



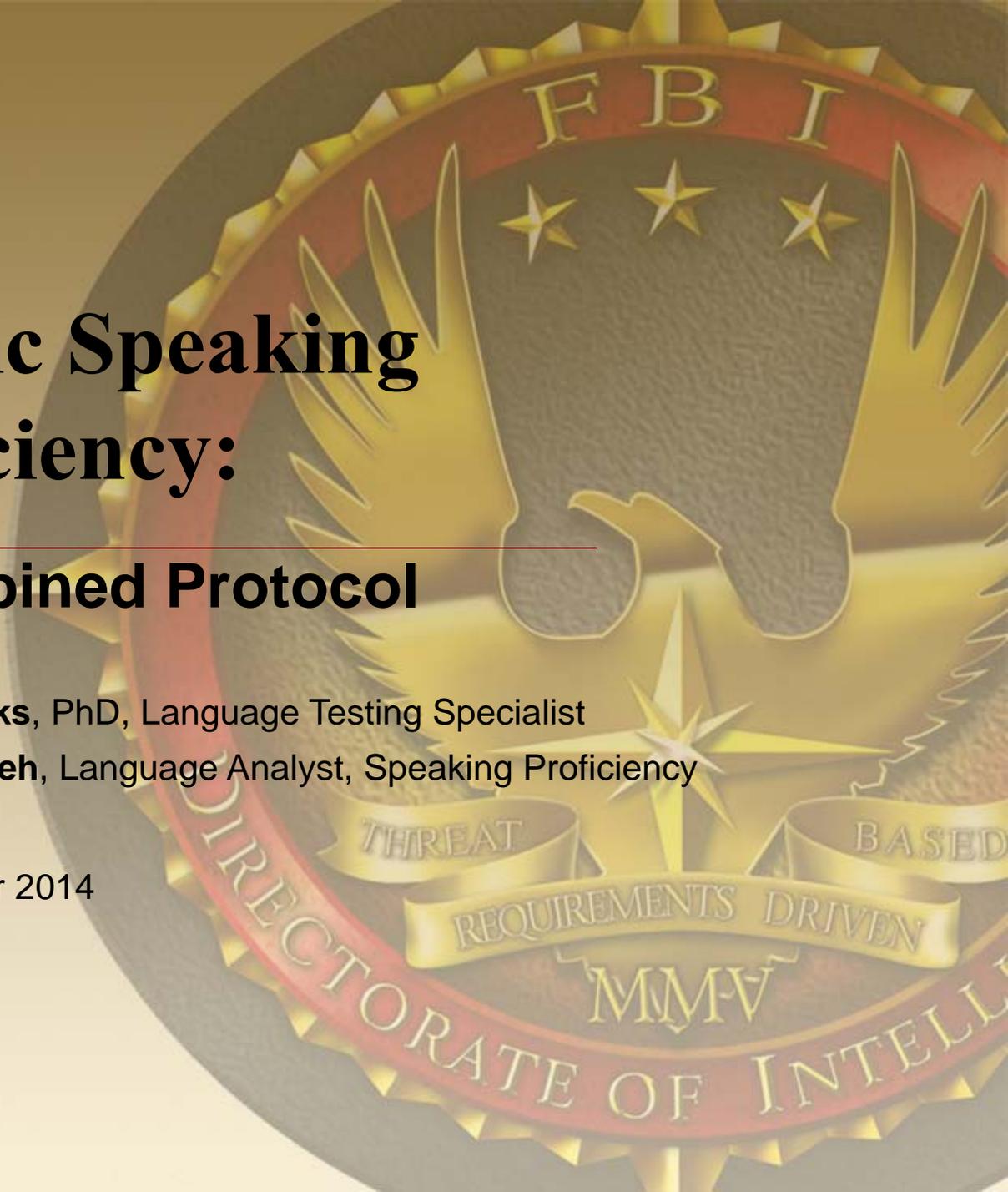
Arabic Speaking Proficiency:

A Combined Protocol

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Introduction

- Context/Issues
- Examinees: mostly Native and Heritage Speakers
- Speaking Proficiency Test (SPT) initially in MSA only
- 2008: Dialect SPT made available for Special Agent applicants
- 2010: MSA SPT and Dialect SPT administered separately to linguist applicants
- Decision: combine MSA and dialect in one test
- Decision: SPT will yield one score (not two)
- Develop new protocol: Eleonore Saleh's proposal



Arabic Language

MSA or colloquial?

