

**Prepared Statement**

**Of**

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**Before the**

**Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee  
on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce,  
and the District of Columbia**

**“A National Security Crisis: Foreign Language Capabilities in the  
Federal Government”**

**May 21, 2012**

## INTRODUCTION

Chairman Akaka, Ranking Member Johnson, and members of this distinguished subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to address the importance of foreign language skills in carrying out the Department's mission, our plan for improving foreign language capabilities, and our efforts and accomplishments regarding ways to increase the number of individuals with foreign language skills.

Let me begin by stating that Defense Secretary Panetta has long believed that having strong language ability is critical to our national security. He offers that "*Language, regional, and cultural skills are enduring warfighting competencies that are critical to mission readiness in today's dynamic global environment.*"

The Secretary emphasized the importance of language and culture in an August 2011 memorandum to the Department's key leaders. In it he outlined his vision to have the required combination of language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities to meet our Nation's present and future national security needs. In short, he stated that, "*The Department must establish and execute policies and procedures that show we value these skills.*" (see Attachment 1).

The August memorandum supports his January 2012 Defense Strategy, which emphasizes that we are a Nation with important interests in multiple regions. We remain engaged in the international arena and must communicate with local populations and their senior officials if we are to strengthen relationships with existing allies, and forge new relationships with potential partners.

The Department is committed to fielding the most capable Force it can deploy, and language is a critical capability of that same Force. As a result, we have improved our tracking of both language requirements and language capabilities over the past seven years. The Department looks at language capabilities within three separate but overlapping groups: the General Purpose Forces (GPF), the Special Operations Forces (SOF), and Language Professionals, which includes language analysts, translators, linguists and Foreign Area Officers. Together, they span our Total Force.

The Department faces difficult challenges regarding language. Currently, the DoD Total Force includes 3.3 million personnel with 7.92% or 258,786 individuals with reported language skills. Although this is noteworthy accumulation of language capability, we find that slightly over 142,000 of these personnel speak Spanish, so the majority of our language capability is not addressing current operational deployments. Our challenge is in generating capabilities to address current and projected operational needs. We need personnel who have the required language competing at the right proficiency level to fill the 36,983 military positions in DoD that are identified as having language requirements. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, over 81% (29,960) of our military positions identified as having language requirements were filled. However, only 28% (10,377) of the positions with language requirements were filled with personnel at *the required foreign language proficiency level*. Although we may be filling the positions, we are not filling those positions with individuals with the requisite proficiency skill level. We have, nevertheless, made headway.

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 fill rate indicates that 34.6% of assigned personnel have the required level of proficiency for their positions, an increase from 31.7% in FY 2010. We admit that we have a lot of work to do in this area and will continue to address this deficiency through

training and other incentives. The long-term solution must be a national one. In short, we recruit from a national pool of individuals who, for the most part, have little or no formal language training. We recognize that our schools cannot teach every language vital to U.S. national security, but we know that having a pool of individuals who have been exposed to a foreign language or had early language learning will greatly facilitate further language acquisition. A citizen possessing any language learning skills would greatly increase the Department's ability to fill language required positions with qualified individuals.

We are working to overcome these challenges through a strategic, integrated way forward -- not only for our nation's security but also for the security of our global partners. As a result of Secretary Panetta's August 2011 memorandum, the Department created a new strategic organization: the Defense Language and National Security Education Office. This office grew from a merger of two strategic offices and allows the Department to draw upon the National mission of the National Security Education Program and the Departmental mission of the Defense Language Office.

As a result of this merger, Departmental leadership has the benefit of national coordination through the National Security Education Board (NSEB) and Department-wide coordination through the Defense Language Steering Committee (DLSC). The NSEB is an interagency governance body with representatives from several Cabinet-level federal agencies, including the Departments of Defense, Education, State, Commerce, Energy; the Office of the Director of National Intelligence; and the Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Humanities, along with six presidential appointees, to provide input on critical language, regional, and cultural issues. The DLSC is an internal governance body that consists of General Officers/Senior Executive Service members from 25 key components across the Department that coordinate

policy and programs, such as Department-wide strategic planning, language requirements, language training, and proficiency testing.

