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Developing & Validating Descriptors for Mediation and Related Concepts

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- Updating and completing the CEFR: context and project structure
- Conceptualisation of mediation
 - in the CEFR 2001
 - a richer interpretation
- Categories for the descriptors
- Research methodology
- Conclusions: potential for language teaching and social integration

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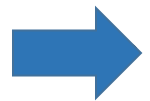
Project Structure

1. 2013–14: Update of the CEFR 2001 scales with descriptors validated and calibrated in projects
2. 2014–16: Provide descriptor scales for the categories not developed in the initial version, in particular for **mediation**
3. 2016–17: Consultation, piloting and publication in the CEFR/CV (online)
4. 2018–20: Dissemination, launch and case studies

2013-14 : Update of 2001 descriptors

- No changes except when necessary
- Enrichment of C-levels
- Enrichment of pre-A1 & A1
- More consistency with 'plus levels'
- Phonology – replacement of the entire scale
- Native-speaker – eliminated
- Correction of translation errors (French version)

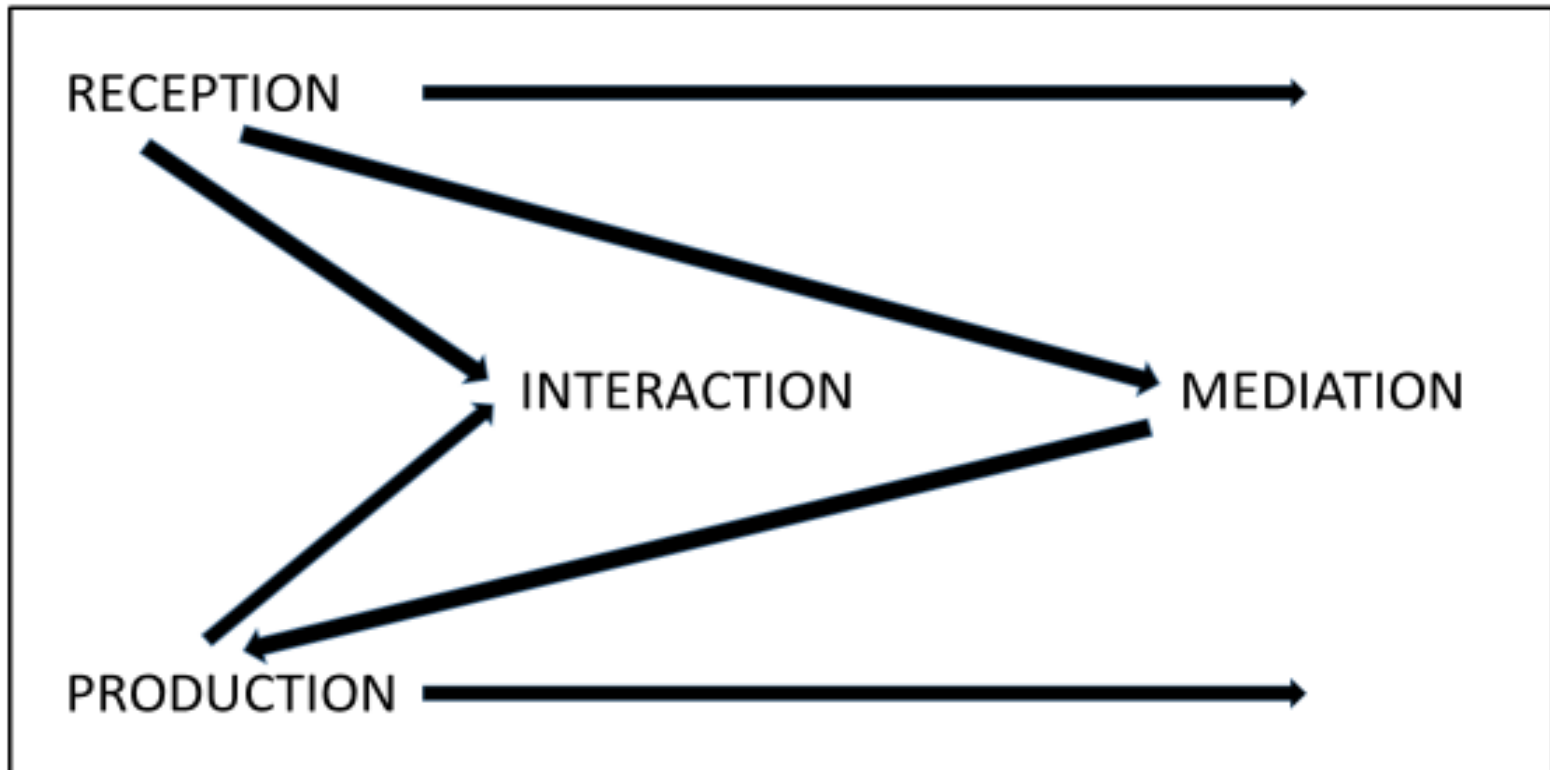
- Updating and completing the CEFR: context and project structure



