

**MANUAL on the  
English Language Proficiency Assessment  
(ICAO language proficiency requirements)**

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## Amendments Requirements

**Amendments Requirements**

The amendments to this manual are to be made according to the following terms:

The modifications of the requirements shall be made in the form of amendments.

The amendments are to be proved by the Director of the CAA RM.

After amendments approval every holder of this document is to insert new pages and to destroy the old ones.



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Amendments Requirements

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Records of amendments

## Records of amendments

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**Generalities**

All licence holders who use the radiotelephone for air-ground communication should be proficient in speaking and understanding the English language for radiotelephony communication. Moreover, aeroplane, airship, helicopter and powered-lift pilots, flight navigators, air traffic controllers and aeronautical station operators must have demonstrate the English language proficiency and have it endorsed on their licence.

Air-ground radiotelephony communication shall be conducted in the English language.

English shall also be available at all stations on the ground serving designated airports and routes used by international civil aviation. In effect, this means that all air traffic controllers involved in international civil aviation must be proficient in speaking and understanding English.

Standardized ICAO phraseology retains its importance and should always be used when applicable. However, a finite list of phraseology cannot cover every conceivable situation and thus must be augmented by plain language, especially to describe unusual events or when clarification or explanation is required.

To meet ICAO language proficiency requirements, an applicant for a licence or a licence holder must demonstrate, in a manner acceptable to the CAA RM and described in this document, compliance with the holistic language descriptors contained in Annex 1 to at least the ICAO Operational Level.

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**Glossary of Language Proficiency and Language Testing Terms**

**Administration.** The actions involved in the delivery of a test to a group of candidates under specified conditions.

**Assessor.** A suitably qualified and trained person who assigns a score to a candidate's performance in a test based on a judgment involving the matching of features of the performance to descriptors on a rating scale.

**Descriptor.** A brief description accompanying a band on a rating scale, which summarizes the degree of proficiency or type of performance expected of a candidate to achieve that particular score.

**Interlocutor.** A suitably qualified and trained person with whom a candidate interacts during a test in order to complete a speaking task.

**Inter-rater reliability.** The consistency or stability of scores between different raters.

**English Language proficiency skills.** The knowledge and abilities which impact on the capacity of a given individual to communicate spontaneously, accurately, intelligibly, meaningfully and appropriately in English language.

**Passing score.** The lowest acceptable score in a test. Candidates scoring below the pass mark fail the test.

**Plain language.** The spontaneous, creative and non-coded use of a given natural language.

**Rate.** To assign a score or mark to a candidate's performance in a test using a subjective assessment.

**Rating scale.** A scale consisting of several ranked categories used for making judgements of performance.

**Reliability.** The consistency or stability of the measures from a test.

**Mark.** The numerical or coded result of a candidate's performance in a test enabling comparisons to be made with regard to other candidates of the same test or with regard to a fixed standard.

**Test delivery.** The physical means by which test input is made available to the test-taker during test administration (e.g. paper documents, computer screen, audio sound-source, face-to-face encounter, etc.).

**Test-taker.** The person who is tested.

**Validity.** The extent to which scores on a test enable inferences to be made about language proficiency which are appropriate, meaningful and useful given the purpose of the test.







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## Chapter 1. Standards Concerning Language Proficiency Requirements

### 1.1 Demonstration of Proficiency

1.1.1 ICAO language proficiency apply to speaking and listening proficiency only and do not address the ability to read and write. In assessing a person's language proficiency, it is necessary to analyze individual categories of that person's language use, as well as assess the person's overall ability to communicate in a relevant context.

1.1.2 In terms of effective aviation communication proficient speakers shall be able to:

- a) communicate effectively in voice-only and in face-to-face situations;
- b) communicate on common, concrete and work-related topics with accuracy and clarity;
- c) use appropriate communicative strategies to exchange messages and to recognize and resolve misunderstandings in a general or work-related context;
- d) handle successfully and with relative ease the linguistic challenges presented by a complication or unexpected turn of events that occurs within the context of a routine work situation or communicative task with which they are otherwise familiar;
- e) use a dialect or accent which is intelligible to the aeronautical community.

1.1.3 In addition to the holistic descriptors a person must demonstrate a minimum standard of linguistic proficiency in each of the following six categories: pronunciation, structure, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and interactions. The ICAO language proficiency requirements apply to native and non-native speakers. In a language proficiency demonstration, each ICAO linguistic category is assessed as meeting one of the following descriptor levels: Level 1 (Pre-elementary), Level 2 (Elementary), Level 3 (Pre-operational), Level 4 (Operational), Level 5 (Extended), Level 6 (Expert). A person's language proficiency is determined by the lowest level achieved in any category. It should also be clear that in order to meet the minimum required proficiency level for radiotelephony communication (Level 4) a person must demonstrate proficiency at Level 4 in all language categories.

1.1.4 Individuals who demonstrate language proficiency below Expert Level 6 on the ICAO Rating Scale shall be formally evaluated at intervals in accordance with an individual's demonstrated proficiency level, as follows:

- a) those individuals demonstrating language proficiency at the Operational Level (Level 4) should be evaluated at least once every three years;
- b) those individuals demonstrating language proficiency at the Extended Level (Level 5) should be evaluated at least once every six years.

1.1.5 The assessment at Level 6 should be carried out by a trained and qualified rater and requires the use of a fully developed specialized language test.

### 1.2 ICAO Standards Concerning Language Proficiency Requirements

1.2.1 The purpose of the ICAO language proficiency requirements is to ensure that the language proficiency of pilots and air traffic controllers is sufficient to reduce miscommunication as much as possible and to allow pilots and controllers to recognize and solve potential miscommunication when it does occur.

1.2.2 The ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements consist of a set of holistic descriptors and Operational Level 4 of the ICAO Rating Scale. Five holistic descriptors provide characteristics of proficient speakers and establish context for communications. The Rating Scale describes the discrete features of language use. ("Holistic" refers to the

communicating person as a “whole”, in contrast to the descriptors in the Rating Scale which instead examine individual, discrete features of language use.) A language proficiency Rating Scale may be thought of as a guide to good judgement and an important step towards harmonization of language standards to which pilots and air traffic controllers are held.

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1.2.3 “The language proficiency requirements are applicable to the use of both phraseologies and plain language.” This statement refers only to those characteristics of language use to which ICAO standardized phraseology conforms. Appropriate application of the language proficiency requirements to the use of phraseology should include the following criteria:

- a) pronunciation of phraseology according to ICAO recommended pronunciations as found in Annex 10, Volume II, 5.2.1.4.3, Doc 9432 or otherwise in accordance with the ICAO Operational Level 4 pronunciation descriptor of the Rating Scale;
- b) using a speech transmitting technique (enunciation, rate of speech, pausing, and speaking volume) in accordance with Doc 9432 or otherwise with the ICAO Operational Level 4 fluency descriptor of the Rating Scale.

1.2.4. The holistic descriptors and descriptors in the Rating Scale are designed as a frame of reference for trainers and assessors to be able to make consistent judgments about pilot and controller language proficiency. Each descriptor is explained below.

**a) Proficient speakers shall communicate effectively in voice-only (telephone/radiotelephone) and in face-to-face situations.**

Radiotelephony communications lack the facial cues, body language and listening cues found in usual face-to-face situations. Communications without such cues are considered to be more difficult and challenging, requiring a higher degree of language proficiency than face-to-face interactions. In addition, other features of radiotelephony communications make it a unique kind of communicative event. For example, the sound quality may be poor, with distracting sounds and the communicative workload of the air traffic controller or a pilot may be heavy, with a corresponding need for efficiency and brevity. This holistic descriptor draws attention to the need for training and testing to provide voice-only settings to exercise or demonstrate language proficiency, as well as face-to-face settings that allow broader uses of language.

