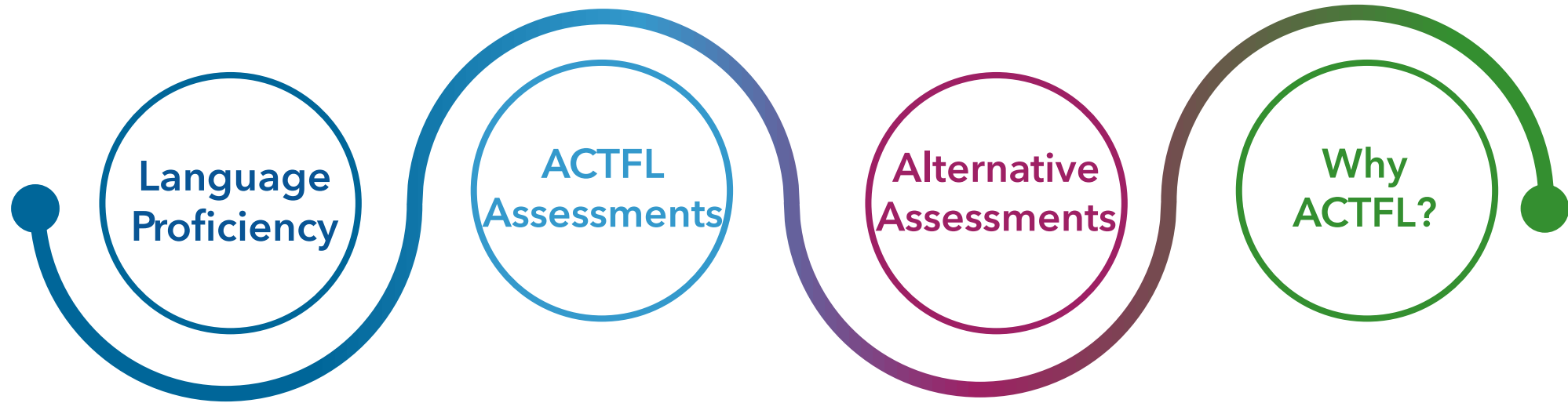




EXCLUSIVE LICENSEE OF **ACTFL**

Jennifer Dobberfuhr Quinlan, PhD
Young-A Son, PhD

Agenda



About LTI

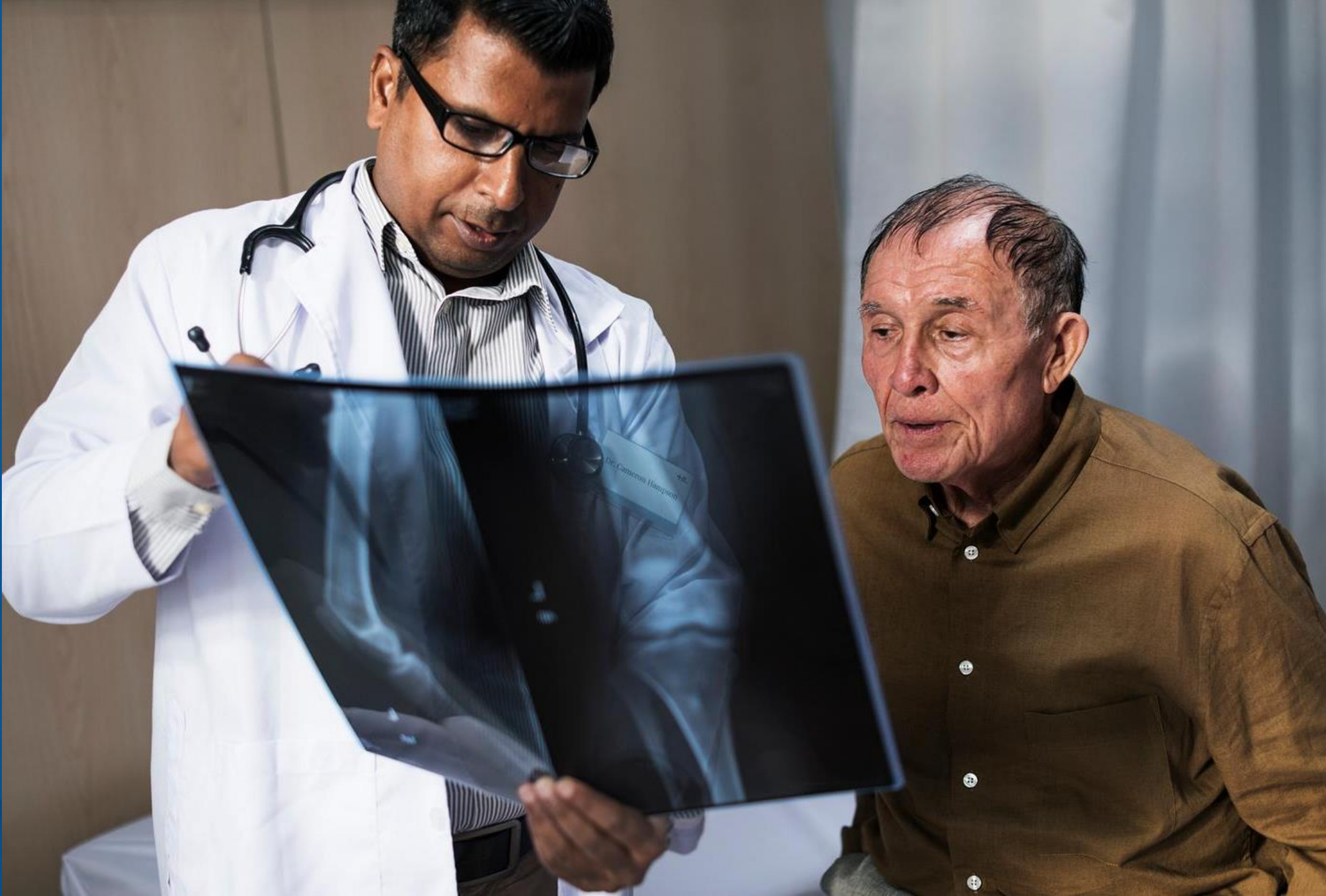


ACTFL
Language Proficiency & Performance
EXCLUSIVELY THROUGH LTI

- A leading global World Language Testing Company
- 1 Million tests per year / over 3,000 clients
- Corporate, Academic and Government clients, as well as individuals
- Test in over 120 languages / in over 60 countries
- **Sole source provider and exclusive licensee of ACTFL Assessments since 1992**

- Formerly known as the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
- A non-profit membership organization with over 13,000 language professionals
