

**Is measuring interactional competence
the same as measuring proficiency?
An empirical study on L2-Chinese IC**



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Interactional competence and proficiency

“Psycholinguistic-individualist”

Roever & Kasper, 2018, p.331

“Sociolinguistic-interactional”

“...our ability to accomplish meaningful social actions, to respond to co-participants' previous actions and to make recognizable for others what our actions are and how these relate to their own actions.”

“...constitute and manage our individual identities, our social role relationships, and memberships in our social groups and communities.”

Hall & Pekarek Doehler 2011, p.1

Linguistic laypersons' criteria

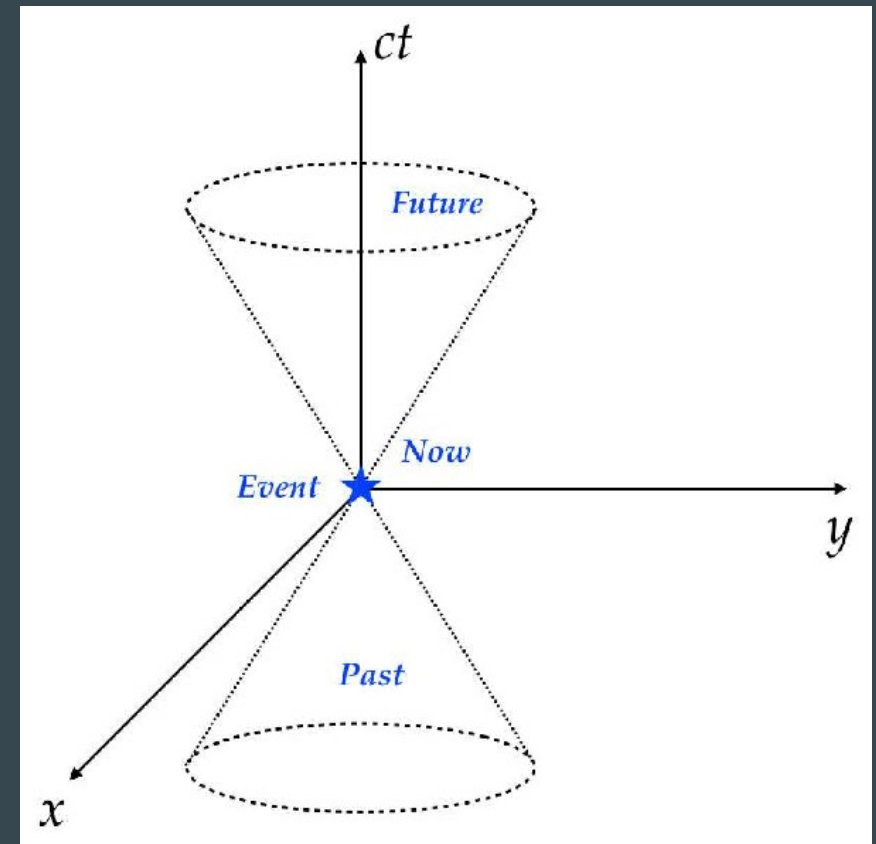
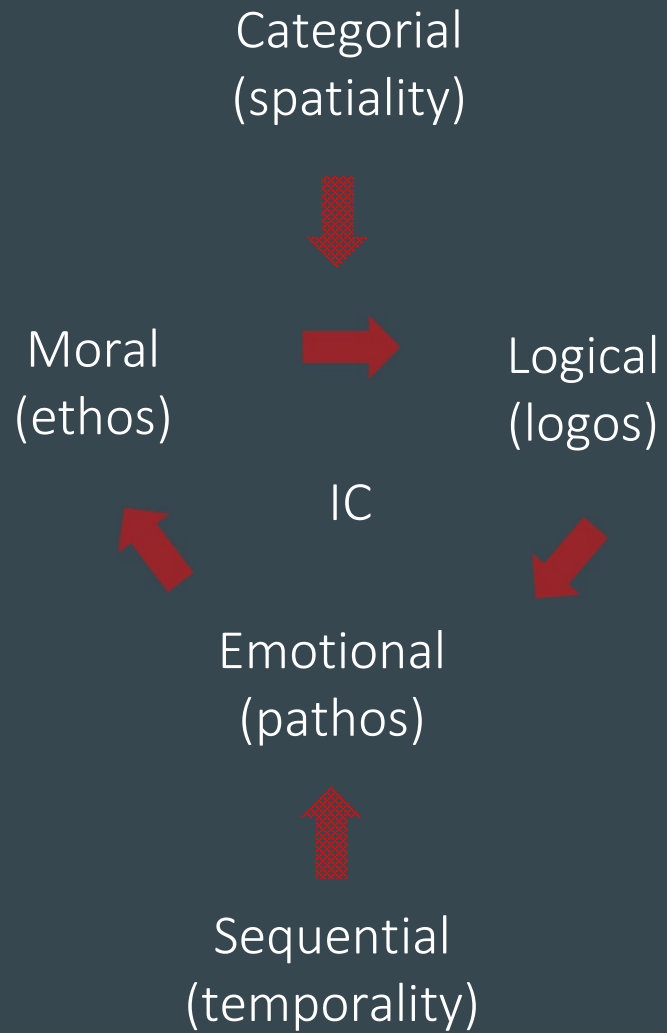
“There is an important sense in which a normal member of a community has knowledge with respect to all these aspects of the communicative systems available to him. He will interpret or assess the conduct of others and himself in ways that reflect a knowledge of each (possible, feasible, appropriate), done (if so, how often).” Hymes, 1972, p. 282

