



Small languages in the digital age – a example of Low German

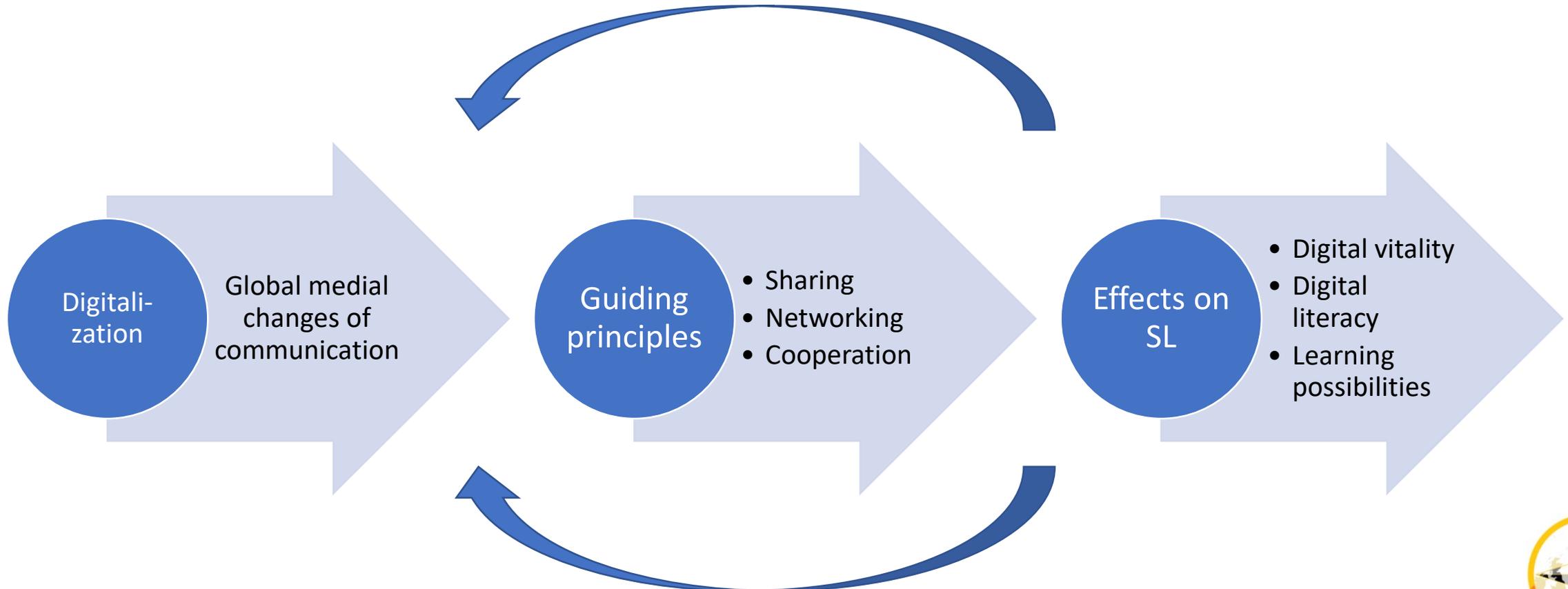
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University of Greifswald/Germany

0. Digitalization



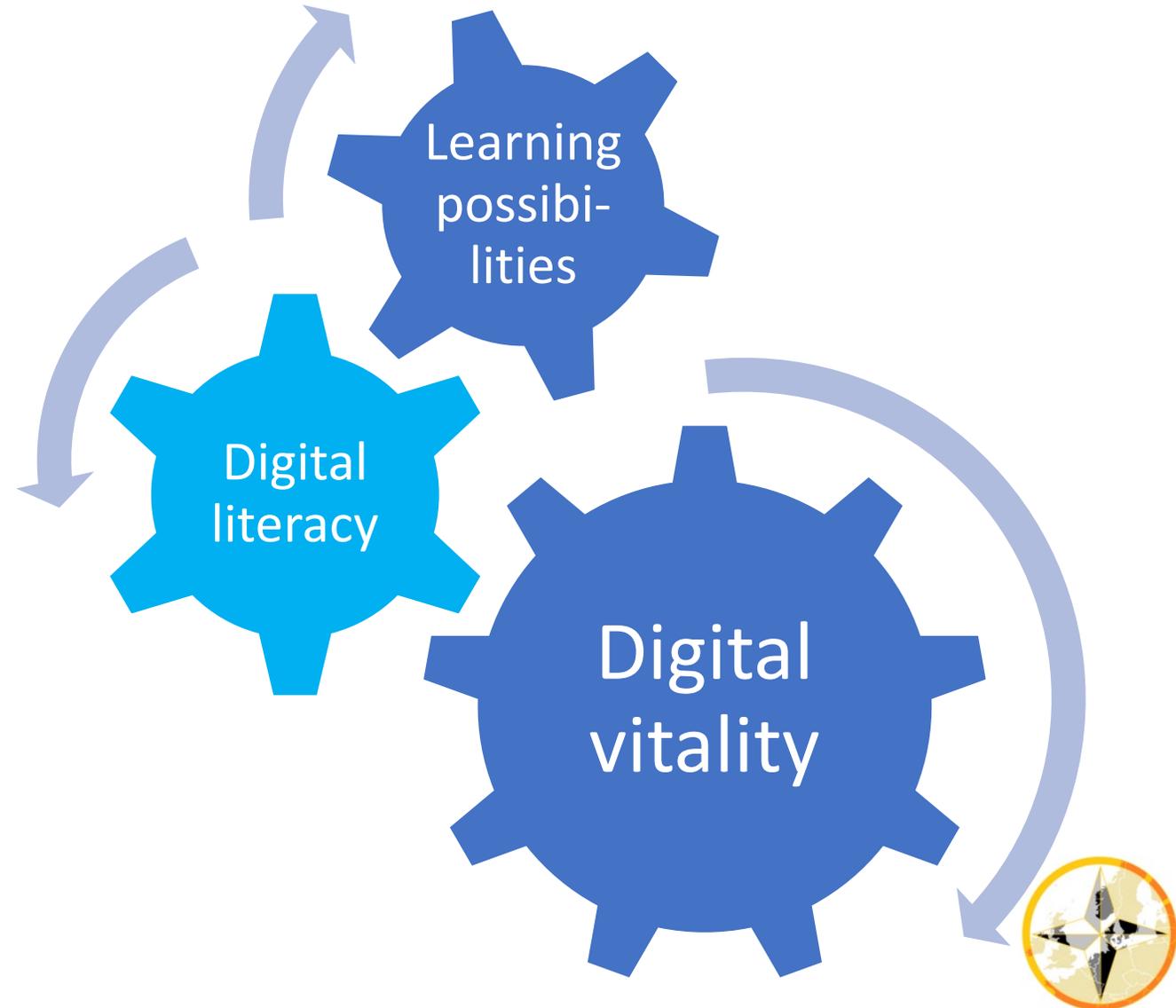
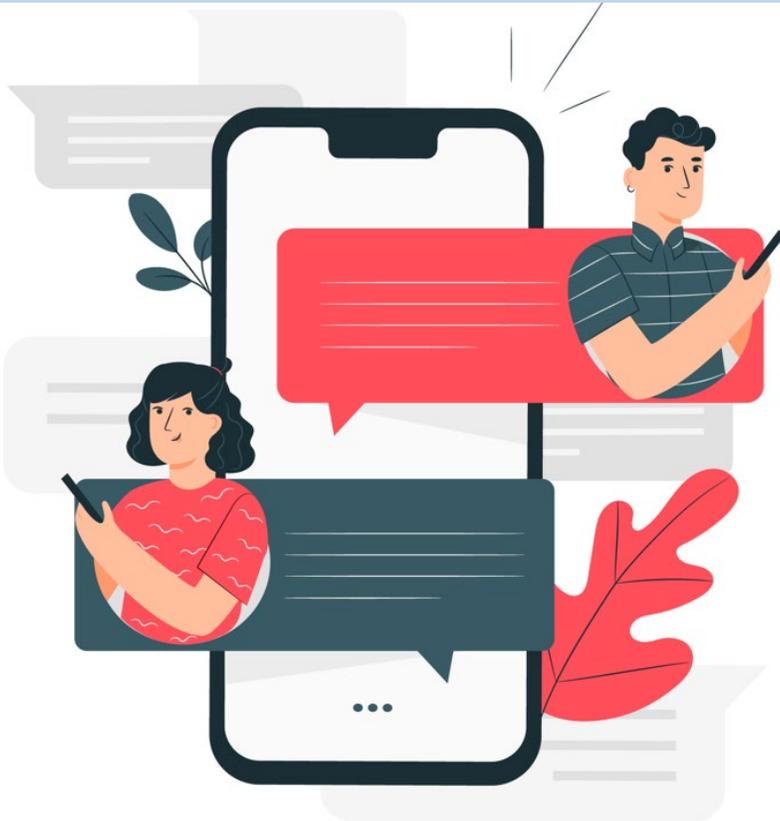
“technologies *for* communication” (Thurlow et al. 2012)



0. Digitalization



Performance era (Kelly-Holmes 2014)





Theses guiding the talk

1. For SL teaching and learning, the integration of digital literacy is essential to create **digital vitality** as a key factor of language maintenance.
2. Digitalization is changing communication practices, which poses specific competence requirements in terms of **digital literacy**.
3. Digitalization can open up specific **learning possibilities** for SL, the use of which depends on the learners or new speakers.