- ACTFL Center for Assessment Research and Development (CARD)
- Developed the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, an international standard measure of proficiency
- Valid and reliable assessments of language proficiency in all skills

Language
Proficiency



What is Language Proficiency?

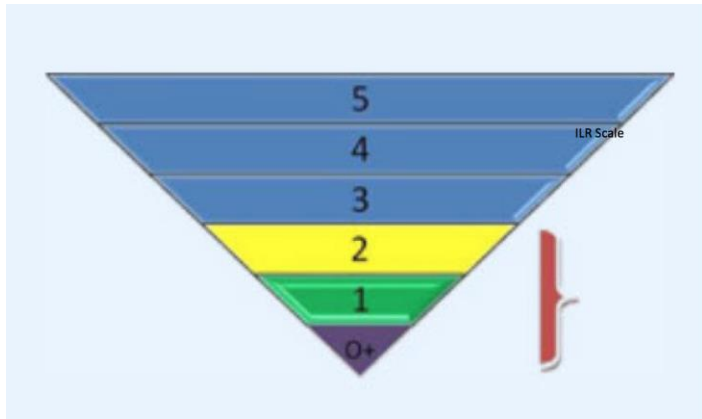
- “**Proficiency** is the ability to use language in **real word** situations in a **spontaneous** interaction and **non-rehearsed** context and in a manner acceptable and **appropriate** to native speakers of the language. Proficiency demonstrates what a language user is able to do **regardless of where, when, or how** the language was acquired (p.4).”

Why measure proficiency?

