

# How Good should a Taxi Driver's English Be?

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## ABSTRACT

This presentation will report on a recent (2009/10) project to develop National Minimum English Standards for taxi driver recruits in Australia. The project arose from the concerns of government authorities responsible for regulating the taxi industry about the English skills of drivers from a non-English-speaking background. The national regulatory authorities decided in 2009 that the International Second Language Proficiency (ISLPR<sup>®</sup>) scale would be used in establishing national standards. One state, Victoria, had been using the ISLPR for some years although there was disagreement among stakeholders about what the acceptable skills profile should be.

The presentation will outline the process that the project team went through in making their recommendations about the minimum levels for Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing. In surveying the language needs of licensed and trainee drivers, they used direct observations (e.g. from in-cab recordings and observations from taxi companies' radio control rooms) and reported data (e.g. from interviews). Documents used as sources of data included messages from control rooms to drivers' computers and the national driver training package. The perspectives of regulatory authorities, managers of taxi companies and trainers were sought, and consumer views (e.g. as expressed in mainstream media) were noted.

The challenge of synthesising the data to arrive at defensible compromises (within the broad context of recruitment needs for a relatively low-paid job) will be discussed. One issue was the gap between the levels that would be sufficient for drivers to cope with routine tasks and the levels that they would need if faced by a situation such as an escalating threat of violence against them. Another was the interplay, often cited during interviews, between language skills and cultural and personality factors.

No statements made in this paper should be seen as expressing the views of Australian, State or Territory Governments, the national taxi industry, or State or Territory jurisdictions.

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## INTRODUCTION

ISLPR Language Services Pty Ltd was contracted in 2009 to provide advice on the language needs of taxi drivers nationally in Australia. In doing so, it is necessary to differentiate between what level of English taxi drivers would ideally have and what is the minimum level that a driver should have on entry to the occupation. Entry requirements, whether to a course of study or an occupation, should be related to the practical needs of the student or worker. The central activity in the project was to identify the English language needs of taxi drivers in their everyday activity and in their training and re-training programmes. In doing so, the project looked at current policies and practices together with the perceptions of the people in the industry as to the needs of drivers. We also tried to observe drivers' needs directly. In light of the needs so established, policy and practice were proposed. Additional information on the methodology will be provided subsequently.

## THE ISLPR<sup>®1</sup>

At some time prior to the project to develop national taxi driver standards, the industry's controlling bodies decided that the standards should be developed in terms of the *International Second Language Proficiency Ratings*, commonly known as the ISLPR<sup>®</sup> [Ingram, D. E. and Elaine Wylie. 1979/2010. *The International Second Language Proficiency Ratings*. Brisbane: ISLPR Language Services]. The earliest version of the ISLPR scale was first released in January 1979 and the research to develop the scale and the procedures by which it is applied in assessing candidates were continued over the last 30 years by Elaine Wylie and David Ingram. Since many people in the audience will be aware of the ISLPR, I will only briefly summarise those aspects pertinent to the project.

The term, ISLPR<sup>®</sup>, is used to identify both a scale and a testing procedure. The focus of the scale and its accompanying assessment procedures is on the practical language ability of, in this case, learners and users of English as a second language (ESL). The scale consists of 12 levels of proficiency from 0 (zero proficiency) to 5 (native-like proficiency), each of which for each macroskill is described in a full page description of language behaviour focussing on the tasks that learners can carry out and how (i.e. in what language forms) they are carried out. Proficiency is defined as the ability to carry out practical language tasks and how those tasks are carried out.

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<sup>1</sup> The ISLPR<sup>®</sup> scale is available from ISLPR Language Services, Level 1, Office Suites, Eight Mile Plains Shopping Centre, cnr Padstow and Warrigal Roads, Eight Mile Plains, Queensland, 4113, Australia; Email: [info@islpr.org](mailto:info@islpr.org). *The ISLPR for Taxi Drivers*, when published, will also be available from this address.

