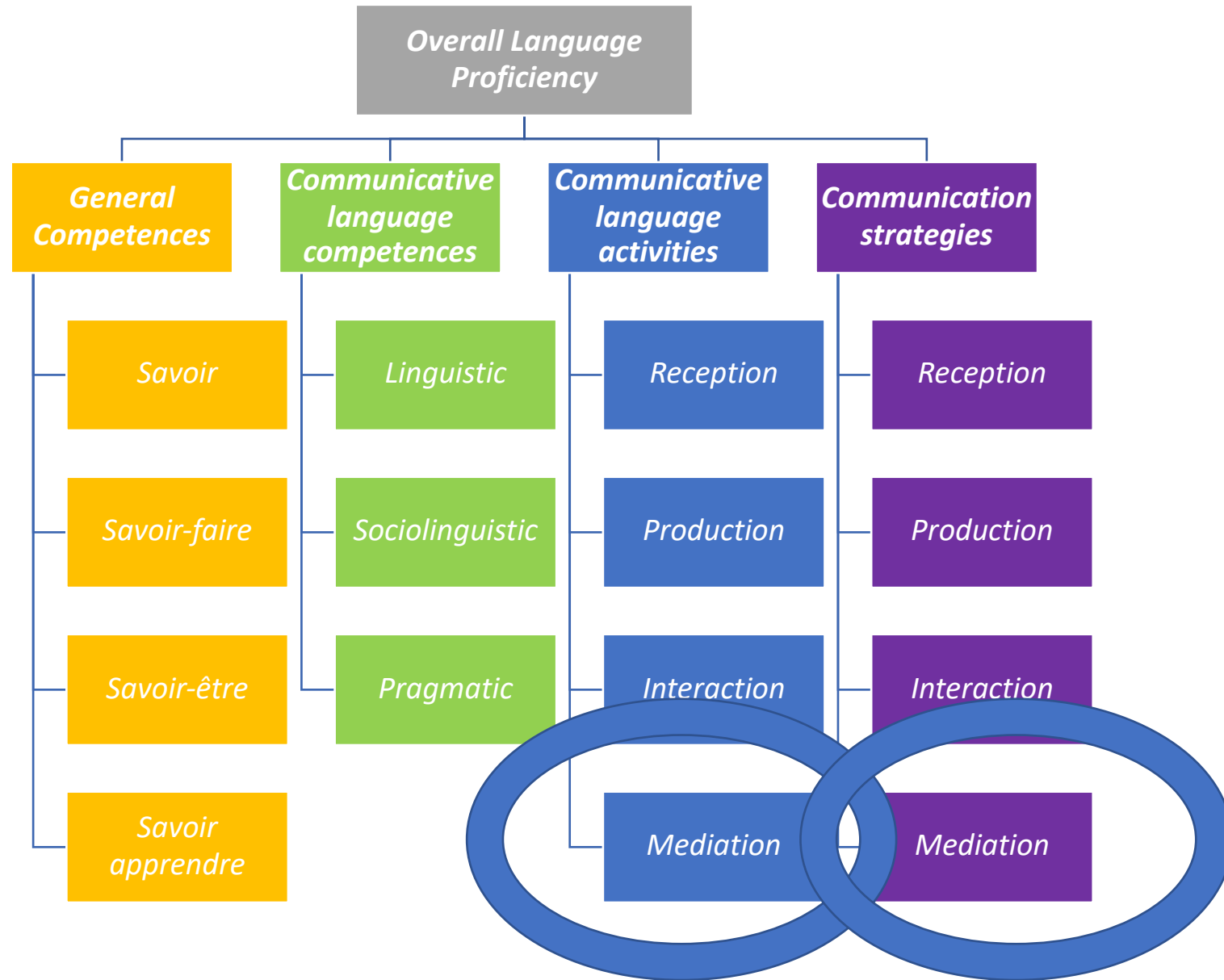
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The CEFR descriptive scheme



Completing the CEFR descriptive scheme



From the CEFR to the CEFR Companion Volume: plurilingualism and mediation

Innovative Aspects of the CEFR 2001

- Levels and descriptor scales > curriculum alignment
- From four skills to four modes of communication: reception, production, interaction, mediation
- Co-construction of meaning in interaction
- Learner as social agent
- Action-oriented approach (tasks)
- Plurilingual and pluricultural competences

The CEFR Companion Volume (CEFR/CV) 2018

COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK
OF REFERENCE FOR LANGUAGES:
LEARNING, TEACHING, ASSESSMENT

**COMPANION VOLUME
WITH NEW DESCRIPTORS**

- **Updates** the CEFR
- **Completes** the CEFR
- **Broadens** CEFR concepts > mediation,
- **Refines** pedagogical vision > AoA
- **Develops** constructs (phonology and pluri)

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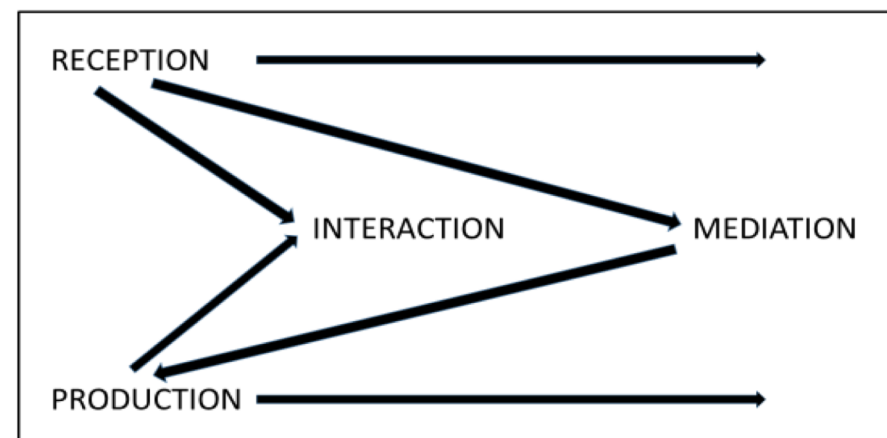
Starting point: mediation in the CEFR 2001

“In mediating activities, the language user **is not concerned to express his/her own meanings**, but simply **to act as an intermediary** between interlocutors who are unable to understand each other directly, normally (but not exclusively) speakers of different languages. ...”

(CEFR Section 4.4.4. English p.87)

“Mediation language activities, **(re)processing an existing text**, occupy an important place in the normal linguistic functioning of our societies.”

(CEFR, Section 2.1.3. English, p.14)



