Oregon Department of Education

# Summary of Score Comparability Analyses

Grade 3 Spanish Reading Pilot, 2009-10

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#### **Summary of Score Comparability Analyses**

#### **Introduction**

Tests translated into a second language present various challenges to providers attempting to construct comparable measures of performance and to users attempting to make comparable inferences with the scores. One goal in designing a comparable measure is to standardize in ways that control for errors. Language differences present a natural barrier to standardization that is challenging to overcome. Words may have various contextual and cultural meanings that do not fully translate across languages in a concise manner. Validity demands that inferences made with the scores are comparable across forms of the test and that the classificatory decisions made with the scores are accurate.

A valid reading test in English that has a parallel or homologous equivalent in Spanish would provide a valuable approach when making comparable decisions regarding the learning of second language populations. To be successful, the items would need to be comparable in content and task, functioning equivalently for students at a given ability level. Such a test would permit policy makers the opportunity to observe changes in the reading scores of Spanish speaking populations and relate those findings to the changing scores of the more common English speaking counterparts. For any set of tests designed for cross language comparisons, inferences or claims made with the test scores can only be interpreted when the same construct is measured on a comparable scale or metric. Despite our intentions, different sociocultural factors and academic variables like class differences, gender, translation, and curriculum differences potentially confound our attempts to produce comparable measures. As a result, one analyzes the degree of comparability achieved by the English and Spanish Reading scales and items, demonstrating how potential differences affect the policy decisions made with the scores.

#### **Background of the Study**

One important source of construct-irrelevant variance is the language used to assess the examinees. Language factors as potential threats to the construct validity of the test has been addressed within the in the 1999 Standards of Educational and Psychological Testing. Score interpretation is an important aspect of any state test. Previous research has shown that tests administered in different languages may not provide comparable scores (Hambleton, 1994; Gierl & Khaliq, 2001). Although Oregon primarily reports data for schools and districts in terms of "meeting "or "not meeting" a performance standard, scale scores are reported to parents and become part of the school record.

Structure Equations modeling has also been used to examine test structure and the scaling metric across multiple groups (see Gierl & Khalig, 2001; Serici & Khaliq, 2002; Wu, Li, and Zumbo, 2006), using an a priori specification of hypotheses testing of increasingly more restrictive models. Serici and Khaliq (2002) found that the factor loadings and error variances were not equivalent across language groups. These slight differences were mainly attributed to overall group proficiency differences.

Differential item functioning (DIF) has been previously used to examine the probability of comparable groups taking the test in different language getting the transadaptive items correct. In fact, although students are taking tests in their native language, there are many examples of studies that demonstrated differential functioning in translated items was pervasive (over 30% of the items) and potentially affected student performance (e.g., Gierl & Khaliq, 2001; Ercikan & Koh, 2005; and Sireci & Khaliq, 2002). Items flagged for DIF often had inconsistent terms or the language used was less familiar.

Because Oregon reading scores in grade 3 are reported against a performance standard, the common practice is to make meeting/not meeting distinctions with the state's school and district results. Guo (2006) proposed a method for assessing the accuracy for tests used to classify students into different classifications. This latent distribution method will be used to compare scores obtained using Spanish item calibrations and scores obtained using English item calibrations. In addition, the means and standard deviations for both scores will also be compared.

Although not directly studied, there may be advantages in using adaptive tests over paper tests when attempting to achieve comparability in language tests. The expected value and derived variances of an adaptively generated set of random forms administered to a large sample from a large item pool might provide some improvement over the fixed forms typically used with paper-and-pencil tests.

With these thoughts in mind, the first purpose of this study is to examine scale and item comparability using the state reading tests offered in both English and Spanish languages. A second but related purpose is to evaluate the classification accuracy of the scores to determine their usefulness in decision making visa via the standard. Given sufficient items and students, one attempts to analyze the veracity of the claim that the measures are comparable for their intended purpose.

#### **Translation and Adaption Efforts**

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requires states that have assessment systems that include both a regular assessment in English and a non-English version of that assessment to demonstrate that these two assessments are comparable and aligned with the same academic content standards. The application of a set of items to a new culture is more complex than merely translating the items (Hambleton, 1994; Van de Vijuer & Hambleton, 1996). There are many factors that jeopardize the validity of intergroup comparisons. Anomalies in specific items and test administrations as well as the challenge of generalizing theoretical constructs across two or more cultures limit our ability to achieve measurement comparability (Van de Vijuer & Hambleton, 1996).

A methodical set of procedures must be employed during item development to ensure the accuracy of the transadaptions and to ensure that the same knowledge, skills, and abilities are being assessed in both languages. Periodic reviews are undertaken to ensure that the items are being translated or adapted properly and that the same knowledge, skills, and ability are being tested. Data obtained from this study will be used to improve item development practices and the test's construct validity.

#### **Sampling and Methodological Considerations**

A sample of 855 tests was randomly selected from students taking the OAKS grade 3 English Reading tests and compared with the 855 grade 3 Spanish Reading tests administered in April 2010. Since the Spanish Reading group is self selected, it is difficult to evaluate their comparability in an even handed fashion. For this reason, successive tests of equivalence are applied to evaluate varying degrees of scale comparability.

