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Title: Between Russian and English: Designing OPI Assessment Questions for Slavic LCTLs

Abstract:

Official ACTFL OPIs are currently available in the following Slavic languages: Bosnian, Bulgarian, Czech, Polish, Russian, Serbian, Croatian, Slovak and Ukrainian. The OPI certification training workshops are, however, available only in Russian, and other language instructors attend training sections conducted entirely in English, or so called mixed-languages sections conducted in English with samples of interviews in Russian. The OPI assessment is focused on meaningful communication, and thus implies cultural awareness of the test taker. Therefore, LCTL certified testers have to translate not only the interview questions from English to the languages they assess, but first and foremost the cultural context/setting in which certain situations and questions may occur. In my presentation I will propose a template of modified OPI questions and tasks that reflect differences between American and Polish cultures, and yet are close cultural equivalents of the standard questions a certified ACTFL tester is required to use, and answers a test taker is expected to provide.