



# Mediation “A paradigm shift in language education”

Enrica Piccardo  
(University of Toronto  
and Université Grenoble-Alpes)

The CEFR Companion Volume: Completing the descriptive scheme

The notion of Mediation: broadening and deepening the perspective

From conceptualization to practice: developing descriptors for mediation

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

Conclusions and future perspectives

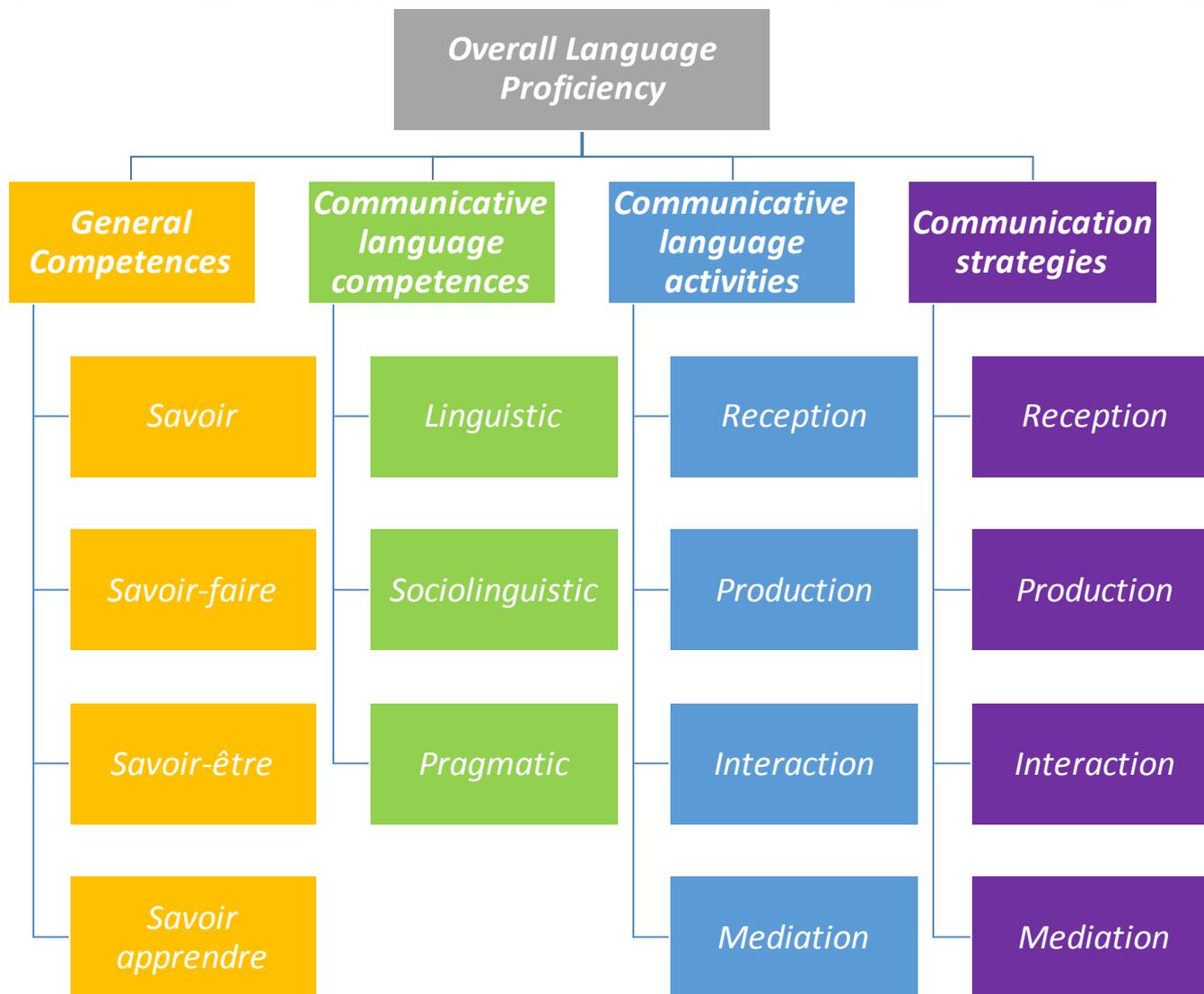
## **The CEFR Companion Volume: Completing the descriptive scheme**