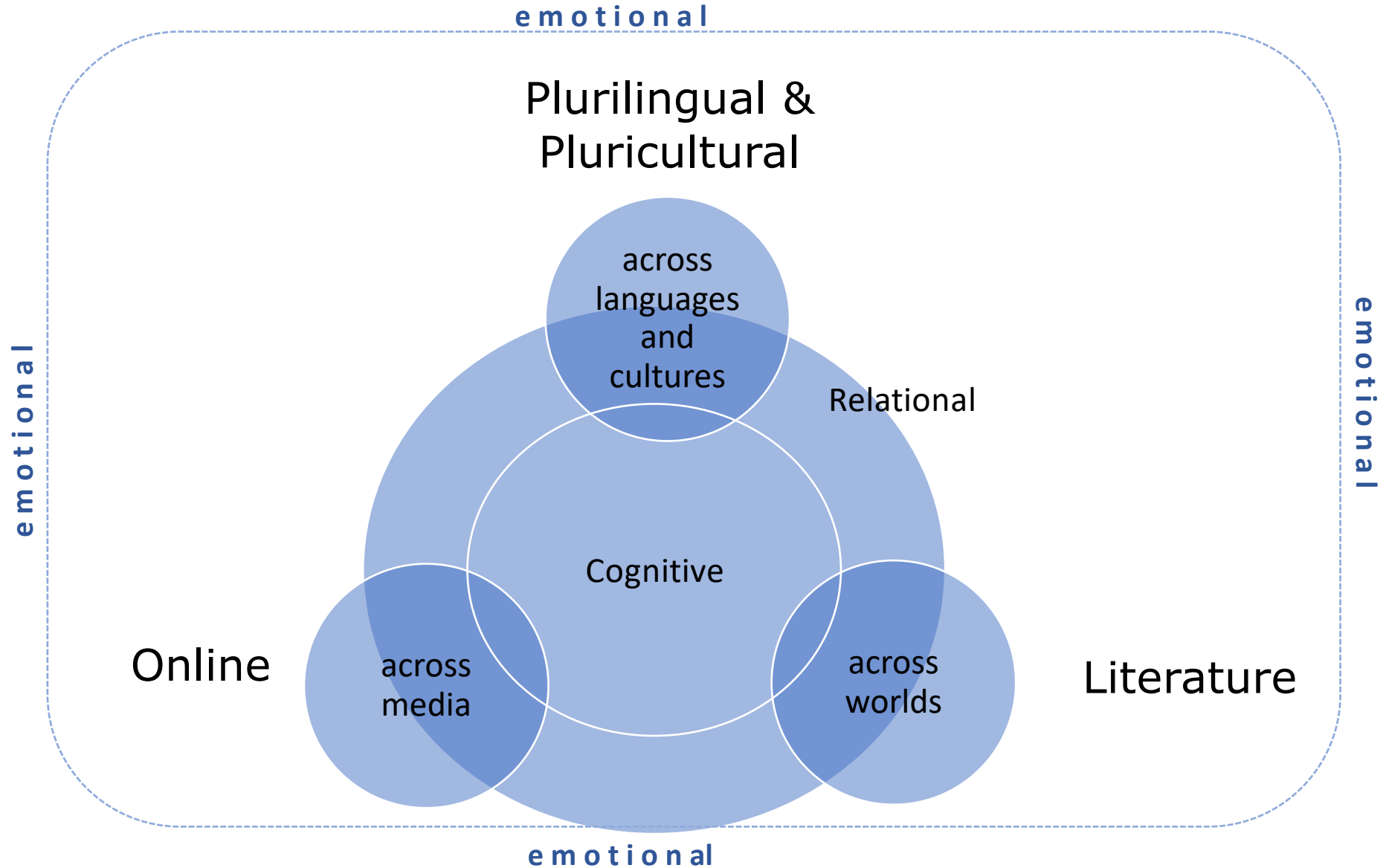
CEFR 1996 & 1998 online versions

Call for a more complex conceptualization

Through mediation language serves different purposes:

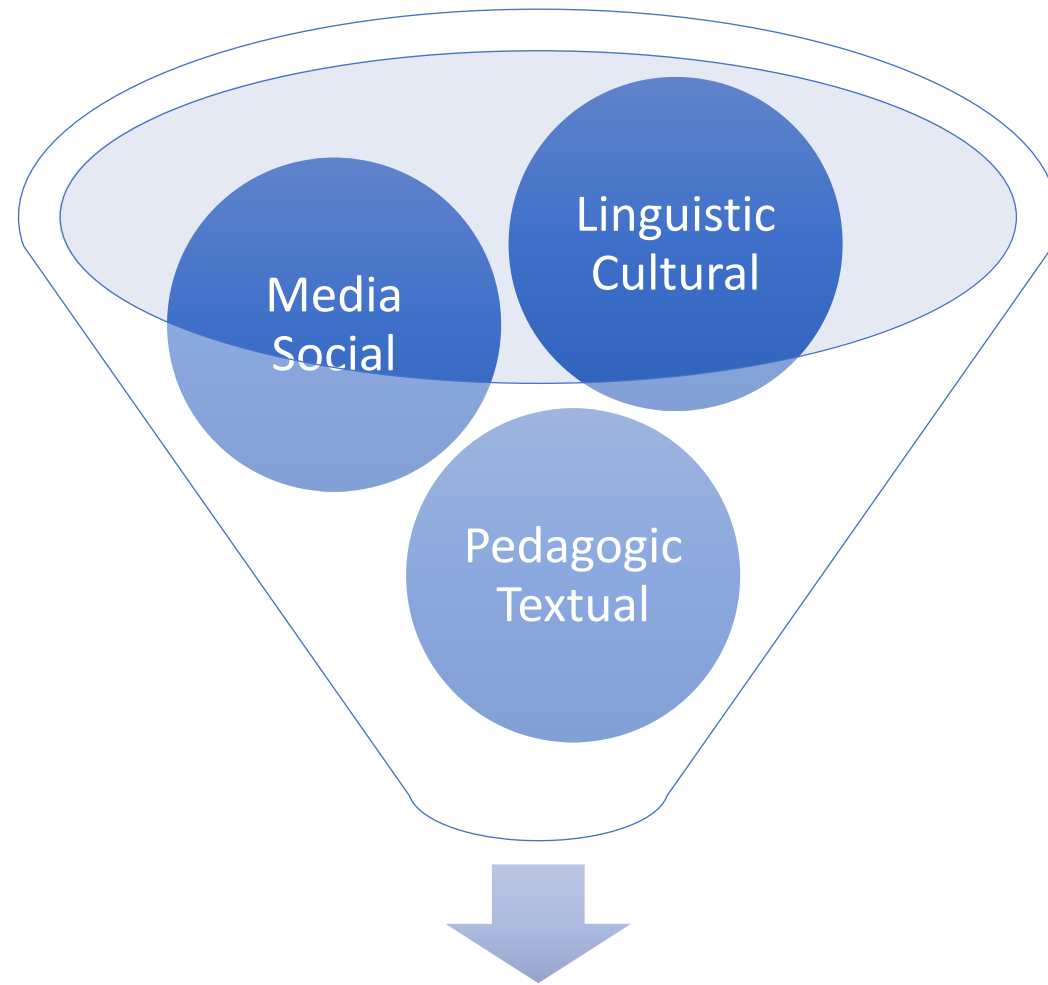
- creating pluricultural space for communication and learning;
- reducing affective blocks/tensions;
- building bridges towards the new, the other;
- (co-)constructing new meaning;
- passing on information (and simplifying, elaborating, illustrating or adapting);
- acting as intermediary.

Mediation conceptual model



From theory to practice: forms of mediation

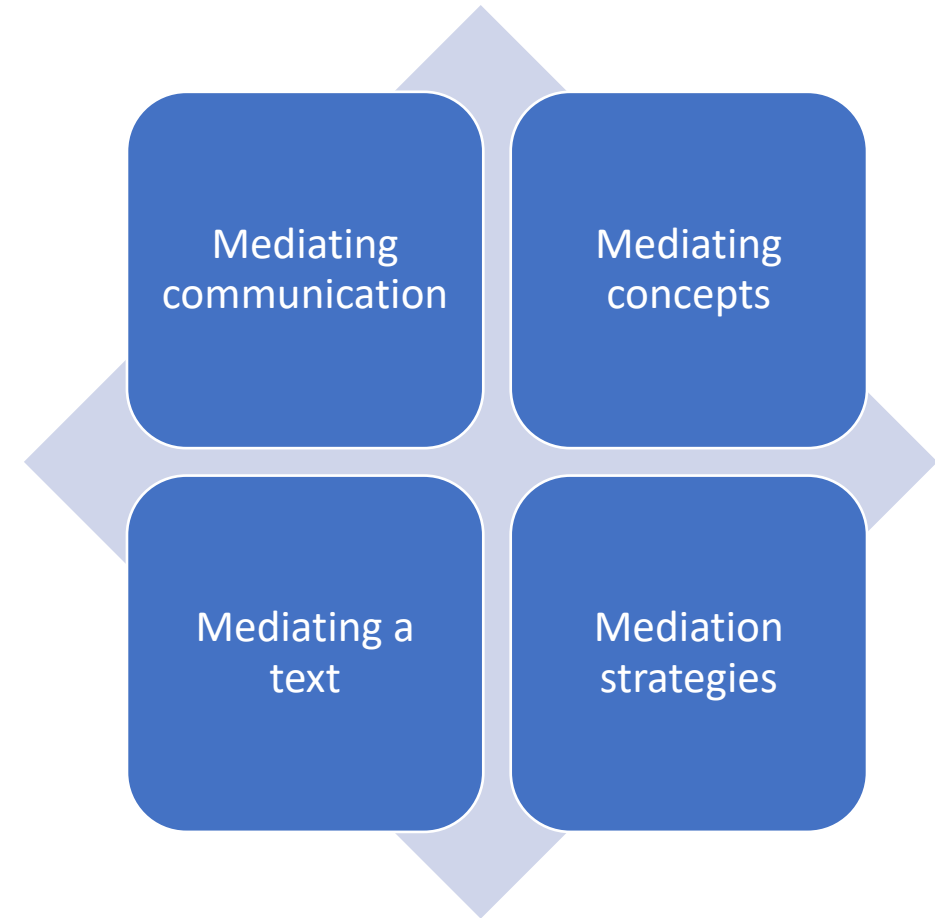
- **Linguistic mediation/textual mediation** > interlinguistic and intralinguistic;
- **Cultural mediation** > facilitating understanding; cultural awareness (within a language and across languages and cultures),
- **Social mediation (including through media)** > playing the role of intermediary (linguistic and cultural mediator); critical cultural awareness;
- **Pedagogic mediation** > educators mediating knowledge, concepts and thinking (cognitively and relationally)