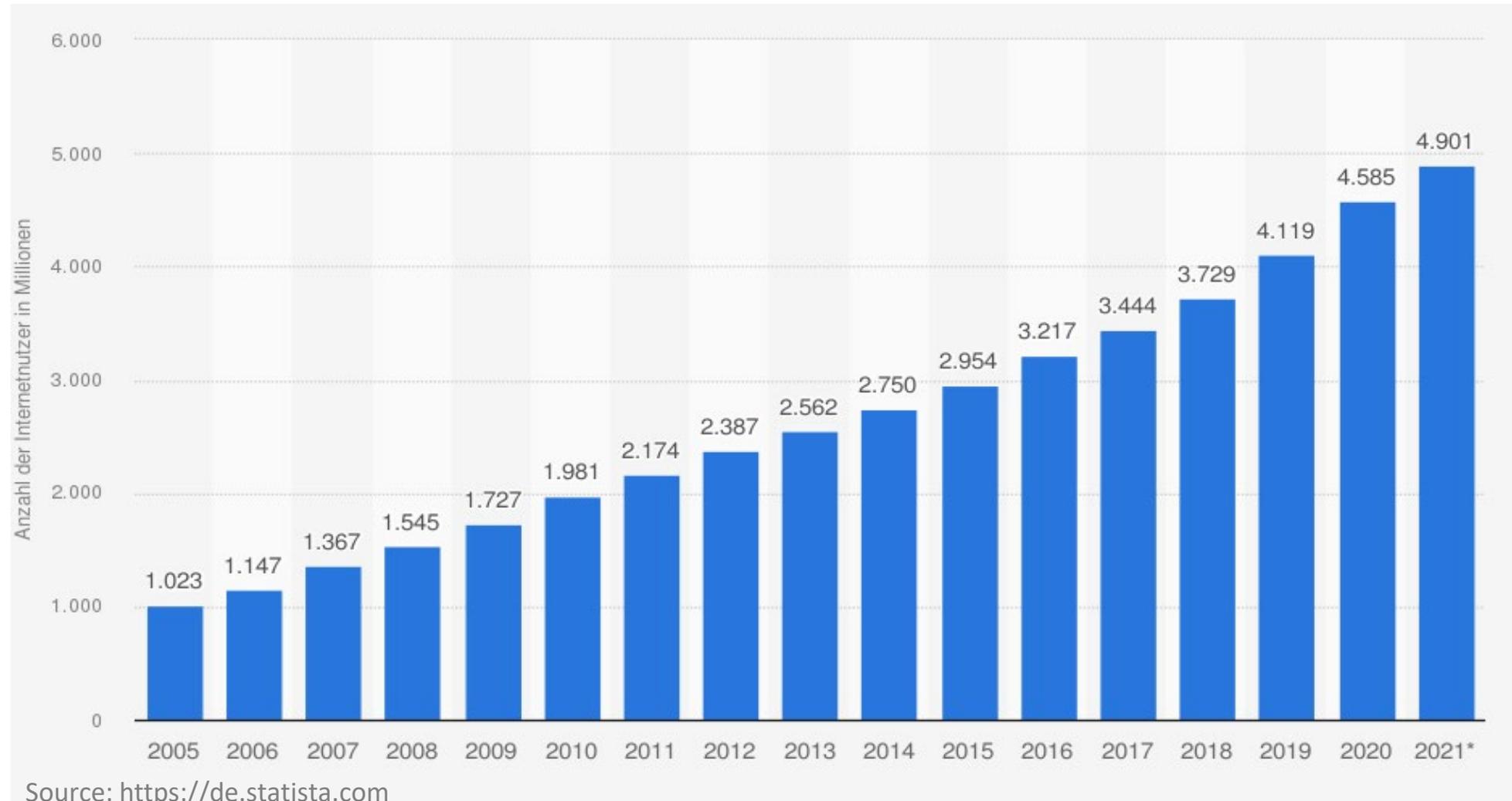


1. For SL teaching and learning, the integration of digital literacy is essential to create *digital vitality* as a key factor of language maintenance.





1. Digital vitality of SL



1. Digital vitality of SL

- Extend to which a language is used and usable on the internet and through digital devices (cf. Dolowy-Rybinska/Soria, 2021)
- SL: Digital Language Vitality Scale (Ceberio et al. 2018/www.dldp.eu)
- groups of indicators
 1. Language digital capacity
 2. Language digital presence and use
 3. Language digital performance



1. Digital vitality of SL

Results

- Digital minorization of RML
- „ general perception [...] **moderately positive**“ (Ferré-Pavia et al. 2018, 1082)
- Low German online (Reershemius 2023; Fenske 2021; Arendt i. rev.)





1. Digital vitality of SL

- Dominance of English
 - Digital linguistic imperialism (Phillipson 1992) and/or linguistic justice (Van Parijs 2011)

Cunliffe (2007, 146f.):

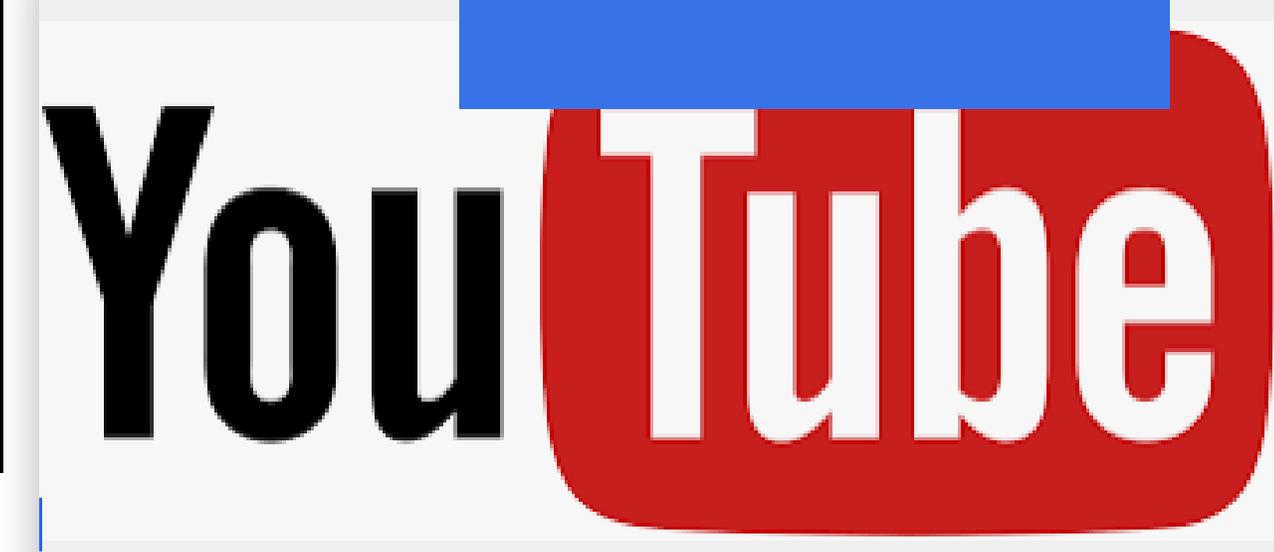
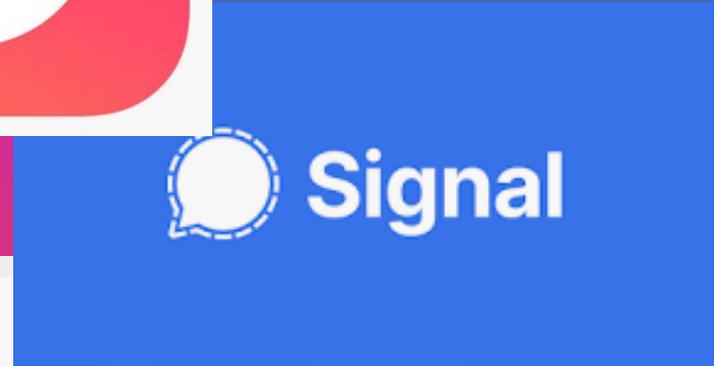
- „ The origins of the Internet and its early adoption by majority languages **and in particular English have led to a dominance that poses a threat to minority languages.** These dominant languages tend to have additional advantages in terms of infrastructure, economic power, and state commitment to the creation of e-societies. The widespread use of English in the real world, as a first and second language, and its dominant position, even among majority languages on the Internet, has established it as the lingua franca of the Internet. **Minority cultures and languages should not be viewed simply as victims of the Internet or as passive recipients of Internet technology,** services and content. Instead it should be recognised that they have the **potential to be active shapers of this technology,** able to create their own tools, adapt existing tools to the local needs and to create culturally authentic, indigenous Internet media. **A culture interacts with a technology and that interaction changes both the culture and the technology.“**
- Cf. also Cunliffe 2019





2. Digitalization is changing communication practices, which poses specific competence requirements in terms of **digital literacy**.