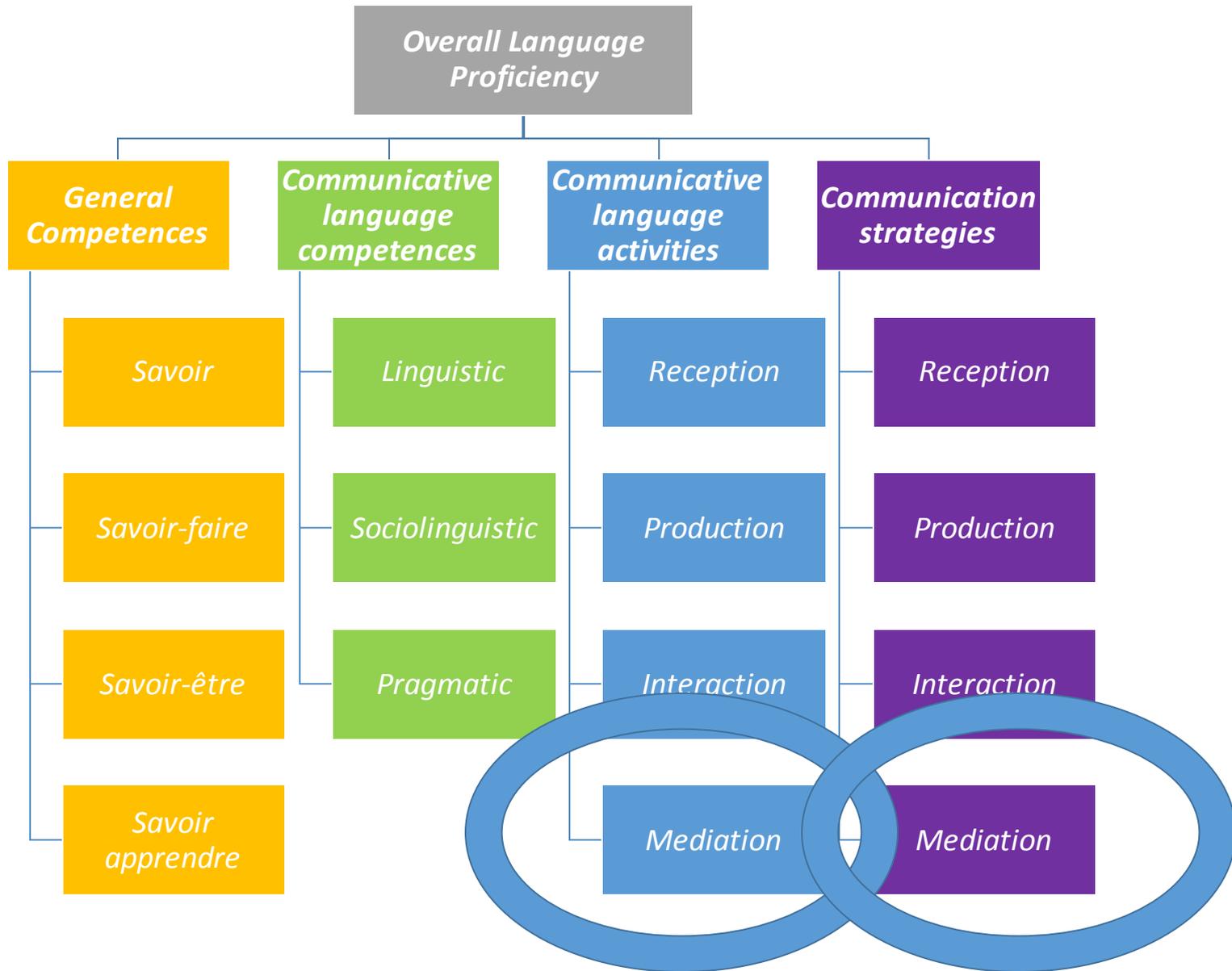
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## *Innovative Aspects of the CEFR 2001 The CEFR Companion Volume (CEFR/CV) 2018*

- 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**

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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- Levels and descriptor scales > **curriculum alignment**
- From four skills to **four modes** of communication: reception, production, interaction, **mediation**
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Reception

Production

Speaker/Hearer

**Code:**

*accuracy / fluency*

Mobilising linguistic  
resources

Interaction

Mediation

Participant

Social agent

**Negotiation of meaning**

## User/learner as Social Agent

Reception

Production

Speaker/Hearer

**Code:** *complexity*  
*accuracy / fluency*

Interaction

Participant

**Negotiation of meaning**

Mediation

Social agent

**Co-construction of  
meaning**

Mobilising general and plurilingual and pluricultural competences

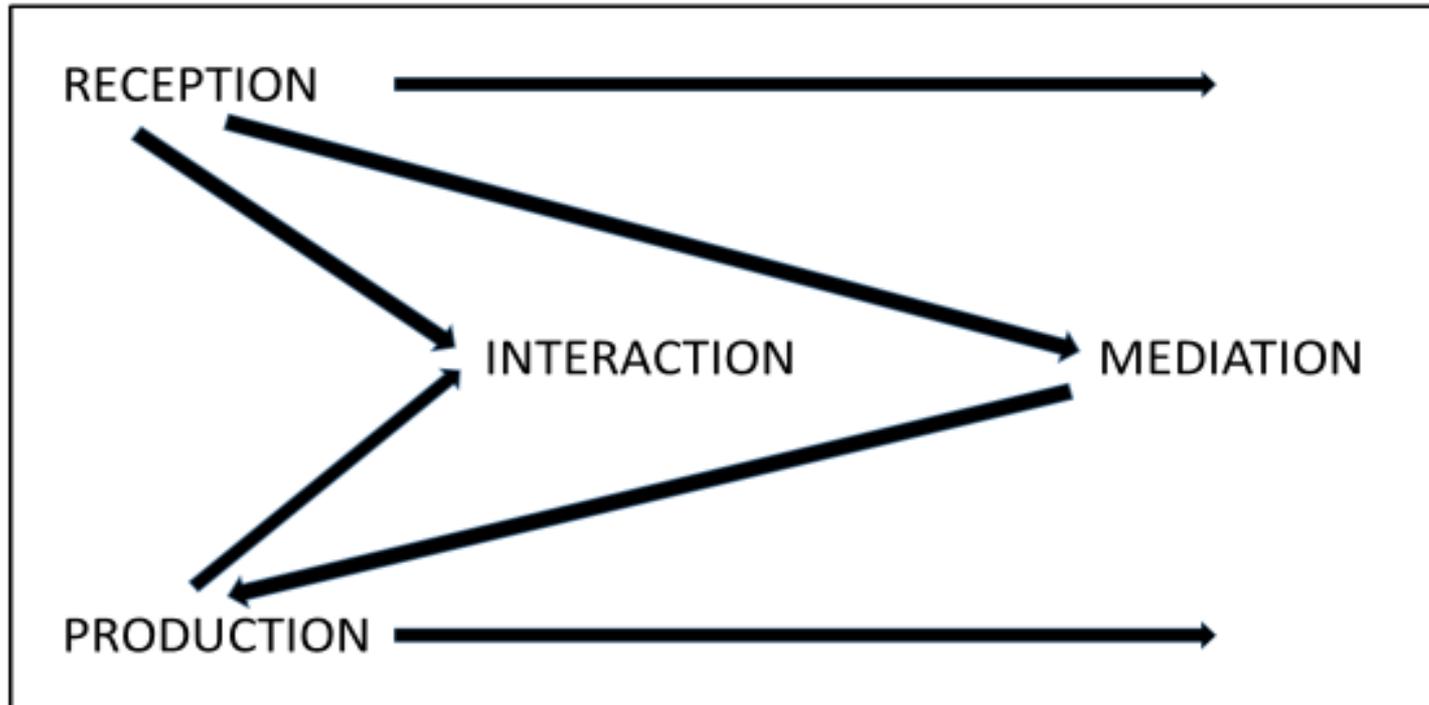
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CEFR 1996 & 1998 versions

