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Agenda item [[2]](#footnote-2) 4.1.3

Technical Domain / Task Number 2 …………………………………

Author(s) / Submitter(s) VTS Voice Communications Workshop – WG2

Output of IALA VTS Voice Communications Workshop – Working Group 2

# Summary

The IALA Workshop on the harmonisation of VTS Voice Communication focused on two key aspects of voice communications – Phraseology (working group 1) and training and assessment (working group 2).

This document identifies the outcome of working group 2 on training and assessment. The working group identified a number of elements for training of English specific to VTS Voice Communications, as well as possible strategies for both training and assessment.

## Purpose of the document

The IALA VTS Committee is invited to review the outcome of the working group, and consider including the elements within a suitable IALA document.

## Related documents

IALA V-103 (R0103)

IALA G1132

ICAO Language Proficiency Table

# Background

The IALA workshop on the harmonisation of VTS Voice Communications focused on the development of phraseology (WG1) and the training and assessment of VTS English (WG2). This document presents the results of WG2 for consideration by the IALA VTS Committee as appropriate.

# Discussion

The working group addressed existing language training as identified in IALA V-103 (R0103) as well as future opportunities. The Working Group addressed the identified issues of training and competency assessment for VTS personnel. The group addressed the following topics:

1. Assessing language level for VTSO / confirming initial and recurrent training requirements
2. Developing training strategies
3. Identifying assessment strategies
4. Developing course structure
5. Identifying process for VTS training

The results of the discussions identified a number of areas for further development. These include:

* Review of the ICAO levels of language proficiency to reflect the VTS environment.
* Development of competence-based training, using the experiential learning cycle, to facilitate effective language training
* Development of a standardised assessment approach for VTS English language

## Assessing language level – new and existing trainees

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Language Proficiency requirements provide a good starting point for developing VTS language proficiency requirements. In particular, band level 3 and 4 could be appropriate for VTS. The ICAO level 4 – Operator level – was found to be suitable for VTS operations in most cases. Where phraseology is provided, there could be opportunity to accept ICAO level 3 for structure and vocabulary. It was noted that there could be an opportunity to use ICAO level 3 as an initial (starting) level, and then progress through the levels as experience is gained. It was noted that it would be beneficial to compare the ICAO level 3 and 4 to the IELTS band level 5. The relevant levels, as excerpts from the ICAO document, are provided in annex A. To assess the level of VTS English, there could be a requirement for an assessment, similar to that carried out by IELTS assessors.

*The VTS Committee may wish to consider developing a VTS Language Proficiency requirements table, similar to the ICAO table, to support the development of VTS English as a Second Language training.*

*The VTS Committee may wish to consider a standardised approach to assessing and testing VTS English proficiency.*

### Maintaining proficiency

It was agreed that there is a requirement to have recurrent assessment and training for English language. While some members identified an annual requirement, it was noted that the timing for the recurrent training could be linked with the actual level of English exhibited.

*The VTS Committee may wish to consider appropriate means to ensure, and assess for, ongoing proficiency in VTS English as a second language.*

### Language used for communicating with vessels

Discussion highlighted the fact that many countries use their mother tongue when communicating with vessels, for example: within port limits; when the pilot is onboard; when communicating with a pilotage exempt master. This could reduce situational awareness for the bridge team (BRM) as well as for all the other ships in the area. Good, standard communication in English within the VTS area could result in more wide spread use of English, resulting in safer transits.

## Training Strategies

The following strategies may assist when developing English language training for VTS

* Classroom teaching, using interactive techniques
* Repetition through presentation of concepts in different ways
* Booklet reference guide for use when in VTS simulations
* Use of a workbook to promote self-study
* Scenarios / story telling with specific objectives clearly stated
* Use of images in the form of pictograph, flash cards
* Simulator training (both language ‘labs’ and VTS simulations)
* Use of a VTS language ‘app’ (application)

Standardised phraseology assists with developing effective training approaches.

## Assessment strategies

Assessment strategies could include:

* Oral assessment (formal, similar to the IELTS oral exam)
* Phrase matching
* Continuous assessment through classroom and simulation training
* Focus assessment during simulation training.

The language used in training simulations should include some exercises with the use of English. Standardised phraseology assists with developing quantitative assessment approaches.

