



Pearson

Considerations for Selecting Appropriate Spanish-Related Measures

Pearson is making available Spanish products that have been developed across our global locations for the benefit of professionals who reside in countries in North, Central, and South America and test Spanish-speaking individuals. While we believe doing so will allow professionals to better serve Spanish-speaking populations, we recognize that not every assessment is appropriate or acceptable for use with every individual.

The information in this document is intended to support professionals in making informed, well-reasoned decisions when selecting an assessment to be used with Spanish-speaking individuals. This information is not intended to be comprehensive regarding all considerations for selecting assessments in Spanish. It should not be interpreted as a requirement or recommendation to choose any assessment.

Professionals should remain mindful to:

- Follow professional best practice recommendations and respective ethical codes
- Follow regulations and legal requirements from federal, state and local authorities, licensing boards, professional liability insurance providers, and payors
- Develop competence with assessing and serving bilingual, multilingual, and non-English-speaking individuals through activities such as practicing, studying, consulting with other professionals, and engaging in professional development. It is preferable that professionals engage in these practices before accepting the responsibility of testing culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

Professionals should use their clinical judgment to determine if a bilingual or Spanish assessment is appropriate for a particular individual, referral question, and situation. There are circumstances where a bilingual or Spanish assessment is not feasible and/or is contraindicated. Documentation of all considerations, procedures, and conclusions remains a professional responsibility.

Several professional organizations and experts have provided guidance on cultural and linguistic competence (AOTA, 2021; APA, 2017; ASHA, 2017; CDC, 2021, September 10; Judd et al., 2009; NASP, n.d.) to assist professionals in decision making and ethical and legal practice issues.

Working With Interpreters

Examiners who do not have the necessary language proficiency to conduct assessments in Spanish may train interpreters to work with them on a regular basis to meet the needs of a growing population of Spanish-speaking examinees. Although professional interpreters are skilled in their respective role, they may need to be trained on basic assessment practices (e.g., no prompting beyond what is acceptable, rules for repetitions, breaks, etc.). Guidance issued by the Department of Health and Human Services relating to Executive Order 13166 indicates that all healthcare providers and any entity that receives federal funding must offer and provide appropriate language assistance services, including bilingual staff or interpreter services, at no cost to each client/patient/student/family with limited English proficiency, at all points of contact and in a timely manner (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2013).

It is important to be aware of the specific requirements for interpreters in your state/location of employment (e.g., some U.S. states require the use certified interpreters). For more information on working with interpreters, please refer to guidelines provided by your professional organization (ASHA n.d.-b; The British Psychological Society, 2017; Judd et al., 2009; NASP, 2015). You may also watch the following Pearson presentation “Collaborating with an Interpreter During Bilingual Assessments,” which provides an overview of best practices:

<https://www.pearsonassessments.com/professional-assessments/blog-webinars/webinars/2021/03/collaborating-with-an-interpreter-during-bilingual-assessments.html>.

Examinee Considerations

Legal and ethical standards (APA, 2016; ASHA, 2017; Civil Rights Act, 1964, as amended; Exec. Order 13,166, 2000; IDEA, 2004) require that services to examinees who use a language other than spoken English must be delivered in the language most appropriate for them or their family.

Clinical judgment, best practice guidance for bilingual service delivery, information from professional organizations and other professional entities (e.g., licensing boards, legal resources, professional liability insurance providers, payors), consultation with other knowledgeable professionals, existing research, and any available federal or state regulations should be considered in the decision-making process. Consideration should be given to whether the necessary administrative tasks involved in a bilingual or monolingual Spanish assessment can be accomplished (ASHA, n.d.-a).

Case History

The examiner should first ensure that an assessment in Spanish is appropriate for the examinee and for the purpose of the assessment. A detailed case history with information about the examinee’s language history (including home language), level of language proficiency, degree of acculturation, educational background, and current language environment, for example, is helpful for determining the appropriate language(s) for the assessment (ASHA, n.d.-a). Additionally, examiners must consider the dialect or language variation used by the examinee and whether the assessment was developed with similar language to determine if accommodations or modifications to the assessment are necessary.

Before the Assessment

When testing examinees from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, it is important to be sensitive to the context in which the examinee is communicating and the circumstances of the examinee's unique situation. It may be the case that the examinee will use a different communication style and language depending on the situation. For example, a school-age child whose family is from Mexico may have been told to use only English while at school. Before administering a test, it may be necessary to meet with the examinee (or the examinee's parents) over extended periods of time to build rapport and to clarify the nature and purpose of an evaluation, its confidential nature, and the way results will be utilized (APA, 1990; ASHA, 2017; ASHA, 2020; Judd et al., 2009).

