

EXAMINING THE WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE (WTC) SCALE WITH ADVANCED FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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BYU

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Bienvenidos a la Montaña.....

Por favor atender las siguientes sugerencias y recomendaciones:

- Ingreso de lunes a sábado de 5:00 a.m. a 9.00 a.m.
- No hay ingreso los días domingos y festivos.
- Recojo mi basura [redacted] velo porque esta re vegetación, la fauna y el agua.
- Transito por los senderos demarcados.
- No arrojo residuos sólidos a la quebrada, ni permito que [redacted] normatividad ambiental y el Código de Policía.
- Entro en silencio y en armonía con el entorno natural.
- Velo por mi seguridad no portando objetos de valor (cámaras, celulares recorrido a otras cuencas, solicite apoyo a las autoridades competente
- Soy amable con los otros caminantes, Policías y Guardabosques.

Estos cerros producen el agua y el aire de Bogotá, ayú

¡BIENVENIDOS!



acueducto
AGUA, ALCANTARILLADO Y ASEO DE BOGOTÁ











Am I self-aware
and acting on
my own?

Or am I waiting
for someone
else to tell me
what to do?



Spring 2020 Problem

- Language department chairs were concerned about the disruption COVID-19 would have on the language ability for students in advanced language classes whose missionary service was disrupted.
- Would WebCAPE work?



WebCAPE (Web-Computer Adaptive Placement Exam)

- Tests students with MC questions.
- Adaptive algorithm gives each student a unique set of questions at varied difficulty levels to determine score.
- Results are low stake.



Whatever you
choose to test
becomes the
de facto learning
objectives
for a curriculum.

The way you
choose to assess
it becomes the
de facto teaching
and learning
philosophy.

-Paraphrase of McTighe & Wiggins

What's our goal?

- Do we want students that are automations that need to be told where to go and what to do via external checklists?
- Or do we want to help students become reflective learners that can accurately self-appraise their language and choose what's best for them?

Bloom's Taxonomy

WebCAPE

	Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyze	Evaluate	Create
Factual	- Factual knowledge of terminology. - Factual knowledge of specific details and elements.					
Conceptual	- Knowledge of classifications and categories. - Knowledge of principles and generalizations. - Knowledge of theories, models, and structures.					
Procedural	- Knowledge of subject-specific skills and algorithms. - Knowledge of subject-specific techniques and methods. - Knowledge of criteria for determining when to use appropriate procedures.					
Metacognitive	- Strategic knowledge. - Knowledge about cognitive tasks, including appropriate contextual and conditional knowledge. - Self knowledge.					

How can we create an instrument that assesses different types of knowledge and higher order skills with positive washback?

Bloom's Taxonomy—Metacognitive

Strategic knowledge

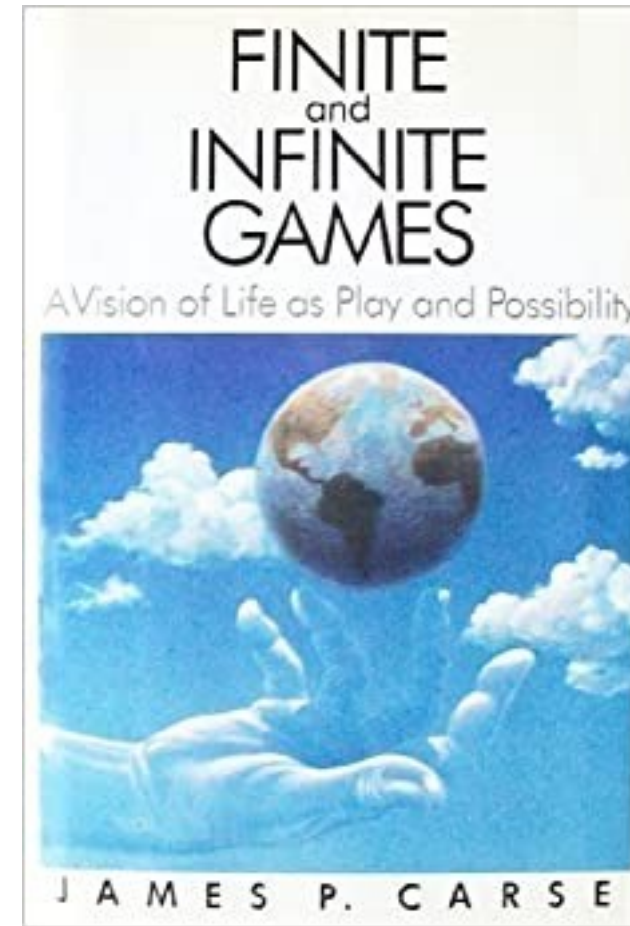
Knowledge about cognitive tasks, including appropriate contextual and conditional knowledge

- Self knowledge

IS LANGUAGE LEARNING A FINITE OR AN INFINITE GAME?