The ISLPR® is adaptive and can be used to assess both general proficiency and proficiency in a specific purpose area, for example, in English for teachers or, in the present case, English for Taxi Drivers.

The standard manner of administering the ISLPR® is in a face-to-face interview of individual candidates by trained testers to assess proficiency in Speaking, Listening and Reading while Writing is assessed by having candidates carry out at least two writing tasks. The purpose of the test is to elicit the candidate's best language behaviour, which is then matched against the detailed descriptors. Though results are characteristically expressed in a numerical profile, e.g. S: 2, L: 2+, R: 2, W: 2+, the numbers and the abbreviated titles of each level in each macroskill are merely shorthand for the full, detailed descriptor. A summary of the ISLPR® together with examples of what candidates can do at each level is provided in an appendix to this paper.

A specific purpose version of the ISLPR for Taxi Drivers is currently being developed [Ingram, D.E., Elaine Wylie and Hilda Maclean. Forthcoming. *International Second Language Proficiency Ratings, Version for Taxi Drivers*. Eight Mile Plains, Brisbane: ISLPR Language Services Pty Ltd. ISBN 978-0-9807820-1-1].

## **PROJECT METHODOLOGY**

In seeking to specify ISLPR standards for the taxi industry, the approach adopted was to observe the language used, the nature of the tasks drivers carry out whether they are native or non-native speakers of English and the language forms required to carry out those tasks. This language was matched against the ISLPR® scale to identify the minimum levels of language proficiency drivers require. Cultural needs were also observed.

In summary,

1. We invited all jurisdictions nationwide to make available whatever data they already held on the language needs of taxi drivers.
2. We sought information on, and reviewed pre-admission requirements for, other occupations with more or less comparable levels of language demands.
3. We recorded and analysed taxi driver interactions with supervisors, operators, passengers and other personnel. In particular, recorders were installed for the duration of a shift in taxis in each of Brisbane and Perth.
4. Supervisors and drivers were interviewed about their experiences on the job to elicit any implications for language skills and any "difficult" situations encountered.
5. Driver interactions were also observed from the central control stations of selected companies. Access was also sought to any recordings of "difficult", situations made by operators and held by the companies.
6. Copies were sought from taxi companies of any written materials that drivers had to produce or read.

Privacy requirements meant that drivers, passengers, taxi companies and most other personnel were not identified in the report and recordings were made only with the prior agreement of all persons involved, especially drivers and their passengers. This obligation also meant that difficult situations with aggressive or unruly passengers were only available from control room recordings and observations. Interviews with supervisors and drivers were also used to elicit information on 'difficult' situations as well as other views they had on the English language needs of drivers.

In light of this data-gathering, needs analysis and the audit of current requirements, policy and practice, language proficiency standards (the NMES or National Minimum English Standards) were proposed as national policy and implications drawn for driver training in language and culture. Implementation procedures were also proposed along with recommendations for testing procedures and the training, accreditation and monitoring of ISLPR<sup>®</sup> testers of taxi drivers. The proposed National Minimum English Standard (NMES) for the registration of taxi drivers thus includes specified standards expressed in ISLPR<sup>®</sup> terms, test administration procedures, and quality assurance procedures.

Responsibility for the project was shared between David Ingram, Elaine Wylie and Hilda Maclean. Hilda acted as a research assistant, seeking documentation on drivers' needs and media reports of incidents involving taxi drivers that were relevant to issues of language proficiency. Elaine was responsible for supervising the data gathering carried out within taxi companies, and David Ingram undertook the data analysis and report-writing. Elaine will now speak to you about the data-gathering.

## **THE NATIONAL STANDARDS: ESSENTIAL COMPROMISES**

The minimum entry levels recommended and adopted as the National Minimum English Standards (NMES) for entry to the taxi industry are ISLPR<sup>®</sup> S:2+, L:3, R:2, W:1+. These levels were intended as entry levels with S:3, L:3+, R:3, W:2+ being preferable goals as drivers gain more experience and enhance their language through experience. The report provides a long discussion on why these levels were recommended based on specific examples from the data gathering undertaken.