**b) Proficient speakers shall communicate on common, concrete and work-related topics with accuracy and clarity.**

Context is an important consideration in communications, and an individual’s language proficiency may vary in different contexts. This holistic descriptor limits the domain of the communicative requirements to work-related topics; that is, air traffic controllers and pilots are expected to be able to communicate about issues in their field of professional practice. Language proficiency should not be limited to standardized phraseology and should range across a relatively broad area of work-related communicative domains.

**c) Proficient speakers shall use appropriate communicative strategies to exchange messages and to recognize and resolve misunderstandings (e.g. to check, confirm, or clarify information) in a general or work-related context.**

Linguists have identified strategic competence as an important part of language proficiency. One aspect of strategic competence important to air traffic controllers and flight crews is the ability to recognize and resolve potential misunderstandings, e.g. having strategies to check for comprehension in a meaningful way, such as asking for a readback. Equally important is the ability to rephrase or paraphrase a message when it is apparent that a message was not understood. Sometimes the phraseology “Say again” should be understood as a request for clarification rather than repetition. Air traffic controllers and flight crews should understand that silence does not always indicate comprehension. On the part of native-speaking air traffic controllers and flight crews, strategic competence can include an appreciation of the threats presented by cross-cultural communications and a sensitivity to strategies to confirm comprehension.

**d) Proficient speakers shall handle successfully and with relative ease the linguistic challenges presented by a complication or unexpected turn of events that occurs within the context of a routine work situation or communicative task with which they are otherwise familiar.**

One of the more challenging events in all communications, including those involving the use of a second language, is when the unexpected happens. Human Factors experts have emphasized the threat of letting our expectations hinder our interpretation of reality. Sometimes, a complication or an unexpected event can lead to a communication breakdown. It is important for air traffic controllers and flight crews to have sufficient language proficiency and the strategic skills to manage a dialogue through any unexpected event. It is the nature of the work of controllers and ~~pilots to adhere to strictly defined procedures and regulations and yet to be able, when confronted~~ with a new situation, to demonstrate substantial flexibility in their response. This holistic descriptor emphasizes the need for language skills practised and demonstrated in this context.

**e) *Proficient speakers shall use a dialect or accent which is intelligible to the aeronautical community.***

A first and natural response to this holistic descriptor is to inquire which dialects or accents would be considered intelligible. One answer is to consider how this issue has traditionally been handled among native-speaker controller populations. A determination of what constitutes a strong regional dialect or marked accent is based on the extensive experience and good judgment of the trainer or assessor. When an individual demonstrates a strong regional dialect or marked accent, one determined to be easily understood only by those most familiar with the dialect, that individual is counselled to use a dialect more widely acceptable or is provided with additional elocution or speech training.



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**Chapter 2. Principles of English Language Proficiency testing 2.1**  
**of test design and development****Principles**

2.1.1 The test should be designed to assess speaking and listening proficiency in accordance with each component of the ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale and the holistic descriptors. It means that language tests for flight crews and air traffic controllers should specifically address the language skills of the ICAO Rating Scale as well as the holistic descriptors. The language proficiency requirements specify that speaking and listening should be evaluated in the context of operational aviation communications. The holistic descriptors and Rating Scale were developed to address the specific requirements of radiotelephony communications. Each component of the Rating Scale is as important as any other. Testing speaking and listening proficiency requires procedures that are different from the procedures that are used to test reading, writing or grammar. Testing reading ability, knowledge about English grammar or vocabulary items in isolation from their context is not consistent with the ICAO requirements.

2.1.2 The test should comply with principles of good practice and a code of ethics. The Code of Ethics is based on a blend of the principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, a respect for autonomy and for civil society. Language testers are independent moral agents and sometimes they may have a personal moral stance, which conflicts with participation in certain procedures. They are morally entitled to refuse to participate in procedures, which would violate personal moral belief. Language testers accepting employment positions where they foresee they may be called on to be involved in situations at variance with their beliefs have a responsibility to acquaint their employer or prospective employer with this fact. Employers and colleagues have a responsibility to ensure that such language testers are not discriminated against in their workplace.

This Code of Ethics identifies 9 fundamental principles, each elaborated on by a series of annotations which generally clarify the nature of the principles.

**Principle 1**

Language testers shall have respect for the humanity and dignity of each of their test takers. They shall provide them with the best possible professional consideration and shall respect all persons' needs, values and cultures in the provision of their language testing service.

*Annotation*

- Language testers shall not discriminate against nor exploit their test takers on grounds of age, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language background, creed, political affiliations or religion, nor knowingly impose their own values (for example social, spiritual, political and ideological), to the extent that they are aware of them.
- Language testers shall never exploit their clients nor try to influence them in ways that are not related to the aims of the service they are providing or the investigation they are mounting.
- Sexual relations between language testers and their test takers are always unethical.
- Teaching and researching language testing involving the use of test takers (including students) requires their consent; IT ALSO REQUIRES respect for their dignity and privacy. Those involved should be informed that their refusal to participate will not affect the quality of the language tester's service (in teaching, in research, in development, in administration). THE USE OF all forms of media (paper, electronic, video, audio) involving test takers requires informed consent before being used for secondary purposes.
- Language testers shall endeavour to communicate the information they produce to all relevant stakeholders in as meaningful a way as possible.
- Where possible, test takers should be consulted on all matters concerning their interests.

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**Principle 2**

Language testers shall hold all information obtained in their professional capacity about their test takers in confidence and they shall use professional judgement in sharing such information.

*Annotation*

- In the face of the widespread use of photocopied materials and facsimile, computerized test records and data banks, the increased demand for accountability from various sources and the personal nature of the information obtained from test takers, language testers are obliged to respect test takers' right to confidentiality and to safeguard all information associated with the tester-test taker relationship.
- Confidentiality cannot be absolute, especially where the records concern students who may be competing for admissions and appointments. A careful balance must be maintained between preserving confidentiality as a fundamental aspect of the language tester's professional duty and the wider responsibility the tester has to society.
- Similarly, in appropriate cases, the language tester's professional colleagues also have a right to access data of test takers other than their own in order to improve the service the profession offers. In such cases, those given access to data should agree to maintain confidentiality.
- Test taker data collected from sources other than the test taker directly (for example from teachers of students under test) are subject to the same principles of confidentiality.
- There may be statutory requirements on disclosure, for example where the language tester is called as an expert witness in a law court or tribunal. In such circumstances, the language tester is released from his/her professional duty to confidentiality.

**Principle 3**

Language testers should adhere to all relevant ethical principles embodied in national and international guidelines when undertaking any trial, experiment, treatment or other research activity.

*Annotation*

- Language testing progress depends on research, which necessarily involves the participation of human subjects. This research shall conform to generally accepted principles of academic inquiry, be based on a thorough knowledge of the professional literature; and be planned and executed according to the highest standards.
- All research must be justified; that is proposed studies shall be reasonably expected to provide answers to questions posed.
- The human rights of the research subject shall always take precedence over the interests of science or society.
- Where there are likely discomforts or risks to the research subject, the benefits of that research should be taken into account but must not be used in themselves to justify such discomforts or risks. If unforeseeable harmful effects occur, the research should always be stopped or modified.
- An independent Ethics Committee should evaluate all research proposals in order to ensure that studies conform to the highest scientific and ethical standards.



- Relevant information about the aims, methods, risks and discomforts of the research shall be given to the subject in advance. The information shall be conveyed in such a way that it is fully understood. Consent shall be free, without pressure, coercion or duress.
- 
- The subject shall be free to refuse to participate in or to withdraw from, the research at any time prior to publication of research results. Such refusal shall not jeopardize the subject's treatment.
  - Special care shall be taken with regard to obtaining prior consent in the case of subjects who are in dependent relationships (for example, students, the elderly, proficiency challenged learners).
  - In the case of a minor, consent shall be obtained from a parent or guardian but also from the child if he is of sufficient maturity and understanding.
  - Confidential information obtained in research shall not be used for purposes other than THOSE specified in the approved research protocol.
  - Publication of research results shall be truthful and accurate.
  - Publication of research reports shall not permit identification of the subjects who have been involved.

