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The influence of ICAO Level 6 on stakeholders' perceptions of and attitudes to quality of communications

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THE INFLUENCE OF ICAO LEVEL 6 ON STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF AND ATTITUDES TO QUALITY OF COMMUNICATIONS

AGENDA

0. BACKGROUND

1. WHAT IS LEVEL 6? >>>> TASK

2. HOW IS LEVEL 6 DEFINED? >>>> TASK

3. ICAO COMPATIBLE LEVEL 6 TEST FORMATS >>>> TASK

**4. THE ISSUE OF 'NATIVE SPEAKERS' AND FIRST LANGUAGE'
>>>> TASK**

5. SUMMARY

The Level 6 qualification has more to do with employability than safety.

You have to be a native speaker to get Level 6!

If we offer L6 tests, all language examiners will soon be out of a job!

In certain countries pilots automatically get Level 6.

You can't get a job as a pilot any more if you don't offer a L6 language qualification

Level 6 is simply a question of status. We are not interested in L6 testing.

BACKGROUND

- 1. AT PRESENT ONLY THREE LEVEL 6 TEST CENTRES IN GERMANY**
- 2. DESIGN OF LEVEL 6 TEST MATERIALS AND EXPERIENCE AS A SENIOR EXAMINER FOR LEVEL 6 SINCE 2010**
- 3. SINCE 2013 FOR AIR BERLIN**
- 4. TO DATE: OVER 150 CANDIDATES FOR LEVEL 6**
- 5. TARGET GROUP:**
 - + AIR BERLIN PILOTS**
 - + EXTERNAL COMMERCIAL PILOTS**
 - + TRAINEES**
 - + PRIVATE PILOTS**

1. What is Level 6?

4.5.9 It should also be noted that **the descriptors for Expert Level 6 exceed the demands of aeronautical radiotelephony communications.** Level 6 has a very wide coverage since **it is intended to account for most first-language speakers with native or native-like proficiency as well as second- or foreign-language speakers with a high level of proficiency.** Attainment of Level 6 should be considered as being **beyond the realistic expectations of most second- or foreign-language learners.** Furthermore, it is **not an indispensable requirement for successful aeronautical communication.**

1. What is Level 6?

PART II: ICAO LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY RATING SCALE (Attachment A to Annex 1)

1.1 Expert, extended and operational levels

LEVEL	<p><i>PRONUNCIATION</i> Assumes a dialect and/or accent intelligible to the aeronautical community.</p>	<p><i>STRUCTURE</i> Relevant grammatical structures and sentence patterns are determined by language functions appropriate to the task.</p>	<p><i>VOCABULARY</i></p>	<p><i>FLUENCY</i></p>	<p><i>COMPREHENSION</i></p>	<p><i>INTERACTIONS</i></p>
Expert 6	<p>Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation, though possibly influenced by the first language or regional variation, almost never interfere with ease of understanding.</p>	<p>Both basic and complex grammatical structures and sentence patterns are consistently well controlled.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Comprehension is consistently accurate in nearly all contexts and includes comprehension of linguistic and cultural subtleties.</p>	<p>Interacts with ease in nearly all situations. Is sensitive to verbal and non-verbal cues and responds to them appropriately.</p>

1. What is Level 6?

Does this cover all the components required for effective communication?

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<p>FLUENCY</p>	<p>COMPREHENSION</p>	<p>INTERACTIONS</p>

Strategic Competence

WORKSHOP TOPIC AREA 1:

TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THE SIX ICAO CATEGORIES SUFFICIENT FOR A COMPLETE DEFINITION OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AT EXPERT LEVEL 6?

SHOULD INTERLOCUTOR-ASSIST STRATEGIES BE INTEGRATED IN THE DEFINITIONS? EITHER AS A SEPARATE CATEGORY OR AS AN ADDITIONAL ITEM IN ONE OF THE EXISTING SIX CATEGORIES?

TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THIS NON-INCLUSION AFFECT THE VALIDITY OF THE TEST CONSTRUCT?

ARE THESE INTERLOCUTOR-ASSIST STRATEGIES TESTABLE?

2. How is Level 6 defined?

LEVEL 6: 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.

2. How is Level 6 defined?

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“native and non-native speakers”

2. How is Level 6 defined?

Descriptor

Expert 6: Pronunciation

Pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation, though possibly influenced by the first language or regional variation, **almost never** interfere with ease of understanding

Explanation

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.

"native and non-native speakers"

2. How is Level 6 defined?

Descriptor

Expert 6: Comprehension

Comprehension is **consistently** accurate in **nearly all** contexts and includes comprehension of linguistic and cultural subtleties.










"consistently"

"nearly all"

Explanation

Level 6 users achieve **a high degree of detailed accuracy and flexibility** in their understanding of aeronautical radio-telephony communications regardless of the situation or dialect used. They further have the ability to discern a meaning which is not made obvious or explicit ("read between the lines"), using tones of voice, choice of register, etc., as clues to unexpressed meanings.

