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European First Year Experience 2016
4 - 6 april 2016, Ghent - Belgium

artevelde university college ghent

EUROPEAN FYE FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE

Academic language skills:

necessary but not sufficient for academic achievement

Lieve De Wachter
Jordi Heeren

EFYE 2016 – 04 04 2016 – 15.45h

Overview

1 Context & construction

- Building an academic language skills test

2 Test results

- Large-scale implementation

3 Predictive validity

- Test results and academic achievement: 3 studies

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Academic language skills and achievement

- Students need to acculturate to the academic environment
- Academic literacy – language – performance

Language is the **vehicle** or instrument that enables the **understandig** of how **knowledge** is structured and how **meaning** is negotiated

(van Dyk 2015)

Construct

Language knowledge

- non-frequent vocabulary
- complex grammatical structures
- impersonal language
- (implicit) relations between text parts

Strategic competence

"…a set of **metacognitive components** […] which can be thought of as higher order executive processes that provide a **cognitive management** function in language use, as well as in other cognitive activities"

Academic Language Proficiency

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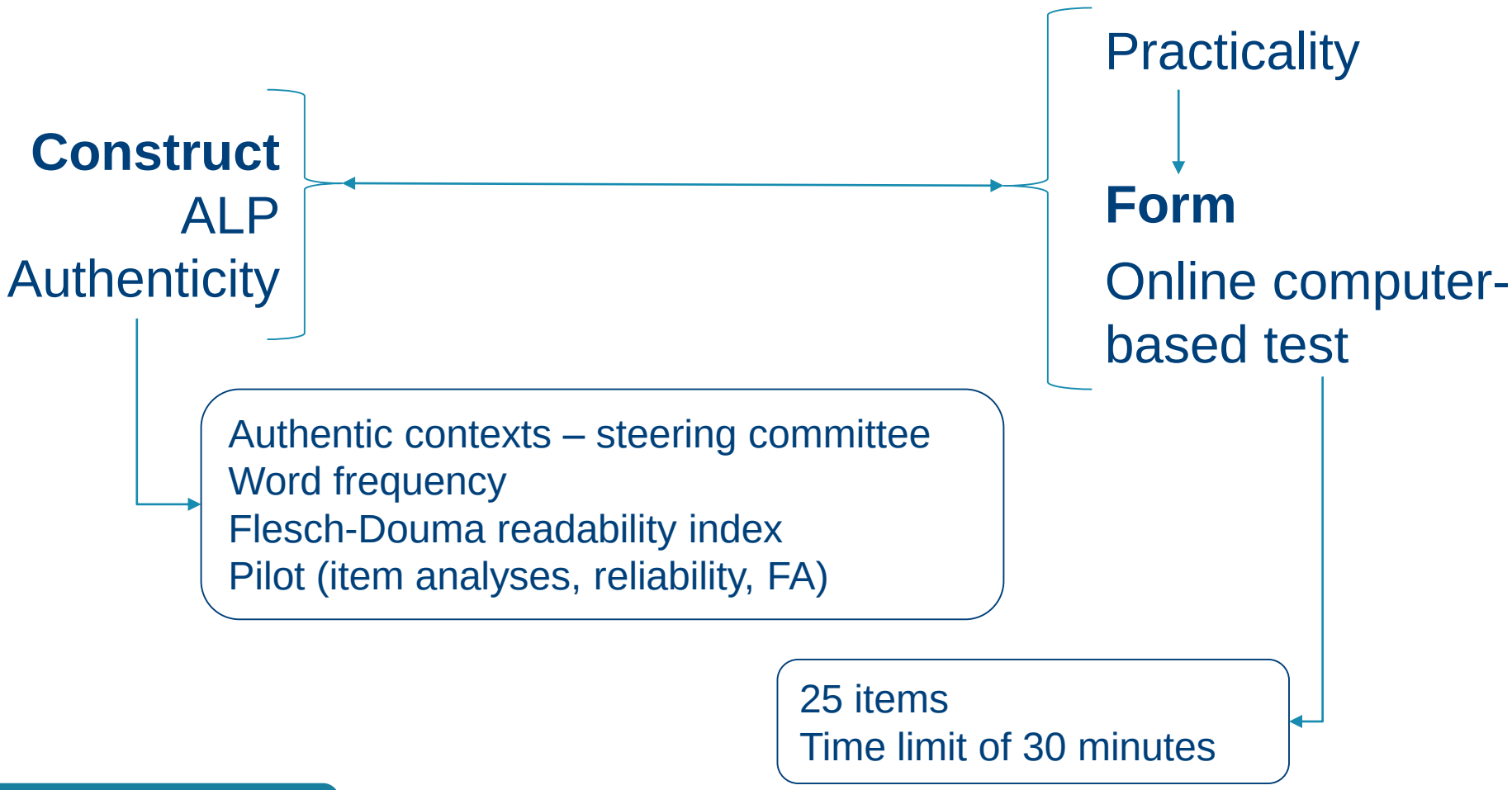
Van den Branden 2010, Hulstijn 2011a, Hulstijn 2011b, Bachman & Palmer, 1996