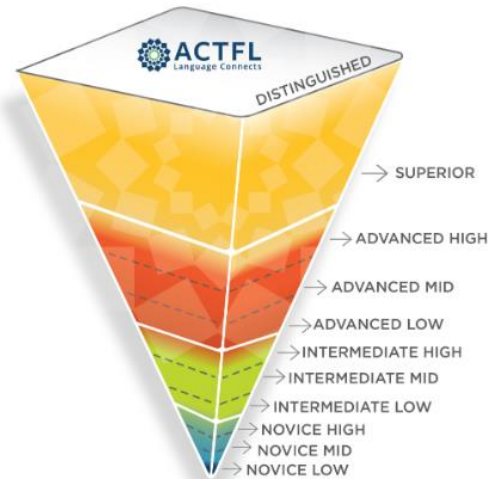
- Ability to use language vs vocabulary mastery
- Ability to meet the needs of patients and communicate effectively
- Ability to interact professionally such that patients can understand and can be understood

Proficiency Scales: How Language Ability Is Measured

Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Skill Level Descriptors



ACTFL Proficiency Scale (ACTFL)



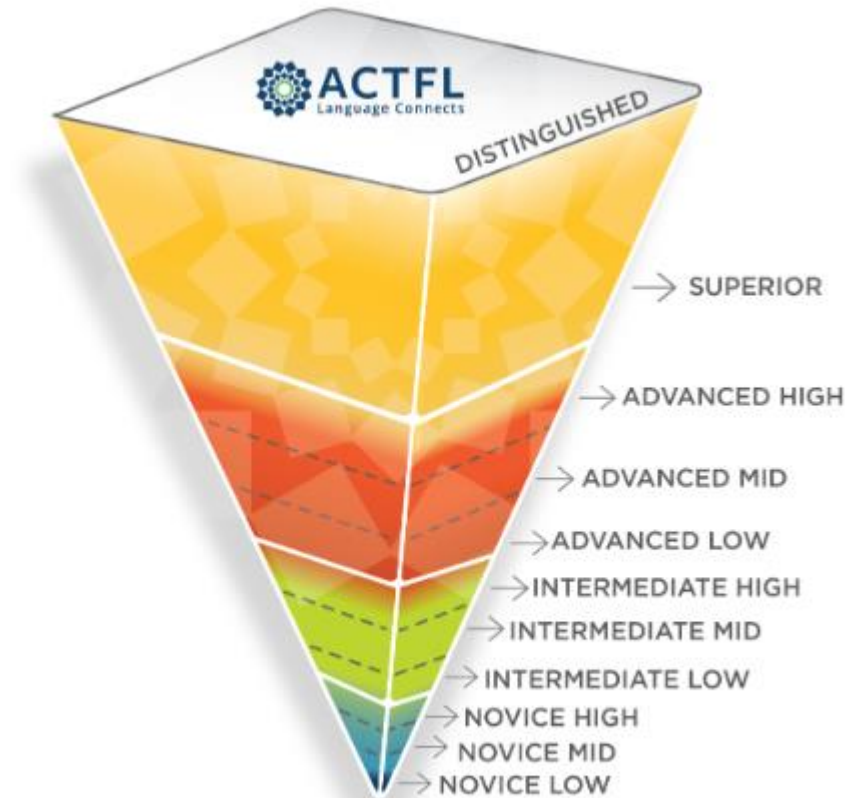
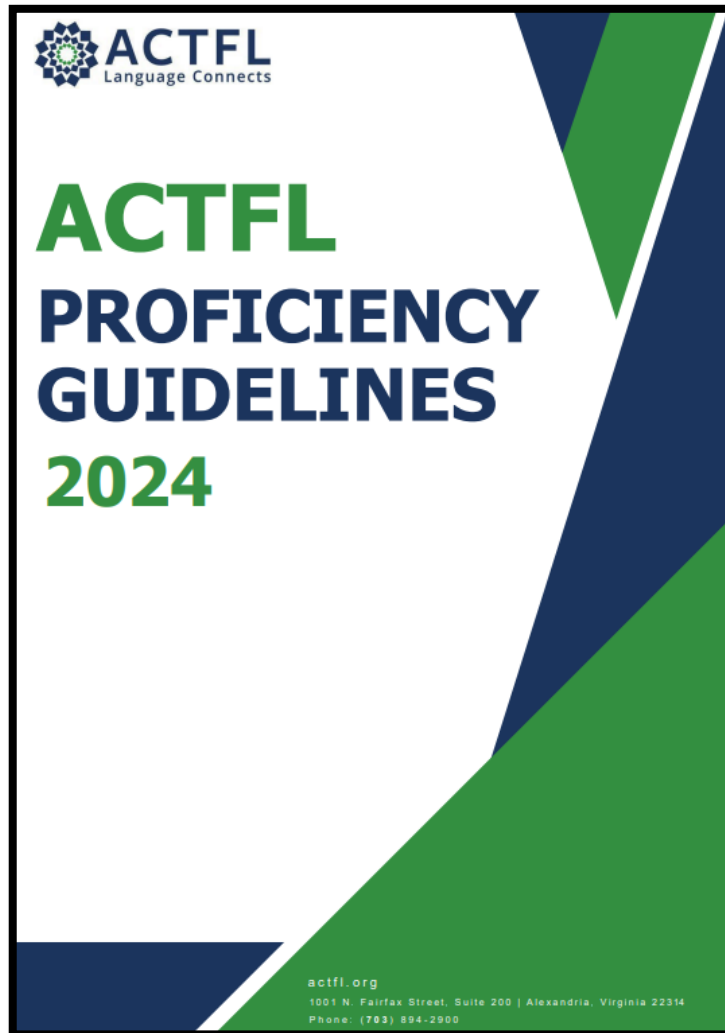
Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)



