Multilingual Assessment of Print Literacy in Adult Second Language Learners

Word Recognition in L2 German and in L1 Arabic

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Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung

AlphaDekade 2016 – 2026

Overview

- **Setting the Stage**: Literacy in Germany
- **ELIKASA**: Multilingual Investigation and Assessment of Basic Literacy in Adult L2 Learners
  - Functional Literacy
  - Technical Literacy: Instruments
  - Sample
- **Word Recognition** in L1 Arabic and L2 German
- **Conclusion**: Difficulties in Assessing Heterogeneous Learners

The ELIKASA-Team

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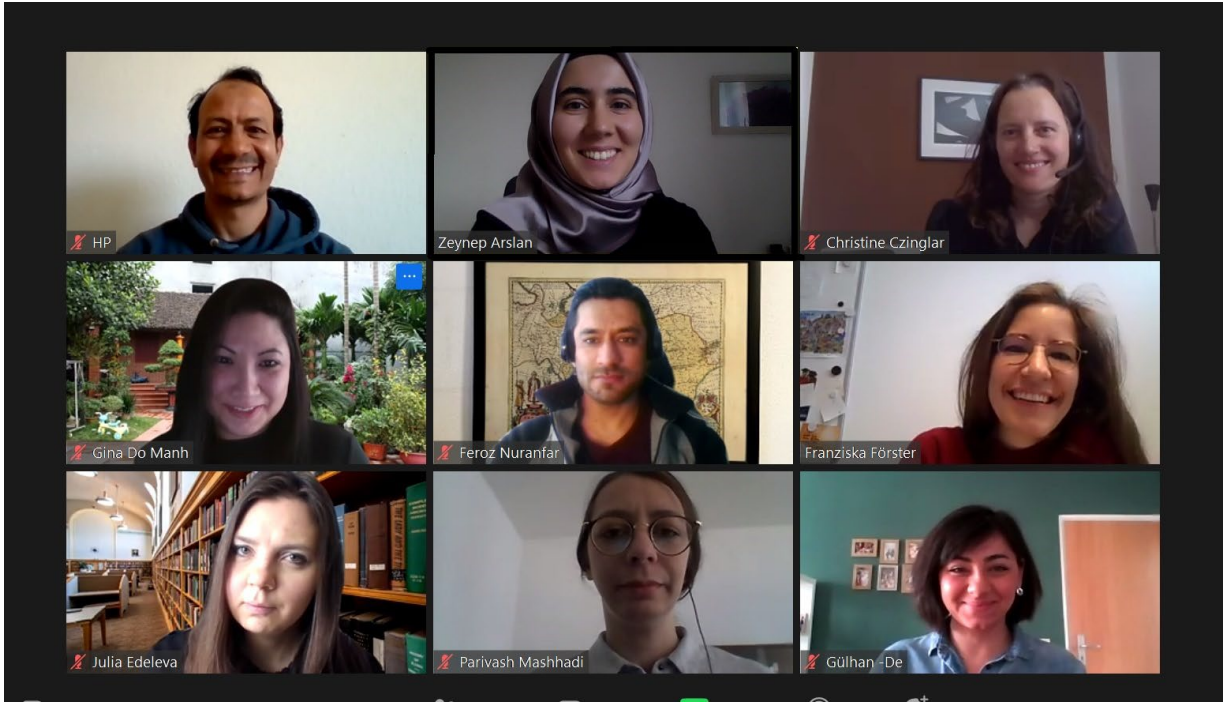


Setting the Stage: Print Literacy in Germany

Literacy in Germany

"**Literacy**" in Germany: from the 1990ies onwards the notions "**Alphabetisierung**" or print literacy as one element of "**Grundbildung**" or basic education (Tröster & Schrader 2016)

"**Literacy is defined as the ability** to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute **using printed and written materials** associated with diverse contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, develop their knowledge and potential and **participate fully in community and society**." (UNESCO 2015: 47)

Basic Education "Grundbildung"

- print literacy
- numeracy
- computer literacy
- health literacy
- financial literacy
- ...

Need for Literacy Courses in Germany

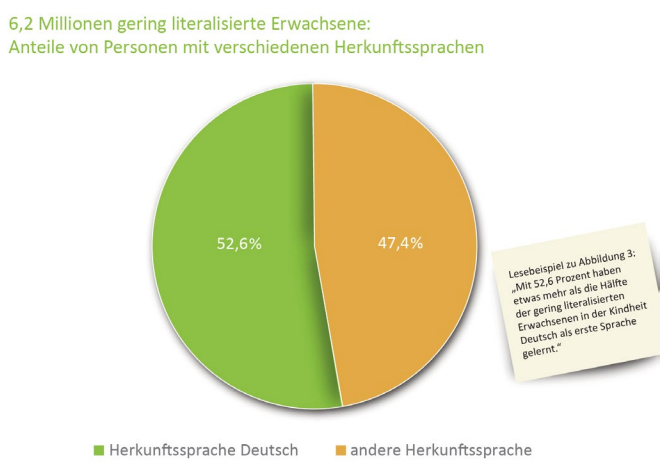
In Germany the LEO 2018 study estimated that **12,1% of the working-age population** (6,2 Mio) have low literacy competences.

Low literacy is the term for **functional illiteracy** in the LEO study: defined as literal competences **below the text level**, even for short coherent texts (Grotlüschen et al. 2020).

47,4% of this group: **non-native speakers of German**, but their **literacy skills in other languages** than German?

→ more research on these non-native speakers

Abbildung 3: Anteile von Personen mit Deutsch als Herkunftssprache und von Personen mit anderen Herkunftssprachen an den gering literalisierten Erwachsenen (Alpha-Levels 1-3) 2018



Grotlüschen et al. (2019)

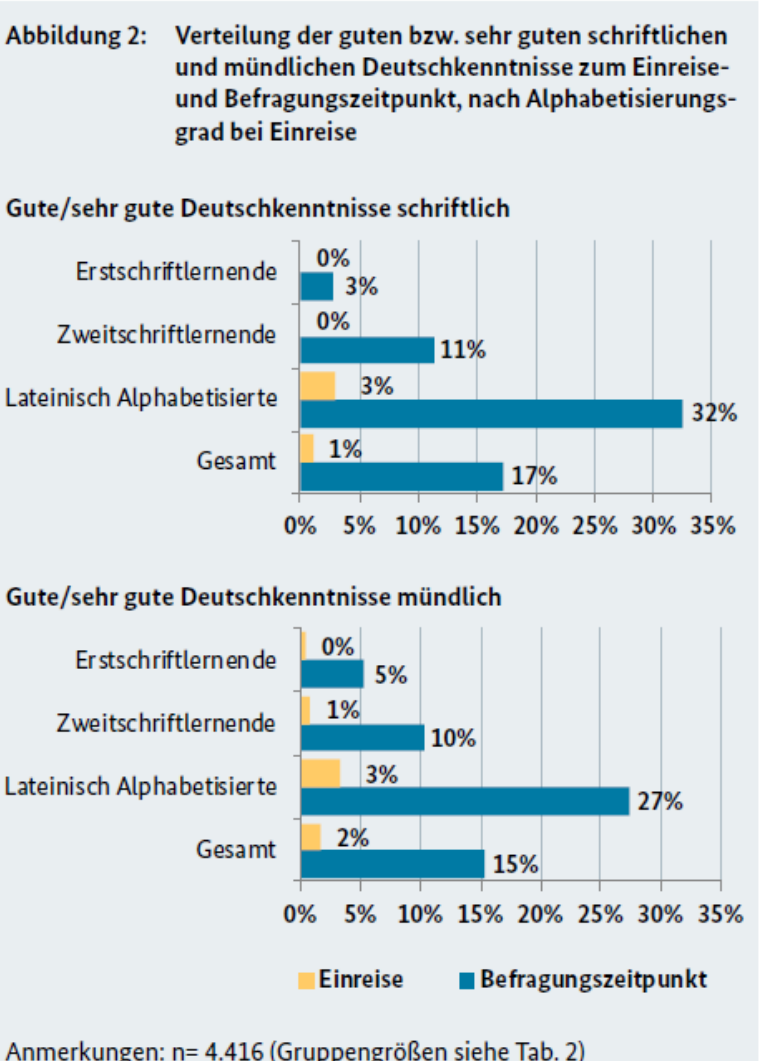
Literacy Skills L2 Beginners in BAMF Literacy Courses

The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) provides integration courses (German language + KoS).

Refugees in Germany 2016 (Scheible 2018)

- 15% no literacy skills
- 51% literacy skills in a different script
- 34% literacy skills in Latin script

LESLLA learners develop more slowly than other L2 learners, in writing as well as oral skills. cf. Condelli & Wrigley (2006), Kurvers & Stockmann (2009), Kurvers et al. (2015)



Diagnostic Tools for Literacy in German

lea.-Diagnostik/Oldenburger Diagnostikbögen

developed for working **native speakers of German** with low literacy skills (“functional illiterates”, see e.g. Feldmeier 2010)

not appropriate for LESLLA learners:

- → vocabulary and grammar too advanced for (beginning) L2 learners
- → complex and multimedial real-life task (Carlsen 2017)

LEO 2018
Leben mit geringer Literalität

Aufgabenstellung IV

Leschek wundert sich manchmal über die Politik.
Er berichtet Martina von seiner Idee, die ihm zum Thema Opposition gekommen ist.

Hören Sie bitte zu und ergänzen Sie die fehlenden Wörter im Text!

„Weißt du, Politik ist schon ein merkwürdiges Geschäft. Stell dir vor, in einer Firma würde nur die eine Hälfte der Leute arbeiten, während die andere Hälfte dafür bezahlt wird, dass sie bei den Kunden die Produkte des Unternehmens schlecht macht."

from Grotlüschen (2010: 78): lea-Diagnostik
Task: Writing on Alpha-Level 2 (Wortebene)

Challenges for Literacy Assessment

Instruments for this heterogeneous lerner group

- level of L2 German
- different learning paces

despite this clear need **language acquisition of LESLLA learners** remained an "**obscure research topic**" (Deygers et al. 2021; also Tarone & Bigelow 2005, 2012; Young-Scholten 2013 u.a.)