DIF applies matched sampling in an effort to produce comparable groups across several ability levels. To obtain comparable groups for DIF analysis of a given item, a sampling program first matches the distribution of the scores of students in the referent group to the existing distribution of scores of students in the focal group who received the same item. The program then segments the focal group's score distribution into ten intervals, and then randomly selects students from the reference group with scores that match the focal group within each interval. So, for example, if 5% of the students in the focal group had scored between 200 and 210 on the test, the sampling program would match the scores of students in referent group until 5% of those scores were between 200 and 210. This matching procedure is performed across the entire distribution of scores in the focal group until a similar distribution of matched scores was generated for the reference group. If sufficient numbers of students were available at each ability level, the item means and standard deviations were approximately equal for both the focal and reference groups after sampling.

#### **Analyses**

Steps in Examining the Empirical Comparability of the Measures are summarized below. These methods have been previously employed in such research (see Sereci & Khaliq, 2002).

- 1. Different conceptions of comparability can be attained for a given set of scales. The first step is to check whether the observed measures possess congeneric equivalence, essentially tau equivalence, and parallel equivalence using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The CFA framework tests these measurement comparability properties by comparing hierarchical models using the chi-square difference test.
- 2. Item comparability promotes conditions where the probability of achieving a correct response is equal given chance levels of difference. A second step checks for item comparability by the two populations using DIF methods that controls for differences in group performance. Tests of the odds ratio or some form of a logistic regression model are considered more appropriate at the item level. Mantel Haenszel and logistic regression are employed item by item to check for uniform and non-uniform differences in item functioning.
- 3. Scores are ultimately employed against a performance standard as a means of judging successful performance. A latent distribution method is employed as a final step to calculate the expected

classification accuracy of the Spanish and English test in classifying students at the cut score. Scores that yield comparable results given these pass/fail determinations produce higher observed rates that closely matches the expected or modeled classification accuracy.

#### **Scale Level Analysis**

Varying conceptions of parallel equivalence provide one means of evaluating test comparability (see Feldt and Brennan, 1989; Graham, 2006). Parallel equivalence assumes the most restrictive model requiring that any examinee belonging to a given language group has the same true score no matter what form of the test is produced by either the Spanish or English pool. Administered forms are comprised of comparable items that are translated into Spanish or English, content balanced to a test blue print, and tailored to an ability estimate. Parallel equivalence demands equal mean scores, observed variances, and error variances on every form in order to produce equal true scores. Scales that have parallel equivalence produce interchangeable item calibrations and student scores, but parallel equivalence is difficult to attain when testing in different languages.

Relaxing one or two restrictions employed by the parallel model allows for an alternative conception of comparability. Because the Spanish reading group is self selected and the number of students testing in Spanish is much smaller than in English reading, it is difficult to evaluate parallel equivalence in an even handed fashion. For this reason, tests of tau or essential tau equivalence are alternatively proposed and applied as a possible accommodation to this inherent challenge. Tau equivalence permits the error variances to vary where the purely parallel model does not. The relaxation of error assumption still allows for a common scale with equal item locations with comparable precision, but each subscale has unique error variance. By further relaxing restrictions, essential tau equivalence differs from tau equivalence in that it permits scales to differ by a constant (Feldt & Brennan, 1989; Graham, 2006). Despite this difference in item location and scale precision, essential tau equivalence still produces comparable measures that still share a common scale but have mean and unique error differences associated with each subscale or strand reporting category (SRC). Because the reliability coefficient is typically calculated as a ratio of true and observed variance, essential tau equivalent models produce reliability coefficients that are comparable to tau equivalent scales. However, as long as differences in the scale location terms exist between language groups, imprecision will always exist in some form on each scale and these constant differences will likely favor lower performers (Bollen, 1989). Differences between essential tau equivalence and tau equivalence are discussed in more detail by Feldt & Brennan (1989) and Graham (2006).

Congeneric equivalence provides the least restrictive test of comparability. The means, observed variances, and error variances of the scale scores are permitted to vary, but the true scores are still perfectly correlated. This result suggests that the produced factor structure is measuring the same latent construct.

#### **The Measurement Model**

As specified by the two-group model below, local independence of each subtest holds when the latent variable,  $\xi$  , accounts for the variance in the unidimensional model and the errors,  $\delta_{\;\;i}$  , are unique and statistically independent.

$$
y_{1i} = \tau_{1i} + \lambda_{1i} \xi + \delta_{1i}
$$
  
...  