**Principle 4**

Language testers shall not allow the misuse of their professional knowledge or skills, in so far as they are able.

*Annotation*

- Language testers shall not knowingly use their professional knowledge or skills to advance purposes inimical to their test takers' interests. When the progress of the tester's intervention is not directly to the benefit of the test takers (for example when they are asked to act as trial subjects for a proficiency test designed for some other situation), its nature shall be made absolutely clear.
- Non-conformity with a society's prevailing moral, religious etc values, or status as an unwelcome migrant, shall not be the determining factor in assessing language ability.
- Whatever the legal circumstances, language testers shall not participate, either directly or indirectly in the practice of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment .

**Principle 5**

Language testers shall continue to develop their professional knowledge, sharing this knowledge with colleagues and other language professionals.

*Annotation*

- Continued learning and advancing one's knowledge are fundamental to the professional role; failure to do so constitutes a disservice to test takers.
- Language testers shall make use of the various methods of continuing education that are available to them. These may involve participation in continuing language testing programmes and professional conferences, and the regular reading of relevant professional publications.
- Language testers shall take the opportunity to interact with colleagues and other relevant language professionals as an important means of developing their professional knowledge.

- Language testers shall share new knowledge with colleagues by publication in recognized professional journals or at meetings.
  - Language testers shall be expected to contribute to the education and professional development of language testers in training and to the drawing up of guidelines for the core requirements of that training.
- 
- Language testers shall be prepared to contribute to the education of students in the WIDER language professions.

**Principle 6**

Language testers shall share the responsibility of upholding the integrity of the language testing profession.

*Annotation*

- Language testers shall promote and enhance the integrity of their profession by fostering a sense of trust and mutual responsibility among colleagues. In the event of differences of opinion, viewpoints should be expressed with candour and respect rather than by mutual denigration.
- Language testers develop and exercise norms on behalf of society. As such theirs is a privileged position which brings with it an obligation to maintain appropriate personal and moral standards in their professional practice, and in those aspects of their personal life which may reflect upon the integrity of that practice.
- Language testers who become aware of unprofessional conduct by a colleague shall take appropriate action; this may include a report to the relevant authorities.
- Failure to uphold this Code of Ethics will be regarded with the utmost seriousness and could lead to severe penalties including withdrawal of ILTA membership.

**Principle 7**

Language testers in their societal roles shall strive to improve the quality of language testing, assessment and teaching services, promote the just allocation of those services and contribute to the education of society regarding language learning and language proficiency.

*Annotation*

- Language testers have a particular duty to promote the improvement of language testing provision/services in that many of their test takers are disenfranchised and lack power on account of their non-native speaker status.
- Language testers shall be prepared by virtue of their knowledge and experience to advise those responsible for the provision of language testing services.
- Language testers shall be prepared to act as advocates and join with others in ensuring that language testing test takers have available to them the best possible language testing service.
- Language testers shall be prepared to work with advisory, statutory, voluntary and commercial bodies that have a role in the provision of language testing services.
- Language testers shall take appropriate action if services, by reason of fiscal restriction or otherwise, fall below minimal standards. Exceptionally, language testers may have to dissociate themselves from such services provided that this is not harmful to their test takers.
- Language testers shall be prepared to interpret and disseminate relevant scientific information and established professional opinions to society. In so doing, language testers shall clarify their status as

either spokespersons for a recognised professional body or not. If the views expressed are contrary to those generally held, they shall so indicate.

- It is reasonable for language testers to make scientifically substantiated contributions to public debate on sensitive socio-political issues, such as race, disadvantage and child rearing.
- 
- Language testers shall differentiate between their role as educators based on professional knowledge and their role as citizens.
  - In fulfilling their responsibilities under this principle, language testers shall take care to avoid selfpromotion and the denigration of colleagues.
  - Language testers shall make clear that they do not claim (and are not seen to claim) that they alone possess all the relevant knowledge.

### Principle 8

Language testers shall be mindful of their obligations to the society within which they work, while recognising that those obligations may on occasion conflict with their responsibilities to their test takers and to other stakeholders. *Annotation*

- When test results are obtained on behalf of institutions (government departments, professional bodies, universities, schools, companies) language testers have an obligation to report those results accurately, however unwelcome they may be to the test takers and other stakeholders (families, prospective employers etc).
- As members of the society in which they work, language testers should recognise their obligation to the testing requirements of that society, even when they may not themselves agree with them. Where their disagreement is of sufficient strength to qualify as a conscientious objection, they should have the right to withdraw their professional services.

### Principle 9

Language testers shall regularly consider the potential effects, both short and long term on all stakeholders of their projects, reserving the right to withhold their professional services on the grounds of conscience.

#### *Annotation*

- As professionals, language testers have the responsibility to evaluate the ethical consequences of the projects submitted to them. While they cannot consider all possible eventualities, they should engage in a thorough evaluation of the likely consequences and, where those consequences are in their view professionally unacceptable, withdraw their services. In such cases, they should as a matter of course consult with fellow language testers to determine how far their view is shared, always reserving the right, where their colleagues take a different view, to make an individual stand on the grounds of conscience.

### THE SOLUTION: ETHICS AND A CODE OF PRACTICE

Because of the high-stakes nature of language testing within the aviation industry, it is particularly critical that developers and providers of language tests to the aviation industry maintain high quality by conscientious adherence to good language testing principles and practices. The International Language Testing Association (ILTA) is one non-commercial, non-profit organization of language testing professionals dedicated to the improvement of language testing throughout the world. In 2000, ILTA membership adopted the ILTA Code of Ethics for language testers (see Appendix D). Test users and developers can refer to the ILTA Code of Ethics as guidance to ensure that their test development and testing practices maintain high standards.

In addition to a code of ethics guiding test developers and end-users, there is also a need for a code of ethical practice. Yet it has proven somewhat difficult to develop a universally applicable code of practice, and there are indications that this code is best developed in recognition of local cultural or industry practice.

One local code of ethics, from the Japan Association of Language Testers, is provided as a sample in Appendix D.

2.1.3 The test should not focus on discrete-point items, on grammar explicitly or on discrete vocabulary items. Discrete-point items are individual test questions which are presented out of context. Examples are a vocabulary test in which test-takers are asked to provide definitions for a list of words, and a grammar test in which test-takers are asked to provide the past-tense forms of a list of irregular verbs. Discrete-point tests, also referred to as indirect tests, do not test language skills directly. Instead, they test ~~individual, specific features of the language thought to underlie language skills. That is, they test knowledge~~ about grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc. This type of test is not appropriate for assessing aviation language proficiency. Discrete point tests do not evaluate a person's ability to use the language. Furthermore, test-takers who perform well on such tests often perform poorly on tests in which they actually have to use the language.

The goal of a proficiency test is to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of communication rather than grammatical accuracy. Grammatical accuracy should be considered only so far as it has an impact on effective communication, but evaluating an individual's grammatical knowledge should not be the objective of the test. The more directly a test performance is related to target performance, the more a test can be considered a proficiency test. Using this approach, speaking skills will be directly assessed during an interview or conversation or role-play, or are based on a recorded sample of actual speech.

2.1.4 Comprehension is assessed through a specific listening section with individual items, it should not be done to the detriment of assessing interaction. A separate listening test can provide information about comprehension independent of a person's ability to interact.

