

A photograph of a historic stone archway, likely a remnant of a castle or fortress, set against a twilight sky. To the left, a church with two prominent spires is brightly lit with warm yellow lights. The foreground shows a grassy field and some trees. The overall scene is a blend of natural and architectural beauty.

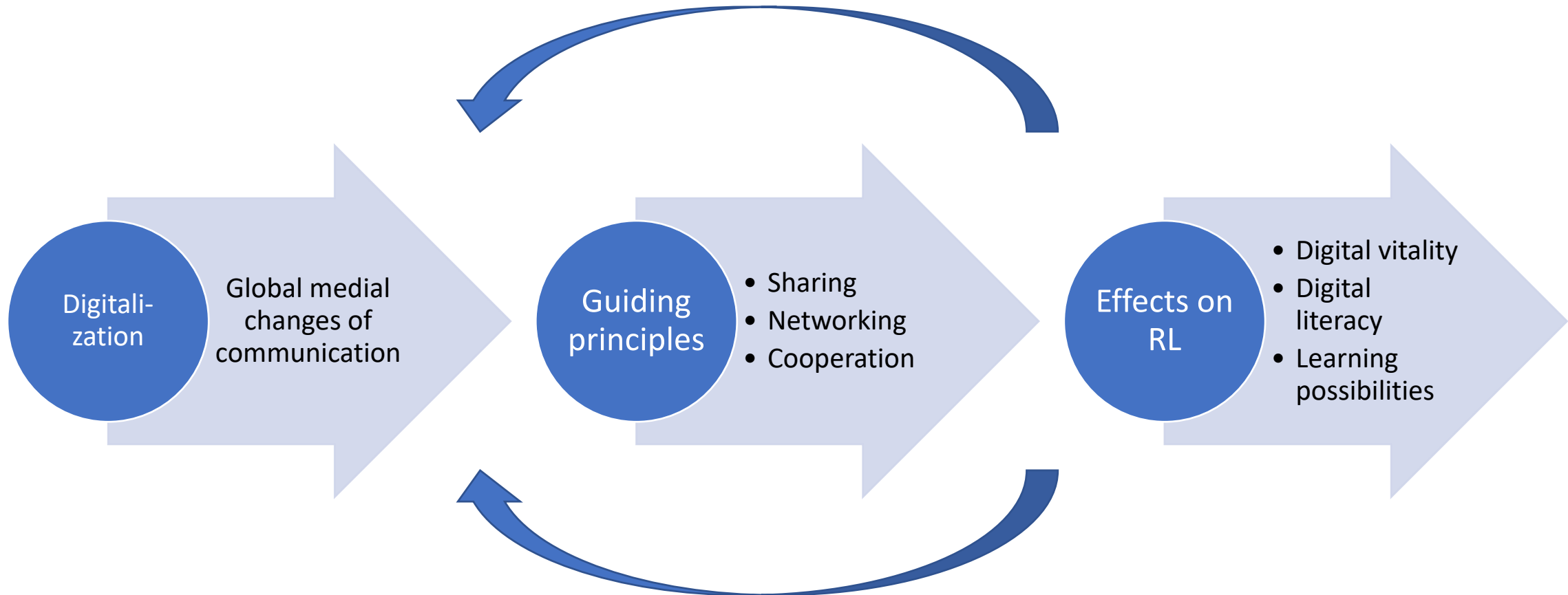
Education through Digitalization? – Learning Potentials for Regional and Minority Languages

Birte Arendt

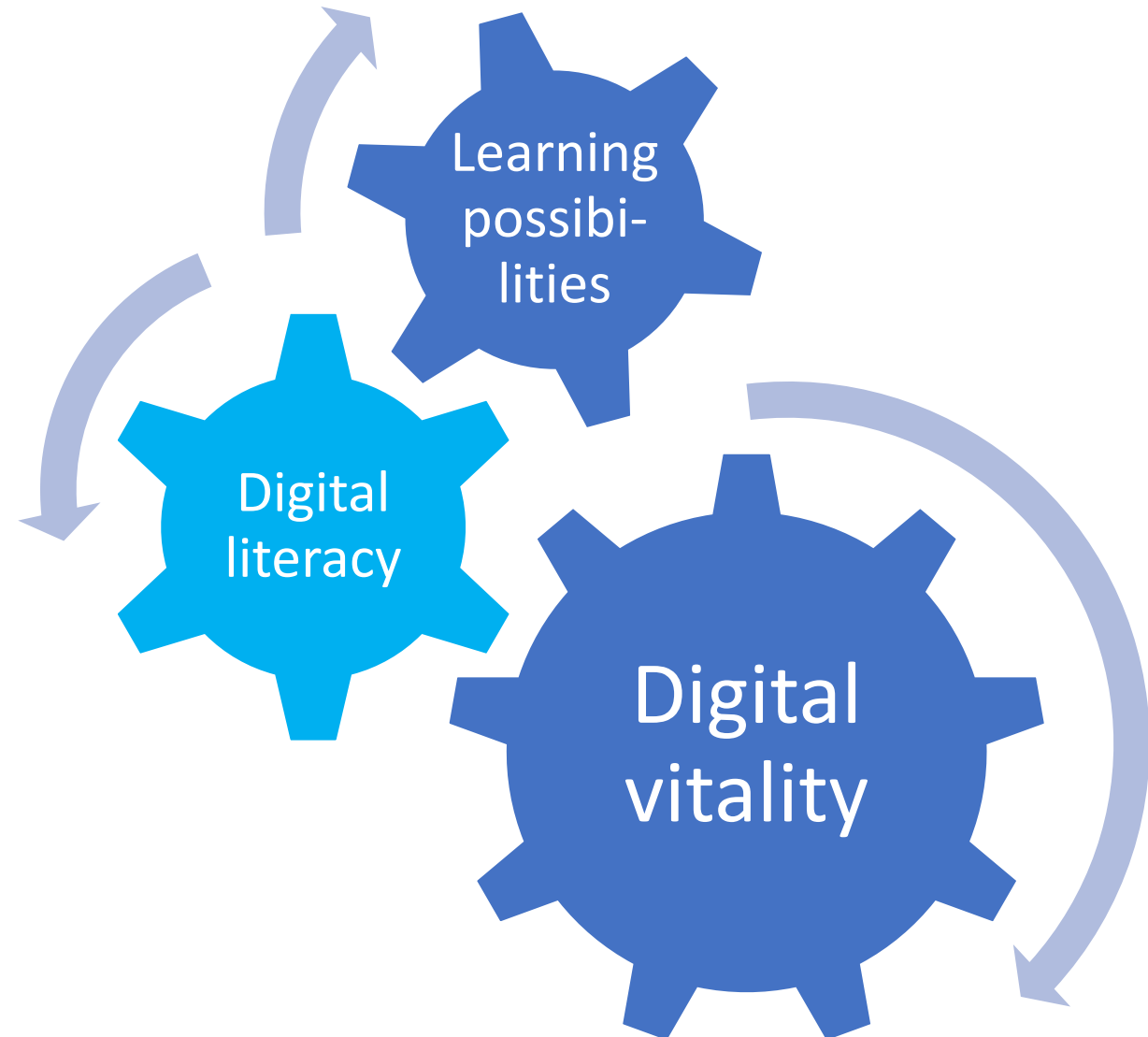
Competence Center for the Teaching of Low German (CCTLG)
University of Greifswald/Germany

