

Understanding Barriers for Students to Move Beyond **the** Propositional Textbase in Literary Reading

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Agenda

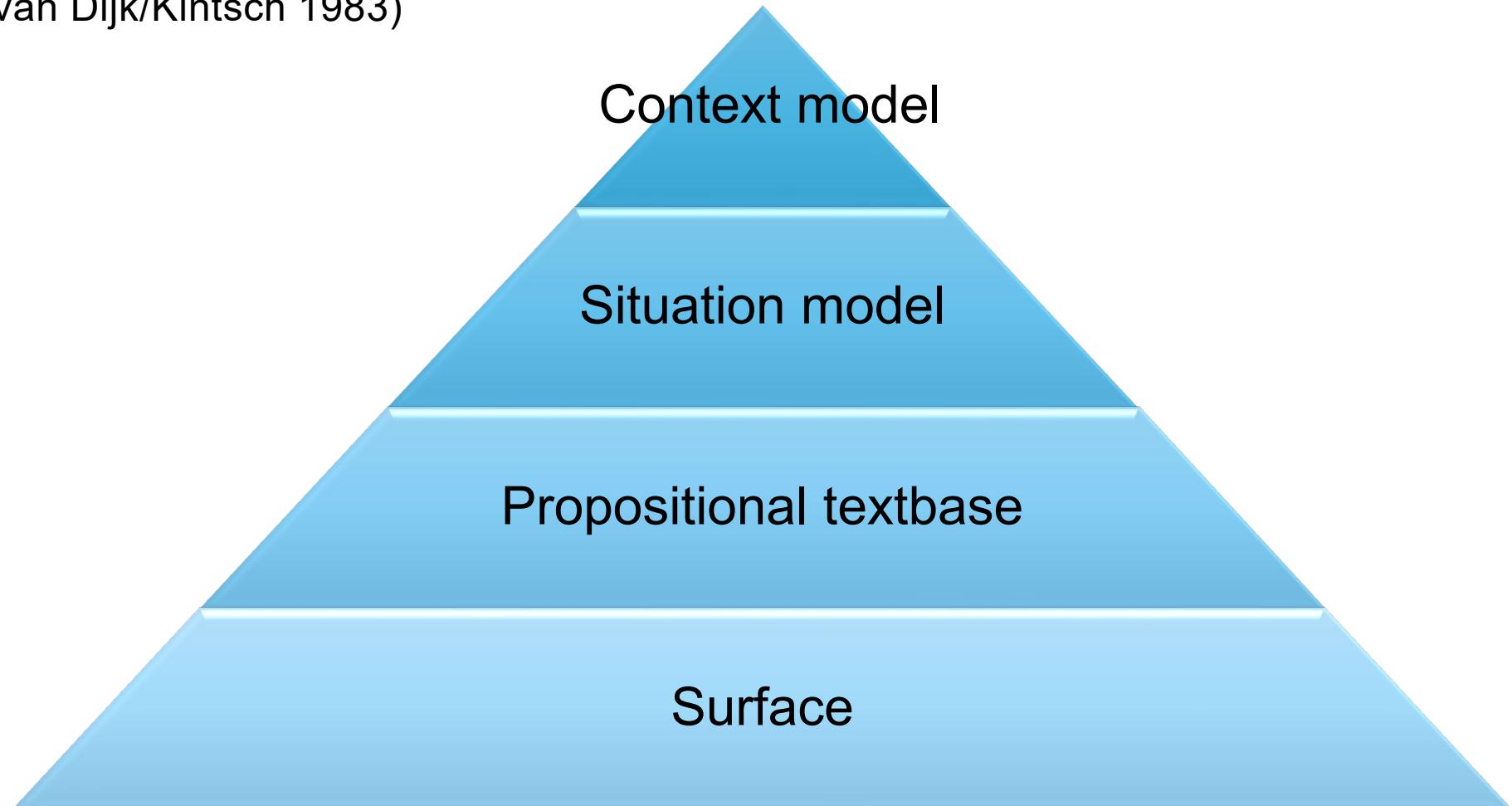
- How we (and others) stumbled upon the problem
- What models of comprehension and literary response say about the consequences of limiting oneself to the propositional textbase
- Potential causal factors
- Testing the instruments – Design and insights from the pilot phase
- Planning the main study
- Open questions