2.1.5 Proficiency tests that are administered directly may use face-to-face communication in some phases of the delivery but should include a component devoting time to voice-only interaction. Voice-only interaction is an important characteristic of aeronautical radiotelephony communications; when a pilot and a controller interact, they cannot see each other. Directly administered proficiency tests should simulate this condition of "voice only" in at least a portion of the test.

When two people interact face-to-face, they use non-verbal cues (information other than words) to help them understand each other's messages. People's facial expressions, their body language and the gestures they make with their hands often communicate important information. Aeronautical radiotelephony communications do not benefit from such non-verbal cues; all radiotelephony communications are conveyed through words alone, which can be more difficult to interpret than face-to-face communication.

2.1.6 The test shall be specific to aviation operations. Tests should provide test-takers with opportunities to use plain language in contexts that are work-related for pilots and air traffic controllers in order to demonstrate their ability with respect to each descriptor in the Rating Scale and the holistic descriptors. The ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements (LPRs) refer to the ability to speak and understand the language used for radiotelephony communications. ICAO language provisions require proficiency in the use of standardized phraseology and in the use of plain language. The assessment of standardized phraseology is an operational activity, not a language proficiency assessment activity. While an aviation language test may include phraseology to introduce a discussion topic or make interaction meaningful to the testtaker, it is important that tests elicit a broad range of plain language and not be limited to tasks that require standardized phraseology. The focus of a language proficiency test for compliance with ICAO requirements should be on plain language.

The idea of a work-related context can be interpreted in different ways. The broad view would elicit samples of interaction and comprehension on those topics occurring in radiotelephony communications without resorting to replicating radiotelephony communications. These could be of a general piloting and controlling nature and involve question and answer routines, short reports or problem-solving exchanges, or briefings and reports.

2.1.7 It is acceptable that a test contains a scripted task in which phraseology is included in a prompt, but the test should not be designed to assess phraseology. An aviation language proficiency test has different aims than a phraseology test. While an aviation language test can include some phraseology as prompts or scene setters, the purpose of the test is to assess plain language proficiency in an operational aviation context.

Tests of phraseology alone are not suitable for demonstrating compliance with ICAO language proficiency requirements. Using phraseology accurately is an operational skill which is very dependent on the operational context; and incorrect usage by a test-taker of a specific phraseology may be an operational error, rather than a language error. Phraseology must be taught and tested by qualified operational personnel.

2.1.8 The test shall not be designed to evaluate the technical knowledge of operations. Language tests should not assess either operational skills or the specific technical knowledge of operations. A language test is not an operational or technical knowledge test.

If the distinction between language proficiency and technical knowledge is not very clear to the interlocutor and rater of an aviation language test, it may be easy to confuse one with the other. Such confusion may lead to test-takers getting penalized unfairly for technical errors; or to other test-takers getting rewarded, also unfairly, for their technical expertise. Another potential problem if very specific technical items are included in a language proficiency test is that they may require technical knowledge beyond that of a test-taker. As a result, the test-taker may be unable to respond effectively, due to a lack of technical expertise rather than a lack of language proficiency.

2.1.9 The final score for each test-taker shall not be the average or aggregate of the ratings in each of the six ICAO language proficiency skills but the lowest of these six ratings. For each test-taker, scores should be reported for pronunciation, vocabulary, structure, fluency, comprehension, and interactions in accordance with the Rating Scale. In cases in which a test-taker is given different ratings for different skill areas — for example, 3 for pronunciation, 4 for vocabulary and structure, and 5 for fluency, comprehension and interactions — the overall score for that test-taker should be the lowest of these scores; in the above example, the test-taker's overall score would be 3.

This practice is critical because the Operational Level 4 descriptors are developed as the safest minimum proficiency skill level determined necessary for aeronautical radiotelephony communications. A lower score than 4 for any one skill area indicates inadequate proficiency. For example, a pilot with Operational Level 4 ratings in all areas except pronunciation may not be understood by the air traffic controllers with whom that pilot should communicate. In summary, an individual should demonstrate proficiency to at least Level 4 in all skill areas of the ICAO Rating Scale in order to receive an overall Level 4 rating.

## 2.2 Test Purpose

2.2.1 The language proficiency requires proficiency testing to fulfil the licensing requirement.

2.2.2 Proficiency testing is different from progress or achievement testing in that proficiency tests do not correspond directly to a training curriculum. That is, it should not be possible for test-takers to directly prepare or study (by memorizing information, for example) for a proficiency test. Proficiency tests require test-takers to demonstrate their ability to do something representative of the full spectrum of required knowledge and skills, rather than to simply demonstrate how much of a quantifiable set of curriculum learning objectives they have learned. In an aviation context, proficiency testing should establish the ability of test-takers to effectively use appropriate language in operational conditions.

## 2.3 Test validity and reliability

2.3.1 Validity refers to the degree a test measures what it is supposed to measure. Reliability refers to the degree that the test produces consistent and fair results. Aviation language tests have high stakes. It is important for safety and for the integrity of the industry, particularly the operators and for testtakers themselves, that language tests be fair and accurate.

2.3.2 Reliability refers to the stability of a test. Evidence should be provided that the test can be relied upon to produce consistent results. Reliability should be reported in the form of a coefficient that can range from 0.0 to 1.0. Although no test will achieve a perfect reliability (1.0), one should look for tests with reliability coefficients as close to 1.0 as possible.

2.3.3. The goal of aviation operational language testing is to ensure that flight crews and air traffic controllers have adequate language proficiency for the conduct of safe operations. Robust language

training programmes are an essential component of a programme to enable pilots and controllers to achieve ICAO Operational Level 4 language proficiency.

## **2.4 Test design and development team qualifications**

2.4.1 All members of the test design and development team should be familiar with the following ICAO publications:

- a) Annex 1(1.2.9), Annex 10(Volume II, 5.2.1.4.3), Doc 9432
- b) Appendix 1 and Attachment A to Annex 1;
- c) Doc 9835; and
- d) ICAO Rated Speech Samples CD.

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2.4.2 The test design and development team shall include individuals with the operational, language test development, and linguistic expertise described below:

- a) Operational expertise:
  - 1) radiotelephony experience as a flight crew member, air traffic controller or aeronautical station operator;
  - 2) experience in aeronautical operations and procedures and working knowledge of current practices.
- b) Language test development expertise:
  - 1) specialization in language test development through training, education or work experience;
  - 2) working knowledge of the principles of best practice in language test development.
- c) Linguistic expertise:
  - 1) working knowledge of the principles of theoretical and applied linguistics;
  - 2) working knowledge of the principles of language learning;
  - 3) experience in language teaching.

A test design and development team that includes all the above types of expertise offers the best foundation for a successful test development project.

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## Chapter 3. English Language Assessment Procedures 3.1 Delivery method

3.1.1 English Language Proficiency testing involves both direct and semi-direct testing. Direct speaking tests involve face-to-face interactions between the test-taker and the interlocutor, who also serves as a rater. In semi-direct testing, test prompts and questions are pre-recorded, and test-takers' responses are recorded for evaluation at a different time and in some cases a different place.

3.1.2. In direct testing procedures, the test-taker interacts with a "live" interlocutor, who is also an examiner or rater. The person-to-person interaction in a direct testing procedure is recorded and directly observed and assessed in real time by a rater. Test-takers are asked to perform language tasks based on a set of elicitation prompts.

3.1.3 In semi-direct testing, speech samples are elicited through pre-recorded and thereby standardized prompts.

3.1.4 Both direct and semi-direct tests elicit speech samples that are assessed for proficiency in speaking and listening. As a result, the test-takers are evaluated in their use of language related to routine as well as unexpected or complicated situations as evidence of their level of proficiency.