Operationalisation



Bachman & Palmer (1996)

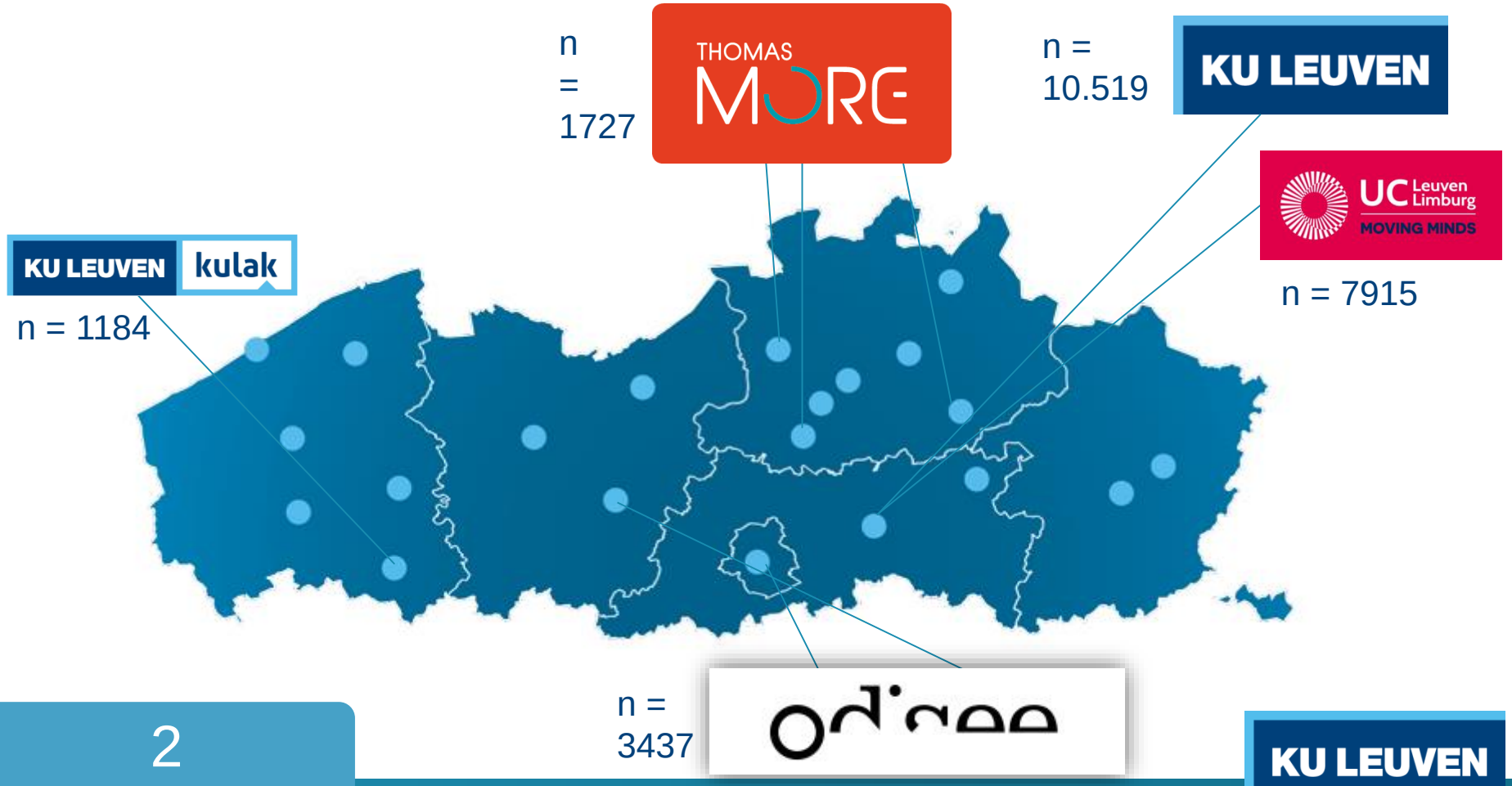
Operationalisation: tasks

Task	Item type
understand academic vocabulary in context	- Synonyms - Word formation - 1 word for 3 contexts
derive different forms of a word and write them down in a given context	- Word formation
understand relations between sentences	- Scrambled text - Reading for structure
