

Validating the TOCFL as an Instructional Tool: Evaluating the Consistency Between the Speedy Screening and Formal Test Versions

Abstract

The organization responsible for the formal Test of Chinese as a Foreign Language (TOCFL) developed the “TOCFL Speedy Screening,” an online assessment platform designed to efficiently assess learners’ proficiency across the four language skills. The platform features flexible administration and low-stakes implementation, making it suitable for institutional use in placement testing, instructional planning, and tracking learner progression. The feedback includes performance descriptors and recommended learning strategies, offering additional value for promoting self-regulated learning.

This study examined the consistency between the TOCFL Speedy Screening and the formal TOCFL in listening and reading to validate the screening platform as an effective instructional tool for assessing learners' language proficiency levels. Data were collected from learners who took both the screening and formal TOCFL assessments. Agreement between proficiency level classifications and score patterns was analyzed using percentage agreement, quadratic weighted Kappa (QWK), and Pearson correlation. The results showed a substantial degree of consistency, supporting the platform’s use as a valid placement and instructional planning tool.

These findings highlight the potential of simplified tools derived from established testing systems to facilitate rapid learner placement and monitor language development over time. They are particularly relevant to instructional contexts with constrained resources and contribute to ongoing discussions on the role of formative feedback in language assessment.

Validating the TOCFL as an Instructional Tool: Evaluating the Consistency Between the Speedy Screening and Formal Test Versions

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The Structural Constraint in CFL Contexts



Barriers

In certain CFL contexts:

- Limited instructional and human resources
- High administration costs
- Longer test time



Challenges

- Difficult to conduct formal assessments on a regular basis



Need

- A practical tool for instructional decisions

TOCFL-Speedy Screening: A Practical Solution for Instructional Support

TOCFL
華語文能力測驗
Test of Chinese as a Foreign Language

Efficiency

- Rapid assessment across four skills

Flexibility

- Low-stakes, repeatable, cost-effective

Instructional Utility

- Immediate feedback with descriptors and strategies

Sample Descriptors and Strategies: Listening

TOCFL
華語文能力測驗
Test of Chinese as a Foreign Language

TOCFL 快篩系統 Speedy Screening 華語文能力測驗成績單(快篩系統)

TOCFL Score Report (Speedy Screening)

姓名 Name: 測驗 0 test 0

考試日期 Test Date: 2022 年 09 月 26 日 (September 26, 2022)

測驗類型 Test Type: 聽力測驗 (Listening)

聽力測驗量尺分數 Listening Test Scale Score	快篩評估等級 Speedy Screening Level
473 / 700	S5

CEFR 等級	臺灣華語文能力基準等級	美國外語教學委員會指標等級
CEFR Level	TBCL Level	ACTFL Level
A2	4 級 (TBCL4)	Intermediate Mid

能力描述 Proficiency descriptors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 能聽懂短篇的對話、討論或是發表，例如：別人的自我介紹、討論的大致內容等。 Can understand short dialogues, discussions, or presentations, and grasp main ideas of a self-introduction or discussion. • 能聽懂公共場所的廣播或通知，例如：機場、學校廣播。 Can understand public announcements or notices in public places, such as at airports and schools.
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學習策略 Learning strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 聽廣播或是看電視節目的時候，觀察學過的詞彙和句子在這些材料中的用法。 Observe the usage of words and sentences you have learned in the radio or TV program that you are listening to or watching. • 聽到新詞彙時，練習利用當下聽到的內容或是前後相關的句子，聯想猜測新詞彙的意思，最後再查辭典確認。 Upon hearing a new word, practice guessing its meaning by associating it with what you are hearing at the moment or with related sentences. Then look it up in a dictionary to verify your guess.

Research Purpose & Question

- **Objective**

To examine the consistency between the TOCFL-Speedy Screening and the formal TOCFL-Computerized Adaptive Test (TOCFL-CAT) in listening and reading.

- **Research Question**

To what extent is the degree of consistency sufficient for placement and instructional decisions?