### 3.2 Aviation-specific language testing issues

3.2.1 Beyond the best practices of generic language testing, there are fundamental constraints specific to the context of the ICAO language proficiency testing requirements. These concern the following:

- a) Test focus.  
The ICAO language proficiency requirements focus on speaking and understanding. Therefore, testing for compliance with ICAO Annex 1 licensing requirements should focus on speaking and listening proficiency.
- b) Test content, particularly concerning the role of standardized phraseology in aviation language testing.  
Pilots and air traffic controllers have to be tested in a context similar to that in which they work. Test content should, therefore, be relevant to their work roles. Radiotelephony communications require not only the use of ICAO standardized phraseology, but also the use of plain language. It follows that a test designed to evaluate knowledge or use of standardized phraseology cannot be used to assess plain language proficiency. But it is acceptable that a test of plain language in a work-related context could contain a scripted test task or a prompt in which standardized phraseology is included.
- c) Test tasks.  
Test tasks that resemble real-life activities are most suitable. A broad interpretation of the holistic descriptors and Rating Scale would aim to elicit plain language on various topics that are related to radiotelephony communications or aviation operations, without replicating radiotelephony communications specifically. Examples should include question and answer routines, problem-solving exchanges, briefings, simulations and role-plays.
- d) Testing for Expert Level 6 proficiency.  
The Level 6 descriptors in the ICAO Rating Scale refer to features of language use that go beyond the work-related context indicated in descriptors at lower levels. For these reason the assessment at Level 6 should be carried out by a trained and qualified rater or by a language testing specialist.

3.2.2. Monolingual native speakers of the language should be considered as "probable expert speakers." However, probable expert speakers may also include multilingual speakers who include the language as one of their native languages, and foreign-language speakers who have acquired a high

level proficiency. A test-taker who is tentatively considered to be a Level 6 speaker of the language may be evaluated through informal assessments (such as interviews), supported by documented evidence

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about an individual's linguistic history. This history could include:

- a) place of birth and early residence;
- b) the language(s) used during childhood in the family, in the community and in education;
- c) long periods of residence (with proven participation) in communities where the language is used socially, professionally or in education;
- d) extended periods of language study or higher education diplomas;
- e) very high scores in general language tests.

3.2.3. On the basis of such assessment of documented information, procedures should then be described and implemented for the formal validation of Level 6 proficiency. These procedures should be implemented and identified as assessment "events" rather than tests. They should involve a trained and qualified rating team and should include assessment of language used in a work-related context with reference to the ICAO Rating Scale. The rater may be an operational flight or ATC examiner.

### 3.3 Testing team qualifications

3.3.1 ELP testing team consists of: administrators, English Language Experts, Interlocutors, markers (or raters). These roles can be combined and one person may act as an administrator, marker, interlocutor or English Language Expert at the same time. Nevertheless, at least two examiners are required for an ELP test, one acting in the role of English Language expert and the other of an Interlocutor.

3.3.2 All members of the testing team should be familiar with the following ICAO publications:

- a) Annex 1(1.2.9), Annex 10(Volume II, 5.2.1.4.3), Doc 9432;
- b) Appendix 1 and Attachment A to Annex 1;
- c) Doc 9835; and
- d) ICAO Rated Speech Samples CD.

3.3.3 Interlocutors, English Language experts and raters (markers) should demonstrate language proficiency of at least ICAO Extended Level 5 in the language to be tested and proficiency at Expert Level 6 if the test is designed to assess ICAO Level 6 proficiency.

3.3.4 Raters, interlocutors and English language experts shall be familiar with aviation English and with any vocabulary and structures that are likely to be elicited by test prompts and interactions. In order to credibly and effectively evaluate test-takers' language proficiency, raters should be familiar with the vocabulary and structures that test-takers are likely to use during the test.

The rater training process should include an aviation familiarity component, so that raters can comprehend, as much as their role requires, technical aspects of the language they will hear during tests.

3.3.5 It is required that at least two raters shall evaluate language tests: one with operational expertise and the other with language specialist expertise.

a) **Operational expertise.** The involvement of operational experts such as pilots, controllers and flight instructors or examiners in the rating process will add operational integrity to the process. Operationally experienced raters can also assist by making informed judgements from an operational perspective on such aspects of language use as conciseness (exactness and brevity) in speech and intelligibility of accents and dialects that are acceptable to the aeronautical community.



b) **Language specialist expertise.** Test raters shall be able to correctly interpret the descriptors of the Rating Scale and to accurately identify strengths and weaknesses in a test-taker's performance. Only qualified language specialists serving as raters can identify and describe these strengths and weaknesses.

3.3.6 Interlocutors, English Language experts and raters shall have successfully completed initial interlocutor training in an approved training organization.

3.3.7 Interlocutors, English Language experts and raters shall complete recurrent interlocutor training at least once each year in an approved training organization.

3.3.8. Initial and recurrent rater training should be documented; the rater training records should be maintained. Language proficiency test raters need to be trained, and the raters need to be trained together to ensure they apply the rating scale consistently.

### 3.4 Test administration

3.4.1 Test-taker documents: paper instructions for a test-taker should be published and an electronic version of them can be provided.

3.4.2 Interlocutor instructions and/or prompts should be published and available for interlocutors.

3.4.3 Rater documentation: rater instructions, rating scale and answer key should be published and available for raters.

3.4.4 Sample of audio recordings (for listening sections or semi-direct prompts) should be published and an electronic version of them can be provided.

3.4.5 Demonstration of test-taker/interlocutor interaction should be provided.

3.4.6. Documents regarding test rating procedure include: Application and Assessment Report (Appendix A), English Language Proficiency Assessment Report with a set of scores (Appendix A) and Assessor Sheets with evidences and support for the score. (Appendix A).

3.4.7. The instructions to the test-taker, the test administration team and test raters should be clearly documented. The equipment, human resources and facilities necessary for the test should be included in the instructions. Clear instructions for each part of the test process should be available.

3.4.8. Policies and procedures for taking the test:

A perspective test-taker shall fill in the "Application and Assessment form" (Appendix A) at least one week before the planned date of test. The form shall be further reviewed by the CAA RM and the date of test shall be announced upon the availability of test team members and test facilities.

3.4.9. Score reporting procedure:

Results of testing should be held in strict confidence and released only to test-takers, their sponsors or employers, and the civil aviation authority, unless test-takers provide written permission to release their results to another person or organization.

3.4.10. Policies and procedures for retaking the test:

3.4.10.1 It is assumed that anyone awarded a particular rating level demonstrates proficiency better than the descriptors contained in each level below. Failure to comply with descriptors in one category in one level indicates that the next lower proficiency level should be awarded. A person's overall proficiency rating is determined by the lowest rating assigned in any of the language proficiency skills of the rating scale.

3.4.10.2 If a test-taker fails to comply with Level 4 in any of the descriptors, the test is considered unsuccessful and the whole test should be re-taken.

3.4.10.3 From the date the test was failed, ELP rating is not considered valid any longer and supersedes the previous validity date.

3.4.10.4 If a test-taker fails to demonstrate a Level 4 proficiency in more than 2 of the Rating Scale descriptors, then at least 6 weeks are required before a test re-take may be attempted. It should be the case when both examiners agree that an obvious failure to attain Operational Level 4 proficiency has been demonstrated and it is not possible to demonstrate Level 4 language proficiency without further study. 6 weeks period is based on the rule of thumb in the field of language training for academic purposes that between 100 and 200 hours of language learning activities are required for any measurable improvement in ability. Specific English language course in the RM CAA approved training organizations should be attended before a test re-take.

3.4.10.5 In case a test-taker fails to demonstrate a Level 4 proficiency in 2 or less of the Rating Scale descriptors, then based on assumption that failure might have been affected by stress, lack of time or any other personal, environmental factors, time period for a test re-take may be shortened considerably but not less than a week in order to meet the requirements stated in 3.4.8

3.4.10.6 In case of three consecutive failures to demonstrate a clear Level 4 language proficiency, further test re-take is only possible if a test-taker completes an extensive English Language course in the RM CAA approved training organization. At least 90 days are required before a test re-take may be attempted.