0. Digitalization

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



0. Digitalization

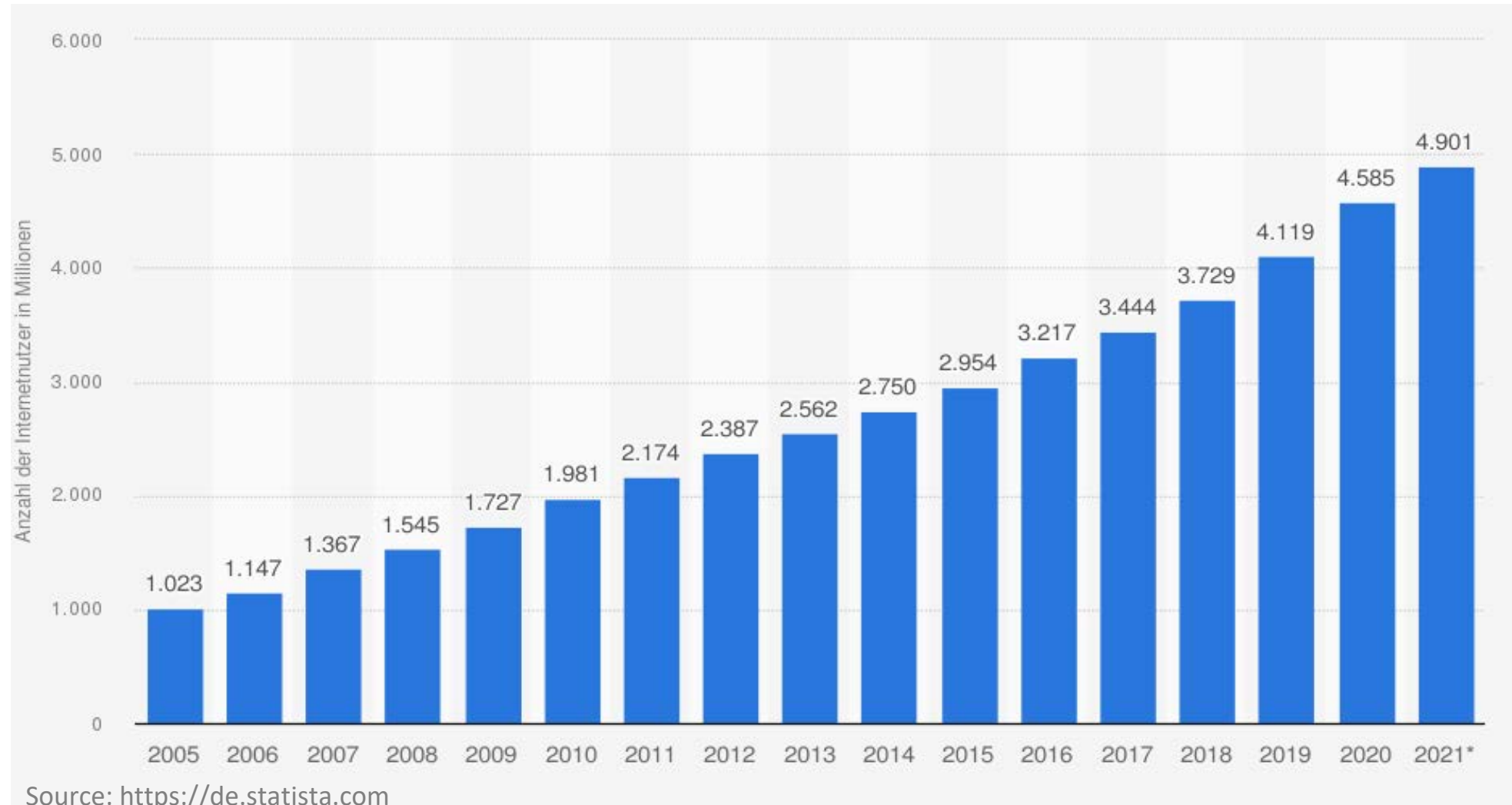


Theses guiding the talk

1. For RL 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** and linguistic critical **appropriateness**.
3. Digitalization can open up specific **learning possibilities** for RL, the use of which depends on the learners or new speakers.

1. For RL 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 RL



1. Digital vitality of RL

(1) Language maintenance

Digital networking to virtual CofP can create affinity spaces.

(cf. e.g. Eckert/McConell-Ginet 1999; Gee 2005; Moriarti, 2015; Angouri 2015).

(2) Language use

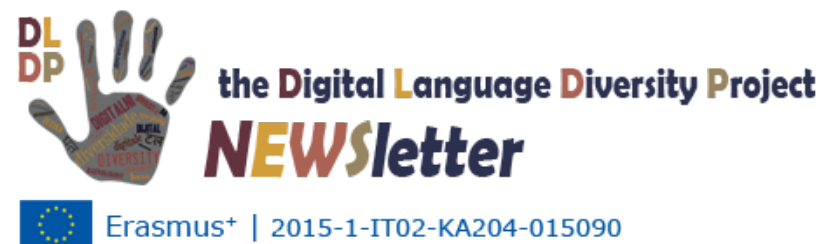
Digitisation can establish translocal communication spaces for and through RL. (cf. e.g. Thurlow 2012, 25; Kytölä 2015).

(3) Language acquisition and teaching.

E-learning and digital literacy are particularly relevant for RL. (cf. e.g. Caruso/Hofmann 2018, 68; Knobel/Lankshear 2015; Black 2008).

1. Digital vitality of RL

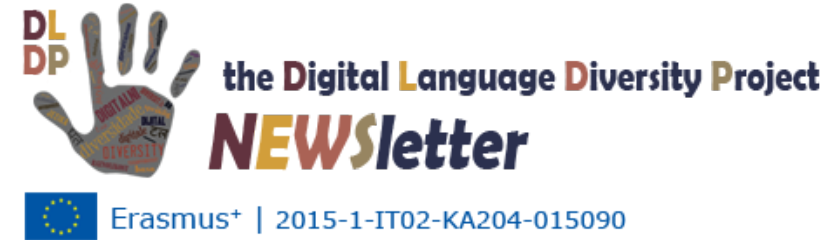
- Extend to which a language is used and usable on the internet and through digital devices (cf. Dolowy-Rybinska/Soria, 2021)
- RL: Digital Language Vitality Scale (Ceberio et al. 2018/www.dldp.eu)
- groups of indicators
 1. Language digital capacity
 2. Language digital presence and use
 3. Language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



1. Digital vitality of RL

Results

- Digital minorization of RML
- „general perception [...] **moderately positive**“ (Ferré-Pavia et al. 2018, 1082)
- Dominance of English
 - Digital linguistic imperialism (Phillipson 1992) and/or linguistic justice (Van Parijs 2011)
- Low German online (Reershemius 2023; Fenske 2021; Arendt i.r.)

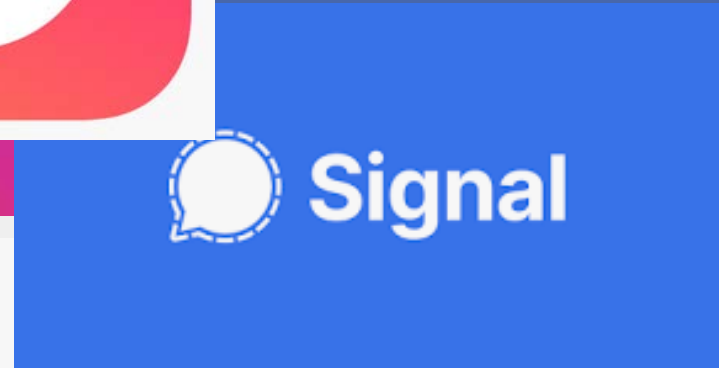


1. Digital vitality of RL

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** and linguistic critical **appropriateness**.