How we (and others) stumbled upon the problem

- Janssen et al. 2006: RETELLING more frequent among weaker 10th-grade Dutch students (26.6%) than among stronger ones (10%) in think-aloud study
- Levine / Horton (2013): “literal descriptive behavior” prevalent among US high school students’ essays on poems
- Carl (2023): Textbase verbalisations more common among 10th graders (37%) than among teacher students in Germany (27%) in think-aloud study
- Rosebrock et al. (2024): Only paraphrases instead of foregrounding reactions with 1/6 of teacher students in German questionnaire study

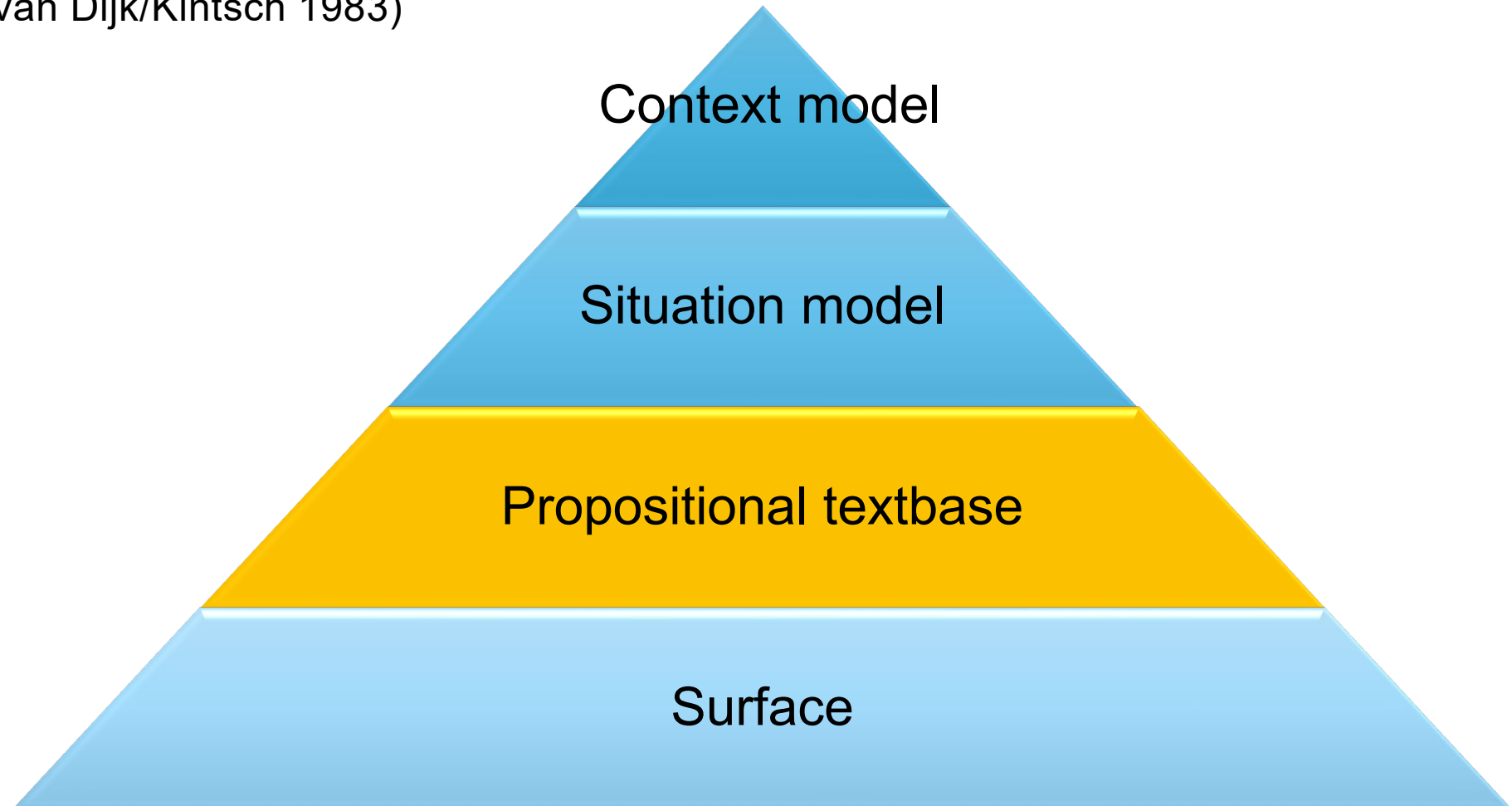
Consequences of being limited to the textbase

