

# **The Arabic Testing Consensus Initiative: Recharting the course for testing spoken Arabic**

---

ILR Plenary Presentation

March 23, 2007

Mahdi Alesh - USMA

Alaa Elgibali – University of Maryland

Jerry Lampe - NFLC

Elvira Swender - ACTFL



# Arabic OPI Testing - ACTFL

---

- Arabic-specific Guidelines predated the 1999 Revision of the Guidelines
- Increase in demand for “Arabic” testing
- ACTFL/ILR testing and rating
  - DLI contract to support testing
- Arabic tester renorming sessions
  - MSA v dialect
  - Variety of profiles
  - Standardized Introduction to OPI



# Challenges

---

- Addressing oral proficiency testing issues that are unique to Arabic
  - Generic Proficiency Guidelines v. language-specific Guidelines
- Training and certifying sufficient numbers of testers to meet the demand for testing in MSA and dialects
  - What types of additional support can be provided during the training process
- Staying aligned with testing and rating protocol used by other ILR testing groups (DLI, FBI, CIA, FSI, etc.)



# Arabic Testing Consensus Initiative

---

- 2- year project
- Collaboration
  - Academic and government representation
- ILR Plenary is the “kick-off” event



# Project Goals

---

- Identify the Issues
  - Unique to testing students of Arabic
  - Specifically when crossing major borders
    - from Intermediate to Advanced (ILR 1+ to 2)
    - from Advanced to Superior (ILR 2+ to 3)



# Project Goals

---

- Survey the field
- Consider, discuss, debate how to address and resolve these issues for Arabic testing
- Build consensus within the broad field of Arabic language specialists regarding specific testing and reporting needs



# Project Goals

---

- Make recommendations for issues to be considered in the upcoming revisions to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines - Speaking (generic)
  - Write and publish **Annotated** Oral Proficiency Descriptors for Arabic
- Write and publish OPI Explanatory Notes for Arabic Testing



# Today's presenters

---

- **Alaa Elgibali** - University of Maryland
  - *A Conceptual Overview*
- **Mahdi Alish** – United States Military Academy
  - *Procedural considerations for testing oral proficiency in Arabic*
- **Jerry Lampe** –The National Foreign Language Center
  - *Cultural dimensions of oral proficiency*