$$
y_{2j} = \tau_{2j} + \lambda_{2j} \xi + \delta_{2j}
$$

- Where  $y_{1i}$  is an observed measure regressed on the first sample's latent variable to estimate a factor coefficient,  $\lambda_{_{-1i}}$  , and intercept,  $\tau_{_{-1i}}$  , while j is the number of factors in the model. This factor model maintains that when two or more groups share the same regression line, then the scale is operating the same way for any sample.
- Congeneric measures possess a common factor structure but do not share the same levels of precision as other forms of measurement. When the population variance/covariance matrix is equal for both groups and across both forms of the test, the factor structure of the two forms of the test is similar.
- Essentially tau equivalent measures assume that the slopes measuring the changes in the observed variables ( $y_{1i}$  ..  $y_{2j}$ ) given a unit change in the latent variable ( $\xi$ ) are invariant across the two tests (i.e,  $\lambda_{1i}$ =....  $\lambda_{2j}$ ), but these true values may lack precision when their modeled intercepts differ (Graham, 2006). Factor loadings that are essentially tau equivalent share a common slope, so they contribute in comparable ways to the true scores and the calibrated values are said to share a common latent scale. Factor loadings that do not share common slopes contribute variance that is unique to the observed variables ( $y_{ij}$ ) and this effect increases measurement error. In other words, congeneric factors that lack essential tau equivalence share the same trait but are less likely to share the same scale.
- A factor analytic model with equal error variance constrained across subscales and groups (  $\delta$  <sub>1*i*</sub> =….  $\delta$  <sub>2*j*</sub> ) provides more consistent and stable measurement across groups and forms of the test. For this reason, these measures are said to be parallel in form. Applying a classical perspective, the ratio of item true score variances to the sum of the item true scores variances and error score variances are similar for forms of the test and the two populations taking the items. When error variances are heterogeneous, the observed variables measure the latent trait with different amounts of error and are less comparable.

#### **Item Level Analysis**

Differential Item functioning describes a set of analytical practices for determining whether any item operates fairly for different groups (see Holland and Wainer, 1993). DIF is defined as an item that displays different statistical properties for different manifest groups after controlling for levels of ability (Angoff, 1993). The presence of DIF implies that the item measures more than one latent trait. Large DIF effects are necessary conditions when evaluating potential item bias, but group differences in item functioning do not always imply that the item is biased. There are true differences between groups that one wishes to validly and reliably measure, but DIF attempts to measure only nuisance factors that confound the measurement of the true scores, thereby creating construct irrelevant differences that were largely unintended (Camilli, 2006). Competing explanations can often occur that better explain these differences, especially when similar patterns exist across various items within a specific content area. Judgmental or logical analysis must then be used to make an ethical decision regarding the future use of the item.

Typically, the item performance of two groups is compared: the referent group and the focal group. Students taking the English Reading test are hereby known as the **referent** group; students taking the Spanish Reading test are herby know as the **focal** group. In this study, to ensure comparability, English passages and reading test items are independently translated to Spanish by two translators. Students taking a reading test in Spanish are assigned to the focal group, while students taking a reading test in English are assigned to the referent group. To be considered comparable, the item performance of the Spanish speaking students at a given level of ability should be equal to the item performance of English speaking students at an identical level of ability on comparable items.

There are two forms of DIF that potentially occur: uniform DIF and non-uniform DIF (see Zumbo, 1999). With uniform DIF, the differences in item functioning always favor the same group no matter what the ability level. Item characteristic curves (ICC) in Figure 1 are parallel so they differ in a uniform manner, with the referent group having a higher probability of getting the item correct at each ability level. With nonuniform DIF, the differences in item functioning can differ depending on the ability level of the groups. Nonuniform DIF is illustrated in Figure 2 where the amount of DIF varies by levels of the RIT scale. The group favored by the item is determined by the level of ability – the focal group is favored at the top of the scale while the referent group is favored at the bottom of the scale.



**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**

*Mantel-Haenszel Procedure*: Holland (1985) proposed the use of the Mantel-Haneszel procedure as a practical and powerful way to detect test items that function differently for two matched groups of examinees. A 2x2 cross-tabulation table is produced for the previously matched set of examinees in both the reference and focal groups over each of the K levels of ability. The Mantel-Haenszel procedure tests the null hypothesis that the common odds ratio of correct response across all matched groups is  $\alpha$  = 1 over the K levels. Mantel and Haenszel developed an estimator of  $\alpha$  whose scale ranges from 0 to  $\infty$ known as alpha ( $\hat{\alpha}$ ), so an obtained value of  $\hat{\alpha}$ =1 implies that there is negligible or no DIF. A small, obtained value less than 1 favors the focal group, while a large value greater than 1 favors the referent group.

*Logistic Regression*: The Mantel-Haenszel method assumes that only the difficulty of the items may change, and item DIF is detected by simultaneously testing for significant group differences in the odds ratio at K ability levels. Like the Mantel-Haenszel procedure, the logistic regression first tests for "uniform" differences in the responses represented by comparing the fit of the model. This is done by first fitting a model relating the dichotomous response of the item to the scale score and calculating a chi-square value. A second model expands on the first model by adding a group variable to the original model and using the likelihood ratio test (1 df) to examine changes in the fitted model. By subtracting the chi-square value of the second model from the first, a likelihood chi-square test of difference is calculated. A significant change in model fit means there is significant uniform DIF. This approach has been shown to be mathematically comparable to the Mantel Haenszel result. Shultz and Geisinger (1992) found that the agreement between the logistic regression and the Mantel Haenszel procedure declines with decreased sample size or when the number of levels employed by the Mantel Haenszel is less than 10. Zumbo (1999) suggested minimum samples of size 200 or larger to evaluate items with DIF with logistic regression.