Interpreter Role

If an examiner is collaborating with an interpreter, the role of the interpreter must be explained to the examinee so that participation and actions are understood. Some test manuals suggest that, if possible, the diagnostic professional and the interpreter meet with the examinee (child) before the testing date so that the examinee can become accustomed to having both the diagnostic professional and the interpreter in the same room. Always refer to the test manual or your professional organization for specific guidance on collaborating with an interpreter with a particular test/examinee (APA, 2017; ASHA, n.d.-b; NASP, 2015).

Difference or Disorder

Bilingual examinees who are presenting weaknesses in one language may not present those weaknesses when assessed in the other language. This occurrence indicates that an examinee possesses the skills in question but is not able to demonstrate those skills in both languages. Differing performance may be caused by limited exposure or limited practice applying the skill in the second language, or the skill may exist in one language but not the other. Possessing skills in one language indicates that an examinee may present a performance difference across languages. A true language disorder will be evident in every language that the examinee speaks (ASHA, 2017). It is often necessary to test a bilingual examinee in both languages when skills are questioned in one language to determine if there is a difference in performance across languages or to diagnose a disorder (ASHA, n.d.-a). For the assessment of multilingual individuals, see <https://academy.pubs.asha.org/2017/05/supporting-slps-work-multilingual-children/>.

Examiner Considerations

Language Proficiency

To assess an individual in the fairest way, the examiner should have native or near native proficiency in the language(s) being used in assessment (APA, 2017; ASHA, n.d.-a; Judd et al., 2009). If not, the examiner should seek the assistance of a qualified interpreter. For more information on language proficiency, please visit ILR (govtilr.org).

Cultural and Linguistic Competence

With over 20 Spanish-speaking countries in the world, the lived experiences of individuals who speak Spanish vary greatly depending upon country/region of origin, economic and educational experiences, religion, and language(s) spoken, among other factors. This diversity is noted by various communication differences in semantics (e.g., vocabulary), phonology (e.g., pronunciation), morphology, syntax, as well as social/pragmatic communication skills. Being aware of these differences is part of developing cultural competence and responding appropriately (ASHA, n.d.-c). Understanding how linguistic mismatches between the examiner, examinee, and assessment may impact the examinee's ability to understand and respond as expected during an assessment is essential. The examiner should acknowledge that an examinee's cultural/regional and linguistic background may impact an area of assessment and take those factors into account (APA, 1990; ASHA, 2017; Judd et al., 2009).

Even if the examiner is collaborating with an interpreter, it is the examiner's responsibility to plan the session, select culturally relevant materials, appropriately administer the assessment, and interpret the results (ASHA, n.d.-b; The British Psychological Society, 2017; NASP, 2015). Therefore, maintaining cultural and linguistic competence is necessary to effectively assess and treat diverse individuals.

Practice

Before administering an unfamiliar assessment in Spanish, the examiner should read through the administration directions and rehearse every item in the entire test so that the examiner is familiar with the administration procedures. Even when an assessment is familiar, a practice run is a good opportunity for the examiner to verify the relevance or appropriateness of test items for a particular examinee based on the examinee's culture and language. If the examiner is not familiar with the regional language variation spoken by the examinee, the examiner will need to confirm with someone who is familiar with the variation (e.g., a family member or other professional). A practice administration is beneficial for ensuring that test administration runs as smoothly as possible. It can also help to identify which parts of the assessment may need to be modified (e.g., selecting alternate vocabulary to use when presenting test stimuli) or not administered. See Considerations for Selecting an Assessment, section 3.c, later in this document.

Assessment Materials

Standardized Procedures

The examiner must follow the standardized administration procedures as much as possible. However, to appropriately evaluate an examinee who speaks a language other than English, the form in which evaluation materials are administered may vary from standard testing procedures when necessary (IDEA Part B Issue Brief: Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students). Examiners may find that the language variation used in a particular assessment does not match the language variation used by the examinee, even when the assessment is in Spanish.

Accommodations and/or modifications during the assessment process may be necessary to gain useful information about the examinee's abilities and limitations. However, note that some changes may invalidate the standardized score. It is the examiner's responsibility to document all accommodations and modifications made during the assessment process in all reports (ASHA, n.d.-a). Refer to the specific test manual to determine if and what accommodations and modifications still allow for standard scores to be used.

Analyzing and Reporting Results

Because standard scores are a comparison of an examinee's scores to the mean and standard deviation of a normative sample, the degree to which the examinee and the normative sample are meaningfully similar increases the appropriateness of considering and reporting the scores. When looking for similarities between the examinee and the normative sample, examiners should consider factors such as the language(s) spoken, culture, region, and educational background (including the quality of education and years of formal schooling), among other relevant factors (NASP, 2015).

