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From *Languaging* to *Plurilanguaging* some considerations

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Shifting terms: from language to languaging

- The term languaging is not new and has raised increasing interest in different fields:
 - philosophy (Maturana, 1988, 2000)
 - linguistics (Halliday, 1985; Jørgensen, 2010; Juffermans, 2011; Mignolo, 1996; Raimondi, 2014)
 - cognitive sciences (Cuffari, Di Paolo & De Jaegher, 2014; Cowley & Gahrn-Andersen, 2018) and
 - language education (Swain, 2006, 2010; Swain & Lapkin, 2013).

The term languaging opens up an entire perspective

Through languaging we can:

- conceive of languages as ever-changing temporary dynamic systems of codified features that result from different influences and actions (both natural development and socio-political normativity)
- see languages as ensembles of linguistic resources
- put the the human being, the social agent who languages at the centre, rather than an arbitrary linguistic system.

Embracing languaging means:

- adopting an embodied and enactive view of cognition
 - which rejects the idea that the mind controls behaviour
 - and rather adopts a systemic perspective with mind and behaviour as reciprocally interdependent, and transformation happening over time in an emergent and strategic way

“it is not so much that language has an important impact on human agency and cultural life, but rather, languaging is human agency” (Raimondi, 2014, p. 11)

Language and language learning from linearity to complexity

In the traditional view:

- language is an **entity**
- language learning is **linear and monolingual**: learn one language at a time, learn in the class to apply out of the class (language + culture)

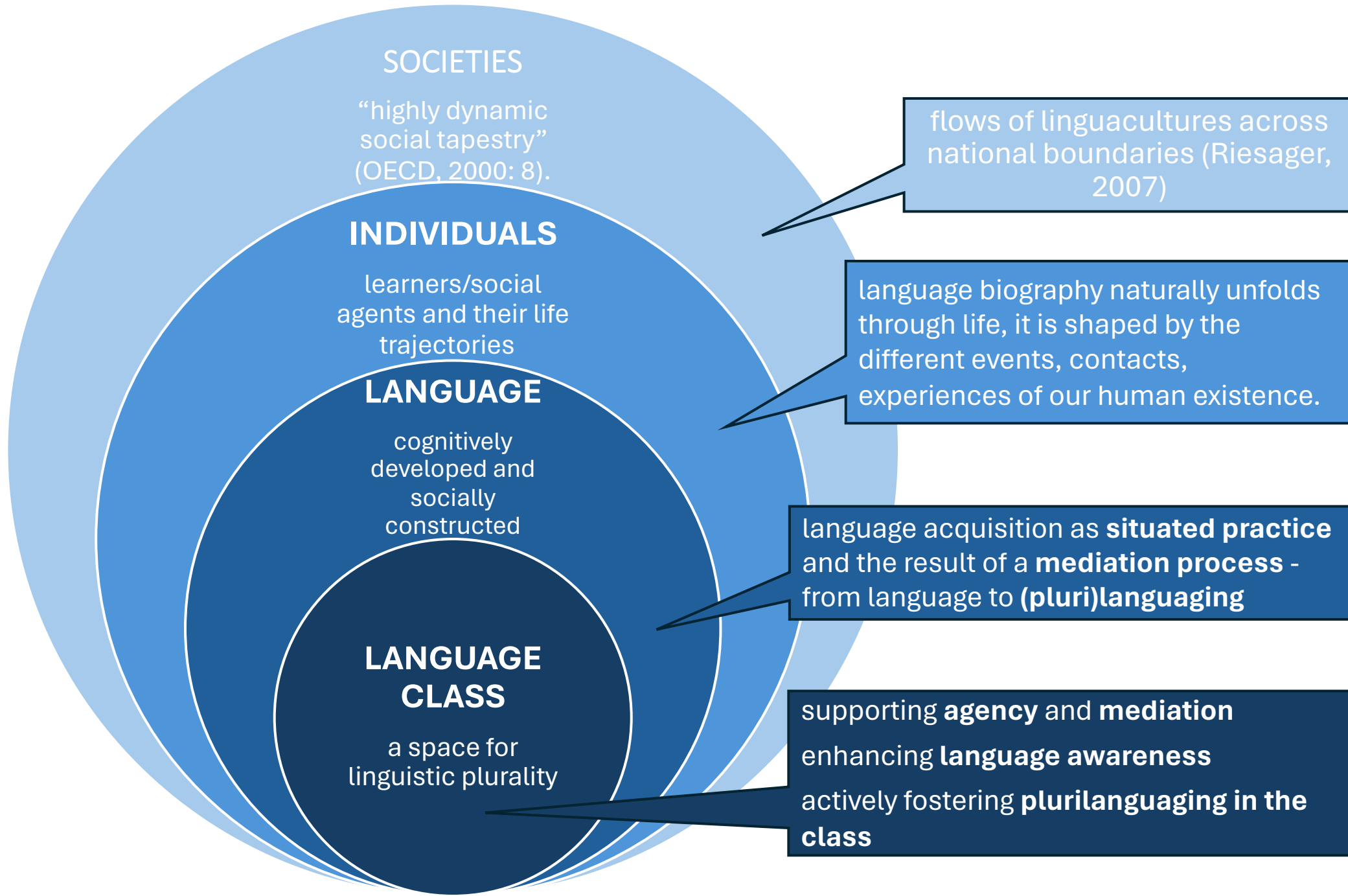
Now, both language and language learning are seen as **complex**:

