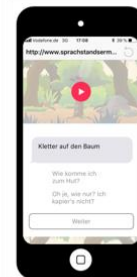


How an app can help to improve the assessment of children's communicative capacities in the L2 in authentic communicative settings?

Nicole Weidinger, Svenja Uth, Christian Meyer, Jörg Roche, Moiken Jessen, Stefanie Haberzettl, Natalia Kapica, Giulio Pagonis, Maike Schug, Sarah Faidt & Team



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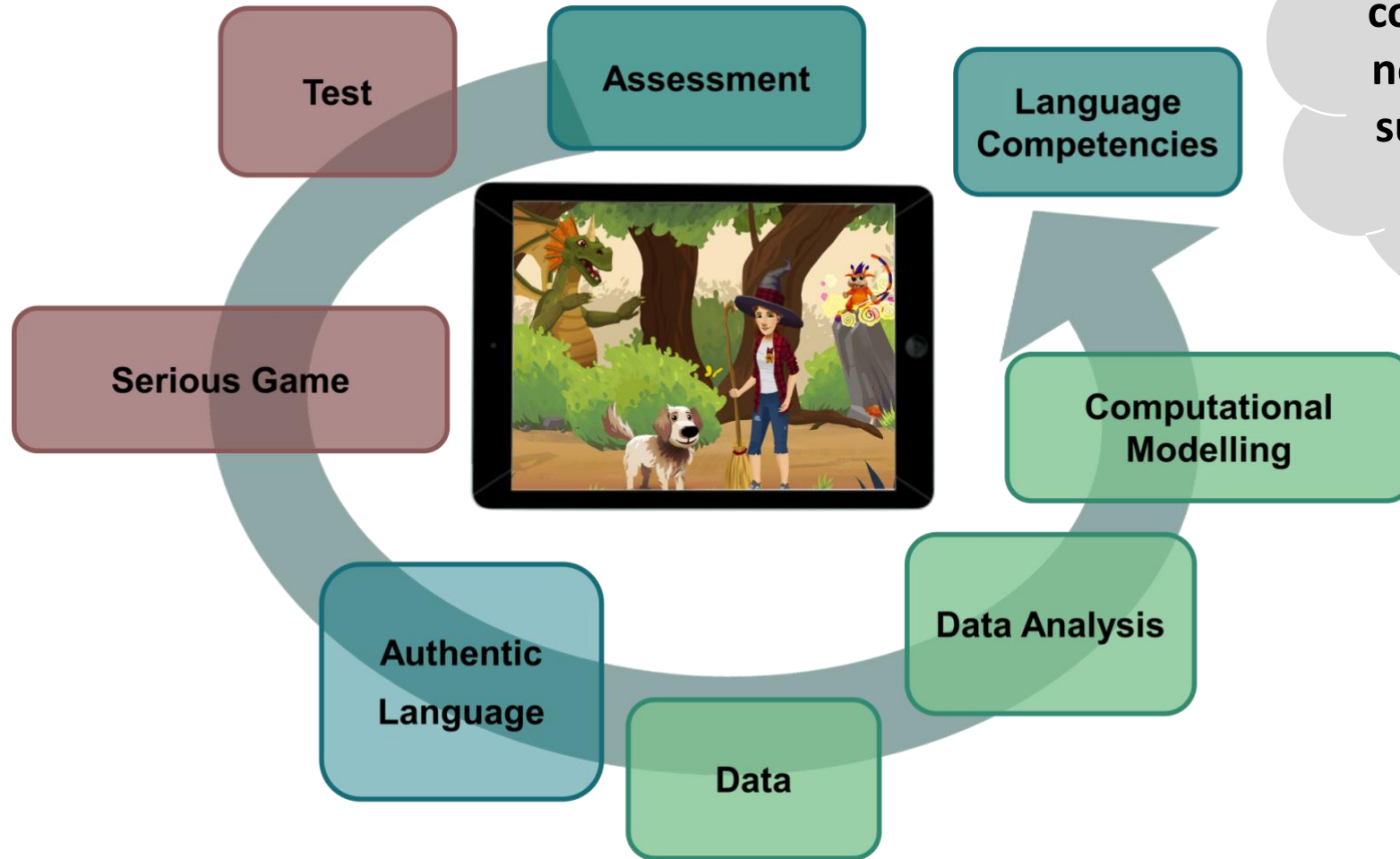
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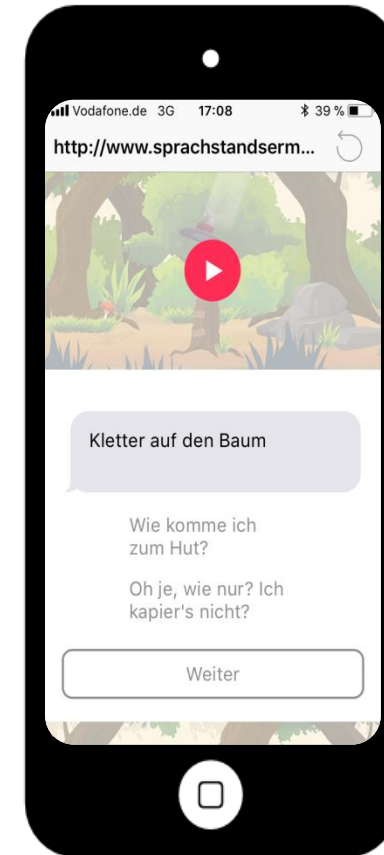
Objectives & Overview



