



UNIVERSITÄT  
LEIPZIG



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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“)

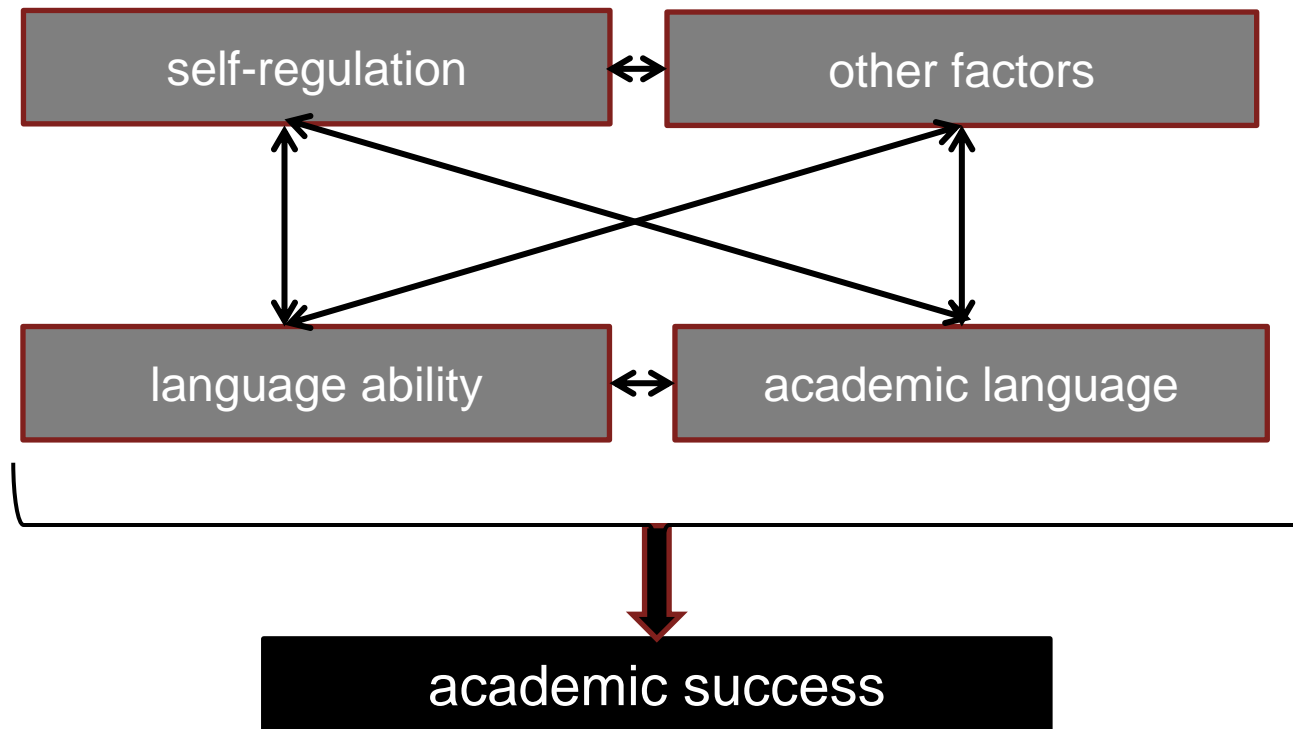
**Understand role of language, amongst other factors of influence, for **academic success**** in order to be able to better support international students in the future.