“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)

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)

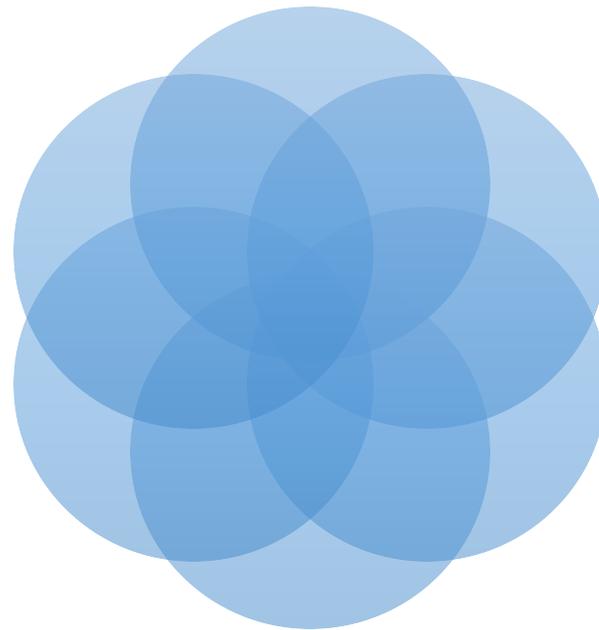
Linguistic  
mediation

Pedagogic  
mediation

Cultural  
mediation