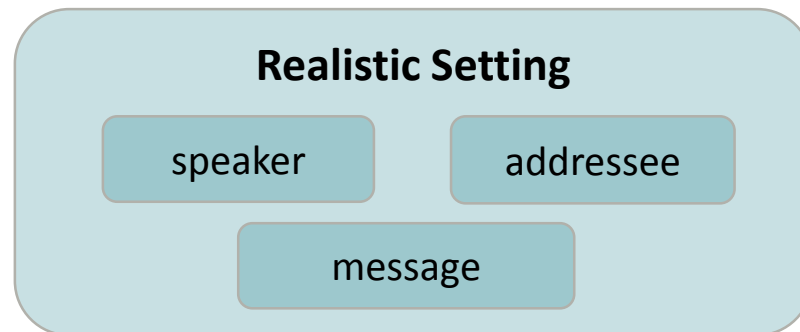
Assessment of the proper communicative potential & need for language learning support of 4- to 5-year-old children in German

- Promoting user engagement in assessment
- Providing more valid assessments compared to traditional approaches
- Providing meaningful and authentic (e.g. ecologically valid) contexts for assessments through interactive immersive environment
- Reducing the players test anxiety through a „stealth approach“
- Applying innovative technology → Advantages of digital software environment

Interactive App(s) for Language Assessment



- Game versus examination
- Childfriendly background story incorporating inspiring characters
- Player's quest → Children are asked to help the game's character.
- To accomplish this task, the child talks to the character on the tablet.
- Inherent motivation
- Test items are embedded in communicatively relevant situations.



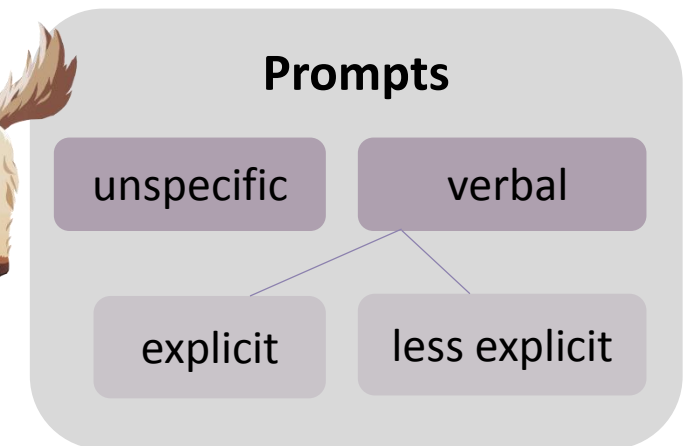
Corpus Studies: Spontaneous speech recordings of four children aged 4;0 to 4;11 years from German longitudinal corpora in CHILDES (MacWhinney 2000)

- Questions and answers:

Children do not give full answers at once

→ Elaboration on a topic takes several turns

- Providing specific follow-up questions helps the child to focus on the precise information that is requested.



