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LANGUAGE AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS.
A LONGITUDINAL RESEARCH PROJECT

GEFÖRDERT VOM

Bundesministerium
für Bildung
und Forschung

1   BACKGROUND

- increasing number of international students at German higher educational institutions (in 2009: 239.143, in 2016: 340.305, DZHW/DAAD 2017: 3)

- dropout rates for BA students high (41% vs 28%, Heublein et al. 2014)

- reasons mostly unknown

- common assumptions:

  - insufficient language abilities,

  - new study culture in Germany,

  - and lack of social integration (Heublein 2015; Heublein et al. 2017)

- int. students claiming to have considerable language problems: **32%** (2012; 2003: 19% BMBF 2013)

- insufficient knowledge of German (sem.1) according to universities: **40%** (GATE Germany 2010; Heublein/Richter 2011)

2 AIM OF SPRASTU („SPRACHE UND STUDIENERFOLG")

Understand role of language, amongst other factors of influence, for academic success in order to be able to better support international students in the future.

2 DESIGN

- longitudinal study (06/2017-10/2020)

- Universities of Leipzig (Herder Institute for German as a Foreign Language) & Würzburg (Department of Psychology)

- appr. 300 international students (in 2-3 cohorts; cross-lagged panel design)

- use of L1 control groups where it makes sense

- financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)