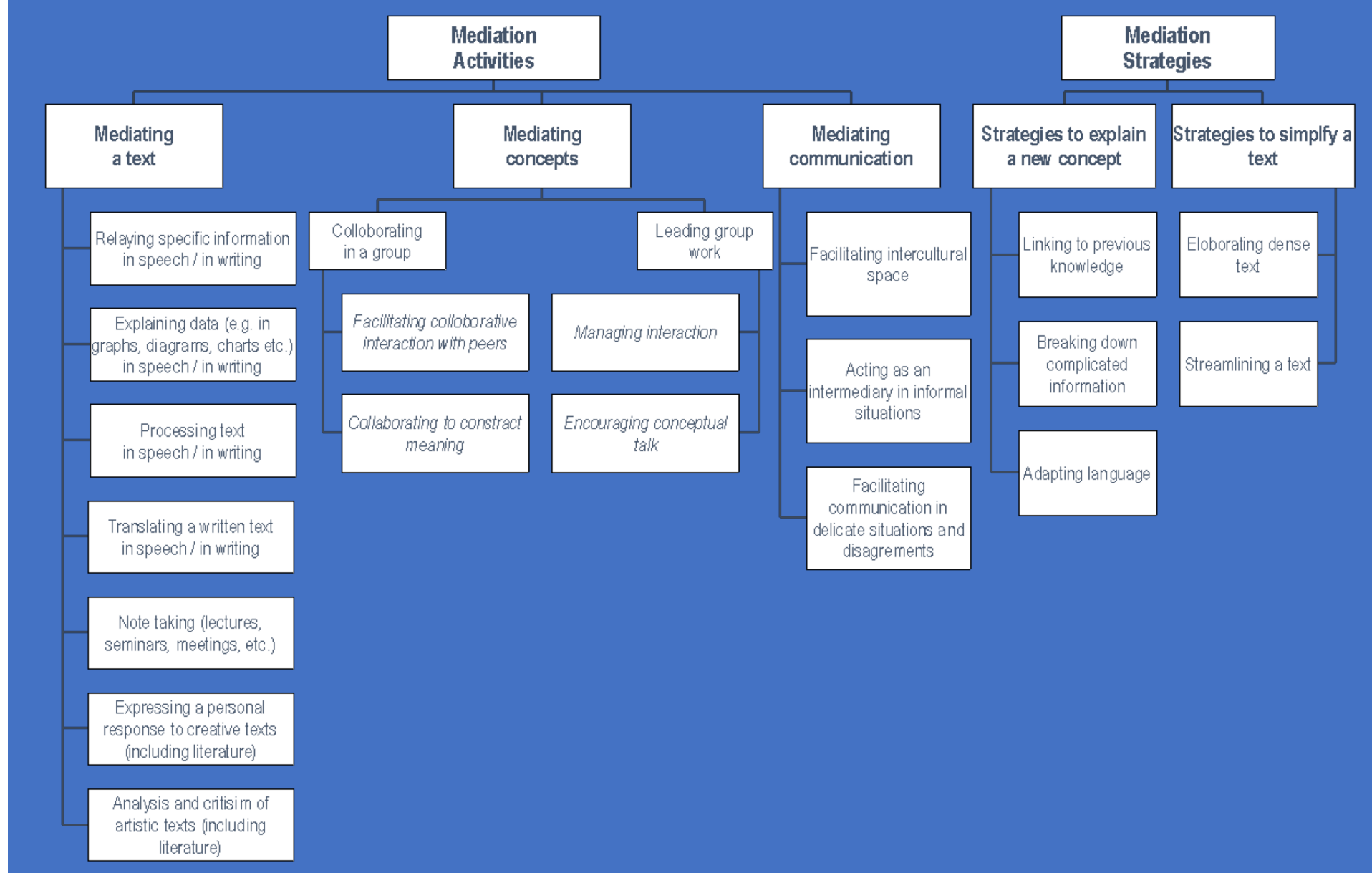


Fusing interpretations

- Creating space, managing tensions, counselling, conflict resolution, guidance
→ **Mediating communication**
- (Co)constructing meaning/knowledge > social ↔ individual
→ **Mediating concepts**
- Reformulating, transcoding, alternating languages, switching oral to written, changing genres, combining text and other modes
→ **Mediating text**

The new CEFR Companion
Volume (CoE, 2018)
operationalizes this new
vision into calibrated and
validated descriptors





Across languages / varieties / registers
Within one language / variety / register

CEFRCV Mediation descriptors scales

Mediating communication

- Facilitating pluricultural space
- Acting as an intermediary
- Facilitating communication in delicate situations / disputes

Mediating a text

- Relaying specific information
- Explaining data (e.g. in graphs)
- Processing text
- Translating written text
- Listening & note-taking
- Expressing a personal response
- Analysis and criticism

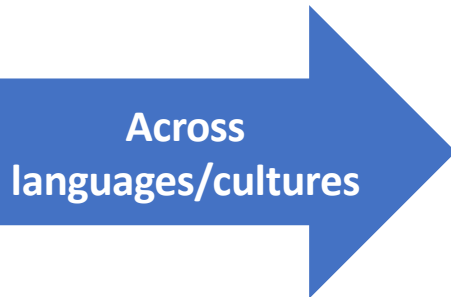
Mediating concepts

- Facilitating collaborative interaction with peers
- Collaborating to construct meaning
- Managing interaction
- Encouraging conceptual thought

Mediation strategies

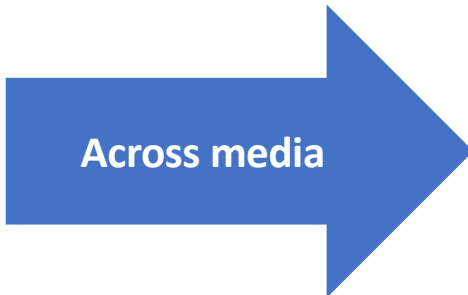
- Linking to previous knowledge
- Breaking down complicated information
- Adapting language
- Elaborating a dense text
- Streamlining a text

CEFR CV Mediation-related descriptors scales



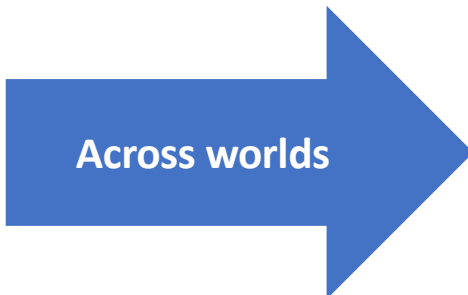
Plurilingual/cultural competence

- Building on pluricultural repertoire
- Plurilingual comprehension
- Building on plurilingual repertoire



Online interaction

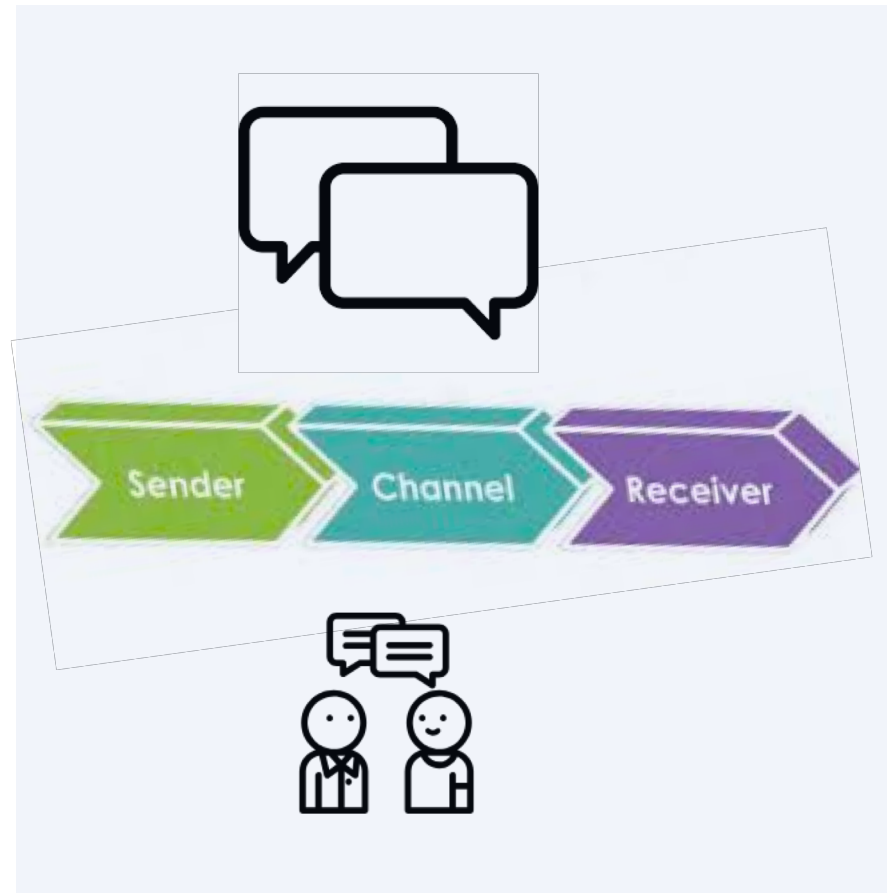
- Online conversation and discussion
- Goal-oriented online transactions and collaboration