Examining the effect size in the difference in difficulties is as important as the test of significance in both the Mantel Haenszel and logistic regression when identifying items with DIF. This strategy is typically adopted because one wants to control for statistical inflation in Type I and Type II error rates attributed to the number of tests and sample size when using the Likelihood Chi-square test over a number of items. Zieky (1993) and Jodin and Gierl (2001), respectively, developed DIF classification systems for the Mantel-Haenszel and logistic regression taking both the test of significance and effect size into account. For Mantel Haenszel, Zieky used the absolute value of the magnitude in change in delta  $(\Delta)$  to determine moderate or large effect sizes. Delta ( $\Delta$ ) is equal to -2.35 ln( $\alpha$ ), where  $\alpha$  is the common odds ratio. When the absolute value of the delta difference is at least 1 and less than 1.5, the effect is moderate in size. When the absolute value of the delta difference is at least 1.5 or great, the effect is large in size. For logistic regression, Jodin and Gierl (2001) recommend using a  $0.035 \leq$  Nagelkerke R $^2 \leq 0.07$  for moderate DIF and 0.07  $\leq$  Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> for large DIF. Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> is a "pseudo" r-squared value associated with the logistic regression and, like the R<sup>2</sup> used in any linear regression, ranges between 0 and 1.

Unlike the more restrictive Mantel Haenszel method, logistic regression goes further by testing whether the item discriminates equally well across the ability distribution. Items with non-uniform DIF identify groups

who have advantage over a second group in one area of the distribution, but are at a disadvantage at another end of the distribution. One way to test for such differences in the rates of growth between groups is to fit a model that adds an interaction term to the second model. This third model with its RIT term, its group term, and its RIT by group interaction term is fitted and a change in the chi-square value is calculated by subtracting the chi-square value of the third model from the second model. Any significant change in chi-square would suggest non-uniform DIF.

Model 1  $_0$  + $\beta_1$  X

Where P=probability of a correct response,  $z = \ln(P/Q)$ , and Q=1-P

A second model expands on the first model by adding a group variable to the original model and using the likelihood ratio test (1 df) to examine changes in the fitted model.

Model 2  $_0$  +β<sub>1</sub>X +β<sub>2</sub> G

A third model with its RIT term, its group term, and its RIT by group interaction term is fitted and a change in the chi-square value is calculated by subtracting the chi-square value of the third model from the second model.

Model 3 
$$
z = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \beta_2 G + \beta_3 XG
$$

A likelihood ratio difference test between the models is then employed to determine successive values of G. Comparing Chi-square distributions with the appropriate degrees of freedom yields a p-value that explains how much the new variable adds to the model.

 $G = \chi^2 = D$ (compact model) – D(augmented model)  $=$ **D**<sub>mod*el*1</sub> - **D**<sub>mod*el*2</sub>  $=$ **D**<sub>mod*el*2</sub> - **D**<sub>mod*el*3</sub>

#### **Decision Level Analysis**

A third important consideration when evaluating score comparability involves the usefulness of the score for making classification decisions. Every time one makes a decision with a standard there is bound to be some number of misclassifications (Rudner, 2001).

An accuracy or classification index estimates the number of examinees that are correctly classified. The higher the index of accuracy, the more likely a student will be classified given his/her score. A classification index compares an observed and expected classification rate using item response theory approach.

A latent distribution method developed by Guo (2006) is employed to examine the classification accuracy in the two tests. The latent distribution method has at least two advantages over a method developed by Rudner (2001): 1.) Guo 's method makes fewer assumptions and is easier to calculate and 2) the analysis is less problematic to perform on ability estimates derived when smaller numbers of items are administered. The Spanish and English reading results of the latent distribution method are than compared using the scores on the Spanish tests calculated from the Spanish pool and the sample student scores calculated from the English pools.

**Results**

#### **Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Results**

Preliminary analysis independently fits a one factor model to the both the Spanish Reading data and the English Reading data with the results presented in Table 1. Previous Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) revealed one strong latent effect for both the Spanish and English Reading tests explained by the four observed variables: vocabulary, reads to perform, demonstrates understanding, and develops interpretations. All residuals calculated when subtracting the sample and reproduced variance/covariance matrix were near 0. One eigenvalue explained over 75 percent of the variance in both tests, and this first factor produced the only eigenvalue greater than 1. The scree plot strongly suggested the existence of one factor being explained in both analyses.

Applying Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), a one factor model adequately explains both the English and the Spanish Reading data. The test of the null maintains that each model is a one factor model, yielding  $\chi^{-2}$  values of 2.865 in Spanish and 5.689 in English with 2 df in each model. A probability of greater than 0.05 is obtained for both overall chi square tests, and one fails to reject the null designating that the model sufficiently reproduces the sample variance/covariance matrix. A Goodness of Fit (GFI) index, the Standard Root Square Residual (SRMR), and Root Mean Square Approximation are applied to test data to model fit. The GFI predicts the percentage of the variance/covariance in the sample variance/covariance (S) that is reproduced by the predicted variance/covariance matrix  $(\Sigma)$ , given the one factor model. A GFI that is greater than or equal to 0.90 is typically accepted as displaying good fit and this index works better with parsimonious models having few parameters. In Table 1, the GFI is close to 1 so the fit the sample to the predicted variance/covariance is good. The SRMR employs the square root of the mean square differences between the matrix elements of the sample and predicted variance/covariances. An SRMR=0 indicates perfect fit, with increasingly larger values indicating poorer fit. The range of the SRMR is in standardized units and the average absolute difference in the residuals should be less than 0.05 for a proper, but each model has. The root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) is a "badness of fit" index that employs a non-central chi square distribution and produces a confidence interval. A RMSEA less than 0.05 indicates a lack of "bad" fit, and both models meet this standard. A confidence band of 90% is presented and there is a greater potential for misfit at the higher end of the scale.