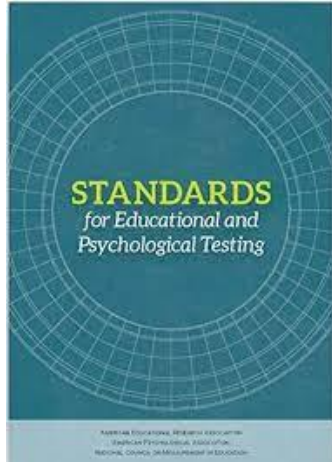
Internationally- Recognized Proficiency Scales

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines

[ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines](#) provide the basis for global ratings and describe functional language ability. [ILR Skill Level Descriptors](#) provide descriptions for speaking, listening, reading, writing at each ILR level.



Test Development, Research and Industry Standards



Standards for Educational
and Psychological Testing (2014)



[ASTM F2889 - 11\(2020\)](#)

Standard Practice for Assessing Language Proficiency



[ACE Review: Bibliography
Of Technical Reports](#)



[Assessing the Validity of ACTFL
Can-Do Statements: A Rasch Analysis](#)

Key Terms

- **Validity:** ensuring that the conclusions and decisions we make based on test scores are appropriate and supported, not just that the test is well-made.
- **Reliability:** the test provides that measurement consistently over time and across identified populations (e.g., no matter who or what you put on a scale, it measures its weight accurately).



ACTFL
Assessments



ACTFL Tests & Background

- ACTFL test developers include:
 - assessment experts,
 - language experts,
 - psychometricians,
 - Educators
- Tests are developed through a rigorous process and undergo regular external evaluation for validity and reliability.
 - ACTFL tests are considered the gold standard for language assessment and are frequently used in published research around language learning, development, acquisition, etc. (Access related studies [here](#).)
 - Review ACTFL's quality assurance processes [here](#).
 - More about understanding [proficiency here](#).

F.A.C.T Check: Testing for Proficiency

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines -2024: “an individual’s level of proficiency in each domain is defined by four criteria, represented by the acronym **FACT**.”

Functions and Tasks: The different types of speech or writing someone can do.

Accuracy: How well someone uses language, including things like grammar, vocabulary, etc.

Context and Content: The setting or circumstances in which someone can effectively communicate and the topics they can handle.

Text Type: How much and how complex of language someone can understand or communicate.

“In order to receive a proficiency rating at a given level, an individual must demonstrate sustained ability to meet each of the FACT criteria for that level.”