## 2 DESIGN

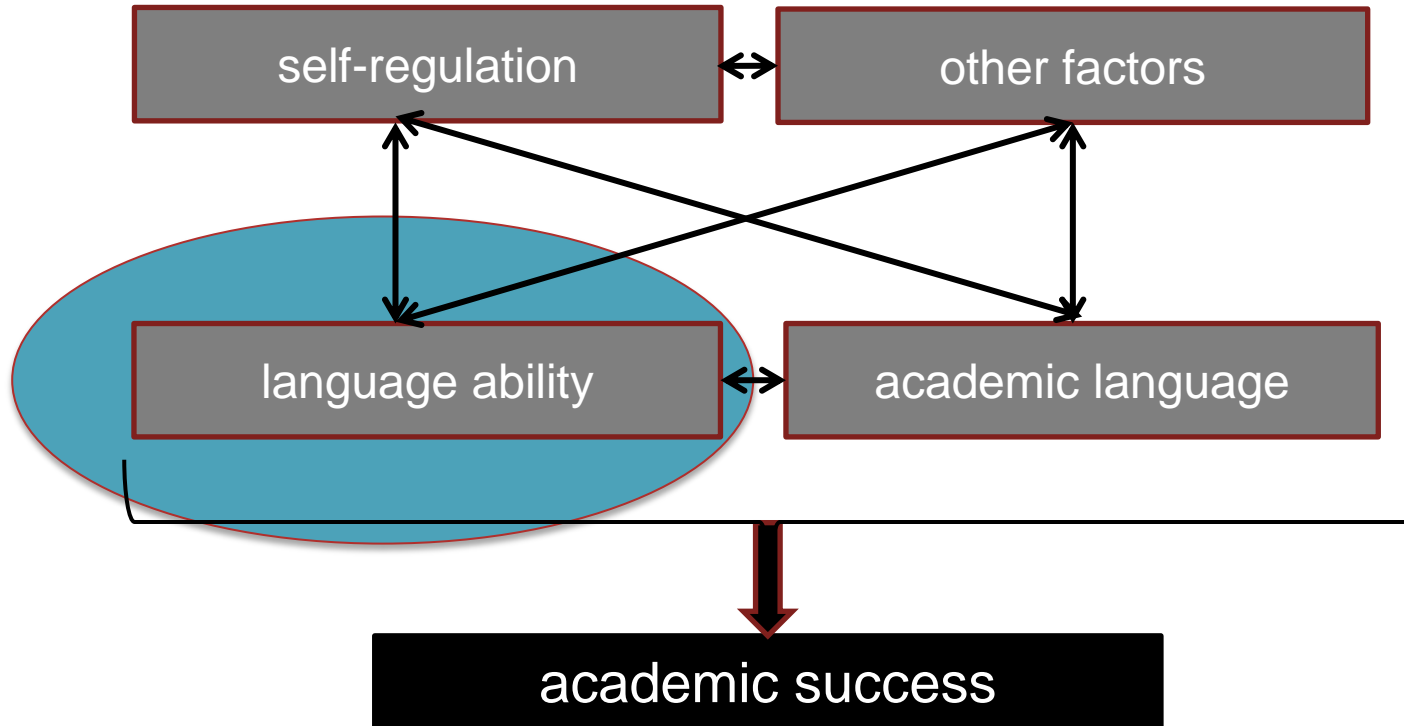
- longitudinal study (06/2017-10/2020)
- Universities of Leipzig (Herder Institute for German as a Foreign Language) & Würzburg (Department of Psychology)
- appr. 300 international students (in 2-3 cohorts; cross-lagged panel design)
- use of L1 control groups where it makes sense
- financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)