# 3   PROJECT BUILDING BLOCKS
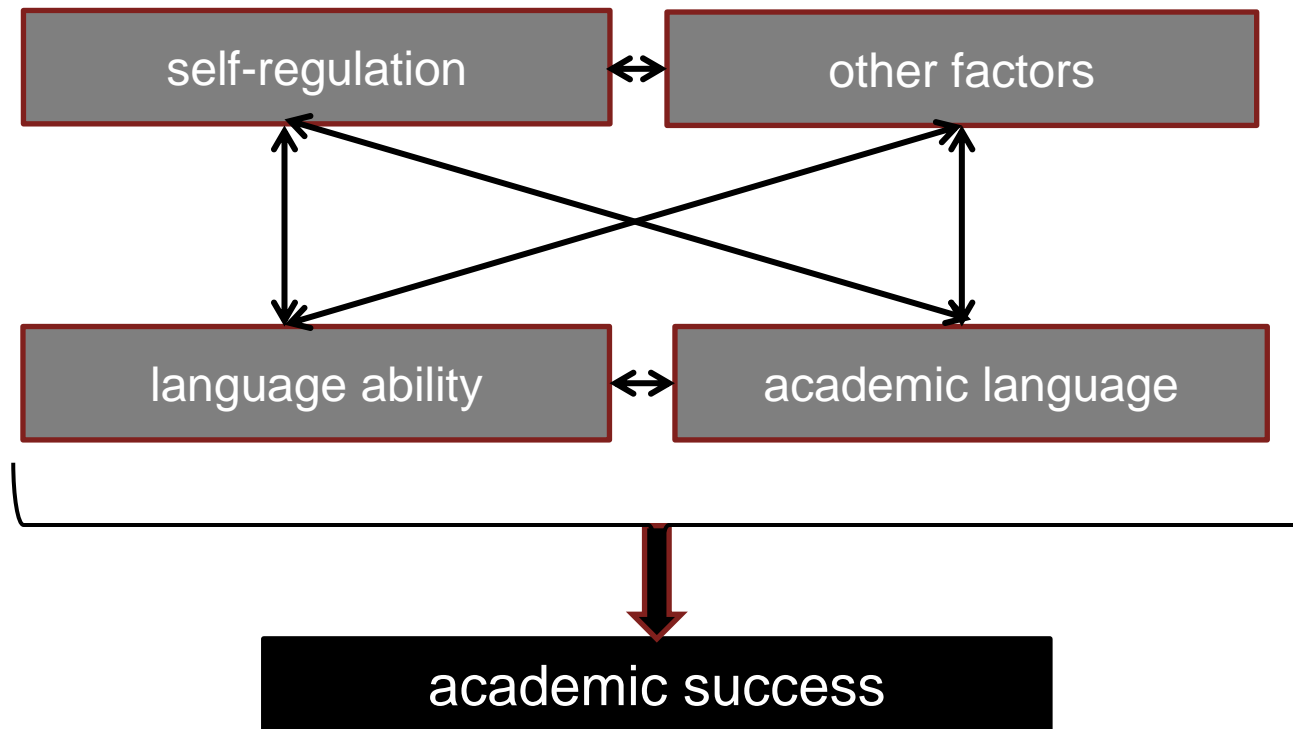
3   BLOCK I: LANGUAGE ABILITY
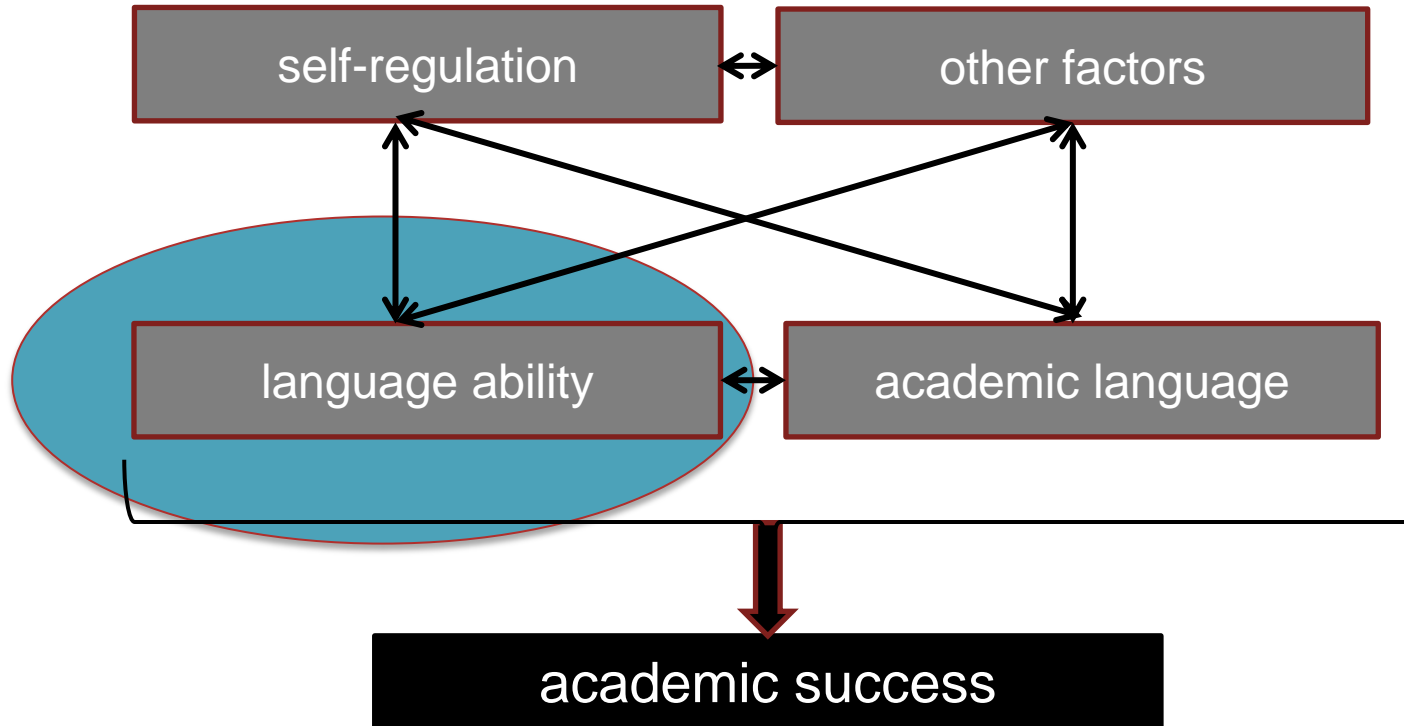
BLOCK I: LANGUAGE ABILITY
OVERVIEW OF LANGUAGE TESTS

| tool	source	results
C-test (onSET)	g.a.s.t.	CEFR levels
listening Test	LTI	CEFR/ACTFL + raw scores
reading Test	LTI	CEFR/ACTFL + raw scores
receptive vocabulary test	ITT Leipzig	frequency bands
productive vocabulary test	ITT Leipzig	frequency bands
writing task (from TestDaF)	g.a.s.t.	CEFR/TDN + analytical ratings
university admission language tests (TestDaF & DSH)	g.a.s.t. & Studien-kollegs	CEFR/TDN levels + ratings for writing+ texts + raw scores

