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Meeting Standards in Assessing Speaking: Monitoring and Improving the Quality of Examinations in Italian

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- 1. Format of CELI (CERTificato di Lingua Italiana) speaking component**
- 2. Validation in the test production process**
- 3. Monitoring rating process: a case study**



CELI speaking component – structure

- Format :** interview (3 tasks) monologue (self-introduction), communicative tasks
- Length:** from 8 (A2) to 20 minutes (C2)
- Reference to the CEFR descriptors:** *General oral production and General oral interaction, Monologue: describing experiences, Transactions to obtain goods and services + argumentation*
- Rating scale:** holistic for A2 level, analytic (4 criteria, from 1 to 5 points per criterion) for all other exams
- Rating decentralised in the CELI Examination Centres (raters in pair)**
- Training and monitoring**
- Profilo della Lingua italiana. Livelli di riferimento del QCER A1,A2,B1,B2:***
fundamental tool as reference in order to define the construct, but also to define the tasks, the criteria and to support the rating process



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CELI speaking component – analytic rating criteria

Vocabulary

(competenza lessicale)

Grammatical accuracy

(competenza morfosintattica)

Pronunciation and fluency

(pronuncia e intonazione)

Socio-cultural competence

(competenza socioculturale)



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CELI speaking component and VALIDATION PROCESS

All these test/exam qualities are part of the **validation process**

- Validity
- Reliability
- Authenticity
- Practicality
- Fairness
- Usefulness
- Impact
- Ethical test use



**Test
Validation
(justification)
process**



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Validity - Validation

“**Validity** is an integrated evaluative judgement of the degree to which **empirical evidence and theoretical rationales** support the adequacy and appropriateness of inferences and actions based on test scores “

(Messick 1989)

“**To validate an interpretation or use of measurements is to evaluate the rationale, or argument for the proposed conclusion and decisions (...).**

Ultimately, the need for validation derives from the scientific and social requirement that public claims and decisions be justified.” (Kane 2006).



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CELI speaking component validation

Validation goes through all the test production process.

This presentation is focused on two particular aspects:

1. Training of raters
2. Monitoring of the rating process through a specific case study



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Training of raters

- Currently around 5000 raters trained (*in over 400 examination centres*)
- Training session in Perugia twice a year (*before June and Nov. exam sessions*)
- Training in Italy and abroad



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Steps of the training

Training of raters on:

- a. **CEFR descriptors** (*General oral production, g. o. interaction, monologues...*): Familiarisation
- b. **Performance samples**: Benchmarking videos for adults and students in the school between 13 and 17 years old, CELI exams videos
- c. **Materials**: Tasks to elicit performances
- d. **Rating**: Rating criteria and scales; in addition to CELI videos, live exams and students from the University to be rated

Profilo della lingua italiana



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CELI speaking exams monitoring rating process

Need of **monitoring the rating process** to provide **evidence** on how criteria and scales are meaningfully and consistently applied by raters in the examination centre.

Monitoring is an on-going process.



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Monitoring rating process, a case study

Where and when? IIC Athens (one of the main CELI examination centres), June session 2013

Methodology: Training of examiners (according to previous modality)

99 students' performance monitored (from CELI 1-A2 to CELI 5-C2)

357 scores given (CELI 1: 1 scoring criteria; CELI 2-5: 4 scoring criteria)

18 examiners – 14 pairs

1 examiner from Perugia as standard



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Monitoring raters' behaviour

More in detail:

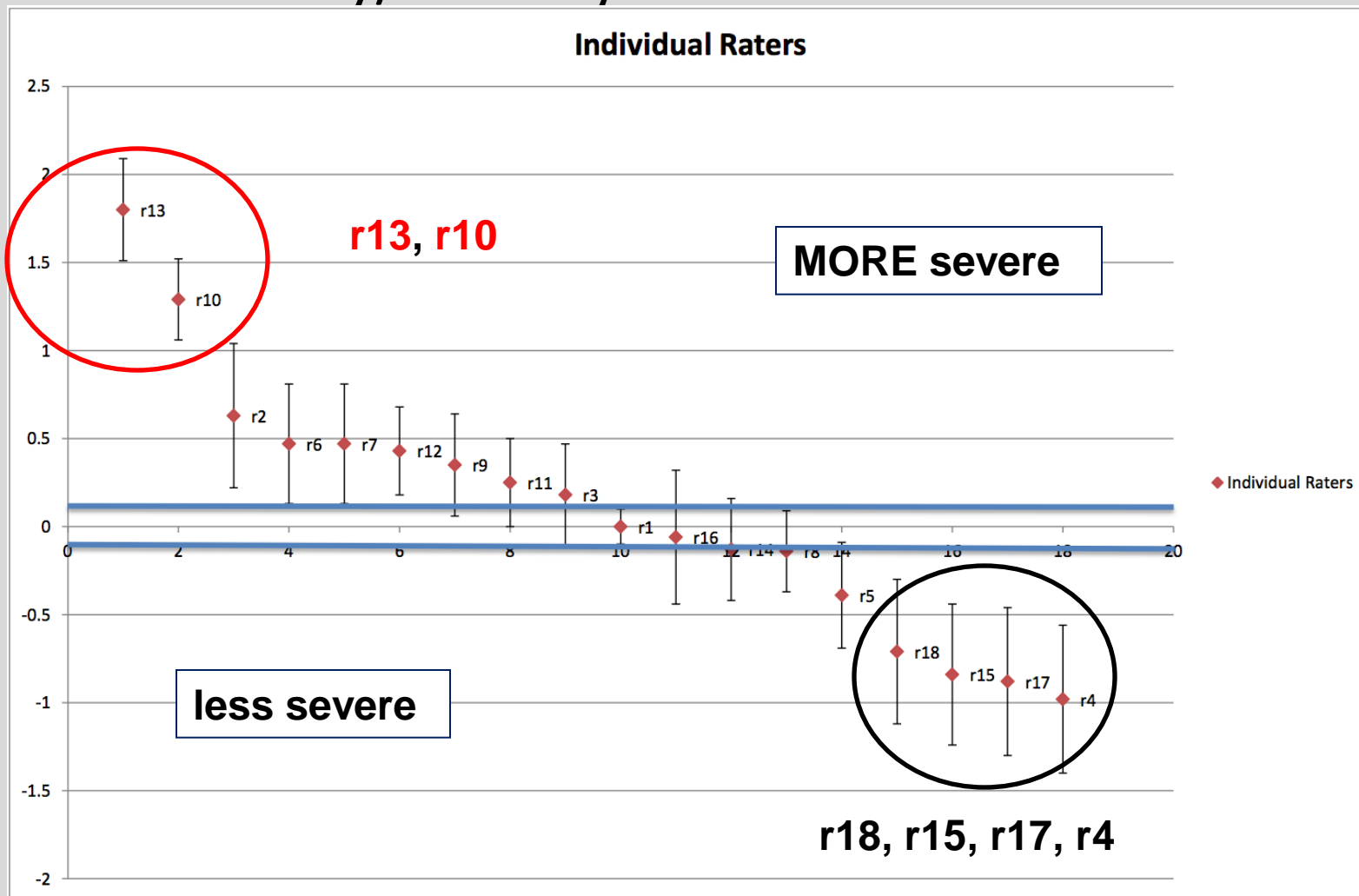
Raters' severity/leniency – consistency
(both individual and paired)

Each rater first assigned scores individually
(standard rater included), and after
that each pair agreed the final score

