

Explicit Focus on Multilingualism for Enhancing Metalinguistic Awareness in Primary School

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Outline

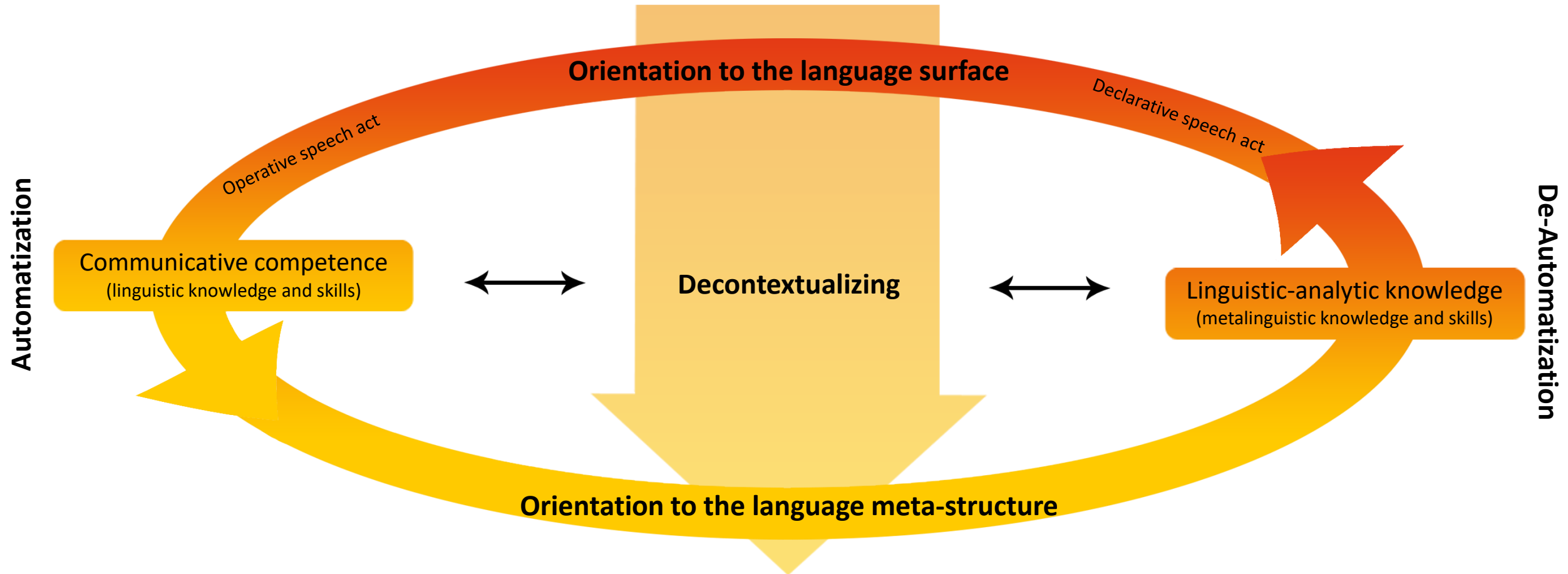
- Theoretical Background
- Overview of the Research
- Project „MoreLanguages“
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Metalinguistic Awareness...

...is defined as the mental ability
to comprehend the structure
and function of language/s in
order to use it/them for
appropriate linguistic behaviour
(Wildemann et al., 2016).

*Children raised in multilingual
contextes develop specific
metalinguistic abilities, which result
in an increased language awareness
(Bialystok, 1991, p. 134).*

A Construct of Metalinguistic Awareness



(Wildemann et al., in prep.)

Explicit Language Reflection...