Conceptualisation of mediation

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Conceptualising mediation



CEFR 1996 & 1998 versions

“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)

Through mediation we can reconceptualize language as:

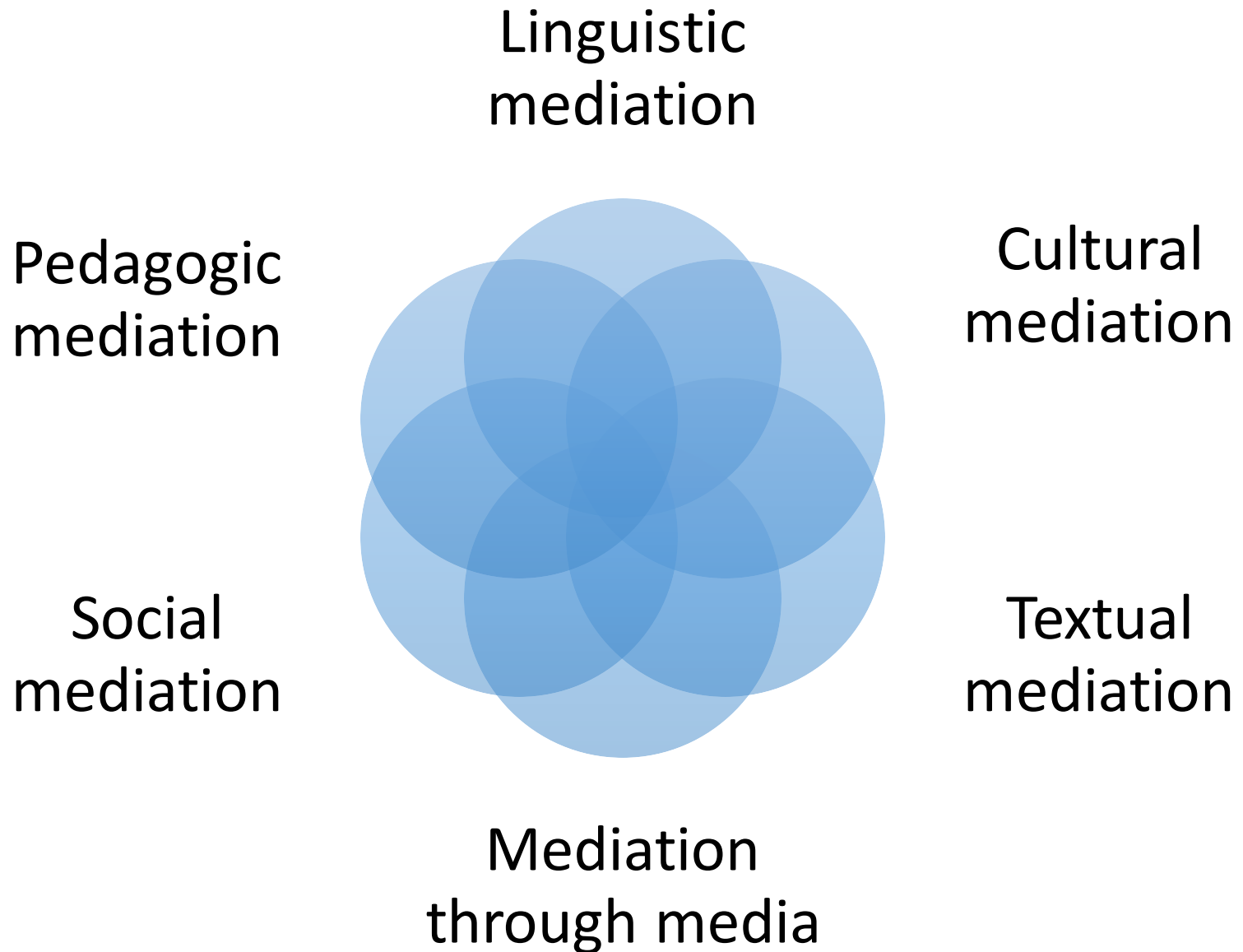
- “an activity” (Thorne & Lantolf, 2007;171)
- “an emergent dynamic process of shared meaning, which creates and transforms itself through interactions of individuals with their environment” (Aden, 2012: 275), a complex dynamic system (Larsen-Freeman, 1997, 2002)
- “socialization into communities of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