BLOCK I: LANGUAGE ABILITY
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: CORPUS DATA

UAT*	TestDaF writing task		
	T1 (2017)	T2 (2018)	T3 (2019)
N~80	N=130		
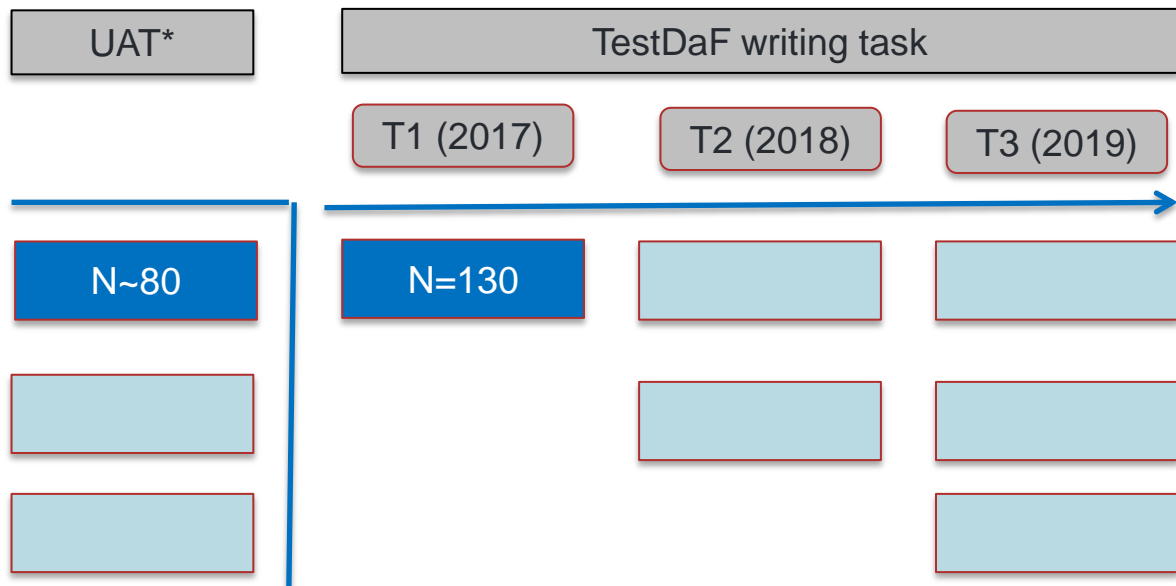
individual university admission test writing parts (DSH & TestDaF)

BLOCK II: ACADEMIC LANGUAGE
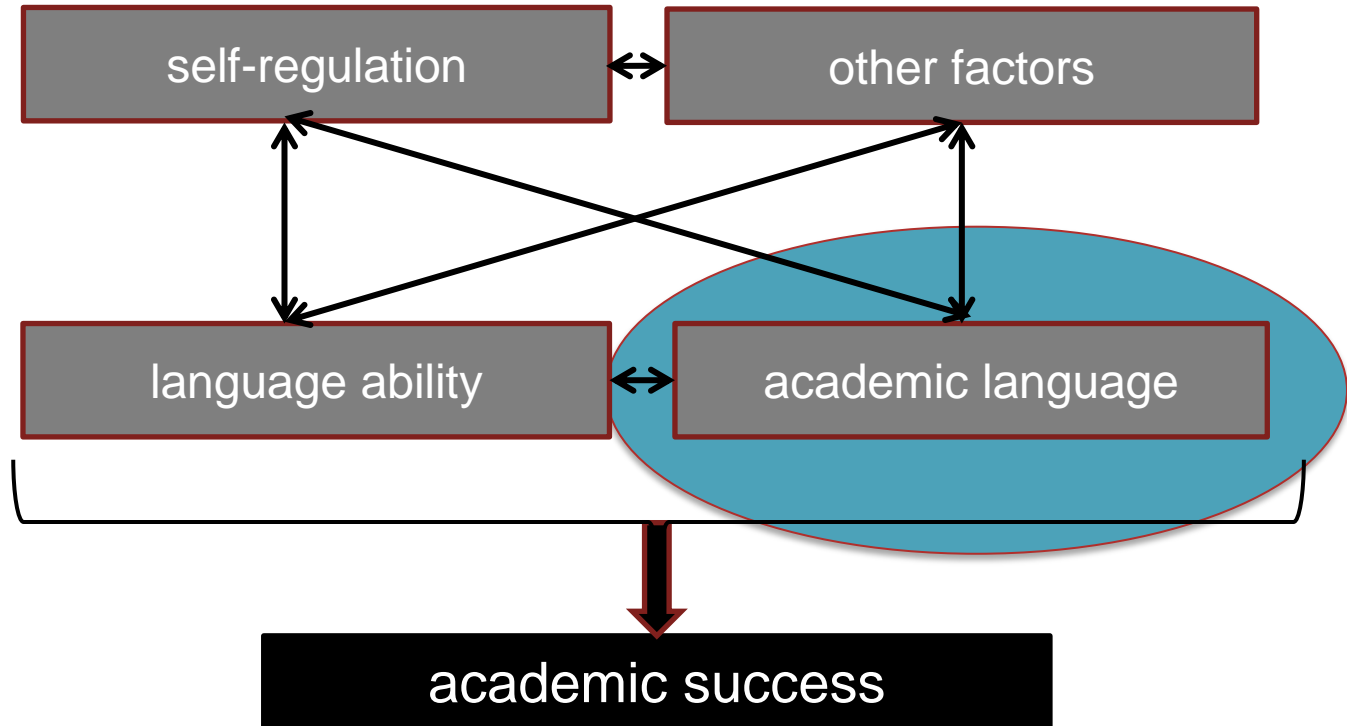
LANGUAGE USED FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES
QUALITATIVE ANALYSES; „CORE" SAMPLE (SELECTED SUBJECTS)

