

NATIONAL LANGUAGE SERVICE CORPS  
*Language for the good of all.*®



## ***Language Assessment in the NLSC***

***Charles Stansfield***

# Organization Description

- Public organization of American citizens who agree to offer their certified language skills to assist the nation, particularly in times of crises, emergencies and national need
  - NLSC focused on service
  - Surge capacity, complements existing programs
  - **Members generally must possess ILR 3/3/3 (L/R/S) in a foreign language and in English**
  - **Testing must be based on the ILR scale (DODI 5160.71)**
- Members are organized in 2 pools covering range of agency requirements
  - National pool – general support
  - Dedicated sponsor pool – subset of National pool for specific specialized support
- Members are deployed as temporary federal workers on an intermittent work schedule – cost reimbursable to DoD
  - Assignments are voluntary

***Federal agencies contract with NLSC for the services of NLSC Members***

# NLSC Status

- Clients and partners:
  - Department of Homeland Security: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, FEMA
  - US Coast Guard
  - Department of State: Rehabilitation and Stabilization
  - Department of Justice: FBI, INTERPOL Washington, Civil Rights Division
  - Centers for Disease Control
  - Internal Revenue Service
  - Department of Defense: Combatant Commands, Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, Intelligence Community, Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, National Guard (HQ, Washington, Utah, Guam, Hawaii)
- Specialize in less commonly and uncommonly taught languages
- **NLSC has improved the government's capacity for language testing and efficient low cost initial screening of large numbers of candidates**

***3900 Members representing over 260 Languages***

# Challenges to Certification Program

- Volume of applicants & members
  - 3900 + members
  - 5000 + applicants
- Range of languages
  - 260 + languages
- Geographic dispersion of members
  - 50 states
  - 20 countries
- Must test 3 skills in 2 English and other language
- Need for rapid response test development
- Must be ILR based



# Certification approach

- Approach:
  - ↗ 3-tiered certification
    - Self assessment on application
    - Recruiter screening for English proficiency (as required)
    - Testing of activated members
    - Client agency evaluation of member performance
  - ↗ Expanded access to testing industry: ASTM F2889
  - ↗ Rapid development of new tests ASTM F2889
- Self-Assessments:
  - ↗ ILR-based global assessments
  - ↗ ILR-based can-do statements
  - ↗ Regular monitoring of concurrent validity



# Certification approach

- Formal testing
  - Web-delivered DLPT5/DLPT-IV administered at MEPS
  - OPI administered telephonically
  - Alternate testing sources accessed on case-by case basis
- English certification
  - Self-assessments required of all who did not complete at least 3 years of HS in US
  - Recruiters can request formal testing based on screening procedure
  - Versant test of English used for formal screening.
    - Correlates .75 w TOEFL speaking. .88 with OPI.



# Challenge: high volume

## Approach: Self-Assessments

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- 4 skills (L/R/S/W)
- Based on ILR scale
- Global statements of proficiency
- Detailed assessments by task and proficiency level (Can-do statements)
- Regular monitoring of concurrent validity with formal proficiency tests (Stansfield, Gao, Rivers, 2010)