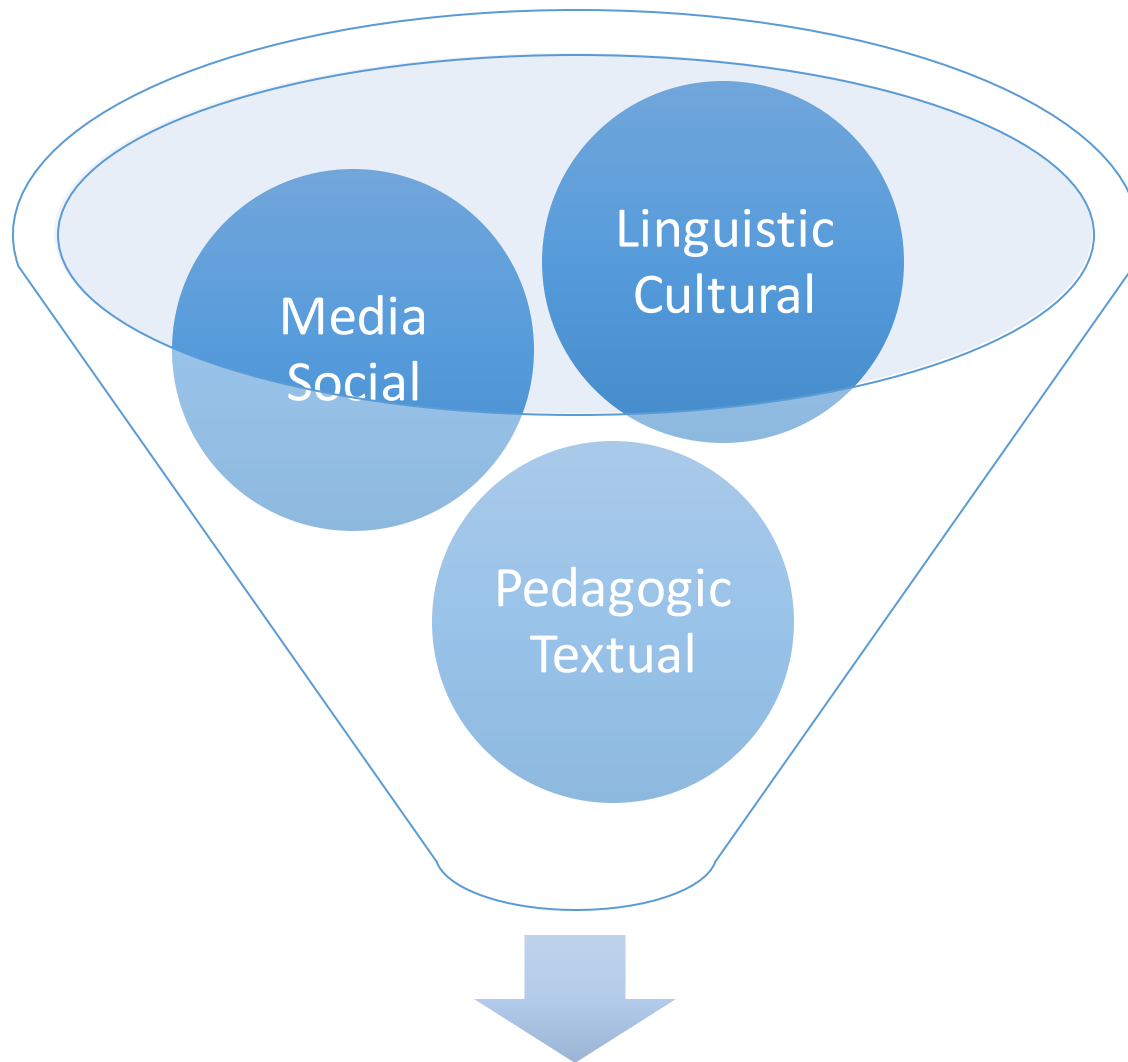
Interpretations of mediation

- diplomacy, conflict resolution, commercial
→ arbitration, counselling, guidance
- abstract operation through which knowledge is acquired (Hegel)
- social interaction/mediation: a fundamental role in development of cognition (Vygotsky)
- 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)