### 3 PROJECT BUILDING BLOCKS



### 3 BLOCK I: LANGUAGE ABILITY



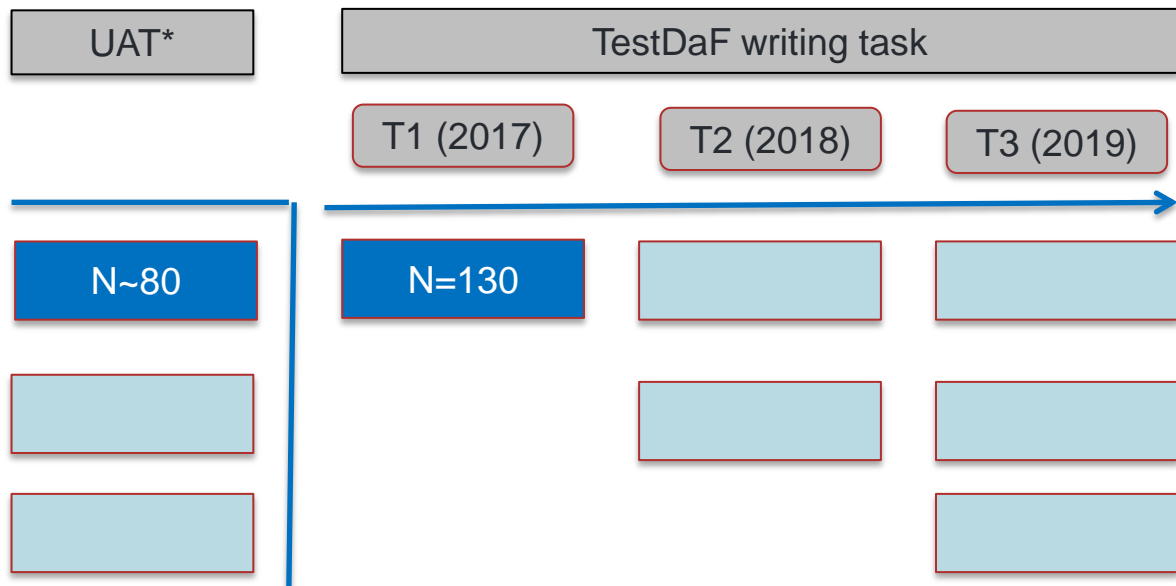
# BLOCK I: LANGUAGE ABILITY

## OVERVIEW OF LANGUAGE TESTS

| <b>tool</b>   | <b>source</b>              | <b>results</b>  |
|---|----------------------------|---|
| 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

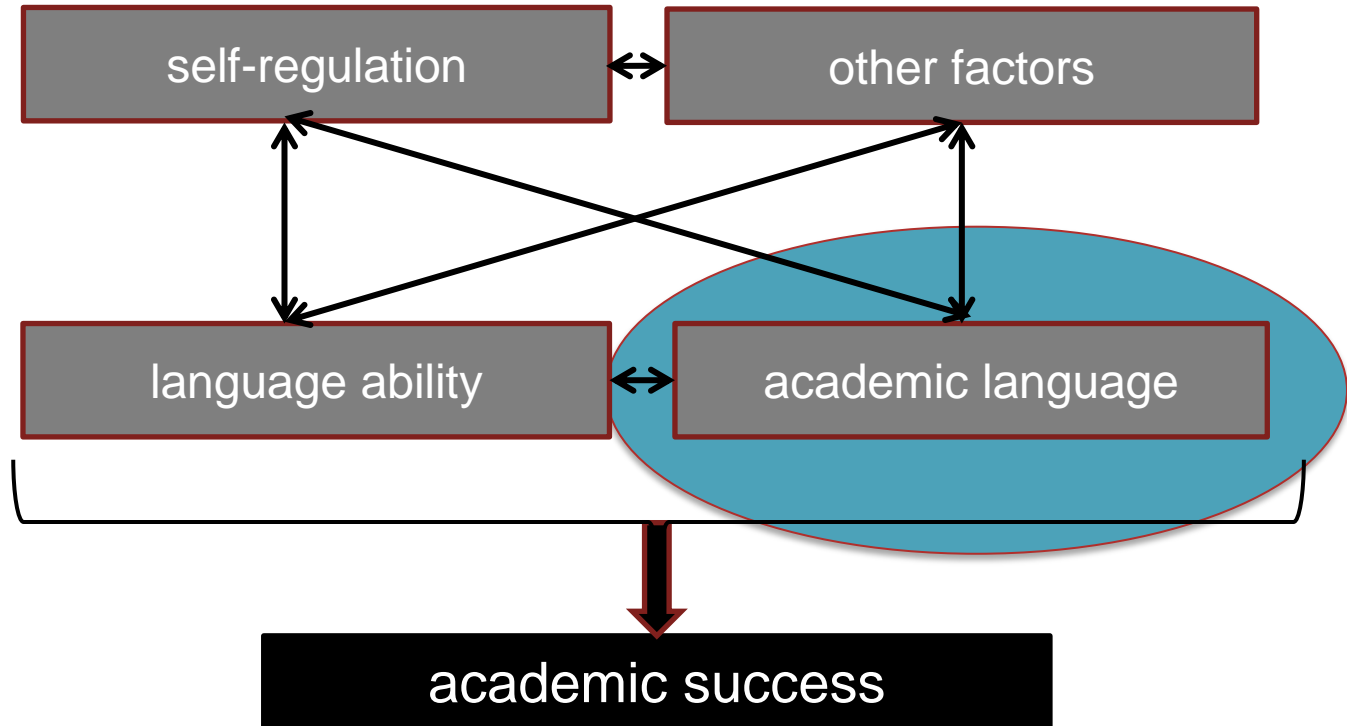
## WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: CORPUS DATA