## **Single Group Analysis Model Fit Table 1**

N=855 per group tested

#### **Hierarchical Test Statistics and Fit Indices**

Using CFA, one evaluates measurement equivalence using a hierarchical procedure that compares a number of increasingly more restrictive models using a likelihood ratio goodness of fit difference test along with a comparative fit index. Since most models are either slightly misspecified or do not account for all measurement error, when sample sizes are large, a nonsignificant chi-square test is rarely obtained. Because a researcher's model is so frequently rejected in large samples, other measures of fit have been developed to assess the congruence of model fit to the data. A better fitting model does not always mean a more correct model.

The Rasch model attempts to estimate person and item points of estimation along a line using joint maximum likelihood. When constructing comparable measures, one attempts to isolate the trait of interest and build an additive measure that is invariant across language groups. CFA employs alternative forms of maximum likelihood estimation to produce parameter estimates describing the relationship between scores of the two samples shown in Table 2 and 3 below. Table 2 shows the factor loadings for the English and Spanish tests in Reading. Equal factor loadings both within and between language groups suggests factor invariance. There appears to be greater between group differences in the slope of the observed variable that demands "reading to perform a task" relative to other observed variables or srcs.



#### **Maximum Likelihood Estimates of the Two Samples Table 2**

Table 3 displays the error variances that are estimated by the one factor model. The most notable result in Table 3 is the differences in error variance in the src 2 (Read to perform the task) compared to all other error variances. The results suggest that there is relatively more within-group error variance in the "read to perform tasks" than in tasks developed for other srcs for both language groups. Moreover, there is relatively more between group differences in error variance in three of the four srcs: read to perform a task, demonstrate understanding, and develop and interpret.



### **Unstandardized Factor and Error Variances Table 3**

A multigroup strategy is next employed to test the null hypotheses (H<sub>0</sub>) that  $\Sigma_1$ = $\Sigma_2$ , where  $\Sigma$  is the population variance-covariance matrix for the two groups. Rejection of the null thus provides evidence of the nonequivalence of the group subscores. Acceptance of the null hypothesis provides evidence that the factor structure produced by both models possess congeneric equivalence. A claim of congeneric equivalence provides evidence that the simple factor structures are similar for both tests. As in the single

group analysis, a SRMR index is calculated to examine the absolute fit of the sample estimates to the implied or predicted variance/covariance matrix at each stage of the hierarchical analysis.

Subsequent chi-square difference tests are next performed to test the increasingly more restrictive assumptions associated with essential tau and parallel equivalence. Statistical Tests are applied by constraining parameters in a restrictively increasing fashion and by observing changes in the chi-square likelihood test (  $\chi$  <sup>2</sup>). Each time one tests the differences in the likelihood chi-square statistics (  $\Delta$   $\chi$  <sup>2</sup>) in the augmented model minus the more compact model. A p-value is computed for each change in the chisquare statistic. A good fitting comparative model will have a  $\Delta \ \chi^{-2}$  p-value greater than 0.05, demonstrating that the differences in the likelihood square statistic are negligible.

Two subsequent fit indices are applied: the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI). RMSEA takes into account errors in approximation by asking, "How well would a model, with unknown but optimally chosen parameters values, fit the population variance/covariance matrix if it were available? "(see Browne and Cudek, 1993). A noncentrality parameter is estimated from a an approximate noncentral chi-square distribution, designated as  $\delta$  . The value of  $\delta$  increases as the null becomes more false. Using Cheung and Resvold's (2002) recommendations, reasonable errors in approximation would be equal to or less than 0.05.

The CFI is a fit index that provides further utility when assessing the fit of two competing models. The CFI is not sensitive to large sample sizes and is derived by a comparison of the hypothesized model to an independence model. Again using Cheung and Resvold's (2002) recommendations, the change in CFI (ΔCFI) should be less than or equal to -0.01, which is a more robust test than the commonly used standard of accepting model fit for any CFI greater than 0.95.

As already mentioned, each subsequent test is more restrictive since additional variance constraints are being placed on the hypothesized model. For instances, considering the first test, congeneric indicators measure the same construct but not to the same degree of accuracy. The CFA model for congenerity does not impose any constraints or restrictions on the model. If this factor structures is different across groups, the null hypothesis would be rejected due to a lack of model fit. However, as in the present case, if the model fits the data reasonably well, the congeneric sets of indicators are said to possess convergent validity so the four indicator variables measure the same latent variable, but the latent measures may be on different scales. One can then proceed to the test of essential tau equivalence to determine otherwise.