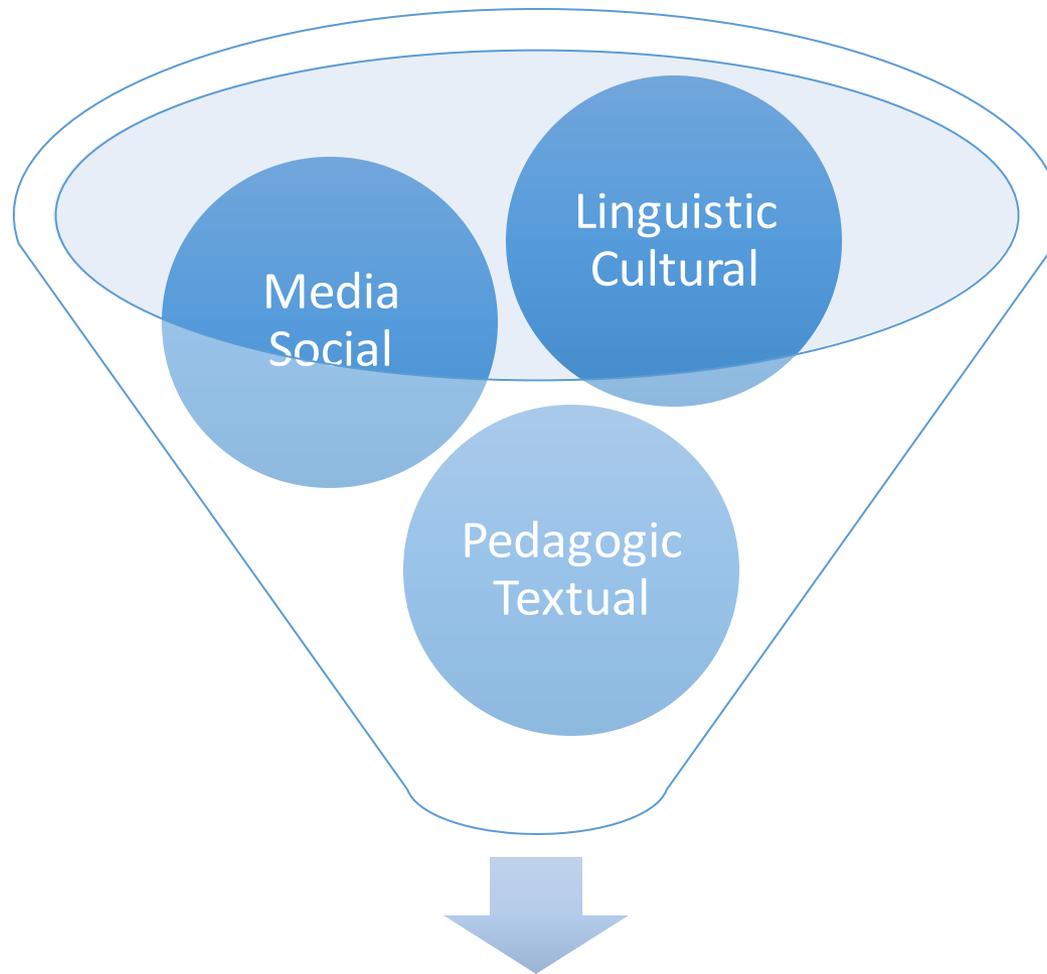
Social  
mediation

Textual  
mediation

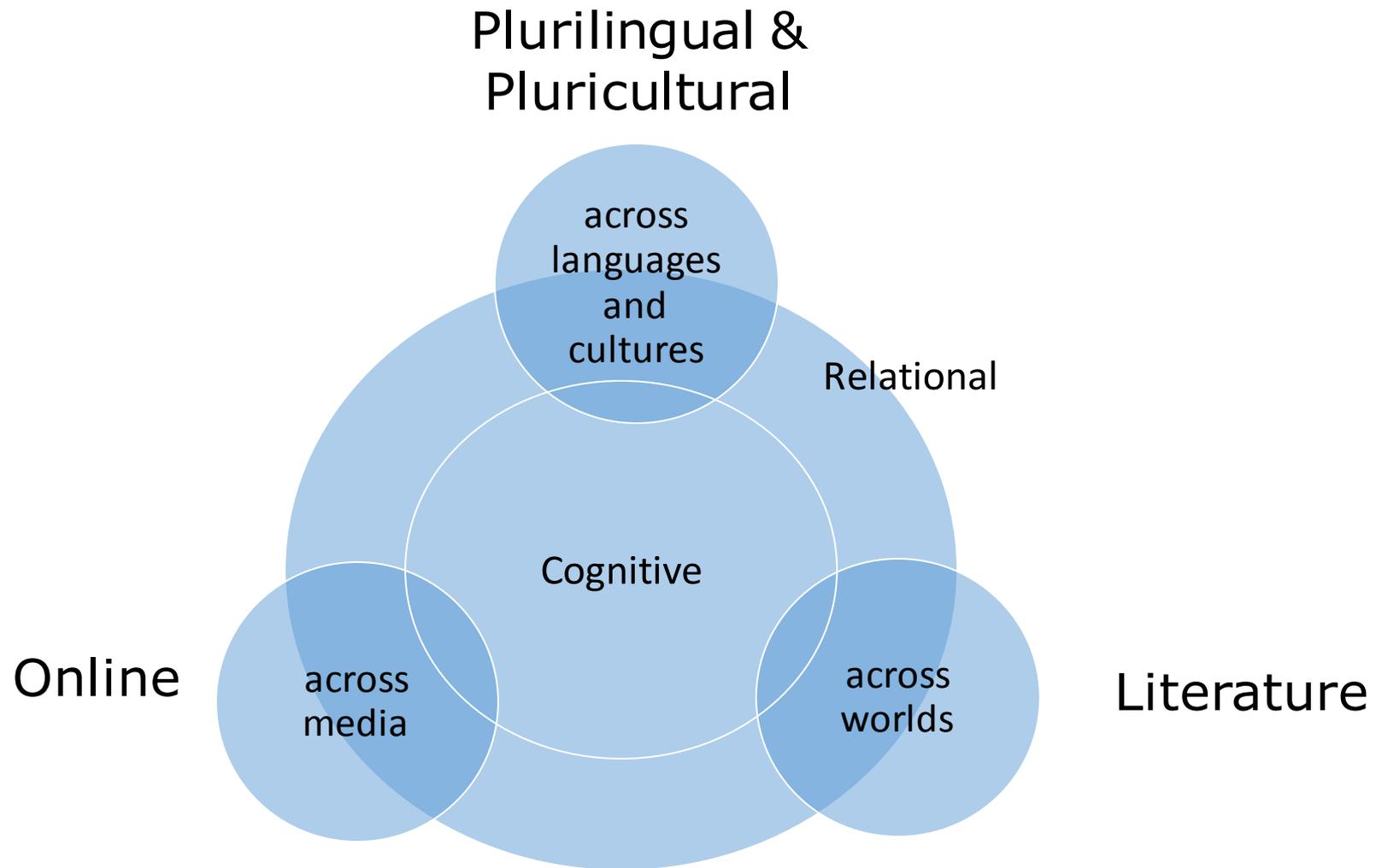


Mediation  
through media

- **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)