(van Dijk/Kintsch 1983)



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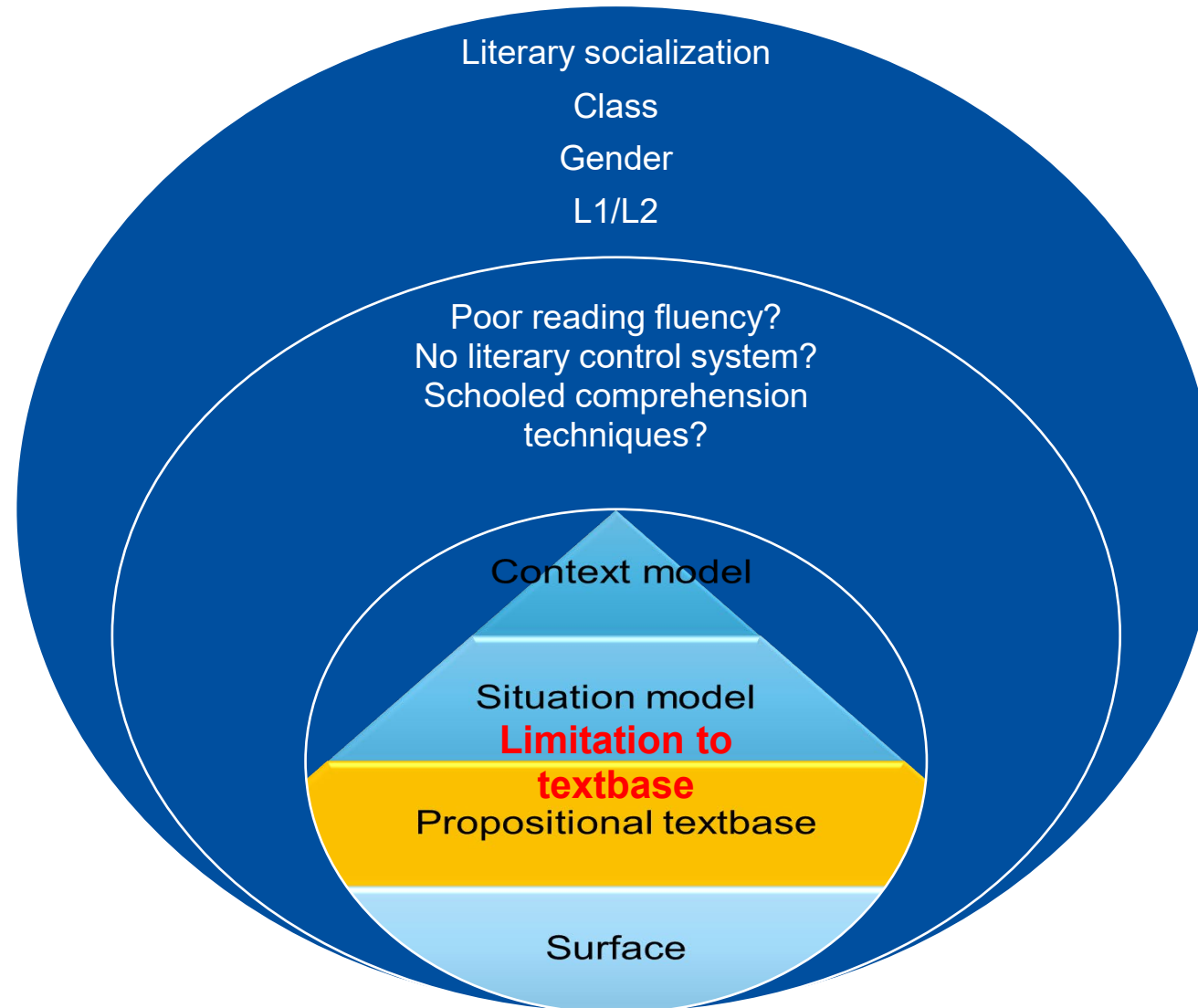