WIKIPEDIA

Dat fre'e Nakiessel

10:34

OSTFRIESISCHE LANDSCHAFT

PlattinO

Die Plattlern-App

Plattdeutsche Sprachlern-App für Ostfriesland

Niveau A1



Los geht's!

Partner:

- Die ostfriesischen Sparkassen
- Oostfreeske Taal
- Stiftung Niedersachsen

Version 2.11

← eat.platt.love

293 Beiträge 5.124 Follower 779 Gefolgt

Plattdeutsch lernen mit Lisa

- Plattler Podcast "Party, Platt & Plüschmors"
- Platt leben
- Plattdeutsches Glückstagebuch

kommodig.com/produkt-kategorie/epl/

ballerdutje, plitti_platt und 87 weitere Personen sind Follower

Gefolgt Nachricht

Vorschläge für dich [Alle ansehen](#)

- Die Ernährungs Docs NDR: ernaehrungsd... Die Ernährungs-Docs
- DVGW: dvgw_ev DVGW e.V.

Lissi Glücksdaagb... Podcast allns över EPL...

YouTube DE

plattdeutsch



Plattdeutsch lernen für Anfänger | So sagst du alles rund um die Zeit | direkt zum Mitlernen :)

1. Polymedia (Madianou/Miller 2021)
2. Multilingual repertoires (Pietikäinen 2010)





2. Digital literacy



- Technologies *for* communication
 - Contextual heterogeneity
 - Diversity of communicative practices (Berger/Luckmann 1969; Günther/Knoblauch 2007) and their norms
- **Sharing** and **networking** and **cooperation** = increasing interactivity
- **Digital culture**: creativity, playfulness, multimodality and multilingual practices (e.g. memes)



2. Digital literacy

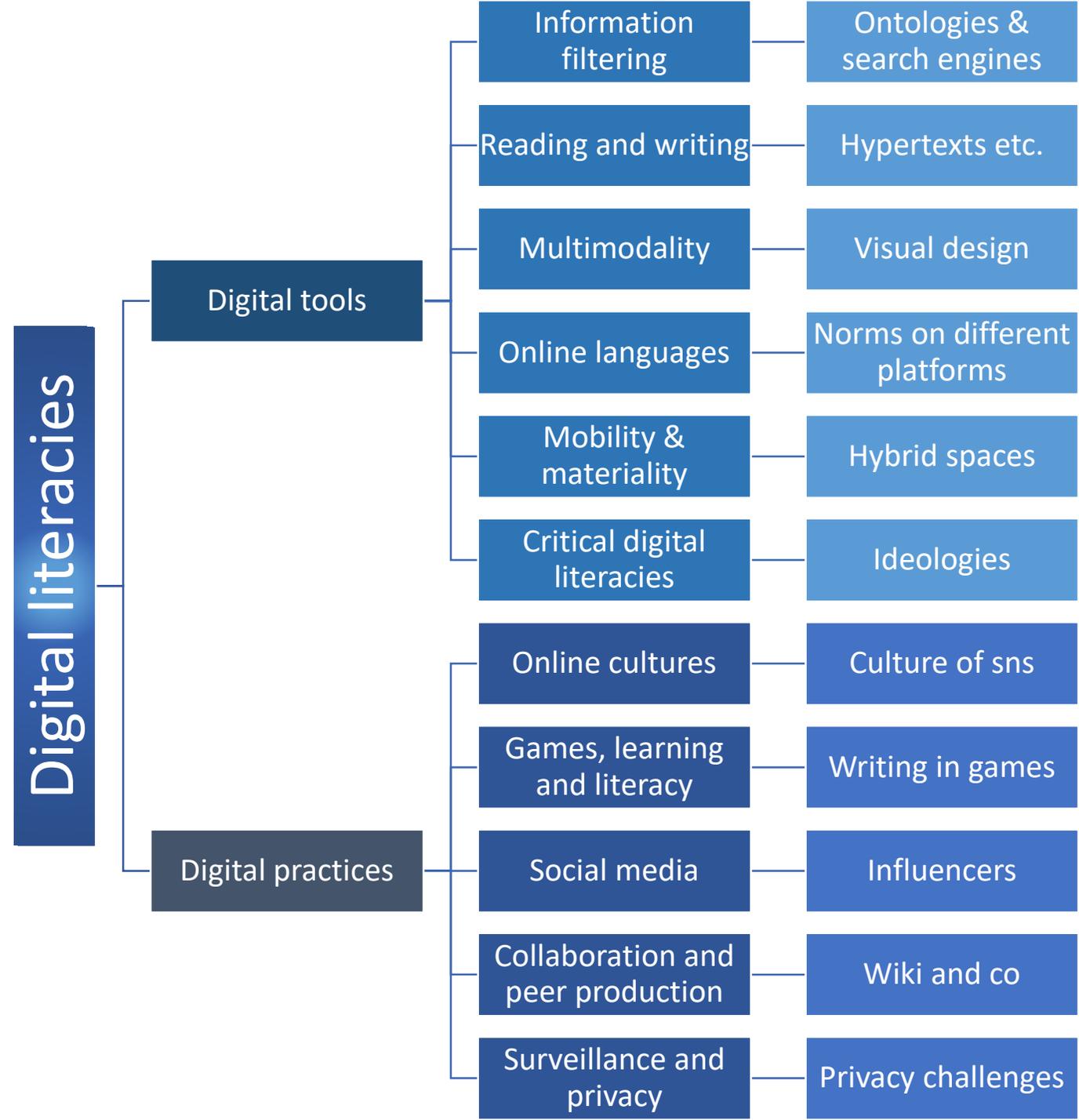


“[Digital literacies are literacies,] that have emerged with the rise of **social practices mediated by digital media**, and that are marked by an ethos characterized by deep **interactivity**, openness for feedback, **sharing** of resources and expertise, and a will to **collaborate** and provide support.” (Knobel/Lankshaer 2015, 152)

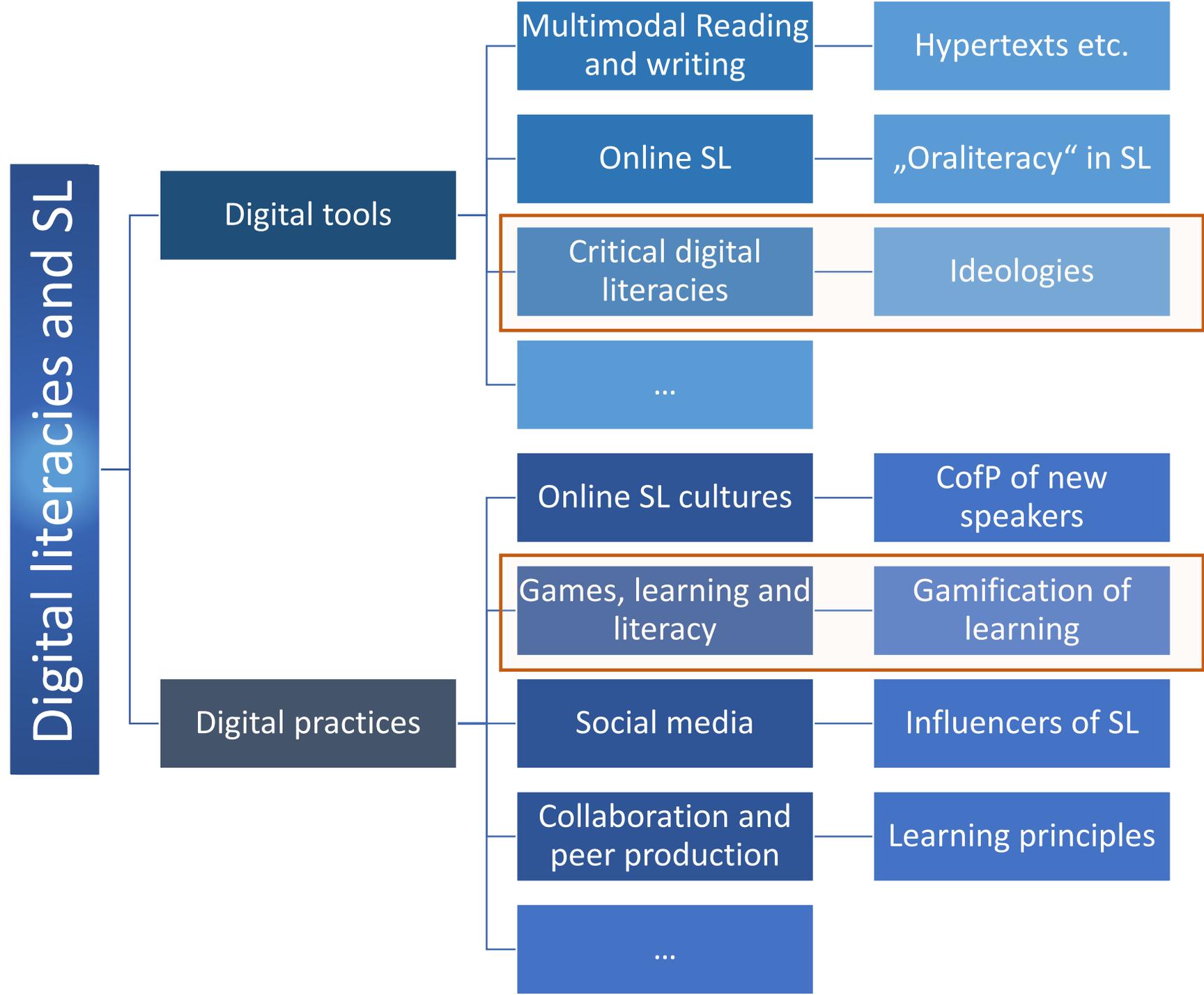
- **digital literacy → digital literacies**