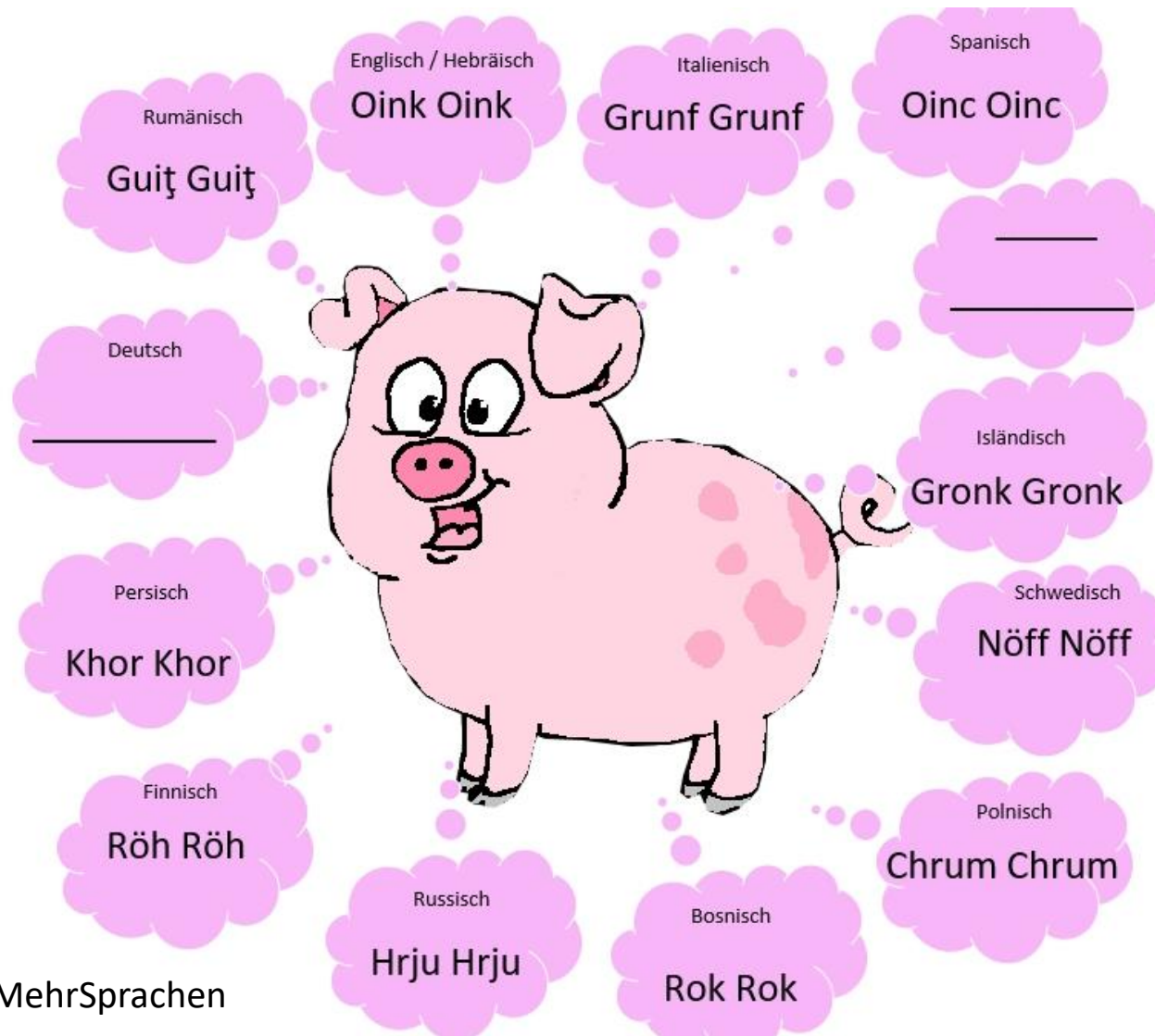
... occurs on different levels (see also Krafft, 2014):

- Morpho-syntactic (word formation & sentence structure)
- Phonologic (pronunciation)
- Pragmatic (speech act)
- Lexical & Semantic (terms & meanings)

... leads to improvements in language skills and metalinguistic awareness (Hyland, 2003; Siepmann, 2007).