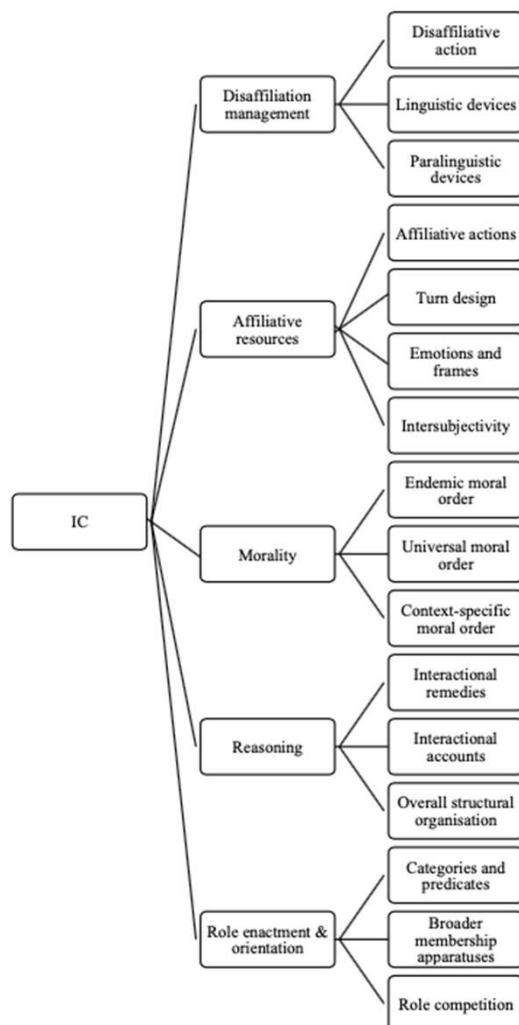
“This potentially weakens the validity of proficiency tests because, in the real-world context, the ultimate arbiters of L2 speakers' oral performance are typically not in fact trained language professionals” Sato & McNamara, 2019, p895

Sample test task



(Dai, in press, 2022, 2023; Tai & Dai, 2023)





Band 5 Exemplary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The speaker has outstanding competence in enacting and orienting to social roles that are highly congruent with their and the interlocutors' categories, matching their conduct with their respective category-bound predicates and relative hierarchical positioning. There is excellent application of the standardised relational pairs, membership categorisation devices and duplicative organisations to which the speaker and interlocutor belong. Highly skilled mediation and prioritisation of the speaker's and the interlocutors' roles are demonstrated.
Band 4 Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The speaker demonstrates the ability to enact and orient to relevant social roles. The matching of category-bound predicates is overall felicitous. The speakers can utilise some broader membership apparatuses (BMAs) to make their conduct recognisable. Role competition is balanced to achieve successful interaction.
Band 3 Average	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The expected roles are in general enacted and oriented to. Some predicates can be over-realised or under-realised. The application of BMAs is limited but no misuse exists. The speaker's and the interlocutors' primary roles are oriented to, but other roles are insufficiently addressed.
Band 2 Concerning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role enactment and orientation are insufficient. Categories are not well matched with predicates. There are incidents of misapplications of BMAs, suggesting lack of knowledge of what context-fitting BMAs to draw on. Primary roles are not adequately attended to.
Band 1 Intervention needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Normatively expectable categories are not attended to and there is grave misunderstanding regarding category-bound predicates. The speaker neglects context-relevant BMAs or seriously mismanaged BMAs, disrupting the interaction. There is mis-prioritisation of roles and role competition is overlooked.

IC measure

- 105 test-takers' IC performances on nine IC tasks
- Scored by two raters in a fully-crossed design
- Using an IC rubric that assesses the sequential, categorial, emotional, logical and moral dimensions of interaction
- Five-step, five-rating-category rubric
- MFRM: test .97, item .98, rater .46