WIKIPEDIA
Dat fre'e Nakieksel

10:34

PlattinO

Die Plattlern-App

Plattdeutsche Sprachlern-App für Ostfriesland

Niveau A1



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Version 2.11

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

→ Polymedia (Madianou/Miller 2021)



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

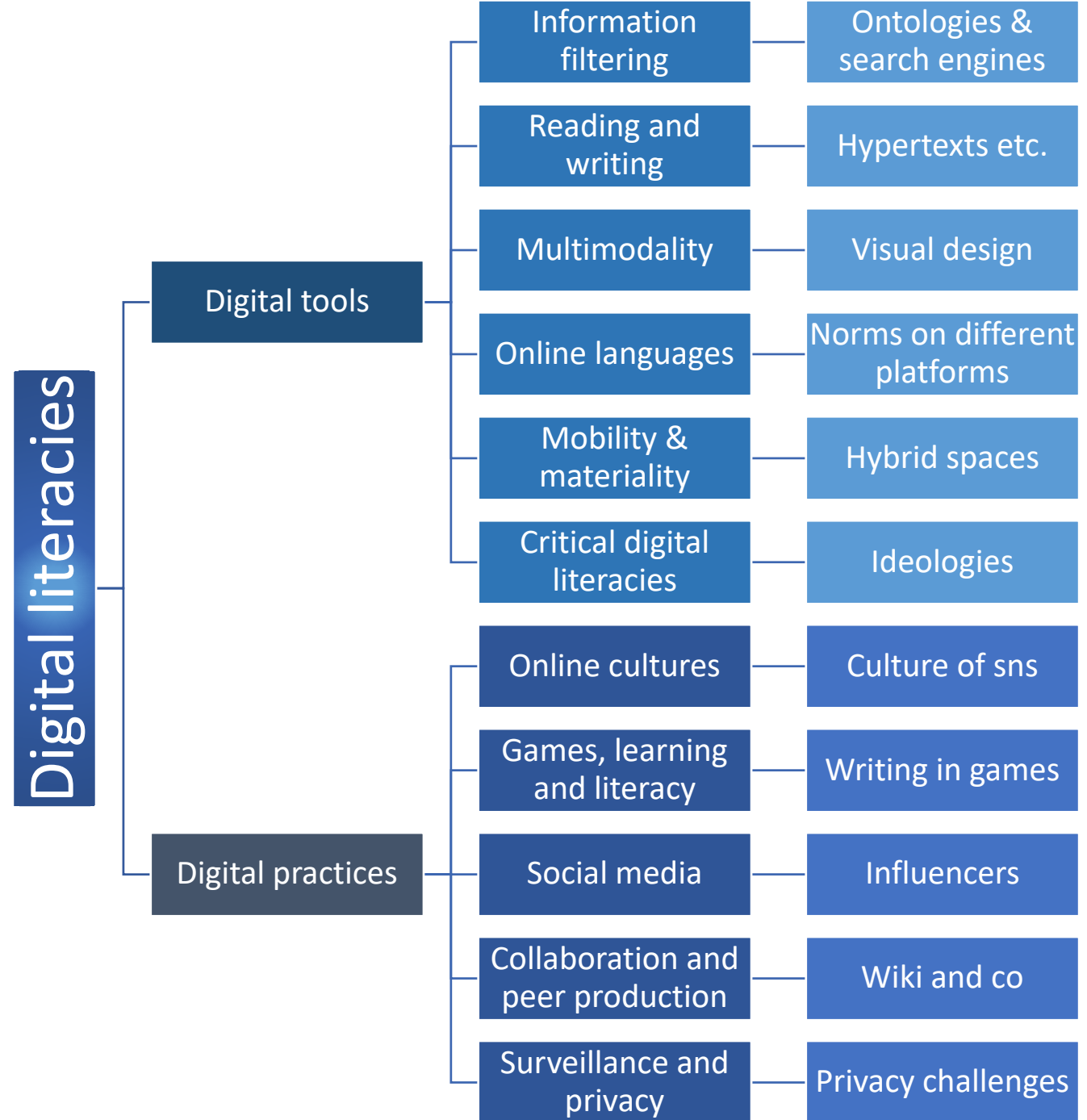
“[Digital literacies are literacies,] that have emerged with the rise of **social practices mediated by digital media**, and that are marked by an ethos characterized by deep **interactivity**, openness for feedback, **sharing** of resources and expertise, and a will to **collaborate** and provide support.”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

2. Digital literacy

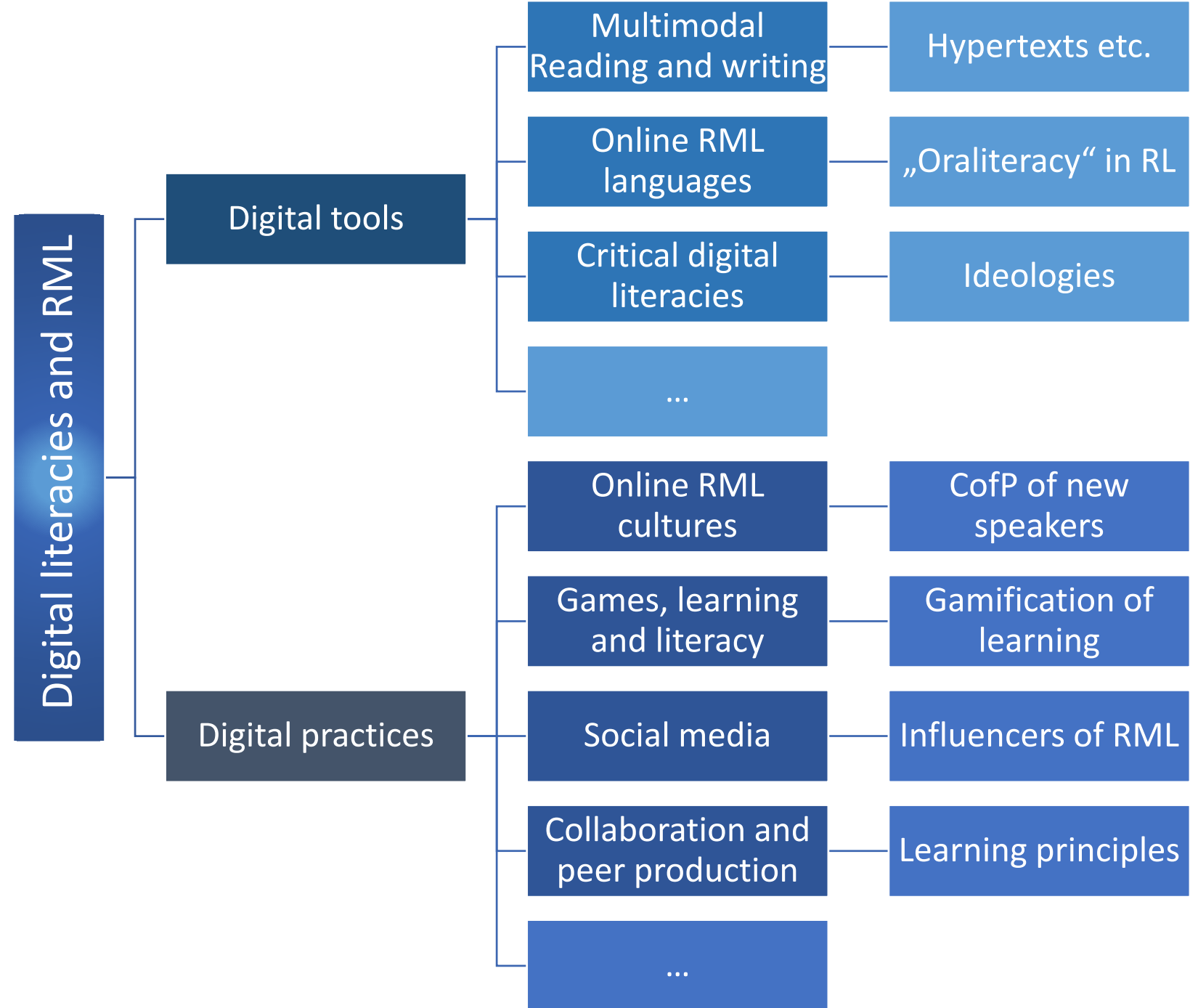
5 different kinds of affordances

1. On what **we can do**
2. On what **we can mean**
3. On how **we can relate to others**
4. On how or **what we can think**
5. On who **we can be**