In proposing "National Minimum English Standards", it was necessary to make certain compromises in order to recommend levels that would meet industry needs and the general public's expectations without having an unduly adverse effect on either the industry or the demographic from which taxi drivers are drawn. Hence it was necessary to take into account the language needs of taxi drivers but also the need to maintain recruitment levels and the need to set levels that give potential drivers some hope of achieving the requirements. If, for example, levels were set too high, not only would it severely damage recruitment but it would set up a situation in which persons who would otherwise be likely recruits would be precluded from ever reaching the entry level with serious impact on their socialisation and language development.

Essential compromises also arise from other considerations. First, the everyday minimal language needs of taxi drivers are, in fact, quite low. In one sense, all they need to be able to do is to understand the passengers' request to go to a particular location, to ask questions to clarify that if necessary, to read the often codified messages that appear on their in-car computer screens, and to fill out forms which, in most cases, can be filled out with the assistance of other drivers or supervisors. However, at the opposite extreme, they need to be able to use appropriate language to calm down aggressive or drunken passengers, to understand what might be said in a great variety of accents (both native and non-native), and to know whether a group of passengers are merely excited or threatening. For the former purpose, a proficiency as low as 1+ in the relevant macroskill would probably suffice. For the latter purpose, drivers with a proficiency as high as S:4, L:4, R:4, W:4 might still be unable to cope.

In other words, there are factors other than language proficiency which enable a driver to cope with threatening or aggressive situations, to know whether they are in fact dangerous to himself or to the cab, and to act appropriately. Many drivers, both native and non-native, told us that most situations can be handled if the driver acts calmly and is firm and non-confrontational. In other words, a variety of personality factors are just as important as, or even more important than, language proficiency.

In addition, cultural factors must also be considered. In fact, the project was specifically to propose ISLPR levels and the ISLPR does not attempt to provide a measurement of acculturation. There are, nevertheless, many situations in which cultural understanding is of vital importance in the everyday life of a taxi driver. Situations that the project personnel observed themselves or that were reported to them included, for example, noisy teenagers in the back of the cab who were actually happy and joking but, if the language or the associated cultural issues were not understood, the driver could have felt threatened and could have acted accordingly. Another example was a female passenger whose language was riddled with expletives but who, in fact, was far from aggressive; there were also instances of female passengers who offered (or could be interpreted as offering) services other than monetary in return for the trip. On the other hand, situations were quoted to the project team in which a Moslem driver refused to accept money handed to him by a female passenger, insisting that it be placed on the seat rather than risk making contact with her hand and other drivers who, contrary to the law, refused to allow seeing-eye dogs in their cabs.

One might assume that, if drivers are given an appropriate English course designed for taxi drivers, appropriate cultural information would be obtained at the same time as language proficiency. One could be tempted, therefore, to set a high proficiency level on the assumption that this would bring a high level of cultural understanding. Alternatively, though it would have been outside the terms of reference of the project, one might recommend a comprehensive culture course for drivers. Even then, however, the difference between the stereotypical Australian culture which would probably be taught and the actual culture (or cultures) encountered in the real life experience of a taxi driver will be considerable and a more complete cultural understanding and, in particular, sensitivity is likely only as the learner interacts with a diverse cross-section of the community. In other words, rather than setting an inappropriately high entry proficiency for new NESB drivers, it seemed better to

make a compromise recommendation accepting that some situations might arise where the driver cannot cope. For such extreme situations, it is necessary that the taxi companies ensure that there are ready means for a driver to call for assistance. In fact, the project team observed some situations in which the controller was able to intervene and speak to the passengers or, in extreme cases, to call other drivers or the emergency services to intervene.

## **IMPLEMENTATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE**

**The Testing Procedure:** It is not the place in this paper to discuss the standard ISLPR assessment procedure. It is important to emphasise, however, that the ISLPR<sup>®</sup> must be administered by trained testers supported by an appropriate quality assurance process. Two aspects of testing for taxi drivers will be mentioned here: the form of the language that should be the subject of the test and whether a full ISLPR rating should be given or threshold testing be used.