Participants & Research Design

- **Participants**

75 CFL learners in Taiwan

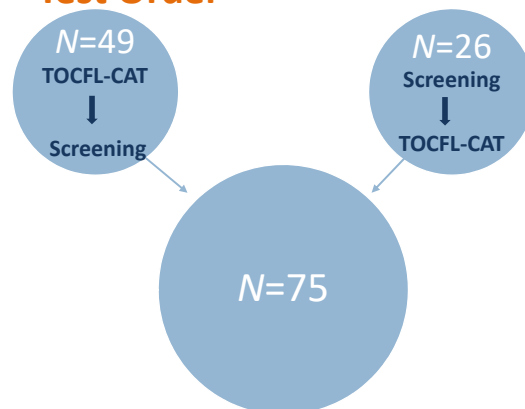
- **Criterion**

Formal TOCFL Computerized Adaptive Test (TOCFL-CAT)

- **Procedure**

Both tests were completed within a maximum interval of two months (60 days)

- **Test Order**



Technical Profiles of the Two Assessment Versions

Feature	TOCFL-Speedy Screening	Formal TOCFL-CAT
Purpose	Instructional support / placement	Proficiency certification
Test length	Fixed 25 items	35-40 items
Framework	3-Stage Multistage Adaptive Testing	Item-level CAT
Administration	Online, Low-stakes	Proctored, High-stakes
Feedback	Score, Level, Descriptors, Strategies	Score, Level, Certificate

Statistical Methods

Percent Agreement

- Assessing categorical-level consistency

Quadratic Weighted Kappa (QWK)

- Evaluating ordinal-level consistency

Pearson Correlation

- Examining score-level association

Results (1): Percent Agreement

Listening test		TOCFL-Speedy Screening						Total
		Under A1	A1	A2	B1	B2	Above C1	
TOCFL-CAT	Under A1	5						5
	A1	2	17	7	2			28
	A2		11	11	5			27
	B1		3	1	7	1		12
	B2				1			1
	Above C1				1	1		2
Total		7	31	19	16	2	0	75

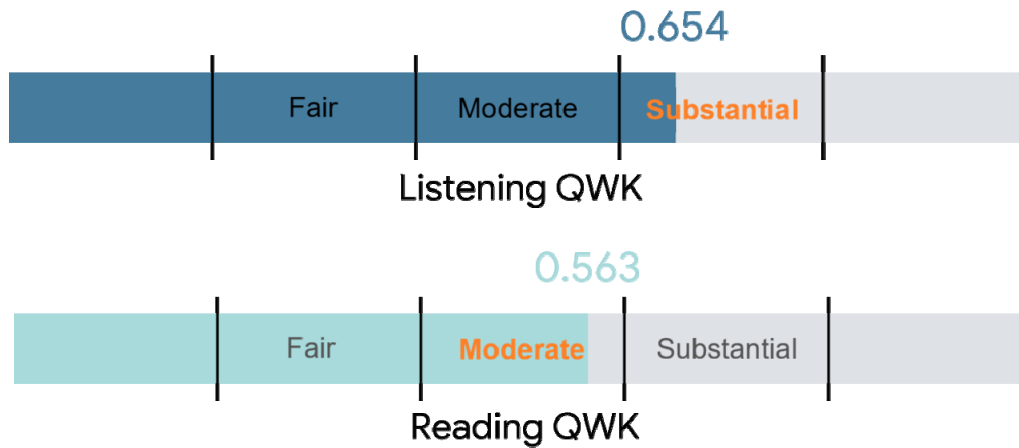
Reading test		TOCFL-Speedy Screening						Total
		Under A1	A1	A2	B1	B2	Above C1	
TOCFL-CAT	Under A1	7	3	1				11
	A1	5	33	3				41
	A2	1	7	1	1			10
	B1		4	1	4			9
	B2	1	1			1		3
	Above C1						1	1
Total		14	48	6	5	1	1	75

Results (1): Percent Agreement (cont.)