2. Digital literacies



2. Digital literacies



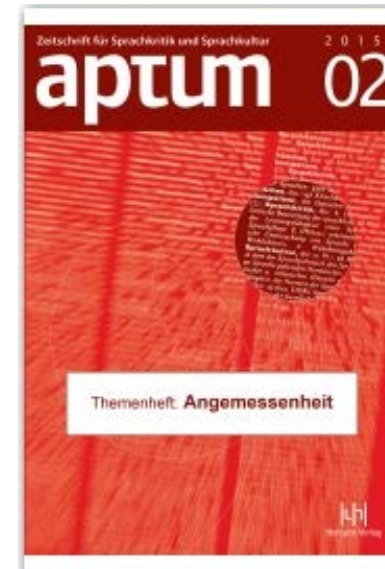
2. Digital literacies



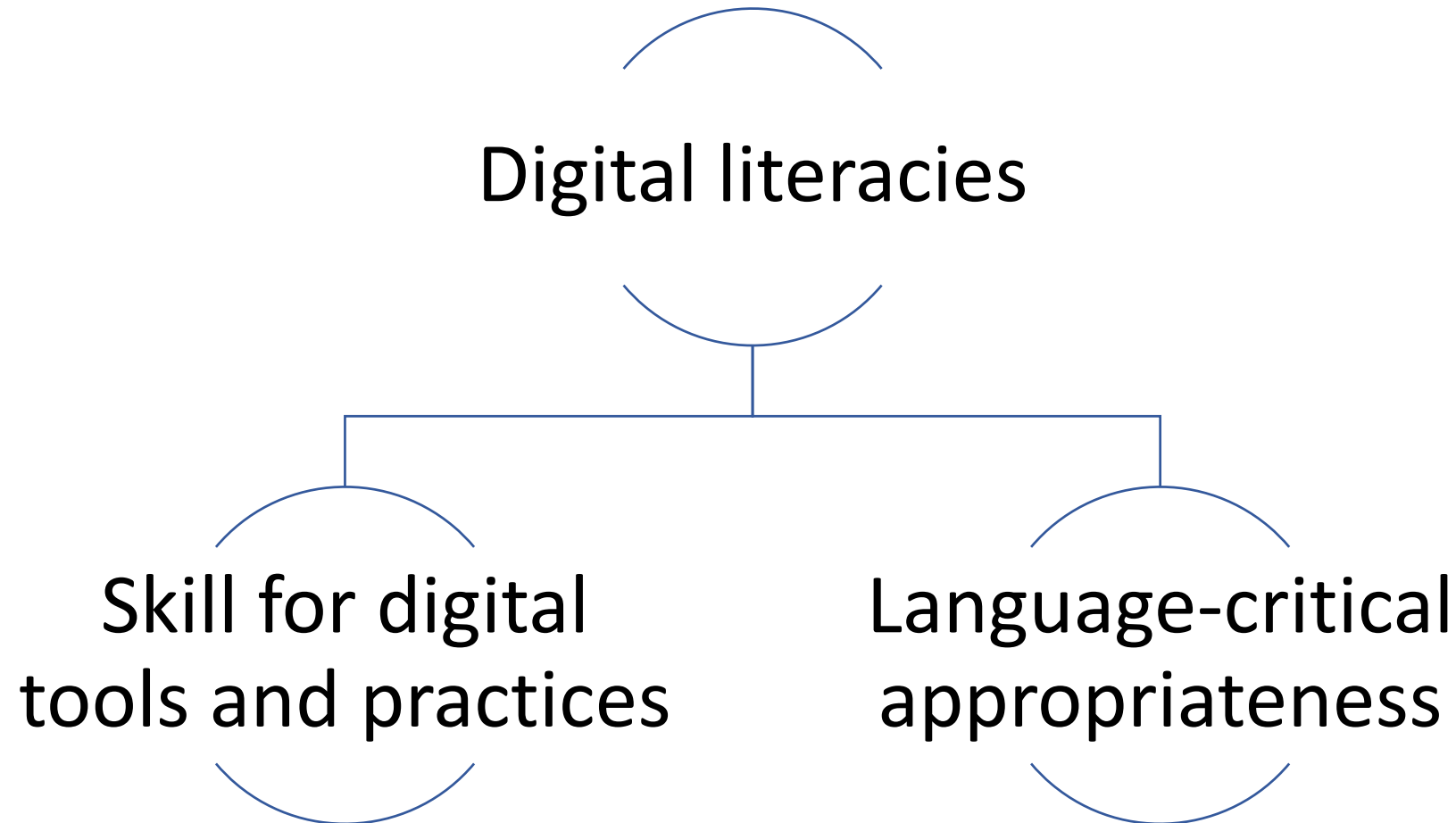
- As a social practice, literacy cannot be properly understood apart from the **context** in which it is situated“ (Iorio 2015, 166; Street 2003)
- „‘Digital literacies’ are ways in which people use the mediational means available to them to take actions and make meaning in particular social, cultural, and economic **contexts**. Consequently, they are inevitably tied up with values, ideologies, power, relationships, and cultural understanding that are part of these **contexts**. They involve not just being able to ,operate‘ tools like computers and smartphones, **but also the ability to adapt the affordances and constraints of these tools to particular circumstances.**“ (Jones/Hafner 2021, 18)

2. Digital literacies & appropriateness

Competence of appropriateness "does not consist in mastering rigid conventions, but lies in the competence to interpret situational factors, to weigh them and to align speech with them - quasi-relationally". (Arendt/Schäfer 2015, 97)