- challenging and study-relevant language-based activities (needs analysis, Bärenfänger et al. 2016, Marks 2016)

1. **written exams (in a minute)**

2. **lecture notes**

   - very common (Arras 2012, Bärenfänger et al. 2016, Ehlich/Steets 2003, Titsworth & Kiewra 2004: 448)

   - strategy for encoding, memorization, reproduction, further processing of lecture contents

   - integrated task: Listen (Dunkel 1988, Carrell 2007, Carrell et al. 2004, Cushing 1993, Song 2011…) – reduction of complexity – read – write useful text under time pressure (Steets 2003)

   - „secondary" text type („Teiltextsorte") → analysis of lectures needed

   - no „standard" form → can be understood only if individual <u>purpose</u> is taken into consideration

   - analysis is complex → has to focus on selected (linguistic) aspects

ANALYSIS OF NOTE-TAKING
PROVISIONAL SCHEME
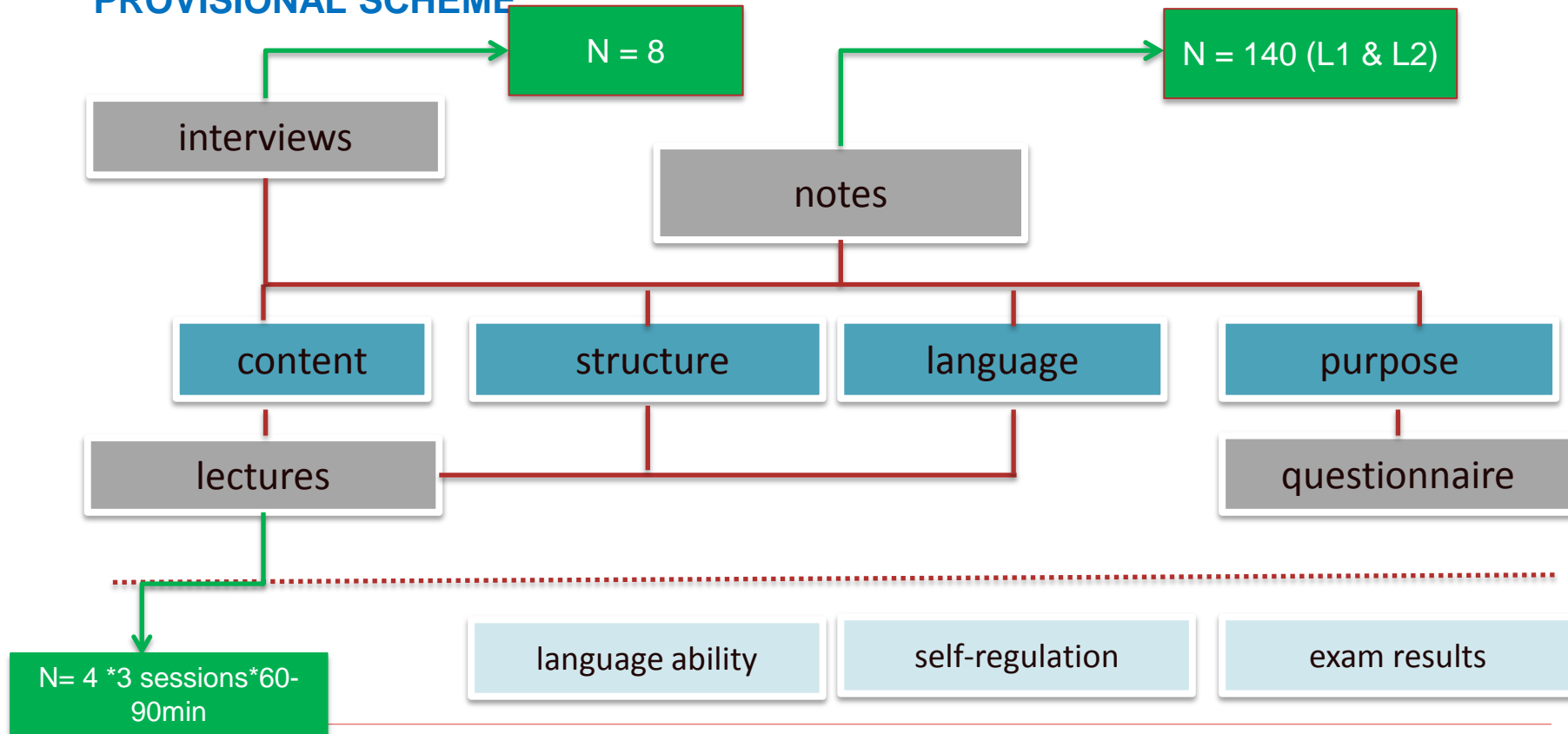
BLOCK III: SELF-REGULATION
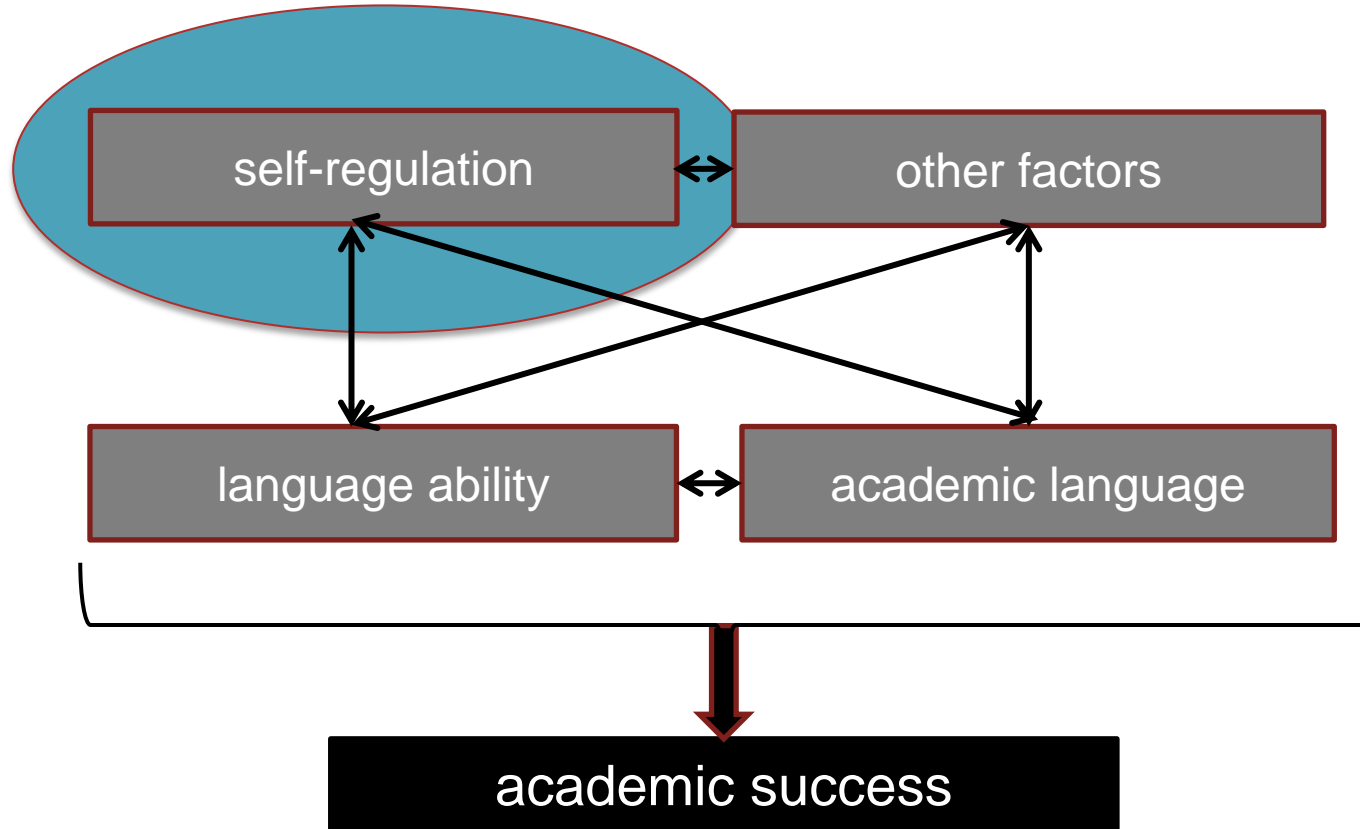
SELF-REGULATION
A VERY COARSE OVERVIEW

