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

ILR Plenary Presentation  
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Mahdi Alish - 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 Alosh** - United States Military Academy
  - Procedural considerations for testing oral proficiency in Arabic

- **Jerry Lampe** - The National Foreign Language Center
  - Cultural dimensions of oral proficiency