



THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP

Creating Global Professionals

ARABIC ORAL PROFICIENCY TESTING CONSENSUS INITIATIVE

ABSTRACT

Valid oral proficiency testing and reliable score reporting require standardized protocols and procedures across languages for testing, rating, and tester training. Testing spoken Arabic presents a number of unique challenges to an already complex issue. The diglossic nature of Arabic, dealing with the linguistic realities of each dialect area, the mixture of dialect features and modern standard features are just some of these challenges. The Arabic Oral Proficiency Testing Consensus Initiative proposes a 2-year project during which language testing experts from three Arabic Flagship Centers (Maryland, Michigan, and Texas), ACTFL, the National Foreign Language Center, and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point work together to address a number of issues unique to testing spoken Arabic. More specifically, and essential to the goals of the Flagship Programs, this collaborative will identify issues unique to testing students of Arabic, specifically when crossing the major border from Intermediate (ILR 1) to Advanced (ILR 2), and from Advanced (ILR 2) to Superior (ILR3).

The project will build on ACTFL's 25-year history of oral proficiency testing and tester training by: (1) addressing Arabic specific testing issues in national meetings with academic, private sector and government representation; (2) building consensus within the Arabic language teaching and testing communities regarding how to resolve these issues; and (3) producing and disseminating a number of publications that will serve the broad Arabic language testing audience. These documents will include Arabic-specific annotations to the generic *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines – Speaking*, OPI Tester Training Manual Explanatory Notes - Annotated for testing Arabic.

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