# Mediation conceptual model



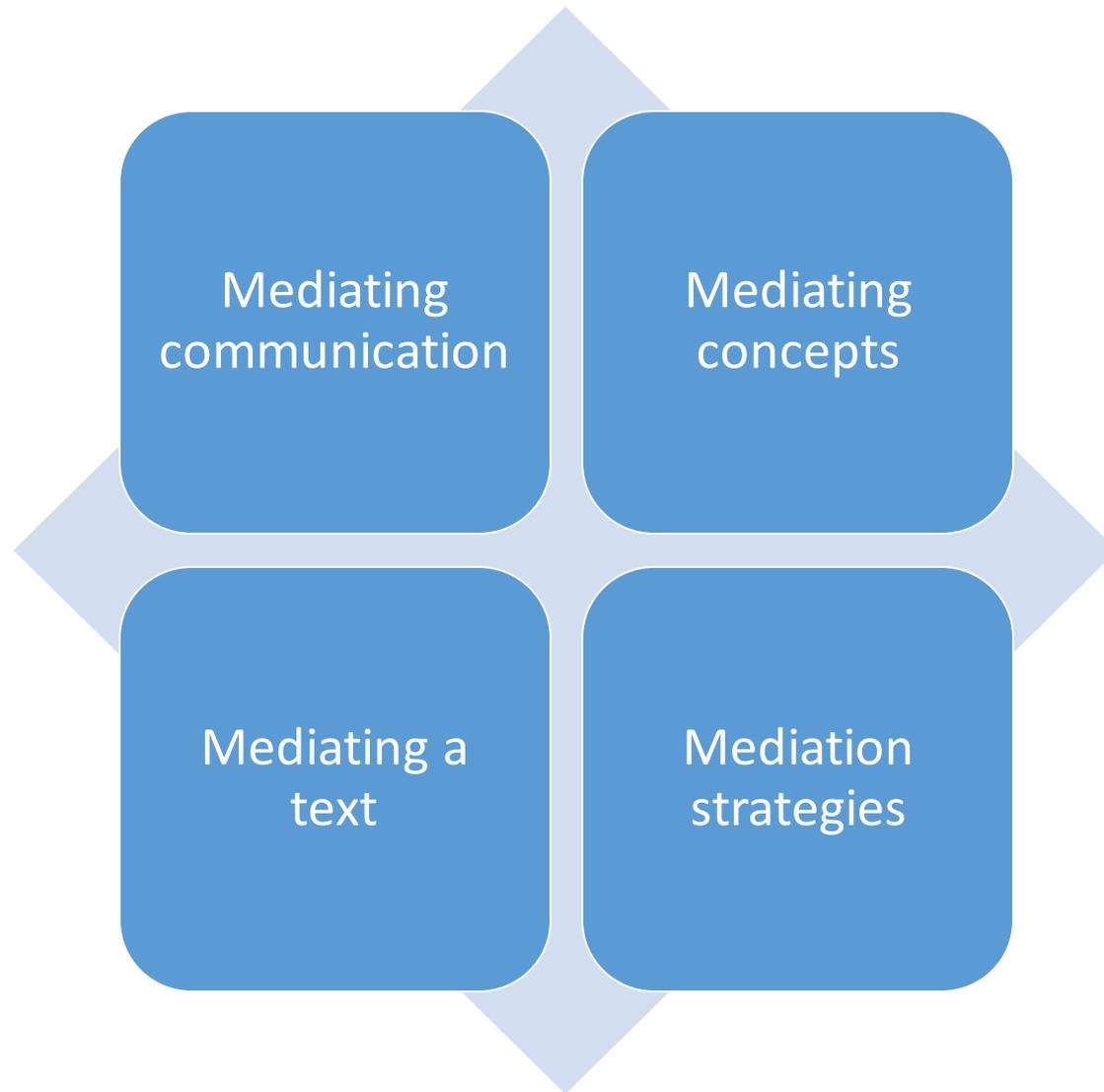
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## Mediating communication

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

## Mediating concepts

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

## 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

## Mediation strategies

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

Across  
languages/cultures

Across media

Across worlds

### 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

# 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.*

## Multilingualism

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

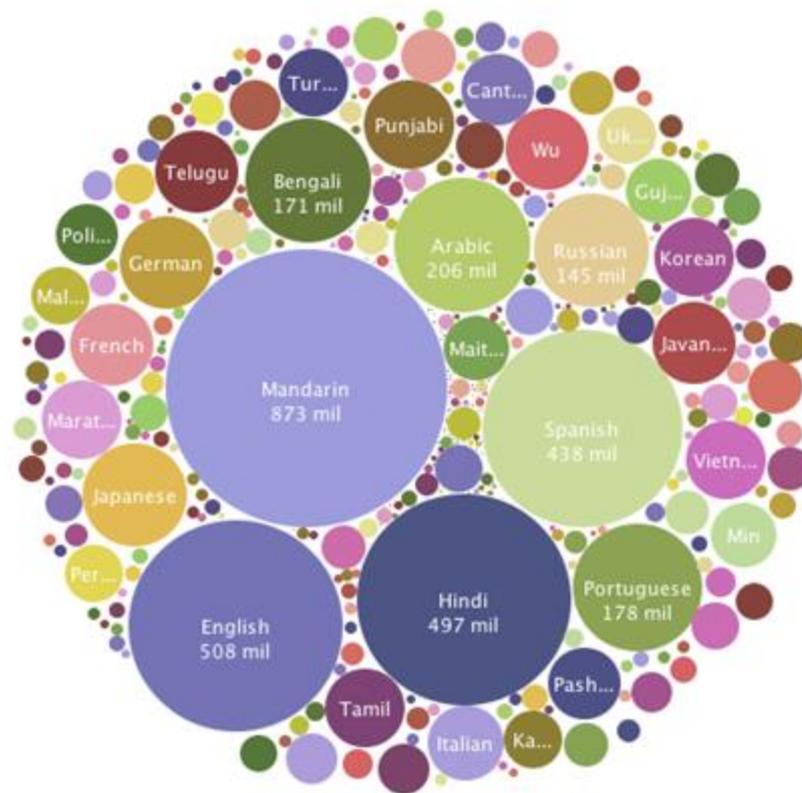
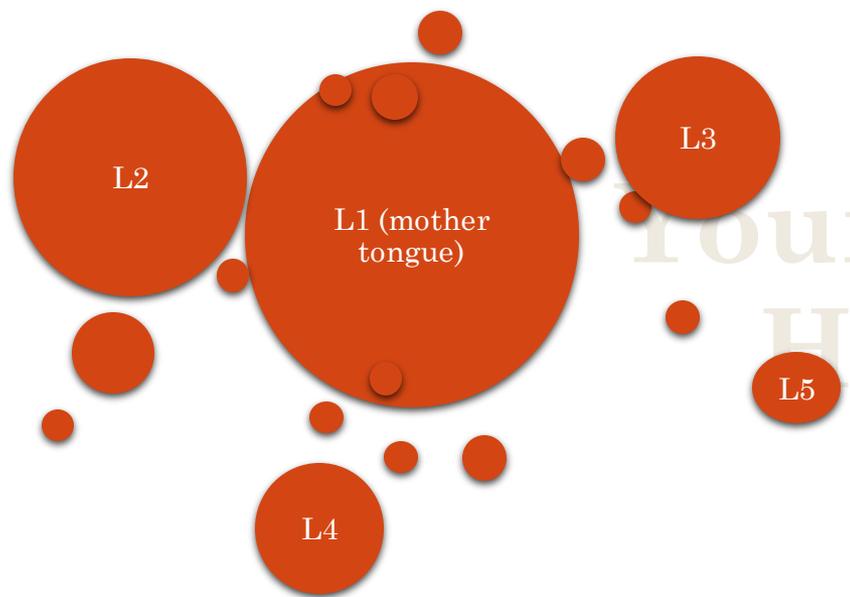
(CECR Section 1.3)

