

Title: Select Issues in Testing and Assessment of Heritage Learners
Author: Julia Titus, Yale University

Given the growing number of heritage language classes in the US, the issue of creating a set of distinct assessment tools for heritage learners becomes more and more urgent. The proposed paper will examine the differences between the L2 learners and the heritage learners in terms of their linguistic performance and will offer a framework for creating a separate test for the heritage learners based on the ACTFL OPI guidelines.

The paper will discuss the drawbacks of traditional grammar tests created for L2 when applied to heritage language classroom setting and argue that these types of tests do not adequately reflect the language skills of the heritage learners. The paper will further comment on the great discrepancy existing between different language skills of heritage learners supported by the current research (Kagan 2005; Kagan & Dillon 2001; Kagan & Dillon 2004), and examine its implications for the creation of appropriate testing tools.

The paper suggests that the ACTFL proficiency guidelines could be used as a valuable starting point in creating an assessment test for the heritage learners, since the strengths of the heritage learners can be captured by creating a more global test, similar to the OPI in structure. In conclusion, an excerpt of the web-based test for heritage learners will be demonstrated.

- Kagan, O. (2005). "In support of a proficiency-based definition of heritage language learners: The case of Russian." *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 8, 213-221.
- Kagan, O., & Dillon, K. (2001). "A new perspective on teaching Russian: Focus on the heritage learner." *Slavic and East European Journal*, 45, 507-518.
- Kagan, O., & Dillon, K. (2004). "Heritage speakers' potential for high-level language proficiency." In H. Byrnes & H. Maxim (Eds.), *Advanced foreign language learning: A challenge to college programs* (pp. 99-112). Boston: Heinle/Thomson.