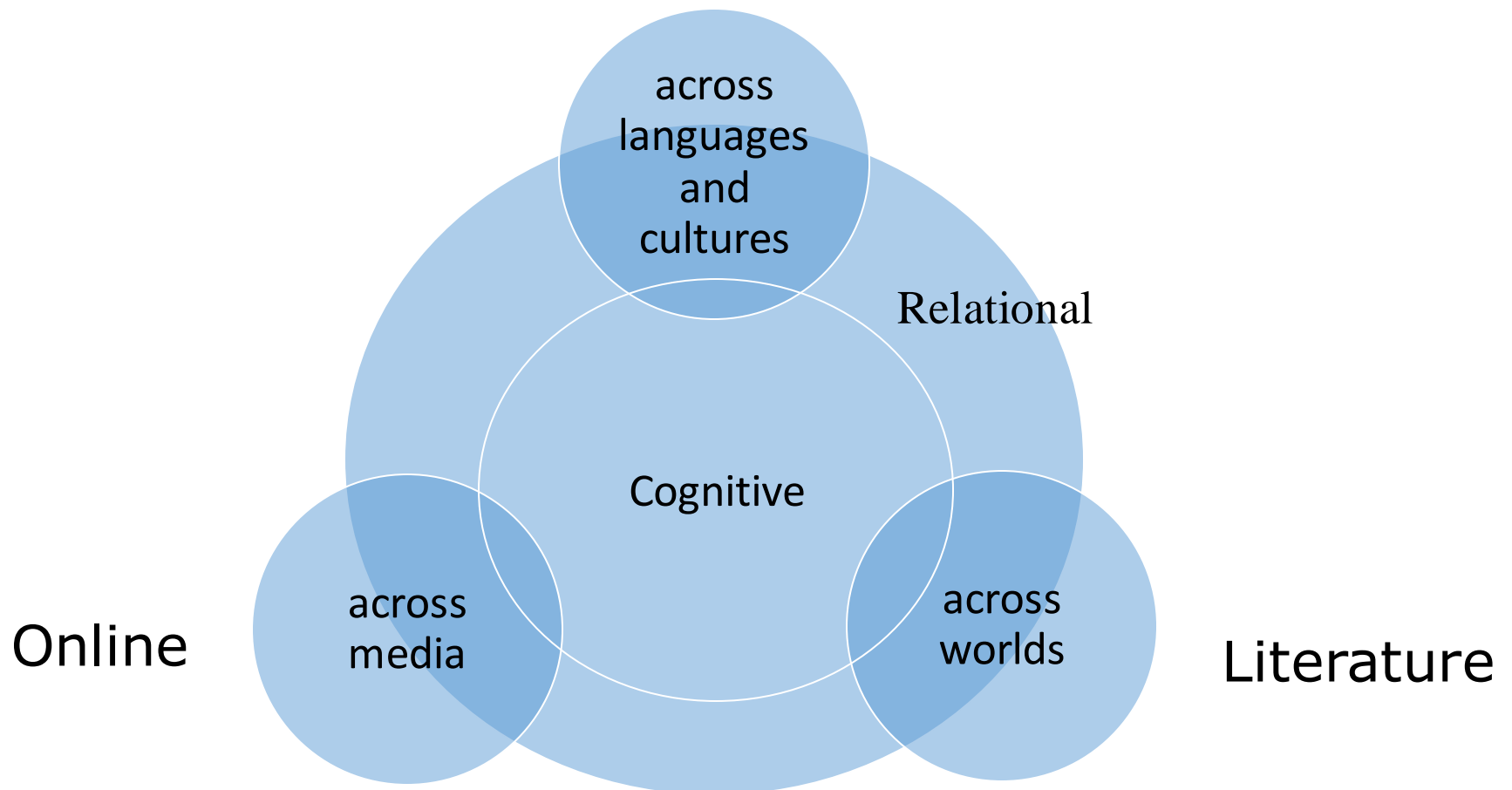
Interpretations of mediation

- diplomacy, conflict resolution, commercial
> arbitration, counselling, guiding → **Social / Cultural**
- abstract operation through which knowledge is acquired; social interaction/mediation: a fundamental role in the development of cognition → **Conceptual / Pedagogic**
- implies reformulation, code switching, moving from oral to writing, changing genres, combining texts and modalities
→ **Linguistic / Textual**





Plurilingual & Pluricultural