LESLLA: Literacy Education and Second Language Learning for Adults, network https://www.leslla.org/

88% of studies on adult L2 acquisition investigate students in academic contexts

studies in pschology **WEIRD** = western, educated, industrialized, rich, demogratic societies

Andringa & Godfroid (2020)

Frith's Model of Literacy Acquisition

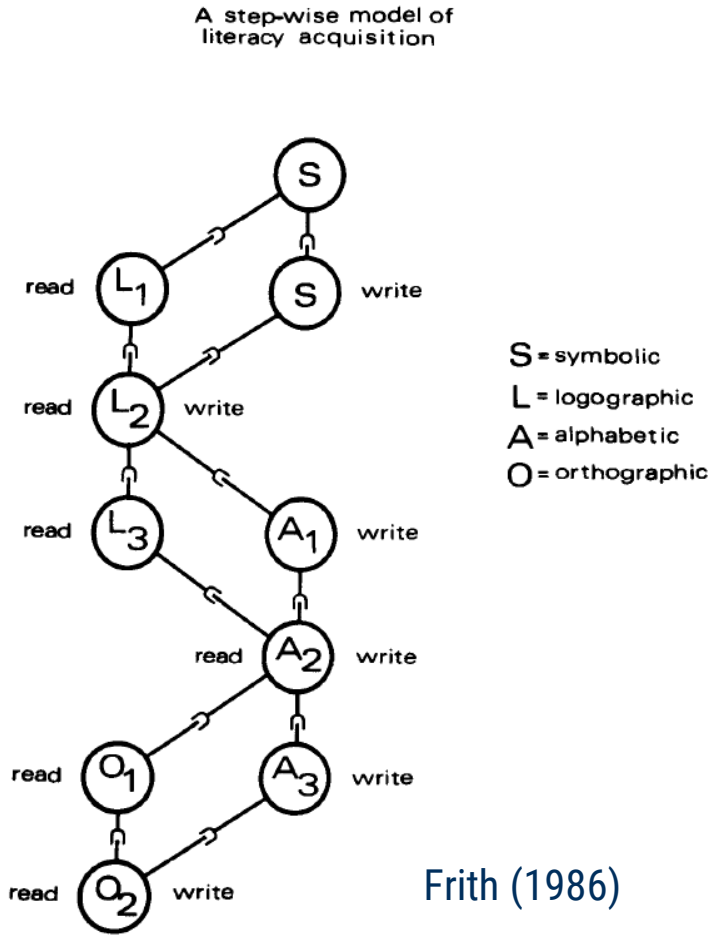
models for literacy acquisition in German children and adults are based on the model Frith (1986) has developed for children aquiring to read/write in English (e.g. Günther 1995, Brügelmann 2013; Scheerer-Neumann 2006 u.a)

strategies

- logographic
- alphabetic
- orthographic

	Strategien		
	LESEN		SCHREIBEN
Ia	logographisch 1		(symbolisch)
Ib	logographisch 2	▸	logographisch 2
IIa	logographisch 3		alphabetisch 1
IIb	alphabetisch 2	◂	alphabetisch 2
IIIa	orthographisch 1		alphabetisch 3
IIIb	orthographisch 2	▸	orthographisch 2

Feldmeiers (2010: 31) depiction of Frith's Model



Frith (1986)

Figure 1. A step-wise model of literacy acquisition

Native Speaker: BLC als Basis für HLC

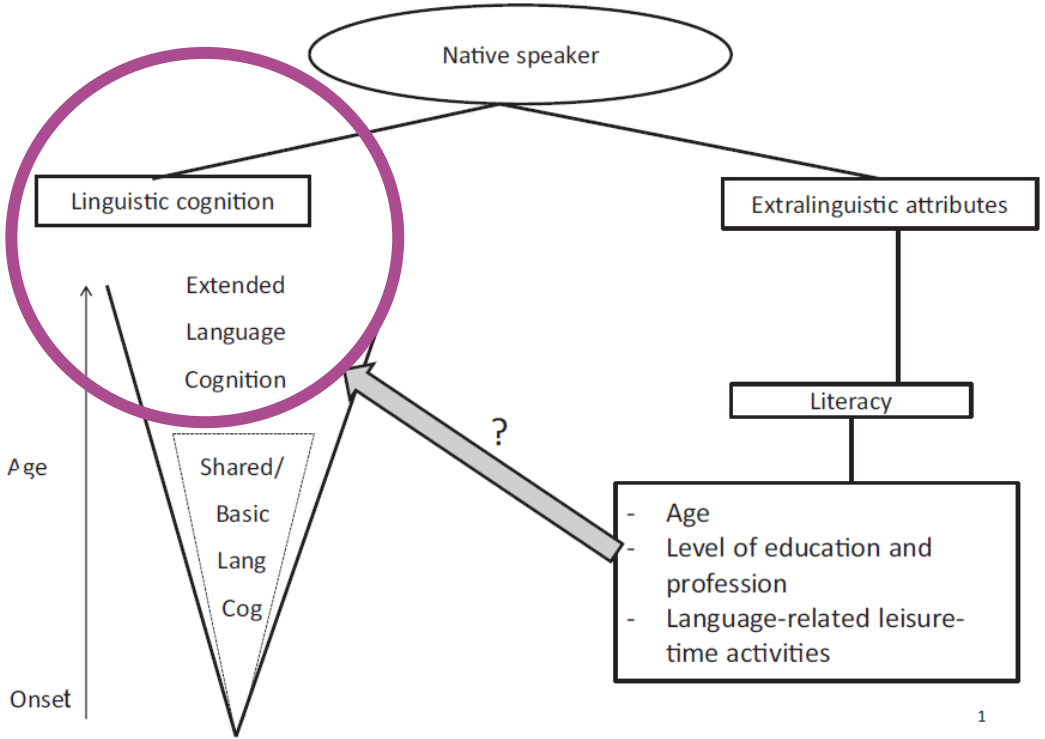


Figure 3 To what extent does extended language cognition vary as a function of literacy-related variables such as age, education, and leisure-time activities?

Hulstijn (2019)

BLC Basic Language Cognition vs.

HLC Higher/Extended Language Cognition

Model for individual differences in native speakers

- education
- language/literacy related experiences

Hornberger (2003) Model of Biliteracy

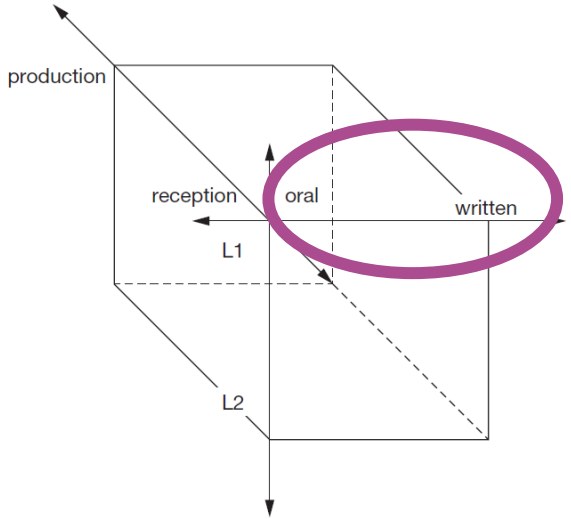


Figure 1.2 The continua of biliterate development in the individual

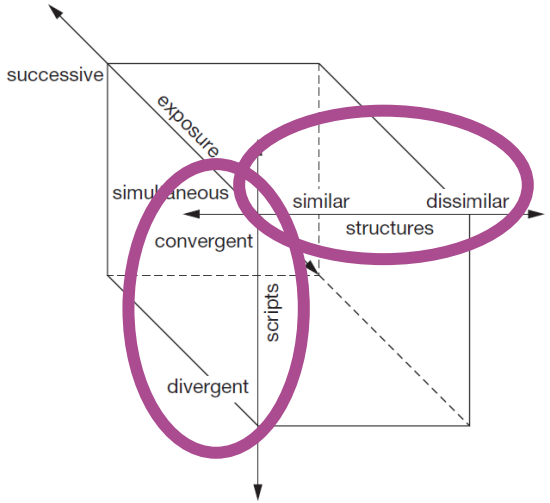


Figure 1.3 The continua of biliterate media

L1 Literacy: important factor for L2 accquisition

Hypothesis: L1 Experience in reading and writing has an impact on L2 acquistion in the written and in the oral mode.

Some possibilities for „Knowledge Transfer“ from L1:

- general **mapping principles** between written and spoken language (Koda 2008, Perfetti & Dunlap 2008)
- literacy based learning, reading and writing **strategies**
- knowledge about different **text genres** and registers
- language-specific knowledge about **phoneme-grapheme relations**
- **metalinguistic / phonological awareness**

KASA
Deutsch lesen.
Erfolg schreiben.

https://kasa.giz.berlin/

The ELIKASA Project

Entwicklung **li**teraler **K**ompetenzen
durch **k**ontrastive **A**lphabetisierung im **S**ituations**a**nsatz

The development of literacy skills
by contrastive literacy education in the situational approach

Bundesministerium
für Bildung
und Forschung

AlphaDekade
2016 – 2026

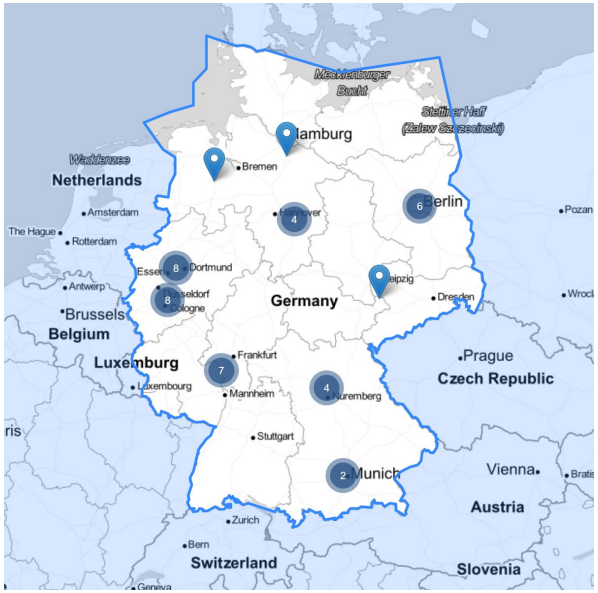
ELIKASA is an evaluation study of the KASA Project

KASA
Deutsch lesen.
Erfolg schreiben.

Kontrastive **A**lphabetisierung im **S**ituations**a**nsatz

- **Contrastive Literacy Courses**: learning to read and write in the L2 German with the help of the L1, homogeneous groups for three languages: Arabic, Farsi-Dari, Turkish, teachers L1 native speakers
- **Situation Approach**: (Literacy) education must be rooted in the concrete **situation of the learner**

  → courses in migrant organizations and mosques, real life vocabulary/tasks/situations ...



43 Contrastive Literacy Courses all over Germany in Migrant Organizations

AlphaDekade 2016–2026

Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung

The KASA Project

Abb. 2IA.15: *Grammatikvideo „haben“ mit Sprachvergleich*

Grammar videos, contrastive text books for Arabic, Farsi-Dari and Turkish, handbook of contrastive alphabetization etc.

