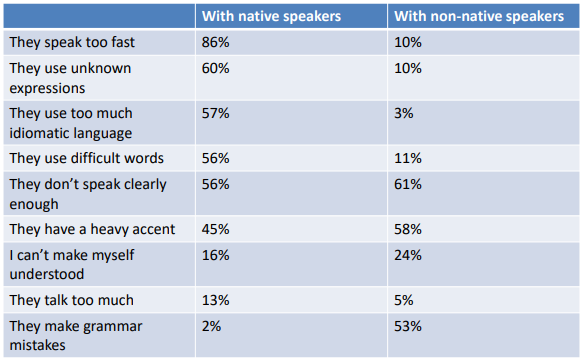
In the working group 1 attended 16 participants from 8 countries with different background and experience: language specialists, pilots, VTS operators with marine background.

The Chairman opened the meeting by introducing herself and then asked each member of the group to introduce himself/herself and to explain their individual background and expertise.

A presentation was conducted regarding the usage of professional English in maritime field. Accordingly to a research conducted by KIMFT (Korean Institute of Maritime Fisheries and Technology) on SMCP, lots of words are daily used by VTSO but not stated on SMCP. An example is the usage of the words “Sir”, “Copy” that are quite common in daily VTS phrases. Moreover the usage of some words, such as “anchor” and “tanker”, could cause confusion and misinterpretation due to the similarity. Some words could have different meaning: verbs, adjective, noun, and it couldn’t be an easy task for the VTSO catch the meaning because it depends of context. In order to achieve an effective communication the words used, in a professionalism contest, should be: intelligible, comprehensible end easily interpretable, some example were provided such as the usage of the words “Anchor” and “Copy”.

A very interesting discussion was held about factors that could cause confusion among native and non-native speakers dialogues. Coming from KIMFT research, the following table summarise some of those factors:



At the conclusion of the speech, the objectives of the working group 1 were remarked:

1. Explore and document key issues that contribute to communication difficulties from the perspective of:

* non-native English speakers communication with native and non-native speakers, and
* native English speakers communication with non-native speakers

1. Develop principles for VTS message construction and the development of common phraseology for clear and unambiguous communication;
2. Identify and explore how the harmonized use of English VTS voice communication phrases between ship and shore for native and non-native speakers can be best utilized by international standards.

Accordingly to the mentioned goals, was requested to the participants of the Working Group 1 to compile phrases on scenario based and for this reason several scenarios, coming from IALA Guideline 1089, were prepared and distributed among participants. Before starting with the collecting of the phraseology some ground rules were showed and discussed. The following ground rules were extracted from IALA Guideline 1132, with the aim to produce standardised, procedural and shorter communication:



