

Title: The Use of *который* among Advanced, Superior and Native Speakers of Russian in Interpersonal and Presentational Description

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The two major testing tools to assess Oral Proficiency in Russian are the OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview) and the SOPI (Simulated Oral Proficiency Interview). The SOPI was developed to be comparable and substitutable to the OPI in situations when there is no OPI tester available or when a group of students needs to be tested at once. The mode in which the speech is elicited in the OPI is interpersonal; the mode in which the speech is elicited in the SOPI is presentational.

My research compares how the mode of speech in the two major proficiency tests for students of Russian affects their performance. Fifty audio-recorded speech samples (of advanced and superior level speakers of Russian and Russian native speakers) were used for this comparison. Using quantitative and qualitative analysis, my research focuses on the speech function of description—a core language function of Advanced (and Superior) level speech according to the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Guidelines (OPG). The interest in the analysis of the usage of relative clauses with *который* stems out from the fact that (1) Russian native speakers produce this construction regularly in their daily speech, and (2) according to the ACTFL OPG for Russian, relative clauses with *который* are one of the major syntactical characteristics of the Advanced level speech.

I will begin my presentation with a summary of the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Guidelines for Russian at the advanced and superior levels. Then I will give a short overview of the Russian textbooks in the field (materials created for beginners, intermediate and advanced students). After that, I will go over the methods of data collection and analysis, and finally I will draw conclusions and suggest how the findings of the research can be implemented into the renewal of the Russian language curriculum.

Although language testers and the research on the correlation, comparability and validity of OPI and SOPI rating show that both tests adhere to the same ACTFL Guidelines and elicit the same speech samples, a detailed comparison of the two tests shows controversial results: in the presentational mode speakers produced a higher and more grammatically correct usage of relative clauses with *который* per description. I hypothesize that the difference in the production of the relative clauses at two tests lies both in the mode and in the prompts used in the task of description at the OPI and the SOPI.