Consequences of being limited to the textbase

Limiting themselves to the textbase, these students

- do not immerse themselves in textworlds,
- do not empathise with characters and experience tension, catharsis etc.,
- do not enjoy ironical amusement, nor heed dystopian warnings,
- do not refine their taste for styles and genres,
- do not interpret texts in their historical/local/group/... contexts
- and thus rely exclusively on contemporary expository media, if at all, for broadening their horizons and discussing cultural issues.

Potential causal factors



Research Questions as we went into the pilot phase

RQ 1: How widespread is limitation to the textbase among 9th grade students in rural Swiss schools?

RQ 2: a) To what extent does poor reading fluency cause limitation to the textbase?

b) To what extent does the absence of a literary control system (Zwaan 1993) cause limitation to the textbase?

(RQ 3 – How limitation to the textbase can be overcome – has been postponed until we know more about the causal factors, so that an intervention can address the real roots of the problem.)

Testing the instruments – Design of the pilot phase

Pilot phase: March 2024

Sample: N=47 9th grade pupils from 3 schools in Eastern Switzerland

Data coll.:
reading fluency screening (SLS) results (n=46)
reading time comparison literary / expository (n=47)
Author Recognition Test (ART) (n=45)
reading behaviour questionnaire (n=46)
literary foregrounding test (Van Peer 1986) (n=45)
while-reading think-aloud protocols (TAP) (n=17)
literary competency test (LUK) results (n=45)