Building upon the 2005 Defense Language Transformation Roadmap, which established a foundational capability to have people with the right skills in the right place at the right time, our current strategy addresses the entire language, regional, and cultural spectrum of activity—from public school education to initial skill training, assessment, enhancement, sustainment, and leveraging international partners.

There is no shortcut for acquiring foreign language skills. They involve significant investment in time and training. We recognize that the linguistic, regional, and cultural readiness of our force is heavily influenced by the preparedness of the national citizenry, from which we build this force. Accordingly, we have initiated programs to attract personnel with these skills. We also assist in training more of our Nation's youth so they develop these skills prior to joining federal service. However, our efforts cannot make up for the fact that opportunities to gain these skills in our Nation's schools are not currently designed to meet the needs of this century.

Therefore, the Department has moved forward to invest in developing these needs. Over the past decade we have come a long way in defining the problem. Based on planning and discussion throughout DoD, we have agreed across the Department that the first step in addressing a strategy is to better identify the language needs within the Total Force. As we work across the Department to identify the need, we are coordinating and improving policies and programs to acquire, sustain, and enhance language skills as well as to build meaningful military and civilian career paths. Lastly, we are working to build strategic partnerships within and across the Federal government, to include our national educational system, our allies, and our

international partners. However, we know we cannot always accurately predict the need, so we are also increasing our ability to surge language capabilities to meet unexpected demands.

## IDENTIFICATION OF LANGUAGE NEEDS

We are actively working to improve our identification of language needs through a standardized, capabilities-based process. This process enables the Combatant Commands to articulate their language requirements and provide them to the Military Services. The Military Services then supply staff to meet those needs. This year, the Geographic Combatant Commands will finish articulating these requirements, which will be the first time that the Military Services will have precise demand signals to inform recruiting, training, and resource management decisions to fill warfighter requirements. While military intelligence agencies have routinely carried out analyses of language requirements, this effort expands upon that to include the Total Force, as our experiences over the last decade of war show that we must identify the linguistic needs of the Total Force if we are to be prepared for the full spectrum of contingencies.

Additionally, every two years, we conduct a language capabilities-based review, which determines the languages upon which we should focus to meet strategic and operational needs for the next 10 to 15 years. Based on a thorough review of the national strategic guidance, intelligence assessments, ongoing operations, and input from the Combatant Commands, Joint Staff, Services, and Defense Agencies, the capabilities-based review prepares the DoD Strategic Language List. This list informs our policies and resource allocation decisions as we recruit, retain, train, and test our personnel.

## LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND PROFICIENCY SUSTAINMENT

To increase the pool for critical languages, the Department must find the means to support language acquisition. Language skills atrophy over time, especially if they are not constantly engaged. Therefore, equally important to language acquisition is language proficiency sustainment. As a result, we have sought innovative solutions to enhance not only language acquisition but also the sustainment process. Our solutions present a strategic and integrated approach that will ensure we create a pipeline for a future workforce that has the skills to meet the demands of the national security community. Our pipeline to build a future workforce can only be accomplished by collaboration, partnership across the Nation, and engagement with our Nation's schools, colleges and universities, industry, and research centers to foster a new generation of skilled individuals, from which DoD and other Federal agencies can recruit a national security workforce.

### *Pipeline for National Security Workforce*

The Department has invested in many strategic initiatives to develop a national security workforce pipeline. These initiatives encompass partnering with Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade (K-12) schools and institutions of higher education to increase the nation's language capability. Programs such as Boren Scholarships and Fellowships, the Pilot African Language Initiative, and The Language Flagship are designed to improve the pool of professionals with critical language proficiency and regional expertise. The Language Flagship is raising standards for undergraduate language education by providing professional level language proficiency for students of any academic major in 26 universities across the country. The Flagship program is designed to bring students to Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Level 3, or general

professional proficiency (see Attachment 2 for sample of ILR proficiency levels). This is the level identified by the national security community as being the minimum to provide work as useful language professionals, such as analysts, translators, or in diplomatic capacities.

