



Interagency Language Roundtable scale

ILR Level 0 – No proficiency

The baseline level of the scale is no proficiency, rated 0. The following describes the traits of an ILR Level 0 individual:

- oral production limited to occasional, isolated words
- may be able to ask questions or make statements with reasonable accuracy only with memorized utterances or formulae
- unable to read connected prose but may be able to read numbers, isolated words and phrases, personal and place names, street signs, office and shop designations
- understanding limited to occasional isolated words or memorized utterances in areas of immediate needs.
- may be able to produce symbols in an alphabetic or syllabic writing system or 50 of the most common characters

ILR Level 1 – Elementary proficiency

Elementary proficiency is rated 1 on the scale. The following describes the traits of an ILR Level 1 individual:

- can fulfill traveling needs and conduct themselves in a polite manner
- able to use questions and answers for simple topics within a limited level of experience; the native speaker must strain and leverage contextual knowledge to understand what is said
- able to understand basic questions and speech, which allows for guides, such as slower speech or repetition, to aid understanding
- has a vocabulary only large enough to communicate the most basic of needs
- writes in simple sentences or sentence fragments with continual spelling and grammar errors
- The majority of individuals classified as Level 1 are able to perform most basic functions using the language; this includes buying goods, reading the time, ordering simple meals and asking for minimal directions

ILR Level 2 – Limited working proficiency

Limited working proficiency is rated 2 on the scale. A person at this level is described as follows:

- able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements
- can handle with confidence most basic social situations including introductions and casual conversations about current events, work, family, and autobiographical information
- can handle limited work requirements, needing help in handling any complications or difficulties; can get the gist of most conversations on non-technical subjects (i.e. topics which require no specialized knowledge), and has a speaking vocabulary sufficient to respond simply with some circumlocutions
- has an accent which, though often quite faulty, is intelligible
- can usually handle elementary constructions quite accurately but does not have thorough or confident control of the grammar



ILR Level 3 – Professional working proficiency

Professional working proficiency is rated 3 on the scale. Level 3 is what is usually used to measure how many people in the world know a given language. A person at this level is described as follows:

- able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most conversations on practical, social, and professional topics
- can discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with reasonable ease
- has comprehension which is quite complete for a normal rate of speech
- has a general vocabulary which is broad enough that he or she rarely has to search for a word
- has an accent which may be obviously foreign; has a good control of grammar; and whose errors virtually never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker

ILR Level 4 – Full professional proficiency

Full professional proficiency is rated 4 on the ILR scale. A person rated at this level should have one of the following characteristics:

- able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels and as normally pertinent to professional needs
- can understand and participate in any conversations within the range of own personal and professional experience with a high degree of fluency and precision of vocabulary
- would rarely be taken for a native speaker, but can respond appropriately even in unfamiliar grounds or situations
- makes only quite rare and minute errors of pronunciation and grammar
- can handle informal interpreting of the language

ILR Level 5 – Native or bilingual proficiency

Native or bilingual proficiency is rated 5 on the scale. A person at this level is described as follows:

- has a speaking proficiency equivalent to that of an educated native speaker
- has complete fluency in the language, such that speech on all levels is fully accepted by educated native speakers in all of its features, including breadth of vocabulary and idiom, colloquialisms, and pertinent cultural references