3.4.11. Record-keeping procedure:

3.4.11.1 All proficiency tests of speaking ability involving interaction between the test-taker and interlocutor during the test shall be recorded on audio media. Test recordings provide a safeguard against charges of subjective judgements and unfairness. Recordings allow:

- a) review or re-rating by different raters in case of uncertainty or an appeal; and
- b) confirmation of assessments in case of appeals by test-takers or their employers.

3.4.11.2 Assessment sheets and supporting documentation should be filed and records maintained for at least the period of validity of ELP result to ensure that rating decisions can no longer be appealed.

Records are important in the case of appeals, for internal analysis related to auditing, for establishing an individual training plan and for establishing recurrent testing schedules. At a minimum, the records should be maintained through the validity period of the licence's language proficiency endorsement requirement (the maximum validity period should not surpass three years for those evaluated at Level 4, and six years for those evaluated at Level 5).

3.4.11.3 The score-reporting process shall be documented and scores maintained for the duration of the licence. The method of scoring and the persons to whom scores are reported should be clearly documented. When a test has been rated and the results documented, the process for reporting should be clear to all decision-makers. This practice is important to ensure that those individuals in the organization who need to know receive test result information and to ensure that the privacy of the testtaker and the security of the information are maintained.

3.4.11.4 Results of testing shall be held in strict confidence and released only to test-takers, their sponsors or employers, and the civil aviation authority, unless test-takers provide written permission to release their results to another person or organization.

3.4.12 Appeals procedure:

Test-takers who feel their scores are not accurate may request that their tests be re-rated or that they have the opportunity to take the test again within 30 days from the date of the test. During the period of 10 days licensing authority commits to resolving an appeal — either in the form of a re-review of the test, a reexamination or a rejection of the appeal.

## Test security

3.5.1 Security measures required to ensure the integrity of the testing procedure and the authenticity of test result data, including databases and certificates: test developers, administrators, raters, information technology personnel and any other staff who are involved in any aspect of the testing process should maintain formal commitments to confidentiality. Tests require multiple versions to meet the needs of the population to be tested with respect to its size and diversity. Necessary security measures should prevent communication between test-takers, communication between test-takers and people elsewhere during the test (for example, by use of a mobile telephone), impersonation of others and the use of false identities.

3.5.2 Test questions and prompts should be held in confidence, and not be published or provided to test-takers prior to the test event-

## 3.6 Rating

3.6.1. Rating shall be carried out by a minimum of two raters. A third expert rater should be consulted in the case of divergent scores.

An aviation language test will have two primary raters — one language expert and one operational expert — and a third rater who can resolve differences between the two primary raters' opinions. For example, there could be a situation where the primary raters agree that in five of the six skill areas a test-taker demonstrates Level 4 proficiency; however, the first rater assigns the test-taker a score of 3 on pronunciation (thereby making the test-taker's overall language proficiency level "3") and the second rater assigns the test-taker a "4" for pronunciation. A third rater would make a final determination for that skill area and, in doing so, would determine the overall score for that test-taker.

3.6.2. The following explanations of the ICAO Rating Scale descriptors focus on Level 3 (Pre-operational), Level 4 (Operational), Level 5 (Extended) and Level 6 (Expert).

### 3.6.2.1. Pronunciation

The six levels of pronunciation descriptors are applicable at all levels to native and non-native speakers. This implies that native English speakers may demonstrate Elementary Level 2 proficiency if their regional dialect is so localized that it is not readily understood by those outside of that particular region. On the other hand, speakers whose speech patterns clearly identify them as non-native speakers (having a so-called "accent") may demonstrate Expert Level 6 proficiency, as long as this meets the criterion of "almost never" interfering with ease of understanding.

<b>Pre-operational 3:</b> <i>Pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation are influenced by the first language or regional variation and frequently interfere with ease of understanding.</i>	<b>Operational 4:</b> <i>Pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation are influenced by the first language or regional variation, but only sometimes interfere with ease of understanding.</i>	<b>Extended 5:</b> <i>Pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation, though influenced by the first language or regional variation, rarely interfere with ease of understanding.</i>	<b>Expert 6:</b> <i>Pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation, though possibly influenced by the first language or regional variation, almost never interfere with ease of understanding.</i>
Accent at this Pre-operational Level 3 is so strong as to render comprehension by an international community of aeronautical radiotelephony users very difficult or impossible. It should be noted that native or second language speakers may be assessed at this level in cases where a regional variety of the language has not been sufficiently attenuated.	Operational Level 4 speakers demonstrate a marked accent, or localized regional variety of English. Occasionally, a proficient listener may have to pay close attention to understand or may have to clarify something from time to time. Operational Level 4 is certainly not a perfect level of proficiency; it is the minimum level of proficiency determined to be safe for air traffic control communications. While it is not an Expert level, it is important to keep in mind that pronunciation plays the critical role in aiding comprehension between two	Extended Level 5 speakers demonstrate a marked accent, or localized regional variety of English, but one which rarely interferes with how easily understood their speech is. They are always clear and understandable, although, only occasionally, a proficient listener may have to pay close attention.	An Expert Level 6 speaker may be a speaker of English as a first language with a widely understood dialect or may be a very proficient second-language speaker, again with a widely used or understood accent and/or dialect. The speakers' accent or dialect may or may not identify them as second language users, but the pronunciation patterns or any difficulties or "mistakes" almost never interfere with the ease with which they are understood. Expert speakers are always clear and understandable.

	non-native speakers of English.		
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### 3.6.2.2. Structure

Relevant grammatical structures and sentence patterns are determined by language functions appropriate to the task. Users may refer to the communicative aeronautical language functions, to the list of controller communicative tasks and to the classification of basic and complex structures in Appendix B for guidance. Language teaching specialists generally categorize grammatical errors into two classes: “global” and “local”. Global errors are those which interfere with meaning; local errors are those which do not interfere with meaning.

<b>Pre-operational 3:</b> Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns associated with predictable situations are not always well controlled. Errors frequently interfere with meaning.	<b>Operational 4:</b> Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns are used creatively and are usually well controlled. Errors may occur, particularly in unusual or unexpected circumstances, but rarely interfere with meaning.	<b>Extended 5:</b> Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns are consistently well controlled. Complex structures are attempted but with errors which sometimes interferes with meaning.	<b>Expert 6:</b> Both basic and complex grammatical structures and sentence patterns are consistently well controlled.
A weak command of basic grammatical structures at this level will limit available range of expression or result in errors which could lead to misunderstandings.	Operational Level 4 speakers have good command of basic grammatical structures. They do not merely have a memorized set of words or phrases on which they rely but have sufficient command of basic grammar to create new meaning as appropriate. They demonstrate local errors and infrequent global errors and communication is effective overall. Level 4 speakers will not usually attempt complex structures, and when they do, quite a lot of errors would be expected resulting in less effective communication.	Extended Level 5 speakers demonstrate greater control of complex grammatical structures than do Operational Level 4 speakers and may commit global errors from time to time when using complex structures. The critical difference between the Level 4 and Level 5 requirements concerns the use of basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns compared to the use of complex structures (see the glossary of basic and complex structures in Appendix B, Part IV). At Level 5, the structure descriptors refer to consistent control of basic structure, with errors possibly occurring when complex structures and language are used. There is actually a big jump between Level 4 and Level 5. Level 5 speakers will have a more sophisticated use of English overall, but will exhibit some errors in their use of complex language structures, but not in their basic structure patterns.	Expert Level 6 speakers do not demonstrate consistent global structural or grammatical errors but may exhibit some local errors.