Normally, the Flagship program develops these skills within a four-year period, during which Flagship students would complete their undergraduate degrees with concurrent intensive language study and an academic year overseas.

To build a pipeline, which in turn will reduce DoD's training time and costs, we have built upon our innovative K-12 initiative to promote and improve language instruction by expanding our partnership between the Language Flagship Program and State and local education entities, such as the State of Utah and the Oregon Public Schools. This year, we have launched a new partnership with the Department of Defense Education Activity. Together, these expanded initiatives will build stronger pathways to language skill development in public schools feeding The Language Flagship, Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), and Project Global Officer programs, as well as the DoD supported and public K-12 schools and public schools, which serve large numbers of students from military families. Though still relatively small in number, all of these efforts are intended to create a pipeline of language skilled individuals.

#### *Future Officer Cadre*

Future officers require a global perspective as leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Therefore, the Department is investing in its future officer leaders through two programs: Project Global Officer and the Pilot Flagship Reserve Officers Training Corps initiative. Through Project Global Officers, we provide grants to institutions of higher education to teach critical languages and enhance future officers' regional expertise and intercultural capacities, largely through study

abroad and cultural immersion opportunities. The Pilot Flagship ROTC Initiative will increase the number of ROTC students completing their undergraduate studies with professional-level proficiency in critical languages and significant regional expertise. These investments in our future leaders, over time, will result in a future officer corps that is better equipped with the skills to lead its noncommissioned officers, interact with our partners, and think and act strategically.

### *Total Force*

The Department places great emphasis on high quality language training. Much of this training is provided by the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC). DLIFLC delivers language training to language professionals, special operations forces, and the general purpose forces. In addition to intensive classroom instruction at the Presidio of Monterey, DLIFLC offers instructional venues through over 30 Language Training Detachments and Mobile Training Teams. It also offers a full range of language learning opportunities through online programs. In 2011, we developed a new initiative to leverage our Nation's academic institutions entitled Language Training Centers. We currently have Language Training Centers at five universities located near major military populations. DoD provides grants to these institutions of higher education and in return they provide specific linguistic and cultural training for active, reserve, and guard personnel. These new efforts allow us to better leverage investments and resources across the military, civilian, and academic language programs.

In 2005, we established the Department of Defense Foreign Area Officer program which created common training and education standards across the Department. In response, each of the four Military Services has instituted a Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program, which provides a corps of mid-grade military officers with high levels of regional expertise and professional-

level language proficiency. Since 2006, we have increased the number of FAOs from 1,414 to 2,055. We plan to add approximately 800 FAOs to these ranks by 2015. We are watching to see how draw downs impact this career field. These officers combine military skills with specific regional expertise, language competency, and political-military awareness to represent and advance U.S. interests in one of nine geographical areas: Latin America, Europe, South Asia, Eurasia, China, Middle East and North Africa, Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Tomorrow's global engagements will require that we continue to invest in FAOs for the knowledge and skills they provide as advisors to Geographic Combatant Commanders.

Another large professional language community consists of the Department's language analysts. Language analysts are primarily enlisted personnel who attend anywhere from 26 to 63 weeks of training at the DLIFLC to achieve ILR Level 2, or limited working level proficiency, in their assigned foreign language(s). Their efforts have proven to be of great utility through previous and current conflicts.

Language proficiency and regional expertise are among the critical capabilities necessary to effectively engage our partners and allies in order to conduct Foreign Internal Defense, Unconventional Warfare and other Irregular Warfare tasks. Special Operations Forces (SOF) will increasingly need these capabilities in order to develop lasting relations, develop trust, and assist our partners and allies in more effectively addressing threats to security and stability. The SOF components have taken steps to increase capabilities and have tapped into external resources such as the DLIFLC.