Analyses run: Many-Facet Rasch Measurement
(MFRM), ICC correlations

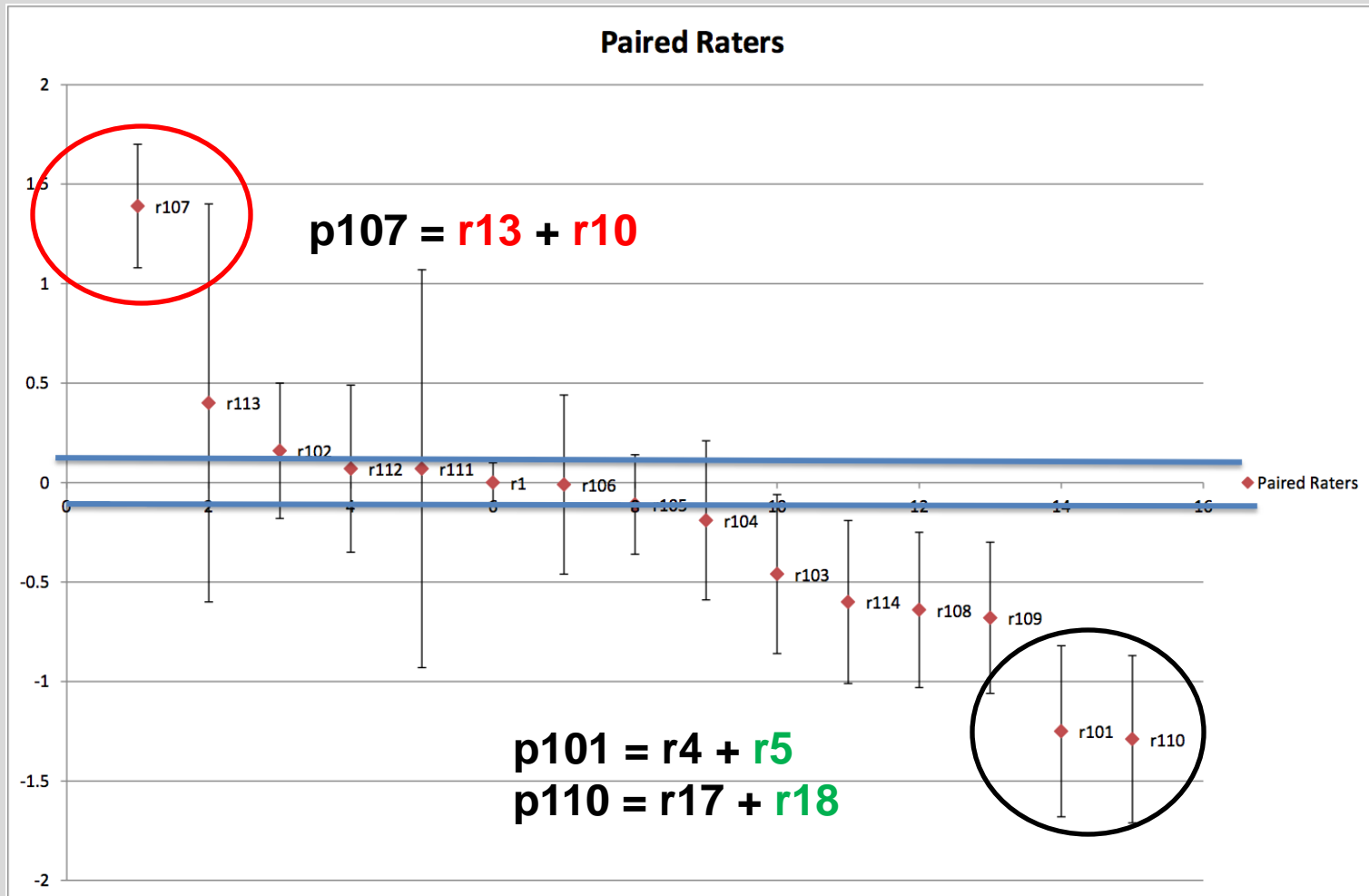
Some results

Severity/leniency of individual raters



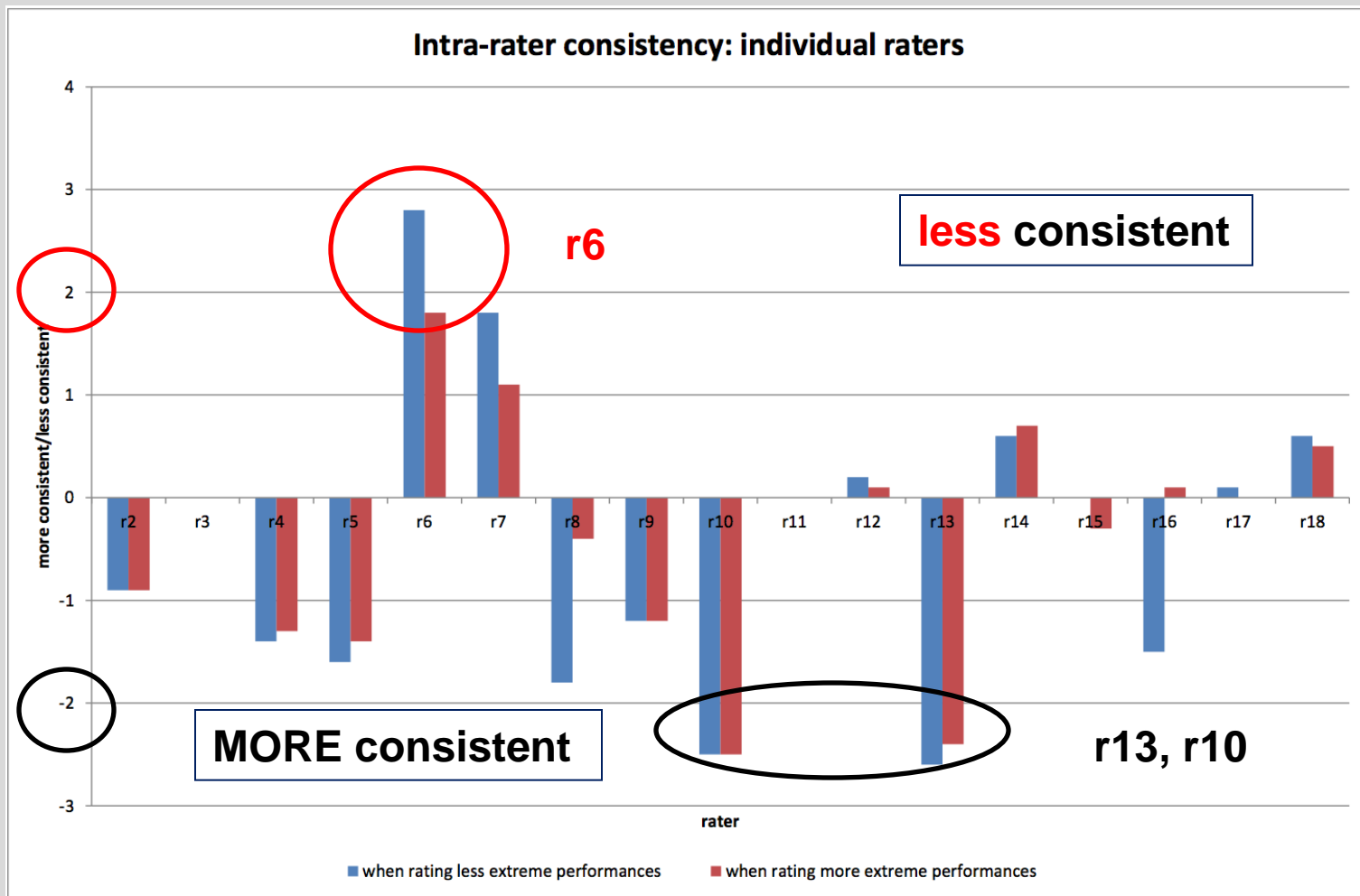
Some results

Severity/leniency of paired raters



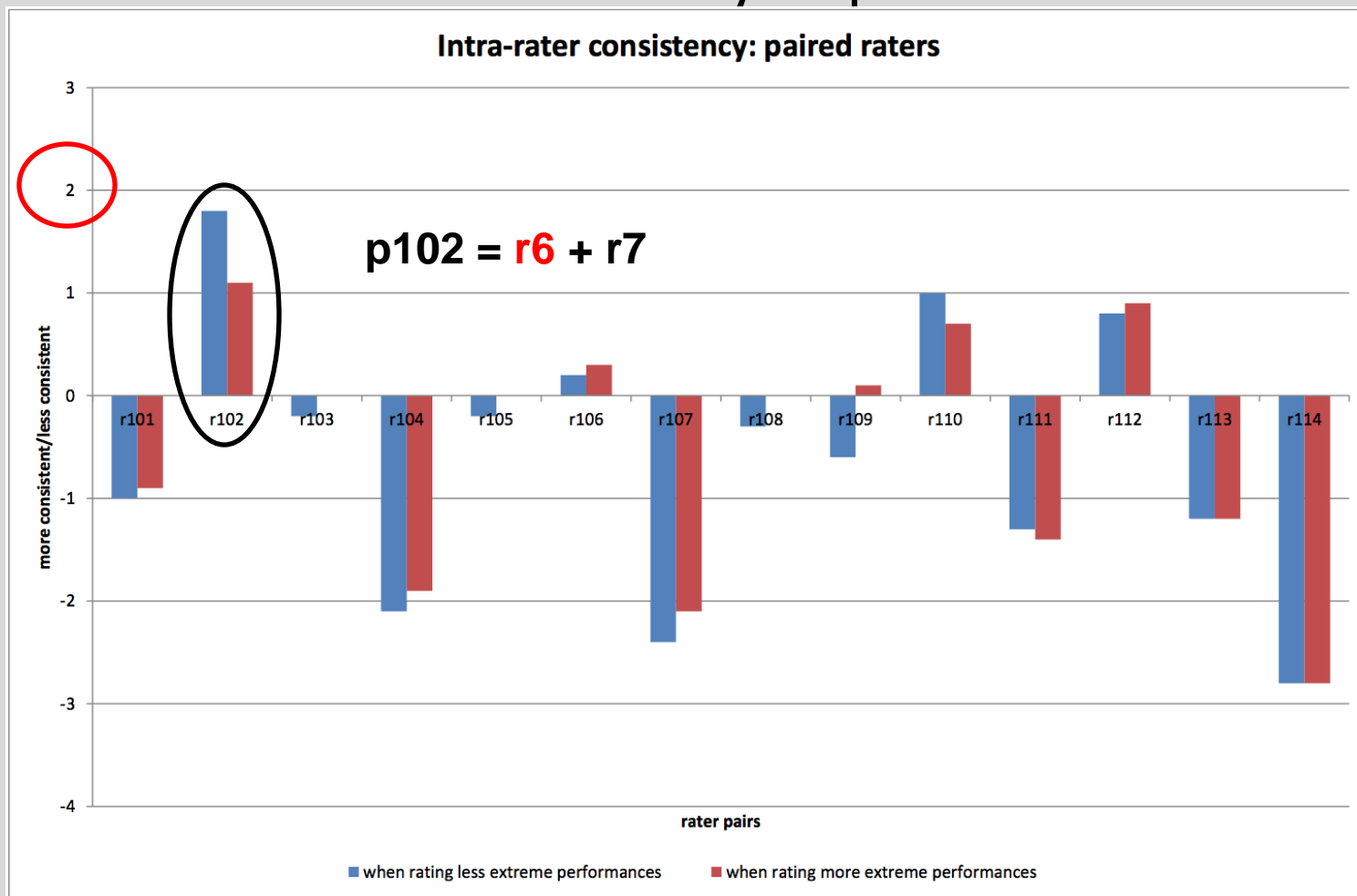
Some results

Intra-rater consistency of individual raters



Some results

Intra-rater consistency of paired raters





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Conclusions

Monitoring the rating process – further actions to be taken:

Training of raters according to results shown

Pairing raters in non-fixed pairs

Re-analysing results

Reproducing the process in other examination contexts



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Grazie per l'attenzione
Thanks for your attention

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