Existing evaluation studies on KASA courses

Seyfried (2022): **Questionnaire-based interviews** with bilingual teachers (LoKos) and participants of KASA courses (TN) in their native language on their motivations, attitudes towards learning and **the contrastive approach**

Welche Bedeutung wird der Kontrastiven Methode von den Lernen*den und den Lehrkräften zugesprochen?

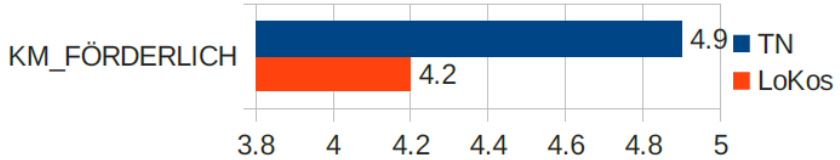


Abb. 1|B.8: *Kontrastive Methode (LoKos = Lehrkräfte, n = 31; TN = Kursteilnehmer*innen, n = 139; KM = Kontrastive Methode)*

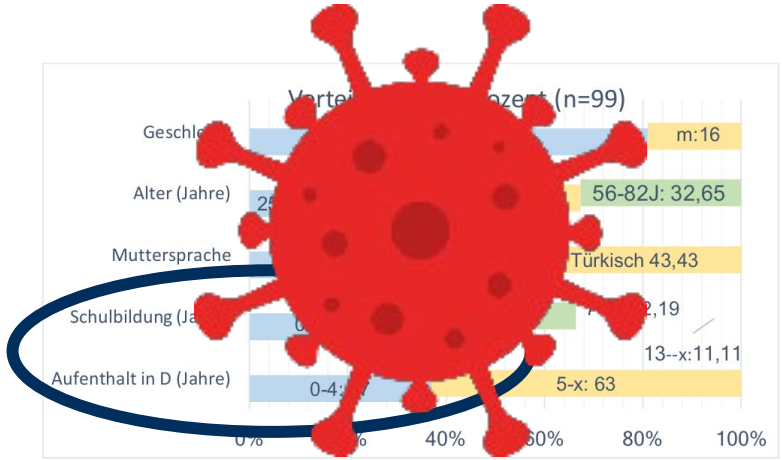
Seyfried (2022: 51)

Adult L2 Learners in KASA Literacy Courses

- **voluntary participation**, 2x3h/week, mostly elderly participants, 2/3 feminine
- **homogenous groups regarding L1**: Arabic, Farsi-Dari, Turkish, contrastive method
- **heterogenous groups**: refugees and work migrants, immigration recently and a long time ago, education, length of stay ...

ELIKASA target group

- **no school at all: 30%**
- 1-2 years of schooling: 6%
- 0-4 years of residency: 37%



Seyfried (2017): KASA learner groups

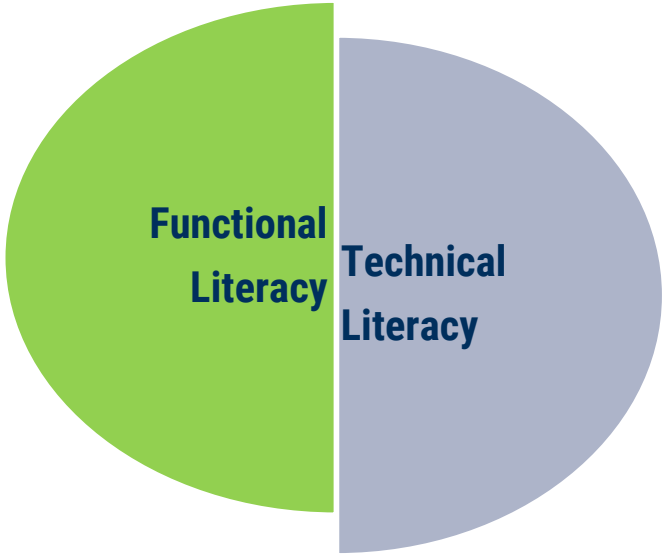
ELIKASA: Investigating the learners

Quantitative Study: Technical Skills

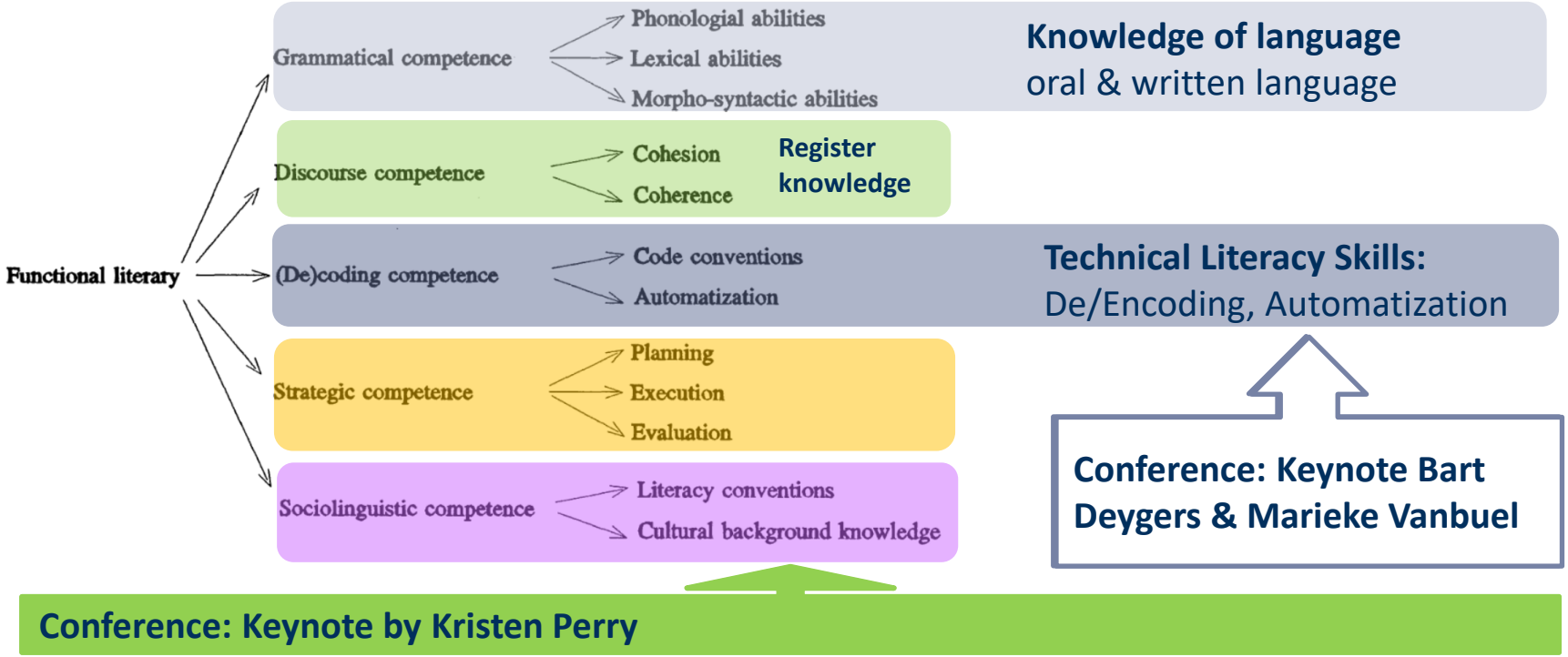
- **Instruments** to assess literacy skill development of adults in German as a Second Language (L2)
- **Multilingual** investigation of literacy skills in L1 and other factors influencing L2 acquisition

Qualitative Study: Functional Literacy

- Interview Study on **everyday literacy practices**



The Construct Functional Literacy (Verhoeven 1994)



Qualitative Study on everyday Literacy Practices

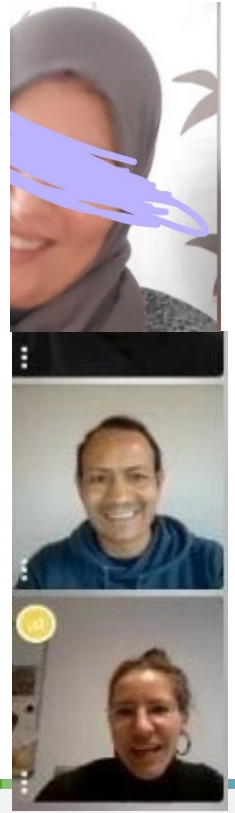
Documentation of literacy events and collection of **artefacts** by participants

Before, during or after the interview:
The participants share documentation of literacy events with the interview team **via Chat**

Reports of a literacy event in a pharmacy

Interview with 12 Arabic speaking participants to reconstruct the documented and/or reported **literacy events** (semi-structured, recurring, online/in presence; Waggershauser 2015, Perry 2009)

Interviews and Chats in Arabic



ELIKASA Assessment Instruments

... are designed to capture learning progress of a heterogeneous group of learners:

L2 beginners of German: oral skills in L2 German (vocabulary, grammar) at the lower end of the spectrum

vs. more advanced L2 learners

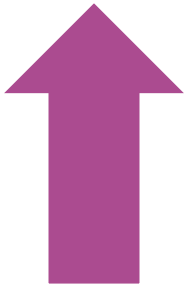
vulnerable learners with no/low L1 literacy: slower learning progress; shorter attention span; less test experience (Carlsen 2018)

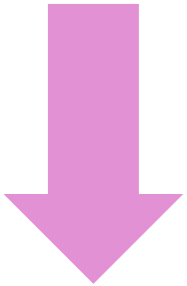
vs. learners with mid-to-high L1 literacy

ELIKASA Assessment Instruments

Oral Skills in L2 German

more advanced learners



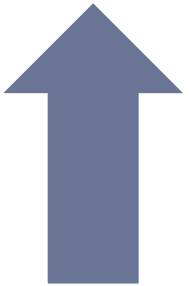


beginning learners

If we want to measure learning progress, we have to take these complex interactions into account

L1 Literacy

mid-to-high L1 literacy



no / low L1 literacy

Methods: Assessment of Technical Literacy Skills

more challenging tasks

more basic tasks

Technical Literacy Skills L2
German as a Second Language

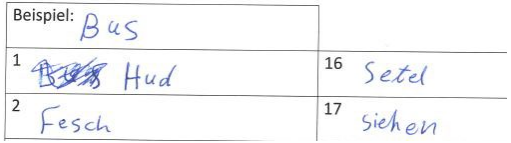
Reading Fluency
Reading Aloud Task

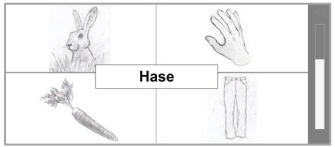
Transcription: Orthography
Spelling Inventory

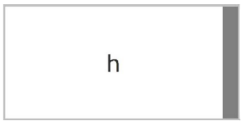
Visual Word Recognition
Picture Selection Task