Carse, J. (2011). *Finite and infinite games*. Simon and Schuster.

Sinek, S. (2019). *The infinite game*. Penguin.



THE
INFINITE
GAME
**THE
INFINITE
GAME**
SIMON
SINEK
THE
INFINITE
GAME
THE
INFINITE
GAME

What's the difference between finite and infinite games?

FINITE

- Played to win
- Externally defined rules
- Limits are predefined
- Players can compete to win within these limits
- Examples:
 - a football match (win/lose)
 - publishing a paper (accept/reject)
 - job interview (hired/not hired)
 - going to church (present/absent)

INFINITE

- Played to keep on playing
- Internally defined rules.
- Limits are not defined
- The goal of players is to stay in the game
- Examples:
 - being an athlete for the joy of the game
 - being a scholar for the joy of discovery
 - Having a career that's fulfilling
 - Being a disciple for the purpose of fulfillment

**FINITE GAMES CAN BE WITHIN INFINITE
GAMES BUT INFINITE GAMES CAN NOT
BE WITHIN FINITE GAMES**

“TO BE PREPARED AGAINST SURPRISE IS TO BE TRAINED. TO BE PREPARED FOR SURPRISE IS TO BE EDUCATED.”

–JAMES CARSE

Is our goal language training or education?

WHAT MESSAGE AM I SENDING TO STUDENTS THROUGH THE TESTS I HELP DEVELOP?

Most tests by definition are finite games

Whatever you
choose to test
becomes the
de facto learning
objectives
for a curriculum.

The way you
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it becomes the
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and learning
philosophy.

-Paraphrased of McTighe & Wiggins

WASHBACK

How can we create tests that tap into those metacognitive skills that encourage lifelong learning and viewing language learning as an infinite game?

LASER



Language Ability Self-Evaluation Resource

Overview

The Language Self-Evaluation Resource (LASER) is an indicator of general language proficiency. It can be completed at any time using a computer with a stable internet connection, and it takes about an hour to complete. It is designed to help BYU students:

- select the appropriate language course for their ability*
- verify that they are in the correct class
- provide information to the instructor to inform curricular decisions
- help them become life-long language learners as they improve their ability to self-assess and self-reflect on the

**If you are taking the LASER to choose the correct language course, the course recommendation provided is just that: a recommendation. Students should consult with their language department concerning any questions about their results.*

Watch the video below and read the description about the purposes of the LaSER, its format, how to access it, and other details.



LPDA INTRO Demo

Description & Details

PART 1: SELF-EVALUATION MODULE (30 TO 40 MINUTES)

This section will gather information about your background and exposure to the language you are studying.

- Language Learning Background (7 minutes)
- Language Use
 - GRIT (5 minutes)
 - Willingness to Communicate (8 minutes)
- Language Proficiency Self-Assessments (10 to 20 minutes)

PART 2: PRODUCTIVE LANGUAGE SAMPLES MODULE (20 TO 50 MINUTES)

For this section, you will be emailed a link to complete your Level Placement/Verification. Here you will be asked to respond to some speaking and writing questions. Some should be easy for you, and some should stretch your ability.

After you respond to the questions, you will have the chance to self-assess your performance in terms of how successful you felt you were, the type of language you used, and your accuracy. You will then be provided with a class recommendation along with information about your self-assessed proficiency.

Who will see your language samples?

Your language samples will be forwarded to the language department. The department and your instructor will use the data to design better language class instruction for all students in the language program. *If you have already registered for a class, please look up your instructor's last name and email address.* You will need to provide that information so the instructor can receive the language samples in a timely manner. If you have NOT registered for a class or you do not have your instructor's contact information, we will send the language samples to you directly and you will need to forward them to your instructor (if it's required).

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:

To get the most accurate results from Part 2 of the LASER, please use the following hardware and software:

1. Laptop or desktop computer
2. Chrome Web Browser

When recording your spoken responses in Part 2, be sure to find a quiet location. An external microphone can also help to ensure the best quality audio.

INFORMATION NEEDED:

Before starting, you will need

Why include WTC?

- Willingness to Communicate (WTC) is a personality trait that dictates the degree of predisposition to consistently communicate across a variety of different situations (McCroskey & Baer, 1985)
- Includes both long-term, permanent variables (traits) and short-term, dynamic variables (states; MacIntyre et al, 1998)
- If we believe WTC helps with language acquisition, then wouldn't we want to encourage it?

Introduction

- Definition of WTC: Readiness to initiate communication (MacIntyre et al., 1998).
- Importance: WTC predicts language use and proficiency development.
- Scope: Theoretical foundations, digital contexts, proficiency links, pedagogical implications, and COVID-19 impacts.