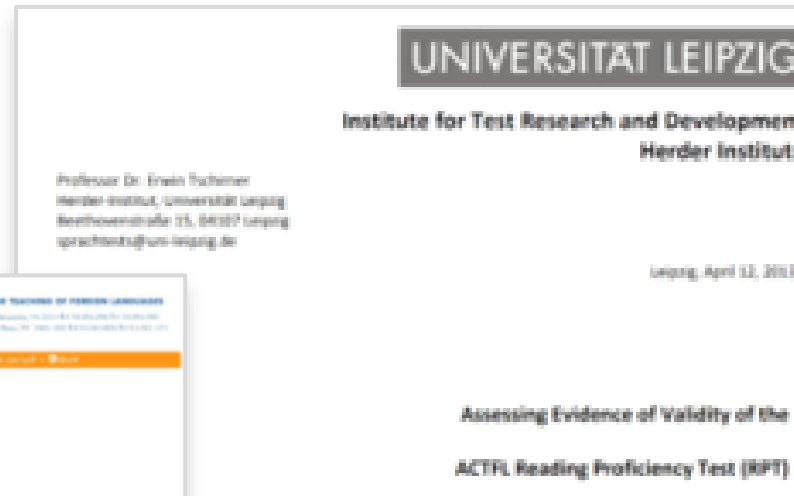
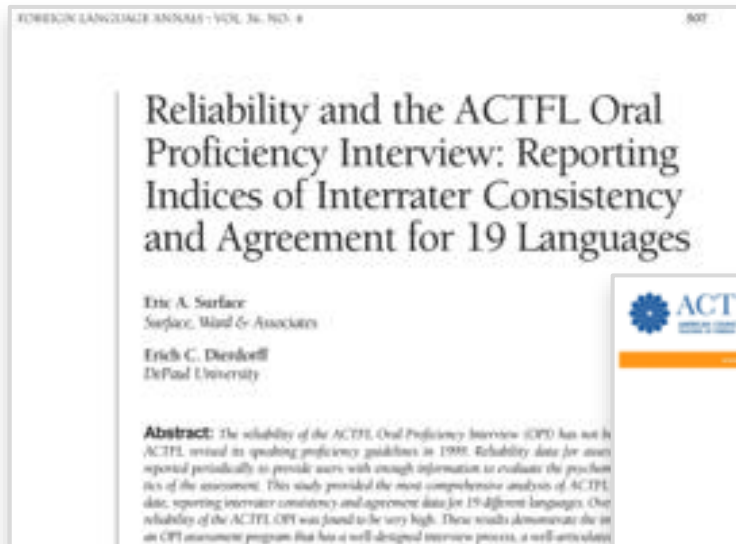
*ACTFL tests evaluate language ability on all four **FACT** criteria.*

ACTFL Assessment Research: Validity Evidence



ACTFL Research / White Papers / Studies

<https://www.languagetesting.com/research/>



[ACTFL Quality Control and Assurance](#)

ACTFL-certified Testers & Raters



- **Qualifications for Certification**
 - ILR3+ Proficiency in Target Language
 - Master's or Ph.D. in the language they test or a related field (SLA or Linguistics)
 - 5-day Workshop Attendance
 - 6 months rate practice / certification rounds of test samples
- **Post Certification:**
 - Rating Reliability –benchmarking and norming activities
 - Ongoing ACTFL Quality Control
 - Rating reliability statistics
 - Random QA reviews
 - Certification valid for 4 years
- **ACTFL / LTI has among the highest inter-rater reliability in the industry**

Alternative Assessments



Is assessment needed for native speakers?

Fluency vs Proficiency

May sound good
but lack depth
of language
development

Limited ability to
communicate in
unpredictable or
unfamiliar
situations

May be ill-
equipped to
navigate cultural
or regional
complexities

What about self-assessment?

2022 study: computer adaptive self-assessment can be effective for low stakes testing.

- Limitation: results are not generalizable to advanced level learners
- If looking to screen for advanced-level and the stakes are high, this method may be inappropriate.