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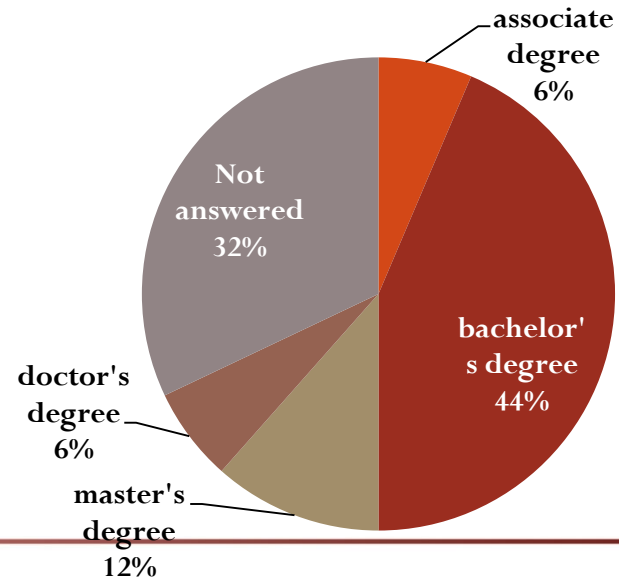
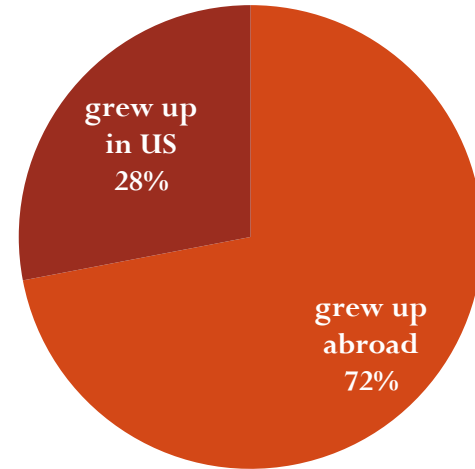
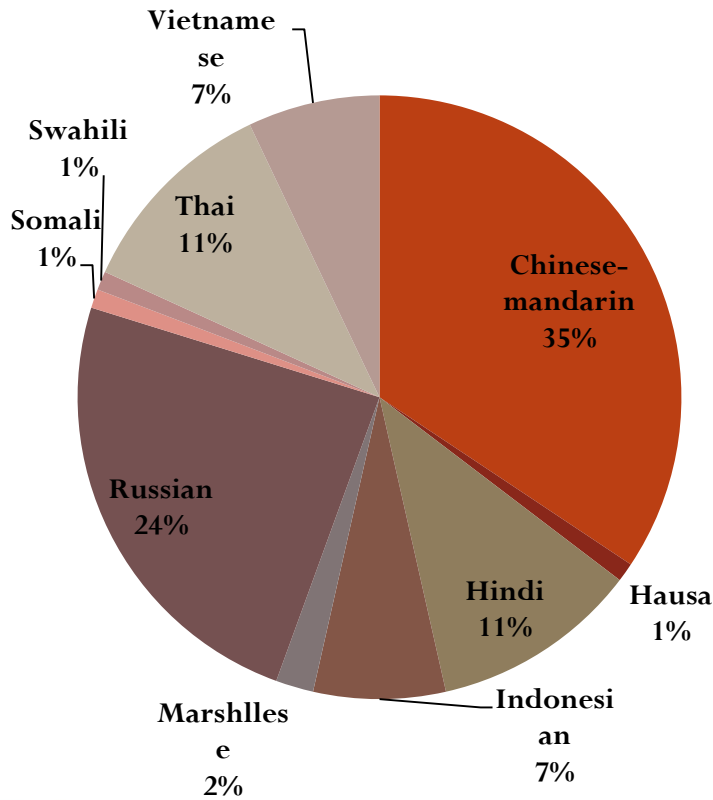


# Research design: SA validity study

- Four skills Can-Do statements: listening, speaking, reading and writing (The data for the writing subset of Can-do statements are not available).
- The 158 Can-do statements (DD Form 2933, Version 4, Sep 2009) describe concrete tasks: 40 listening, 48 speaking, 32 reading, and 38 writing.
- Global assessment: the plus level is interpreted as 0.6 higher than the baseline level.
- N=349



# Characteristics of the Sample



# Self-Assessments: Concurrent Validity

		OPI	Can-do: Listening	Can-do: Speaking	Can-do: Reading	Global: Listening	Global: Writing	Global: Reading	Global: Speaking
OPI	Pearson Correlation	1							
	Sig. (2-tailed)								
	N	349							
Can-do: Listening	Pearson Correlation	0.426**	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000							
	N	347	372						
Can-do: Speaking	Pearson Correlation	0.395**	0.728**	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000						
	N	347	372	372					
Can-do: Reading	Pearson Correlation	0.454**	0.690**	0.806**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000					
	N	347	372	372	372				
Global: Listening	Pearson Correlation	0.535**	0.722**	0.707**	0.740**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000				
	N	345	369	369	369	370			
Global: Writing	Pearson Correlation	0.440**	0.602**	0.704**	0.794**	0.723**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000			
	N	334	356	356	356	356	357		
Global: Reading	Pearson Correlation	0.495**	0.679**	0.679**	0.791**	0.801**	0.850**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000		
	N	346	370	370	370	370	357	371	
Global: Speaking	Pearson Correlation	0.480**	0.698**	0.747**	0.714**	0.887**	0.747**	0.779**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	N	346	370	370	370	370	357	371	371

\*\* Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

- Moderate correlations; acceptable for initial screening

## What is the practical utility of the correlations? How do the correlations compare with those found in predictive validity studies of high stakes tests such as the GRE and the SAT?