## Plurilingualism

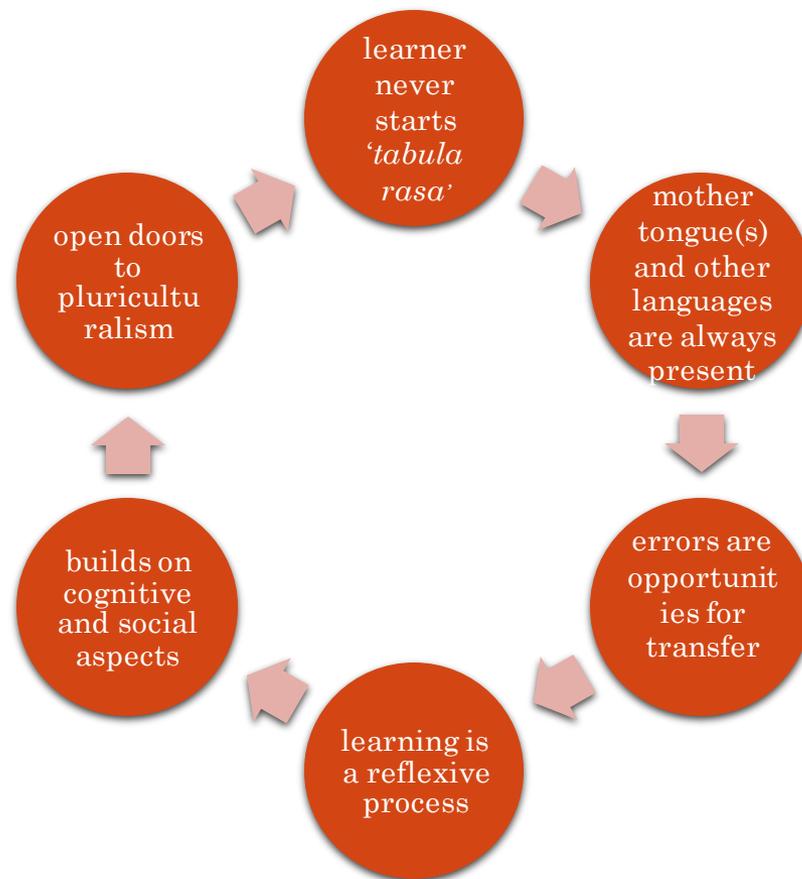
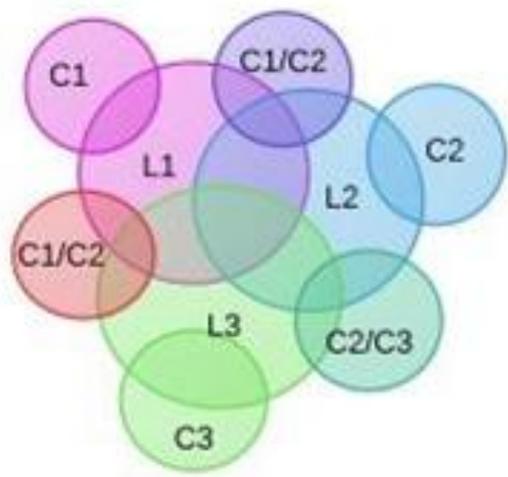
Plurilingual competence the ability to:

- **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.