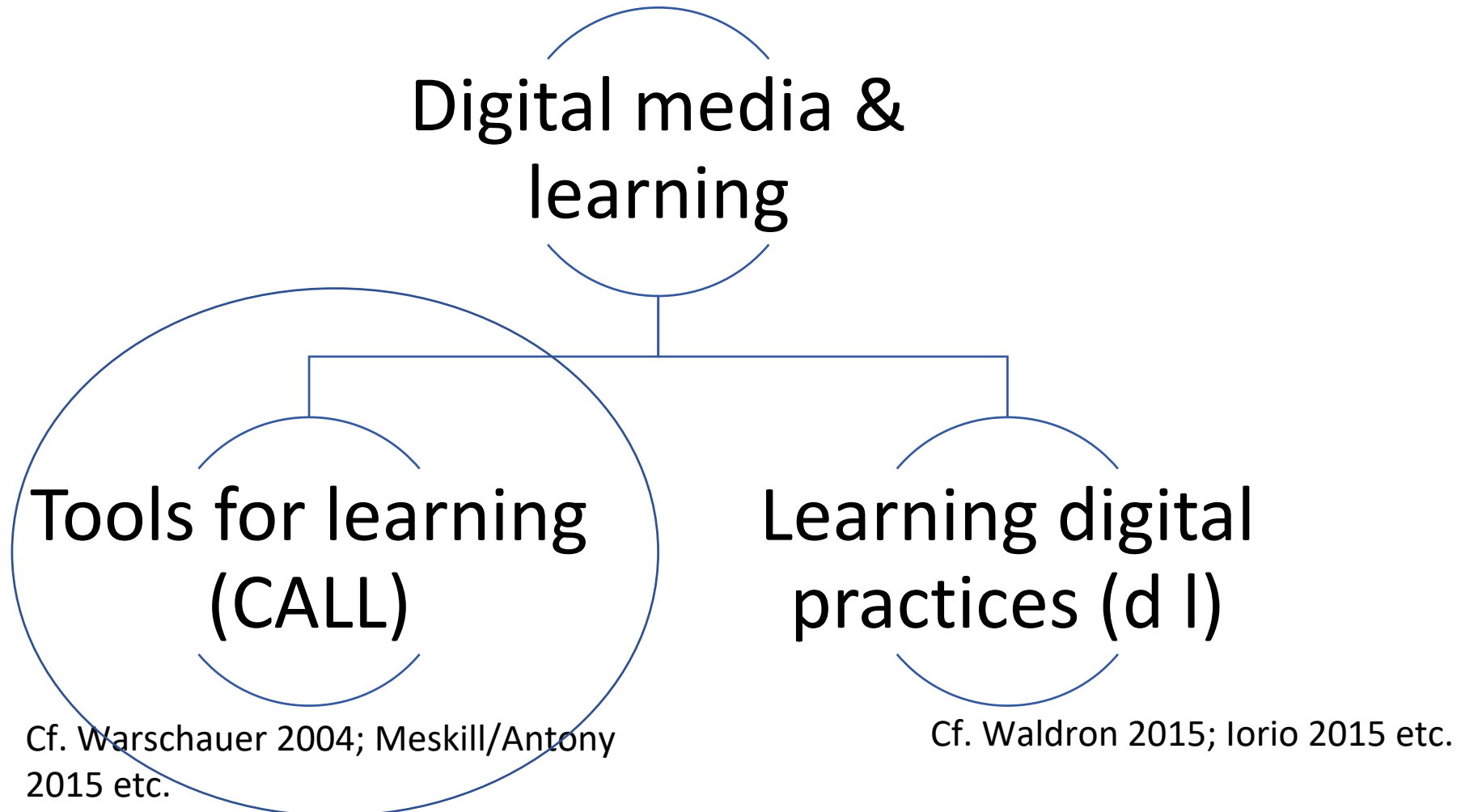


2. Digital literacies & appropriateness



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

3. Digital media & learning



3. Digital media & learning

Online courses for Low German

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

- small/contested/minority language (i.a. Pietikäinen/Kelly-Holmes 2013; Tamburelli/Tosco 2021)
- 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)

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)



Source: <https://www.niederdeutschsekretariat.de>

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

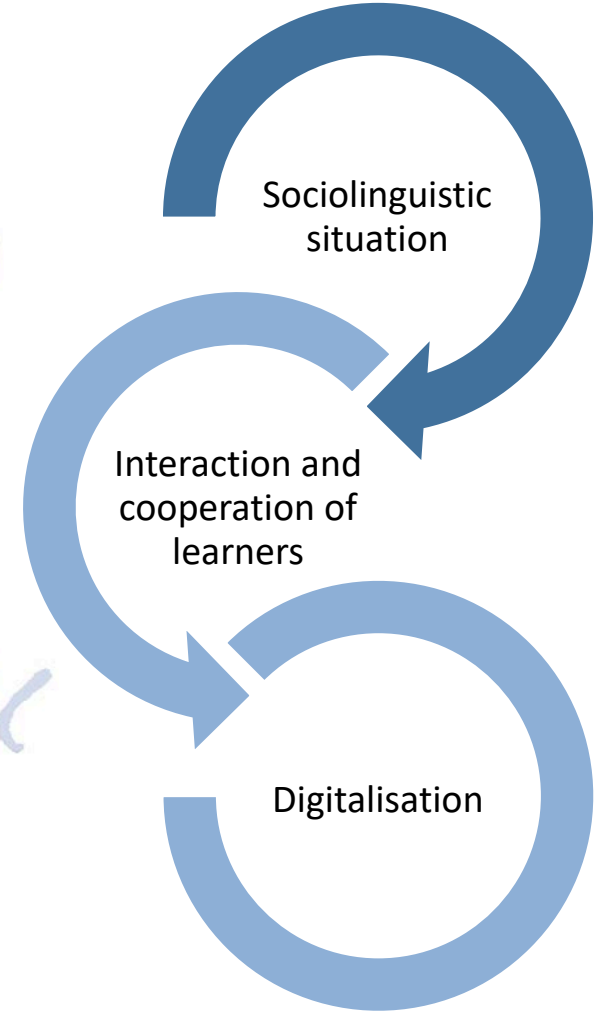
E-learning

sitten - sitzen
Pund - Pund
Pier - Pier
Apfel - Apfel

Sociolinguistic situation

Interaction and cooperation of learners

Digitalisation

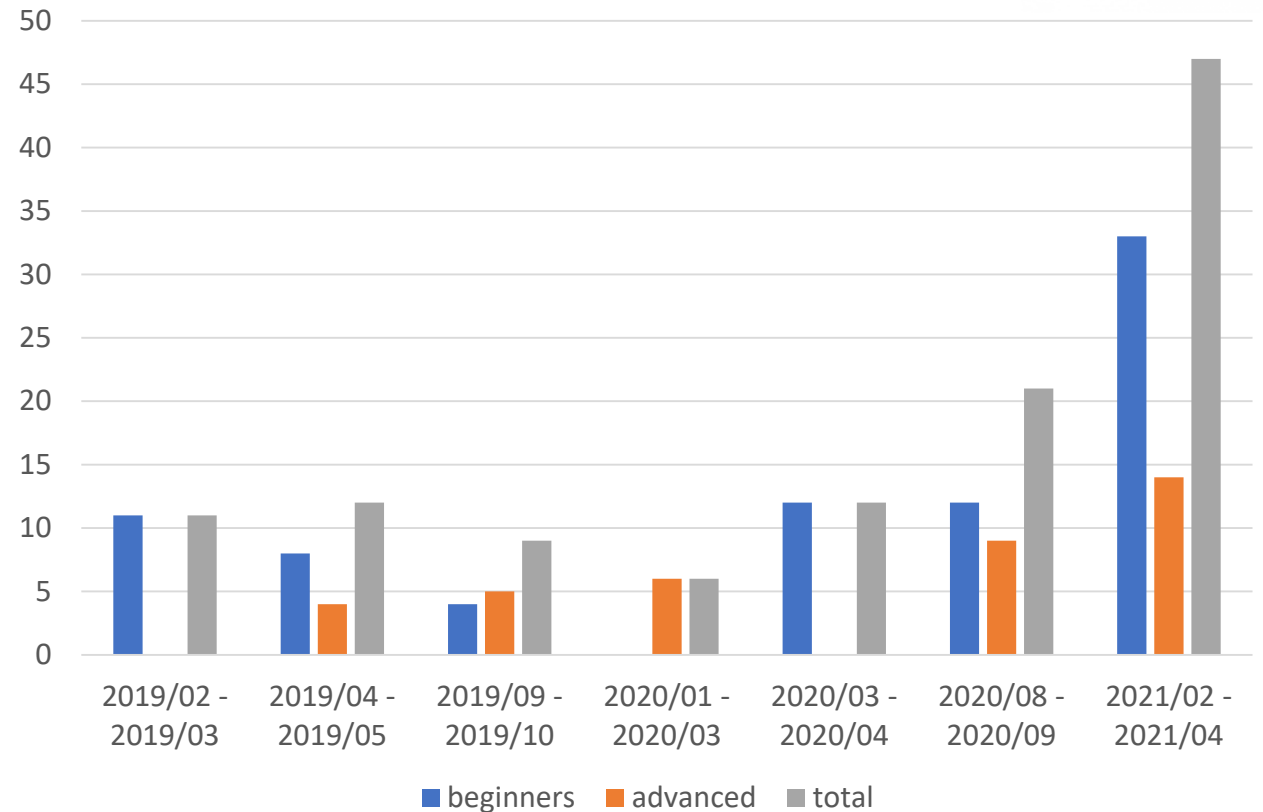


3. Digital media & learning

Online courses for Low German

OER of CCTLG

- Teaching Videos
- Qizlett material
- Online courses
- ALWINE (vocabulary trainer)
- Digital dictionary
- Learning-App



3. Digital media & learning

Online courses for Low German

Teaching
principle

Cognitive-
constructivistic
concept of
learning

Methods

Interaction and
cooperation
oriented

Digitalization
(E-Learning)