Three meta-analyses (Norris and Ortega, 2000; Ellis, 2002; Spada and Tomita, 2010) report a statistically significant relationship between explicit language reflection and the learning outcomes of foreign-language learners.

Explicit language reflection worksheet:



- How are the words pronounced?
- How are the words written?
- Are there any similarities or any differences between the animal sounds in different languages

➔ Language reflection task on phonological and graphemathical level

Overview of the Research



Many international studies on L2- and L3-acquisition underline the advantages of explicit language reflection (a.o. Abu Radwan, 2005; Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Hyland, 2003).

Only a few studies focus on teacher trainings and reveal the relationship between *Teacher Language Awareness*, teaching behavior and (meta)linguistic competences of multilingual students (see also Andrews, 2007; 2009; Young, 2012).

However, the results are inconsistent, which is why Andrews (2007) suggests: „[...] more research that might shed light on this relationship“ (p. 179)

The results outlined here were gained mainly in foreign language research. Whether they are valid in German context is still unclear and should be investigate in our study "MoreLanguages"

„MoreLanguages“



- Experimental study on multilingualism and multilingual education with a control group
- Three data measurement times (pre – post – follow-up design)
- Level-nested participants (one experimental group and one control group)
 - N = 34 primary-school teachers
 - N = 509 primary-school children
- Teacher training on the use of multilingualism in German language classes

Purpose of the Study



... is to promote and investigate language reflection in German lessons.

... is to find out, whether primary-school children may profit from such lessons and therefore increase their metalinguistic awareness.



Methods



Participants

	Experimental group	Control group
Primary-school teachers	N = 18 (M=10.22*; SD=8.85; 94.4% female)	N = 16 (M=12.09; SD=10.77; 82.4% female)
	receive training on the use of multilingualism in German classes	conduct classes as usual (without any training)
Primary-school children	N = 277 (M=8.78**; SD=0.48; 49.3% female)	N = 232 (M=8.72; SD=0.41; 48.3% female)

* Age (years)

** Professional experience (years)

Measures

Primary school teachers	Primary school children
Demographical data (Pre) – self-report data	Demographical data (Pre) – self-report data
Attitudes to multilingualism (Pre, post & follow-up) – self-report questionnaire	General cognitive ability (Pre) – test (CFT 20-R)
Experiences with multilingualism (Pre, post & follow-up) – self-report questionnaire	German language abilities (Pre) – profile analysis (Tulpenbeet)
Motivation to teach (Pre, post & follow-up) – self-report questionnaire	Metalinguistic awareness (Post & follow-up) – elicitation method (M-SPRA)
Language reflection in German lessons – weekly digital diary	Motivation (Pre, post & follow-up) – self-report questionnaire (NFC-Kids, SESES-S)

... is to provide teachers with materials and methods, which may be used in multilingual classes and integrated in regular language lessons.

Making Language a Subject of Discussion and Comparing Languages, by ...

... including more languages in the German lessons

... discovering similarities and differences between languages

... understanding multilingualism widely:

- Dialects
- Heritage language of children in the class
- Other foreign languages

Developing Metalinguistic Awareness, by ...

- talking about language/s
- analyzing language/s
- reflecting on language use
- being aware of language structure
- thinking about language functions
- developing language knowledge