Grapheme Recognition
Visual Scan Task

Hallo! Mein Name ist Ralf. Ich bin Deutscher. Ich wohne in Frankfurt. Ich spiele gern Fußball. Ich lese gern. Ich arbeite bei der Post. Die Arbeit macht mir Spaß. Mein Leben macht mir heute viel Spaß. Ich bin glücklich. Früher war ich nicht glücklich. Warum? Hier ist meine Geschichte. Ich bin sechs



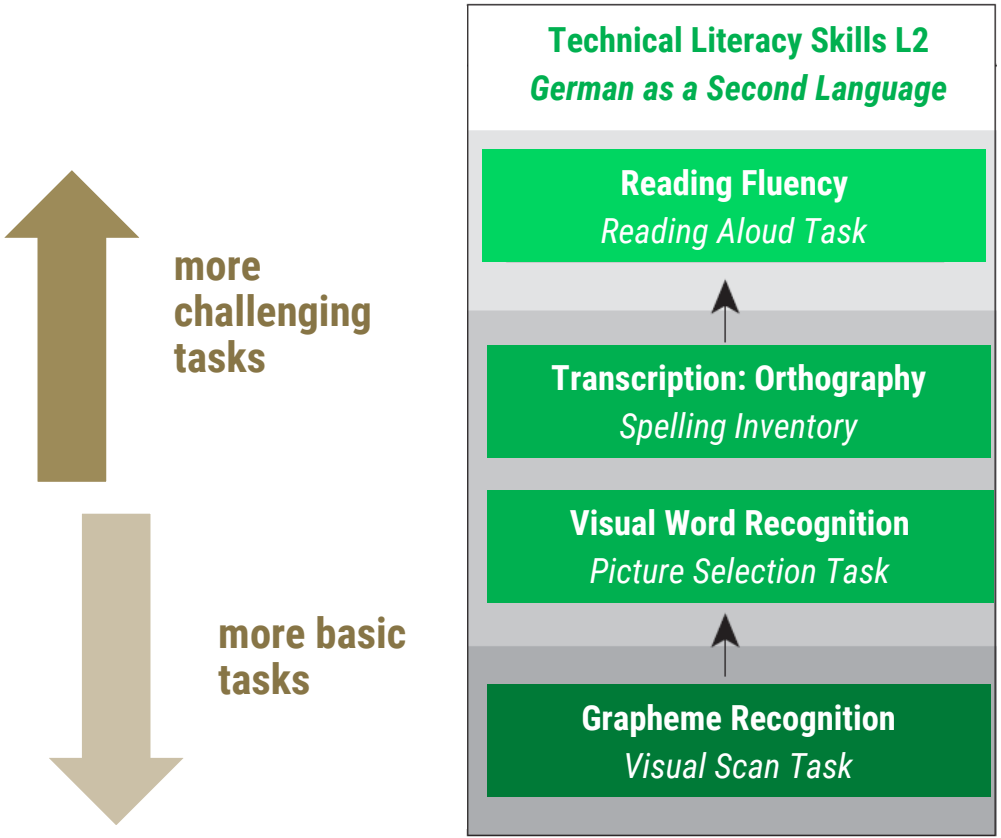




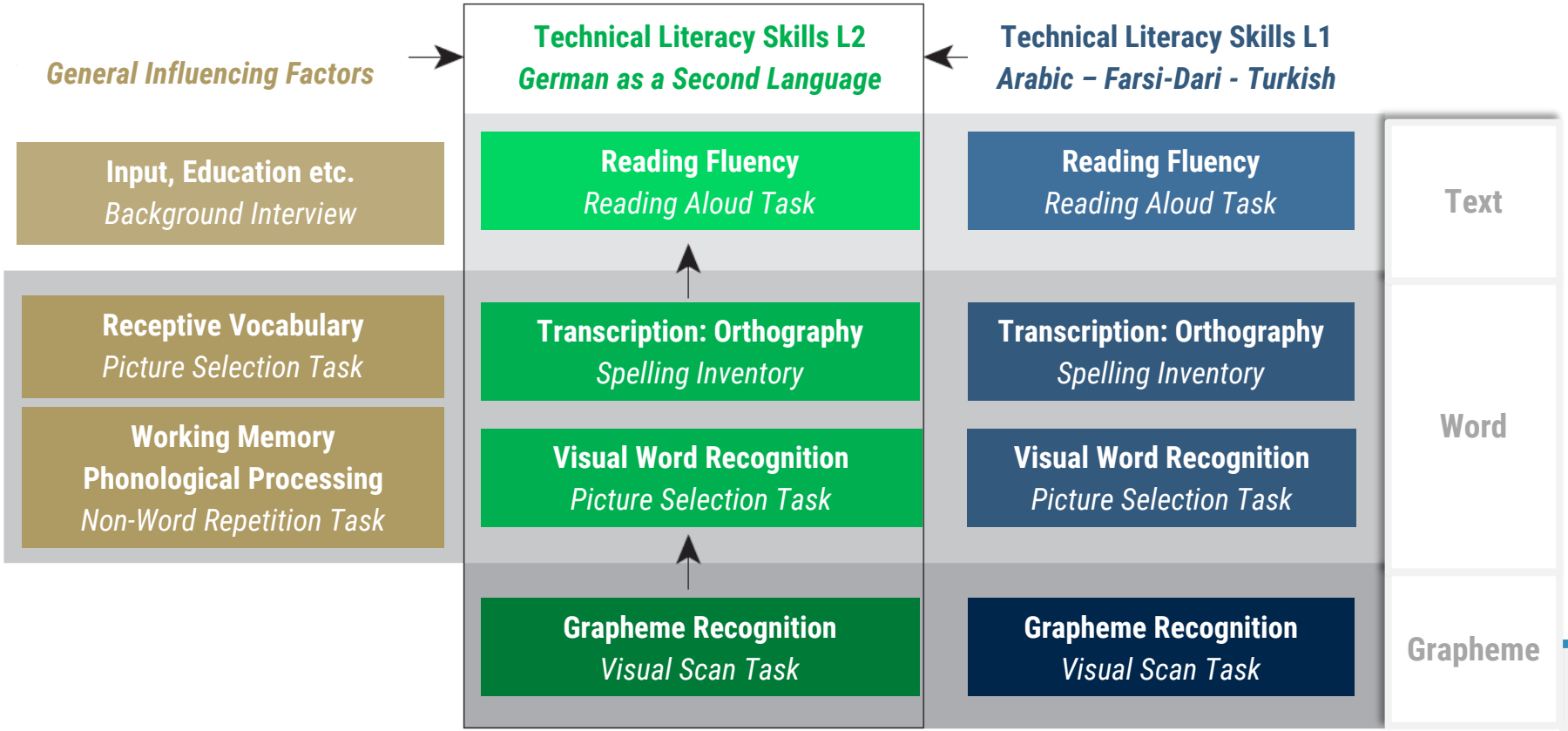
(a) Zielgraphem

(b) String/Wort/Match

Methods: Assessment of Technical Literacy Skills



Methods: Assessment of Technical Literacy Skills



The Quantitative Study ELIKASA Participants

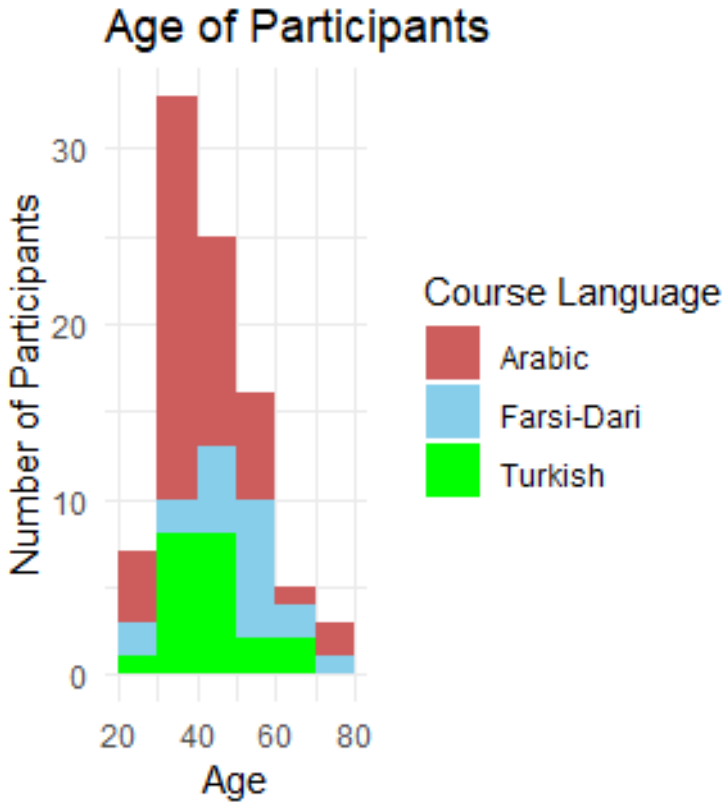
The quantitative Data for this talk were analyzed by
Katharina Karges (University of Bamberg) &
Yousuf Aboamer (FSU Jena)

ELIKASA Participants

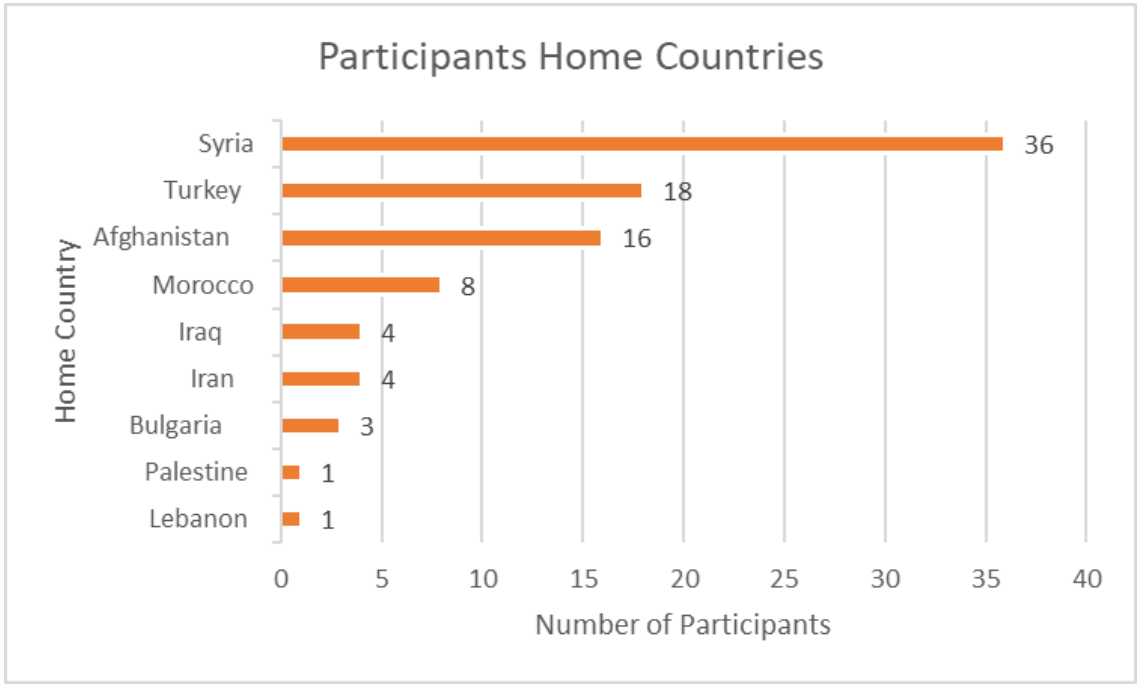
- Interviews from 91 participants (in the native/course language)
- 81 female, 10 male