A difference test of essential tau equivalence fixes all the factor loadings equal to 1 and evaluates whether the model is both congeneric and whether the score reporting categories (src' s)have equal factor loadings. Internal measures of consistency like Cronbach's Alpha assume essential tau equivalent measures (see Raykov, 1997; Graham, 2006). If the fit of the model to the data violate the essential tau equivalent assumption, it is possible that a strong simple structure factor analytic model will produce latent measures on different scales with spuriously low reliability. Rejection of the null hypothesis of no differences implies that the true scores significantly vary over the score reporting categories (src). However, in this case, the fit indices present a different story when compared to the rejected equal factor loadings hypotheses of the

chi-square difference test. Changes in the comparative fit indices ( $\Delta$ CFI) are appreciably small when subtracting the CFI of the congeneric model from the CFI of the essentially tau equivalent model. In addition, the RMSEA provides additional support that the restrictions on the factor loadings are having little "bad effect" on model fit. A change in the CFI ( $\Delta$ CFI) ranging between 0 than -0.01 provides alternative evidence of essential tau equivalence attributed to the factor loadings, while a small RMSEA of .036 with the 90% confidence interval of 0.22 and 0.05 demonstrates that the null hypothesis of close approximation is not rejected.

Parallel equivalence tests whether the model error variances are equal and independent across the four indicators, thereby functioning to produce equal reliability. Once again, a significant chi-square result provides evidence of misfit. Strictly interpreted, the fit indices again provide little evidence for parallel equivalence. In Table 4, the  $\Delta$  CFI indicates slightly larger amounts of change than Cheung and Resvold's recommended levels of comparative fit (between 0 and -0.01) for the more restrictive parallel model ( $\Delta$ CFI =-0.011) compared to the essential tau equivalence model. The RMSEA is less than 0.05 but a small part of the upper band of the 90% confidence interval exceeds the 0.05 level. An SRMR of 0.028 appears to be small relative to the commonly employed standard that less than or equal to 0.05 is fitting. In summary, the empirical evidence suggests that some variability exists in the reliability of the different subscales.



## **Nested Tests of Parallel Equivalence Table 4**

N=855 per group tested

## **CFA Conclusions**

Confirmatory factor analyses provides empirical support that both the Spanish and English Reading tests are adequately explained by a one factor model, providing evidence of unidimensionality. Multi-group factor analysis provides evidence of their congeneric equivalence – that is to say, the simple factor or theoretical structure demonstrated in the separate factor analysis is shared across Spanish and English

forms of the test. A simple factor or latent trait is an unobserved construct measured by the test – in this case, reading achievement. In substantive research, it is important to know whether the factor loadings and the relations among the strand reporting category scores are equivalent across forms of the test, because a unit increase their latent score translates into a unit increase in each strand reporting category score. Chisquare tests of equal slopes of the strand score factor loadings on the latent trait are significant, suggesting some linear differences in growth trajectories of each test. Although this result suggests that strand reporting scales are not strictly operating in the same way, any between language differences the strand variable scales viewed in Table 3 appear to be due to sample variation. Comparative fit indices provide evidence for the confirmation of the essential tau equivalence models, entailing a congeneric solution in which the indicators of a single factor have equal factor loadings but different error variances. This essential tau equivalence suggests that a unit change in each strand score translates into a unit change in the latent score, but that any change is different by some constant. Because there was evidence of essential tau equivalence, a more restrictive model was tested. This further tests of parallel equivalence yielded additional mixed results given its more restrictive assumptions of equal error variances. Models with equal error variances have equal reliability and produce interchangeable true scores across forms of the test. Such a result would exhibit the highest standards of comparability and is seldom achieved in practice.

#### **DIF Results**

Tests of item invariance provide a second method for assessing measurement equivalence. The odds of success for students taking an English Reading item should be equal to those students taking a comparable Spanish item when the underlying ability level is the same. Mantel-Haenszel DIF analysis is employed to test this underlying assumption for each of the 169 comparable items written for both the Spanish and English reading pools. Mantel Haenszel results are rated using a classification system adopted by Educational Testing Systems (ETS) and developed by Zieky (1993). Items with large DIF are rated C, items with moderate DIF are rated B, and all other items with little or no DIF are rated A. ETS recommends that all C items be evaluated and considered for removal.

Although some of the items from the Spanish pools had less than 200 responses, the decision was made to be cautious and analyze every item no matter what the number of responses. There were 169 items analyzed in this DIF analysis but only 81 items had more than 200 responses. A total of 14 items had at least 200 cases in each group and received C ratings – 8 items had results favoring the referent group while 6 items had results favoring the focal group. The 14 items represented about 7 percent of the item pool. Another 17 items received B ratings and the remaining items received A ratings. Schultz and Geisinger (1992) found that the agreement between the logistic regression and the Mantel Haenszel procedure declines with decreased sample size or when the number of levels employed by the Mantel Haenszel is less than 10.