- 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**

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Mediating a text

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

Mediation strategies

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



**Mediation as people
have interpreted it**



**Broader
interpretation**

Mediating concepts

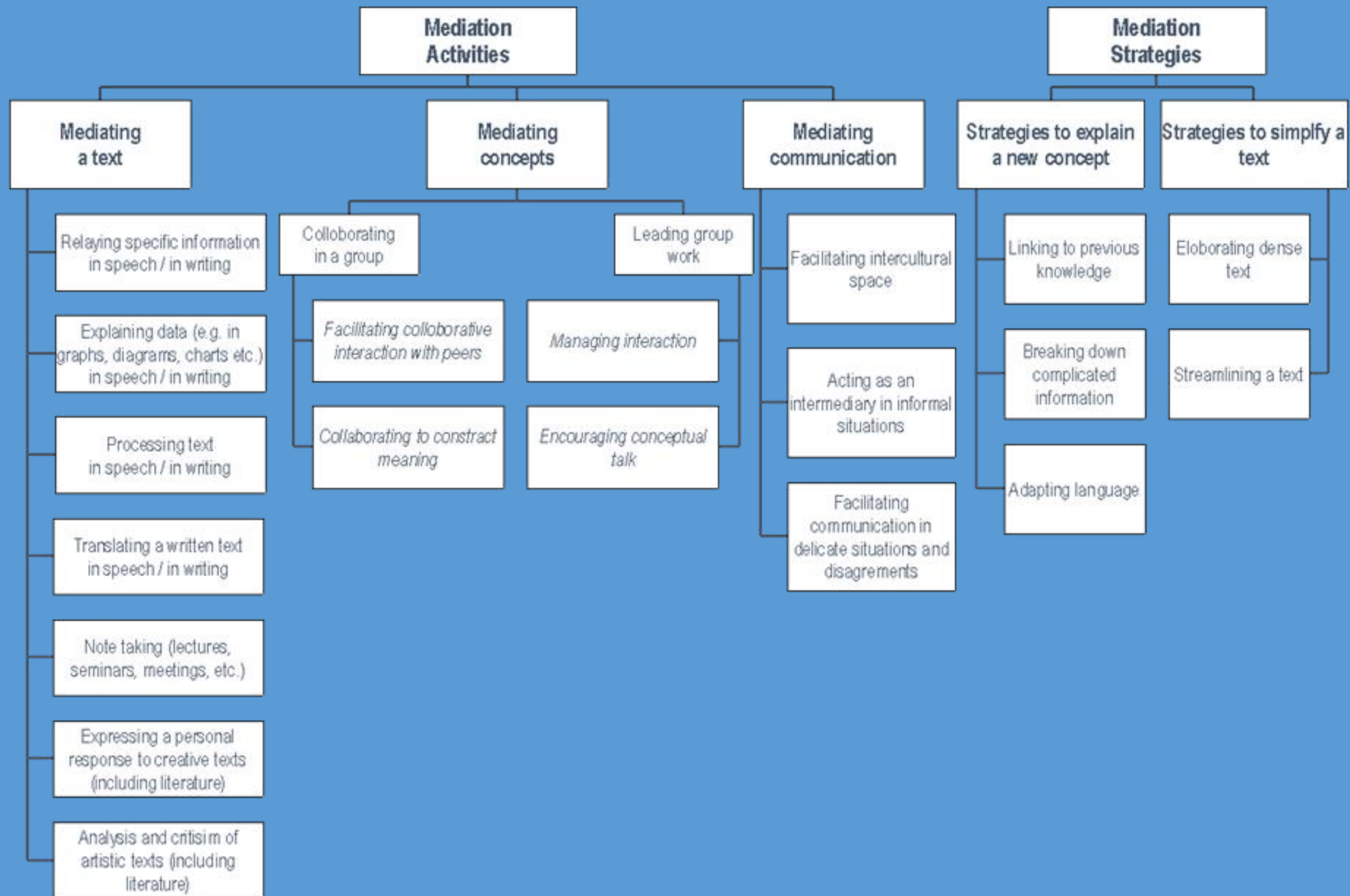
- Facilitating collaborative interaction with peers
- Collaborating to construct meaning
- Managing interaction
- Encouraging conceptual thought