understand text patterns	- Scrambled text - Reading for structure
make meaning of a text beyond sentence level	- Scrambled text - Reading for structure - Reading comprehension
understand the essence of a complex text	- Reading comprehension

Test results

Test results

- 2010-2015 → 24.781 students of the Association KU Leuven



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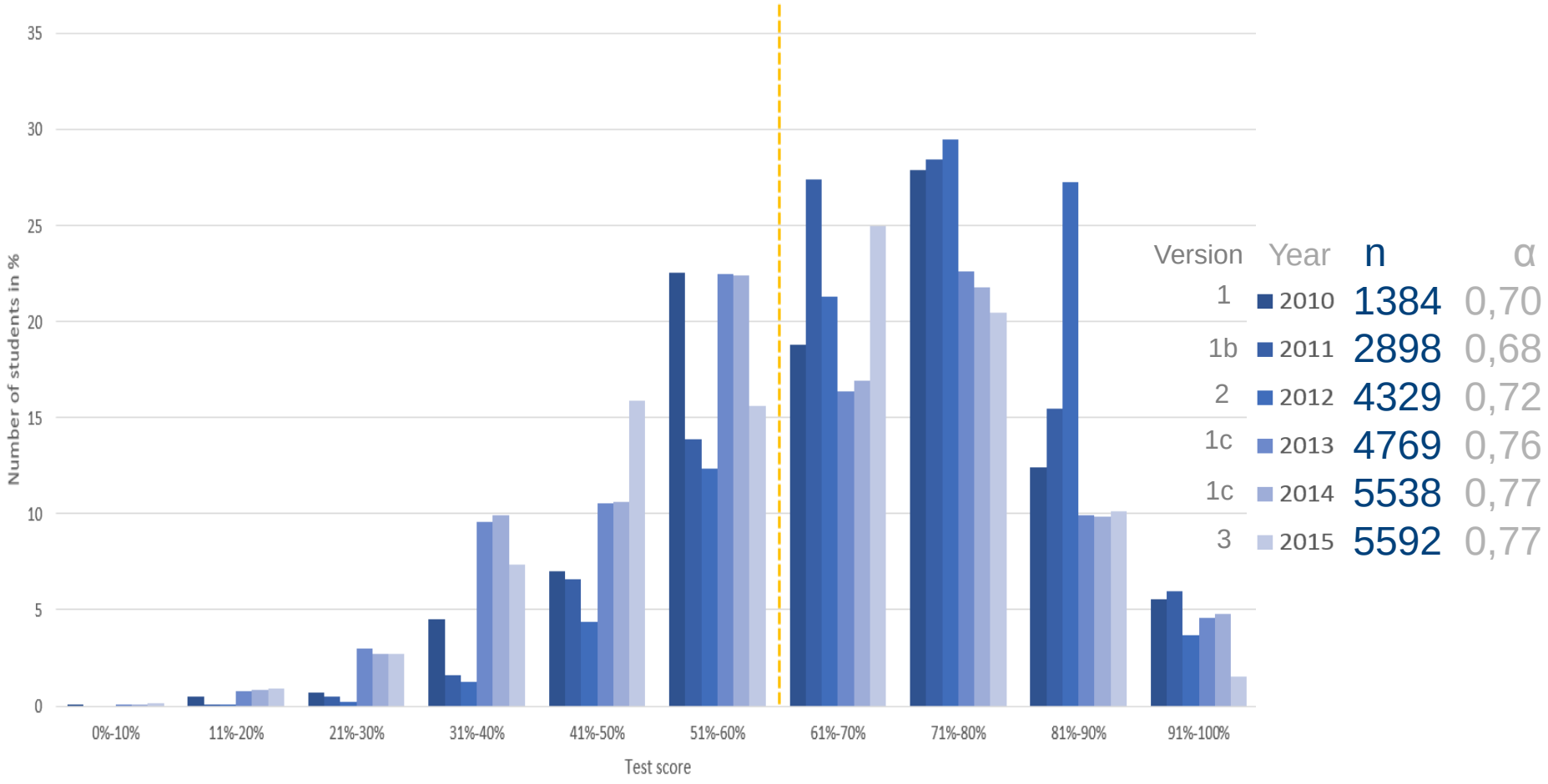
Test results