Examiners should consider the difference in level of exposure to the content that individuals in the normative sample had and that of the examinee (APA, 2020; NASP, 2015). For example, school-age examinees may be enrolled full-time in educational settings where only Spanish is spoken or, in the case of children in the U.S., educational programs may be fully immersive in English, dual language (English/Spanish), etc. Note that most formal testing is unfamiliar to individuals who have not had exposure to the mainstream educational context and the culture of testing, which includes both nonverbal and verbal components (ASHA, n.d.-a). For an examinee up to preschool age, the level of exposure to Spanish may be like that of the normative group. If that is the case, reporting standard scores may be acceptable. If the examinee is school-age and the normative group received more formal schooling in Spanish, it may not be appropriate to report standard scores because of this difference in the language used for educational instruction.

If the examinee is not reflected in the test's normative sample, qualitative information should be described in terms of the examinee's abilities and limitations rather than reporting scores. In many situations, descriptive information can provide valuable information. For example, "a test given in English will speak to a child's ability in English; a test given in Spanish will speak to a child's ability in Spanish" (ASHA, n.d.-a).

Considerations for Selecting an Assessment

Before selecting an assessment in Spanish, consider the following:

1. Are normative data available? If so, where were the data collected?

Normative data are helpful for making diagnostic decisions and explaining results to stakeholders and funding agencies; however, as stated previously, normative data should only be reported and used for diagnostic purposes when the examinee is represented in the normative sample. Knowledge of where the data was collected may be helpful in determining if (a) a particular examinee is represented in the normative sample and (b) the examinee's

region/culture is reflected in the context of the material. This information is intended to aid examiners in making the most appropriate selections for assessment measures.

2. What is the language variation used in the assessment?

Consider the language variation used in the assessment as well as the language variation spoken by the examiner and the examinee. If there are any mismatches, consider if the variation might impact the results of the assessment. Areas of language/communication that may be affected by linguistic variations are:

- a. Phonology/pronunciation- For example, in some dialects of European Spanish, the use of voiceless “th” /θ/ is commonly used to pronounce words with “c” or “z,” while other dialects pronounce these letters with /s/. North American Spanish speakers may incorrectly interpret this linguistic variation as lisping.
- b. Semantics-
 - i. For example, the meaning of a word may differ depending on the region or country of origin. The word “torta” in Mexico refers to a sandwich, but in countries like Columbia and Venezuela, the word “torta” refers to a cake.
 - ii. Vocabulary may also differ depending on the region and culture. The word “car,” for example, is referred to in Spanish using many different terms. A person may be familiar with “carro,” “automóvil,” or “coche.”
- c. Morphosyntax- For example, the personal pronoun “vosotros” is used in some European Spanish variations but may not be understood or not be used by North American Spanish speakers. It is more common for North American Spanish speakers to use “ustedes.” Depending on which pronoun is used, verb conjugations will also differ significantly in sentences.
- d. Social communication (e.g., pragmatics)- For example, the use of “usted” is used in formal and informal situations in many Latin American countries. However, there are Spanish speaking regions where the use of “usted” is reserved only for formal situations. The tone of a conversation may be misread or misunderstood by individuals who use “usted” in differing social situations when speaking with those who use the form in all social situations.

If there are dialectal mismatches, consider selecting a matched assessment or making necessary modifications to the assessment to avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretations. Refer to the test’s manual for guidance on modifying and scoring the test. Always report any modifications to the assessment process with the assessment results.

3. How was the test developed/standardized?

- a. What are the assessment’s linguistic demands? There are assessments that accept nonverbal responses, which minimize the impact that language variation and cultural

- backgrounds have on the results. Note that even assessments requiring nonverbal responses have spoken directions and may include gestures. The meaning of gestures may differ depending on the region/culture of the examinee. The same linguistic and cultural considerations should be taken into account when selecting any Spanish-related assessment, regardless of the amount of language required.
- b. Were the test items translated, adapted, or developed in a Spanish-speaking country? Items that have been translated are literal translations of English test items. Test item content that is translated mirrors the content found in the English version. When test items are adapted, the language is translated in a way that allows the text and related content to be more culturally appropriate and understandable. In adapted tests, the items measure the same skills as they do in English, but the content used may differ from the English version. Items that were adapted and developed in a Spanish-speaking country include linguistic variations and content that are more culturally aligned with the country in which they were developed.
 - c. Is the use of word/dialectal variations allowed in test administration, when scoring responses, or both? Some tests allow examiners to choose appropriate regional vocabulary when administering test items and/or regional vocabulary variations are accepted when scoring responses. Examiners can use this information to determine the likelihood of modifying an assessment for a particular examinee or population based on the flexibility of administration and scoring rules and the linguistic variation(s) of Spanish used by the examinee(s).
 - d. Are examinee responses accepted in Spanish and/or English and is code-switching allowed? Some tests may allow items to be scored correctly in either language regardless of the language of administration. Examiners can use this information to determine if one standardized assessment that assesses skills in both languages is sufficient as part of a comprehensive evaluation or if an assessment in each language is more appropriate.
 - e. Was the entire test developed in Spanish? Tests that are developed in Spanish-speaking countries have components that are also written in Spanish (e.g., the manual, stimulus book, and record forms). Spanish tests that were developed in the U.S. may have test items/examinee-facing content in Spanish and examiner-facing content and test components in English. It is important for monolingual Spanish-speaking examiners to verify the language of a test's components to ensure understanding of all materials. Bilingual examiners will need to have a native/technical level of proficiency in Spanish when considering purchasing assessments developed in a Spanish-speaking country to understand all test materials.
 - f. For detailed information about a specific test's development (e.g., normative sample descriptions, special studies), visit the test's product page or consult the development and standardization chapter of the test's manual to obtain full information.