## Identifying the process for VTS English training

An outline for the development of a VTS English training program could include:

* Pre-course (pre-requisite) – The candidate would be required to confirm their entry level for the training (IELTS band level 5 or above)
* Training program developed to reflect the appropriate language proficiency level required.
* Standard VTS voice communication phrases provide a means to harmonize delivery of VTS, but these need to be supported by standard operating procedures.
* Training to include different strategies to address the three main learning styles – auditory, visual and kinesthetic.
* Training to focus on competence outcomes, using the experiential learning cycle.
* During training assessment would be included to monitor progress.
* Following the training all candidates would undertake an (oral) assessment, based on set criteria. The VTS Committee may wish to consider how a standardised (oral) assessment could be developed and administered.
* Specific approach to developing VTS English language training include:
  + Initial training – this could be implemented by an English language instructor based on specific scenarios as identified in the development of scenarios. This training would be to reinforce the existing training (IELTS band level 5) and prepare the candidate for the specific VTS English language training. Language labs / simulators; repetition; recorded voice are examples of the strategies that could be used.
  + VTS English language training – based on the scenarios and internationally agreed phraseology, the candidates would be trained by a VTS instructor with sufficient English level. The language can be reinforced during VTS simulation exercises to address multiple training objectives.

# action requested

The VTS Committee is invited to consider the results of the IALA workshop on harmonising VTS Voice Communication, in particular:

1. consider developing a VTS Language Proficiency requirements table, similar to the ICAO table, to support the development of VTS English as a Second Language training.
2. consider a standardised approach to assessing and testing VTS English proficiency.
3. consider appropriate means to ensure, and assess for, ongoing proficiency in VTS English as a second language.
4. identify the most effective approach to include guidance on VTS English language training within the IALA documentation structure.
5. Annex A – ICAO Language Proficiency Levels (level 3 and 4 presented)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Level | Pronunciation | Structure | Vocabulary | Fluency | Comprehension | Interactions |
| 4 | Pronunciation, Stress, rhythm and intonation are influenced by the first language or regional variation, but only sometimes interfere with ease of understanding | Basic grammatical structure and sentence patterns are used creatively and are usually well controlled. Errors may occur, particularly in unusual or unexpected circumstance, but rarely interfere with meaning. | Vocabulary range and accuracy are usually sufficient to communicate effectively on common, concrete and work-related topics. Can often paraphrase successfully when lacking vocabulary in unusual or unexpected circumstances. | Produces stretches of language at an appropriate tempo. There may be occasional loss of fluency on transition from rehearsed to spontaneous interaction but this does not prevent effective communication. Can make limited use of discourse markers or connectors. Fillers are not distracting. | Comprehension is mostly accurate on common, concrete and work-related topics when the accent or variety used is sufficiently intelligible for an international community of users. When the speaker is confronted with a linguistic or situational complication or an unexpected turn of events, comprehension may be slower or require clarification strategies. | Responses are usually immediate, appropriate and informative. Initiates and maintains exchanges even when dealing with an unexpected turn of events. Deals adequately with apparent misunderstandings by checking, confirming or clarifying. |
| 3 | Pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation are influenced by the first language or regional variation and frequently interfere with ease of understanding. | Basic grammatical structure and sentence patterns associated with predictable situations are not always well controlled. Errors frequency interfere with meaning. | Vocabulary range and accuracy are often sufficient to communicate on common, concrete or work-related topics, but range is limited and word choice often inappropriate. Is often unable to paraphrase successfully when lacking vocabulary. | Produces stretches of language, but phrasing and pausing are often inappropriate. Hesitations or slowness in language processing may prevent effective communication. Fillers are sometimes distracting. | Comprehension is often accurate on common, concrete and work-related topics when the accent or variety used is sufficiently intelligible for an international community of users. May fail to understand a linguistic or situational complication or an unexpected turn of events. | Response are sometimes immediate, appropriate and informative. Can initiate and maintain exchanges with reasonable ease on familiar topics and in predictable situations. Generally inadequate when dealing with an unexpected turn of events. |

1. Input document number, to be assigned by the Committee Secretary [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Leave open if uncertain [↑](#footnote-ref-2)