Course Languages (mostly also L1)

- 50 Arabic
- 20 Farsi-Dari
- 21 Turkish



ELIKASA Countries of Origin

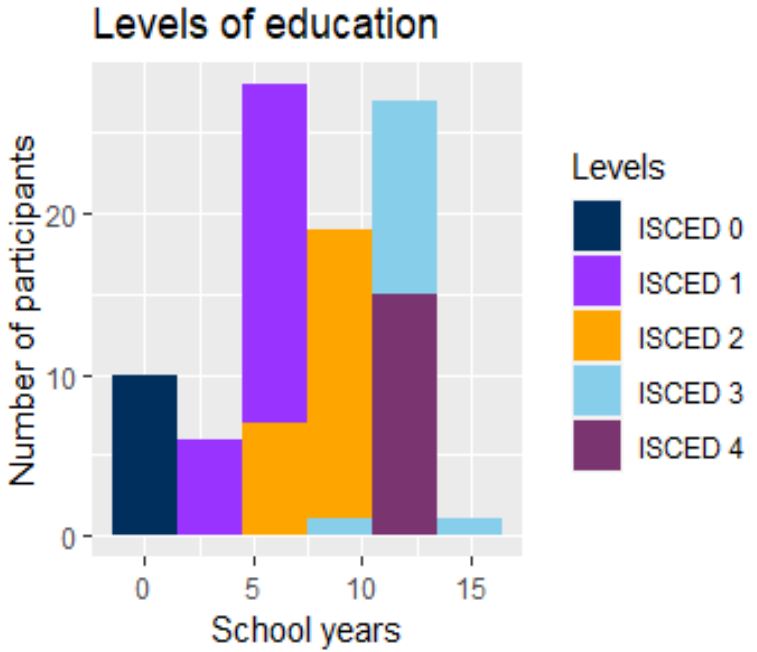


- mostly from Middle East countries
- political unrest and violent conflicts, e.g. Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq
- Europe: Bulgaria, Türkiye

ELIKASA Education (ISCED Standard)

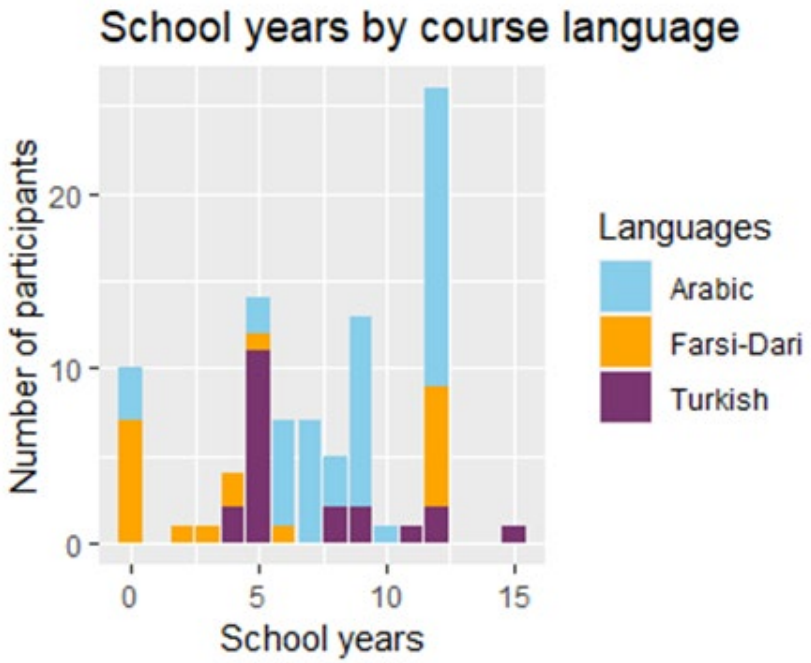
Educational level according to ISCED:

- ISCED 0 – pre-primary education: participant did not go to school
- ISCED 1 – primary education: up to 6 years of schooling
- **ISCED 2 – lower secondary education**: up to 9 years
- **ISCED 3 – upper secondary education**: up to 12 years, but no post-secondary certification
- **ISCED 4 and higher – post-secondary education**, incl. vocational training



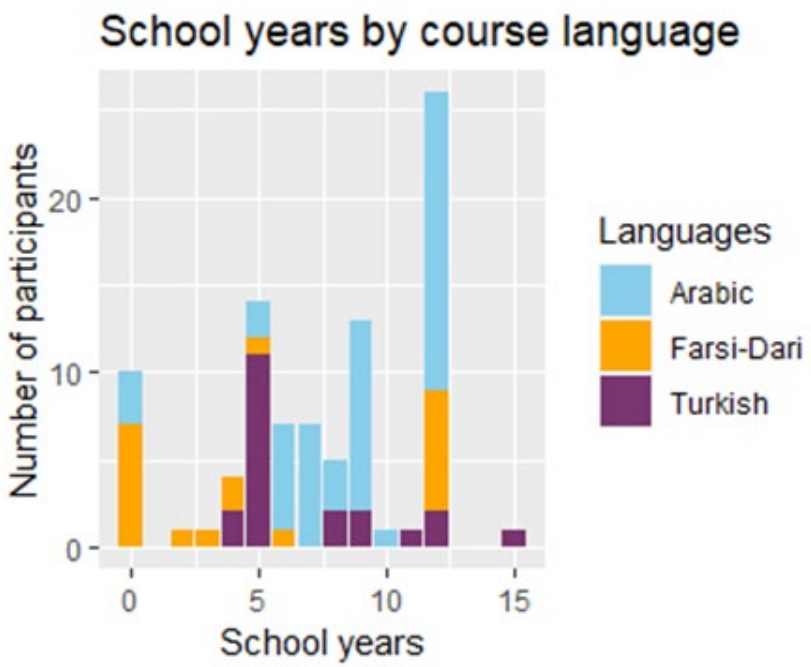
ELIKASA School Years

- **11% (10/91) have no schooling**, mostly in Farsi-Dari group
- **30% (27/91) have 1-6 years** of schooling, mostly Turkish and Arabic
- **53% (48/91) have 7-12 years** of schooling, mostly Arabic, some Farsi-Dari



ELIKASA School Years

- **11% (10/91) have no schooling**, mostly in Farsi-Dari group
  ≠ earlier KASA groups: 30 %
- **30% (27/91) have 1-6 years** of schooling, mostly Turkish and Arabic
  = earlier KASA groups: 35 %
- **53% (48/91) have 7-12 years** of schooling, mostly Arabic, some Dari-Farsi
  ≠ earlier KASA groups: 11%



data on earlier KASA groups: Seyfried (2017)

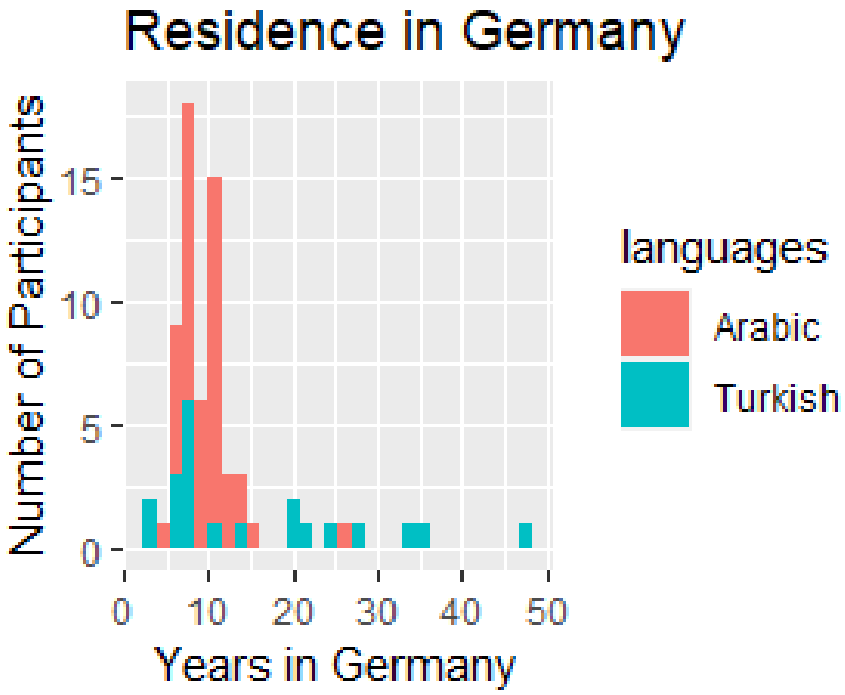
ELIKASA Length of Residence

for all 91 participants

- **2% have 0-4 years of residence**
  ≠ earlier KASA groups: 37%

- **72% have more than 5 years of residence**
  ≠ earlier KASA groups: 63%

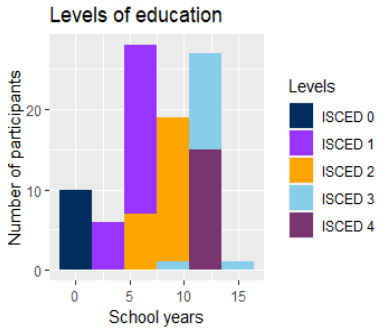
- length or residence of 26% mostly Farsi-Dari learners unclear as of now

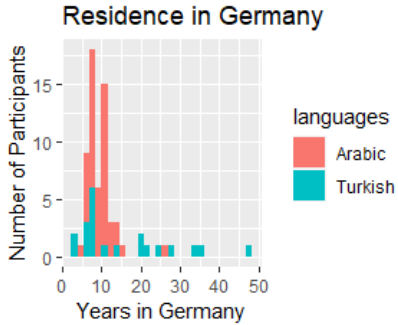


data on earlier KASA groups: Seyfried (2017)

ELIKASA Participants

Our sample differs strongly in **Education** and in **Length of Residence** from earlier groups of KASA learners for which our instruments were calibrated.