Literature

- Expressing a personal response to creative text (including literature)
- Analysis and criticism of creative text (including literature)
- Reading as a leisure activity

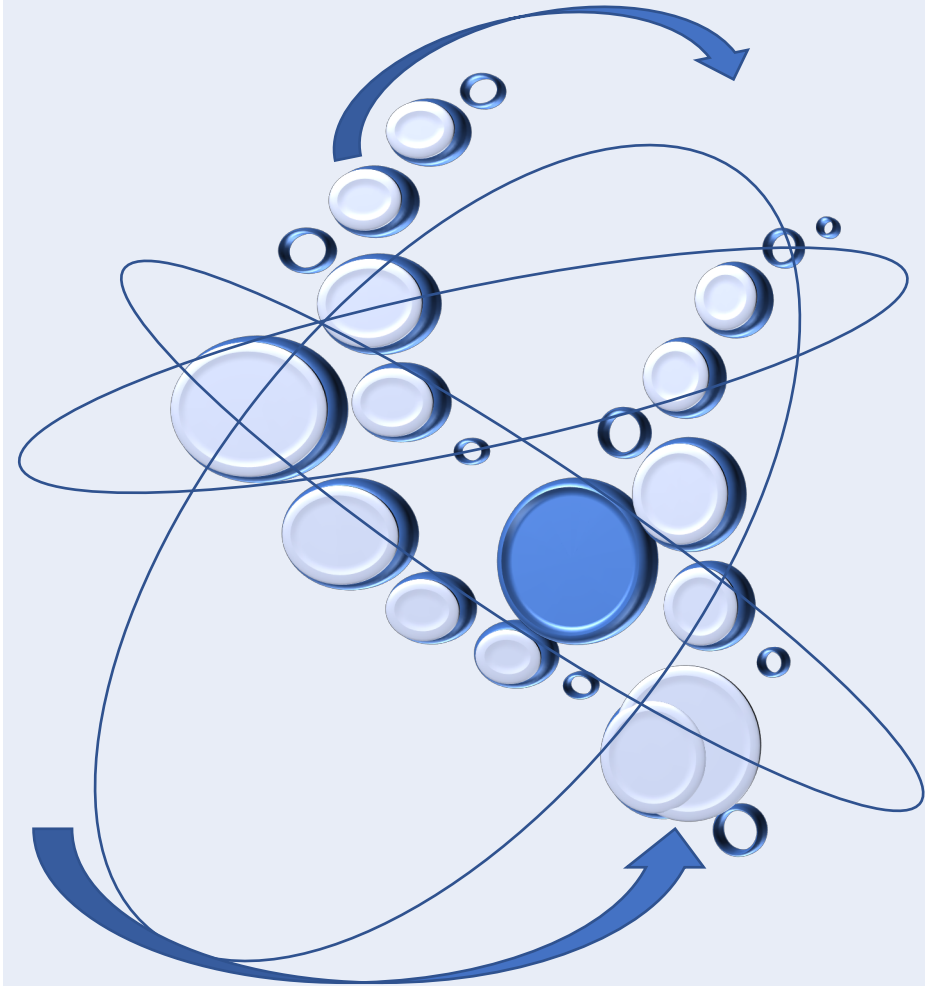
From a linear vision...



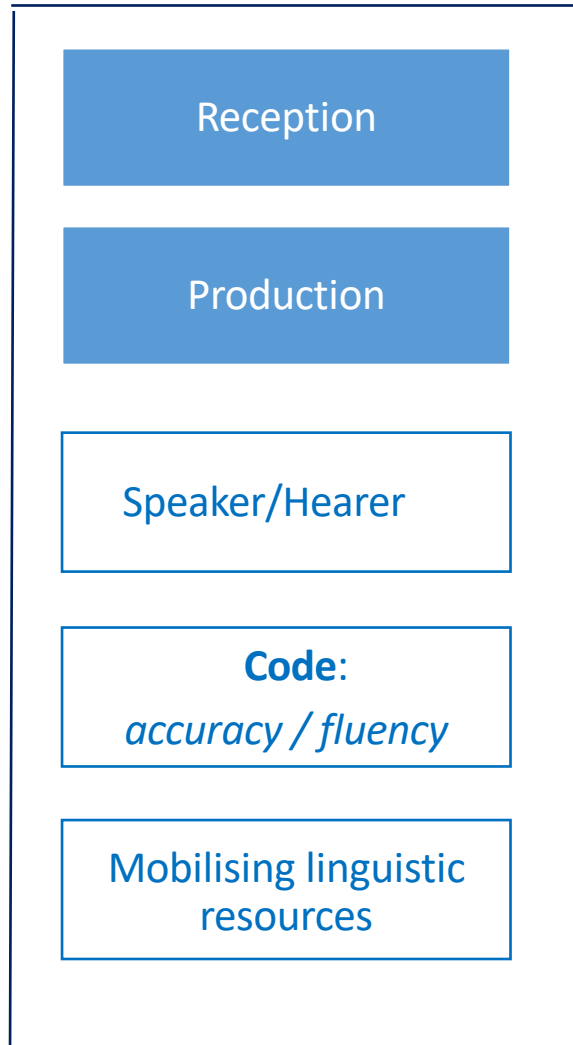
Traditionally, communication and language learning have been seen as **linear and monolingual**: learn to communicate a message in one language, learn in the class in order to apply out of the class (language + culture)

... to a complex vision

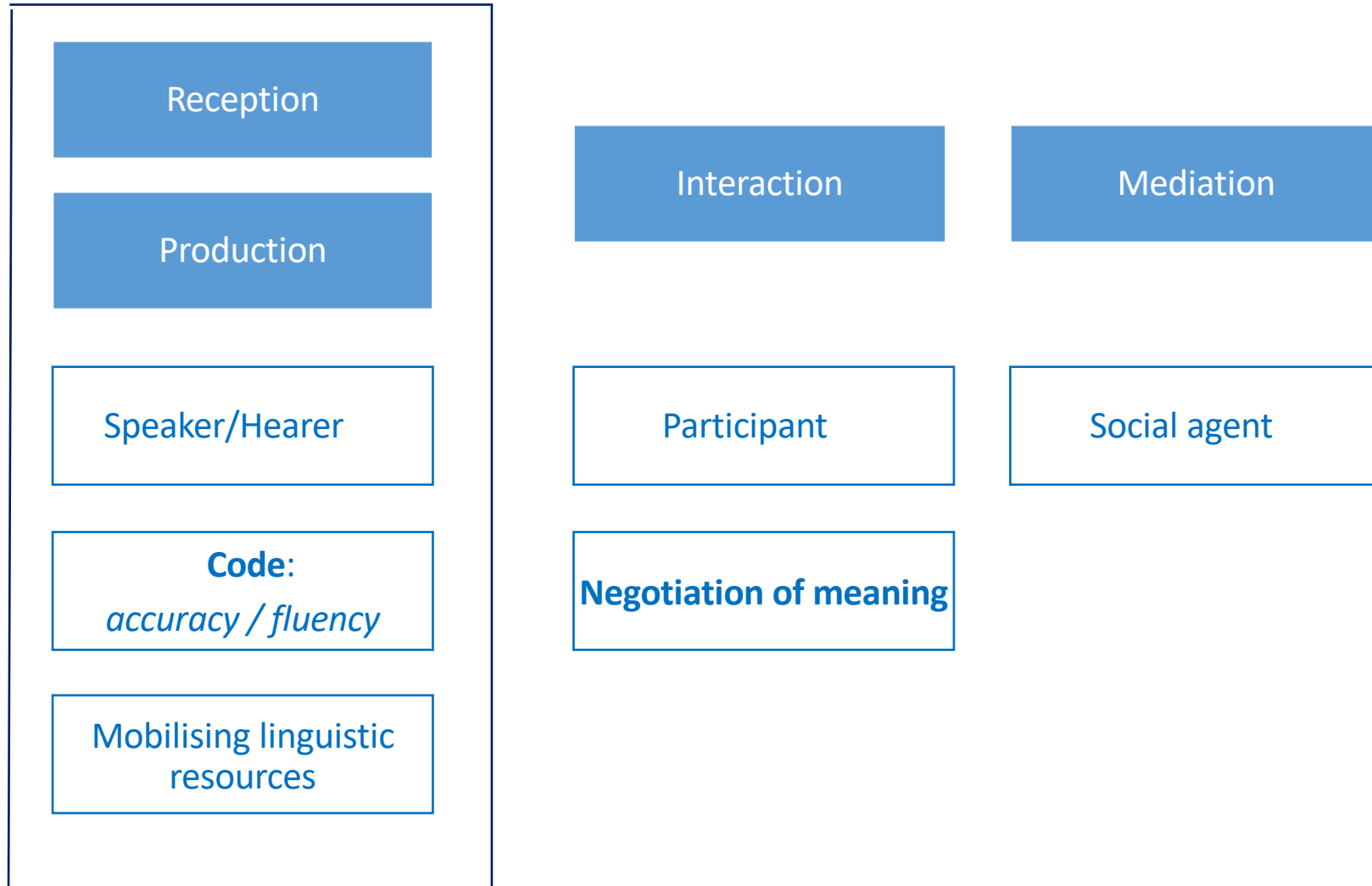
Now (action-oriented approach) both communication and language learning are **complex**: learn to (co)construct content and communication, linguistic and cultural repertoires, class as real social context