2015 study among heritage speakers:

- Self-assessed language skills are systematically biased.
- Subjective measures are inadequate estimates of language skills
- Use with caution when seeking to identify language skills rather than self-perceptions.

2020 Meta-evaluation, 67 studies, 97 independent samples, > 68,500 participants:

- Varied correlation between self-assessment and language performance
- Valid & reliable results depend on several criteria.
- Developing a valid self-assessment often takes similar or more time, research, psychometric analysis, and vetting as developing an external measure.

What about industry-specific assessment?

Opportunities:

May evaluate mastery of specific language

Risks:

Assessing narrow elements of language use

Missing critical language ability for professional interaction and more comprehensive functioning

What about industry-specific assessment?



- Test structure: 6 recorded prompts of patients describing a condition (in target language) & communicative tasks (in English); 10-60 seconds to respond for each task (in target language).
- Scoring: on objective items only. Subjective items are not part of score calculation.
- **Objective** units (included in the score) represent significant words/phrases common in doctor/patient communication (~vocabulary test).
- **Subjective** scoring categories include fluency, pronunciation, customer service, and cultural proficiency - **not part of the test score calculation.**

Would mastery of medical terminology alone equip a physician to describe a medical condition and treatment options a patient may want to consider?

Why
ACTFL?



ACTFL Global
Engagement
Initiative Award

The Value of Testing with ACTFL Assessments

- **Comprehensive:** ACTFL assessments measure the ability to use language in unrehearsed settings to accomplish a wide variety of communication objectives in culturally appropriate ways.
- **Standardized:** the internationally recognized criteria ([*ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines*](#) and [ILR skill level descriptions](#)) provide **reliable insights** into what someone is capable of doing with their language skills.
- **Industry aligned:** National Board of Certified Medical Interpreters (NBCMI) and Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI) use ACTFL assessments to certify staff. Likewise, several federal agencies rely on ACTFL assessments to evaluate candidates for specific assignments.
- **Official:** ACTFL provides *legally defensible* ratings, valid for 2 years.

Oral Proficiency Interview by Computer

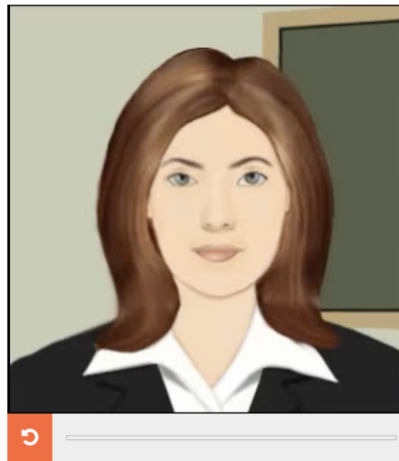


- Simulates a live conversation with an avatar
- Delivers pre-recorded prompts, customized to test-taker's background and interests
- On demand, internet-based (24/7)
- Takes 20-40 min to complete
- Results within 5 business days
- Available in 13 languages

Available Languages: Arabic, Chinese Mandarin, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Pashto, Persian (Farsi), Portuguese, Russian Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese

Question 1 of 2

Sign Out

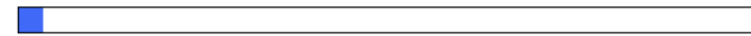


Question Progress:



Recording...

Response Time:

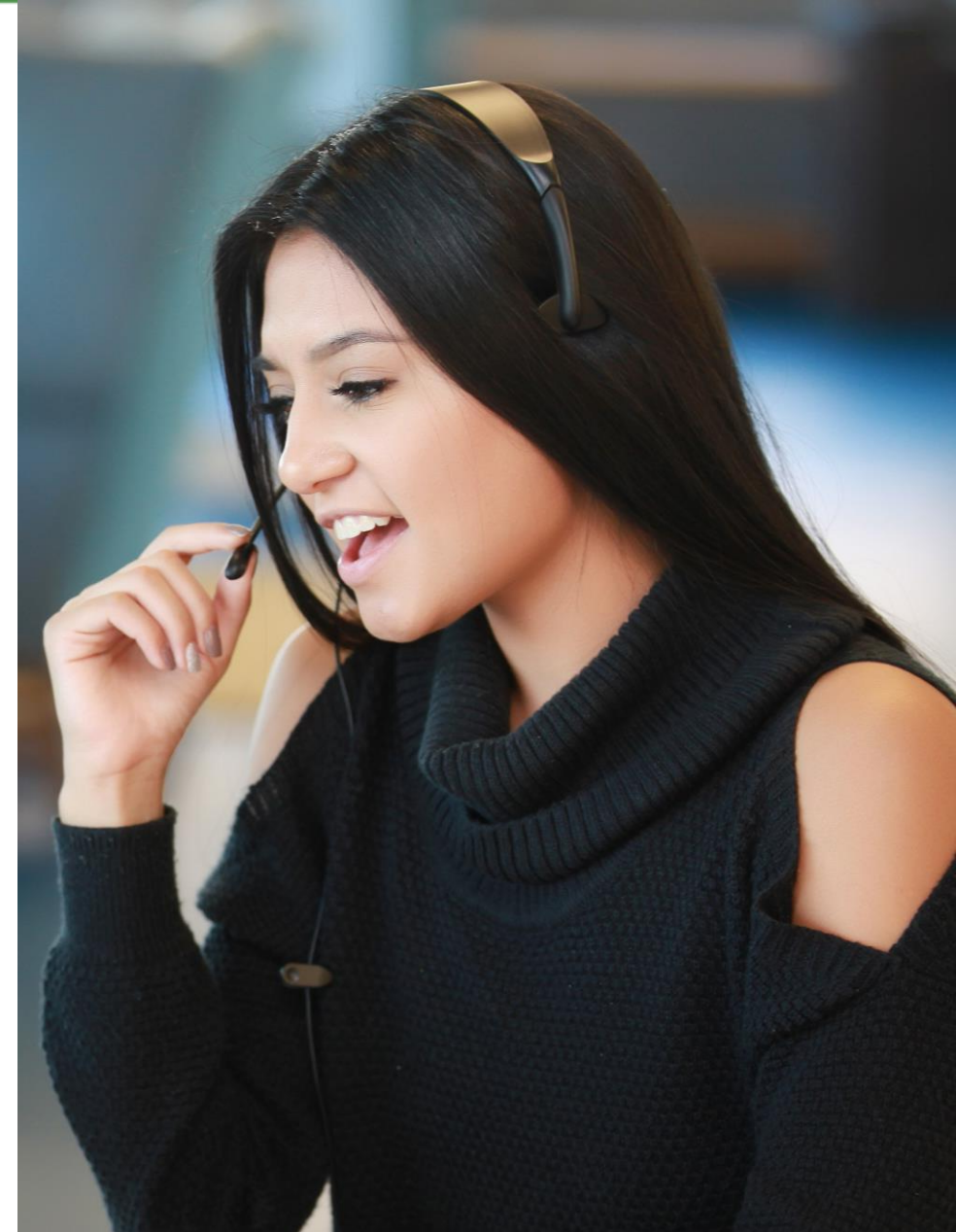


Next >

Oral Proficiency Interview



- Flagship ACTFL oral assessment
- Live telephonic interview between test-taker and ACTFL-certified Tester
- Content is adapted to the test-taker's academic, professional, and personal experiences
- Takes 15-30 min to complete
- Results within 5 business days
- **Available in >120 languages**



Language Functions at Specific Levels

Language Descriptors at 2 or 2+

- Can **express themselves fully** and maintain conversations on social, academic, & work-related topics and special fields of competence.
- Can communicate with detail and organization, handle unexpected complications, **ask questions to probe** for more information.
- Understand and use **cultural knowledge** to conform linguistically and behaviorally in many social and work-related interactions. They show conscious awareness of significant cultural differences and may adjust accordingly.
- **Able to satisfy most work requirements** with language usage that is **generally, but not always, acceptable and effective**. Speakers will show a **high degree of fluency** and ease of speech, yet under pressure their language **functionality may break down**.