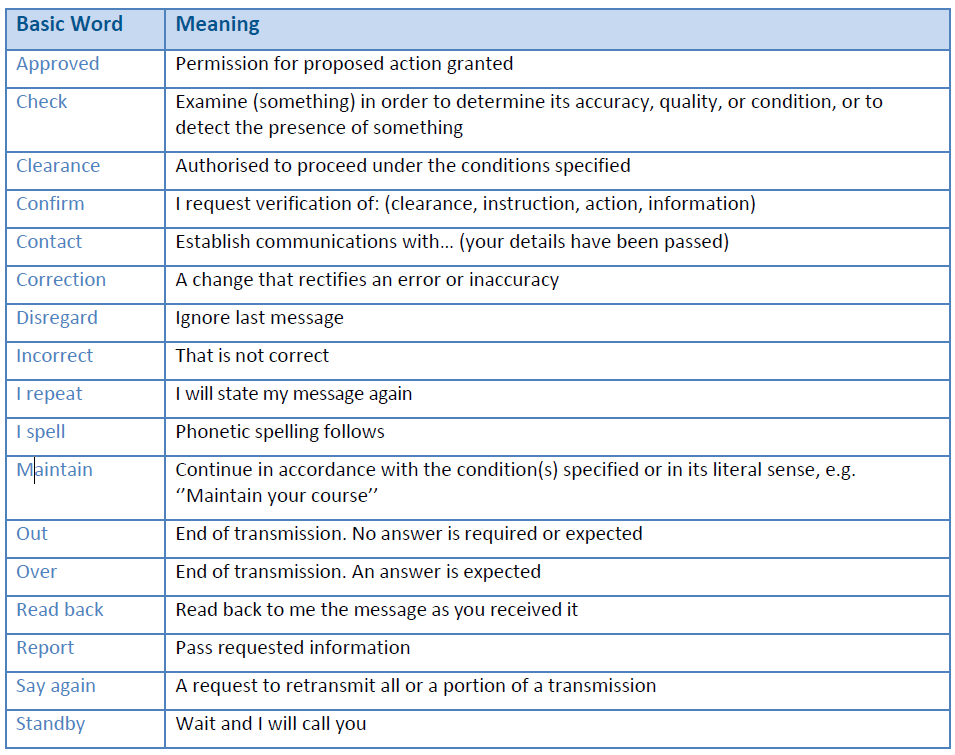
* Structure of the message

The use of structure provides consistent message formulation and conveys a professional image to stakeholders. This technique also provides familiarity to the receiver, setting the tone of a safe and efficient VTS. VTS VHF communications should therefore be structured in order to give the best chance of understanding to the receiver and to keep the message as concise as possible. Moreover the structured message could be used during on the job training and it can reduce the total amount of training. Some examples were provided:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

* Basic Words

Basic words standardised ways of saying common things in phrases which promote consistency among operators. The basic words comprised in IALA guideline 1132 were recalled.



* Short and simple sentences

In order to reduce the length of the phrase, some sentences in VTS communication should be removed if the meaning is clearable and implicit (e.g. according to my equipment, my radar indicates that, pay attention etc.).

Some contributions from participants were offered in this particular matter and in particular was remarked the importance of maintaining the communication very short in order to:

* + avoid congestion in VHF frequencies especially in a busy area or in a demanding port;
  + preserve the VTSO Situational Awareness related to the traffic image.
* Grammar

The use of VTS communication does not need to be linguistically precise (e.g. the omission of the “to be” verb and prepositions may be allowable) but it must be comprehended by different cultures and needs to be unambiguous for all parties involved.

* One topic one sentence

In order to achieve a more comprehensive communication the phrase should contain one topic only, without using complex structure, and/or subordinate phrases, trying to keep the subject, verb, and object as near to one another as possible.

* Active form

The phrase should be structured using the active form. Otherwise, in the passive form, the attention of the receiver will be focussed on the object of the phrase and not on the subject:

* + Passive form: “Vessel B is being overtaken by Vessel A in position XXXX”
  + Active form: “Vessel A is overtaking vessel B in position XXXX”
* Make sentence positive

The phrase should be structured avoiding the negative form (“do not”) but seeking a word that has as a meaning of refusal. e.g. Instead of Vessels are not allowed, Clearance declined/rejected.

A valid input was discussed regarding the traffic clearance and if “clearance” is the right word to use as VTS authorisation or others words exist to better define and describe this concept. It was recognised that the word “clearance” is well known and understood world-wide as part of the SMCP vocabulary. Secondly was proposed to seek a new word to express the clearance rejection and the proposal was to use the negative form “DO NOT followed by the action e.g. “DO NOT enter”.

* Abbreviations

Many abbreviations are so commonly used in normal speech that they are more familiar than their original unabbreviated form. The use of such abbreviations in radio transmissions is to be encouraged.

* Message Markers

In order to improve radio discipline, the VTSO should use the message markers, to keep the communication short, to the point and clear for all users. There are eight Message Markers, but only seven should be used by VTS:

* INFORMATION
* WARNING
* ADVICE
* INSTRUCTION
* QUESTION
* ANSWER
* REQUEST
* Prowords

Some words, placed before the Message Markers, better define and emphasize the content of the messages, supplement the message markers and prepare the receiver for the content for the message (Traffic Information, Weather Information, Collison Warning).

A productive discussion was held regarding the usage of pro-words and if them give a real benefit to the intelligibility of the phrase or not, in order to maintain the sentence as more concise as possible. It was argued that the use of pro-words could enhance the comprehension of the sentence in case of poor communication or if the receiver doesn’t understand the full sentence. Moreover pro-words could summarise the content of communication at the beginning of the message. At the same time it was debated that a research should help to understand the real benefit of this new structured form.

* Providing positions

In providing positions, it is recommended to use buoys, landmarks, lighthouses first, then cardinal points or cardinal directions and as last case latitude and longitude, especially when the navigation is conducted near the coastline, giving positions in latitude and longitude could disturb the ship master in having a proper look out.