2. Digital literacies



2. Digital literacies



2. Digital literacies

Ideologies on YouTube



Critical literacy

„In the past, ‘critical literacy’ was presented as a special category of language education; however, in the online future, virtually all literacy will necessitate critical judgment.” (Warschauer 2004, 20)

- Language ideologies (Irvine/Gal 2000; Kroskrity 2004; Milani/Johnson 2010)
- SL as „contested languages“ (Tamburelli 2021)



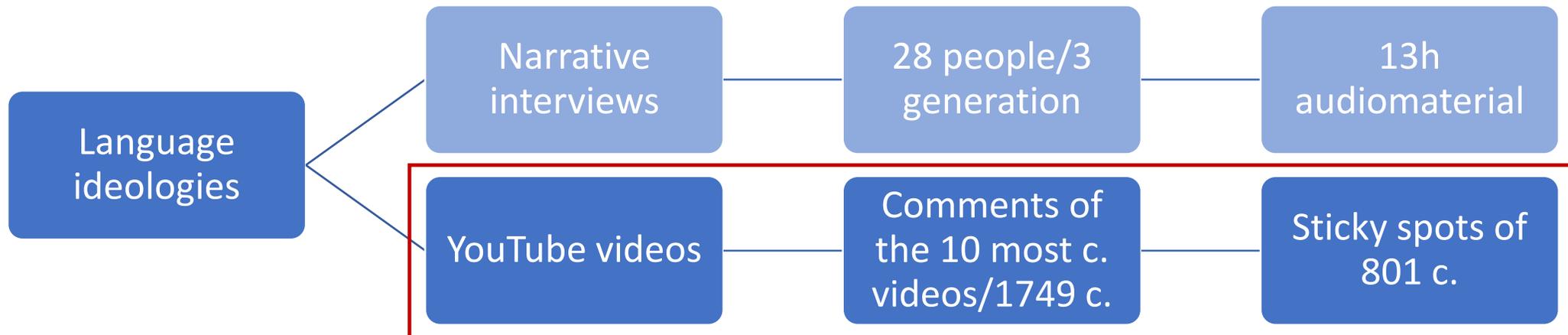
2. Digital literacies

Ideologies on YouTube



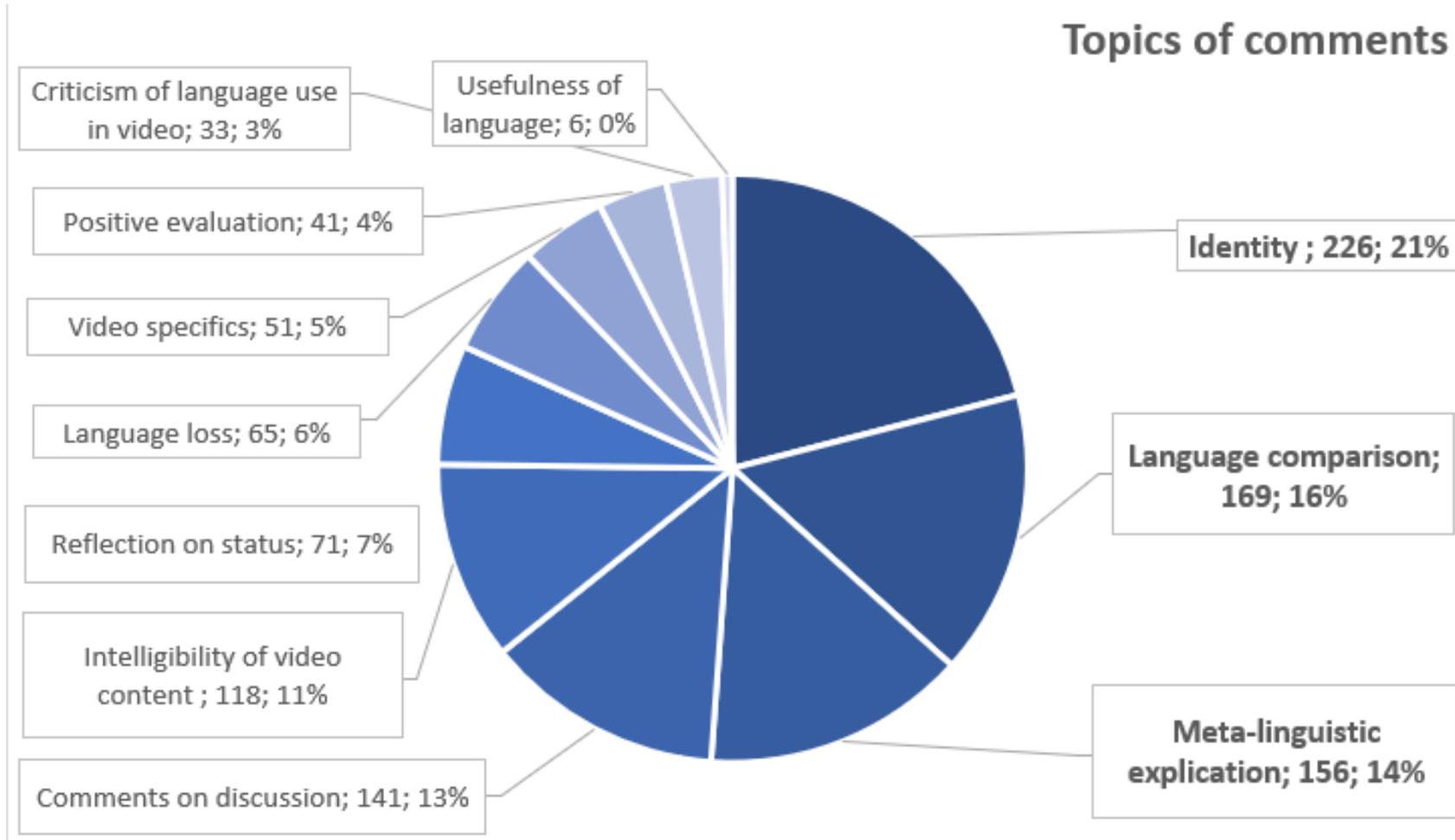
Explorative Case study

- practices of contestation in narrative interviews (cf. Arendt 2021) and on YouTube (Androutsopoulos 2013; Leung 2017)
- Topos-analysis of language ideological argumentative events (Kienpointner 1992)



2. Digital literacies

Ideologies on YouTube



2. Digital literacies

Ideologies on YouTube



Example: analogy- and distance-topos

MB / [5 years ago](#)

Das richtige Plattdeutsch / Niederdeutsch ist grammatikalisch und Wortschatzmäßig näher am Niederländischen als am Hochdeutschen dran. Dann ist es durchaus als eigene Sprache zu verstehen. Doch was uns die CDU hier als "Niederdeutsch" abgeliefert hat, war Hochdeutsch mit westfälischer Schnauze gesprochen, um es einmal salopp auszudrücken. (Er preist die "niederdeutsche Grammatik" an und dann folgt seine niederdeutsche Rede der hochdeutschen Grammatik. ;))

*Proper Low German is closer to Dutch than to High German in terms of **grammar** and **vocabulary**. Then it can certainly be understood as a **language in its own right**. But what the CDU delivered to us here as "Low German" was High German spoken with a Westphalian mouth, to put it casually. (He praises the "Low German grammar" and then his Low German speech follows the High German grammar. ;))*



Henning Rehbaum hält Rede auf Plattdeutsch im Landtag



2. Digital literacies

Ideologies on YouTube



Findings

- Binary structured toposinventory

Context-abstract topoi	Context-specific topoi	
	<i>Dialect</i>	<i>Language</i>
Analogy topos	Dialect topos	(National) language topos
Layer topos (interlingual)	Pronunciation topos	Vocabulary topos
Mediality topos	Speech topos	Script topos
Composition topos (intralingual)	Heterogeneity topos	Homogeneity topos
Distance topos (interlingual)	Closeness topos	Distance topos
Intelligibility topos	Intelligibility topos	Unintelligibility topos

Cf. Arendt (i. rev.)