One of the goals of Pearson Clinical Assessment is to consider ways in which our assessments may be used appropriately with diverse populations based on best practice recommendations and share those considerations with examiners. Ultimately, it is the examiner's responsibility to understand a test's materials and its possible use. Another goal is to respond to customers' requests to make our

wide selection of assessment measures available and easily accessible so that examiners have options to select the most appropriate tools for assessment.

We would love to hear from you. To contact us, visit [Customer Support for Spanish Assessments](#).

References

- American Occupational Therapy Association. (2021). Diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic plan. <https://www.aota.org/about/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-strategic-plan>
- American Psychological Association. (1990). Guidelines for providers of psychological services to ethnic, linguistic, and culturally diverse populations. <https://www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/policy/provider-guidelines>
- American Psychological Association. (2016). Revision of ethical standard 3.04 of the “Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct” (2002, as amended 2010). *American Psychologist*, 71, 900. <https://www.apa.org/ethics/code>
- American Psychological Association. (2017). Multicultural guidelines: An ecological approach to context, identity, and intersectionality. <http://www.apa.org/about/policy/multicultural-guidelines.pdf>
- American Psychological Association. (2020). Guidelines for psychological assessment and evaluation. <https://www.apa.org/about/policy/guidelines-psychological-assessment-evaluation.pdf>
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2017). Issues in ethics: Cultural and linguistic competence. <https://www.asha.org/Practice/ethics/Cultural-and-Linguistic-Competence/#sec1.6>
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2020). Multicultural affairs and resources. <https://www.asha.org/practice/multicultural/>
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (n.d.a). Bilingual service delivery (Practice Portal). Retrieved January 28, 2022, from <https://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Professional-Issues/Bilingual-Service-Delivery/>
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.b). Collaborating with interpreters, transliterators, and translators (Practice Portal). Retrieved January 31, 2022, from <https://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Professional-Issues/Collaborating-With-Interpreters/>
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.c). Cultural competence (Practice Portal). Retrieved January 31, 2022, from <https://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Professional-Issues/Cultural-Competence/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021, September 10). Cultural competence in health and human services. <https://npin.cdc.gov/pages/cultural-competence>
- Civil Rights Act of 1964, Pub. L. No. 88-352, 78 Stat. 241 (1964). <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-78/pdf/STATUTE-78-Pg241.pdf>
- Exec. Order No. 13,166, 3 C. F. R. 289 (2000). <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2001-title3-vol1/pdf/CFR-2001-title3-vol1-eo13166.pdf>

- Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, Pub. L. No. 108-446, 20 U.S.C. 1400 (2004). <https://www.congress.gov/108/plaws/publ446/PLAW-108publ446.pdf>
- Judd, T., Capetillo, D., Carrión-Baralt, J., Mármol, L. M., San Miguel-Montes, L., Navarrete, M. G., Puente, A. E., Romero, H. R., Valdés, J., & NAN Policy and Planning Committee. (2009). Professional considerations for improving the neuropsychological evaluation of Hispanics: A National Academy of Neuropsychology education paper. *Archives of Clinical Neuropsychology*, 24, 127–135. <https://doi.org/10.1093/arclin/acp016>
- National Association of School Psychologists. (2015). The provision of school psychological services to bilingual students. <https://www.nasponline.org/x32086.xml>
- National Association of School Psychologists. (n.d.). Cultural competence. Retrieved January 5, 2022, from <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/diversity-and-social-justice/cultural-competence>
- The British Psychological Society. (2017.) Working with interpreters: Guidelines for psychologists. <https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/working-interpreters-guidelines-psychologists>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2013). Language access plan. <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/open/pres-actions/2013-hhs-language-access-plan.pdf>