Theoretical Foundations of WTC

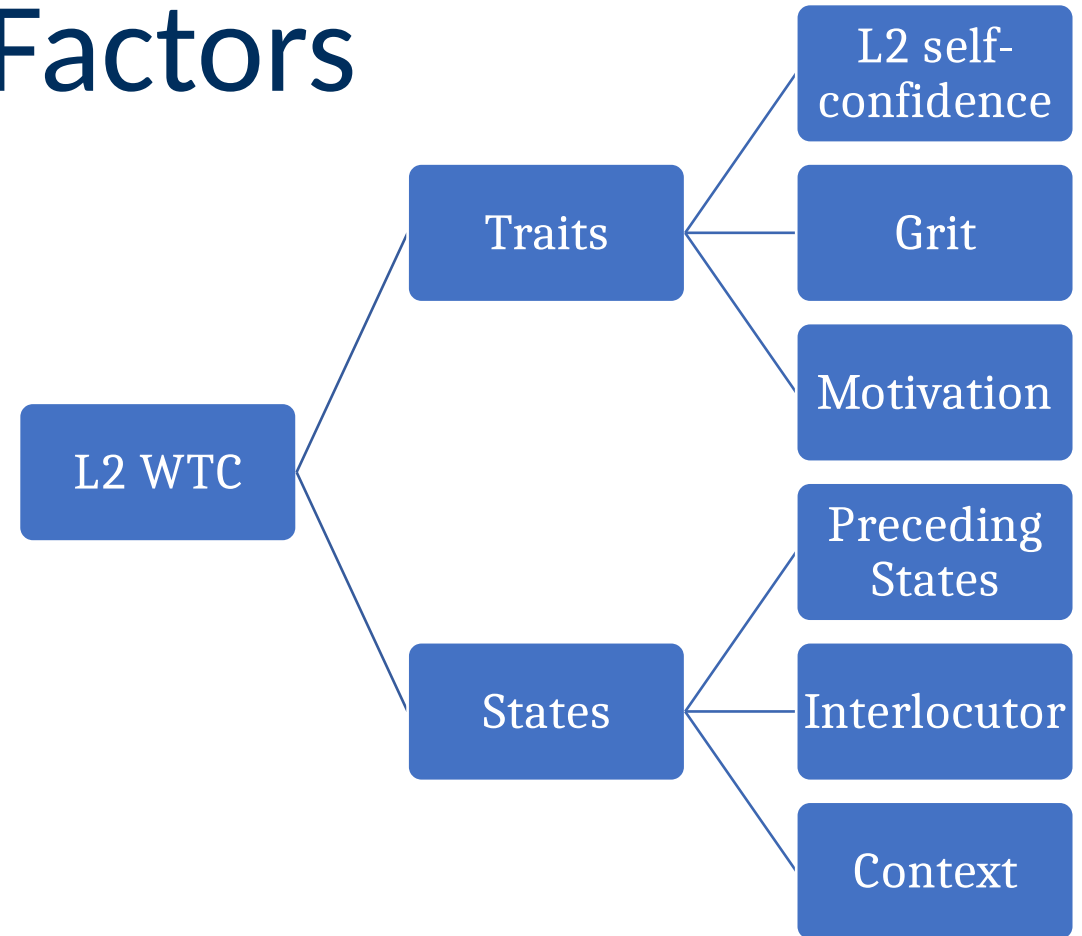
- Origins in L1 communication (McCroskey & Baer, 1985).
- Extension to L2 (MacIntyre et al., 1998).
- Key Components: Self-confidence, anxiety, motivation, intergroup attitudes.

WTC Literature

- Started in L1 as static trait (McCroskey & Baer, 1985)
- Applied to L2, added dynamic aspect (MacIntyre et al, 1998)

Trait and Situational Factors

- Trait-like: Personality, self-confidence, motivation.
- Situational: Interlocutor familiarity, group size, topic interest, classroom environment.



Digital and Online Environments

- CMC reduces anxiety, encourages participation (Freiermuth & Huang, 2012).
- Games create immersive, low-pressure environments (Reinders & Wattana, 2015).
- Digital WTC measurement (Lee & Drajati, 2020).

WTC and Oral Proficiency

- Positive correlation: More speaking leads to proficiency (Joe et al., 2017).
- Complex: Among advanced learners, less variation (Lilya, 2022).
- Dynamic cycle: WTC and proficiency reinforce each other.

WTC During COVID-19

- Challenges: Initial drop in WTC (Moser et al., 2021).
- Adaptations: Breakout rooms, chat features.
- Opportunities: Digital settings can foster WTC for some learners.

Conclusion

- WTC is shaped by traits and context.
- Goal: Foster WTC as a key outcome.
- Future: Explore digital contexts and diverse populations.