Continuum of instruments targeting **metacognitive strategy knowledge:**

1. *general* learning strategies (frequency of use, measured with LIST scales)

2. knowledge about the appropriateness of the use of specific strategies in study-relevant, language-based *scenarios*

3. perceived actual strategy use in high-stake *authentic tasks* (exams)…

SELF-REGULATION
FOCUS WRITTEN EXAMS

Aims of analysis

(1) **aspects of linguistic difficulty** of exam tasks

(2) **methodological quality** of exams

(3) **test-taking strategies** used in exams

(4) test **preparation** strategies & test **results**

(5) **goals** (achievement/performance…), expected results, text anxiety & exam **results**

SELF-REGULATION
FOCUS WRITTEN EXAMS: INSTRUMENTS

(a)	exam tasks	(provided by teachers | N=5)
(b)	exam solutions	(provided by students | N=40 | L1 & L2)
(c)	exam results & evaluations	(provided by teachers | N~ 40)
(d)	stimulated recalls	(students | test-taking strategies & perceived difficulty | N=8 | L2)
(e)	questionnaire	(students | test-taking strategies, perceived difficulty, test preparation, expected results …| N~ 40 | L1 & L2)
(f)	interviews	(teachers | N=8 | test construction methodology; language awareness; expected solution and strategies)