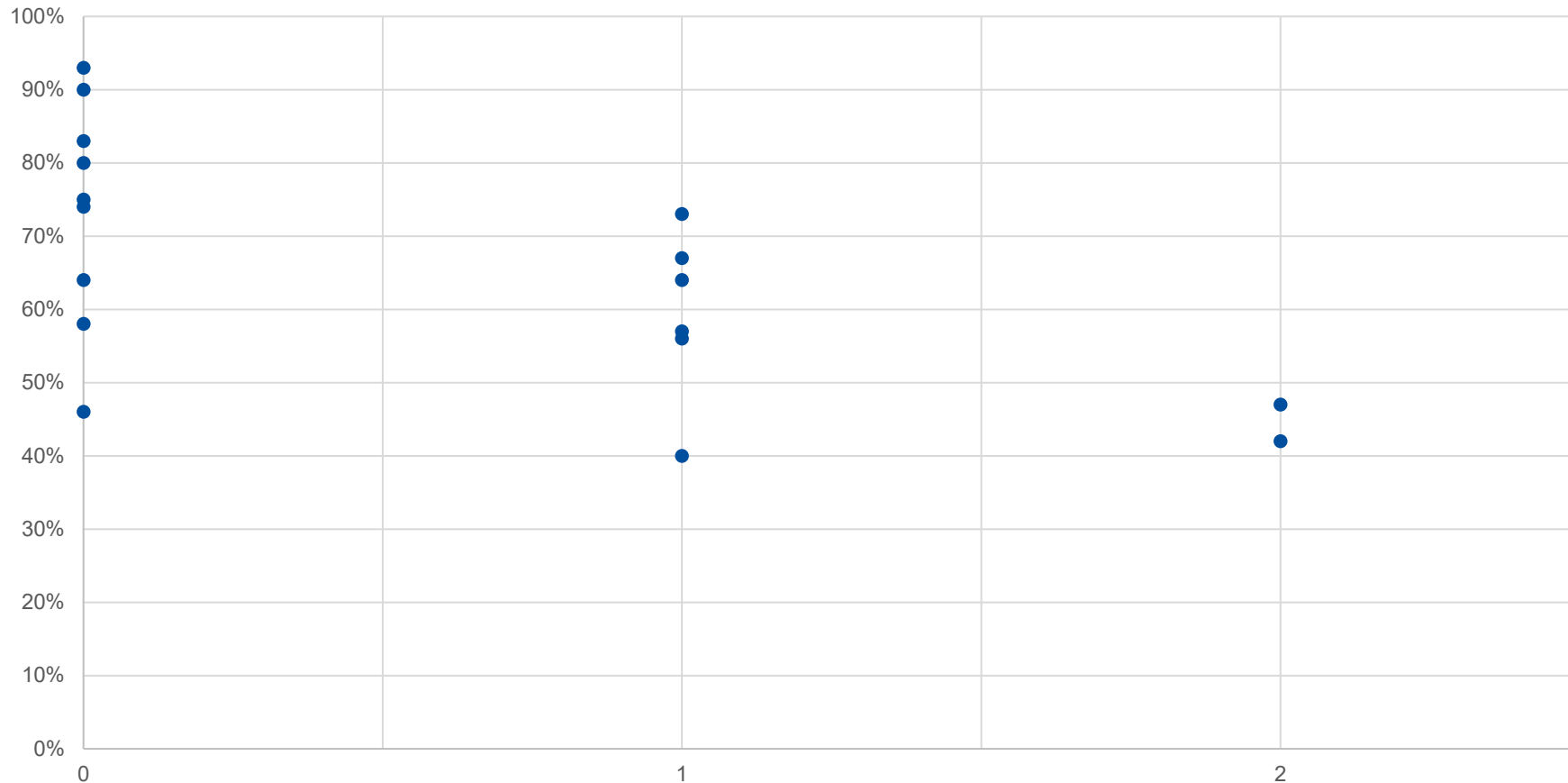
Think-aloud statements were coded; entire protocols also globally rated.