Possible Reasons

Education
KASA courses switched to digital online mode during the pandemic

Length of Residence
less new migrants during the pandemic
first data collection one year later than planned (after 1 year of KASA)

Influence of L1 Literacy

Word Recognition in L2 German and L1 Arabic

Visual Word Recognition & L1 Literacy

Visual word decoding is a **lower-level cognitive process** that is essential for higher-level **text comprehension** (Simple View of Reading, Gough & Tunmer 1986).

Efficient word recognition **saves cognitive resources** (e.g. working memory), needed for higher-level reading comprehension (e.g. Verbal Efficiency Hypothesis, Perfetti 1985, 2017).

Lower-level cognitive processes can be **automatized** by training to work **without conscious effort** (e.g. Richter & Müller 2017).

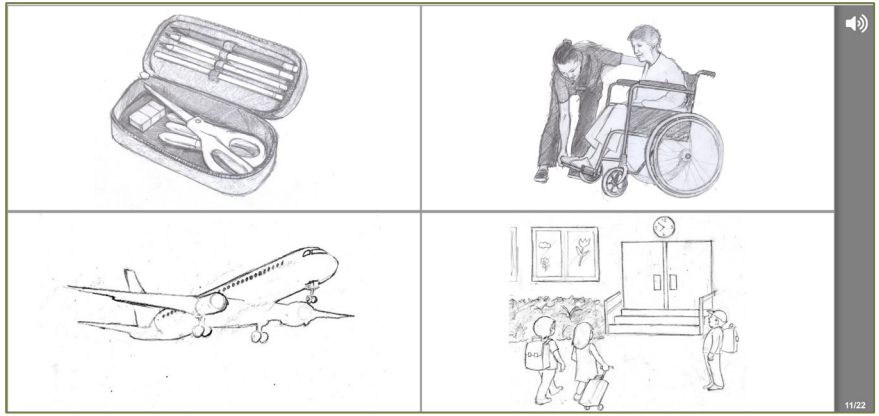
Language Threshold Hypothesis

Learners need to have acquired enough knowledge about the L2 (e.g. vocabulary, grammar), bevor they can transfer skills and strategies from their L1 (Clarke 1980; Grabe & Stoller 2011, 2019)

Two Picture Selection Tasks (cf. Haman et al. 2015)

Audio Input: Receptive Vocabulary

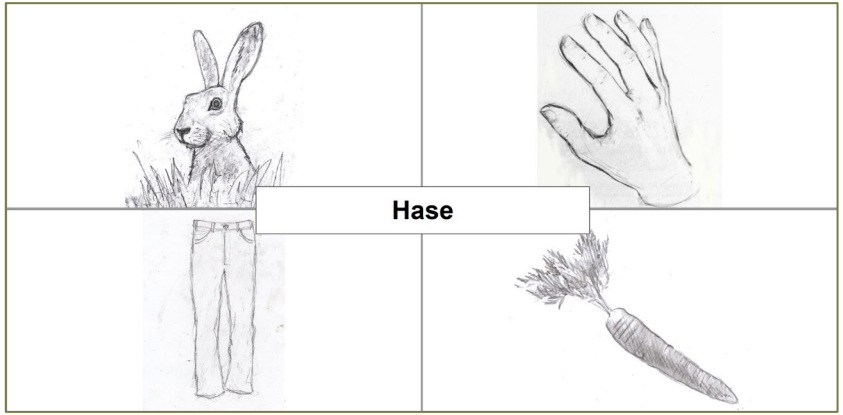
L2 German, A1 vocabulary



Schule ‚school'

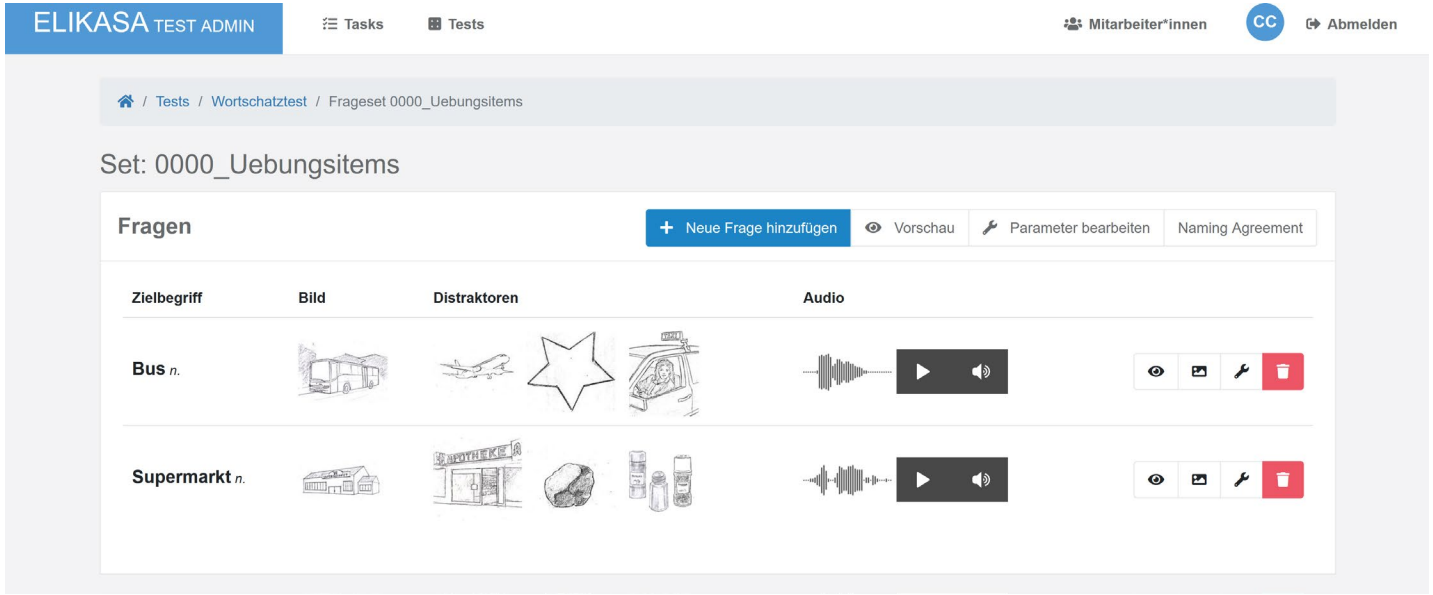
Visual Input: Word Recognition

L2 German and L1 Arabic (Farsi-Dari, Turkish)



Hase ‚rabbit'

ELIKASA Digital Testing Platform



practice items for vocabulary

digital testing platform: cooperation with Bitstem GmbH

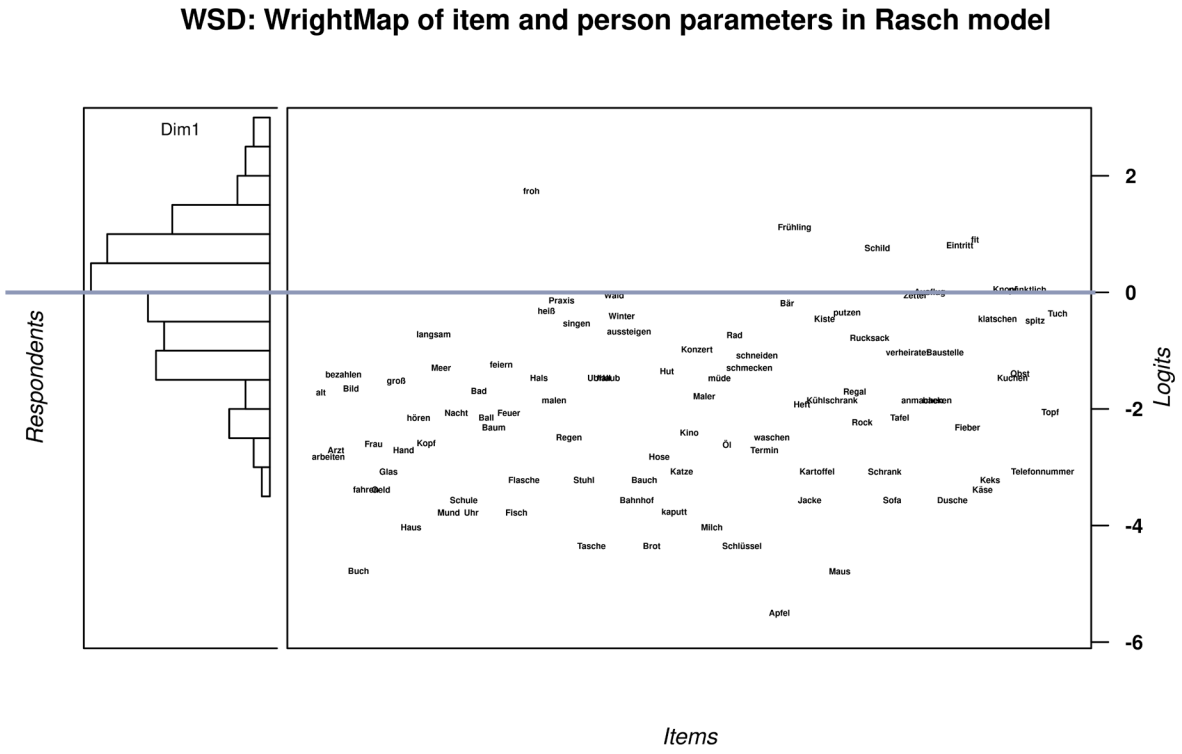
allows group testing using iPads in class, can be

Receptive Vocabulary in L2 German

Rasch modelling confirmed that the test results conformed to psychometric criteria of test quality.