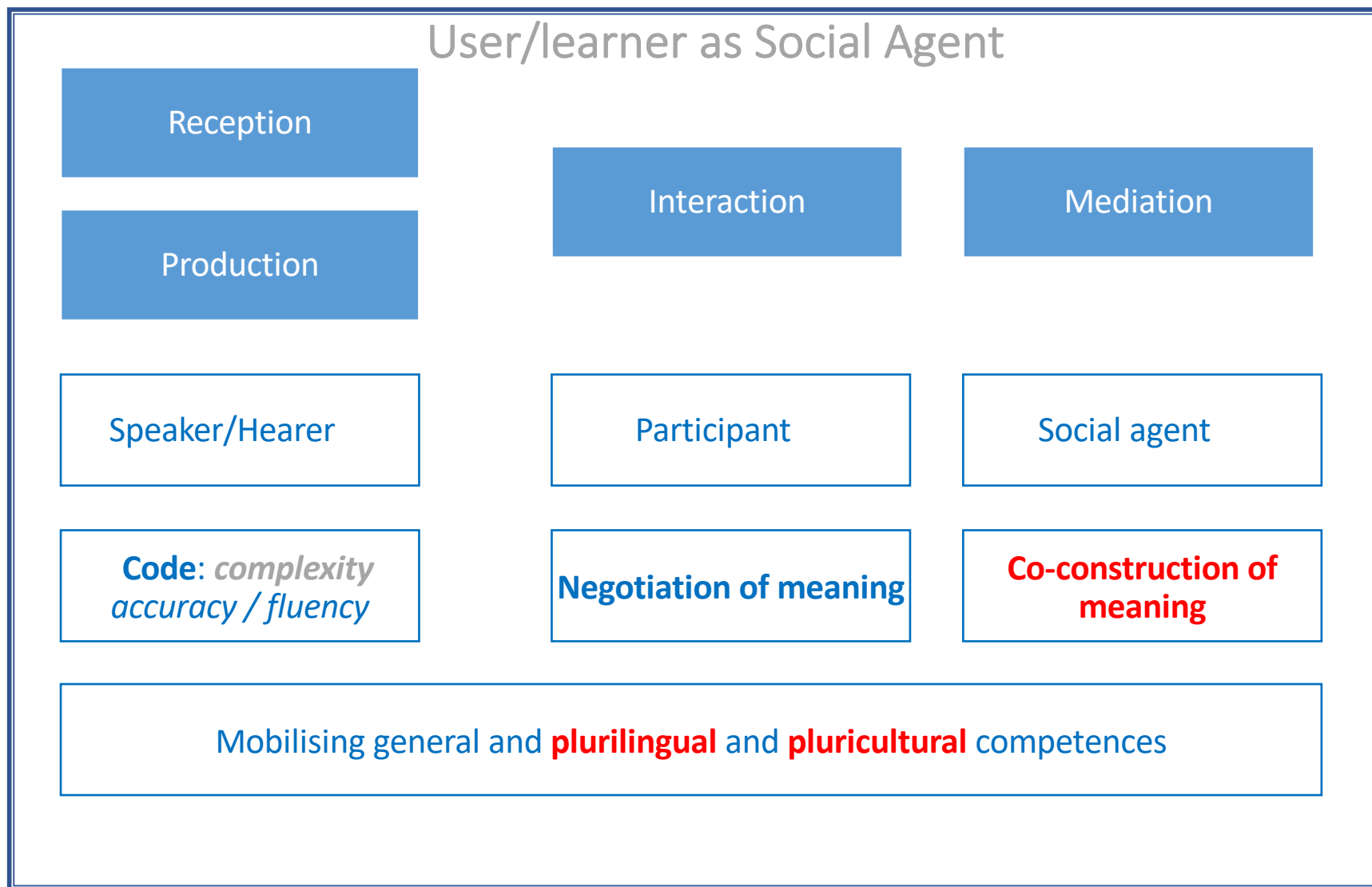
Before the CEFR 2001



After the CEFR 2001



After the CEFR Companion Volume 2018



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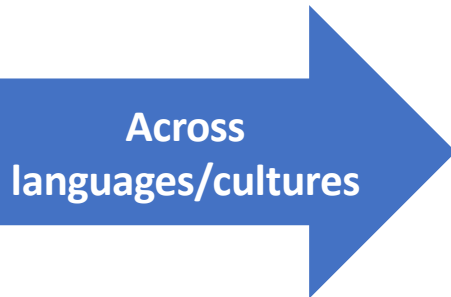
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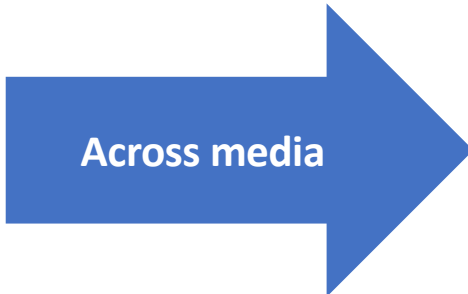
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CEFR CV mediation-related description scales: plurilingualism



Plurilingual/cultural competence

- Building on pluricultural repertoire
- Plurilingual comprehension
- Building on plurilingual repertoire



Online interaction

- Online conversation and discussion
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Plurilingualism: a bit of history

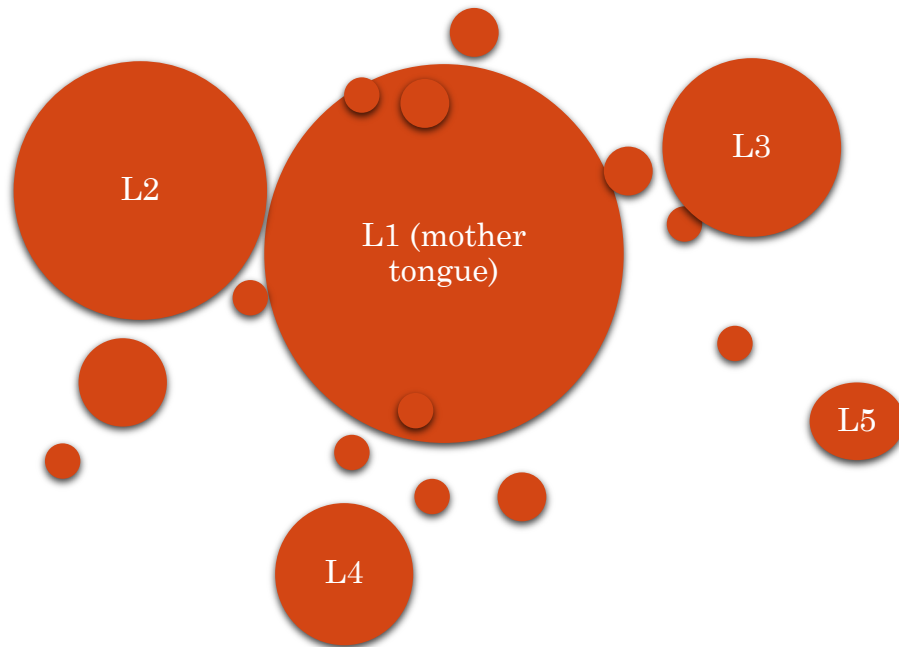
- Linked concepts of plurilingualism / pluriculturalism and partial competences introduced to language education for the first time in **Draft 2 of the CEFR proposal in 1996**. They appeared in a more elaborated form in the following year in the paper ***Plurilingual and Pluricultural Competence* (Coste, Moore, Zarate, 1997)**
- They were developed as:
 - a form of **dynamic, creative process of ‘linguaging’ across the boundaries of language varieties**
 - a **methodology**
 - **language policy aims**

