

**Indonesian Oral Proficiency Guidelines:  
Implications for Indonesian language teaching curriculum**

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The proficiency movement of the late 1970s with its oral proficiency interview (OPI) developed by American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) has had a transformative effect on the field of foreign language teaching pedagogy. ACTFL first published its generic *oral proficiency guidelines (OPG)* in 1982; and these guidelines have been updated in 2012 in response to studies of language-specific guidelines that suggested the original guidelines were too Eurocentric (Liskin-Gasparro 2003, Thompson and Johnson 1988).

In 2010 the *Consortium for the Teaching of Indonesian (COTI)* initiated a national project to create Indonesian OPG with the objectives of creating a national standard for assessing Indonesian oral proficiency and of stimulating discussion of pedagogical implications of the guidelines. This paper reports on the methods, procedures, and results of the project and then offers a discussion of the language-specific descriptors for the Indonesian levels of novice, intermediate, advanced, and superior. These descriptors for each level are then substantiated by examples from the interview data.

Based on the interview data, the paper presents the following curricular recommendations for improving the acquisition of Indonesian oral proficiency:

1. The data indicate that there is a need to include materials that teach socio-pragmatic principles beginning with the novice level.
2. The curriculum should include materials that directly teach register distinctions (both the linguistic and social parameters thereof) beginning at the intermediate level. The social contexts of dialogues as well as the linguistic structures of at least two registers should be directly taught.
3. The acquisition of communicative competence, especially in a diglossic language, is essential for the acquisition of OP. Communicative competence requires that students are taught how to accomplish social functions (e.g., apologizing) in at least two contexts that demand different registers.

The COTI project to create Indonesian-specific OPG has highlighted a number of unique challenges for the teaching of Indonesian OP and illustrates a number of pedagogical insights.

**Bibliography**

- Liskin-Gasparro, Judith. (2003). The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and the Oral Proficiency Interview: A brief history and analysis of their survival. *Foreign Language Annals*, 36 (4), 484-486.
- Thompson, R.T., & Johnson, D.E. (1988). "Proficiency Testing in the Less Commonly Taught Languages." Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 304 024).