At the same time, place names used should be those on chart or in sailing directions in use. In this subject a very productive discussion was held regarding providing the names in local language. Was listened a radio conversation between a Korean VTS and a ship, where the VTSO provided an anchorage position with bearing and distance from a lighthouse. It was recognised by all participants that for non-Korean speakers is very difficult to understand the Korean name of lighthouse. So the group agreed that in preparing or revising the own standard operative procedures and the relative phrases, the VTS should consider the intelligibility of the landmark’s name in local language and provide information in alternative way such as using true bearing or cardinal direction.

As second point was discussed when a VTSO provide positions of a fixed object or about the surrounded traffic. In this scenario the VTSO should avoid words like ahead of you, port or starboard side or using relative bearing. Instead of those, the VTSO should provide positions through cardinal direction and cardinal points or true bearing and as last chance in latitude and longitude.

* Traffic situations

In providing traffic information the VTSO should address the communication to the Give Way vessel first, as general rule, but a very interesting debating was held regarding the overtaking situation. Overtaking is particular important scenario that should be considered carefully. Accordingly to risk assessment statistics, overtaking is the first cause of collision during the navigation in a traffic separation scheme. The VTSO should act in pro-active way and inform vessels fair in advance. At the same time overtaking is a debating case because the Give Way vessel, as receiver, could consider the traffic information addressed quite obvious and even needless while the Stand On Vessel couldn’t be aware about the developing situation.

An another important discussion was held regarding head on situation, where both vessel are considered Give Way. The group agreed that in this scenario the VTS, in preparing/revising own standard operative procedures and phrases, should determine which factors are eligible to determine the priority of call for providing traffic information, such as ship type, ship leaving a channel or a port etc.

* Read Back

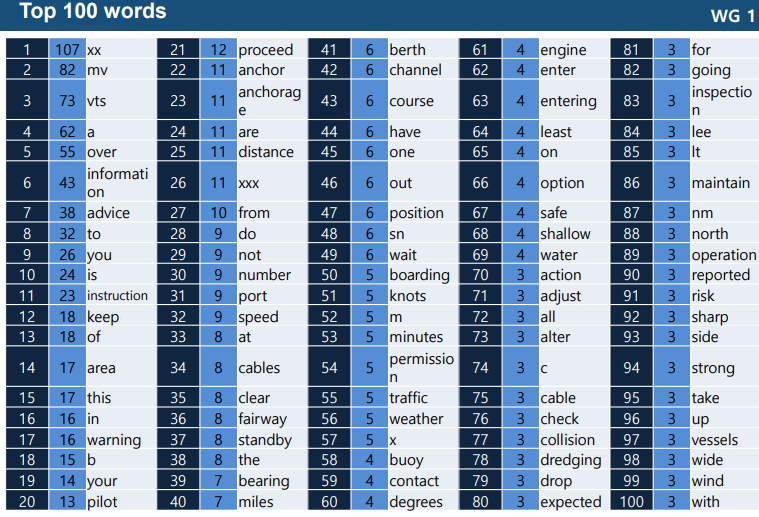
The phrase READ BACK could be considered as powerful feedback tool and can contribute significantly to achieve an effective communication for VTS purposes. There are two main principles for reading back communications: the first principle is to benefit other mariners and the second is to ensure that the message is received correctly. This can be requested by the VTSO using the message: ‘Read back’, it is recommended when the message markers ‘INSTRUCTION, ADVICE or WARNING’ are used by the VTSO

After the discussion of the ground rules the group was dived in 5 sub-groups and for each was provided a list of scenarios, a glossary of SMCP (referred to the particular scenario) and some examples, the last as contribution from Korean Coast Guard.

All phrases were discussed in plenary on Thursday afternoon.

**Conclusions**

As outcome, the Working Group 1 produced 67 different scenarios utilizing 250 different words and a total of 1418 words.



Thanks to a KIMFT software, it was analysed and discussed the most used words that participants selected during the preparation of the phrases, and one of them was “INFORMATION”. This could be considered as a result of the introduction and use of the message markers in VTS.

Although the IALA glossary (annex B Guideline 1132) suggests the use of some words, the group preferred to use others words meanly coming from local procedures, in order to simplify the understandable of the phrase (e.g. “Maintain” and “Keep”). The same consideration could be done for some ground rules (pro-words), phrases (e.g. “stand by engine” and “keep engine ready”) and even between practice and SMCP (e. g. “rig pilot ladder on your lee side” and “rig the pilot ladder on port/starboard side”).

The mentioned key factors drew the attention of the participants on the fact that sometimes there is a difference between human perception and formal standard documentation.

The developed phraseologies were reported in annex A.