2. Digital literacies

Ideologies on YouTube



Prelimery conclusion

- Purist ideology of homogeneity - offline AND online
- Normative language ideologies
- Hinder concepts of linguistic diversity
- Need for critical reflection on this

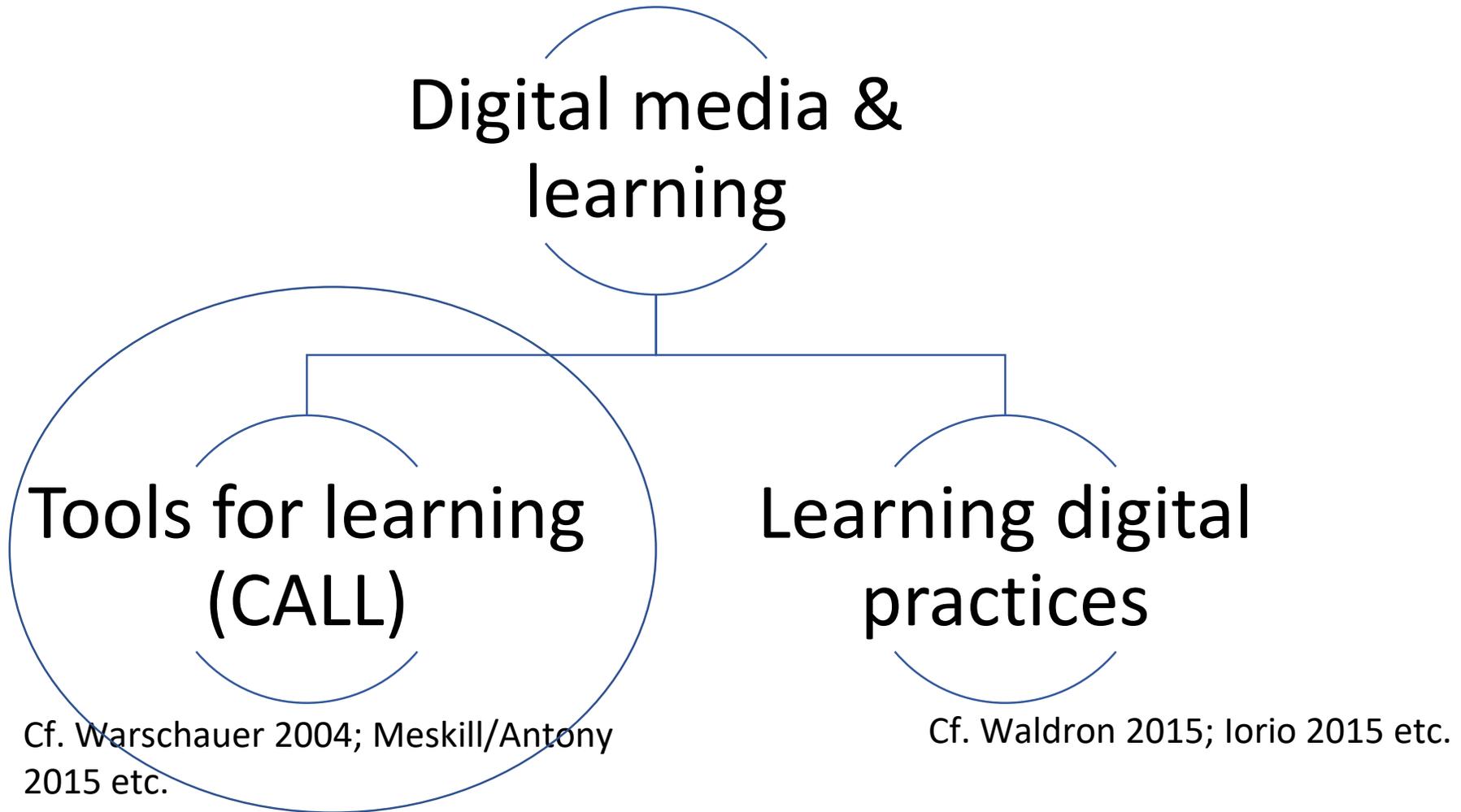




3. Digitalization can open up specific **learning possibilities** for SL, the use of which depends on the learners or new speakers.



3. Digital media & learning



3. Digital media & learning



Plattdüütsch; ISO: 639-3 nds (Low German; Low Saxon); Area: Nothern germany

- Recognised by ECRML (1998), integration in education (i.a. Tollefson 2002; Cenoz 2009; Arendt/Langhanke 2021)
- new speakers (i.a. Jaffe 2015; Hornsby/Vigers 2018; Arendt 2021)

Sociolinguistic characteristics and **speaker oriented demands**

1) low contact between (potential) speakers

→ new CofP (Eckert/McConnell-Ginet 1999) nessecary

2) language area is extensive, also Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

→ trans local interaction (Georgakopoulou/Spilioti 2015)

3) heterogeneous knowledge among new speakers

→ inclusive cooperative learning methods (Arendt 2021)



3. Digital media & learning

Online courses for Low German



Studies

- Teaching degrees,
- Master's,
- Subsidiary subject
Low German

Continuing Professional Development

- In-house training courses
for staff members in
childcare facilities

Courses

- Teachers at
- primary schools
 - secondary schools
 - grammar schools

Teaching Materials

Research

Library

E-learning



3. Digital media & learning

Online courses for Low German

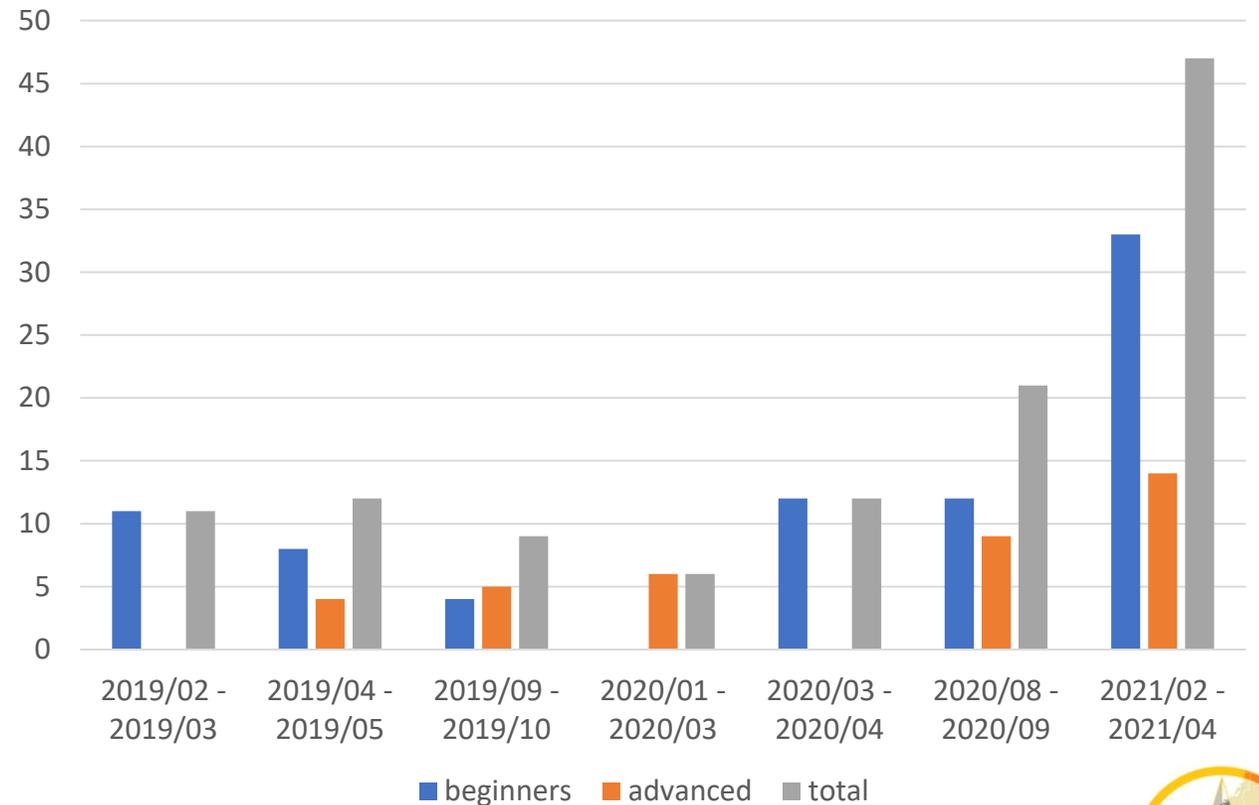


OER of CCTLG

- Teaching Videos
- Quizlett material
- Online courses
- ALWiNE (vocabulary trainer)
- Digital dictionary
- Learning-App