WTC Literature Gaps

- Research on relationship with language proficiency is mixed
- Participants:
 - Almost all with EFL/ESL participants
 - Mostly low proficiency speakers
- Contexts
 - All formal settings or short-term study abroad programs
 - Little research on digital WTC

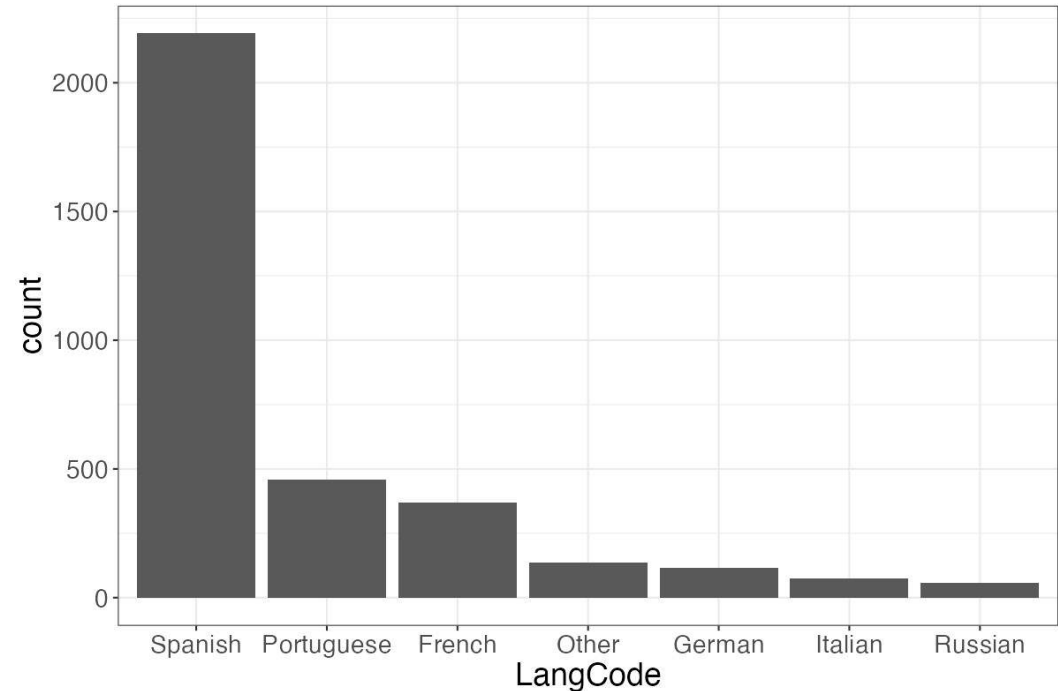
Research Questions

1. To what extent does the WTC instrument function reliably for learners through the advanced level?
2. How do the four subcategories of the WTC instrument vary?
 - How does the inclusion of the digital communication subcategory function?
3. What is the relationship between WTC and L2 oral proficiency?