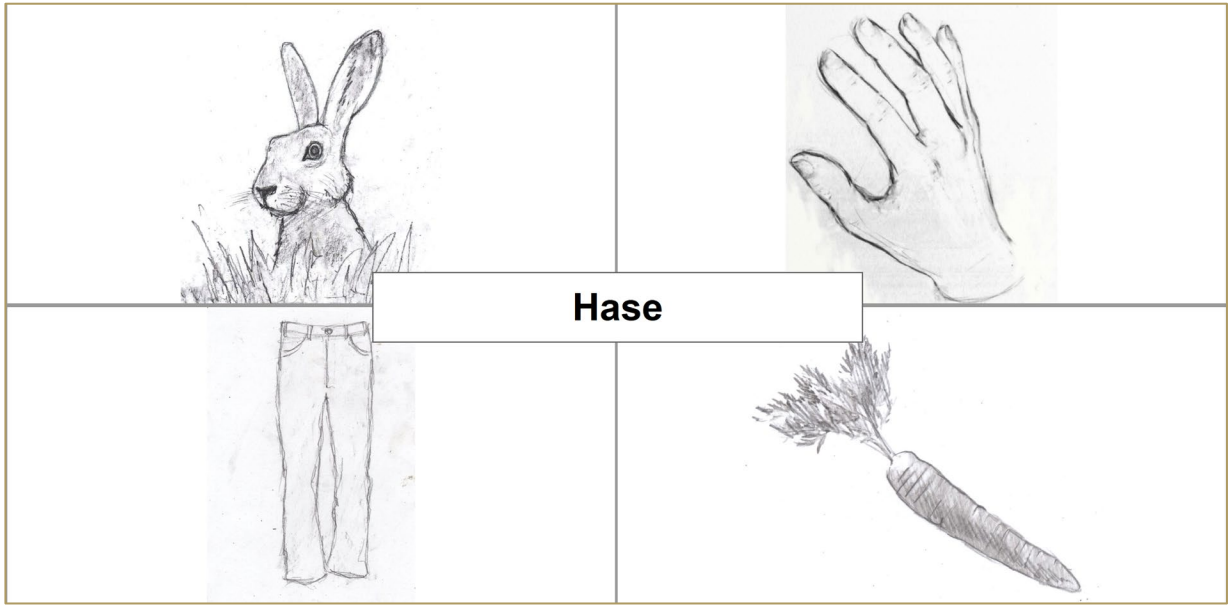
After one year of attending KASA courses most of the 99 items (A1) are mastered by most of the participants.

BUT: Many items are too easy for our KASA participants.



Word Recognition in L2 German

Zielitem: Hase



Distraktor 2: Hand

Distraktor 2: Hose

Distraktor 3: Karotte

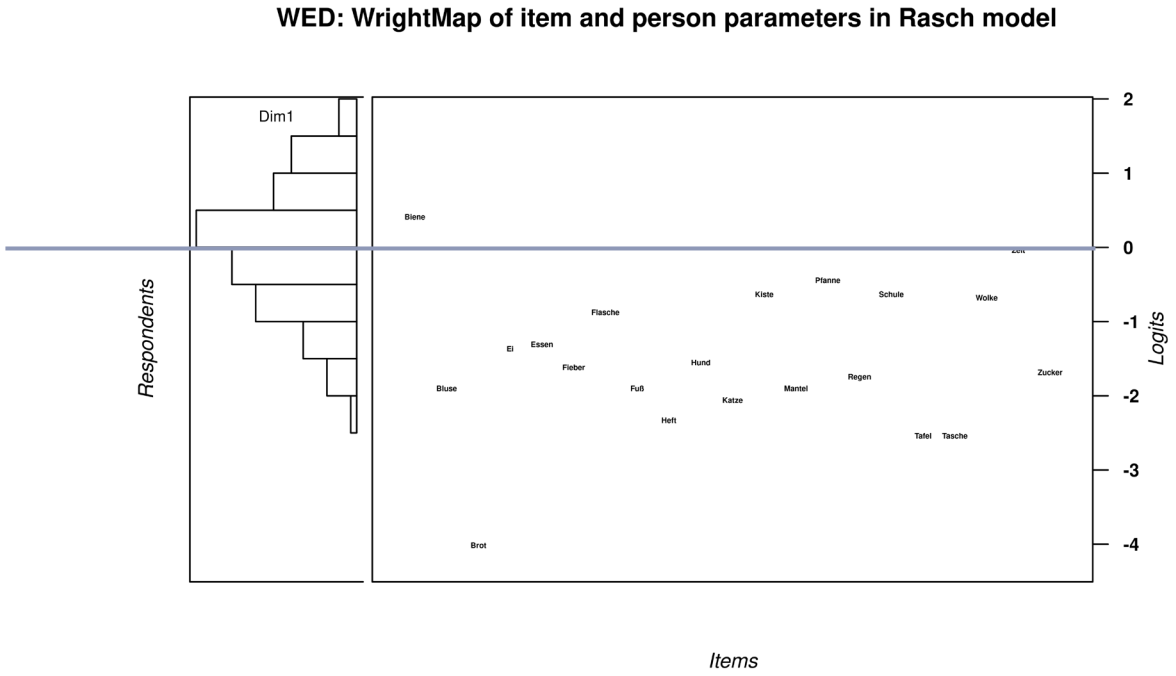
ähnlich **Würzburger Leise Lese Probe** (WLLP, Schneider et al. 2011)

Word Recognition in L2 German

Rasch modelling confirmed that the test results conformed to psychometric criteria of test quality.

After one year of attending KASA courses most of the 21 target items (A1) are mastered by most of the participants.

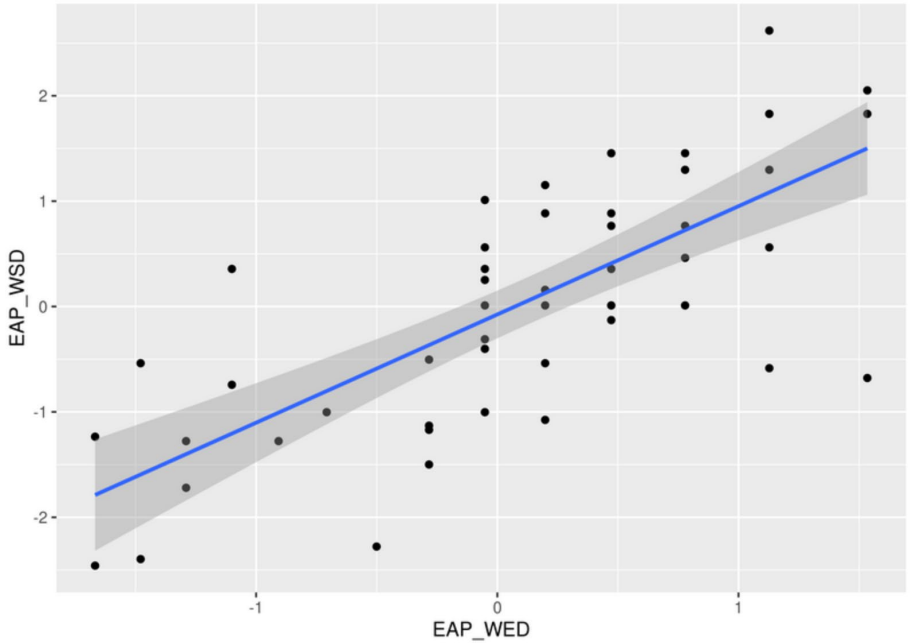
BUT: Most items are too easy for our KASA participants.



L2 word recognition depends on L2 vocabulary

Hypothesis:
Higher test results in the vocabulary test are positively correlated with the results in the word recognition test.

Confirmed:
r(51)=.73, 95% CI [.61,1.0], p<.001

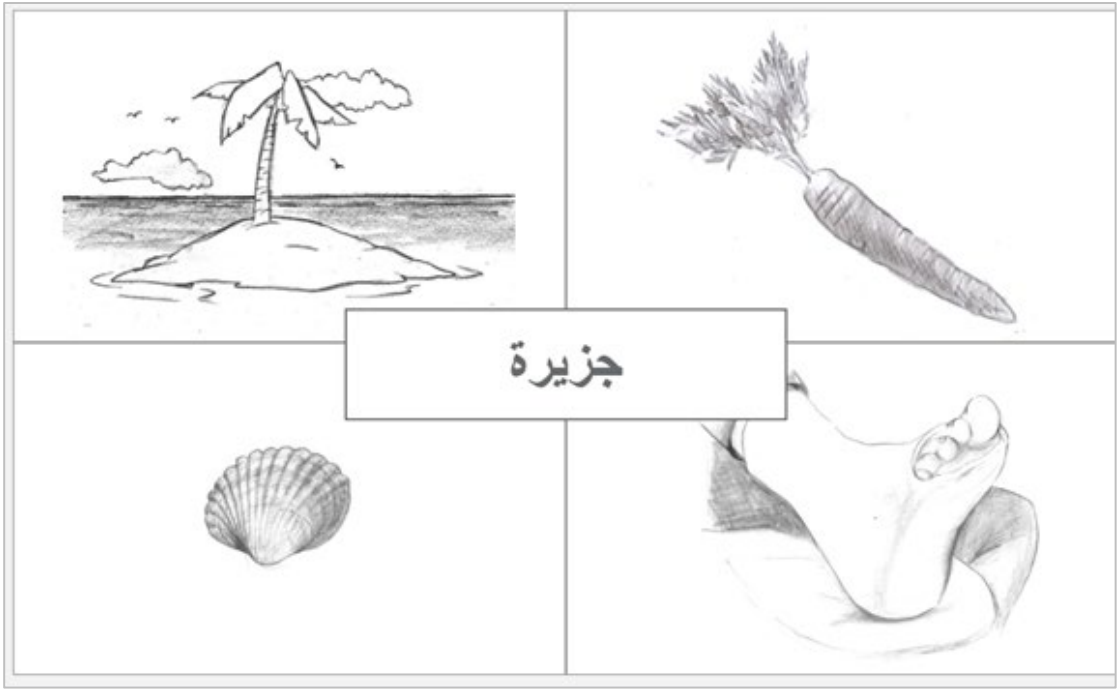


Word Recognition in L1 Arabic

see our Poster in the poster session

Rasch Modeling

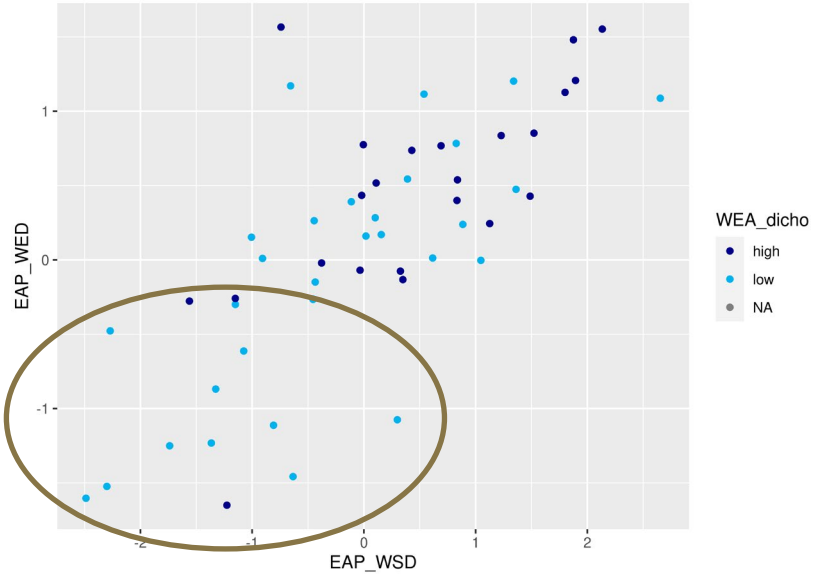
Little variance, as most items are too easy for our group of participants.