Mediating communication

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

Plurilingual/cultural competence

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



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

Mediating concepts – collaborative group work

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

Facilitating pluricultural space

- Can support an intercultural exchange using a limited repertoire to introduce people from different cultures and to ask and answer questions, showing awareness that some questions may be perceived differently in the cultures concerned.

Plurilingual

- Can exploit creatively his limited repertoire in different languages for everyday contexts, in order to cope with an unexpected situation.

Comments from piloting

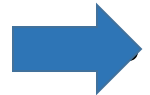
*"I think the new proposed scales will be very helpful to **define curriculum aims for level A1.**"*

*"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**"*

- *For me as teacher: With the help of the descriptors you are more aware of the question « What do I want my students to be able to do ? » - the **teaching objective can be defined much better and more clearly !***
- *For assessment: Can my students really do this ? **Have I taught them the necessary competences ?***
- *For the students: They were happy and very cooperative to give feedback and **appreciated I was interested in their self-assessment.***

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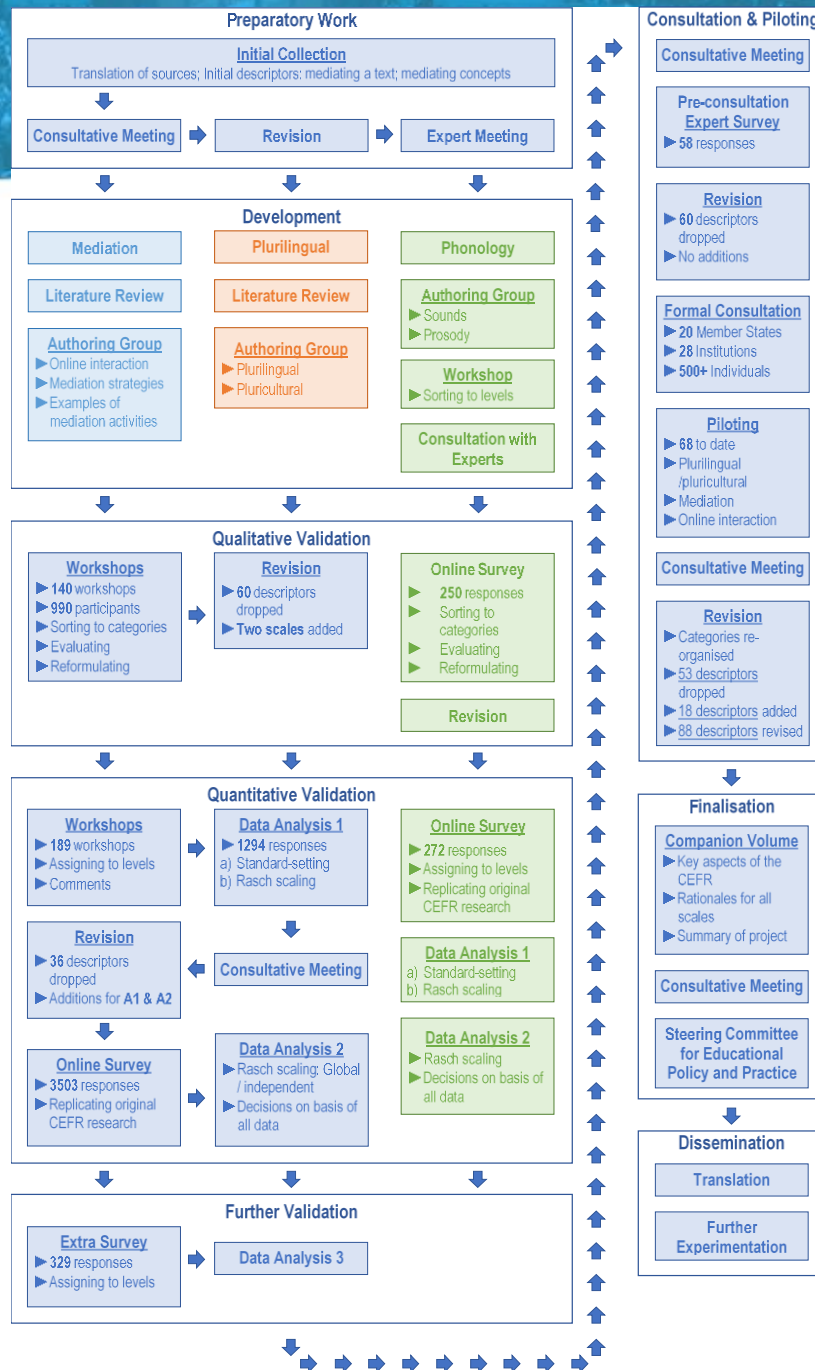
Research methodology