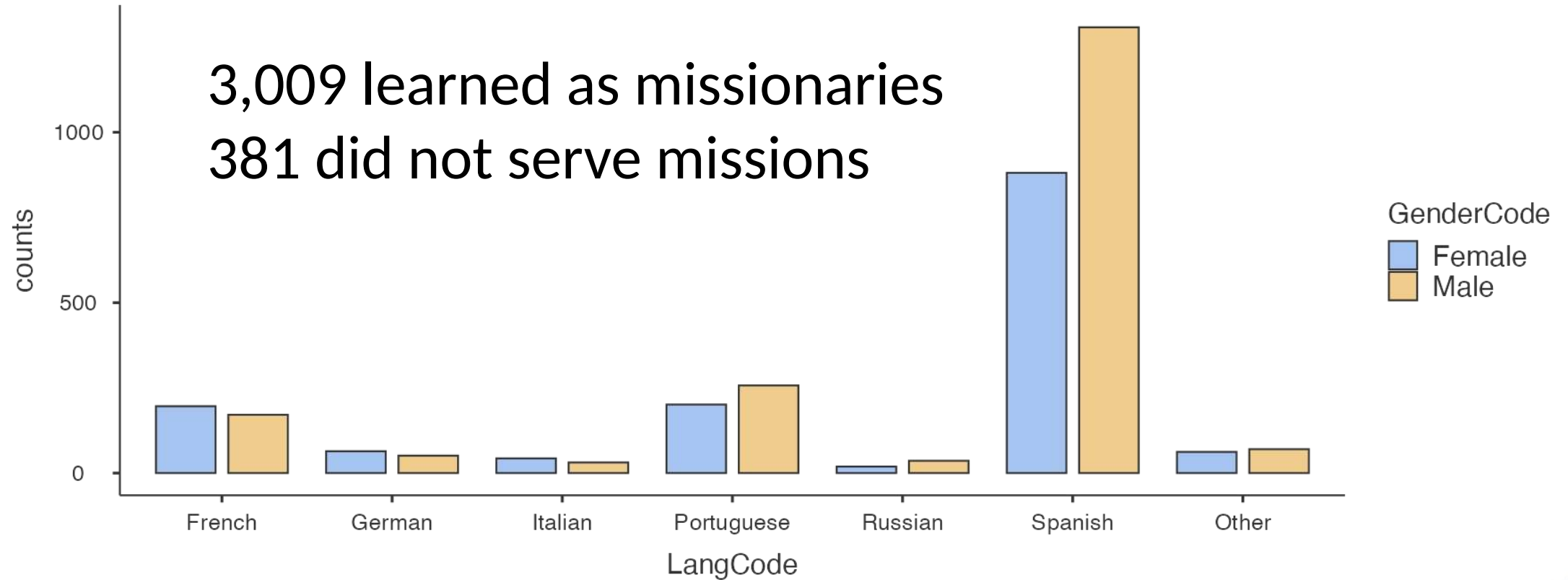
Participants

Studying a foreign language at a large US University and took LASER

- Spanish (n = 2,189)
- Portuguese (n = 458)
- French (n = 367)
- German (n = 115)
- Italian (n = 74)
- Russian (n = 55)
- Other (n = 132)
 - Chinese, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, Indonesian, Japanese, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Swedish, Thai



Gender



Instruments

- Oral Proficiency Interview-Computer (OPIc)
- WTC Instrument
 - WTC section of LASER
 - Section 1—Speaking with native speakers in the participant's home country (k = 6 of 6)
 - Section 2 (new)—Communicating with native speakers online (k = 4 of 7)
 - Section 3—Speaking with L2 TL speakers in a school setting (k = 3 of 5)
 - Section 4—Speaking with L2 TL speakers abroad (k = 4 of 8)

OPIc

- Examinees self-assess general speaking level and answer survey questions about their hobbies and interests
- One of five forms is selected that target different ability levels of the ACTFL proficiency scale
- Examinees respond to a number of questions based on the interests they provided by speaking to an avatar
- Speech sample is double-rated on ACTFL rating scale

OPIc Scores

Language	NL	NM	NH	IL	IM	IH	AL	AM	AH	Total
French	1	1	11	13	30	46	67	97	39	305
German						20	69	16		105
Italian			1	0	1	4	20	35	6	67
Portuguese					1	46	135	38		220
Russian						6	18	10	3	37
Spanish				1	39	207	937	664	34	1882
Other					1	2	3	2		8
Total	1	1	12	14	72	331	1249	862	82	2624

WTC Instrument Items

Item	Statement
1.1	If I encountered some native speakers of [Language] in the street, restaurant, hotel, etc., I hope an opportunity would arise and they would talk to me.
1.2	If I encountered some native speakers of [Language] in the street, restaurant, hotel, etc., I would find an excuse and would talk to them.
1.3	If I encountered some native speakers of [Language] who are facing problems in my country because of not knowing our language, I would take advantage of this opportunity and would talk to them.
1.4	I am willing to accompany some native speakers of [Language] and be their tour guide for a day free of charge.
1.5	I am willing to talk with native speakers of [Language].
1.6	If someone introduced me to a native-speaker of [Language] I would like to try my abilities in communicating with him/her in [Language].

Item	Statement
2.1	If I encountered some native speakers of [Language] in an online forum, I hope an opportunity would arise and they would message me.
2.2	If I encountered some native speakers of [Language] in an online forum, I would find an excuse and would message them.
2.3	If I encountered some native speakers of [Language] who are facing problems online because of not knowing our language, I would take advantage of this opportunity and would message them.
2.4	I am willing to communicate with native speakers of [Language] online.
3.1	In order to practice my [Language], I am willing to talk in [Language] with my classmates outside the class.
3.2	I am willing to ask questions in [Language] in the classes at the university.

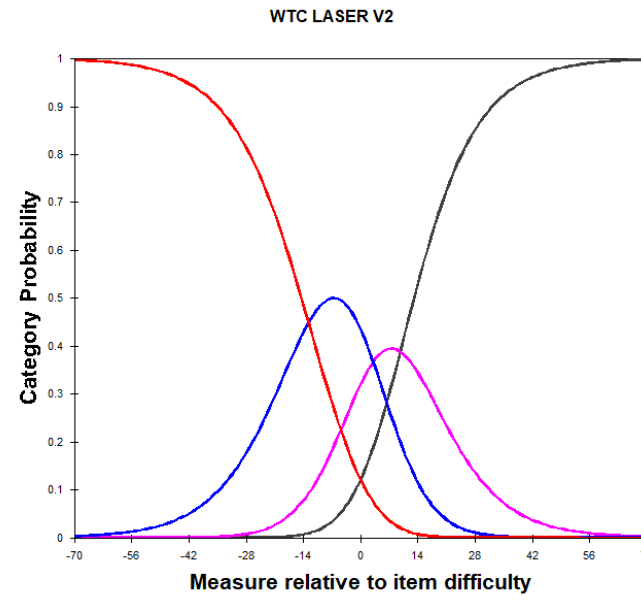
WTC Instrument Items

Item	Statement
3.3	I am willing to talk and express my opinions in [Language] in the class when all my classmates are listening to me.
3.4	I am willing to have pair and group activities in the class so that I can talk in [Language] with my classmates.
3.5	In order to practice my [Language] I am willing to talk in [Language] with my professors outside the class.
3.6	I am willing to give a presentation in [Language] in front of my classmates.
3.7	In group work activities in the class when the group is composed of my friends, I am willing to speak in [Language].
3.8	In group work activities in the class when the group is NOT composed of my friends, I am willing to speak in [Language].
4.1	In order to practice my [Language], I am willing to speak in [Language] with native English-speaking missionaries learning [Language].

