



CUSTOMER  
CONTACT WEEK  
DIGITAL

2020  
**NOVEMBER  
MARKET STUDY**

**FUTURE OF  
THE CONTACT  
CENTER:  
A FORECAST**

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF AI-DRIVEN ASSESSMENTS FOR BILINGUAL LANGUAGE SCREENING

By Dr. Jacob Burdis, CSO and Cofounder of Emmersion

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is projected to contribute over \$15 trillion to the global economy by 2030. Virtually every industry will be affected by AI in some form or another—especially contact centers. This shift is already apparent and it will continue to profoundly impact processes such as bilingual candidate language screening. AI innovations such as machine translation and speech recognition have already radically changed the way contact centers hire and retain the best talent.

### WHY IS AI NEEDED FOR SPEAKING ASSESSMENTS?

One of the areas in which AI will be most impactful is in democratizing speaking assessment. Assessing productive language skills such as speaking has traditionally required participation from a highly trained human rater. Typically, a rater will conduct a one-on-one oral interview with the job candidate, asking probing, open-ended questions. The rater then will use a rubric to evaluate the candidate's ability across sub-categories of oral proficiency such as fluency and accuracy.

## Challenges with Human-rated Assessments

There are many difficulties with this model. First, the time required for both administration and evaluation makes this type of assessment very expensive. Due to the expense, many contact centers do not assess speaking as often as they need—some do not assess it at all. Lack of proper—or any—testing leads to time and money wasted on unqualified agents, high agent attrition, and low customer satisfaction scores.

Second, the process of training people to be consistent in their ratings is very difficult and time-intensive. Without significant training, ratings on interview-based speaking assessments are often subjective and inconsistent.

Thirdly, many contact centers are utilizing digital means to expand their reach, which creates a scalability issue when they simply cannot procure the human capital needed to conduct speaking assessments to match their hiring cadence.

Additionally, gathering and using the assessment data from human-rated assessments is cumbersome. Typically, there is a lag between conducting the interview, assigning a rating based on the rubric, and entering the rating data into a system to be consumed. The lack of immediacy is a huge barrier for processes, such as hiring, that rely on the ratings from the assessment.

Since time is a luxury, those involved with human-rated assessment systems often default to meeting the minimum requirement to get the scores into the system and move on. This means that there is not time for the rater to include personalized, qualitative feedback about the candidate's specific performance. The lack of personalized assessment data creates a barrier for using this data to gain a deeper, more specific understanding of the candidate's abilities.

## Opportunities with AI-powered Assessments

The advantages afforded by AI-powered assessments can be leveraged to overcome many of the challenges of human-rated speaking assessments. Firstly, assessment administration is typically much simpler and shorter. Scheduling a human to interact with a computer is emphatically easier than scheduling a human to interact with another human.

Secondly, assessment rating is inherently consistent. While it takes a lot of work and data to create a rating system that can assess speaking, once it is created and calibrated, the ratings will always be consistent.

Thirdly, assessment rating is immediate and automatic, which allows the system to be virtually infinitely scalable.

Since the computer is producing the rating, there is no lag between scoring and entering the ratings into a consumable format (such as a dashboard or API). With immediate results, contact centers stay ahead of the competition and are able to make quick, educated decisions for even hundreds at a time, if needed.

## HOW EMMERSION USES AI

Emmersion's automated—and now adaptive—speaking assessment has three sections that collect three distinct types of data. It begins with a language background survey where we collect information such as the candidate's overall language experience and previous exposure to the language.

### Part 1

Part 1 of the assessment utilizes a process called elicited imitation (EI), which is a fancy way to say listen and repeat. EI is a research-proven method to efficiently get a strong and reliable prediction of oral language proficiency. It measures how efficiently the candidate's brain can process or "chunk" language information. Higher proficiency in the language enables a speaker to "chunk" longer and more complex sentences. This video provides a brief explanation of this process.