# Multilingualism: languages side by side

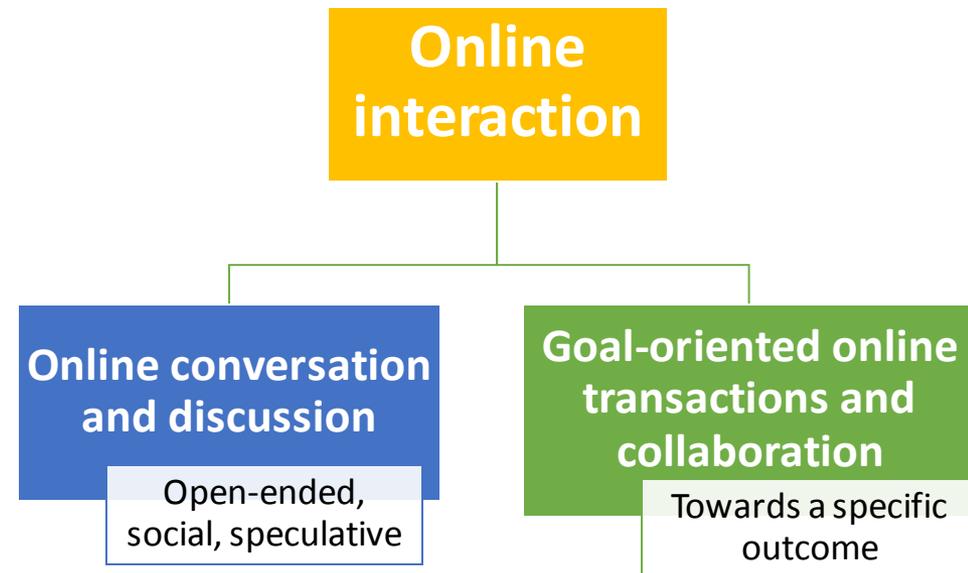


# Plurilingualism/Pluriculturalism: a network with multiple connections



## Since 2001 exponential development of multi-modal online interaction and collaboration:

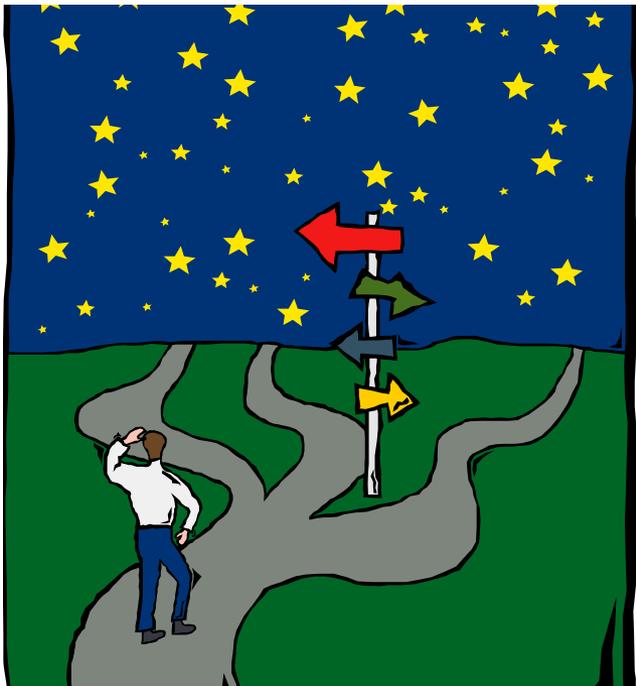
- involves multiple remote social actors who can flexibly remix media and texts to support their message
- can be synchronous, asynchronous, spoken and written, and is often a blend these



## Mixed synchronous / asynchronous remote online exchanges: new emerging needs

- the need for more redundancy in messages;
- the need to check that the message has been correctly understood;
- ability to reformulate in order to help comprehension, deal with misunderstanding;
- ability to handle emotional reactions
- inter-cultural sensitivity

## Individuals and literature



## *Expressing a personal response to creative texts*

### Personal reactions to literature

- ▶ explaining what he/she liked, what interested him/her about the work;
- ▶ describing characters, saying which he/she identified with;
- ▶ relating aspects of the work to own experience;
- ▶ relating feelings and emotions;
- ▶ personal interpretation of the work as a whole or of aspects of it.

## *Analysis and criticism of creative texts*

### intellectual reactions to literature

- ▶ comparing different works;
- ▶ giving a reasoned opinion of a work;
- ▶ critically evaluating features of the work,

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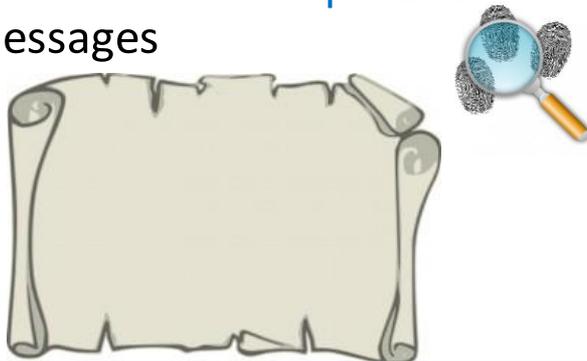
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## Mediation: cognitive and relational, individual and social

- In real-life situations, learners/users **draw on all possible resources/tools available to make sense of oral or written texts** both in a language and through languages, in order **to understand concepts and messages**