Item	Statement
4.2	I am willing to ask questions in [Language] in large group settings of other native English-speaking missionaries learning [Language].
4.3	I am willing to talk and express my opinions in [Language] in large group settings of other native English-speaking missionaries learning [Language] that are listening to me.
4.4	I am willing to speak in [Language] in pair and small group settings with other native English-speaking missionaries learning [Language].
4.5	I am willing to teach a lesson in [Language] in front of a large group of other native English-speaking missionaries learning [Language].
4.6	I am willing to speak in [Language] with a group composed of friends that are also [Language] learners.
4.7	I am willing to speak in [Language] with a group NOT composed of friends that are also [Language] learners.

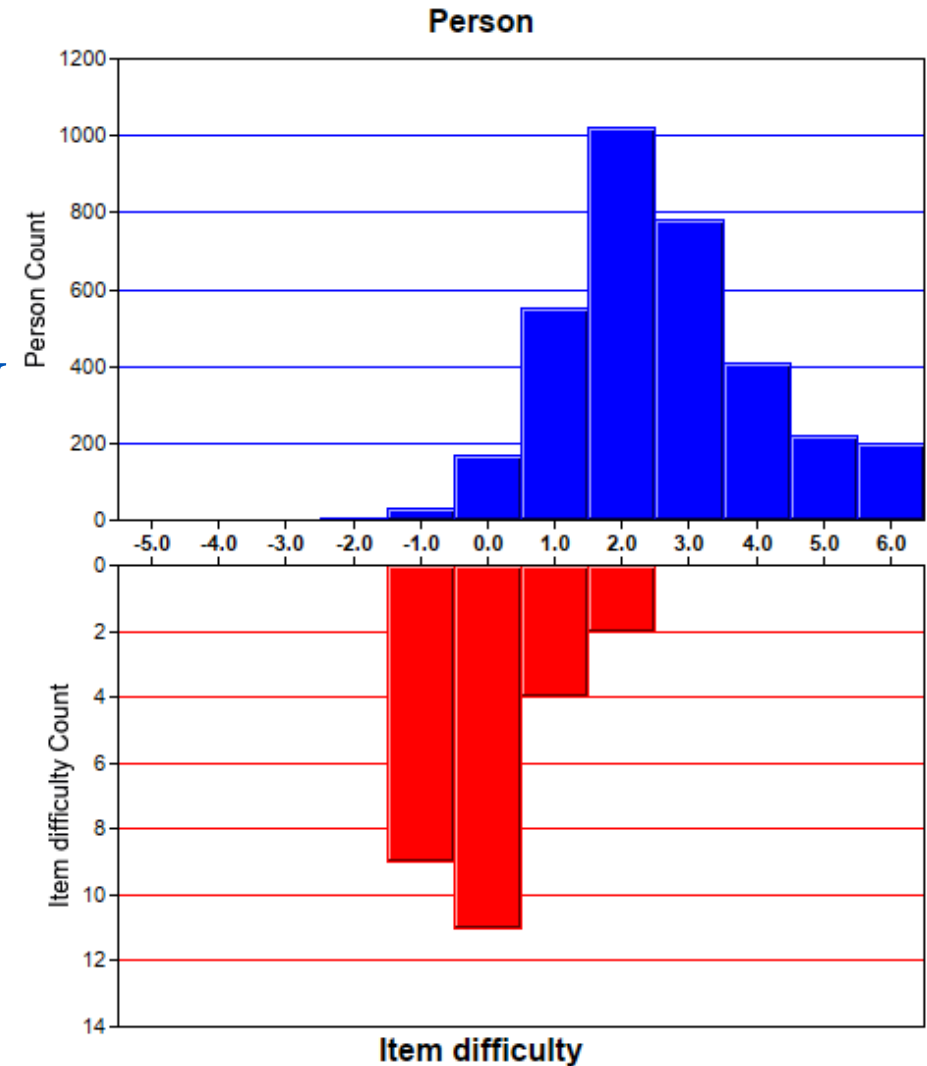
WTC Scale Calibration

- Rasch analysis
- Polytomous data – Rating scales model
- Poorly ordered or narrow categories – do not evenly categorize responses that fall between two categories (Linacre, 2018)
- 100 pt → 4 pt scale
 1. 0% to 25%
 2. 26% to 50%
 3. 51% to 75%
 4. 76% to 100%