Characteristics

Inclusion of
heterogeneous
knowledges

Demanding
acquisition
contexts

Translocal
communication

Virtual CofP &
affinity spaces

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

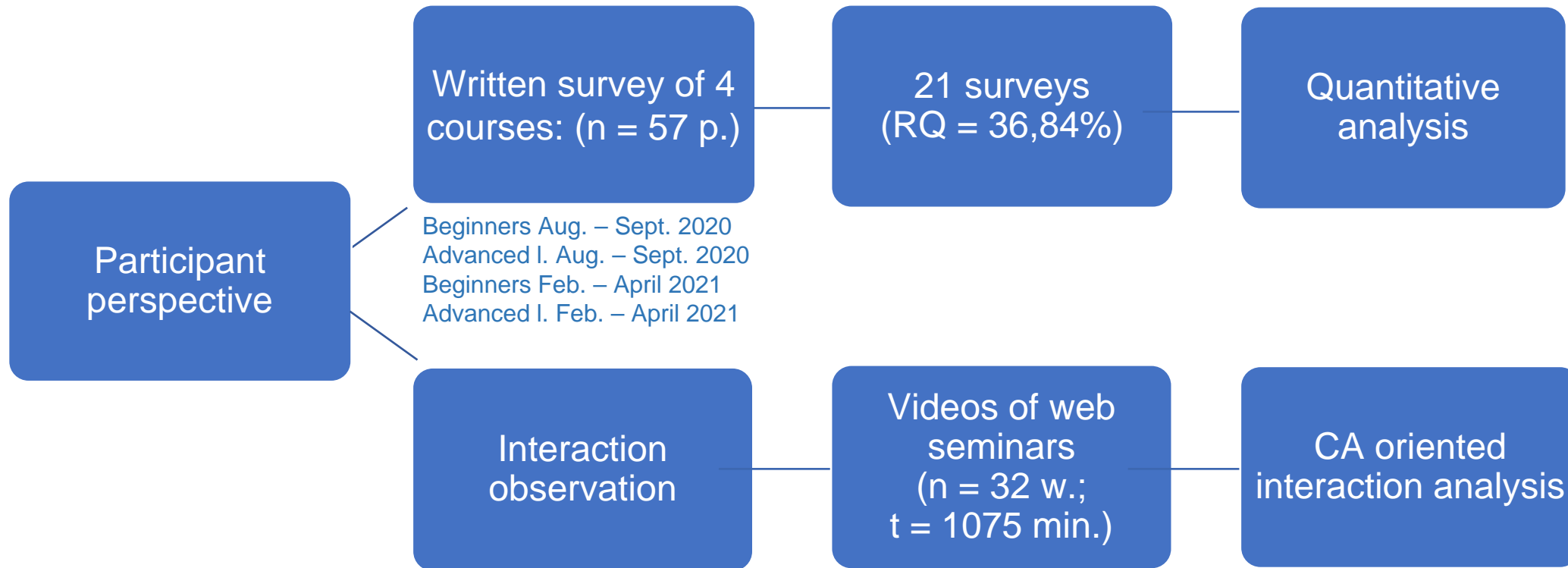
3. Digital media & learning

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?

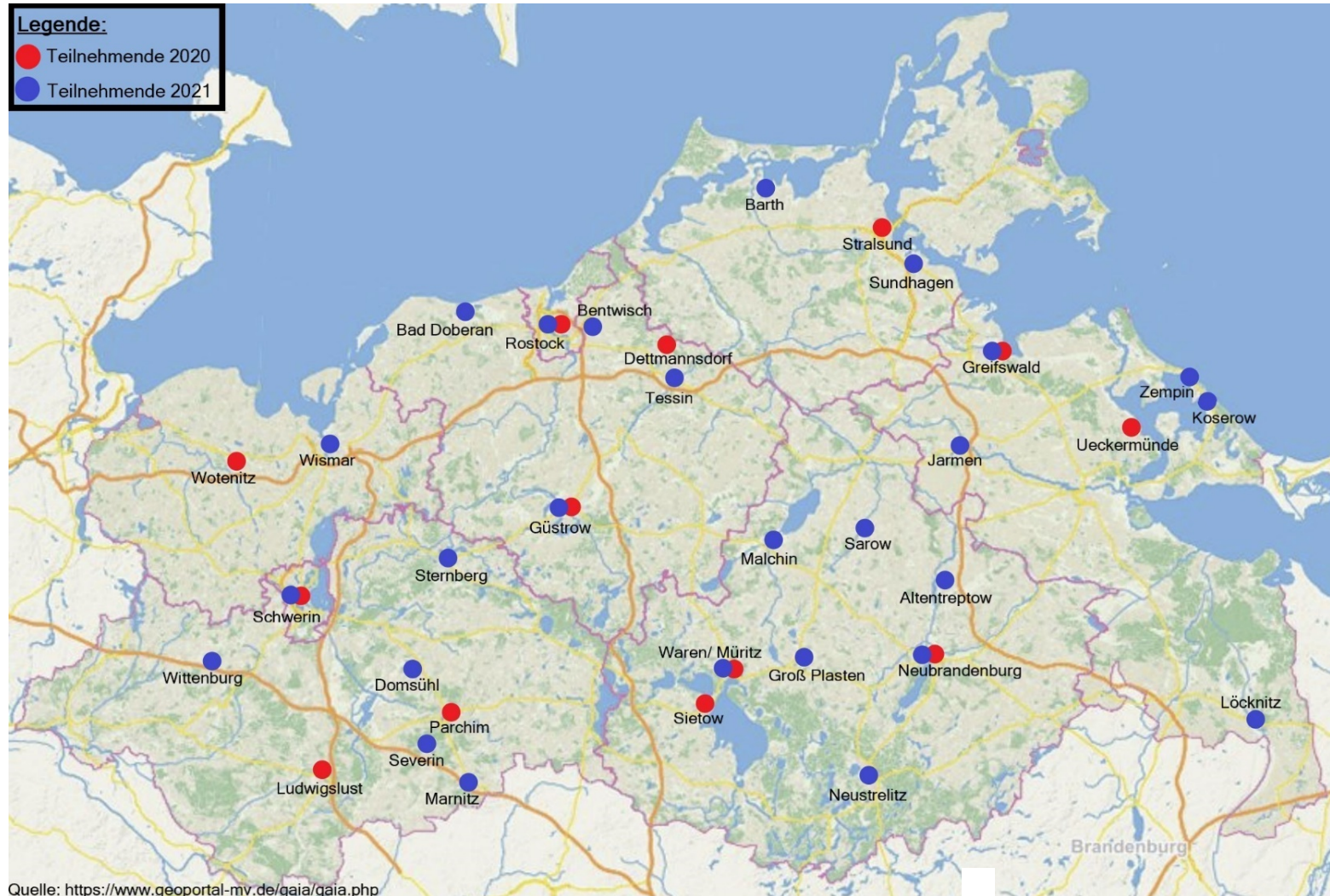
3. Digital media & learning

Online courses for Low German



3. Digital media & learning

Online courses for Low German



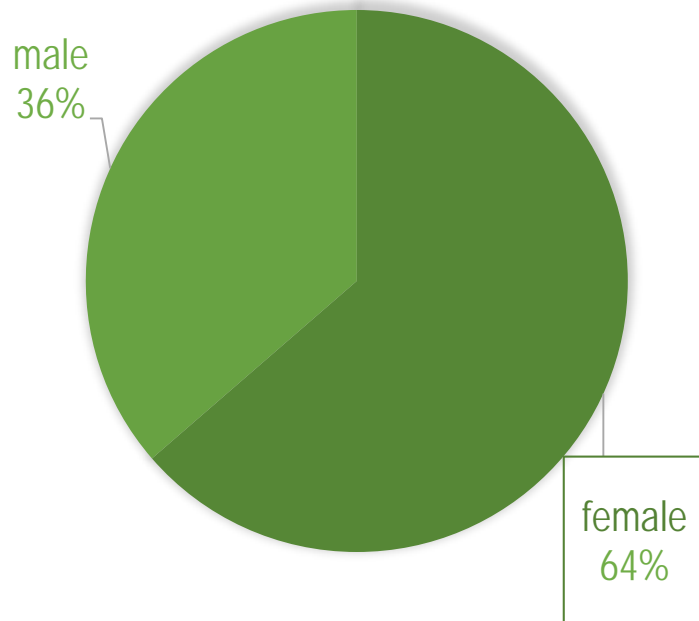
Who?