The U.S. Army Special Operations command, traditionally the principal regionalized special operations force, significantly strengthened both language and regional instruction. All

Army Special Forces, Military Information Support, and Civil Affairs Soldiers receive cross cultural communications training and language instruction to proficiency level of ILR level 1. Additionally, the top 15% of graduates attend follow-on training to attain ILR 2 and to learn specific regional content related to one of the five geographic combatant commands in 8-week regional studies courses. At the end of their SOF qualifying courses, Army SOF are then assigned to operational units based on their regional alignment. Naval Special Warfare Command implemented language instruction for its operators. All SEALs and Special Warfare Combatant Craft Crewman (SWCC) currently train to ILR level 1 or 0+ during their SOF qualifying instruction and the troop graduates attend follow on course to achieve ILR 2 or 1+ depending on the language. Combat Aviation Advisors in Air Force Special Operations Command train to ILR level 1 and select Critical Skills Operators in the Marine Special Operations Command are trained to ILR 2. All SOF have access to sustainment and enhancement programs to include the Special Operations Forces Tele-training System, Joint Language University, DLIFLC online resources, and the Language Training Centers. These skills increase mission readiness and continue to lead to improved operational success

Current operations have taught us that language and culture training is also necessary for the success of our General Purpose Forces. Therefore, we made it a requirement that all DoD personnel deploying to Afghanistan take basic language and culture training. The DLIFLC also operates language training detachments that provide pre-deployment language and cultural instruction to the General Purpose Forces to ensure basic linguistic and cultural norms are met and that any specified, mission-specific vocabulary is identified and learned prior to deploying.

### *Partner Language Capacity*

We must build our partners' language capacity so that DoD can increase interoperability. The Defense Language Institute English Language Center provides this capacity by training international military and civilian personnel to speak and teach English. This resource is vital to building and sustaining partner capacity throughout the world and is a key component for coalition operations as well as foreign military sales and security cooperation initiatives. It serves as the primary vehicle through which foreign military members gain the language capability needed to attend military training and education in the U.S., and has resulted in building global contacts.

### *Native and Heritage Speakers*

Native and heritage speakers possess not only desired linguistic skills, but a deep cultural understanding that can inform leaders and influence mission success. The Department has leveraged this expertise through the Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest pilot program, which brings highly proficient native and heritage speakers into the General Purpose Forces, increasing the Department's overall language capacity without expending the time and financial resources to grow this capability within our existing force. The Army's 09L (Interpreter / Translator) program currently recruits native and heritage speakers of Middle Eastern languages who perform interpretation and translation functions in support of Overseas Contingency Operations. The English for Heritage Language Speakers program provides a pipeline of speakers of critical languages who are well-equipped with the skills needed in national security positions. Continuing these native and heritage speaker programs will provide the Department with native level language proficiency and cultural knowledge.

## *Financial Incentives*

The Department invests in acquisition and sustainment of language because it is a critical skill for a highly functioning Total Force. In many cases, given the mission, we must start with students that do not possess language learning skills or proficiency.

The Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center trains primarily military enlisted personnel to become language analysts. This training program is often referred to as the Basic Course. It also has a smaller training program for military officers preparing to become Foreign Area Officers. This training program is an intensive course of study to bring students with no language proficiency to limited professional capability in the shortest possible time. Few educational institutes can match its output in quality or quantity. The Department also trains students at the university based Flagship program to ILR level 3, general professional proficiency. This program starts with students who already have language skills.

The Department provides incentives to active duty and reserve military, as well as to civilian personnel. Financial incentives to study a language are also available to ROTC cadets and midshipmen. The Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus is targeted to active duty and reserve personnel and is intended to encourage members to identify, sustain, and enhance their proficiency in languages of strategic interest to the Department. To ensure we have a pipeline of leaders with language skills, a skill proficiency bonus is paid to ROTC students that study foreign languages of interest to the Department. The role of these financial incentives is to send a clear message that the Department values these skills and to encourage more personnel to acquire, sustain, and enhance their skills.