Version	Year	n	α
1	2010	1384	0,70
1b	2011	2898	0,68
2	2012	4329	0,72
1c	2013	4769	0,76
1c	2014	5538	0,77
3	2015	5592	0,77

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Validity: 3 studies

Predictive validity

- Validity = test scores + interpretation + uses
- Validity argument
- Focus: predictive validity

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Predictive validity – study 1

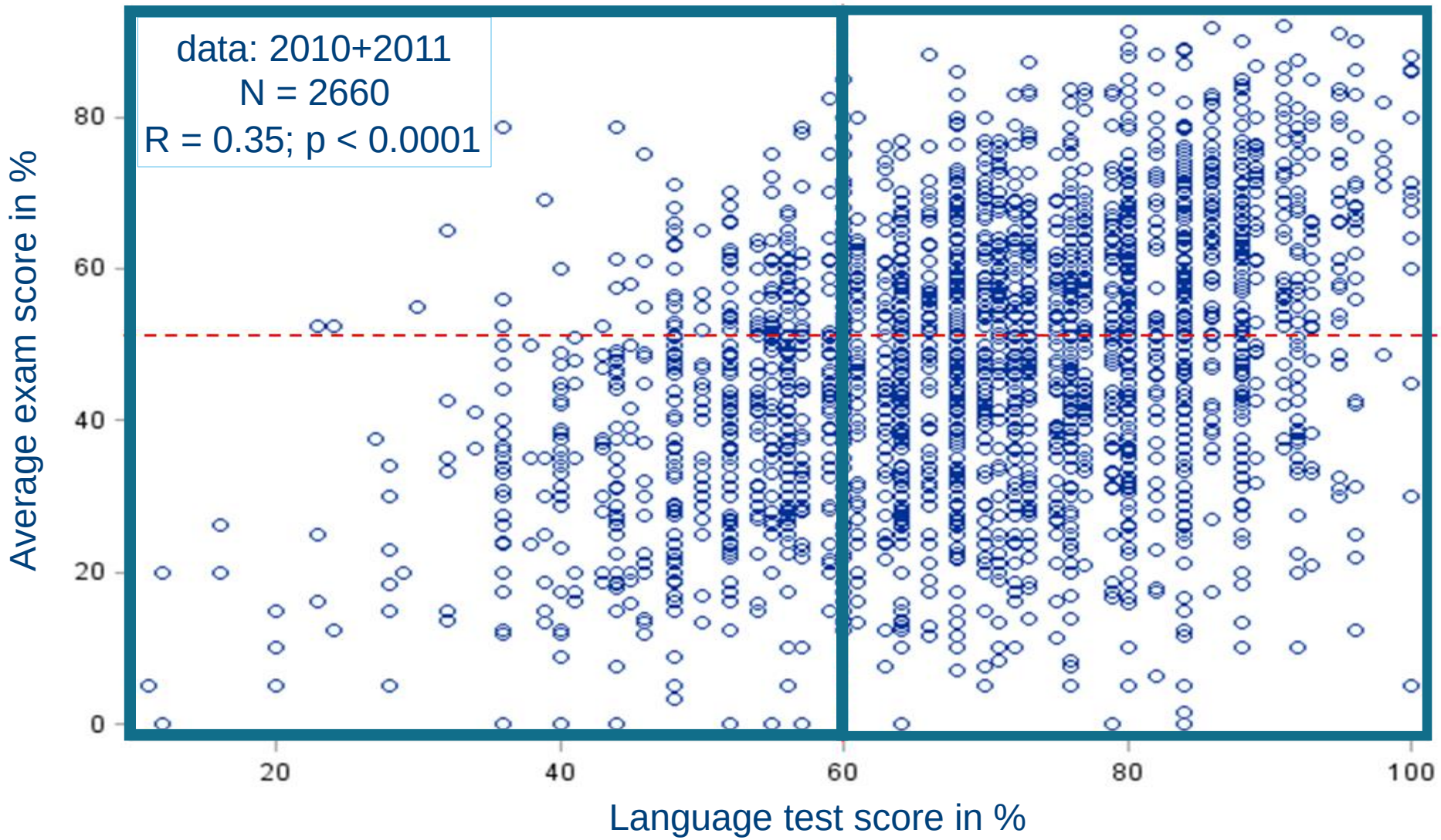
- Correlation
- Faculties: Law, Science & technology, Economics, Arts, Social Sciences