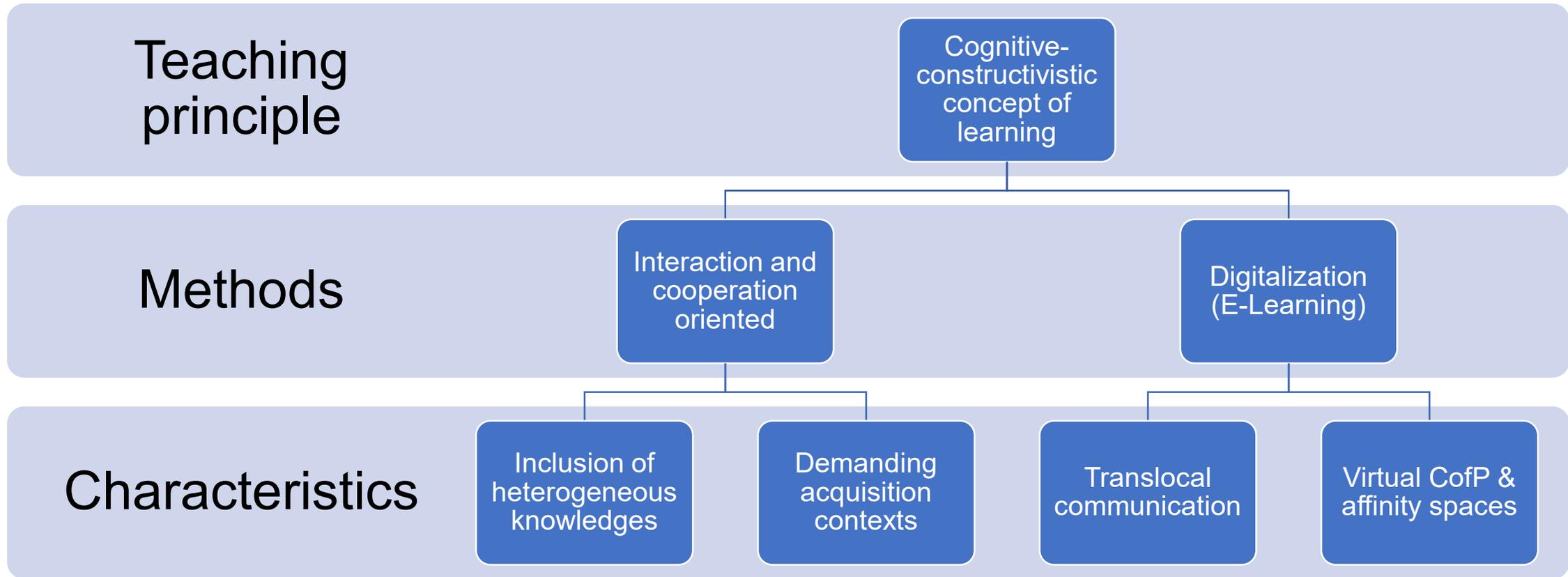


Lüneburgischer
Landschaftsverband



3. Digital media & learning

Online courses for Low German



Cf. Slavin 1994;
Sato/Ballinger 2016;
Arendt 2021

Cf. Arendt 2018;
Heller 2015;
Morek 2015

Cf. Caruso/Hofmann
2018; Stern/Arendt
2021; Kytölä 2015

Cf. Moriarti, 2015;
Thurlow et al.
2012, Graham
2015; Angouri
2015; Gee 2013



3. Digital media & learning

Online courses for Low German



1. **Data and methods:** participant perspectives in survey and authentic interactions of online courses
2. **Findings:** Who? Why? How? Evaluation?
3. **Summary and discussion:** possibilities and limitations of online courses



3. Digital media & learning

Online courses for Low German

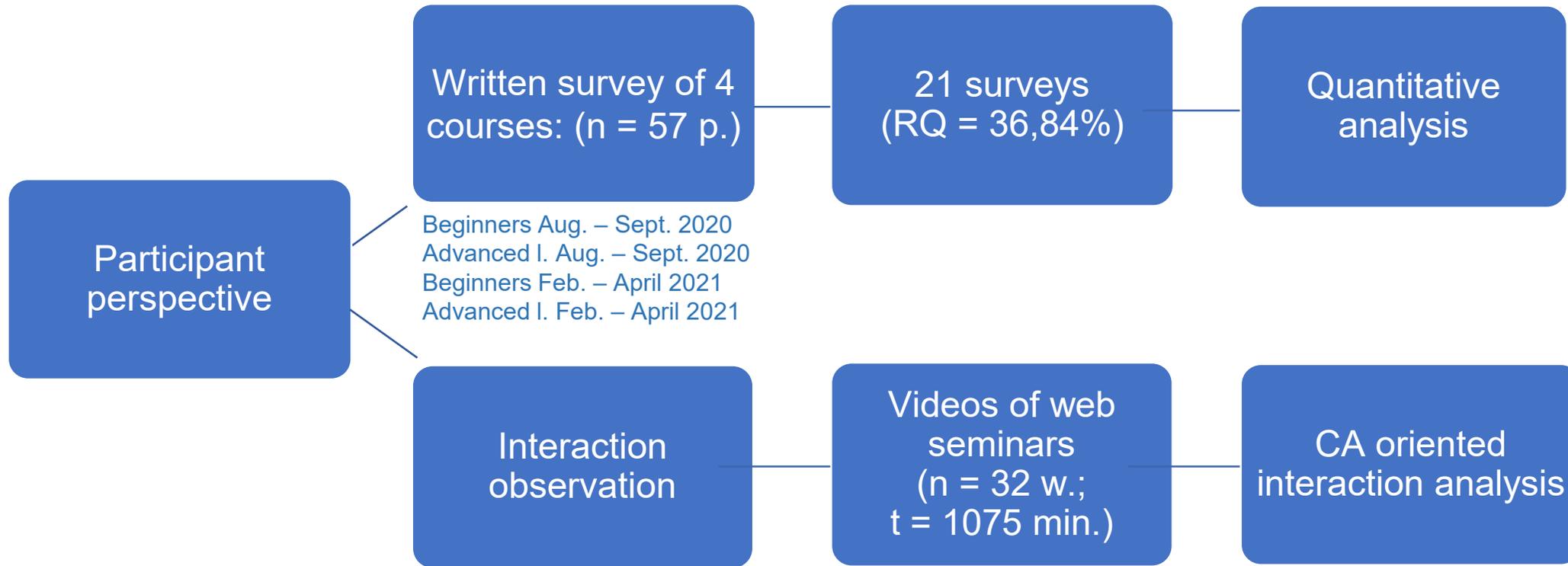


1. **Who** are learners?
2. **Why** do they want to learn regional language?
3. What **practices** are established by learners?
4. How do new speakers **evaluate** digital offers?



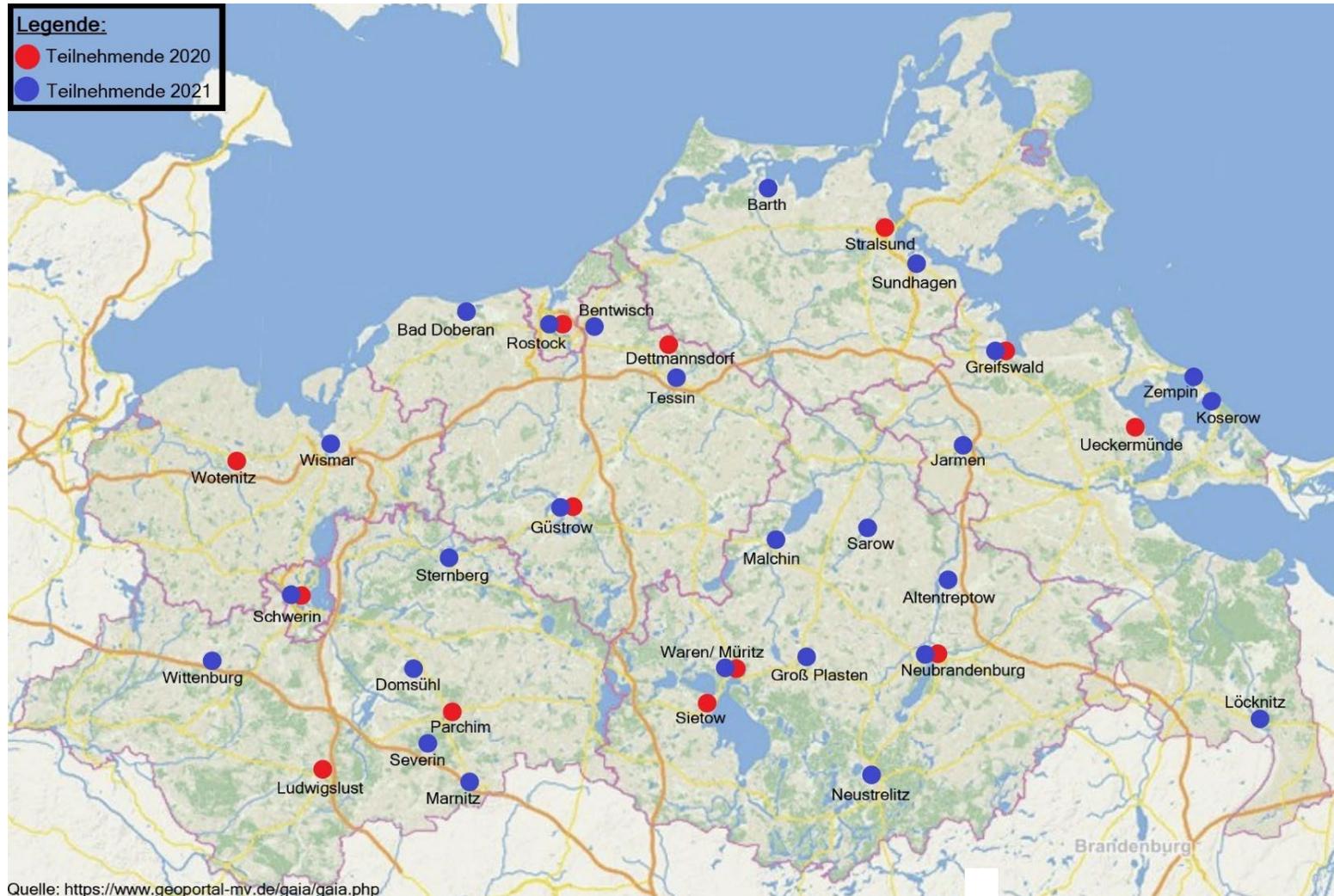
3. Digital media & learning

Online courses for Low German



3. Digital media & learning

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Who?

