

# “The Humanities in Virtual Reality (HumaniVR) – Developing Methods and Applications of Virtual Reality for the Humanities”



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Social VR as a new space for  
language learning...

intercultural learning ...

scientific learning ...

But how exactly?



# Language learning in Social Virtual Reality

## Strengths and possibilities

- activity-oriented, immersive, collaborative communication in language tandems and groups  
(see also „Digital-game-based language learning“)
- 3D-space and motion in first hand experience emphasize important grammatical and lexical areas, e.g.:
  - prepositions
  - motion verbs
  - deictic terms (*hier, da, dort, hierher, dorthin* etc.)
  - etc.
- embodied learning (see: cognitive linguistic theory on the space/language-intersection): dynamics between the autopoietic body (real) and the allopoietic body (the avatar)
  - is there *oben* and *unten* in a virtual space without gravity?
- - conversations with new modalities in terms of space, time, identity  
(see Karl Bühler: „Ich-Hier-Jetzt-Origo“, 1934)

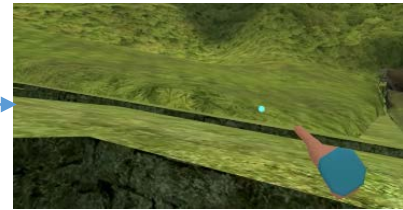
## Example 1: German *da* has several, diverse meanings/characteristics

- deictic (a place in the distance „da“ vs. „hier“)
- expeditive (directing the listener's attention to something: „sieh mal, da!“)
- part of a directive speech act („geh da entlang!“)
- operative (organising the temporal order of events in oral communication: „ich wollte gerade das Haus verlassen, da klingelte des Telefon.“)



L1: German NS  
L2: Spanish NS, learns German as a foreign language

51 [01:58.5]	
L2 [v]	(na)
L1 [v]	Nee hier kommen wir nicht weiter •• doch, wir können außen rum gehen •••
[16]	
.. 52 [02:03.9]53 [02:05.0] 54 [02:06.1]55 [02:07.3] 56 [02:10.1]	
L2 [v]	•• ja •• dá? ((1,7s)) jā, jā, jā und dann
L2 [nv]	hustet
L1 [v]	da •• und dann ••• also hier, hier rum
[17]	
.. 57 [02:16.1]	
L2 [v]	• ok ((2s)) oh ähm ••
L1 [v]	und dann da hinten irgendwo soll ich vorgehen? ((markiert
[18]	
.. 58 [02:21.0]	
L2 [v]	da ((3,5s)) ok gehen wir?
L1 [v]	die Richtung mit einem Pfeil) ((3,5s)) ((unv., 0,2s)) Warte, ich komm nicht



# Virtual Reality as a „third space“

(see postcolonial theory, Bhabha (1996) et al.)

- neither „home“ nor „foreign space“ for all participants  
→ intercultural meeting always at „eye-level“ (?)
- freedom from economic, social, sociopolitical pressures (?)
- large degrees of freedom in terms of identity construction (gender, ethnicity, age, dis\_ability, etc.)

# Virtual Reality as a „non-place“

(cf. Augé 1994)

- VR as a prime example of „non-places“
  - The step from postmodernity to supermodernity (?)
  - Pessimistic voices: „non-places“ are places of „loneliness“; they „lack identity and history“; our experiences there are “partial and incoherent“; we may travel through them, but never (like to) stay there.
- will VR become and remain such a place of „loneliness“ and „incoherence“ for its users?