MSA (Fusha)

- based on Classical Arabic of the Qur'an and early Islamic literature
- the standard and literary written Arabic used in formal / official speeches across the Middle East and North Africa
- books, newspaper, magazines, official documents are written in MSA
- taught in schools at all ages in the Middle East
- like "Shakespearean" English or Latin

Colloquial Arabic ('Amiyyah)

- rooted in the Classical Arabic with national or regional variants
- the daily spoken language with wide national or regional varieties e.g. Egyptian, Levantine, Gulf, Northwest Africa, Sudanese
- typically spoken not written
- does not require formal education



Challenges

MSA SPT

- Interactive situation: unnatural - artificial
- Difficult for natives
- Use of dialect in MSA Test

Dialect SPT

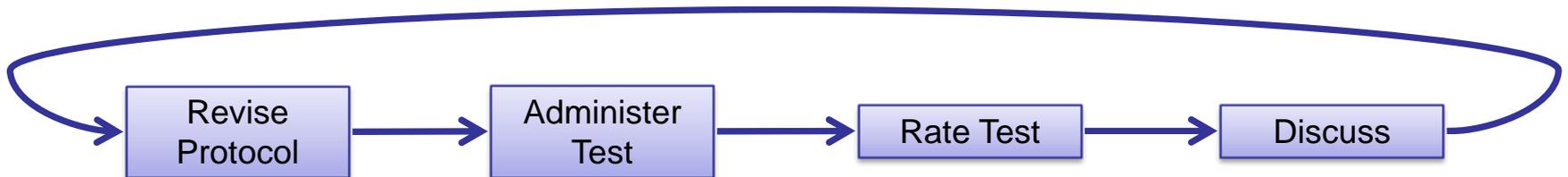
- Non-interactive situation (Formal speech): unnatural - artificial
- Difficult for non-natives
- Use of MSA in dialect test