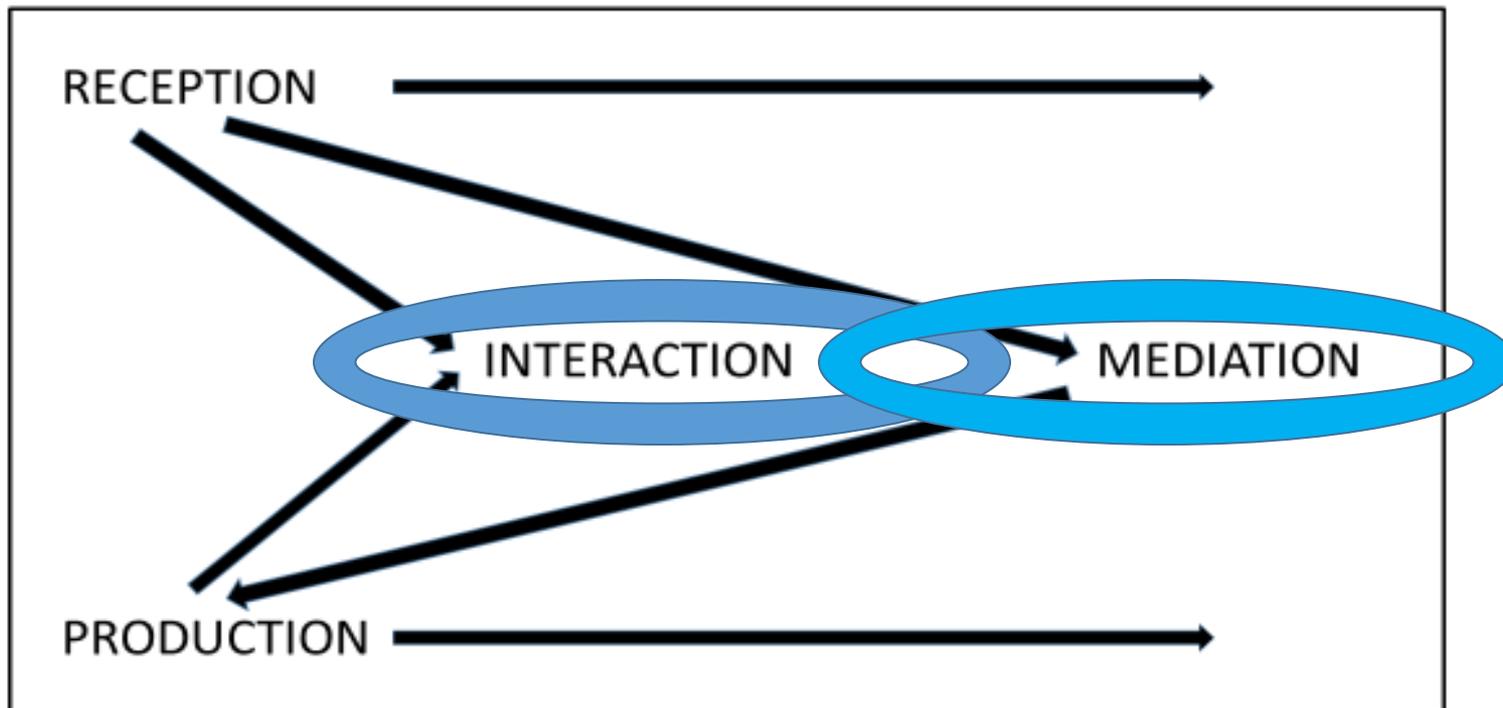
Mediating concepts and texts

- But they aren't alone...
- learners/users constantly engage in a **double perspective**: individual and social

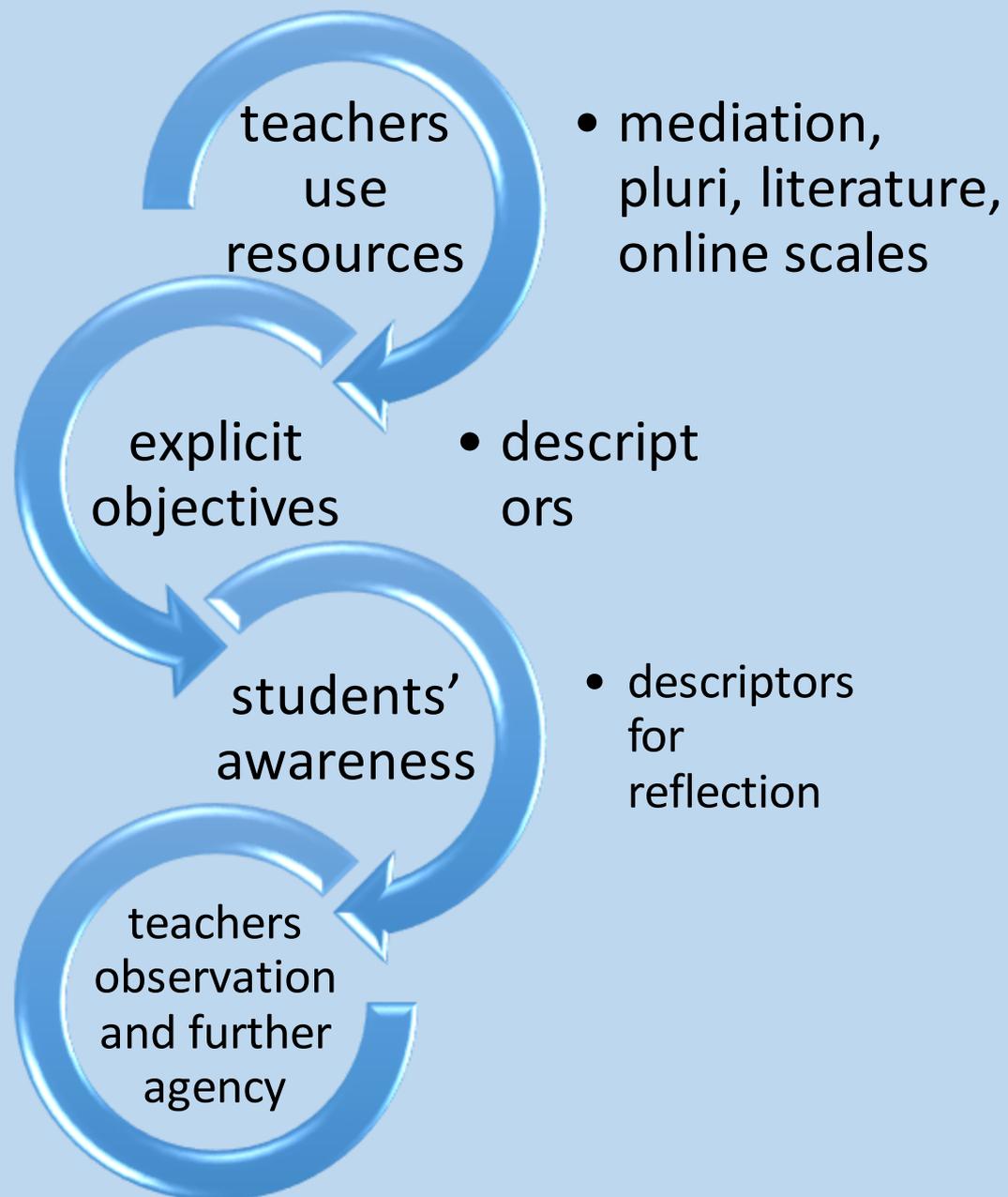


Mediating communication

## Repeating the success of interaction



CEFR 1996 & 1998 versions



## Comments from the piloting

- *“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**”*

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## Mediation a promising concept

- 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
- 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