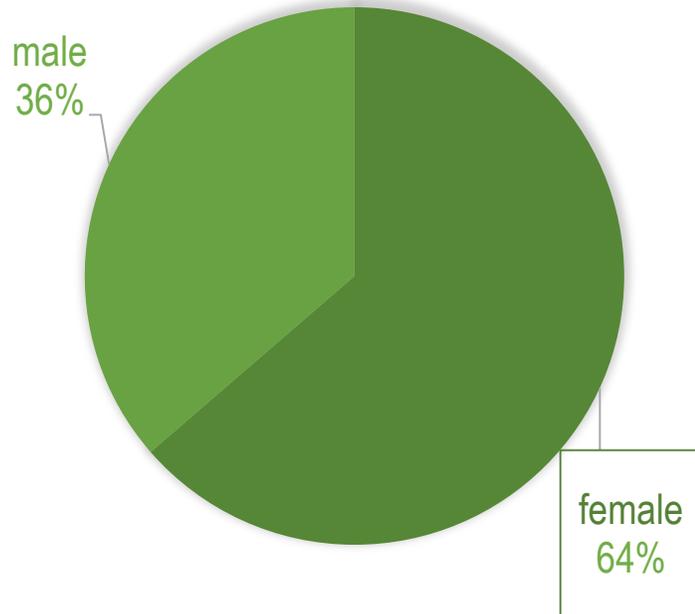
- Participants from all parts of the M-WP
- translocal communication
- Virtual CofP



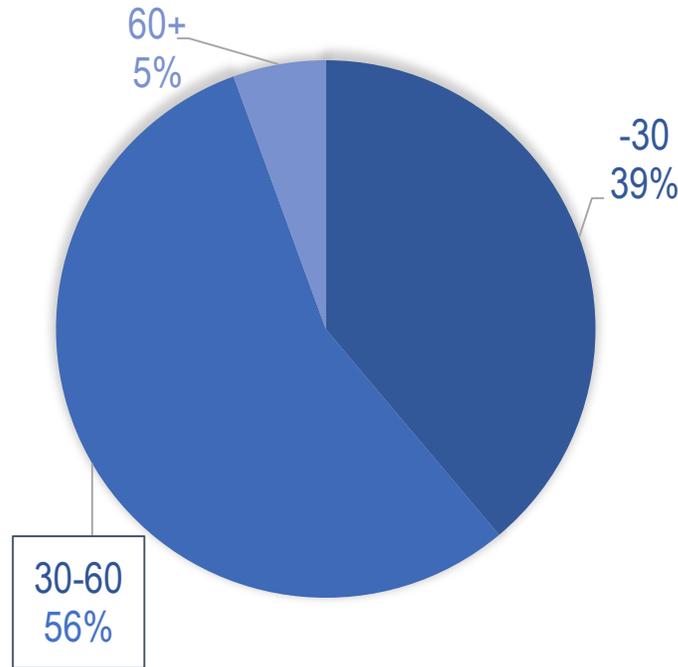
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Online courses for Low German

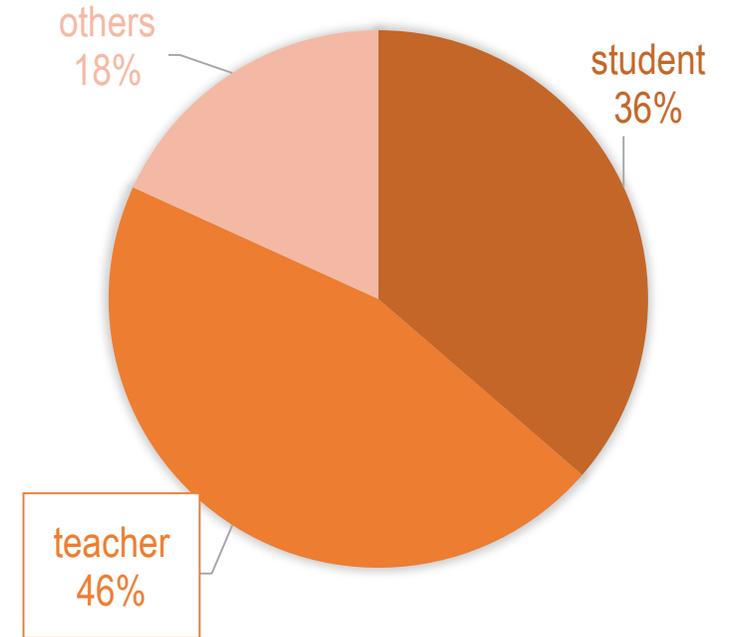
GENDER



AGE



PROFESSION



Typical participant

- adult female teachers with predominantly receptive competences



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”

*I think that's a great pity.
Low German was my
family's mother tongue,
but now, almost two
generations later, it is
almost forgotten. (JP-A)*

*Overcoming language
obstacles, developing
knowledge; improving
pronunciation. (MK-F)*

*Try to acquire
additional
qualifications to make
myself more attractive
to schools. (CR-A)*

“

Reasons

1. **Social aspects** of belonging (family and living area) and tradition
2. **Individual interests** (improving competencies, interest in languages)
3. **job-related reasons** (vocational school teachers; hotel keeper; school director)



3. Digital media & learning

Online courses for Low German

Example 1: simulation globale: village meeting (08.07.2019; A8, t: 00:01:39)
L, W: students; US: teacher

edudip Spracherwerbskurs Niederdeutsch für Mecklenburg-Vorpommern - Fortgeschrittenenkurs

WS [redacted]
Un dann fräten sei kein Mūs mihr. De Mūs fräten de Fauder für den Käuh un de Käuh verhungern.

LS [redacted]
De Katten kümm alleen runner van de Boom und wenn dat ierst Wind gäben möt, aber runner kamen de van alleen. Aver

WS [redacted]
Awer dat duert ok 50 Johr. Bi Katten ut Mäkelborg.

LS [redacted]
Lat doch mol de M [redacted]

Ulrike Stern
Chat

MN [redacted]
Moin, alltausamen!

MODERATOR [redacted]
Moin!

6

3. Digital media & learning

Online courses for Low German



Example 1: simulation globale: village meeting (08.07.2019; A8, t: 00:01:39)
L, W: students; US: teacher

019 L: äh:: ((räuspern))|de katten kümmn alleen runner vun de boom un (.)
äh:: ((clearing throat)) the cats can get down from the tree by themselves and (.)
020 wenn dat ierst wind gäben moet (.) aber runder kam se: van (.) alleen:
if there has to be wind first (.) but they get down by themselves
021 W: aber: dat duurt ok fö:=äh (.) fünfzig
but that also takes uh (.) fifty
022 was heißt [fünfzig]?
what does [fifty] mean?
023 L: [föfftig]
[fifty]
024 US: [föfftig]
[fifty]
025 W: ((kurzes Lachen)) föfftig jahr: (.) bi katten ut mäckelburg (2.0)
((short laugh)) fifty years with cats from Mecklenburg (2.0)

Demanding argumentative event
(strong thematic progression)

Self-initiated other repair
(cooperation)

Support by other learners
(heterogen. knowledge)



3. Digital media & learning

Online courses for Low German



”

*At least I dared to
speak in Low German
(CR-A; BR-F; JK-F)*

*My vocabulary and
grammar knowledge
has improved. (LL-F)*

*Since I started listening to
radio, audio books and
videos in Low German, my
listening comprehension
has improved
(JP-A)*

“

Evaluation: Online courses ...