RQ1: Results - Reliability

- Cronbach $\alpha = 0.88$
- Distribution of the measured person ability and item difficulty measures were not congruent
 - Person mean = 2.60
 - Item mean = 0.00



RQ2: Results - Subcategories

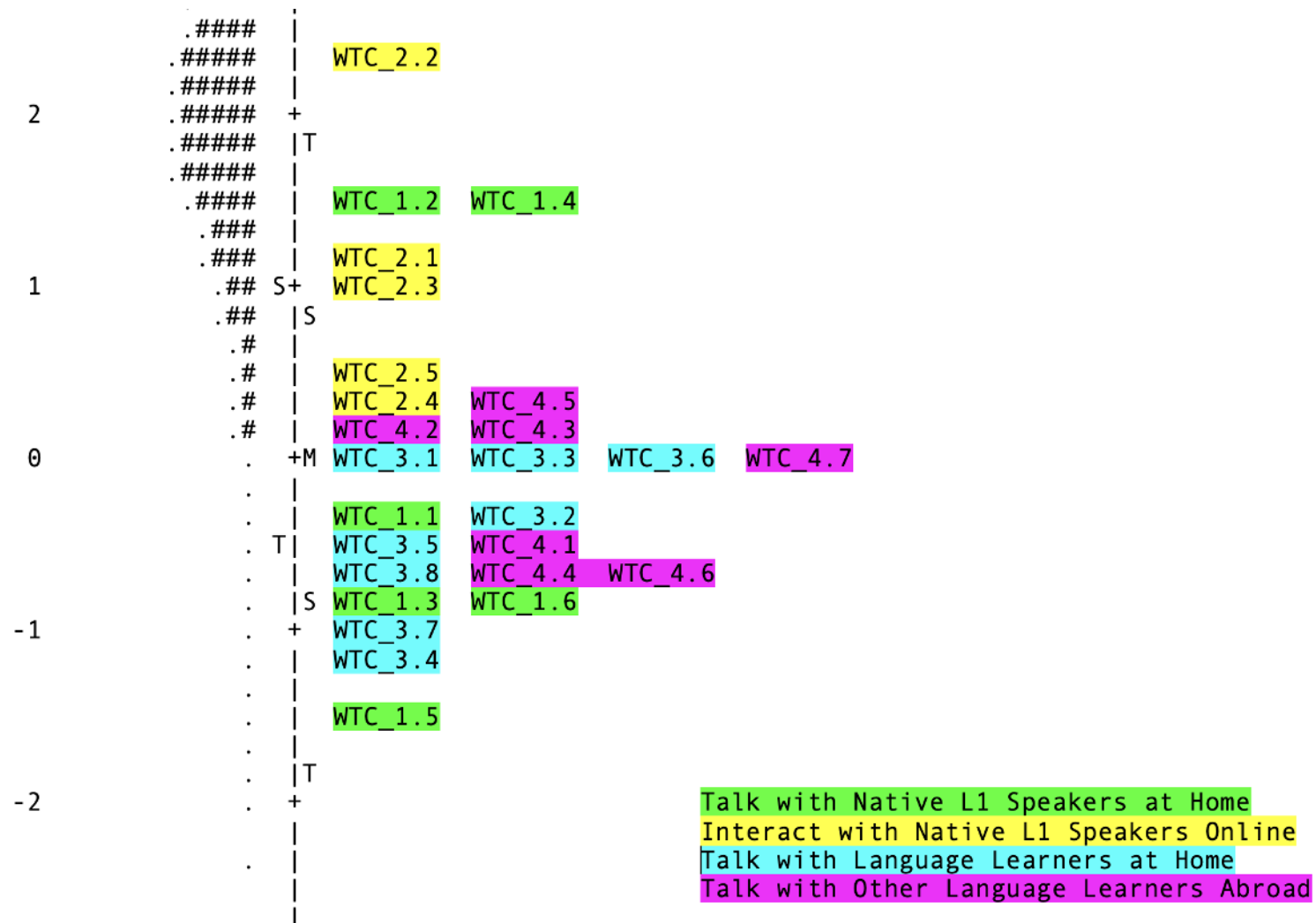
- ANOVA [$F(3,25) = 4.24, p = .02$] –significant differences overall
- Significant difference between online and native school sections [$t(5) = 3.84, p = .02$] and online and abroad questions sections [$t(5) = 3.1, p = .03$]

WTC Instrument Sections Item Subtotals

	n	Measure	Standard Error	Outfit
3—School/Class	8	-0.46	0.16	-625.30
4—L2 Learning Peers Abroad	7	-0.17	0.16	-1258.30
1—Natives	6	-0.08	0.52	-2377.92
2—Online	5	1.07	0.37	-1250.84