## BUILDING PARTERNSHIPS

We recognize that the work of building language capability cannot be done alone. We use informal and formal forums to generate cross-collaborative efforts at the national, state, and local levels. Building on the efforts of the 2005 National Security Language Initiative to encourage interagency collaboration, the Department continues to engage with a number of federal agencies in formal and informal venues. The Department leverages the NSEB by hosting Senior Language Authorities from DoD, as well as representatives from other federal agencies, to present and discuss their needs, and their efforts to build a workforce with advanced language capabilities. Together with the DLSC, the Department uses the NSEB as a means to create and support national collaboration and partnership.

Additionally, DoD collaborates with local, federal and state programs to enhance language, regional and cultural pre-federal service capabilities through K–12 critical language programs and postsecondary programs. This year, our Portland K–12 Chinese Language immersion pilot sent its first graduates--as advanced Chinese language speakers--to the University of Oregon Flagship program. We are currently exploring expansion of immersion programs to additional languages across the state of Utah and have interest in further expansion to an additional 15 states. The Department also continues to work at the State level with its Language Roadmap Initiative. Under this program, the State of Rhode Island this year will present a strategy for statewide language initiatives in partnership with its DoD sponsored Language Flagship program. On an international basis, we are also supporting the Global Ministry of Defense Advisors program with language and culture training to assist in building partner capacity, and are establishing new regionally focused initiatives modeled after the Afghanistan- Pakistan Hands program.

## SURGE CAPACITY

Through experience, we have learned the importance of building a surge capacity through which we may obtain the needed language expertise quickly and at a reasonable cost. The Department's National Language Service Corps (NLSC) provides a pool of qualified volunteers with high levels of proficiency in both English and a foreign language who can then be activated as temporary government employees, when needed. Department of Defense Combatant Commanders have been our primary single user since inception; however, in the past year we have had a significant response from many other federal agencies. For instance, we are coordinating with federal agencies so they can utilize this corps of volunteers to meet their emergent language needs, especially in response to Executive Order 13166 regarding Limited English Proficiency. This Executive Order mandates that all federal agencies will provide language access at all levels of government to individuals who have limited English proficiency. The NLSC is already part of the Department of Homeland Security's language access plan built in response to Order 13166, and that plan is being used as the template for other agencies. Additionally, we have had numerous requests for assistance from the Department of Justice, with the Federal Bureau of Investigations and Interpol being the primary users.

The Departments of Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, and customers in the Intelligence Community have utilized, or are preparing to use, our members for operational needs. In the first four months of 2012, the NLSC has completed five missions, has two missions on-going, and is planning ten others in support of five U.S. government agencies, totaling over 10,000 hours of work with 60 members.

Through targeted recruitment of members, the NLSC has become another means of leveraging very valuable language and cultural training that our federal employees receive while

serving in the military or as a civilian federal employee. Because of their operational experience and language training, the NLSC is an effective means of capturing and redeploying their language skills to address language capability gaps in the federal government workforce.

## CONCLUSION

We have made great progress in improving our foreign language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities to meet 21st century national security challenges. Although we have achieved much success, we acknowledge that much work remains. A critical challenge lies in the lack of language skills from which we can recruit. However, our vision and strategy are designed to build language and cultural capabilities so they are available to DoD and other Federal agencies when needed. Our continued investments in developing a pipeline and in training our personnel are critical to success.

The lessons learned expressed by our warfighting Commanders validate the importance of having a Total Force with the required language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities that are available when necessary. Thank you for the opportunity to share the Department's efforts in this area and for your continued support of our language and culture programs.

# ATTACHMENT 1



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

AUG 10 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS  
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE  
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS  
DIRECTOR, COST ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM  
EVALUATION  
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
DIRECTORS OF THE DEFENSE AGENCIES  
DIRECTORS OF THE DOD FIELD ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: Language Skills, Regional Expertise, and Cultural Capabilities in the Department of Defense (DoD)

Language, regional and cultural skills are enduring warfighting competencies that are critical to mission readiness in today's dynamic global environment. Our forces must have the ability to effectively communicate with and understand the cultures of coalition forces, international partners, and local populations. DoD has made progress in establishing a foundation for these capabilities, but we need to do more to meet current and future demands.