## 3.6.2.3. Vocabulary

Vocabulary includes individual words and fixed expression. Vocabulary can be classified by the domains of meaning to which it refers. While memorizing phraseologies is neither an acceptable means of demonstrating language proficiency nor an effective or recommended language learning strategy, it is undeniable that *context* is a relevant factor in language proficiency. Therefore testing focuses on vocabulary related to aeronautical radiotelephony communications.

<b>Pre-operational 3:</b> <i>Vocabulary range and accuracy are often sufficient to communicate on common, concrete or work-related topics, but range is limited and the word choice often inappropriate. Is often unable to paraphrase successfully when lacking vocabulary.</i>	<b>Operational 4:</b> <i>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.</i>	<b>Extended 5:</b> <i>Vocabulary range and accuracy are sufficient to communicate effectively on common, concrete and work-related topics. Paraphrases consistently and successfully. Vocabulary is sometimes idiomatic.</i>	<b>Expert 6:</b> <i>Vocabulary range and accuracy are sufficient to communicate effectively on a wide variety of familiar and unfamiliar topics. Vocabulary is idiomatic, nuanced and sensitive to register.</i>
Gaps in vocabulary knowledge and/or choice of wrong or non-existent words are apparent at this level. This has a negative impact on fluency or results in errors which could lead to misunderstandings. The frequent inability to paraphrase unknown words or in the process of clarification makes accurate communication impossible.	An Operational Level 4 speaker will likely not have a well-developed sensitivity to register (see glossary on page (ix)). A speaker at this level will usually be able to manage communication on work-related topics, but may sometimes need clarification. When faced with a communication breakdown, an Operational Level 4 speaker can paraphrase and negotiate meaning so that the message is understood. The ability to paraphrase includes appropriate choices of simple vocabulary and considerate use of speech rate and pronunciation.	Extended Level 5 speakers may display some sensitivity to register, with a lexical range which may not be sufficient to communicate effectively in as broad a range of topics as an Expert Level 6 speaker, but a speaker with Extended proficiency will have no trouble paraphrasing whenever necessary.	Level 6 speakers demonstrate a strong sensitivity to register. Another marker of strong proficiency seems to be the acquisition of, and facility with, idiomatic expressions and the ability to communicate nuanced ideas. As such, use of idioms may be taken into account in assessment procedures designed to identify Level 6 users in a non-radiotelephony context. This is not however intended to imply that idiomatic usages are a desirable feature of aeronautical radiotelephony communications. On the contrary, use of idioms is an obstacle to intelligibility and mutual understanding between non-expert users and should therefore be avoided by all users in this environment.

## 3.6.2.4. Fluency

For our purposes, fluency is intended to refer to the naturalness of the flow of speech production, the degree to which comprehension is hindered by any unnatural or unusual hesitancy, distracting starts and stops, distracting fillers (em ...huh ... er ...) or inappropriate silence. Levels of fluency will be most apparent during longer utterances in an interaction.

They will also be affected by the degree of expectedness of the preceding input which is dependent on familiarity with scripts.

<b>Pre-operational 3:</b> <i>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.</i>	<b>Operational 4:</b> <i>Produces stretches of language at an appropriate tempo. There may be occasional loss of fluency on transition from rehearsed or formulaic speech to spontaneous interaction, but this does not prevent effective communication. Can make limited use of discourse markers or connectors. Fillers are not distracting.</i>	<b>Extended 5:</b> <i>Able to speak at length with relative ease on familiar topics but may not vary speech flow as a stylistic device. Can make use of appropriate discourse markers or connectors.</i>	<b>Expert 6:</b> <i>Able to speak at length with a natural, effortless flow. Varies speech flow for stylistic effect, e.g. to emphasize a point. Uses appropriate discourse markers and connectors spontaneously.</i>
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The slowness of speech flow at this level is such that communication lacks concision and efficiency. Long silent pauses frequently interrupt the speech flow. Speakers at this level will fail to obtain the professional confidence of their interlocutors.	Speech rate at this level may be slowed by the requirements of language processing, but remains fairly constant and does not negatively affect the speaker's involvement in communication. The speaker has the possibility of speaking a little faster than the ICAO recommended rate of 100 words per minute if the situation requires	Rate of speech and organization of discourse at this level approach natural fluency. Under appropriate circumstances, rates significantly higher than the ICAO recommended rate of 100 words per minute can be achieved without negatively affecting intelligibility.	Fluency at this level is nativelike or near native-like. It is notably characterized by a high degree of flexibility in producing language and in adapting the speech rate to the context of communication and the purposes of the speaker.
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### 3.6.2.5. Comprehension

This skill refers to the ability to listen and understand. In air traffic control communications, pilots rely on the clear and accurate information provided to them by controllers for safety. It is not sufficient for air traffic controllers to be able to handle most pilot communications; they must be ready for the unexpected. Similarly, pilots must be able to understand air traffic controller instructions, especially when these differ from what a pilot expects to hear. It is during complications in aviation that communications become most crucial, with a greater reliance upon plain language. While comprehension is only one out of six skills in the Rating Scale, it represents half of the linguistic workload in spoken communications.

<b>Pre-operational 3:</b> <i>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.</i>	<b>Operational 4:</b> <i>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.</i>	<b>Extended 5:</b> <i>Comprehension is accurate on common, concrete and work-related topics and mostly accurate when the speaker is confronted with a linguistic or situational complication or an unexpected turn of events. Is able to comprehend a range of speech varieties (dialect and/or accent) or registers.</i>	<b>Expert 6:</b> <i>Comprehension is consistently accurate in nearly all contexts and includes comprehension of linguistic and cultural subtleties.</i>
Level 3 comprehension is limited to routine communications in optimum conditions. A pilot or controller at this level would not be proficient enough to understand the full range of radiotelephony communications, including unexpected events, substandard speech	As with all Operational Level 4 descriptors, comprehension is not expected to be perfectly accurate in all instances. However, pilots or air traffic controllers will need to have strategies available which allow them to ultimately comprehend the unexpected or unusual communication. Unmarked or complex textual	Level 5 users achieve a high degree of detailed accuracy in their understanding of aeronautical radiotelephony communications. Their understanding is not hindered by the most frequently encountered non-standard dialects or regional accents, nor by the less well-structured messages that are associated	Level 6 users achieve a high degree of detailed accuracy and flexibility in their understanding of aeronautical radiotelephony communications regardless of the situation or dialect used. They further have the ability to discern a meaning which is
behaviours or inferior radio reception.	relations are occasionally misunderstood or missed. The descriptor of Operational Level 4 under "Interactions" clarifies the need for clarification strategies. Failure to understand a clearly communicated unexpected communication, even after seeking clarification, should result in the assignment of a lower proficiency level assessment.	with unexpected or stressful events.	not made obvious or explicit ("read between the lines"), using tones of voice, choice of register, etc., as clues to unexpressed meanings.

### 3.6.2.6. Interactions

Because radiotelephony communications take place in a busy environment, the communications of air traffic controllers and pilots must not only be clear, concise and unambiguous, but appropriate

responses must be delivered efficiently and a rapid response time is expected. The interactions skill refers to this ability, as well as to the ability to initiate exchanges and to identify and clear up misunderstandings.