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

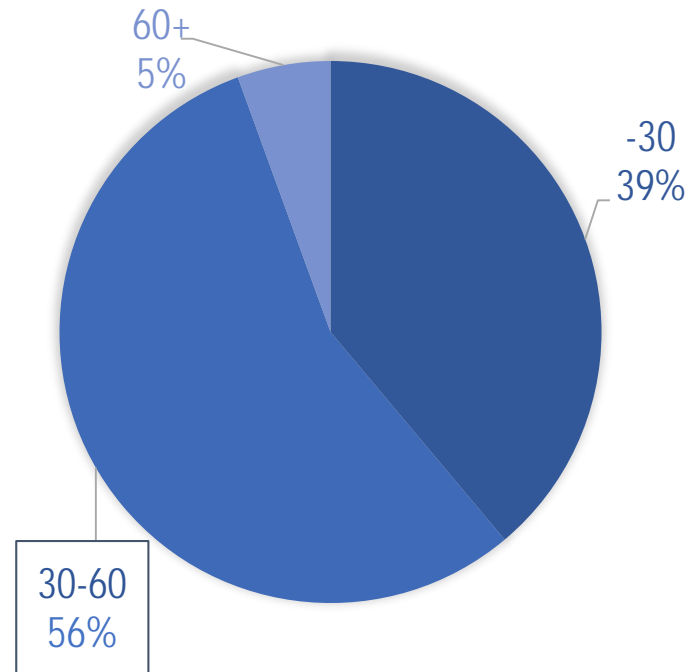
3. Digital media & learning

Online courses for Low German

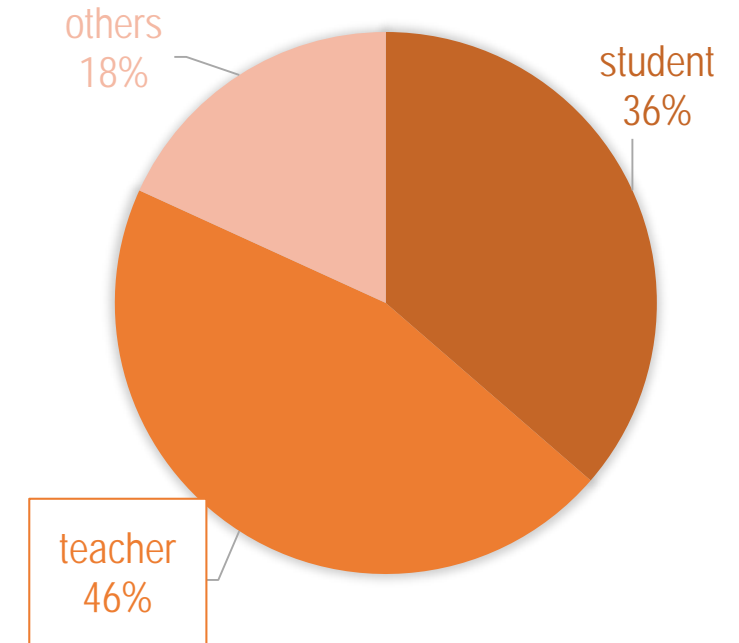
GENDER



AGE



PROFESSION



Typical participant

- adult female teachers with predominantly receptive competences

3. Digital media & learning

Online courses for Low German

”

*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

The screenshot displays an online course interface for Low German. The interface is divided into two main sections: a content area on the left and a video/chat area on the right.

Content Area (Left):

- WS (Wissen):** Un dann fräten sei kein Mūs mihr. De Mūs fräten de Fauder für den Käuh un de Käuh verhungern.
- LS (Lesen):** De Katten kümm alleen runner van de Boom und wenn dat ierst Wind gäben möt, aber runner kamen de van alleen. Aver
- WS (Wissen):** Awer dat duert ok 50 Jahr. Bi Katten ut Mäkelborg.
- LS (Lesen):** Lat doch mol de M

Video/Chat Area (Right):

- Teacher:** Ulrike Stern (labeled "teacher")
- Chat:** A chat window showing messages from students (MN) and a moderator. The messages are: "Moin, alltausamen!" and "Moin!" (labeled "chat").
- Learners:** A list of participants at the bottom, including Wiebke Salzmann, Lisa Schultz, and didaktik, Ulrike Stern (labeled "learners").

The bottom of the interface shows a video player with a play button and a progress bar. The progress bar indicates the video is at 59:29. The bottom right corner shows a settings icon and a full screen icon.

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: [föffftig]
 [fifty]
024 US: [föffftig]
 [fifty]
025 W: ((kurzes Lachen)) föffftig 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

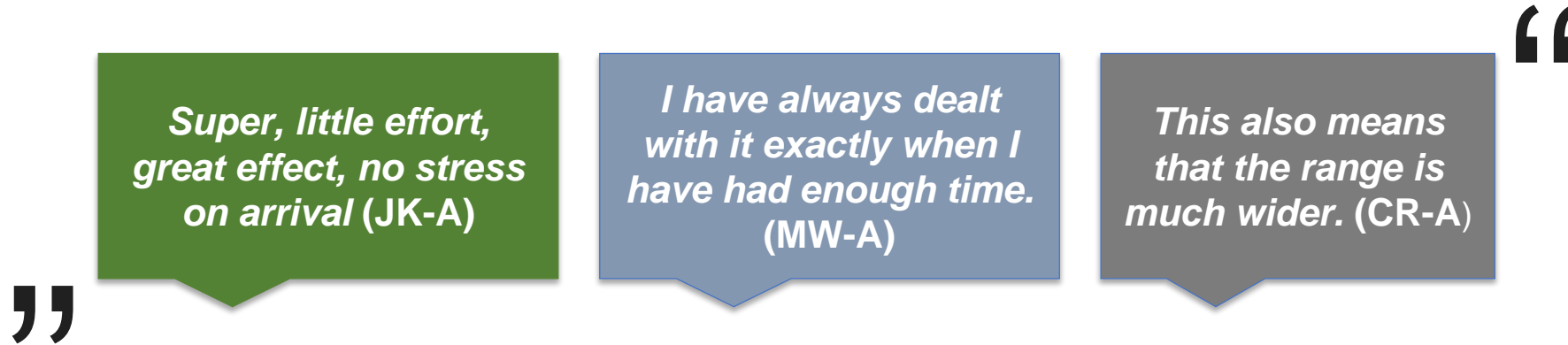
” *At least I dared to speak in Low German (CR-A; BR-F; JK-F)* *My vocabulary and grammar knowledge has improved. (LL-F)* *Since I started listening to radio, audio books and videos in Low German, my listening comprehension has improved (JP-A)* “