The Department must establish and execute policies and procedures that show we value these skills. As a minimum, both military and civilian personnel should have cross-cultural training to successfully work in DoD's richly diverse organization and to better understand the global environment in which we operate. Commanders must ensure that deploying units, leaders, and staffs receive the language and culture training that is commensurate with their missions and responsibilities. We must also increase and sustain the foreign language proficiency of our language and regional professionals if we are to be able to understand and plan for future missions. Finally, we must build relevant career models for officer and enlisted personnel that place a high value on language, regional and culture expertise to increase DoD's capacity to support global missions.

In order to move forward to meet the challenges of building and sustaining these skills, I have asked the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to develop a way ahead. I expect your full support as we proceed in building and institutionalizing these vital skills in our Force.



OSD 09206-11



## ATTACHMENT 2

### INTERAGENCY LANGUAGE ROUNDTABLE FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY SCALE

The U.S. government relies on the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) language proficiency scale to determine linguistic expertise. The following table outlines the proficiency descriptions for each ILR proficiency level. Below are the ILR descriptors for speaking. There are also ILR skill level descriptions for Reading, Listening, Writing, Translation Performance and Interpretation Performance and are located at (<http://www.govtilr.org/>)

ILR RATING	ILR PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTION
0	<p><i>No Proficiency:</i> Unable to function in the spoken language. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words. Has essentially no communicative ability.</p>
0+	<p><i>Memorized Proficiency:</i> Able to satisfy immediate needs using rehearsed utterances. Shows little real autonomy of expression, flexibility or spontaneity. Can ask questions or make statements with reasonable accuracy only with memorized utterances or formulae. Attempts at creating speech are usually unsuccessful.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> The individual's vocabulary is usually limited to areas of immediate survival needs.</p> <p>Most utterances are telegraphic; that is, functors (linking words, markers and the like) are omitted, confused or distorted. An individual can usually differentiate most significant sounds when produced in isolation but, when combined in words or groups of words, errors may be frequent. Even with repetition, communication is severely limited even with people used to dealing with foreigners. Stress, intonation, tone, etc. are usually quite faulty.</p>
1	<p><i>Elementary Proficiency:</i> Able to satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics. A native speaker must often use slowed speech, repetition, paraphrase, or a combination of these to be understood by this individual. Similarly, the native speaker must strain and employ real-world knowledge to understand even simple statements/questions from this individual. This speaker has a functional, but limited proficiency. Misunderstandings are frequent, but the individual is able to ask for help and to verify comprehension of native speech in face-to-face interaction. The individual is unable to produce continuous discourse except with rehearsed material.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Structural accuracy is likely to be random or severely limited. Time concepts are vague. Vocabulary is inaccurate, and its range is very narrow. The individual often speaks with great difficulty. By repeating, such speakers can make themselves understood to native speakers who are in regular contact with foreigners but there is little precision in the information conveyed. Needs,</p>