2. How is Level 6 defined?

 Rated Speech Samples Developed for ICAO by ICAEA 										
<p>Notes: • Samples can be reorganised by clicking on the table headings (task description, professional background, etc) • Samples can be played from this page OR opened in a separate window by clicking the sample file name, where they can be downloaded as well</p>										
<i>File Name</i>	<i>Task Description</i>	<i>Professional Background</i>	<i>First Language</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>I</i>
46 L5Hungarian2 	gives a verbal report on the events in the first task to the interlocutor who plays the role of supervisor. The first part of this sample features a voice-only role play task simulating tower RT communications. The candidate takes the role of ATC and the interlocutor takes the role of the pilots. After the RT role play, there is a face-to-face task in which the candidate gives a verbal report on the events in the first task to the interlocutor who plays the role of supervisor.	ATC	Hungarian	06:50	5	5	5	5	5	5
47 L5Hungarian3 	The first part of this sample features a voice-only role play task simulating tower RT communications. The candidate takes the role of ATC and the interlocutor takes the role of the pilots. After the RT role play, there is a face-to-face task in which the candidate gives a verbal report on the events in the first task to the interlocutor who plays the role of supervisor.	ATC	Hungarian	07:12	5	5	5	5	5	5
48 L5Polish1 	The first part of this sample features a voice-only role play task simulating tower RT communications. The candidate takes the role of ATC and the interlocutor takes the role of the pilots. After the RT role play, there is a face-to-face task in which the candidate gives a verbal report on the events in the first task to the interlocutor who plays the role of supervisor.	ATC	Polish	05:17	5	5	5	5	5	5
49 L5Russian1 	In this task, the candidate describes a picture and then responds to discussion prompts presented by the interlocutor.	ATC	Russian	04:10	5	5	5	5	5	5
50 L5Russian2 	This is a face-to-face discussion task. The interlocutor asks the candidate a series of work-related discussion questions.	Pilot	Russian	04:55	5	6	6	6	6	5
51 L5Russian3 	This is a face-to-face discussion task. The interlocutor asks the candidate a series of work-related discussion questions.	Pilot	Russian	04:26	5	5	5	5	5	5
52 L6French1 	In this task, the candidate describes a picture and then responds to discussion prompts presented by the interlocutor.	ATC	French	04:06	6	6	6	6	6	6

WORKSHOP TOPIC AREA 2A:

TO EXEMPLIFY CERTAIN DECISIONS, RATHER THAN THE FOLLOWING L6 PERFORMANCE.

TO INCREASE THE STANDARDIZATION OF RATING AND TO ENSURE AS HOMOGENEOUS AN INTERPRETATION OF THE COMPETENCE LEVELS AS POSSIBLE, HOW COULD STANDARD-SETTING PROVIDE GREATER ACCURACY IN RATING LANGUAGE PERFORMANCE?

3. ICAO compatible test format

What requirements regarding test format are implicit and explicit in the ICAO descriptors?

- 1. Aviation environment**
- 2. Two different types of speaking task: dialogic and monologic**
- 3. The task must elicit a certain degree of complicity**
- 4. There must be sudden changes in topic.**
- 5. Topics must be a variety of familiar and non-familiar.**
- 6. Topics should pressurize by involvement.**
- 7. Topics should provide intercultural potential.**

4. The 'Native-speaker'

Assessment of language proficiency at Expert Level 6

6.2.8.11 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 or oral interactions with licensing authorities, recruitment officers or flight examiners), supported by documented evidence about an individual's linguistic history. This history, to be determined by State authorities, could include:

4. The 'Native-speaker'

Assessment of language proficiency at Expert Level 6

- 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.

4. The 'Native-speaker'

Assessment of language proficiency at Expert Level 6

6.2.8.13 Although the relative ease of assessing proficiency at the Expert level allows flexibility in the way such assessments may be made, the demonstration of language proficiency is nonetheless an important element of the formal process that leads to the issuance of a pilot or an air traffic controller licence. It is therefore essential that each State establish appropriate procedures to ensure that the results of the assessment are properly documented. **Because of its potential safety impact, and since the outcome of a Level 6 assessment is that no further demonstration of language proficiency will be required throughout a career, the informal validation of Level 6 proficiency without documented evidence is not recommended.**

4. The 'Native-speaker'

WORKSHOP TOPIC AREA 4:

THE QUESTION OF NATIVE-SPEAKER COMPETENCE VERSUS NON-NATIVE-SPEAKER COMPETENCE AND/OR FIRST-LANGUAGE AND SECOND LANGUAGE AND HOW TO DEAL WITH THESE GROUPS IS A (VERY) GREY AREA.

ARE THERE ANY NON-BUREAUCRATIC ALTERNATIVES THAT MIGHT 'SQUARE THE CIRCLE'?

5. Summary



**Thanks for the positive and
cooperative atmosphere!**

**I hope it has been informative and
productive for everybody!**