- language is a process (**linguaging**) and emerges from complex webs of actions, which all require some form of **mediation**. Mediation is at the centre of acting as a **social agent** (Council of Europe, 2020).
- **plurilingualism** conceptualizes the ecology of language learning and use
- **plurilinguaging** operationalizes plurilingualism

A complex dynamic systems theory (CDST) is **an ecological post-structural metatheory** that helps to study complex systems in a meaningful and coherent way

“A system is a collective whole, made up of heterogeneous constituents, which are interdependent” (Larsen Freeman & Todeva, 2022: 211)

Systemic view: embedded Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS)



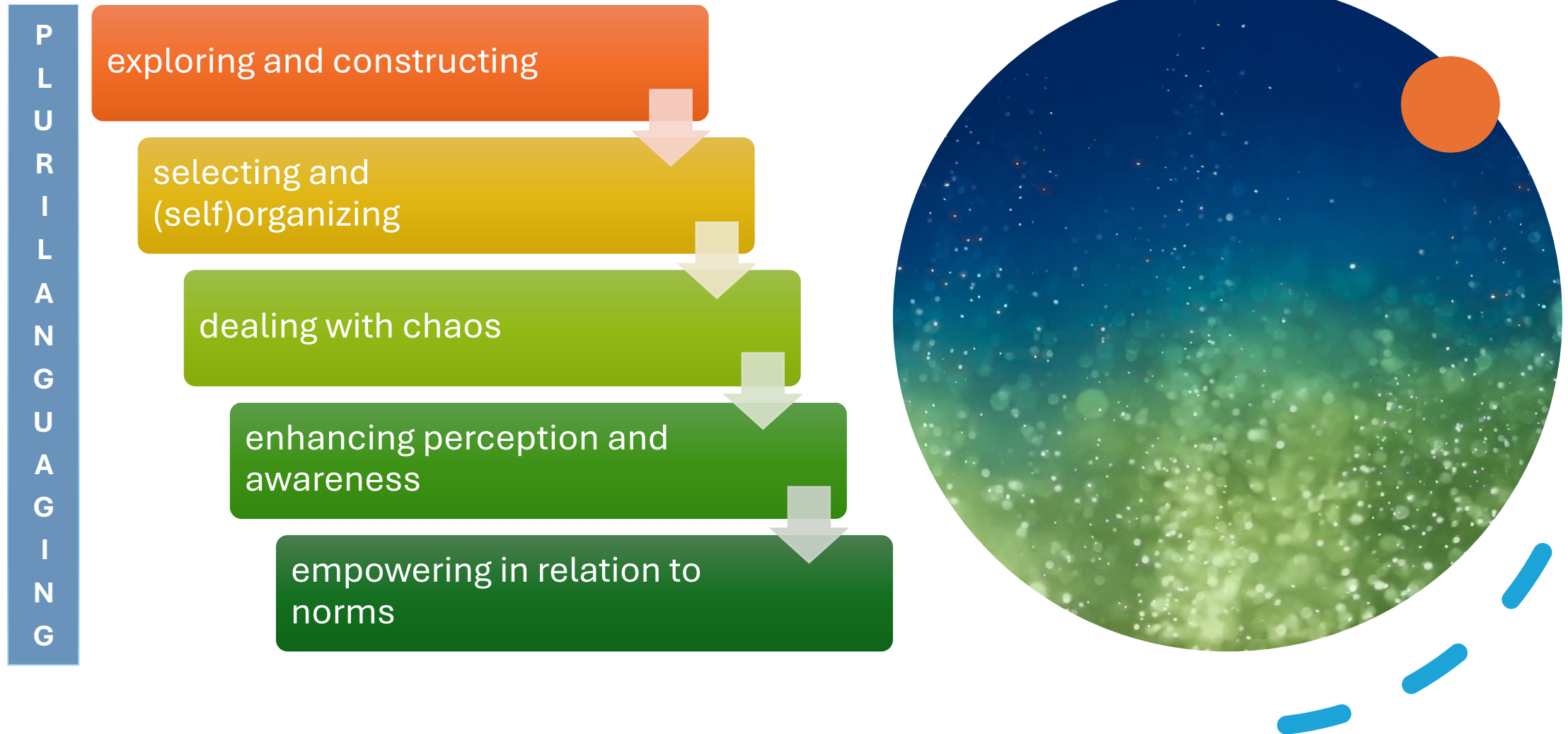
In this systemic view...

- Individuals are involved in a complex intersubjective activity called *linguaging*
- They are in **constant need of mediating**, in different ways, at different levels
- In our societies linguaging increasingly happens across the boundaries of language varieties through a dynamic and creative process of *plurilinguaging*
- In language education:
 - language use/learning is a semiotic, non-linear activity, in which mediation is crucial.
 - the classroom and all other social spaces are spaces of collective knowledge, of shared understanding, of mediation and (pluri)linguaging

Extending the concept of languaging to plurilanguaging helps to better capture the complex and dynamic positioning and agency of plurilingual individuals