BLOCK IV: OTHER FACTORS OF INFLUENCE
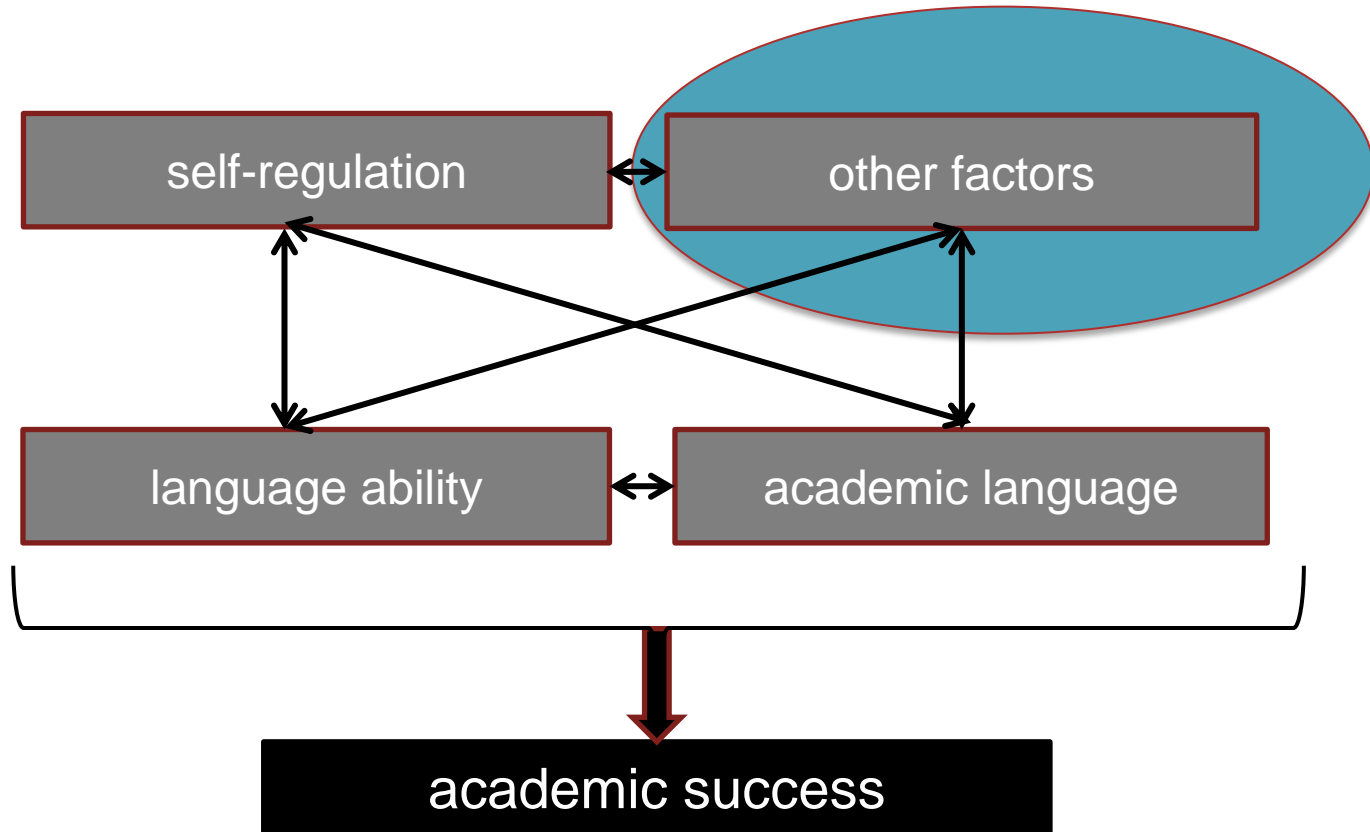
OTHER FACTORS OF INFLUENCE

Background questionnaire:

-   motivation for choice of study; language (learning) background; prior knowledge ..

Main questionniare:

-   **institutional, individual, social factors**, e.g.: academic & social integration; motivation; academic self-concept; financial situation … (Heublein et al. 2010, Schiefele et al. 2002, Nationales Bildungspanel…)

-   **language-related factors:** language contact (McManus et al. 2014), willingness to communicate (McIntyre et al. 2001), development of language ability, L2 aptitude beliefs (Lou & Noels 2017)

Academic success

-   academic achievement (grades)

-   satisfaction (Schiefele et al., 2002)

-   loyalty

(York, Gibson & Rankin 2015; Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek 2006)

WHAT'S IN IT IN TERMS OF LANGUAGE DATA?
SOME REMARKS ON DATA PROCESSING (WORK IN PROGRESS!)

- Sprastu is not a corpus project – however, language data we have will be made **publicly available**, data protection allowing
- **constraints: no large** numbers; but dense information; **rich metadata, longitudinal**
- **some quirky data (**notes – exams) →**not all** language data will come in a **machine-readable** format

Ideas…
- **written texts** (L1-L2) & **lectures** (L1) → corpus
- one **tool** for all (probably Exmaralda/Dulko)
- **minimal to no manual annotations -** L2 data planned to have **target hypothesis I**
- **visualization via ANNIS** is planned and would be great

OUTLOOK
WHAT WE HOPE TO WORK TOWARDS

Main aim:

- factors of influence on **academic success** of international students – **role of language**

But also:

- insights on profile & development of language abilities during course of study,
- understand predictive power of university admission language tests
- further research on empirical correlates of CEFR levels by (preparing) analyses of highly contextualized longitudinal learner data
- challenges caused by language used in typical academic situations,
- research into (development of) self-regulation/strategy knowledge,
- …

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

ANNEX

LECTURE NOTE – EXAMPLE (1)

EXAMPLE TESTDAF WRITING TASK