- Conclusions: potential for language education and social integration

- Developmental research (Richey & Klein, 2005)
- Mixed methods sequential qualitative and quantitative design (Cromwell & Plano Clark 2011)
- Three phases:
 - Development of the descriptors
 - Qualitative validation (categories, evaluation, improvement)
 - Quantitative validation in two steps (Rasch model)

Steps in the research project

Figure 11 in CEFR/CV Multimethod developmental research design



- Descriptors appeared on 2–4 (normally 3) questionnaires (in both qualitative and quantitative)
= *linked into one data set*
- Certain existing CEFR descriptors linked back to the mathematical scale underlying the CEFR levels
= *anchor items*
- Questionnaires were distributed in a representative manner across different countries, types of institutions

Development: (authors < > sounding board > consultants > authors)

- Analysis of existing literature and resources
- Collation/formulation, classification, feedback from external experts
- Iterative cycles of review, revision and elaboration

Qualitative Validation : (990 participants in 140 institutions)

- Assigning descriptors to related categories
- Evaluating (clarity; pedagogic usefulness; relevance to real world)
- Suggest reformulations (reduce to c 20 words)

Quantitative Validation (calibration with Rasch model)

Assigning to levels (1294 participants in 189 institutions)

- Yes/No responses (actually 0-4) (3503 responses)
- Supplementary validation for plurilingual/-cultural (62+267 = 329)

At what CEFR level do you think a person can do what is defined in the descriptor?

Pre-A1 A1 A2 A2+ B1 B1+ B2 B2+ C1 C2

- **Classic analysis**
averages; percentages for each level
- **Rasch analysis**
to link results to CEFR levels

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Could you, or the person concerned, do what is described in the descriptor?

- 0 **Beyond** my/his/her capabilities
- 1 Yes, under **favourable** circumstances
- 2 Yes, in **normal** circumstances
- 3 Yes, even in **difficult** circumstances
- 4 Clearly **better than this**

Replicating original CEFR descriptor research
(North & Schneider 1998; North 2000)

- Global analysis
- Separate analyses for broad categories:
 - Interpretation/translation
 - Online
 - Literature
 - Plurilingual/pluricultural

1. Expert meeting (c. **30**)
2. Pre-consultation expert survey (August 2016) (**58**)
3. Main consultation (Oct 2016-Feb 2017)
 - Institutions: NGOs, cultural institutes, networks (**28**)
 - Individuals: survey participants, experts (**500/800**)
4. Survey of Member States (**20** countries)

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Potential of the CEFR/CV for language education and social integration

- Completing provision of descriptors for CEFR scheme
- Responding to societal developments since 2001:
 - Accommodation/behaviour of *native speaker* removed
 - Digital language competence (online) added
- Broadening educational scope
 - Collaboration, facilitating space for learning & communication
 - Co-construction and mediation of new knowledge / concepts
 - Building bridges:
 - towards the new, the other
 - across languages and cultures
 - across imaginative, virtual and 'real' worlds



merci grazie grácias tesşekkürler
 danke faleminderit obrigada
 thank you efcharisto