*“Plurilingual and pluricultural competence is not the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather the existence of a **complex** or even **composite competence** on which the user may draw.” (CEFR, 2001: 168)*

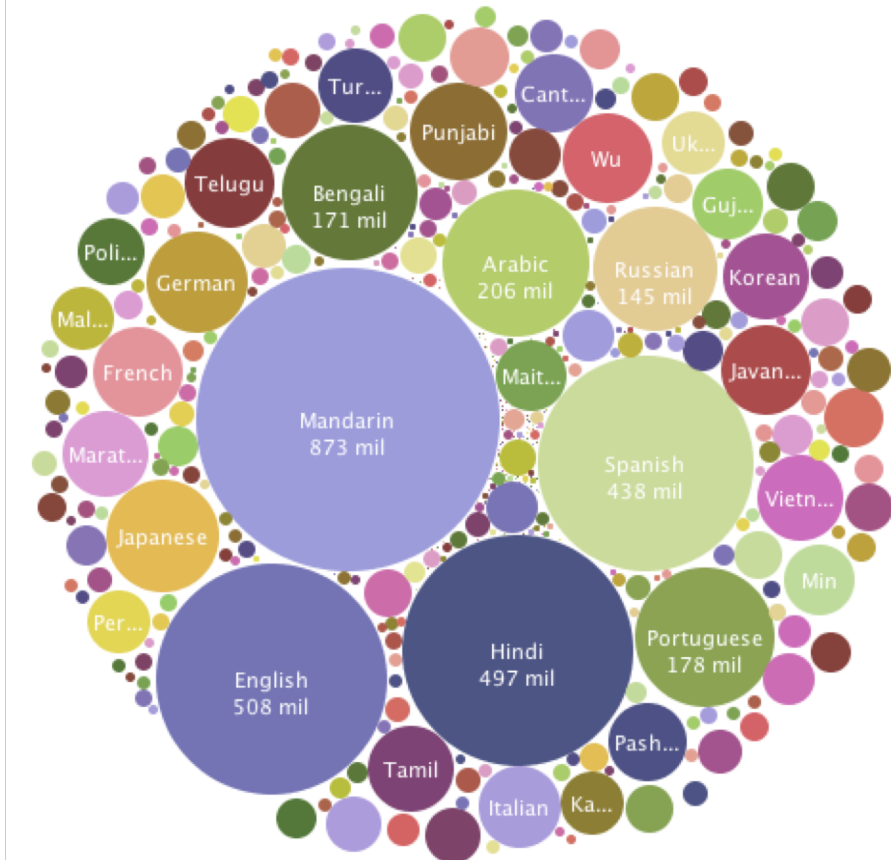
*“the aim is to develop a linguistic **repertory**, in which all linguistic abilities have a place” (CEFR, 2001: 5).*

Multilingualism: languages side by side

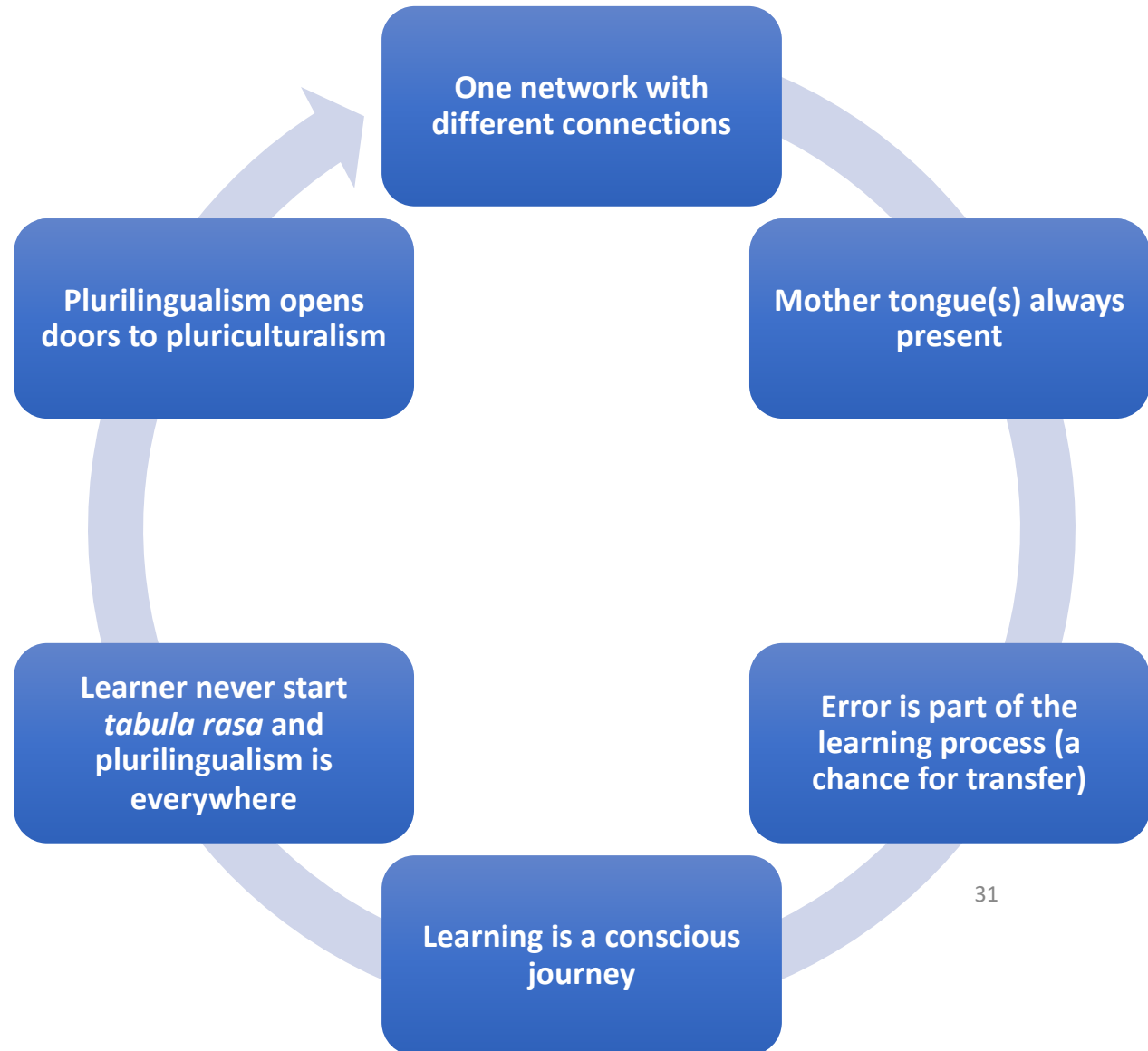
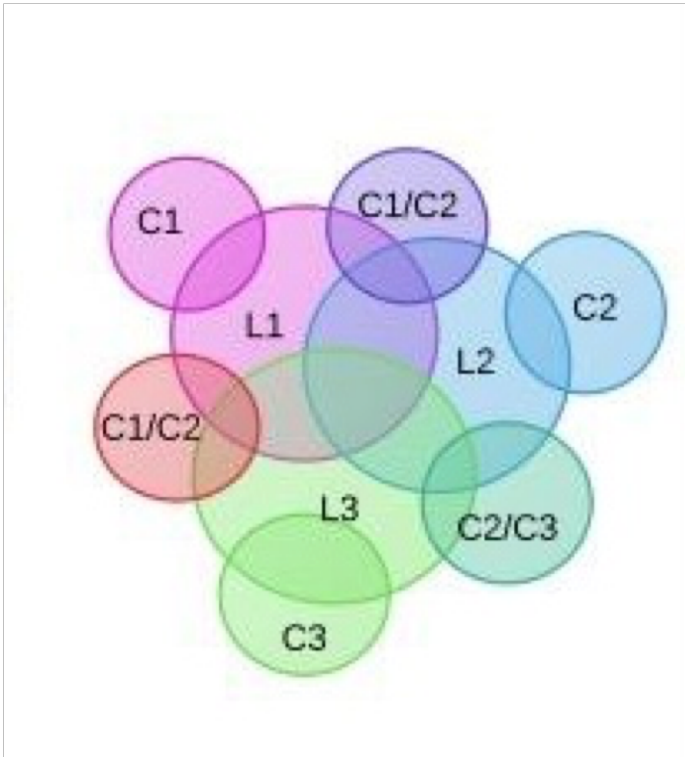
Individual level



Societal level



Plurilingualism/Pluriculturalism: a network with multiple connections



Multilingualism vs Plurilingualism, a substantial difference CECR Section 1.3

Multilingualism

“the knowledge of a number of languages, or the co-existence of different languages in a given society”

Attained by:

***diversifying** the languages on offer*

*learning **more than one** foreign language, reducing the dominant position of English”.*

Plurilingualism

Plurilingual competence involves the ability to:

- *switch* from one language or dialect to another
- *express* oneself in one language and *understand* the other
- call upon the *knowledge of a number of languages* to make sense of a text,
- recognise words from a *common international store* in a new guise
- *mediate* between individuals with no common language
- by *bringing the whole of their linguistic equipment* into play
- *experiment with alternative forms of expression* in different languages or dialects,
- exploiting *paralinguistics* (mime, gesture, facial expression, etc.)
- radically *simplifying* their use of language.