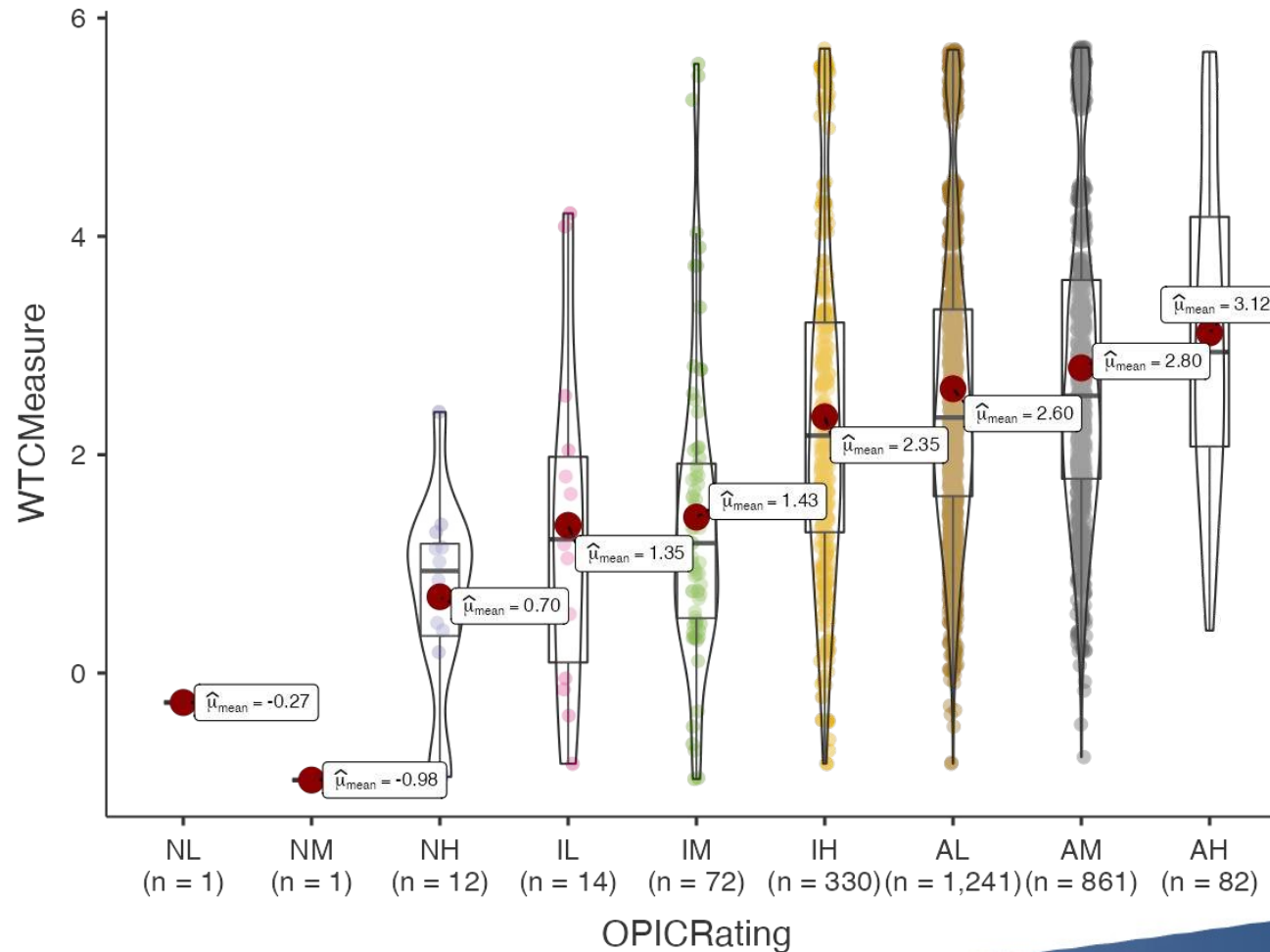
Welch 2-sided t-test between WTC Instrument Sections

Code	Code	Measure (logits)	S.E.	t	d.f.	Probability
1	2	-1.16	0.64	-1.82	8	0.106
1	3	0.38	0.54	0.69	5	0.519
1	4	0.08	0.54	0.15	5	0.884
2	3	1.54	0.4	3.84	5	0.012
2	4	1.24	0.4	3.1	5	0.027
3	4	-0.29	0.23	-1.28	12	0.223



RQ3: Results - Proficiency

$[F(8, 2605) = 16, p < .001]$



The only adjacent rating that is significantly different is between IM and IH (Tukey difference = .92, $p < .001$)

BUT

$r = .2$ ($p < .001$)

R-squared = .047-small effect size

Conclusions and Future Research

- Scale is reliable for population, but 4-point scale better
- Mismatch in person ability and item difficulty because:
 - So many missionaries
 - Desire to appear willing to communicate
- There is a relationship between WTC and speaking proficiency, but the effect size is small
- Online WTC different!

QUESTIONS?

Thank you!

BYU

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