As recommended by Jodoin and Gierl (2001), items possessing moderate or large amounts of non-uniform DIF, uniform DIF, or both uniform and uniform DIF were analyzed. Logistic regression produced 7 significant DIF results for items with at least 200 responses in each group, and all 7 of these items also had some form of uniform DIF and were also identified in the Mantel Haenszel analysis. However, the severity of the DIF was less than the severity of the DIF identified by Mantel-Haenszel. Using the Jodoin and Gierl (2001) effect size criteria, of the 7 items demonstrating DIF, 6 had moderate DIF and 1 had large DIF. Logistic regression appeared to indicate more moderate DIF since, often times, DIF estimated as large and uniform in the Mantel Haenszel odds ratios migrated to the interaction term in the logistic regression. Although the uniform tests for the items in Table 5 on the next were still significant, the effect sizes decreased in a manner that changed their classifications to No DIF. Moreover, even if one accepts only the Mantel Haenszel results, only 8 of the items favor the referent group.



## **DIF Results Table 5**

A total of 165 of the 169 Spanish items had large score effects (Nagelkerke  $\geq$  0.07 and p-value  $\geq$  0.01) suggesting that they were highly related to the latent trait of interest. Almost 98 percent of the Spanish items in the pools had Nagelkerke coefficients of determination associated with the Spanish scale score that exceeded 0.07. Almost half (47%) of the Spanish items had coefficients of determination of 0.20 or greater. This finding suggests that most of the items in the Spanish pool had high convergent validity with the latent trait.

Three of the thirteen items with C ratings were rejected for future administration by content specialists and translators based largely upon translation differences in some word or phrase in the item's language complexity between the English and Spanish versions. Two additional items with less than 200 responses were also rejected for the same reasons. One item favored the focal group and a second favored the referent group.

#### **Classification Accuracy Results**

A comparison of the Spanish and English results is first performed using scores generated with Spanish and English item calibrations. Using item response data from the Spanish pool, if the Spanish calibrations generate systematically different scores then scores produced by English calibrations, the item calibrations are not comparable because the resulting scores are different.





The average scale scores and their respective standard deviations are presented in Table 6. No matter whether the scale scores are calculated with Spanish or English calibrations, results are very comparable. A scatter plot of this result can be seen in Figure 3. Scores appear to be very linear, with a correlation of 0.996. This result suggests that the calibrations produced for English Reading items are useful for producing comparable results on the Spanish Reading test.





The RIT scale scores produced with the different Spanish and English item calibrations demonstrated high levels of classification agreement when the grade 3 performance standard was applied. In Table 6, 95.9 (54.4 +41.5=95.9) percent of the scores produced by the two different sets of item calibrations reliably classified the scores.

**Observed Scores (Spanish Calibrations) to Observed Scores (English Calibrations) Table 7**

Spn. Observed\Eng. Observed	Does Not Meet Observed	Meets Observed
Does Not Meet Observed	465 (54.4%)	13 (1.5%)
Meets Observed	22 (2.5%)	355 (41.5%)

Tables 7 and 8 below present the observed and expected number of examinees and their percentages using the latent distribution method. Results of the classification analysis suggest an estimated classification accuracy of 89.1 percent (50.9%+38.2%) for the Spanish Reading Test when compared to the latent distribution.

**Observed Spanish Reading Scores (Spanish Calibrations) to the Latent Expected Scores Table 8**

Observed\Expected	Does Not Meet Expected	Meets Expected
Does Not Meet Observed	435 (50.9%)	47 (5.5%)
Meets Observed	46 (5.4%)	327 (38.2%)

A comparable rate of 90.5% (52.5%+38%) accuracy classification was observed for the Spanish Reading Test using English calibrations. These results suggest good agreement at reaching an accurate decision using either set of calibrations when classifying students with the performance standard.

# **Observed Spanish Reading Scores (English Calibrations) to the Latent Expected Scores Table 9**



#### **Conclusions**

Validity and reliability claims are typically based on the score interpretations users will make when making inferences regarding some specified test purpose (Kane, 2006; Messick, 1989). If the decision maker's desire is to make comparable decisions with English and Spanish test scores that are perfectly equivalent, then the stronger levels of parallel testing need to be met. Interchangeable true score could only be produced when two forms are perfectly parallel, but in many testing situations a form of comparability can be achieved when the same target is measured with small differences in reliability. Wu, Li, and Zumbo (2006) found similar effects in TIMMS data only in countries with the same language. Countries testing with different languages often could not attain congeneric equivalence between translations of their tests and English.

The current study examines English and Spanish Reading data over comparative definitions of test equivalence using multiple-group CFA. Results of a CFA study demonstrated essential tauequivalent scores that permit users to make decisions about scores that are on the same scale as the English Reading test and have the same factor structure. Although the mean precision and errors in measurement may differ between the Spanish and English scales, these differences appear to be small in actual effect when considering the CFA and DIF results.

Great efforts were made to create over 200 comparable items in both English and Spanish for test use. Of these items, 169 were used in this first field test of Spanish Reading. For items with 200 or more responses in Spanish, large differences in item functioning were only observed for 13 items, and these differences equally favored both groups. Such results compare quite variability with similar DIF studies of forms translated into different languages (see Sereci & Khaliq, 2002, Gierl & Khaliq, 2001; Ercikan & Kohl, 2005). In fact, the logistic regression results suggested more moderate DIF was present than large DIF, and Mantel Haenszel tests produced only 8 large DIF items that favored English speakers. Content specialists and translators continue to monitor these items to improve on the translation or adaption of the item into a second language.