- N=2660

- Correlation: language test score – average exam score

- Academic year: 2010-2011 and 2011-2012

Predictive validity – study 1



Predictive validity – cut-off point

- Normal distribution → standard deviation

	AVG<50 exams	AVG >50 examens	Total
<60% language test	72.08	27.92	23.82
≥ 60% language test	45.86	54.14	76.18

Predictive validity – study 2

- Multiple regression
- Faculty of Social Sciences (n=490)
- 2014-15 and 2015-16

- IV's:
  - gender (Declercq & verboven 2010, Lacante et al. 2001, Departement of education 2009; 2010)
  - pre-university education (Declercq & Verboven 2010, Rombaut et al. 2006, Lacante et al. 2001)
  - multilingual home situation (Weideman 2003, Departement of education 2014)
  - high school GPA (Van Dyk 2015, Departement of education 2014, Kobrin et al. 2008, Lacante et al. 2001)
  - language test score (Van Dyk 2015)

- DV: CSE in January

Predictive validity – study 2

Results multiple regression analysis

R^2 = 26.1%	β	p
High school GPA (1-10)	.405	.000
Pre-university education (1-7)	.168	.000
Language test score (%)	.117	.005
Multilingual student (0-1)	.113	.005
Gender (0-1)	.073	.070

F(5, 484)=34,21; p<0,000

Predictive validity – study 3

- UCLL (Jacques, Walravens, Vanhoren & Sterckx, 2015)
  - Department of economics
  - 536 first-year college students (2013-2014)
  - Correlation: Language test score – CSE
  - In January r=0,297 (n =536)
  - In June r=0,302 (n=506)

Predictive validity – study 3

- Large differences according to subdiscipline!

  AF: no correlation ⇔ BV: r=0,45

  FV: no correlation MA: r=0,43

  MMA: r=0,68

- Threshold of 60% still meaningful?
  - Average of total group = 58,83%

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Conclusion

- Low-stakes academic language test
- Useful?
  - Weak but significant relation with study success
  - Small but significant contribution as predictor
  - Search for meaningful threshold → warning signal
- The test as a starting point for further (self-)investigation and/or remedial activities
- www.luci.be

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