The CEFR pioneered the idea of linguistic and cultural diversity as a resource, valuing uneven dynamic profiles

Plurilingualism is ... an uneven and changing competence, in which the user/learner's resources in one language or variety may be very different in nature to those in another.

Plurilinguals have a single, inter-related, repertoire that they combine with their general competences and various strategies in order to accomplish tasks



An uneven plurilingual competence

greater proficiency in one language than in the others
profile of competences in one language is different from that in others
the pluricultural profile differs from the plurilingual profile

plurilingual and pluricultural competence does not consist of the simple addition of monolingual competences

this 'partial' competence, is a functional competence with respect to a specific limited objective

A changing competence

A differentiated competence allowing code switching

A partial competence

Non-compartmentalized competences

Abandoning 'perfect bilingualism'

an individual builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact

develop a linguistic repertoire, in which all linguistic abilities have a place



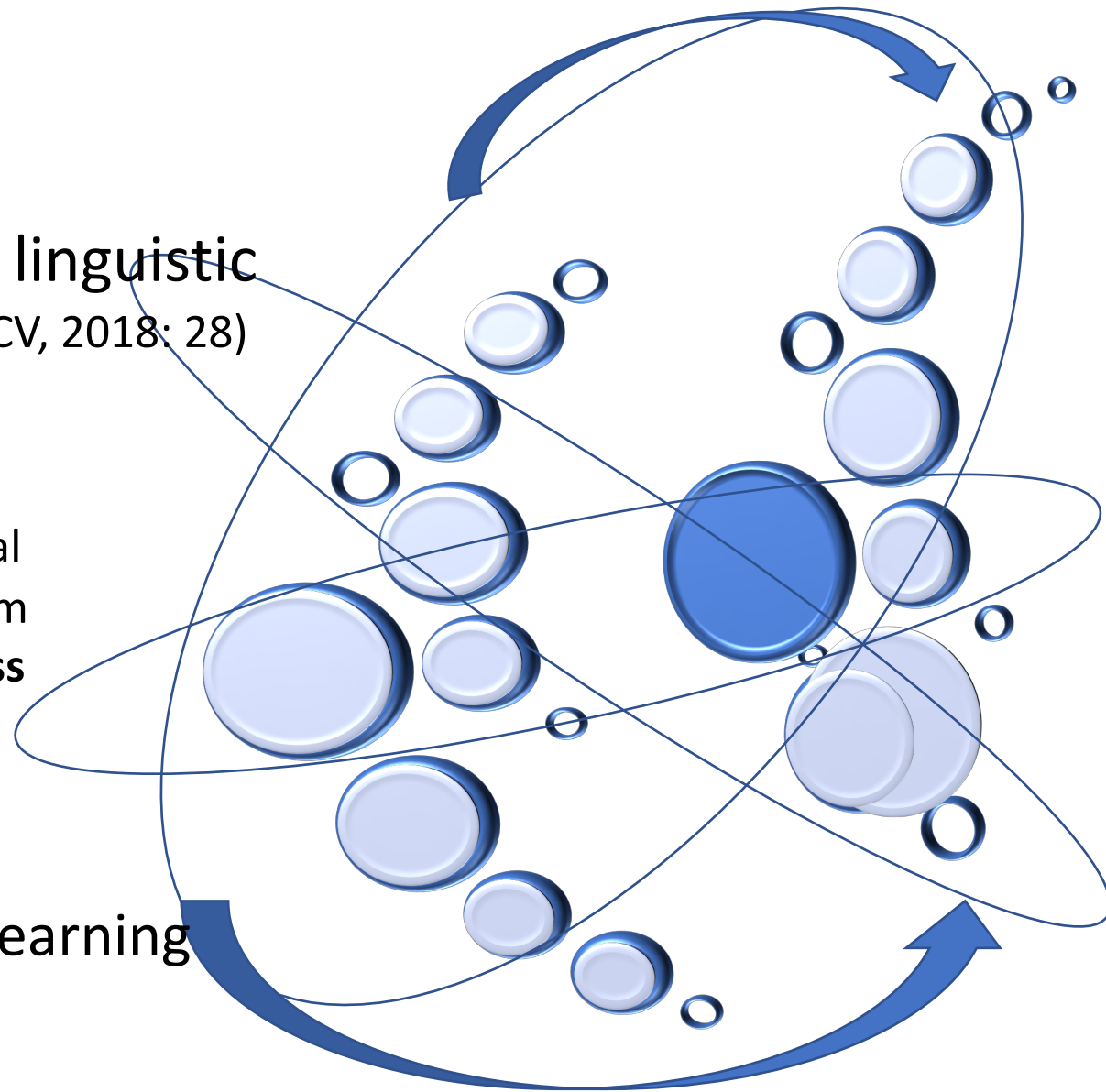
Plurilingualism: the **dynamic and developing** linguistic **repertoire** of an individual user/learner (CEFR CV, 2018: 28)

- Also:

- Competence in a language (included L1) is always partial
- Partial competences are **less partial** than they may seem
- Having learnt a language means having **some awareness** in several other languages

Three main principles (CEFR, 2001: 169):

1. **Non-compartmentalization** of language learning
2. **Cognitive economy**
3. **“a general language education”**



Examples of descriptors

Mediating concepts – collaborative group work B1

- *Can use questions, comments and simple reformulations to maintain the focus of a discussion.*
- *Can ask questions to invite people to clarify their reasoning.*

Mediating a text – relaying specific information in speech B1

- *Can relay (in Language B) specific information given in straightforward informational texts (such as leaflets, brochure entries, notices and letters or emails) (written in Language A).*

Mediating communication – facilitating comm. in delicate situations B1

- *Can demonstrate his/her understanding of the key issues in a disagreement on a topic familiar to him/her and make simple requests for confirmation and/or clarification.*

Examples of descriptors

- Plurilingual comprehension A2
- *Can understand short, clearly articulated spoken announcements by piecing together what he/she understands from the available versions in different languages.*
- Building on plurilingual repertoire A2
- *Can mobilise his/her limited repertoire in different languages in order to explain a problem or to ask for help or clarification.*
- Building on pluricultural repertoire A2
- *Can recognise that his/her behaviour in an everyday transaction may convey a message different to the one he/she intends, and can try to explain this simply.*

Comments from the piloting phase

*“Above all the activity served to **make students and myself aware of the skills and strategies they were using**. For students this represented **a confidence boost** and reinforced the benefits of being plurilingual. They all felt that it represented the kind of situation which they might encounter, in which they would need to use similar strategies and communication skills, and it reinforced the idea that different members of the group could contribute in different ways depending upon their linguistic background.”*

*“The activities contributed in raising the learners and the teachers **awareness regarding the importance of plurilingualism** in the learning environment as well as the positive effects of allowing students to translanguage in the classroom.”*