*\*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)

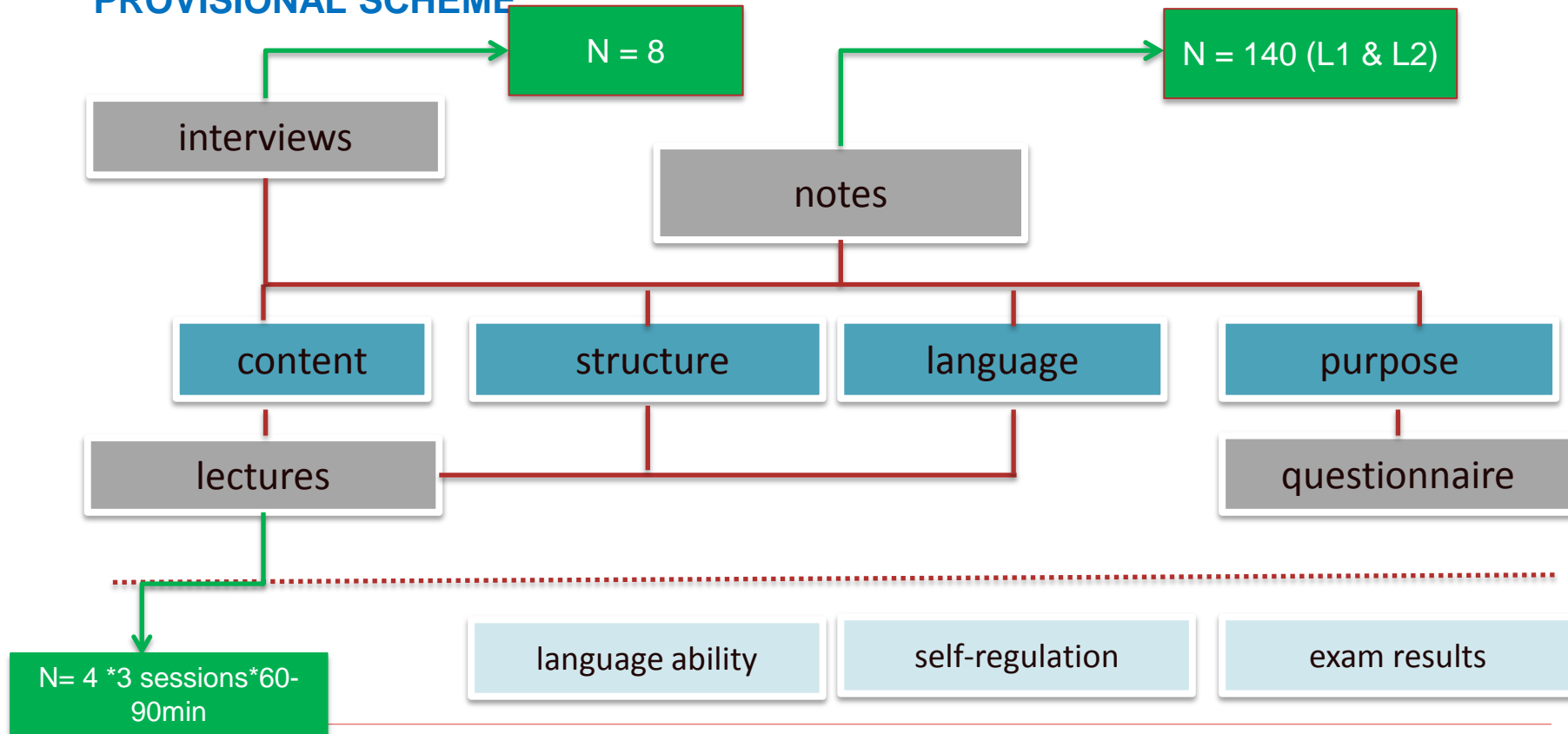
### 1. written exams (in a minute)