	<p>experience or training may vary greatly from individual to individual; for example, speakers at this level may have encountered quite different vocabulary areas. However, the individual can typically satisfy predictable, simple, personal and accommodation needs; can generally meet courtesy, introduction, and identification requirements; exchange greetings; elicit and provide, for example, predictable and skeletal biographical information. He/she might give information about business hours, explain routine procedures in a limited way. and state in a simple manner what actions will be taken. He/she is able to formulate some questions even in languages with complicated question constructions. Almost every utterance may be characterized by structural errors and errors in basic grammatical relations. Vocabulary is extremely limited and characteristically does not include modifiers. Pronunciation, stress, and intonation are generally poor, often heavily influenced by another language. Use of structure and vocabulary is highly imprecise.</p>
1+	<p><i>Elementary Proficiency Plus:</i> Can initiate and maintain predictable face-to-face conversations and satisfy limited social demands. He/she may, however, have little understanding of the social conventions of conversation. The interlocutor is generally required to strain and employ real-world knowledge to understand even some simple speech. The speaker at this level may hesitate and may have to change subjects due to lack of language resources. Range and control of the language are limited. Speech largely consists of a series of short, discrete utterances.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> The individual is able to satisfy most travel and accommodation needs and a limited range of social demands beyond exchange of skeletal biographic information. Speaking ability may extend beyond immediate survival needs. Accuracy in basic grammatical relations is evident, although not consistent. May exhibit the more common forms of verb tenses, for example, but may make frequent errors in formation and selection. While some structures are established, errors occur in more complex patterns. The individual typically cannot sustain coherent structures in longer utterances or unfamiliar situations. Ability to describe and give precise information is limited. Person, space and time references are often used incorrectly. Pronunciation is understandable to natives used to dealing with foreigners. Can combine most significant sounds with reasonable comprehensibility, but has difficulty in producing certain sounds in certain positions or in certain combinations. Speech will usually be labored. Frequently has to repeat utterances to be understood by the general public.</p>
2	<p><i>Limited Working Proficiency:</i> Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements. Can handle routine work-related interactions that are limited in scope. In more complex and sophisticated work-related tasks, language usage generally disturbs the native speaker. Can handle with confidence, but not with facility, most normal, high-frequency social conversational situations including extensive, but casual conversations about current events, as well as work, family, and autobiographical information. The individual can get the gist of most everyday conversations but has some</p>

	<p>difficulty understanding native speakers in situations that require specialized or sophisticated knowledge. The individual's utterances are minimally cohesive. Linguistic structure is usually not very elaborate and not thoroughly controlled; errors are frequent. Vocabulary use is appropriate for high-frequency utterances. but unusual or imprecise elsewhere.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> While these interactions will vary widely from individual to individual, the individual can typically ask and answer predictable questions in the workplace and give straightforward instructions to subordinates. Additionally, the individual can participate in personal and accommodation-type interactions with elaboration and facility; that is, can give and understand complicated, detailed, and extensive directions and make non-routine changes in travel and accommodation arrangements. Simple structures and basic grammatical relations are typically controlled; however, there are areas of weakness. In the commonly taught languages, these may be simple markings such as plurals, articles, linking words, and negatives or more complex structures such as tense/aspect usage, case morphology, passive constructions, word order, and embedding.</p>
2+	<p><i>Limited Working Proficiency Plus:</i> Able to satisfy most work requirements with language usage that is often, but not always, acceptable and effective. The individual shows considerable ability to communicate effectively on topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. Often shows a high degree of fluency and ease of speech, yet when under tension or pressure, the ability to use the language effectively may deteriorate. Comprehension of normal native speech is typically nearly complete. The individual may miss cultural and local references and may require a native speaker to adjust to his/her limitations in some ways. Native speakers often perceive the individual's speech to contain awkward or inaccurate phrasing of ideas, mistaken time, space and person references, or to be in some way inappropriate, if not strictly incorrect.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Typically the individual can participate in most social, formal, and informal interactions, but limitations either in range of contexts, types of tasks or level of accuracy hinder effectiveness. The individual may be ill at ease with the use of the language either in social interaction or in speaking at length in professional contexts. He/she is generally strong in either structural precision or vocabulary, but not in both. Weakness or unevenness in one of the foregoing, or in pronunciation, occasionally results in miscommunication. Normally controls, but cannot always easily produce general vocabulary. Discourse is often not cohesive.</p>
3	<p><i>General Professional Proficiency:</i> Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations in practical, social and professional topics. Nevertheless, the individual's limitations generally restrict the professional contexts of language use to matters of shared knowledge and/or international convention. Discourse is cohesive. The individual uses the language</p>