Promoting Language Skills

... of ALL children, no matter their origin or their initial language abilities

Methods & Materials

1. Allowing other languages

2. Recognizing metalinguistic awareness

3. Implementing children`s ideas

4. Picking up on other languages

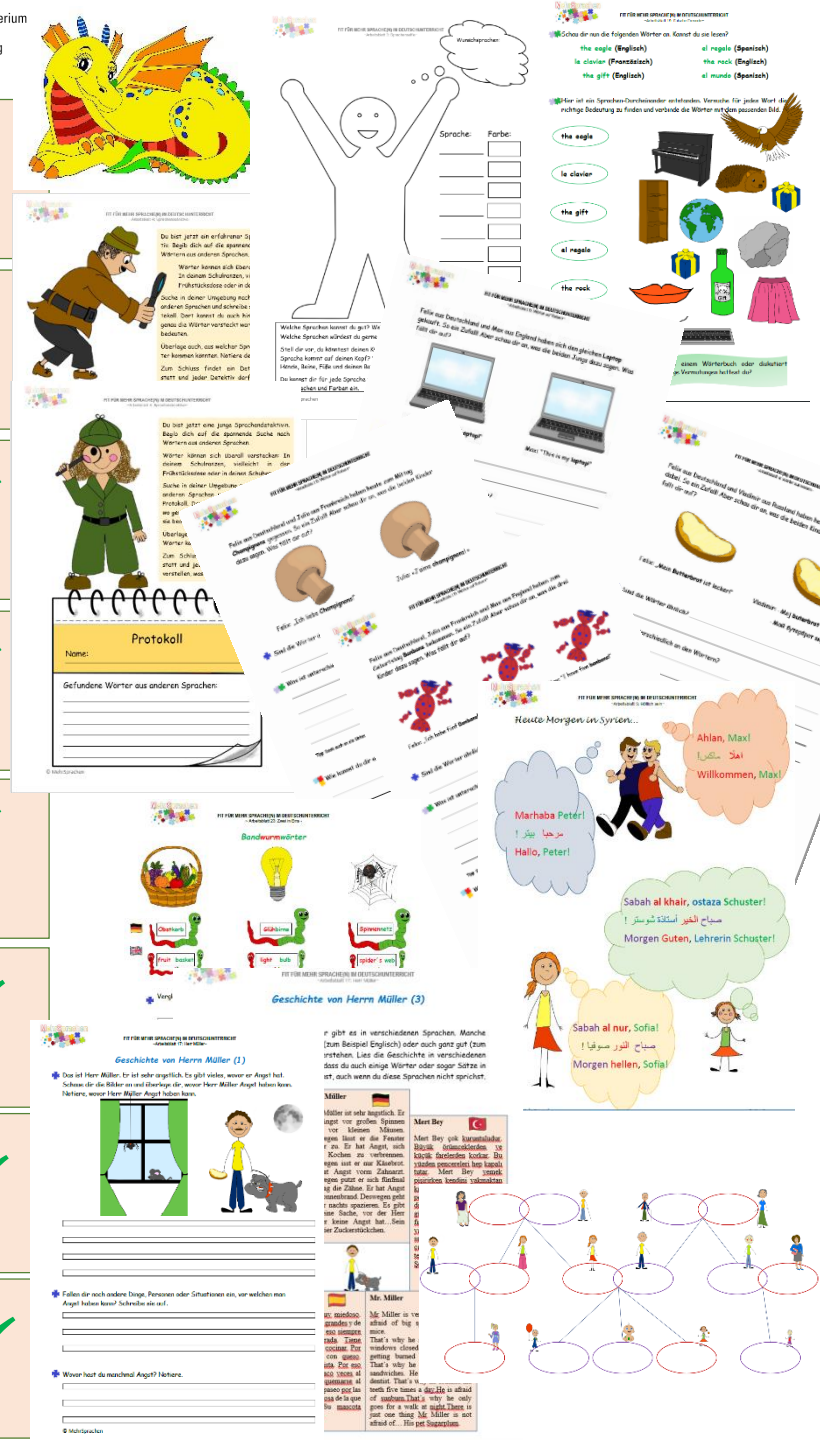