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



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

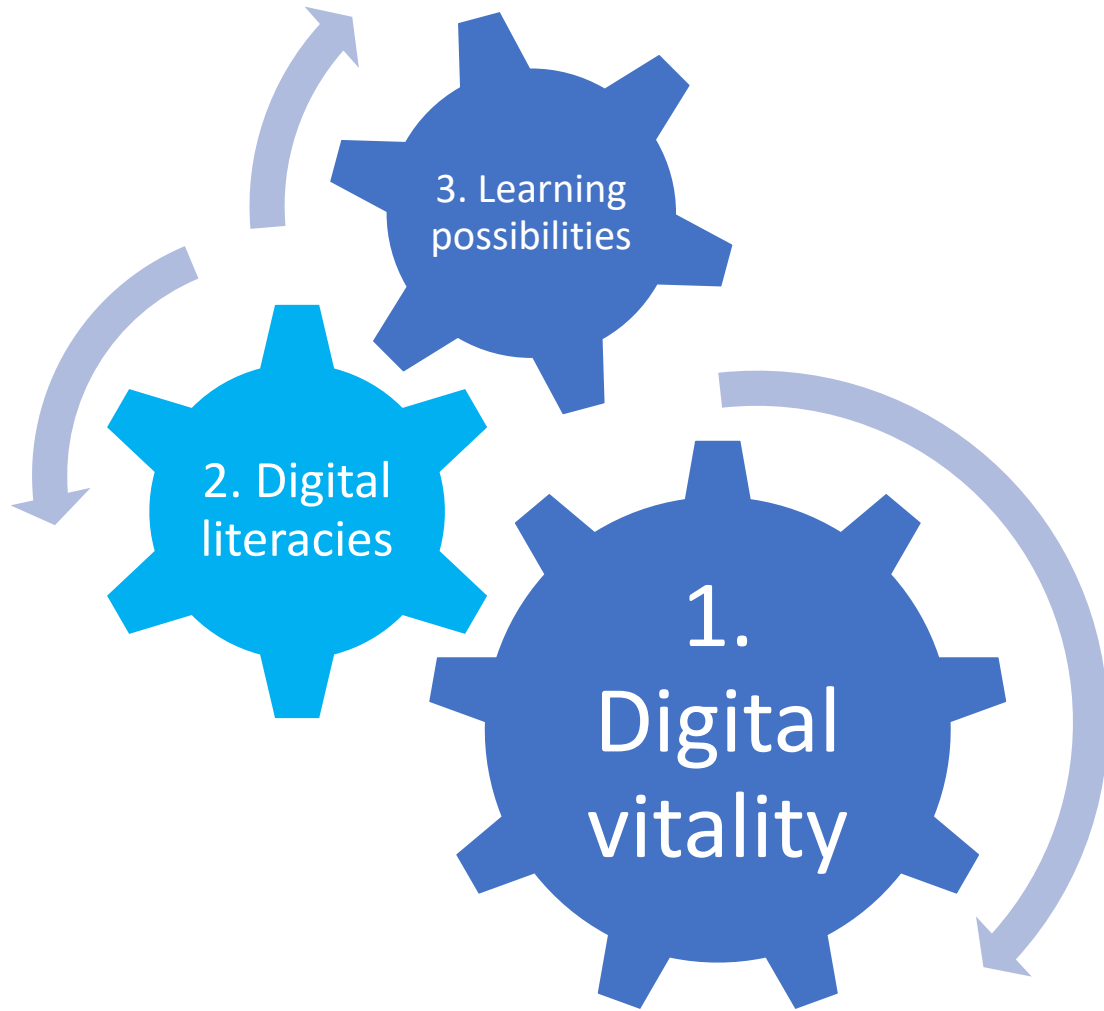
Possibilities

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 stimutable 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

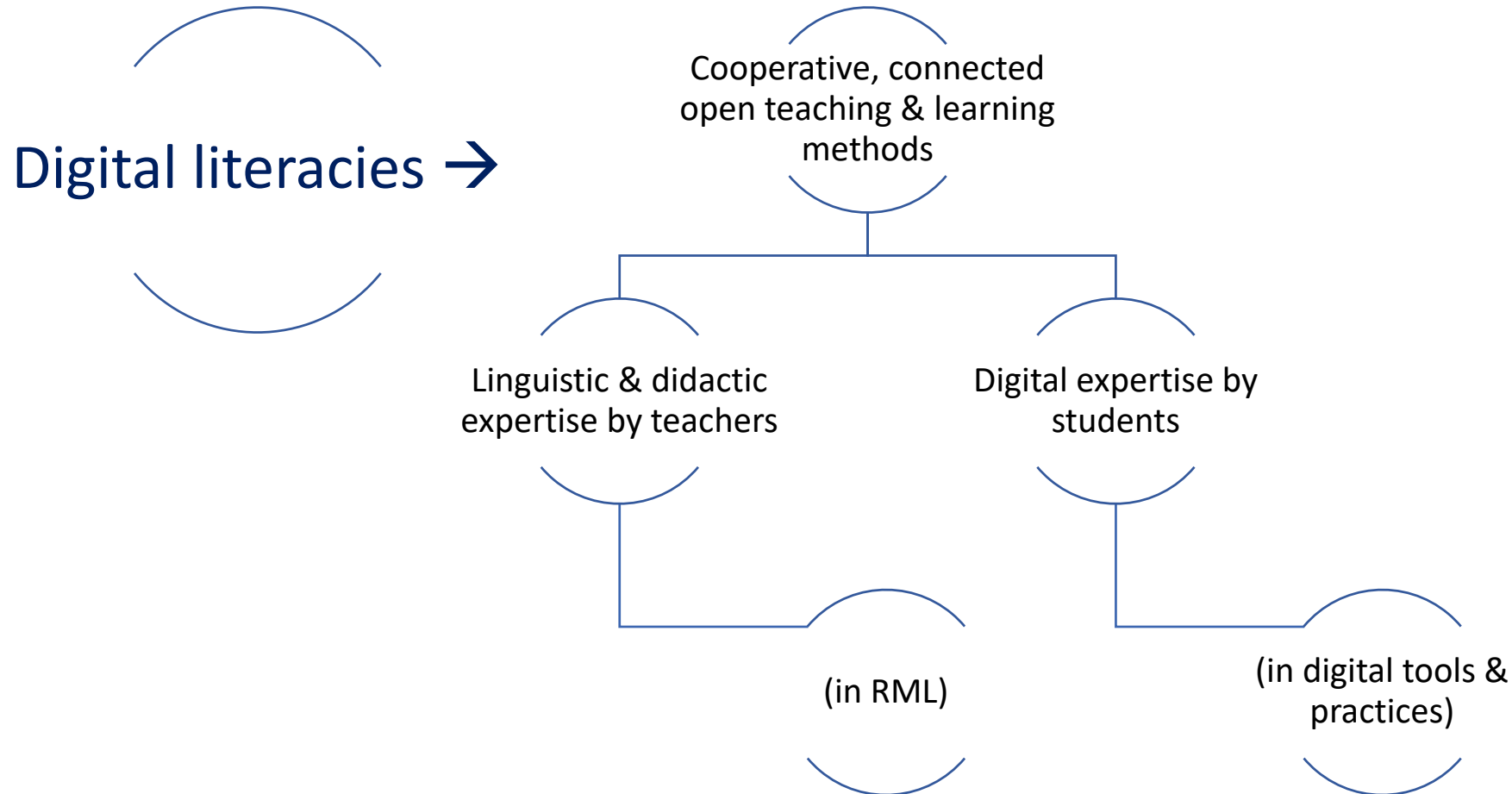
4. Summary



1. For RL 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** and linguistic critical **appropriateness**.
3. Digitalization can open up specific **learning possibilities** for RL, the use of which depends on the learners or new speakers.

4. Conclusion

Changing teaching principles



- ▼ Kompetenzzentrum für Niederdeutschdidaktik
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 - > Service



Kompetenzzentrum für
Nedderdüütschdidaktik

Fri
11
DEC

Tagung "Minority Languages in
the Digital Age"

Von Harten bedankt!

Literature (selection)

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Digitale literacy and RML

- „Digital literacy refers to the **skills required to achieve digital competence**, i.e. the confident and critical use of information and communication technology (ICT) for work, leisure, learning and communication. Digital literacy is another essential pre-condition for digital language vitality. If speakers of the language are digitally not (or very minimally) proficient, then it becomes evident that their native language has little chance of being digitally active, notwithstanding its spoken vitality or technological readiness. In the present study, ‘digital competence’ is one of the dimensions that shall be considered for assessing the potential for digital presence/vitality of languages. As such it should address the digital skills that members of a given language-speaking community possess, irrespective of the language(s) they use on digital media and devices. The rationale behind this being that, if a person has high digital skills, she/he is potentially) able to use her/his own mother tongue digitally. “ (Ceberio et al. 2018, 6)

2. Teaching Low German with WS

