FSI’s Arabic Speaking Test Model

Choice-based approach

ECOLT

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FSI’s Examinee Population

- Second language learners
- Examinees who learned Arabic elsewhere
- FSI-trained Examinees with language skills enhanced at post
FSI’s OLD Test Format

Two Protocols

- Interactive
- Separate MSA test protocol
- Separate dialect test protocol
OLD FSI’s Test Challenges

- Define boundaries (MSA/Dialect)
- Establish boundaries between various dialects
- Establish a system of credits and penalties based on use of MSA or dialect
FSI’s **NEW** Test Format

**One Protocol**

- Interactive
- Integrated but flexible
- One protocol for both MSA and dialect
- Based on examinee’s choice of dialect
Precepts of Arabic Use

- Arabic: one continuum
- Examinee: choice of dialect
- Yardstick: highly articulate well-educated native speaker
- Meaning: negotiated
- Audience: defines language interaction
Arabic Language

**Formal Arabic**
- Classical Arabic
- Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)

**Colloquial Arabic** (informal)
- Colloquial of the Educated
- Colloquial of the Enlightened
- Colloquial of the Illiterate
Examinee’s Choice

Test Choice
- MSA
- Egyptian Arabic
- Iraqi Arabic
- Moroccan Arabic
- Sudanese Arabic
- Syrian Arabic, etc.

Register Choice
- **Situation** (conference, formal speech, birthday party, interview, shopping…)
- **Audience** (doctors, judges, journalists, street vendors, farmers…)
- **Topic**
- **Type of message**
Yardstick
(Highly Articulate Well-Educated Native Speaker)

- Speaks formal and informal Arabic
- Moves naturally between the two
- Selects register based on audience, topic, situation, and message
Negotiated Meaning

- Pure MSA
- Dialect
- Blended Arabic (MSA/Dialect mix)
- Mix of multiple dialects (rare)
Outcome

Natural interaction regardless of the Arabic variant.