

Motion Approved by GPC 11-26-12. Approved by Faculty Senate 12-5-12.

Modification of Spoken English Certification (SPEAK) Standards for TAs in Modern Languages and Linguistics:

A motion was passed for the standards for international TAs teaching in MLL to be adjusted.

**The standard for foreign TAs teaching in MLL should be adjusted to 45 (SPEAK) or 23 (TOEFL).
See justification below.**

Request for Modification of Spoken English Certification (SPEAK) Standards for TAs in Modern Languages and Linguistics

FSU wants to be sure that every teaching assistant in the university speaks fluent or near-fluent English. The reason for this is at once logical and understandable. If a foreign student is not at ease with English, he/she will be unable to convey important information to undergraduates in a clear and coherent fashion. The Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics (MLL) completely supports the university's position. However there are some elements concerning teaching in MLL which are different from what occurs in other departments. For instance, a foreign student teaching History must be able to explain complex events and concepts in English. Should this not be the case, the undergraduates will suffer. This situation is quite different in MLL where foreign graduate students are teaching their native language to undergraduates. Thus someone from a Francophone country would be teaching French, and a person with a Hispanic background would be providing instruction in Spanish. Since our language courses follow what is called the "Communicative Approach," the classes are run entirely in the target language. This minimizes the need for English, but that is not to say that a knowledge of English is unnecessary for teaching foreign languages at FSU. Inevitably an undergraduate will ask an occasional question in English, and during office hours the TA-student discussions are at least to some extent in English. So what we are requesting is not that MLL students be exempted from the SPEAK criteria, but that the criteria be modified for our students. Currently a TA who scores either 45 on the SPEAK or 23 on the speaking section of the Toefel iBT is only allowed to teach levels 1 and 2, while scores of 50 or 26 permit a student to teach higher levels. A simple glance at these standards immediately indicates that they are not really suited for language teaching. A foreign student with weaker spoken English (23 or 45) might in fact be better placed in the higher level language courses where students already have a good knowledge of the target language, and can most probably follow explanations in the foreign language. **We therefore propose a simple modification, namely that the standard for foreign TAs teaching in MLL be adjusted to 45 (SPEAK) or 23 (Toefel).**

We appreciate your consideration of this request.