	<p>acceptably, but with some noticeable imperfections; yet, errors virtually never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker. The individual can effectively combine structure and vocabulary to convey his/her meaning accurately. The individual speaks readily and fills pauses suitably. In face-to-face conversation with natives speaking the standard dialect at a normal rate of speech, comprehension is quite complete. Although cultural references, proverbs and the implications of nuances and idiom may not be fully understood, the individual can easily repair the conversation. Pronunciation may be obviously foreign. Individual sounds are accurate: but stress, intonation and pitch control may be faulty.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Can typically discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with reasonable ease. Can use the language as part of normal professional duties such as answering objections, clarifying points, justifying decisions, understanding the essence of challenges, stating and defending policy, conducting meetings, delivering briefings, or other extended and elaborate informative monologues. Can reliably elicit information and informed opinion from native speakers. Structural inaccuracy is rarely the major cause of misunderstanding. Use of structural devices is flexible and elaborate. Without searching for words or phrases, the individual uses the language clearly and relatively naturally to elaborate concepts freely and make ideas easily understandable to native speakers. Errors occur in low-frequency and highly complex structures.</p>
3+	<p><i>General Professional Proficiency Plus:</i> Is often able to use the language to satisfy professional needs in a wide range of sophisticated and demanding tasks.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Despite obvious strengths, may exhibit some hesitancy, uncertainty, effort or errors which limit the range of language-use tasks that can be reliably performed. Typically there is particular strength in fluency and one or more, but not all, of the following: breadth of lexicon, including low- and medium-frequency items, especially socio-linguistic/cultural references and nuances of close synonyms; structural precision, with sophisticated features that are readily, accurately and appropriately controlled (such as complex modification and embedding in Indo-European languages); discourse competence in a wide range of contexts and tasks, often matching a native speaker's strategic and organizational abilities and expectations. Occasional patterned errors occur in low frequency and highly-complex structures.</p>
4	<p><i>Advanced Professional Proficiency:</i> Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs. The individual's language usage and ability to function are fully successful. Organizes discourse well, using appropriate rhetorical speech devices, native cultural references and understanding. Language ability only rarely hinders him/her in performing any task requiring language; yet, the individual would seldom be perceived as a native. Speaks effortlessly and smoothly and is able to use the language with a high degree of effectiveness, reliability and</p>

	<p>precision for all representational purposes within the range of personal and professional experience and scope of responsibilities. Can serve as in informal interpreter in a range of unpredictable circumstances. Can perform extensive, sophisticated language tasks, encompassing most matters of interest to well-educated native speakers, including tasks which do not bear directly on a professional specialty.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Can discuss in detail concepts which are fundamentally different from those of the target culture and make those concepts clear and accessible to the native speaker. Similarly, the individual can understand the details and ramifications of concepts that are culturally or conceptually different from his/her own. Can set the tone of interpersonal official, semi-official and non-professional verbal exchanges with a representative range of native speakers (in a range of varied audiences, purposes, tasks and settings). Can play an effective role among native speakers in such contexts as conferences, lectures and debates on matters of disagreement. Can advocate a position at length, both formally and in chance encounters, using sophisticated verbal strategies. Understands and reliably produces shifts of both subject matter and tone. Can understand native speakers of the standard and other major dialects in essentially any face-to-face interaction.</p>
4+	<p><i>Advanced Professional Proficiency Plus:</i> Speaking proficiency is regularly superior in all respects, usually equivalent to that of a well educated, highly articulate native speaker. Language ability does not impede the performance of any language-use task. However, the individual would not necessarily be perceived as culturally native.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> The individual organizes discourse well employing functional rhetorical speech devices, native cultural references and understanding. Effectively applies a native speaker's social and circumstantial knowledge; however, cannot sustain that performance under all circumstances. While the individual has a wide range and control of structure, an occasional nonnative slip may occur. The individual has a sophisticated control of vocabulary and phrasing that is rarely imprecise, yet there are occasional weaknesses in idioms, colloquialisms, pronunciation, and cultural reference or there may be an occasional failure to interact in a totally native manner.</p>
5	<p><i>Functional Native Proficiency:</i> Speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken. The individual uses the language with complete flexibility and intuition, so that speech on all levels is fully accepted by well-educated native speakers in all of its features, including breadth of vocabulary and idiom, colloquialisms and pertinent cultural references. Pronunciation is typically consistent with that of well-educated native speakers of a non-stigmatized dialect.</p>