

## **Language proficiency and the Celpe-Bras exam**

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Despite its relevance to testing/assessment as well as to other subareas of Applied Linguistics, the concept of language proficiency has not been adequately understood and assessed. Although there is clear consensus that language proficiency means “to know a language” there does not seem to be agreement on what it is to “know a language”. My aim in this talk is to discuss terminological and conceptual aspects of language proficiency in an attempt to elucidate the concept so that it can be used more productively. Proficiency will be related to terms such as linguistic competence, communicative competence, communicative language ability as well as to the concept of fluency. The assessment of proficiency will be related to the assessment of achievement. Examples taken from the Brazilian Certificate of Proficiency in Portuguese as a Foreign Language (Celpe-Bras) will be used to illustrate the concept of proficiency which underlies the exam, that is, to be able to engage in different activities in the world, displaying adequacy to the situational demands of the various contexts.

### **About the lecturer**

Prof. Matilde Virginia Ricardi Scaramucci is Professor in the Department of Applied Linguistics and Dean of the Institute of Language Studies at the State University of Campinas, Brazil. She earned Bachelors in Language and Literature from the University of Vale do Paraíba (São Paulo, Brazil), Master of Arts in TESOL from Sao Jose State University (California, USA), Doctor of Philosophy in

Applied Linguistics from the State University of Campinas (São Paulo, Brazil). She has also completed her postdoctoral research in the University of Melbourne (Australia). Prof. Scaramucci is the author of books and monographs on Foreign and Second Language Teaching (mainly Portuguese and English as Foreign Languages) and has published numerous journal articles and book chapters. She has served as a member of the Editorial Boards of many journals and is currently the editor-in-chief of *Trabalhos de Linguística Aplicada*, one of the most important journals on Applied Linguistics in Brazil. Prof. Scaramucci is also one of the founders of the Celpe-Bras exam (Brazilian proficiency exam of Portuguese as a Foreign Language).