- By convention, correlation coefficients of 0.10, 0.30, and 0.50 are termed small, moderate, and large respectively in terms of their effect size (Cohen, 1988).
- Clark & Swinton 1979. OPI/self assessment  $r=.48$
- Heilenman (1990). French course grades/self assessment  $r=.33$
- Ross (1998). meta-analysis 23 studies  $r=0.61$



# Challenge: Range of Languages

## Approach: Expand access to quality tests

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- NLSC language requirements exceed DLPT system coverage
  - Current membership has skills in 260+ languages
  - DLPTs in less than 100 languages
- NLSC requires rapid response to emerging requirements
  - Marshallese (CDC, NVTC) S, L, R 2009
  - Reading proficiency interview (Kennedy and Stansfield, 2010)



# NLSC Remote testing

- Test DLPT5/DLPT-IV (web delivered) at Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS)
- DLPT (L/R/S) accessed through MOA among DLIFLC, DMDC, NSEP
  - OPI conducted under contract by LTI
- MEPS accessed via informal agreement among USMEPCOM, DLNSEO
  - First civilian use of MEPS for DLPT
- English testing by telephone and computer (Versant)



# Challenge: Rapid response to new reqmts.

## Approach: innovative rapid test development

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- NLSC requires rapid response to emerging requirements
  - ↗ Marshallese (CDC, NVTC)
- NSLC Developed 3-skill Marshallese test (L/R/S) in 2009 – 3 month timeframe. Article in Applied Language Learning.
- NSLC piloting level 3 reading test
  - ↗ Test one level in reading, use as a proxy for S if correlations  $\geq .40$
  - ↗ Armenian test Developed MAR-APR 2012
  - ↗ Six week timeframe
  - ↗ Developing Tajiki test (Sept – November 2012)
  - ↗ Piloting and concurrent validity with OPI



# ASTM Standard of Practice

- Leverage
  - world-leading foreign language proficiency testing (the DLPT system) and practices (the FILR Proficiency Guidelines) to ensure quality procurement of test development and administration
  - the \$15b language services industry's potential to provide language proficiency testing in more than 170 languages
- Enable rapid development of foreign language proficiency tests to meet surge requirements
- Enhance compliance with
  - PL 104-113 §12(d), which requires US Government agencies to maximize the use of industry standards
- Improve quality assurance through the availability of such standards to procurement and contracting for language proficiency testing

***Standards enhance DoD ability to use industry sources***



# Program Summary

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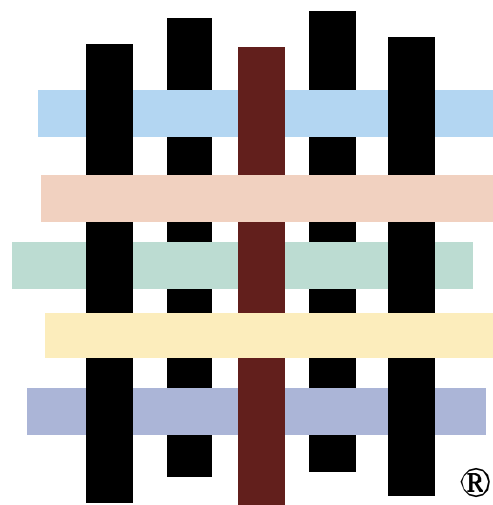
- Meets a critical need by providing a cost effective language screening for the full range of language needs
- Develops instruments following ILR scale and ASTM standards.



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# Member Language Breakdown (A-D)

<b>Acholi</b>	1
<b>Afrikaans</b>	2
<b>Akan</b>	2
<b>Albanian, Arbëreshë</b>	2
<b>Albanian, Arvanitika</b>	2
<b>Albanian, Gheg</b>	8
<b>Albanian, Tosk</b>	7
<b>Amharic</b>	6
<b>Arabic</b>	
Arabic, Algerian Saharan Spoken	14
Arabic, Algerian Spoken	28
Arabic, Baharna Spoken	9
Arabic, Chadian Spoken	4
Arabic, Cypriot Spoken	2
Arabic, n Spoken	2
Arabic, Eastern Egyptian Bedawi Spoken	40
Arabic, Egyptian Spoken	164
Arabic, Gulf Spoken	102
Arabic, Hadrami Spoken	7
Arabic, Hijazi Spoken	13
Arabic, Judeo-Iraqi	40
Arabic, Judeo-Moroccan	4
Arabic, Judeo-Tripolitanian	1
Arabic, Judeo-Tunisian	2
Arabic, Judeo-Yemeni	11
Arabic, Libyan Spoken	27
Arabic, Mesopotamian Spoken	31
Arabic, Moroccan Spoken	37
Arabic, Najdi Spoken	5