- Spatial expressions are highly frequent (approx. 30% of utterances contain spatial information)

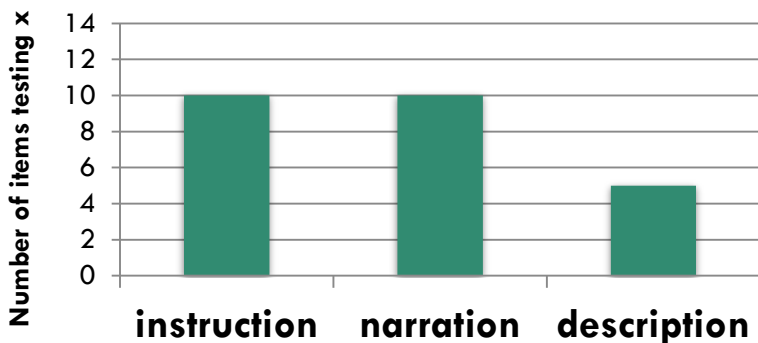
- Languages show strikingly different lexicalization patterns in the expression of motion events (e.g. Slobin 1996; Talmy 2000).
- Cross-linguistic differences affect the speakers' focus of attention (*Thinking-for-Speaking*: Slobin 1996, 2004).
- When verbalizing a motion event, speakers choose among several means of expressions those which are typical of their native language.

Implications for early L2 acquisition (Bryant 2012)

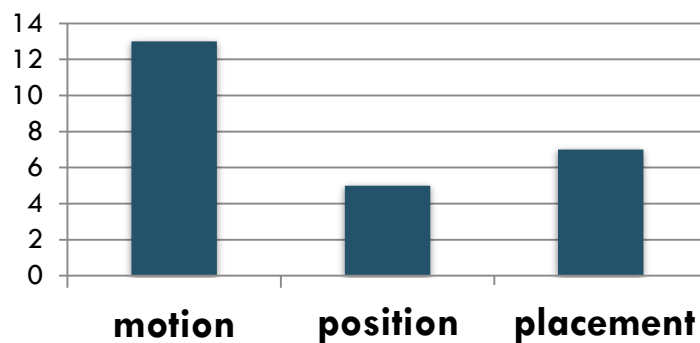
- L2 learners produce spatial descriptions deviant from target language norms.
- Even with a contact time of 24 months, children with L2 German differ from L1 children.