5. Contrasting texts

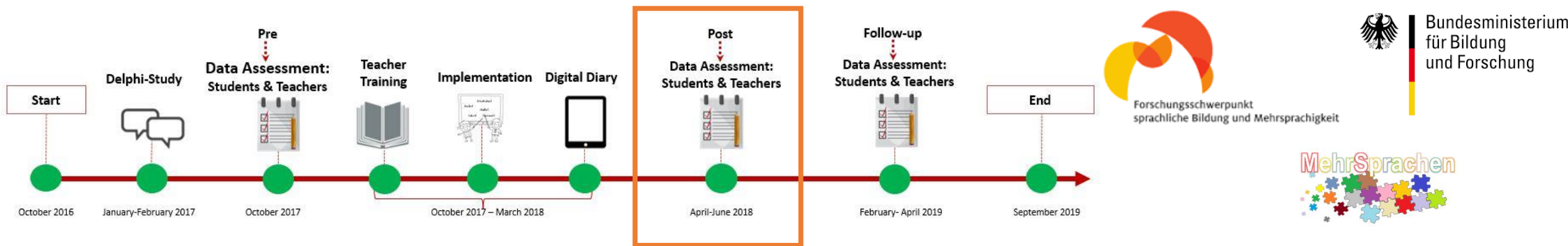
6. Contrasting language systems

7. Contrasting daily routines

8. Reflecting about languages

Oomen-Welke (2000)





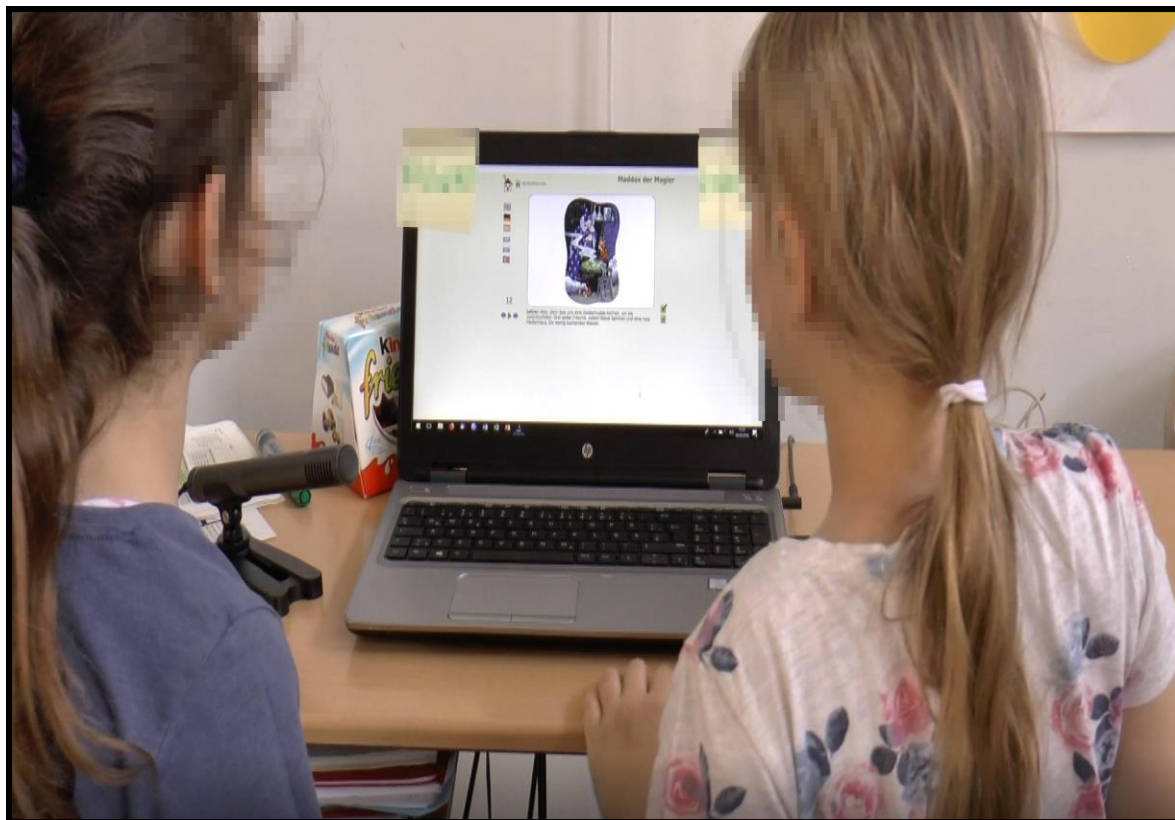
Assessment of metalinguistic awareness – elicitation tool „M-SPRA“ (Wildemann et al. 2016)