Arabic Tester Workshop

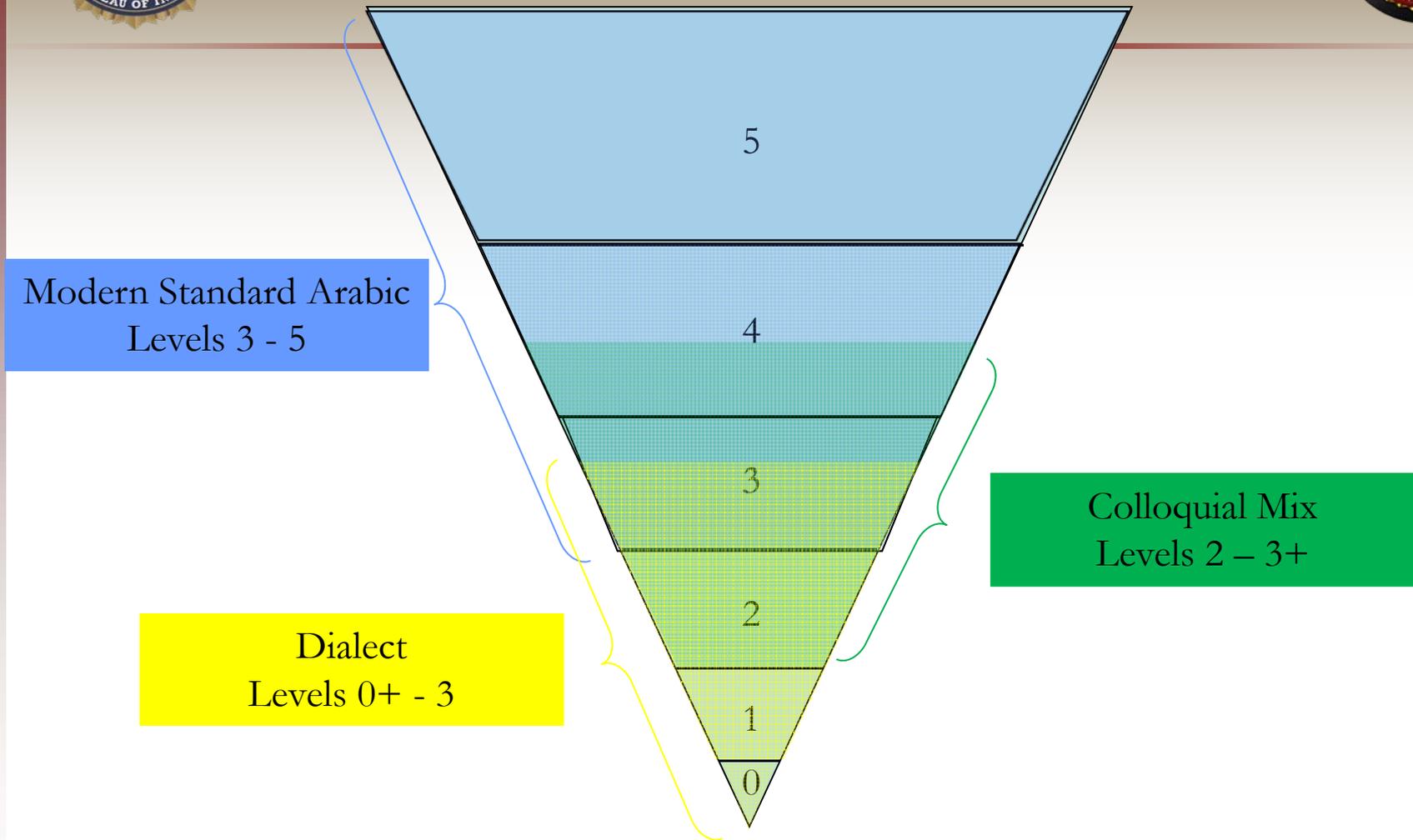


- 13 Arabic Testers (Dialect/MSA):
 - Egyptian, Jordanian, Iraqi, Lebanese, Moroccan, Palestinian, Syrian, Yemeni
- Agenda
 - Discuss the nature of Arabic
 - Decide which tester combination to use
 - Decide how to transition between the Arabic variants
 - Decide how many ratings to assign
 - Conduct numerous trials





Arabic Variant Use for ILR Skill Levels





Final Protocol

Test Phase	Elicitations	ILR Level	Elicitation Arabic Form	Response Arabic Form
Warm up	Introduction questions	0-3	Dialect	Dialect or Colloquial/MSA Mix
Core	Questions	0-3	Dialect	Dialect
Core	Interactive Situation	1-3	Dialect	Dialect
Core	Questions	2-3	Colloquial/MSA Mix	Dialect (2) Colloquial/MSA Mix (3)
Core	Interactive Situation	3-4	Colloquial/MSA Mix	Colloquial/MSA Mix
Core	Questions	3-5	MSA	Colloquial/MSA Mix (3) MSA (4 -5)
Core	Non -interactive Situation	3-5	MSA	Colloquial/MSA Mix (3) MSA (4 -5)
Wind down	Questions	1-3	Determined by examinee	



Employing the Protocol

- Examinee Types: Arabic-Specific Considerations

	Dialect	Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)
Native Speaker	Native, in country	Learned within culture and at school
Heritage Speaker	Native (varies), not in country, often limited	Often not learned
Learner (MSA)	None or limited, not in country	Learned at school or in training
Learner (Dialect)	Classroom or immersion learners	Varies



Employing the Protocol

- Score Reports and Interpretation
 - Single test, single score report
 - What does the rating mean?

Level	Descriptor	Using...	Who?
0 / 0+	No/Memorized Proficiency	Dialect/MSA	HS, L
1	Elementary Proficiency	Dialect/MSA	HS, L
2	Limited Working Proficiency	Dialect/Colloquial Mix/ MSA	NS, HS, L
3	General Professional Proficiency	Colloquial Mix/MSA	NS, L, HS/L
4	Advanced Professional Proficiency	MSA	NS, L, HS/L
5	Functionally Native Proficiency	MSA	NS



Thank You

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