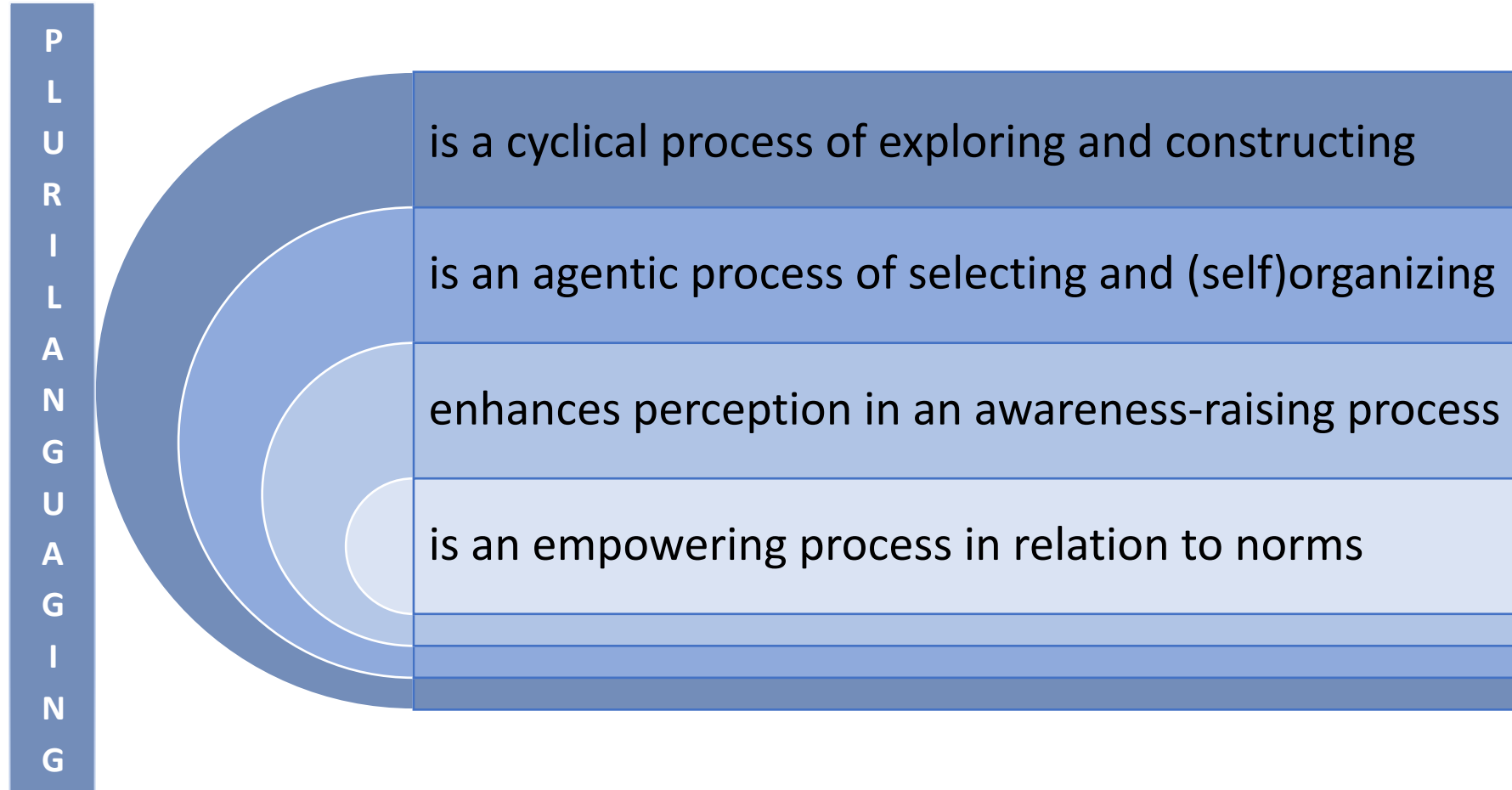
*“It greatly stimulates to focus practically on the **applied aspects of pluricultural and plurilingual university education** ... reveals great methodological gaps in our understanding of what pluricultural and plurilingual education through co-learnt languages is...”*

Comments from the piloting phase cont'd

*“The students were made **more aware of how language can be used to collaborate, take turns, build a conversation, and work towards a goal.** ... The descriptors helped to draw attention to the **end results** and the objectives that speakers were trying to achieve”*

*“We saw how the participants moved from needing to clarify and confirm mutual understanding to interacting more effortlessly by **building upon each other's ideas**”*

New 'pluri' scales: revealing the dynamic nature of plurilingualism and supporting *plurilinguaging*: “a dynamic, never-ending process to make meaning using different linguistic and semiotic resources” (Piccardo, 2018: 216)



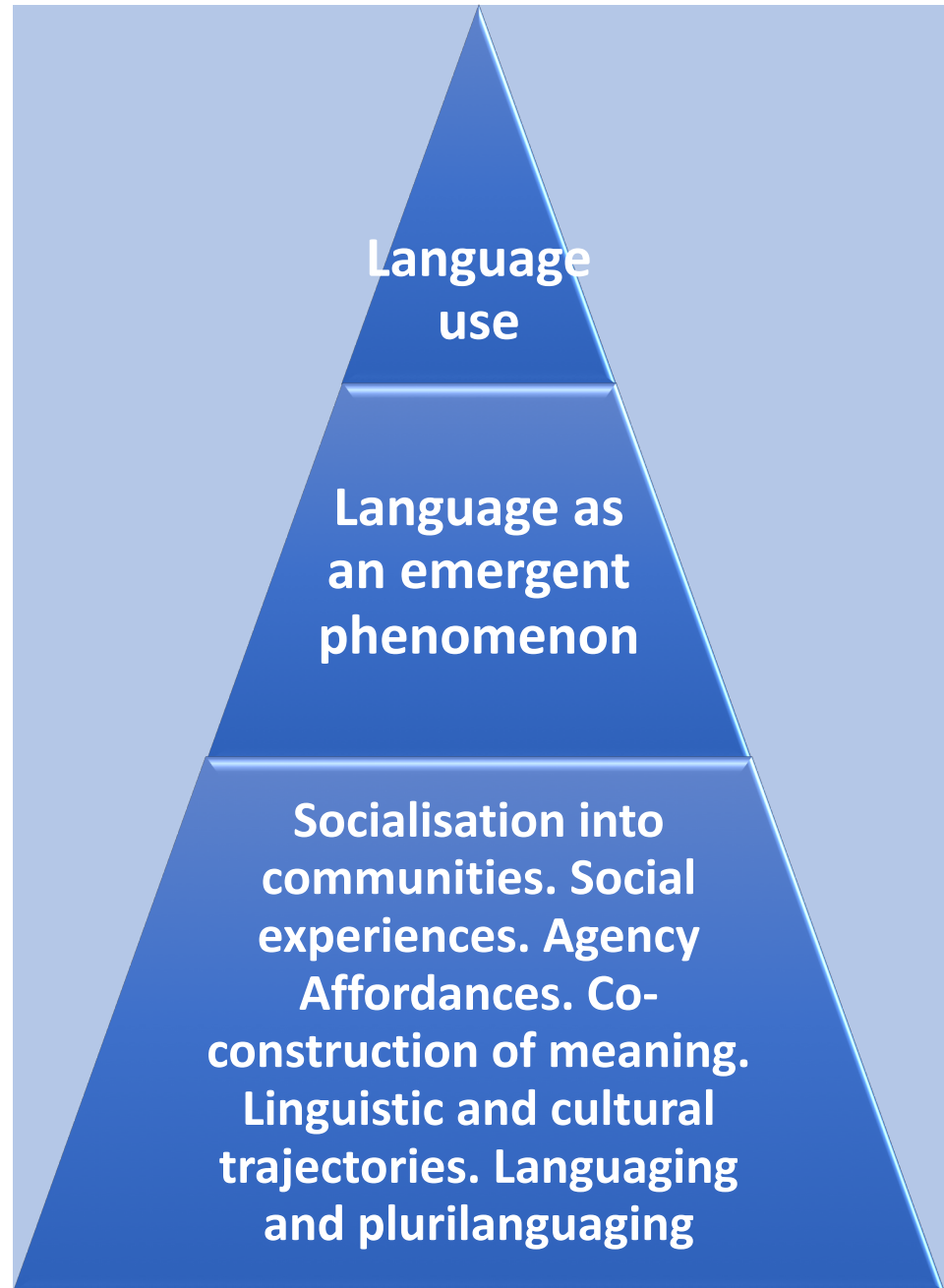
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Mediation: a Copernican revolution in (language) education

- Mediation at the core of knowledge construction, (co)construction, (re)construction, both individually and socially
- Mediation breaks down the walls of Cartesian thinking that separate the individual from culture and society
- Innovation potential in language education
 - Making learners (and teachers) aware of the mediated and complex nature of language (learning)
 - Facilitating social integration
 - Empowering learners through recognition of their trajectories and funds of knowledge
 - Broadening the scope of (language) education



merci grazie gracias tesçekkurler
danke faleminderit obrigada
thank you efcharisto
Miigwetch

enrica.piccardo@utoronto.ca