### 2. lecture notes

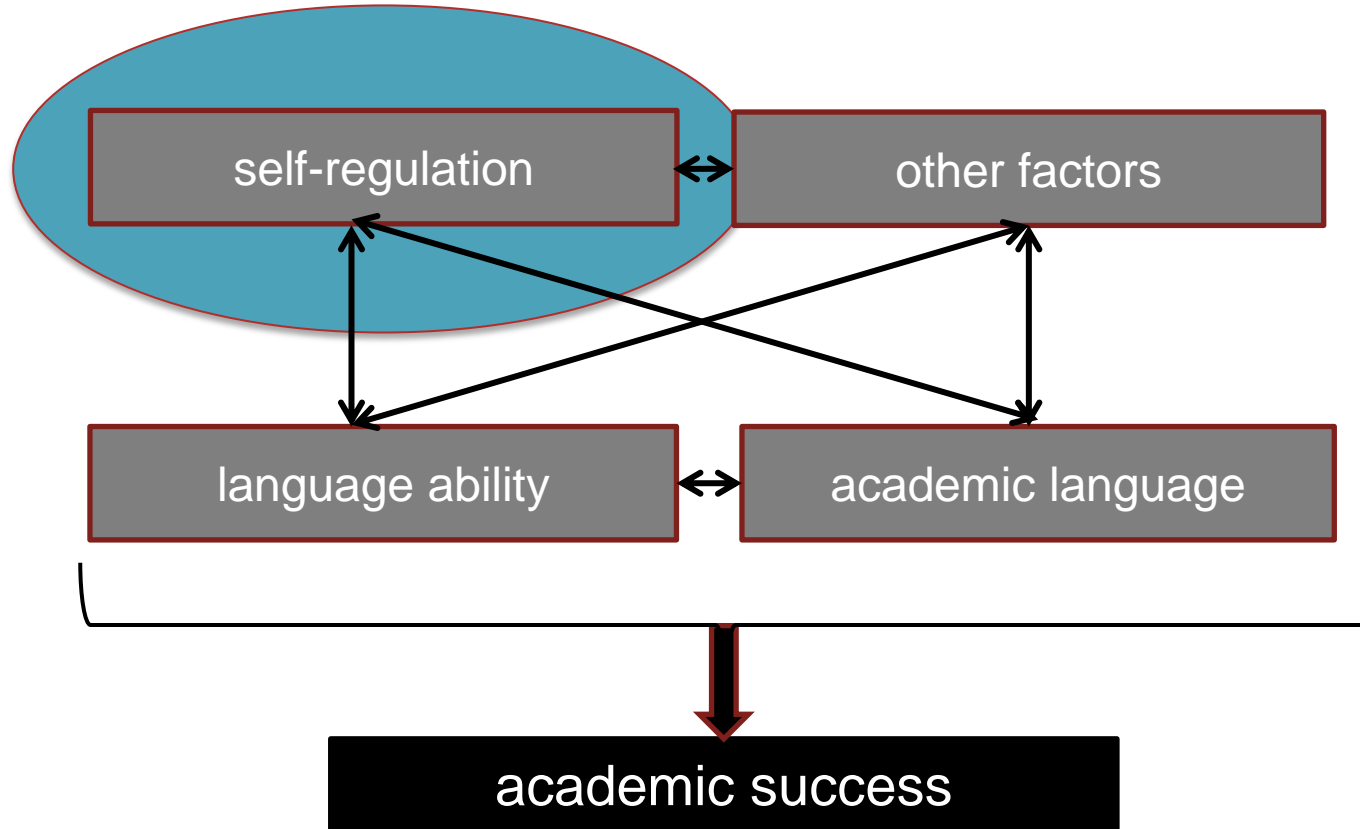
- very common (Arras 2012, Bärenfänger et al. 2016, Ehlich/Steets 2003, Titsworth & Kiewra 2004: 448)
- strategy for encoding, memorization, reproduction, further processing of lecture contents
- integrated task: Listen (Dunkel 1988, Carrell 2007, Carrell et al. 2004, Cushing 1993, Song 2011...) – reduction 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 purpose 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