Test type	Exact agreement	Adjacent agreement
Listening test	53.3%	92.0%
Reading test	62.7%	89.3%

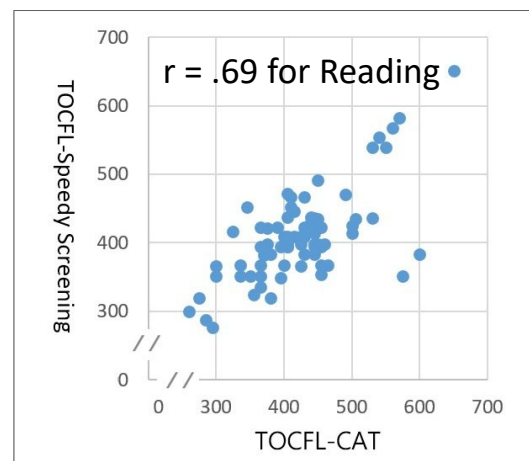
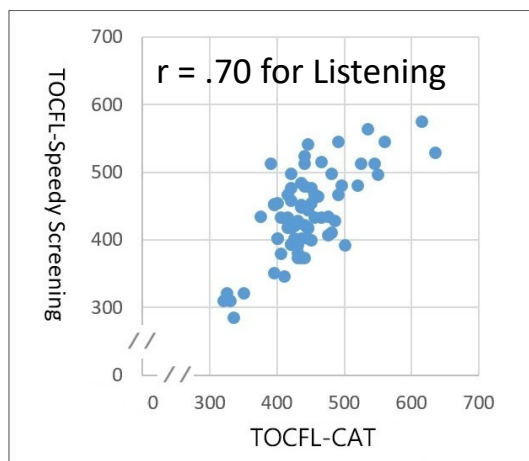
Most discrepancies were within adjacent levels.

Results (2): Quadratic Weighted Kappa (QWK)



Most discrepancies remained within adjacent levels.

Results (3): Pearson Correlation



Demonstrates strong correlation.

Interpreting Consistency through the Viewpoints of Practical Utility

TOCFL
華語文能力測驗
Test of Chinese as a Foreign Language

- **The Efficiency-Precision Trade-off**

A 25-item screening cannot match a 35–40 item CAT

- **Fit-for-Purpose Consistency**

The observed agreement is sufficient for low-stakes use

- **Evidence of Stability**

Adjacent agreement reached 89%–92%

- **Conclusion**

A simplified but useful tool for resource-constrained contexts

Utilizing Simplified Tools for Formative Feedback

TOCFL
華語文能力測驗
Test of Chinese as a Foreign Language

華語文能力測驗成績單(快篩系統) TOCFL Score Report (Speedy Screening)

姓名 Name: 使用者 02 user02

考試日期 Test Date: 2023 年 05 月 27 日 (May 27, 2023)

測驗類型 Test Type: 閱讀測驗 (Reading)

閱讀測驗量尺分數 Reading Test Scale Score	快篩評估等級 Speedy Screening Level
496 / 700	S6

CEFR 等級 CEFR Level	臺灣華語文能力基準等級 TBCL Level	美國外語教學委員會指標等級 ACTFL Level
B1	4 級 (TBCL 4)	Intermediate High

能力描述 Proficiency descriptors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 能理解與常見主題有關的文章重點。 Can understand the main ideas of an article on a common topic. 能理解以日常用語描寫的情感和願望。 Can understand emotions and wishes described in everyday language. 能理解信件、傳單和簡短文件中的重要資訊。 Can understand key information in letters, flyers and short documents.
學習策略 Learning strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 多閱讀不同來源、文體的資料，例如：新聞、雜誌、短篇小說等。 Read more passages from different sources and genres, such as news, magazines, short stories, etc. 在閱讀結構清晰論點明確的文章時，練習找出關鍵詞和文章脈絡，幫助自己理解整體概念與細節。 Practice identifying key words and contexts to help you understand general ideas and details when reading well-structured texts with clear arguments.

- **Support for Teachers:** Facilitates rapid, data-informed instructional planning.
- **Resource Efficiency:** Provides a sustainable assessment solution for constrained contexts.
- **Formative Potential:** Assists in monitoring learner development and promoting self-regulated learning.

國家華語測驗推動工作委員會
Steering Committee for the Test of Proficiency in Chinese



Research Constraints



- **Sample Size**

Findings are based on 75 learners

- **Range Restriction**

Most participants were at lower-to-mid proficiency levels

Correlations may have been underestimated

- **Caution**

Generalization should be made with caution

- **Gap**

High-level learners were underrepresented

Danke schön Thank you

謝謝

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TOCFL-CAT Intro Video



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DE

Official website