Domain Space: Testsystematics

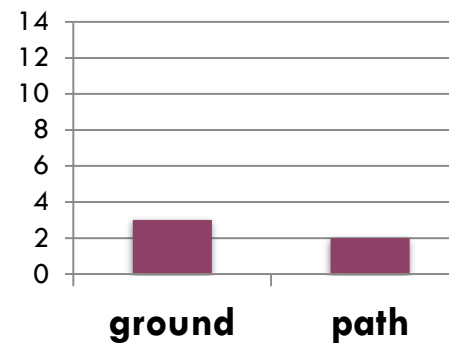
Discourse Type



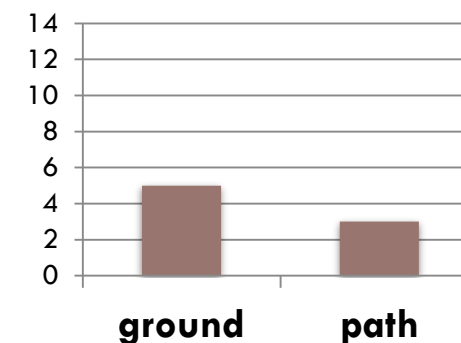
Event Type






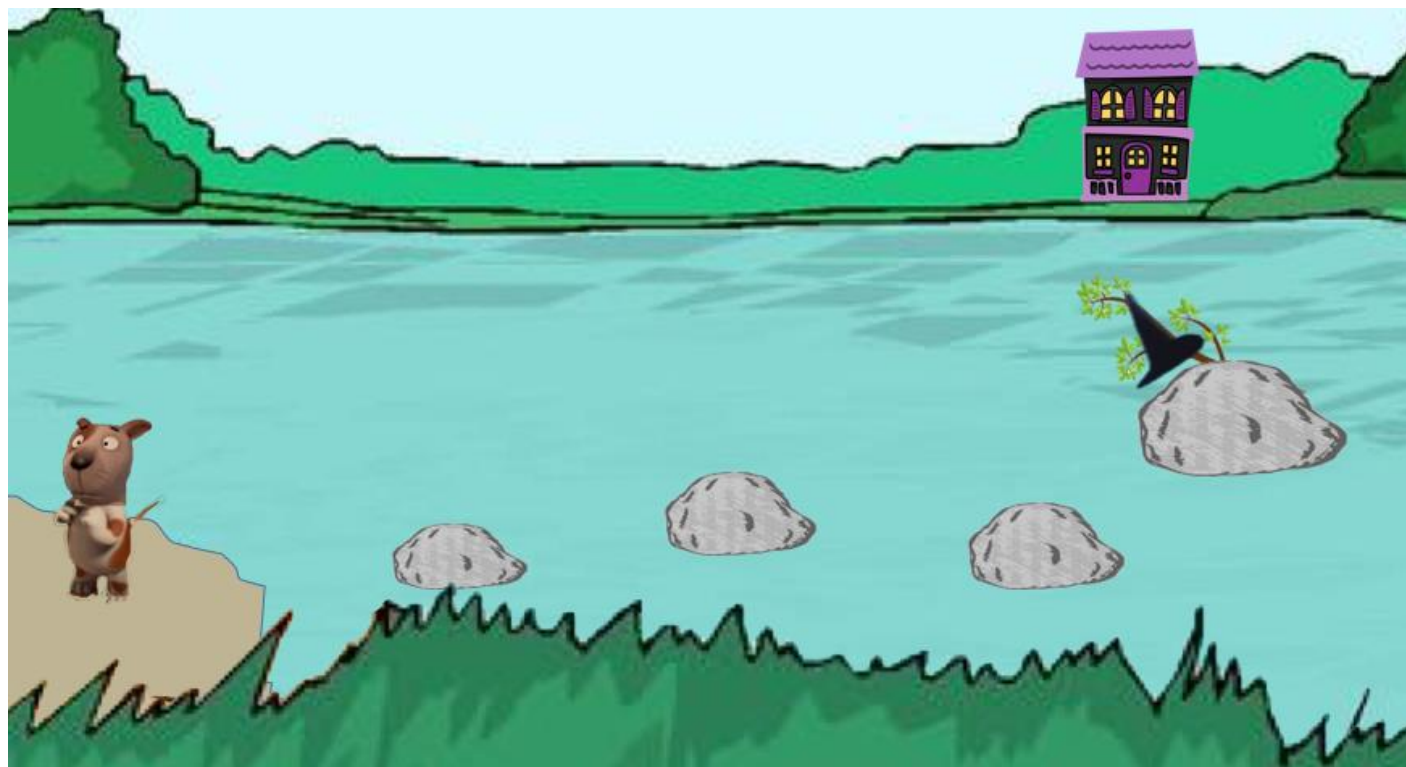
Canonicity



Complexity



Discourse Type	(Figure) Ground	Relation	Event	Event Type	Canonicity	Complexity	
instruction	(Du) Gras (you) grass	durch <i>through</i>	springen <i>to jump</i>	motion	path		
narration	(Hut) großer Korb (hat) big basket	in <i>in</i>	legen <i>to put</i>	placement		ground	
description	(Flasche) Tisch (bottle) table	auf <i>on</i>	stehen <i>to stand</i>	position			



- ❖ Why are you afraid, dog?
- ❖ How do I get to the hat?
- ❖ You can swim yourself, too?
Can't you?
Or you jump onto the stone?
Or are you afraid?
- ❖ But how?
- ❖ You can [uh] swim yourself.
- ❖ Mhm.
- ❖ Or jump on the stone then.
- ❖ Okay. I'm gonna try that.
- ❖ Good job, dog! You made!

