

# **Effects of Glossolalia**

Jack B. Huber, Ph.D.

2022-11-16

## **Table of contents**

# **Abstract**

Some Christians speak in tongues. This study uses data from the Pew Research Center 2014 Religious Landscape Study to examine the effect of glossolalia on a variety of religious, social, and political attitudes and behavior.

# Background

In the Christian world, glossolalia is the practice of speaking or praying in “tongues.” Glossolalia is particularly associated the Pentecostal tradition which emphasizes the direct “infilling” of the Holy Spirit. While most people who practice glossolalia tend to see it as direct evidence of divine presence, not all will claim that lack of it means lack of divine presence.

## Research Questions

In this study, I use data from a recent national survey to explore the practice of glossolalia in the population of American adults. I pose the following research questions:

1. Who speaks in tongues? Which traditions? Which demographics?
2. Correlates of glossolalia. What religious variables are most predictive of glossolalia? Is there something special about speaking in tongues?
3. Effects of glossolalia on attitudes, psychology well-being?

# Methods

## Data Source

The data for this project come from the 2014 Religious Landscape Study, by the Pew Research Center.

## Instruments

### Outcome variables

### Predictor variables

**Frequency of praying or speaking in tongues.** Measurement of glossolalia comes from one item in the Religious Landscape Survey. Respondents how identified with one of the following Christian traditions – Evangelical Protestant Tradition, Mainline Protestant Tradition, Historically Black Protestant Tradition, Catholic, Mormon, Orthodox Christian, Jehovah’s Witness, Other Christian – were asked how often they “speak or pray in tongues” with the following response options: at least once a week, once or twice a month, several times a year, seldom, or never.

## Statistical Analysis

To investigate the prevalence of glossolalia in the Christian world I used basic descriptive statistics. To isolate the effect of glossolalia on attitudes I used OLS regression.

# Results

## Prevalence of glossolalia

Table 1 presents the frequencies of responses to the item asking respondents how often they pray or speak in tongues.

X percent of self-identified American Christians, estimate XX,XXX people, engage in the practice. Thus glossolalia does not appear to be a prevalent practice.

## Predictors of Glossolalia

## Effects of Glossolalia

## Discussion