Arabic, North Levantine Spoken	65
Arabic, North Mesopotamian Spoken	8
Arabic, Omani Spoken	5
Arabic, Sa'idi Spoken	8
Arabic, Sanaani Spoken	1
Arabic, South Levantine Spoken	30
Arabic, Standard	211
Arabic, Sudanese Spoken	29
Arabic, Ta'izzi-Adeni Spoken	2
Arabic, Tunisian Spoken	15
<b>Armenian</b>	13
<b>Assyrian Neo-Aramaic</b>	2
<b>Azerbaijani</b>	
Azerbaijani, North	4
Azerbaijani, South	1
<b>Bamanankan</b>	1
<b>Baoulé</b>	1
<b>Batak</b>	2
<b>Bavarian</b>	1
<b>Belarusan</b>	5
<b>Belize Kriol English</b>	1
<b>Bengali</b>	12
<b>Bhojpuri</b>	1
<b>Bicolano, Albay</b>	1
<b>Bislama</b>	1
<b>Bosnian</b>	10
<b>Bulgarian</b>	6
<b>Burmese</b>	2
<b>Catalan-Valencian-Balear</b>	1

<b>Cebuano</b>	4
<b>Chaldean Neo-Aramaic</b>	1
<b>Chidigo</b>	1
<b>Chinese</b>	
Chinese, Gan	1
Chinese, Hakka	5
Chinese, Huizhou	2
Chinese, Mandarin	605
Chinese, Min Dong	4
Chinese, Min Nan	35
Chinese, Wu	5
Chinese, Xiang	1
Chinese, Yue	53
<b>Comorian</b>	
Comorian, Maore	1
Comorian, Mwali	1
Comorian, Ndzwani	1
Comorian, Ngazidja	1
<b>Creole Guadeloupean French</b>	5
<b>Creole Guianese French</b>	1
<b>Creole Guyanese English</b>	1
<b>Creole Hawai'i English</b>	2
<b>Creole Karipúna French</b>	1
<b>Creole Louisiana French</b>	1
<b>Creole Saint Lucian French</b>	3
<b>Creole Sudanese Arabic</b>	8
<b>Croatian</b>	13
<b>Czech</b>	6
<b>Dagbani</b>	1

# Member Language Breakdown (D-M)

<b>Dai</b>	1
<b>Dari, Zoroastrian</b>	6
<b>Dinka</b>	
Dinka, Northeastern	1
Dinka, Northwestern	1
Dinka, South Central	1
Dinka, Southeastern	2
Dinka, Southwestern	1
<b>Drents</b>	1
<b>Dutch</b>	8
<b>Efik</b>	1
<b>Éwé</b>	1
<b>Farsi</b>	
Farsi, Eastern	73
Farsi, Western	97
<b>Fijian</b>	1
<b>Filipino</b>	1
<b>Finnish</b>	2
<b>French</b>	324
<b>French, Cajun</b>	2
<b>Fulfulde, Western Niger</b>	1
<b>Ga</b>	1
<b>Ganda</b>	1
<b>Garre</b>	1
<b>Georgian</b>	3
<b>German, Standard</b>	73
<b>Gikuyu</b>	5
<b>Greek</b>	8
<b>Guaraní, Paraguayan</b>	1

<b>Gujarati</b>	33
<b>Haitian</b>	50
<b>Haitian Vodoun Culture Language</b>	4
<b>Hassaniyya</b>	1
<b>Hausa</b>	20
<b>Hebrew</b>	12
<b>Hebrew, Ancient</b>	3
<b>Hindi</b>	207
<b>Hindi, Fiji</b>	1
<b>Hindko</b>	
Hindko, Northern	1
Hindko, Southern	1
<b>Hmong Dô</b>	1
<b>Huba</b>	1
<b>Hungarian</b>	9
<b>Igbo</b>	8
<b>Igo</b>	1
<b>Ijo, Southeast</b>	1
<b>Indonesian</b>	123
<b>Indo-Portuguese</b>	1
<b>Italian</b>	36
<b>Japanese</b>	119
<b>Javanese</b>	9
<b>Jewish Babylonian Aramaic</b>	1
<b>Judeo-Berber</b>	1
<b>Kabuverdianu</b>	1
<b>Kalmyk-Oirat</b>	1
<b>Kannada</b>	2
<b>Kashmiri</b>	2