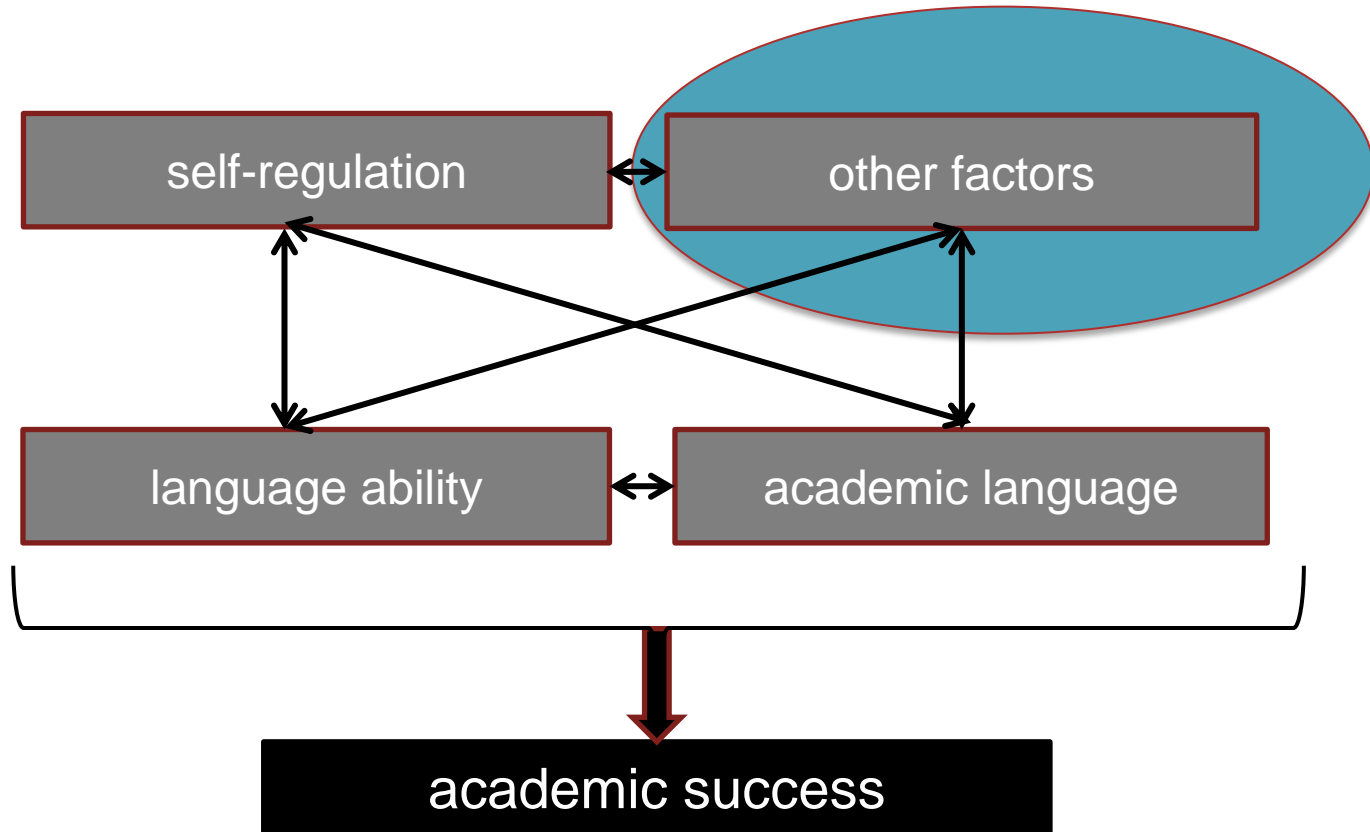
- (1) **aspects of linguistic difficulty** of exam tasks
- (2) **methodological quality** of exams
- (3) **test-taking strategies** used in exams
- (4) test **preparation** strategies & test **results**
- (5) **goals** (achievement/performance...), expected results, test anxiety & exam **results**