When making decisions using the performance standard, both the English and Spanish Reading calibrations produced comparable results when making decisions with the scores with Oregon performance standards.

Although these effects were not studied, random forms produced by computer adaptive tests might produce greater between form comparability than the standard fixed forms used in paper and pencil testing. Likewise, the use of linguistic experts might also help to reduce language differences in items. Future research in these areas in needed.

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**Appendix A**

**Differential Item Functioning Statistics**

## **Glossary**

## **Mantel Haenszel Table Headings**

Mean Focal : The average scale score for all persons comprising the protected group that may be adversely affected by the test. In this case, students taking reading items in Spanish are being treated as the focal group.

Mean Referent (Mean Ref.): The average scale score of all other persons not under protected status whose scores are matched to the focal group. In this case, students with comparable overall scale scores taking the English reading test are included in the referent group.

Standard deviation of the Focal group (Std. Focal): the square root of the average squared deviation of each score from the mean for each member of the focal group. The standard deviation tells you how tightly the various scores are clustered around the mean in a set of data.

Standard deviation of the Referent group (Std. Referent): the square root of the average squared deviation of each score from the mean for each member of the referent group. The matching routine was written to reproduce a similar distribution for the referent group. Therefore, the standard deviations for both groups should be roughly equal.

Number Focal (N Focal): The number of students classified as members of the focal group.

Number Referent (N Refer.): The number of students classified as members of the referent group.

Mantel Haenszel Chi-Squre (MH Chi-sq): A calculated test of significance based on the common odds ratio. The total test scores for students in each group are classified into 10 intervals and a 2x2 table is formed for each table. A chi-square is then calculated for each table and summed, so the number of degrees of freedom is the number of intervals. The calculated chi-square tests whether the two groups answer in similar ways across all levels of the matching criterion.

Mantel Haneszel P-value (MH P value): The probability that the value of a chi-square statistic can be greater than the chi-square value we calculated. If the p value is less than the specified p-value (typically .05 or .01), then we reject the null hypothesis of no difference between the groups and conclude that there is some difference.

Absolute Delta: The absolute value of delta D DIF and a measure of effect. Delta D DIF (not displayed in the table) describes a transformation of the odds ratio that makes the distribution symmetric about 0. If the value of Delta D DIF is negative, the focal group finds the item to be

easier. If the value of Delta DIF is positive, the referent group finds the item to be easier. When the absolute value is calculated, the ETS classification system can be applied to the effect. ETS Classification: A rating of A, B, or C based on a significant p-value and the magnitude of absolute delta using the Mantel Haensel Test. If the absolute value of delta is equal to or larger than 1.0 and less than 1.5, there is moderate DIF. If the absolute value of delta is equal to or great than 1.5, there is large DIF.

Favored Group: The group favored by the item as identified by the Mantel Haenszel test.

## **Logistic Regression Table Headings**

Uniform Chi-Square: A chi-square statistic measuring modeled change over and above any real score differences attributed to the latent trait. A significant Chi-square value suggests that one group is outperforming the other group in an even fashion across the ability distribution, and that these nuisance differences are not explained by the latent trait being measured.

Uniform P-value: The probability that the value of the chi-square statistic is greater than the obtained value of the chi-square statistic associated with the group effect. Again, a p-value less than 0.05 suggests that the null hypothesis can be rejected and that there are significant group differences in the probability of the response.

Uniform Effects (Uniform Change): Changes in the Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> associated with uniform effects greater than 0.035. The effect difference is less sensitive to changes in sample size, so it is valuable in this context. Moderate effects have a Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> equal to or greater than 0.035 and less than 0.07 with a p-values less than or equal to 0.05. Large effects have a Nagelkerke R  $^2$  equal to or greater than 0.07 with p-value less than or equal to 0.05.

Non-Uniform Chi-Square: A chi-square statistic measuring the score-by-group interaction over and above any real score or uniform differences. In other words, an interaction effect benefits one group in one part of the score distribution while another group benefits in a different area of the score distribution.

Non-Uniform P-value: The probability that the value of the chi-square statistic is greater than the obtained value of the chi-square statistic associated with the group by score interaction. Again, a p-value less than 0.05 suggests that the null can be rejected and that there are significant confounding differences in the probability of the group response.

Non-Uniform effects (Interaction Change): Changes in the Nagelkerke R $^2$  associated with nonuniform effects. The effect difference is less sensitive to changes in sample size, so it is valuable in

this context. Moderate effects have a Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> equal to or greater than 0.035 and less than 0.07 with a p-values less than or equal to 0.05. Large effects have a Nagelkerke R  $^2$  equal to or greater than 0.07 with p-value less than or equal to 0.05.

Jodoin/Gierl Classification: A rating of DIF based upon the p-value and the magnitude of the effect associated with either the uniform or interaction models. The Jodoin-Gierl (2001) effect size criteria are:

Negligible or A-level DIF:  $R^2$  < 0.035 Moderate or B-level DIF: Null hypothesis rejected and 0.035  $\leq R^2 < 0.070$ Large or C-level DIF: Null hypothesis rejected and  $R^2 \geq 0.070$ 

## **Mantel-Haenszel Statistics**



















# **Logistic Regression Statistics**