<b>Kazakh</b>	3
<b>Khmer</b>	
Khmer, Central	31
Khmer, Northern	6
<b>Kissi, Northern</b>	1
<b>Konkani</b>	1
<b>Korean</b>	86
<b>Krio</b>	1
<b>Kurdish</b>	
Kurdish, Northern	1
Kurdish, Southern	1
<b>Kyrgyz</b>	3
<b>Lao</b>	24
<b>Latvian</b>	1
<b>Liberian English</b>	2
<b>Lingala</b>	2
<b>Lithuanian</b>	5
<b>Luo</b>	2
<b>Maay</b>	1
<b>Macedonian</b>	1
<b>Maithili</b>	1
<b>Malagasy</b>	
Malagasy, Northern Betsimisaraka	1
Malagasy, Plateau	1
Malagasy, Sakalava	1
Malagasy, Tandroy-Mahafaly	1
Malagasy, Tsimihety	1

# Member Language Breakdown (M-Z)

<b>Malay</b>		
	Malay	9
	Malay, Baba	1
	Malay, Balinese	1
	Malay, Standard	1
<b>Malayalam</b>		2
<b>Mandinka</b>		1
<b>Marathi</b>		11
<b>Marshallese</b>		20
<b>Mazanderani</b>		1
<b>Miao, Southern Mashan</b>		1
<b>Mongolian, Halh</b>		8
<b>Moro</b>		1
<b>Murik (MALAYSIA)</b>		1
<b>Navajo</b>		1
<b>Nepali</b>		9
<b>Nupe-Nupe-Tako</b>		1
<b>Obolo</b>		1
<b>Oromo, Borana-Arsi-Guji</b>		2
<b>Pampangan</b>		1
<b>Panjabi</b>		
	Panjabi, Eastern	49
	Panjabi, Western	7
<b>Parsi-Dari</b>		21
<b>Pashto</b>		
	Pashto, Central	10
	Pashto, Northern	5
	Pashto, Southern	6
<b>Pidgin Chinese English</b>		2

<b>Pidgin Nigerian</b>		2
<b>Polish</b>		26
<b>Portuguese</b>		89
<b>Prussian</b>		1
<b>Pulaar</b>		2
<b>Quechua, Chiquián Ancash</b>		1
<b>Romanian</b>		14
<b>Russian</b>		394
<b>Rwanda</b>		1
<b>Samoan</b>		1
<b>Seraiki</b>		1
<b>Serbian</b>		7
<b>Sicilian</b>		2
<b>Sindhi</b>		2
<b>Sinhala</b>		2
<b>Slovak</b>		4
<b>Somali</b>		29
<b>Soninke</b>		1
<b>Spanish</b>		579
<b>Spanish, Loreto-Ucayali</b>		4
<b>Sukuma</b>		1
<b>Sunda</b>		2
<b>Swahili</b>		70
<b>Swahili, Congo</b>		3
<b>Swedish</b>		3
<b>Tachelhit</b>		1
<b>Tagalog</b>		20
<b>Tajiki</b>		6
<b>Tamazight, Central Atlas</b>		1

<b>Tamil</b>		12
<b>Telugu</b>		2
<b>Tetun</b>		1
<b>Thai</b>		
	Thai	98
	Thai Song	1
	Thai, Northeastern	12
	Thai, Northern	7
	Thai, Southern	3
<b>Tigrigna</b>		2
<b>Turkish</b>		22
<b>Turkmen</b>		1
<b>Ukrainian</b>		41
<b>Urdu</b>		76
<b>Uyghur</b>		1
<b>Uzbek</b>		
	Uzbek, Northern	4
	Uzbek, Southern	3
<b>Vietnamese</b>		164
<b>Vlaams</b>		1
<b>Wolof</b>		3
<b>Wolof, Gambian</b>		1
<b>Yoruba</b>		9
<b>Zarma</b>		1