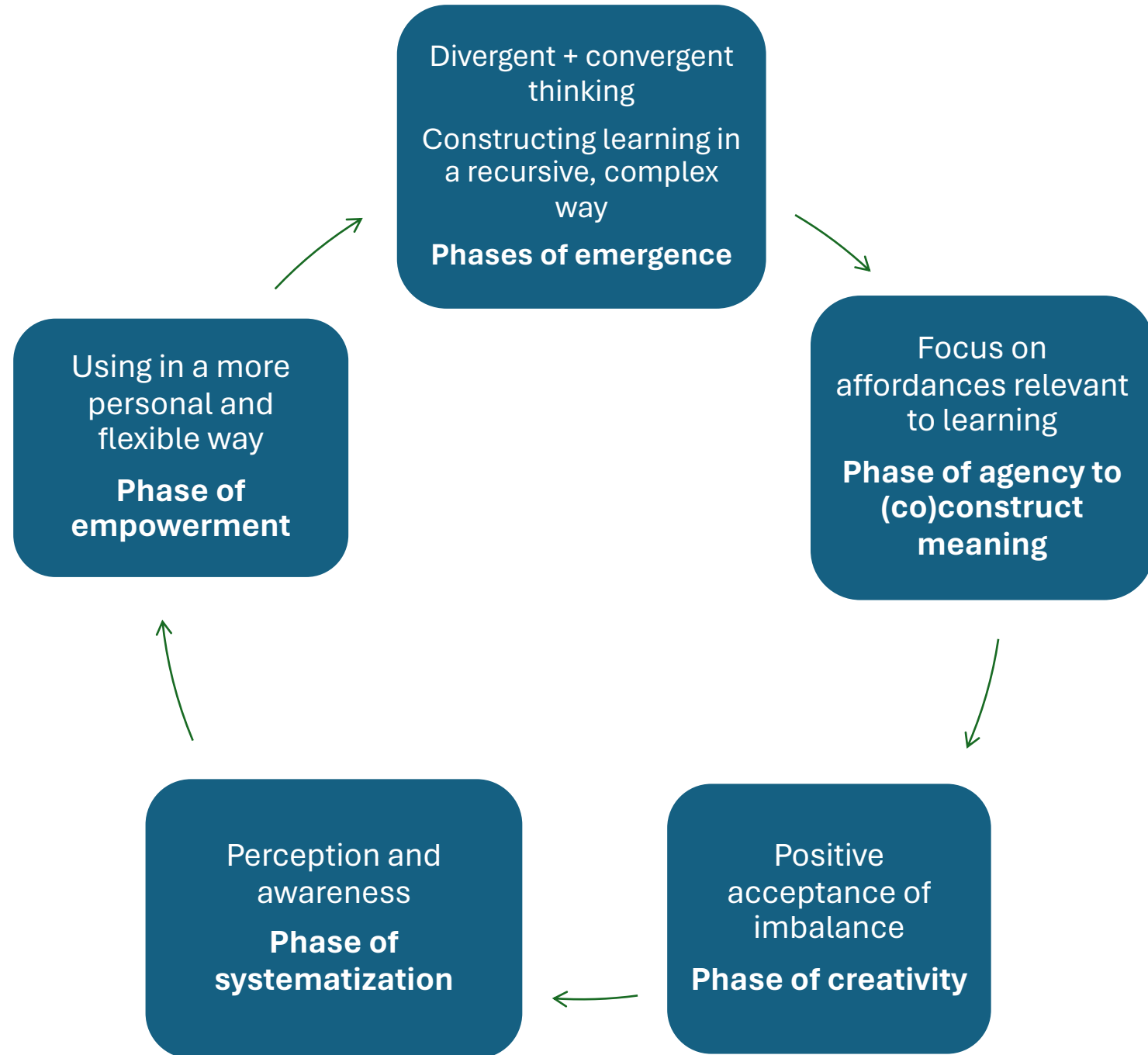
- The term plurilanguaging is not new either, it has been used in sociolinguistics since the early 2000s to describe:
 - interactions between individuals living in contexts that are linguistically and culturally diverse (Arrizón, 2006 ; Lüdi, 2015, 2016, 2020; Lüdi, Höchle Meier, Yanaprasart, 2013, 2016)
 - the dynamic language practices of individuals who, by crossing frontiers and cultures, operate in transnational and (post)colonial contexts, with a particular focus on intersectionalities and possible marginalization (Mignolo, 1996, 2000; Makoni & Makoni, 2009).
- However, most importantly, the term extends and broadens the scope of the concept of languaging, thus I revisited the concept of plurilanguaging from a complex dynamic perspective and described it as a five-pronged holistic process (Piccardo, 2017)

A five-pronged model of *plurilinguaging*:



Plurilinguaging

“a dynamic, never-ending process to make meaning using different linguistic and semiotic resources” (Piccardo, 2018: 216)



A cyclical process of exploring and constructing

- Learning a new language is characterized by phases of emergence. Individuals construct their learning in a recursive, complex way, adapting with exposure to the language
- A cyclical process of divergent and convergent thinking
 - divergent > hypothesis making, decoding and meaning-making:
 - convergent > filtering and adapting to the speech community's norms, which aligns with creativity (Guilford, 1967; Kharkhurin, 2016).
- In a plurilingual view, this alternation is purposefully sought, learners are
 - encouraged and supported in a conscious process of divergent thinking and problem finding, and later
 - guided toward awareness of the norm in a convergent thinking process.