Additionally, as an adaptive assessment, the administration time is reduced further while still increasing its quality. Each question is scored immediately, and the system determines which question will be the most appropriate for the candidate's level. Each question is designed to provide the most evaluative information possible, making the overall process much more efficient and saving precious time. Adaptivity provides the user experience similar to the Goldilocks fairy tale—not too difficult or too easy, but is just right for their level. This experience leaves them feeling accomplished and confident that they represented their ability well.

### Part 2

Part 2 of the assessment follows a question-answer format, collecting spontaneous responses from the candidate. It uses the data from Part 1 to determine the difficulty level for the questions asked in Part 2. For each question, candidates have 30 seconds to read the prompt and prepare to respond, and then up to 60 seconds to respond. After Part 2, the system analyzes all of the data to determine and present a score for the candidate. It then provides a numerical score on the TrueNorth scale, and provides score predictions for the ACTFL, CEFR, and other relevant scales.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR THE WIN



Let's be honest—even though assessments are immensely important, they are a means to an end. No one gets excited about the prospect of taking or reviewing an assessment (well, maybe we do). What everyone really cares about are the evaluation scores that are produced from the assessment. Organizations use these scores to make vital decisions such as whether to hire a candidate. Problems such as high employee turnover and low customer satisfaction scores are rarely connected to properly assessing agent language ability, but the proof is in the effect this tool has already had on hundreds of contact centers throughout the world.

By utilizing artificial intelligence in the hiring process, contact centers are equipped to streamline and cut costs while simultaneously improving accuracy and efficiency. The time-to-hire is decreased, pushing the contact center to the head of the competition with faster, more accurate decisions. By staffing with qualified agents who speak the language well, customers receive the quality experience they are promised and deserve.

While many are concerned about AI bringing about the apocalyptic robot singularity, the reality is that, in the immediate future, AI will afford many new exciting opportunities. Several contact centers already have a headstart in integrating AI into their products and services with tools such as virtual receptionists and chatbots.

Will AI solve all of the challenges of the contact center industry? Likely not. Since language is a means of communication between humans, it would be counterproductive to completely exclude the human element. However, using AI as shown above can be a significant force to improve learning outcomes when built into a cohesive system. Emmerision is passionately focused on taking the steps to turn this possibility into a reality.

## APPENDIX

-  **Why Adaptive? A Guide to the First Fully-Adaptive, Fully-Automated Speaking Assessment**
-  **The Surprising Value of Accurate Language Screening**

## 2020 EDITORIAL CALENDAR

### FEBRUARY

#### Market Study: State of Contact Center Technology

February 2nd, 2020



### APRIL

#### Market Study: New Standards for Contact Center Performance

April 27th, 2020



### JUNE

#### Market Study: Modernizing Service Experiences with AI & Digital

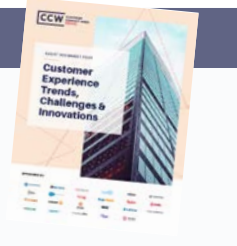
June 30th, 2020



### AUGUST

#### Market Study: Customer Experience Trends, Challenges & Innovations

August 11th, 2020



### NOVEMBER

#### Market Study: Future Of The Contact Center: A Forecast

November 3rd, 2020



### MARCH

#### CCW Online: State of Contact Center Technology

March 3rd, 2020

### MAY

#### CCW Online: New Standards for Contact Center Performance

May 19th, 2020

### JULY

#### Modernizing Service Experiences with AI & Digital

July 21-23, 2020

### SEPTEMBER

#### CCW Online: Customer Experience Trends, Challenges & Innovations

September 22nd, 2020

### OCTOBER

#### Business Continuity for Customer Contact

October 20-22, 2020

### NOVEMBER

#### New Era of Customer Insights & Analytics

November 10-12, 2020

### DECEMBER

#### Future of the Contact Center

December 1st, 2020

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