# 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 questionnaire:

- **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)

Wovon hängt die Bewegung in einem Gelenk nachher?

▷ Knochenhemmung (→ man kann Ellenbogen nicht überstrecken)

▷ Weichteilhemmung (→ man kann Ober- & Unterarm nicht genau aneinander legen)

Knochen:  
Druck → schlecht,  
Zug → besser

▷ Bandhemmung, z.B. Lig. coracoacromiale des Schultergelenks  
(Arm nur bis 90° heben, danach kann das Band <sup>schlechte Bewegung</sup> schlechte Bewegung → schrattes Gelenk <sup>diese</sup> Drehung Scapula)

• Art. sacroiliaca als Beispiel für eine Amphiarthrose → schrattes Gelenk  
(in der Hüfte)  
→ unregelmäßige Gelenkflächen, starrer Bandapparat

↳ geringe Beweglichkeit

Wofür braucht man dieses Gelenk?

Druck auf Hüfte wird verringert & in Zug umgewandelt

## Neutral-Null-Methode

~ dient standardisierter Messung der Gelenkbeweglichkeit

Gradzahl links Grundstellung Gradzahl rechts

1) Seitwärtsneigung = Sagittal 40 | 0 | 40

2) Beugen / Strecken 85 | 0 | 0

## EXAMPLE TESTDAF WRITING TASK

Teilnehmeretikett

TestDaF  
Test Deutsch als Fremdsprache

Schriftlicher Ausdruck

Schreibbogen 60 Min.

1 „Zusammen oder alleine leben“- das ist  
 2 jetzt sehr-sehr aktuelle Thema. Damit  
 3 beschäftigt sich auch vorliegende  
 4 Grafik. Man vergleicht hier der Anzahl  
 5 der Menschen in einem Haushalt, und  
 6 wie ~~haben~~ sich diese Zahlen im Laufe der  
 7 Zeit verändert, haben. Nach vor 100 Jahren  
 8 wohnten die Menschen mehr in großen  
 9 Familien, zum Beispiel 44% der Bevöl-  
 10 kerung hatten mehr als 3 Personen  
 11 in dem Haushalt, der Prozentsatz von

12 Haushalten mit einer oder zwei Personen  
 13 war gleich und betrug 28%. Die  
 14 Situation hat sich in nächsten 20 Jahren  
 15 ein bisschen geändert, so im Jahr 1998  
 16 war der Anzahl alleine lebenden Menschen  
 17 fast gleich wie bei Haushalten mit  
 18 zwei oder drei und mehr Bewohner.

19 Deutlich fort kann man sehen, dass im Jahr  
 20 2015 ist die Situation ganz anders aussieht.  
 21 Schon in diesem Jahr wohnt fast die Hälfte  
 22 von Menschen allein, die Anzahl beträgt  
 23 42%, die Haushalten mit 2 Personen  
 24 belegen zweiten Platz mit 34%, und