An agentic process of selecting and (self)organizing

- Individuals (seen as CAS) engaged in a task **only experience affordances that they perceive as invitations** (Käufer and Chemero, 2015, p. 203).
- Language learners/users exert their agency, **focusing on affordances** (linguistic, cultural, cognitive, emotional, etc.) **relevant to their learning** process. and drawing upon **all** their linguistic and cultural resources to mediate and (co)construct meaning.
- The CAS self-organizes and reaches a new stage in the learning process.
- In a plurilingual perspective the relevant affordances multiply:
 - the need to make **targeted decisions** increases,
 - uncertainty and elusiveness require **both focused and lateral** attention and thinking

> conducive to creativity

A process of dealing with chaos

- Positive acceptance of imbalance, awareness of the complex nature of language learning is key (Puozzo Capron and Piccardo, 2014)
 - individuals are able to **negotiate in-between spaces**, construct and invent, and embrace change. Notion of ‘**edge of chaos**’
- Dealing with chaos as a natural, positive state
 - individuals feel free to make **personal and creative use** of all their linguistic and cultural resources.
 - individuals with multiple languages have a **higher degree of tolerance of ambiguity** (Dewaele and Wei, 2013), a fundamental trait of creativity (Vernon, 1970; Sternberg and Lubart, 1995; Zenasni et al., 2008).
- The **routine ambiguity** intrinsic in using multiple languages (same idea may take different nuances in different languages) **can enhance divergent thinking** (Lubart, 1999)

Enhanced perception and awareness

- **Selective engagement** with a rich landscape of affordances requires awareness, which **initiates change** in the CAS and **triggers further awareness** of linguistic and cultural features, thus enhancing the entire learning process.
- Mere exposure to linguistic and cultural difference does not per se stimulate creativity (Maddux et al., 2010), **metalinguistic/-cultural ability is necessary**: the plurilingual view puts awareness at the core of the process.

An empowering process in relation to norms

- Plurilinguals have greater facility in perceiving **unusual analogies and associations** and an increased capacity for **metaphorical thinking** (Kharkhurin, 2012), a key to creative processes
- Embracing a plurilingual paradigm fosters a more **flexible attitude toward norms**, opening to **hybrid spaces** and the **crossing of boundaries**, both conducive to creativity (Maddux et al., 2010; Saad et al., 2013).
“Where systems are stretched, where conventional rules are not upheld, where a point of criticality is reached, new forms emerge: New forms and patterns then become the resources of the community upon which members of the speech community can draw, exploit and reshape to populate with their own intentions and the affordances of the new context” (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008, p. 102).

Action rather than perfection

‘Taking a complexity theory perspective on the language classroom places the focus on action’ (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008: 197).

Learning a new language is not mapping different words onto the same language-independent concepts, it also means creating new concepts and recalibrating existing ones (Athanasopoulos, 2016).

A new conceptualization of language education to provide space and ways for learners and teachers alike to embrace complexity rather than seek simplification and to recognize the mediated nature of all language use

New mediation and ‘pluri’ scales of the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020) support plurilinguaging



*Caminante, no hay camino,
se hace camino al andar*
Antonio Machado

This ECPSM symposium
PLURILINGUAGING IN MULTILINGUAL
EDUCATIONAL SPACES is a much
needed and timely reflection.
I wish you all an excellent event!

merci grazie gracias
danke hartelijk dank
thank you efcharisto
obrigada

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