1. Encouraged to speak
2. Increases declarative and procedural knowledge
3. Provides further impulses



3. Digital media & learning

Online courses for Low German



”

*Super, little effort,
great effect, no stress
on arrival (JK-A)*

*I have always dealt
with it exactly when I
have had enough time.
(MW-A)*

*This also means
that the range is
much wider. (CR-A)*

“

Evaluation – Advantages of digital implementation

1. Time and travel cost savings
2. Individualisation of learning processes (through recording)
3. Variety of offers



3. Digital media & learning

Online courses for Low German



- **Who** are learners?
 - adult female teachers with predominantly receptive competences
- **Why** do they want to learn regional language?
 - Social aspects; individual interests; job-related reasons
- What **practices** are established by learners?
 - peer-oriented cooperation and demanding interaction patterns
- How do new speakers **evaluate** digital offers?
 - Encourage to speak & provide further impulses
 - Time and travel cost savings; Individualisation of learning processes



3. Digital media & learning

Online courses for Low German



Possibilities

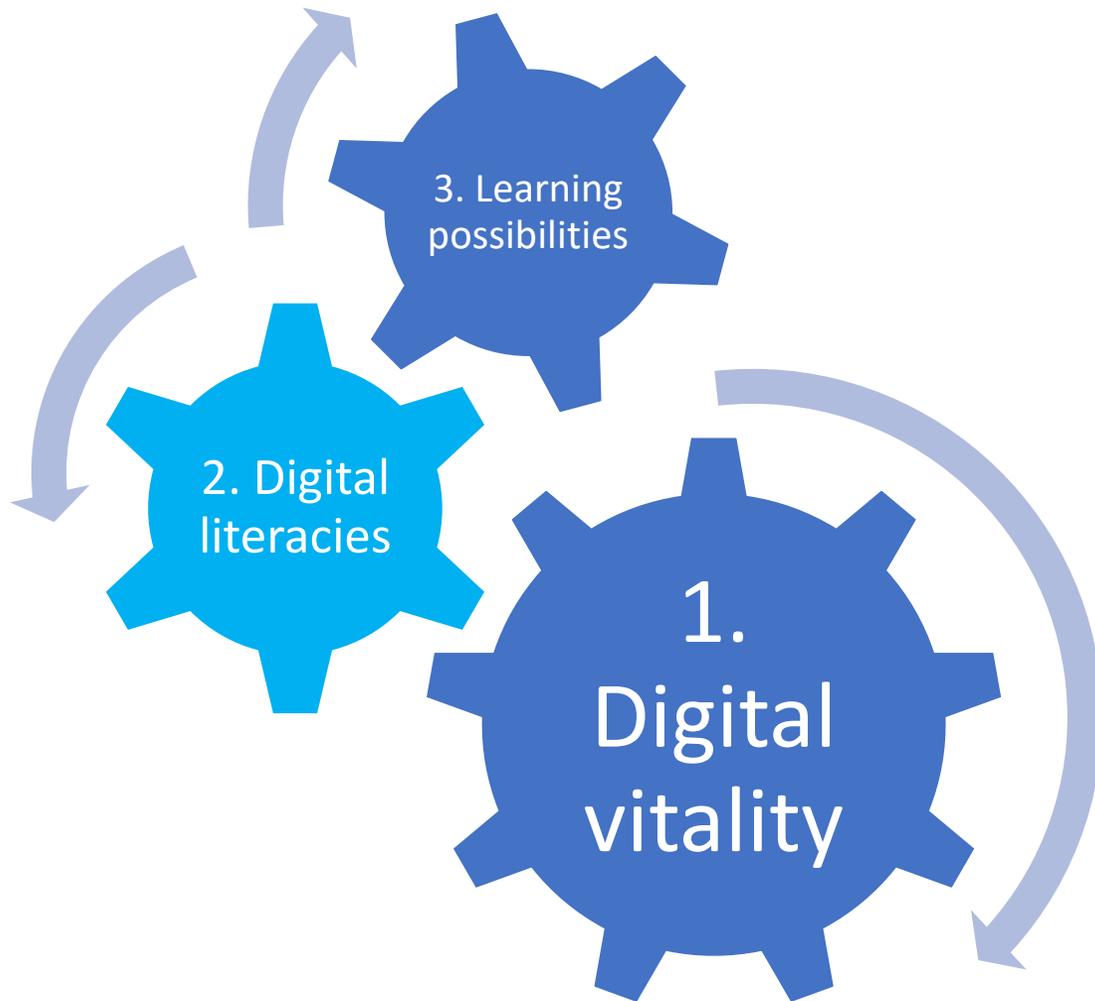
1. Individualisation of learning processes
 - selection of place and time
 - possibility to repeat the lessons
2. Translocal communication
 - self-chosen learning environment
3. Heterogeneous learning groups
 - support cooperative learning from each other
4. Addressing different skills
 - learning by doing
 - acquisition supportive interactive experiences (encouraging)

Limitations

1. Technical limits
 - equipment differences
2. Sustainability
 - time limit
 - competences only stimulable by occasional use
3. Group sizes
 - rehearsals only possible in small groups
 - in bigger groups mainly receptive competencies
4. Situation of new speakers
 - new speakers among themselves
 - acceptance problems not yet eliminated



4. Summary

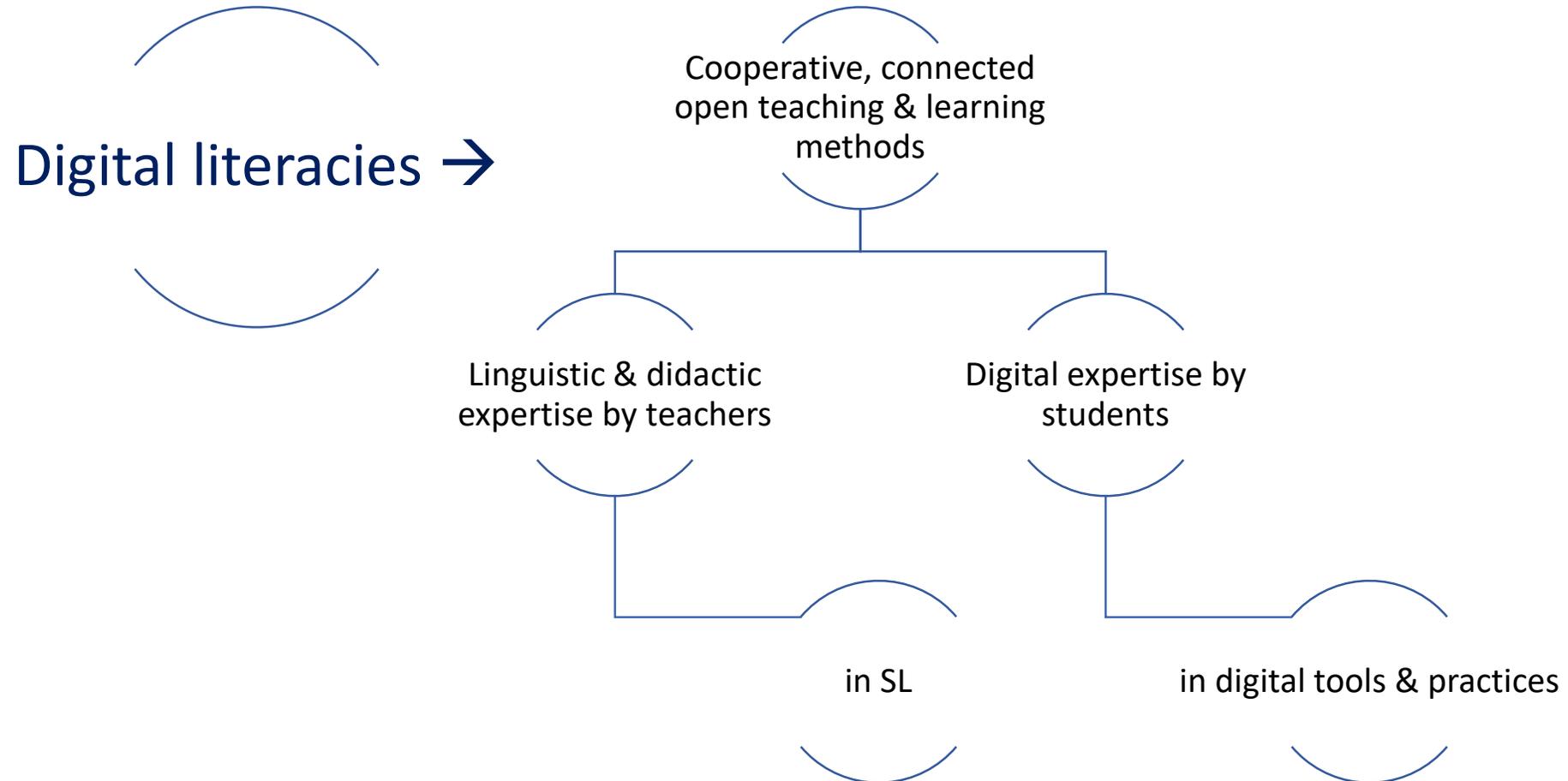


1. For SL teaching and learning, the integration of digital literacy is essential to create **digital vitality** as a key factor of language maintenance.
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4. Conclusion

*Changing teaching principles
small languages – big ideas*



4. Conclusion

*Changing teaching principles
small languages – big ideas*



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MYNBOU

• • •



- ▼ Kompetenzzentrum für Nedderdüütschdidaktik
 - > Wat dat Nieges gifft
 - > Fuurt- und Wiederbilligen
 - > Informationen oewer dat Bifachstudium Nedderdüütsch
 - > Nedderdüütsch lihren - ierste Schräd
 - > Service



Kompetenzzentrum für Nedderdüütschdidaktik

Fri 11 DEC

Tagung "Minority Languages in the Digital Age"



Von Harten bedankt!



UNIVERSITÄT GREIFSWALD
Wissen lockt. Seit 1456





Literature (selection)

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