Insights from the pilot phase: Testing the instruments

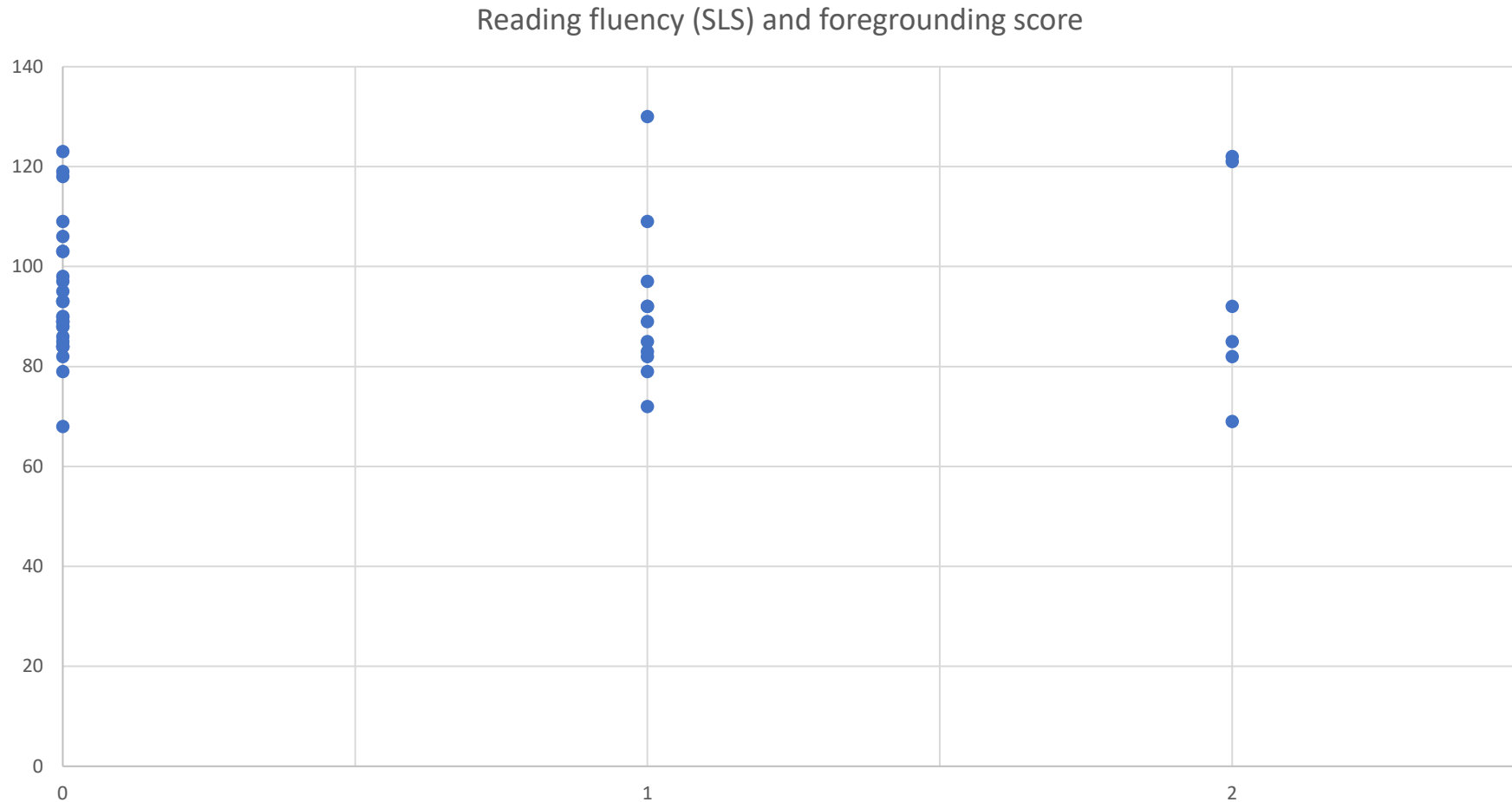
- ART and LUK were too difficult → weak reliability → new tools needed
- TAPs and foregrounding test were rated and coded with high reliability rates ($\kappa = 0.83$)
- TAPs and foregrounding test showed convergence validity
→ they do measure the same phenomenon (limitation to the textbase)

Insights from the pilot phase: Convergence validity of TAPs and foregrounding test