L2 word recognition and L2 vocabulary depend on L1 word recognition

Hypothesis: Higher test results in the L1 word recognition test are positively correlated with the results in the L2 word recognition and L2 vocabulary test.

Maybe?
Other factors are probably at play.



L2 word recognition and vocabulary depend on individual characteristics of participants

Two stepwise linear regression models

- **Dependent variable: L2 word recognition**
  - **Independent variables:** L2 vocabulary, L1 word recognition, Length of stay in Germany + various interactions
  - Adj. R^2 = .63 (i.e. 37% of the variance remains unexplained)
  - $p < 0.001$ ($F = 9.66$ on 7 and 28 degrees of freedom)
- **Dependent variable: L2 receptive vocabulary**
  - **Independent variables:** L2 word recognition, L1 word recognition, Length of stay in Germany, **ISCED + various interactions**
  - Adj. R^2 = .64 (i.e. 36% of the variance remains unexplained)
  - $p < 0.001$ ($F = 8.82$ on 8 and 27 degrees of freedom)

Conclusion: Word Recognition in L1 and L2

High correctness rates in L2 Deutsch: after one year of attending KASA courses and after a longer period of residence in Germany the learner acquired most of the vocubulary and are able to decode correctly on word-level

High correctness rates in L1 Arabisch: most learners went to school for more than 6 years, they already have higher-level skills in reading in their L1, hence the word recognition task in Arabic poses no challenge

As learners have the **necessary oral skills in the L2 German** (receptive vocabulary), the can apply their L1 literacy skills and we see this effect in the statistical model, alongside other influencing factors like length of residence.

The ELIKASA instruments presented above work well, but are calibrated for beginning L2 learners with low literacy in Arabic.

Methods: Assessment of Technical Literacy Skills

more challenging tasks

more basic tasks

Technical Literacy Skills L2
German as a Second Language

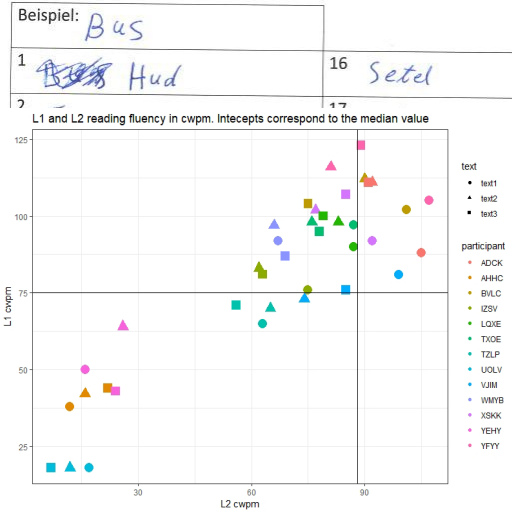
Reading Fluency
Reading Aloud Task

Transcription: Orthography
Spelling Inventory

Visual Word Recognition
Picture Selection Task

Grapheme Recognition
Visual Scan Task

Hallo! Mein Name ist Ralf. Ich bin Deutscher. Ich wohne in Frankfurt. Ich spiele gern Fußball. Ich lese gern. Ich arbeite bei der Post. Die Arbeit macht mir Spaß. Mein Leben macht mir heute viel Spaß. Ich bin glücklich. Früher war ich nicht glücklich. Warum? Hier ist meine Geschichte. Ich bin sechs



Next steps in ELIKASA and beyond

- finalize the analysis of spelling inventories and reading fluency in L2 and all three L1
- analyse the second data point (less learners unfortunately) to see developmental patterns
- statistical correlation of instruments and influencing factors
- in-depth analysis of spelling, reading fluency and literacy practices in three dissertations

Beyond ELIKASA

- use instruments with other learners, especially beginners and low-literacy learners, e.g. in BAMF literacy courses
- use L1 instruments in heritage language courses for adolescents
- digital test platform can easily be modified and expanded (new items, new pictures etc.)

Scientific Board	Institution	Expertise
Dr. Alexis Feldmeier	WWU Münster	DaZ-Alphabetisierung von Erwachsenen
Prof. Dr. Natalja Gagarina	Leibniz-Zentrum Allg. Sprachwissenschaft ZAS	Psycholinguistik, mehrsprachige Diagnostik und Instrumentenentwicklung
Prof. Dr. Ulrich Mehlem	Goethe Universität Frankfurt	Schriftspracherwerb, Mehrschriftigkeit, Arabisch
Prof. Dr. Martin Neef	TU Braunschweig	Schriftlinguistik, Phonologie, Morphologie
Prof. Dr. Karen Schramm	Universität Wien	DaZ-Alphabetisierung von Erwachsenen
Prof. Dr. Christoph Schröder	Universität Potsdam	Schriftspracherwerb, Mehrsprachigkeit, Türkisch
Prof. Dr. Clemens Seyfried	PHD Linz	Leistungsfeststellung, Lehrerausbildung
Prof. Dr. Katrin Wisniewski	Universität Leipzig	Testentwicklung, Lernerkorpora, Lernersprache

Field of Expertise	ELIKASA Team	Scientific Board / Support
Arabic	Dr. Yousuf Aboamer, Franziska Förster	Prof. Dr. Ulrich Mehlem
Farsi-Dari	Feroz Nuranfar, Dr. Parivash Mashadi, Gina Do Manh	Dr. Lutz Rzehak
Turkish	Zeynep Arslan, Franziska Förster, Prof. Dr. Christine Czinglar	Prof. Dr. Christoph Schroeder
German **German as a Second Language**	Yulia Edeleva, Gina Do Manh, Franziska Förster, Zeynep Arslan, Prof. Dr. Christine Czinglar	u.a. Prof. Dr. Martin Neef, Prof. Dr. Karen Schramm, Dr. Alexis Feldmeier
Psycholinguistik, quantitative Methoden	Yulia Edeleva, Gina Do Manh, Dr. Yousuf Aboamer, Prof. Dr. Christine Czinglar	Prof. Dr. Natalja Gagarina, Prof. Dr. Katrin Wisniewski, Dr. Felix Golcher, Katharina Karges
Interviews, qualitative Methoden	Franziska Förster, Dr. Yousuf Aboamer, Prof. Dr. Christine Czinglar	Prof. Dr. Karen Schramm, Prof. Dr. Clemens Seyfried

Vielen Dank! Teşekkürler!
خیلی ممنون! شکراً جزیلاً !

Thank you!

Entwicklung **li**teraler **K**ompetenzen durch **k**ontrastive **A**lphabetisierung im **S**ituations**a**nsatz
The development of basic literacy skills by contrastive literacy education

Bundesministerium
für Bildung
und Forschung

E-Mail: christine.czinglar@uni-jena.de

AlphaDekade
2016 – 2026

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Some additional slides

ELIKASA Assessment Instruments

… were designed to meet the following criteria

ecological validity: assessment instruments mirror the behavior of learners in their (learning) habitat; tasks should be familiar, success and resource oriented
→ complexity of real-life tasks (Carlsen 2018)

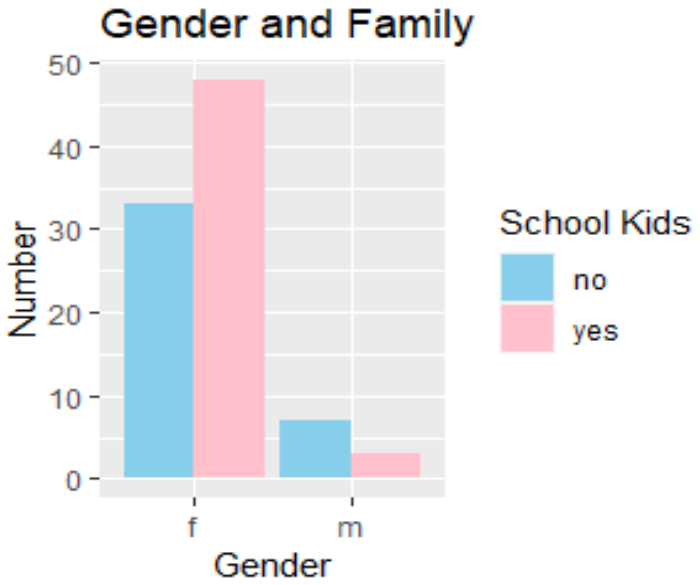
multilingual approach: administration of tasks in L1, assessment of literacy skills also in L1

limited time for testing: testing in KASA literacy courses, attention span, digital group testing when possible

Heterogeneity of Learners

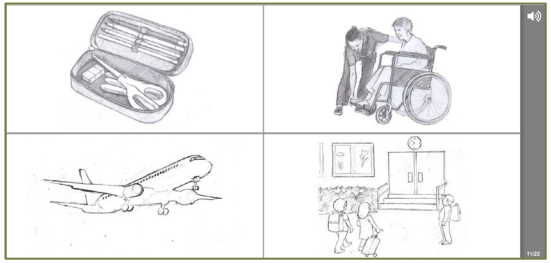
ELIKASA Gender & Family Care

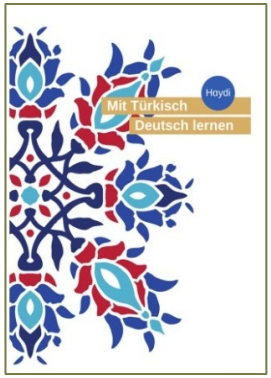
- 81 female, 10 male
- 82 have children, number of children: median 4, range 0-7
- 51 participants, mostly women, have to take care of school children at home
  - time on task
  - brokering
  - Caring of school kids can lead to more contact with German?

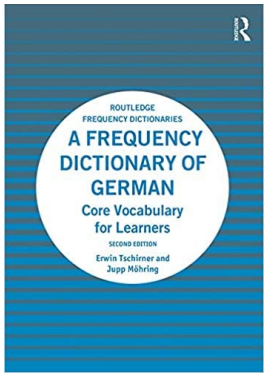


L2 German Receptive Vocabulary

- **Receptive vocabulary**: measure for L2 language competence (e.g. Miralpeix & Muñoz 2018), e.g. Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (Dunn & Dunn 2007, Lenhard et al. 2015)
- **Item selection**: everyday vocabulary up to A1 level of CEFR, KASA text books for contrastive literacy courses
- **Item presentation**: 60 items in 5 progressive sets, ordered according to frequency (cf. Tschirner & Möhring 2020, Nation 2016), random order inside sets
- **Item administration**: replay audio 1x (success-orientation), random placement of 4 pictures







Word Recognition in L1 Arabic

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Many items are too easy for this group of participants.