Proficiency measure

- HSK scores recorded

Dai 2022



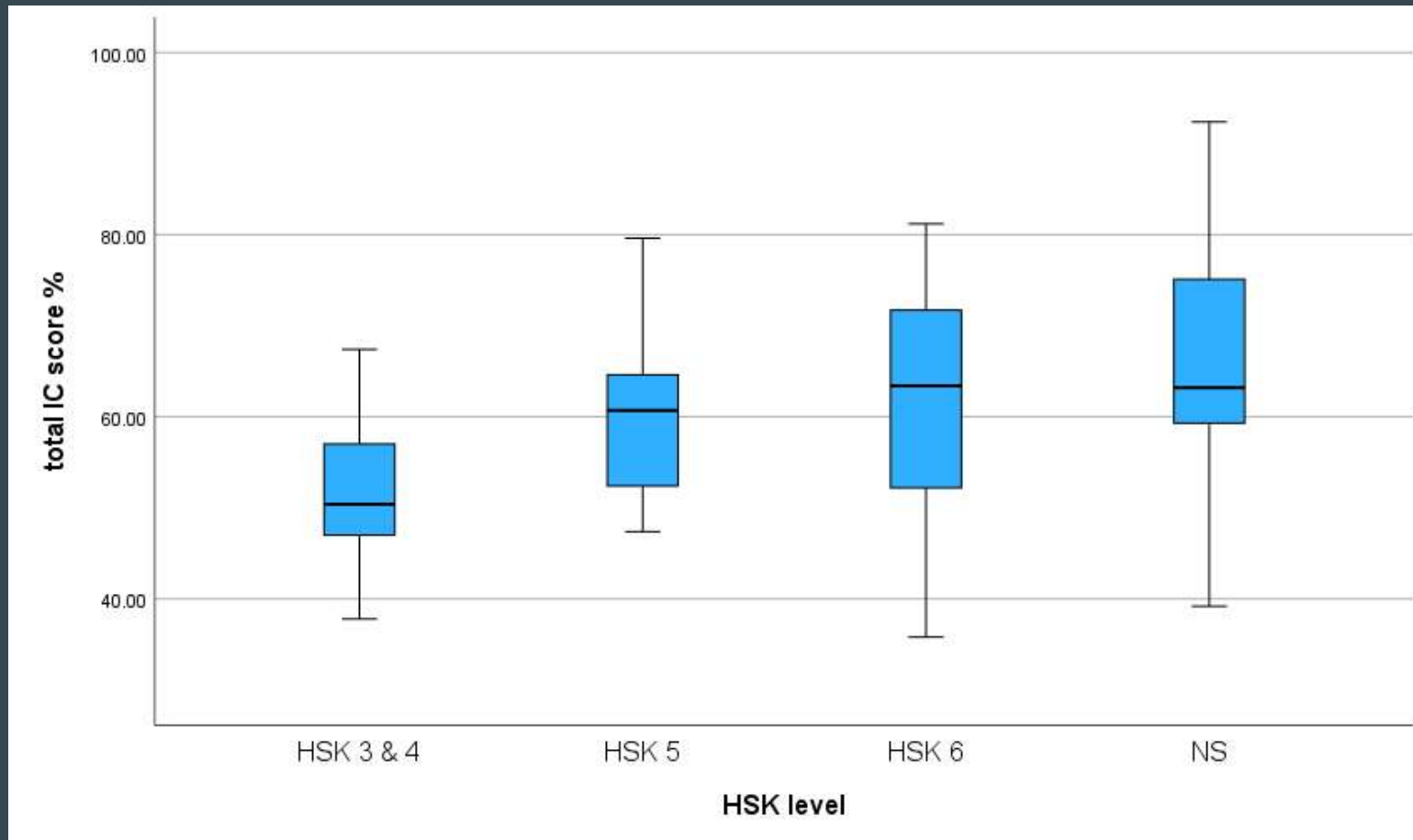
RQ: what is the relationship between IC and proficiency scores?

Results

- Mean scores increase with HSK level
- So do standard deviations

HSK level	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	95% CI
HSK 3 & 4	52.10	8.11	21	48.41, 55.79
HSK 5	59.90	9.25	26	56.16, 63.64
HSK 6	62.07	11.20	23	57.23, 66.92
NS	66.72	15.95	15	57.89, 75.55
<i>Total</i>	<i>59.76</i>	<i>11.88</i>	<i>85</i>	<i>57.87, 62.34</i>

Results



- Significant effect for group: $F(3, 81) = 5.75, p = .001, \eta^2 = .175$
- HSK 3 & 4 < HSK 5, 6, NS
- NS range 39% to 92%

Discussion

- Proficiency as measured by HSK explains only 17% of IC scores
- Lower proficiency seems to hamper IC performance but higher proficiency does not seem to enhance it further
- Surprisingly (?), NS vary greatly in their IC

Why proficiency doesn't boost IC in our study

- Different findings in other studies, e.g., Ikeda (2021), Roever & Ikeda (2022), Xiao, Taguchi & Li (2019), Youn (2013)
- Possible reasons:
 - Little impact at higher levels
 - Configuration of resources
 - “Proficiency-free” scale
 - Non-language professionals as raters
 - HSK

Proficiency, IC and language testing

- Lower levels: no separate measure needed
- Higher levels: separate measure needed
- Measure NSs' IC?
- Is IC testing still language testing?

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Thank you!
Do you have any questions or comments?



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