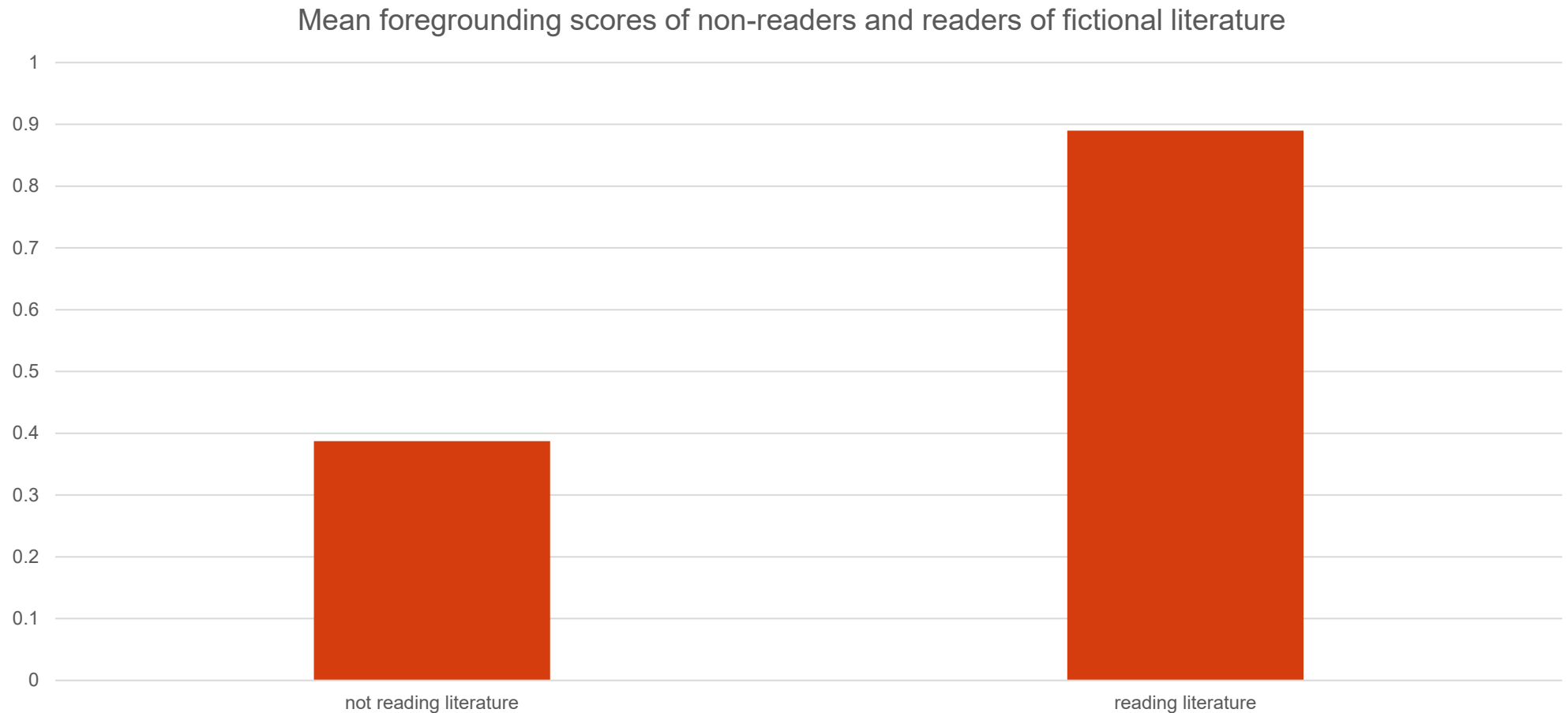
Convergence of instruments: TAP textbase % and Foregrounding questionnaire score



No signs for reading fluency effects on limitation to the textbase



Hints that limitation to the textbase applies more often to students who do not read literature outside school



Planning the main study

Testing our main hypothesis (= absence of literary control system causes limitation to the textbase) with a larger random sample (n=150 each from Germany and Switzerland) in the piloted design appears viable:

- Rating / coding of the **TAP** reliably captures the phenomenon
- Literary genre (short stories) and level of complexity are suited to identify those who are and those who are not limiting themselves to the textbase

Minor adjustments:

- Use young adult fiction for the foregrounding test
- Adapt the literary competency test (**LUK**)
- Expand the **reading questionnaire**

Open questions / Major adjustments?

Methodology:

- Suitable instruments for testing the existence of a “literary control system“ (other than self-reporting questionnaires)?

Communicative validity:

- Teachers‘ views on the phenomenon?

Works Cited

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