<p><b>Pre-operational 3:</b> Responses 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.</p>	<p><b>Operational 4:</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>Extended 5:</b> Responses are immediate, appropriate and informative. Manages the speaker/listener relationship effectively.</p>	<p><b>Expert 6:</b> Interacts with ease in nearly all situations. Is sensitive to verbal and nonverbal cues and responds to them appropriately.</p>
<p>The interaction features at this level are such that communication lacks concision and efficiency. Misunderstandings and nonunderstandings are frequent leading to possible breakdowns in communication. Speakers at this level will not gain the confidence of their interlocutors.</p>	<p>A pilot or air traffic controller who does not understand an unexpected communication must be able to communicate that fact. It is much safer to query a communication, to clarify, or even to simply acknowledge that one does not understand rather than to allow silence to mistakenly represent comprehension. At Operational Level 4, it is acceptable that comprehension is not perfect 100 per cent of the time when dealing with unexpected situations, but Level 4 speakers need to be skilled at checking, seeking confirmation, or clarifying a situation or communication.</p>	<p>Interactions at this level are based on high levels of comprehension and fluency. While skills in checking, seeking confirmation and clarification remain important, they are less frequently deployed. On the other hand speakers at this level are capable of exercising greater control over the conduct and direction of the conversation.</p>	<p>Expert speakers display no difficulties in reacting or initiating interaction. They are additionally able to recognize and to use non-verbal signs of mental and emotional states (for example, intonations or unusual stress patterns). They display authority in the conduct of the conversation.</p>





## Appendix A Application and Assessment Report

Application and Assessment Report					
<b>Numele solicitantului</b> Applicant's last name:		<b>Prenumele:</b> First name:		<b>Adresa și telefon nr.:</b> Tel. No:	
English language proficiency for aeronautical communication.		Nota Mark		Data și semnătura Date, signature	
Part 1( Listening part)					
Part2 (Speaking part)					
<b>Admis</b> Passed		<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Admis partial</b> Partly passed		<input type="checkbox"/>
			<b>Respins</b> Failed		<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

.....

.....

.....

Rezultatele primei reexaminări/ Results of the first re-examination

English language proficiency for aeronautical communication.	Nota Mark	Data și semnătura Date, signature
Part 1( Listening part)		
Part2 (Speaking part)		
<b>Admis</b> Passed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Admis partial</b> Partly passed
		<b>Respins</b> Failed
		<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

.....

.....

.....

Rezultatele a doua reexaminări/ Results of the second re-examination

English language proficiency for aeronautical communication.	Nota Mark	Data și semnătura Date, signature
Part 1( Listening part)		
Part2 (Speaking part)		
<b>Admis</b> Passed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Admis partial</b> Partly passed
		<b>Respins</b> Failed
		<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

.....

.....
.....

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT REPORT Nr \_\_\_\_\_

(Assessment based on Holistic Descriptors & ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale, Annex 1)

**Candidate's name** \_\_\_\_\_

Part1	Level
Listening / comprehension	

Part2		Level awarded	Agreed Part 2 level	Third assessor required
1 Assessor name				Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
2 Assessor name				

	Level
General assessment:	

### ASSESSORS:

\_\_\_\_\_  
( Signature / Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
( Signature / Name)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Aeroport, MD-2026, Chişinău Tel: 52-91-65, Fax: 52-91-18 e-mail: info@caa.md


## Assessor sheet Part 2.

## English Language Proficiency Test (Speaking part)

Candidate name:	Date of test:	Test version:																												
Assessor name:	Assessor role: OPE/ELE																													
<b>Task 1. Introduction. Duration – up to 6-7 minutes</b>																														
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<b>Task 2 (a+b). Communication between the pilot and the ATC. Duration – up to 6-7 minutes</b>																														
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<b>Task 3. Picture description Duration – up to 6-7 minutes</b>																														
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P	S	V	F	C	I																									

\* The candidate should demonstrate proficiency to at least Level 4 in all skill areas of the ICAO Rating Scale in order to receive an overall Level 4 rating.  
 \*\* The final mark/level given to the candidate by OPE & ELE shall coincide, otherwise a 3rd examiner shall rate the candidate after listening to the recording.

**Example of Certificate:**

CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA		
ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY FOR AERONAUTICAL COMMUNICATION		
<b>Certificate of English Language Proficiency</b>		
This is to certify that:		
<b>Name , Last name</b>		
has achieved <b>ICAO Level 4</b>		
Test assessors:		Expiration date:

---

## Appendix B Glossary of Basic and Complex Structures

### Basic structures:

- Articles

- Adverbs of frequency

Always, Generally, Usually, Often, Sometimes, Seldom, Never, etc.

- Comparison of adjectives

- Discourse markers

Actually, Basically, Anyway, (and) yeah (more and more frequent), Listen, I mean, Let's see/Let me see, Like, Oh, Now, Okay, So, Well, You know, You see, You know what I mean, It is true, Of course, But, Still, (and) by the way, Besides, Another thing is, On top of that, So, Then, First(ly), Second(ly), etc., First of all, In the first/second place, Finally, In the end, In short

- Modal verbs

Can, May, Must, Have Got to, Should, Ought to, Would, Could, Might, Needn't, Don't have to, Mustn't

- Numbers (cardinal and ordinal)

- Passive voice

Simple present

Simple past

- Position of direct and indirect objects: Bob sent some flowers to his girlfriend.

Bob sent his girlfriend some flowers.

- Question words for describing people and things and for requesting information What? Who? Which? Why? Where? How?

- Relative pronouns

Who, which, whose

- Tenses

Present simple

I do

Present continuous

I am doing

Past simple

I did

Past continuous

I was doing

Present perfect simple

I have done

Present perfect continuous

I have been doing

Simple future tense

Will

Future

Going to

- There to be

Present, past, future

## Complex structures

- Adjectives

Gradable and ungradable adjectives

Fairly angry (gradable)

Totally amazed (ungradable)

Prepositions after adjectives Angry

about, afraid of, etc.

Adjectives + that clause or to + infinitive

Enough, sufficiently, too + adjective

The sooner the better, etc.

- Adverbs and conjunctions Comment adverbs

apparently, frankly, rightly Viewpoint

adverbs

biologically, ideologically, morally Adverbial

clauses of time

before, until, after, as soon as, before, when, while, hardly, no sooner, scarcely Giving

reasons

seeing that, since, in as much as, due to, owing to, with so many people ill

- Clauses

Relative clauses

Participle clauses

-ing, -ed and being -ed

Participle clauses with adverbial meaning Opening

her eyes, the baby began to cry.

Formed 25 years ago next month, the aviation club ...

- Conditionals

Real and unreal, all tenses

- Discourse markers

Mind you, On the whole, Broadly speaking, By and large, Certainly, May, stressed "Do", On the one hand, On the other hand, While, Whereas, However, Even so, Nonetheless, Nevertheless, All the same, Although, Though, Even though, If, In spite of, Despite, Incidentally, Moreover, Furthermore, In addition, Additionally, (and) what is more, Therefore, As a result, Consequently, (Quite) on the contrary, To begin with, To start with, For one thing, For another thing, In conclusion, Briefly

- Infinitives and gerunds

- Modals

Will and would to show willingness, likelihood and certainty

Will and would to show habits

Modals + past participle to express criticism or regret

- Nouns

Compound nouns

Uncountable nouns with zero article

e.g. good advice

- Passive voice

Present perfect/past perfect/future/continuous forms in general

- Phrasal verbs:

They wanted to **get** the meeting **over with**.

---

The programme's lack of success could be **put down to** poor management. Boeing **came in for** a lot of criticism over their new plan.

- Quantifiers

One of + plural

One of the best things

Each (of) and every + singular verb except when follows the noun or pronoun it refers to.

- Questions

Reporting questions

Negative questions

Question tags

- Reflexive pronouns

Herself, himself, themselves

One and ones

There's my car — the green one. So

I think so.

So I hear.

Do so

She won the competition in 1997 and seems likely to do so again.

Such

Such behaviour is unacceptable in most schools.

- Reported speech

They promised that they would help him the next day.

He told me it wasn't going to be ready by Friday.

- Verb tenses

Past Perfect

I had done

Past perfect continuous

I had been doing

Present continuous

For the future

Future continuous

I will be doing

Future perfect

I will have been doing The

future seen from the past

was going to, etc.

Intentionally Left Blank