- Multilingual Software „**My first stories**“
- Story „Maddox, the Magician“
- Languages: German, English, Russian, Turkish, Spanish
- Guided Interaction (no assessment of language skills)
- **Five prompt interaction-sequences that guide children to reflect on language/s**



(Oldenbourg, 2013)

Elicitation-Setup



Example of an Interaction-Sequence: *Capital Letters*

TA: Well! Ok! Now you can look in another language how many capital letters are there.

C1: This one?

C2: Let us take English!

TA: Right, you can take English.

(Children read the text.)

C2: There are three capital letters or four, if we also count the introduction word.

C1: Mhm (approval)

TA: Mhm (approval). Why are here only few capital letters?

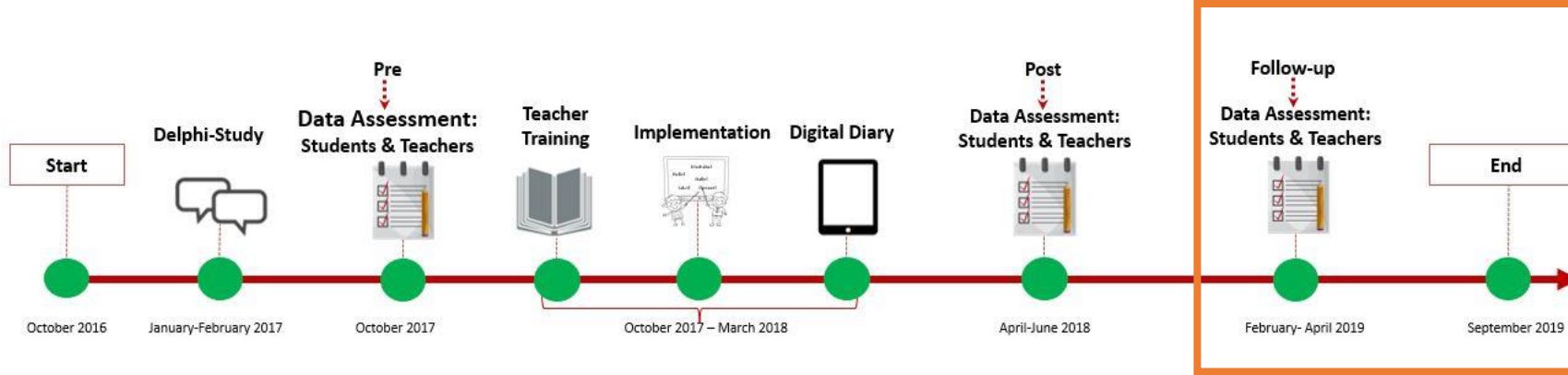
C1: Because here is "yellow", this means "gelb" (German word for yellow) and both are written with a lower case, but "spider" is "Spinne" (German word for spider) and in English it is written without a capital.

C2: Really?

C1: Yes!

TA: What do you think, C2?

C2: I think the same.



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What we already know:

Empirical studies have already shown that multilingual children reflect on language/s more frequently and more elaborately than their classmates do, even after controlling for age, general cognitive ability and language abilities (Akbulut et al., 2017; Bien-Miller et al., 2017).

Expected findings on...

... whether explicit language reflection (promoted through the teacher training) enhances teachers' attitudes towards multilingualism and motivation to teach (more) languages ...

... how the teacher training influences the use of language/s and multilingualism in German lessons ...

... and whether students' metalinguistic awareness profit from such lessons.

Thank You!

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