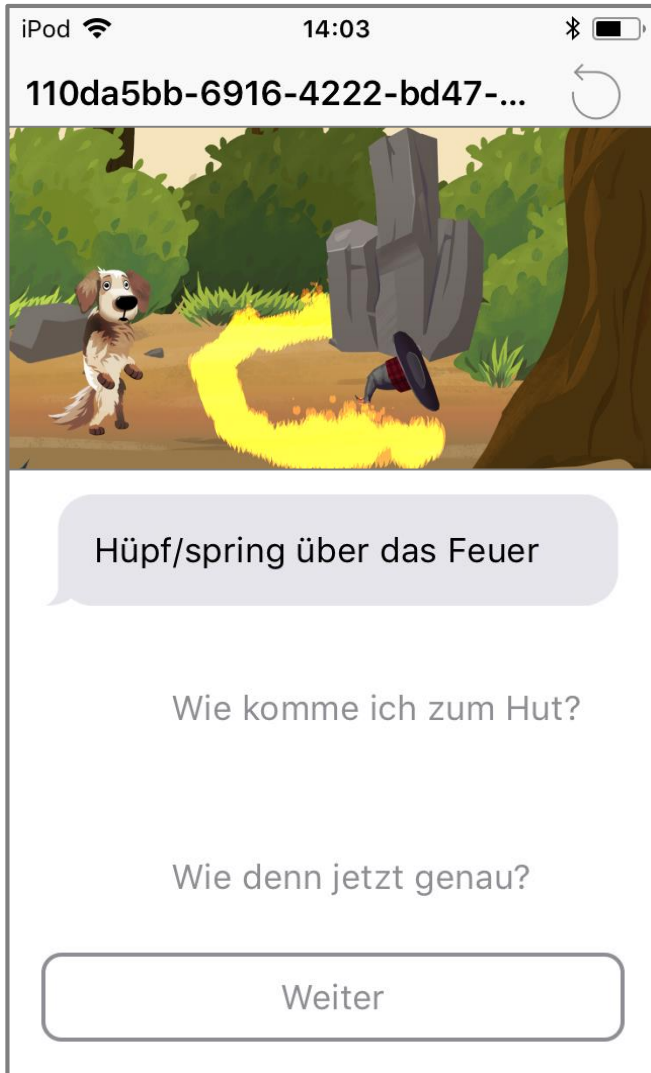
App Demonstration



Unspecific prompt:
OOHHHHHHH

Verbal prompt (1):
How do I get to the hat?

Verbal prompt (2):
How exactly?



Unspecific prompt:

Dort ist des Hut. Wie sollst du denn machen. Spring. Spring am besten. Spring. Springen. Kannst du bitte springen. Du musst springen.

There is the hat. How you should do. Jump. Best is to jump. Jump. Jump. Can you please jump. You have to jump.



Verbal prompt (1):

How do I get to the hat?

Du musst springen.

You have to jump.



Verbal prompt (2):