Language Descriptors at 3 :

- Can discuss abstract topics, offer critical commentary, and hypothesize about **complex** issues.
- Can manage **extended discourse in professional discussions, cultural and technical** dialogues
- Skilled at negotiating unpredictable situations or complications in conversation
- **Convey meaning clearly** without searching for words or making significant grammar errors.
- Ability to handle linguistic and **cultural nuances**.
- **Highly understandable and credible** in social, academic, and professional settings.
- Appropriately adapts language style and register with high control over the **formality and tone**.
- **Advanced cultural competence**.
- Occasional language gaps may still emerge in specialized or highly nuanced contexts.

ORAL PROFICIENCY LEVELS IN THE WORKPLACE

ACTFL Level	ILR Scale	Language Functions	Corresponding Professions/Positions*
Superior	3	<i>Discuss topics extensively, support opinions, hypothesize. Deal with linguistically unfamiliar situations and unexpected complications. No patterns of error emerge and minimal sporadic errors in low-frequency or complex structures are present, but in such a way, that they do not distract from their message.</i>	Attorney, Court Interpreter, Financial Services Marketing Manager, Foreign Area Officer, Judge, University Language Professor
Advanced High	2+	<i>Narrate and describe in past, present, and future. Deal effectively with an unanticipated complication with sufficient control of structure and vocabulary to be understood by most anyone.</i>	Account Executive, Broker, Financial Advisor, Human Resources Communications Manager, Insurance Manager, Interpreter, Marketing Manager, Military Linguist, Physician , Quality Assurance Specialist, Researcher/Analyst, Social Services Case Manager, Translation Officer
Advanced Mid	2		Account Executive, Banker, Banking and Investment Services Manager, Customer Service Representative, Banking Manager, Collections Representative, Court Stenographer, Credit & Loan Advisor, Customer Service Agent, Facilities Manager, Financial Advisor, Fraud Specialist, Human Resources Benefits Specialist, Interpreter, Marketing Manager, Medical Interpreter, Mental Health Specialist, Patient Advocate, Program Executive, Recruiter, Researcher/Analyst, Sales & Marketing Representative, Social Service Case Manager, Technical Service Agent
Advanced Low			911 Dispatcher, Accounting Coordinator, Banker, Banking Manager, Billing Clerk, Call Center Representative, Claims Processor, Consumer Products Customer Services Representative, Credit & Loan Advisor, Customer Service Agent, Customer Service Interpreter, Employee Trainer, Financial Advisor, Flight Attendant, K-12 Language Teacher, Legal Receptionist, Legal Secretary, Maintenance Administrator, Maintenance Technician Supervisors, Nurse, Police Officer, Program Executive, Researcher/Analyst, Retail Services Personnel, Sales & Marketing Representative, Social Service Case Manager, Social Service Receptionist, Social Worker
Intermediate High	1+	<i>Create with language, initiate, maintain, and bring simple conversations to a close by asking and responding to simple questions with sentence-length discourse. Their communication will include errors that may, at times, distract from their message but they can usually clarify their message, as needed.</i>	Administrative Assistant, Auto Inspector, Aviation Personnel, Banking Manager, Conductors (Bus/Train), Custodian, Customer Service Agent, Employee Trainer, Facilities Manager, Firefighter, Flight Attendant, Insurance Manager, K-12 Language Teacher, Maintenance Technician, Missionary, Nurse, Police Officer, Receptionist, Sales Support Representative, Social Worker Assistant, Tour Guide, Utilities Installer
Intermediate Mid			Cashier, Customer Service Agent, Salesclerk (highly predictable contexts), Technicians (equipment maintainers), Truck Driver
Intermediate Low			1
Novice High	0+	<i>Communicate minimally with formulaic and rote utterances, lists, and phrases. Their communication will include many errors and require a very sympathetic interlocutor for successful communication.</i>	No functional professional working ability
Novice Mid	0		
Novice Low			

*The levels of proficiency associated with the positions above are minimal levels of oral proficiency, most of which are based on LTI task analyses, where the minimal levels were determined by subject matter experts from companies and agencies who use ACTFL proficiency tests.

Some of Our Clients



Indiana University Health



Principal



Thank you



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