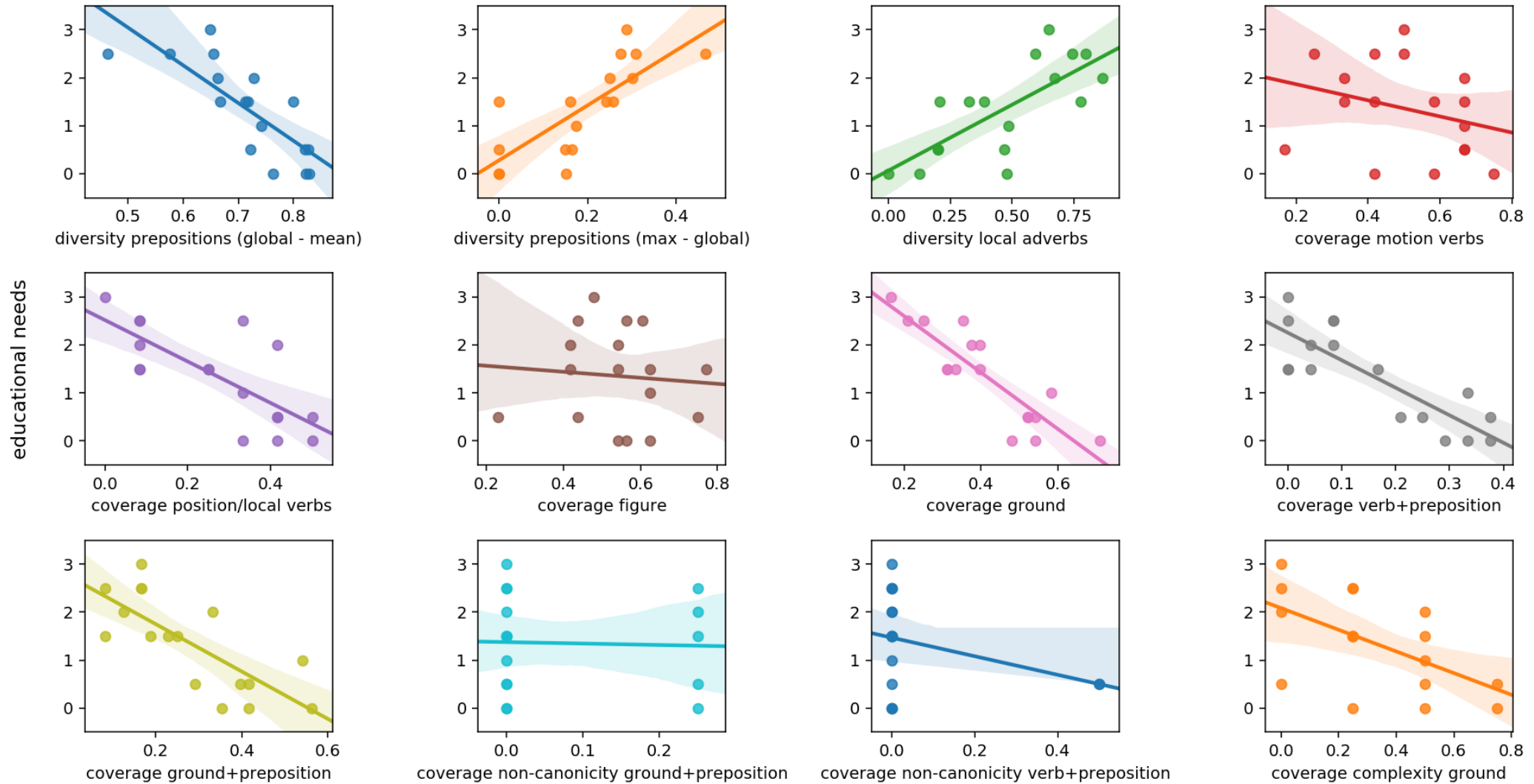
How exactly?

Du musst einfach hüpfen. Durch des Feuer.

You just have to hop. Through the fire.

- Measurements for analysis of language use are based on orthographic transcripts
- Expert ratings for
 - a) language abilities (covered by test systematics)
 - b) need for language learning support
 - c) Analysis of linguistic features (e.g. diversity in use of prepositions, motion verbs)
- Are there differences in a), b), c) between groups with different e.g. L1, age, contact time with German?
- Which linguistic features are most discriminative to predict children's needs for language learning support?

Overview Preliminary Features



- Pilot testing of the App: 120 children aged 4;6 to 6;0 years with German as a first and second language
- Validation studies: Expert ratings, correlations with existing tests, evaluations on the authenticity of language production (e.g. use of modal particles and ellipses, questions addressing the dog)
- Usability testing of the Apps
- Adding more domains to the assessment tool (discourse, definiteness, possession)
- Standard setting
- Incorporation of spoken language features



Thank you for your attention!





- **Daimler and Benz Foundation and all members of the Ladenburger Kolleg:**

Wolfgang Klein, Gabriele Kecker, Elisabetta Terrasi-Haufe, Christoph Draxler, Heike Behrens, Katrin Skoruppa, Karin Madlener, Dirk Ifenthaler, Jan Delcker, Frank Thissen, Marcus Hasselhorn, Wolfgang Woerner

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- **NEXT Munich**

Reference

Roche, J., Jessen, M.; Weidinger, N., Behrens, H., Haberzettl, S., Hasselhorn, M., Ifenthaler, D., Kapica, N., Kecker, G., Klein, W., Madlener, K., Pagonis, G., Schug, M., Skoruppa, K., Terrasi-Haufe, E. & Thissen, F. (2016). Zur Entwicklung eines interaktiven Verfahrens der Sprachstandsermittlung bei mehrsprachig aufwachsenden Kindern - von der Idee zu ersten Umsetzungsschritten. *Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht*. 21(2), pp. 127-142. <http://tujournals.ulb.tu-darmstadt.de/index.php/zif/article/view/819/820>