Though a version of the ISLPR scale for taxi drivers is currently being developed, it is necessary to consider whether the test should be for general proficiency or for specific purpose proficiency for taxi drivers. When potential drivers are tested for entry to the occupation prior to undertaking a training course, the test should be of general proficiency. However, if the test is taken after training during which drivers can be expected to have been introduced to language forms commonly occurring in their day-to-day activity, then it is legitimate for the test to be given in the context of the language used in the taxi industry. In any case, most of the interaction in the cabs has to be considered to be in general, non-specific language and specific-purpose language is more likely to occur in reading where drivers need to be familiar with the laws and regulations or in listening where company or technology specific codes are used.

In most testing, each macroskill is rated against the scale with one of 12 proficiency levels being assigned from 0 to 5; this enables implications to be drawn for training programmes and allows future development goals to be set. However, a threshold approach can also be adopted, i.e. in the case of the NMES, the aim of the test is, initially at least, to assess whether or not a candidate meets the requirements for registration as a taxi driver, i.e. the outcome of the test can be an indication that the candidate has a speaking proficiency of at least S:2+, a listening proficiency of at least L:3, a reading proficiency of at least R:2, and a writing proficiency of at least W:1+. This “threshold approach” is shorter and less exacting than the regular approach but the choice of which approach should be adopted really depends on the use to be made of the end results. Consequently, the project report left the decision as to which approach should be used to each jurisdiction or company to determine.

**Quality Assurance and Tester Training:** The validity and reliability of the ISLPR<sup>®</sup> and its testing procedures depend on the quality of the testers, the quality of their training, and the implementation of a strong quality assurance system. Testers should be well educated persons, preferably with a minimum of a Bachelor degree and should, desirably, be trained ESL teachers or have other training in language as part of their degree studies. Alternatively, they should be able to demonstrate the

necessary understanding of language and culture and of testing to be able to cope adequately with ISLPR<sup>®</sup> testing.

The minimum training for ISLPR<sup>®</sup> testers is the “Introduction to the ISLPR<sup>®</sup>” offered by ISLPR Language Services (ILS). It is typically a 20-hour course with an introduction to the theory underlying the ISLPR<sup>®</sup> and its testing methods, a detailed study of the scale, and practice in testing and rating candidates. Participants who demonstrate sufficient ability to conduct high quality interviews and to rate reliably may be accredited to conduct ISLPR<sup>®</sup> tests, subject to agreed conditions including quality assurance (QA).

The usual QA procedures applied by ILS require that all tests be check-marked by a senior tester with the final rating approved by one of the authors where the two testers disagree. Where similar QA arrangements are implemented, licensing arrangements have also been put in place authorising the use of the ISLPR<sup>®</sup> trade mark and quality assuring the test results. Testers submit an agreed number of their videorecorded tests for feedback and evaluation and, provided that the interviewers and ratings are of an acceptable standard, ILS accredits the testers for an agreed period. Whether such QA procedures are implemented in the taxi industry nationally, as they already are in Victoria, will depend on the various State and Territory jurisdictions.

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## Appendix

### SUMMARY TABLE OF THE ISLPR®

The following table provides the number and short name of each proficiency level used in the ISLPR® and the introductory summary description from the “General Description of Language Behaviour” of each level. The full description of the proficiency at each level is much longer with each description of each macroskill (speaking, listening, reading and writing) at each level (except 2+, 3+ and 4+) filling an A4 page in three columns, headed “General Description of Language Behaviour”, “Examples of Language Behaviour”, and “Comment”. The same key introductory description is used for each macroskill at each level. In the table below, the macroskills are grouped together at each level since the same number, name and key description apply to each one at that level. A full proficiency statement identifies each macroskill separately, e.g. S:2+, L:3, R:2, W:1+.

Number	Name	Short Description of Language Behaviour	Examples of Language Use at this Level	Elements of the ISLPR® Descriptors Cited in the Report	Taxi Driver Tasks identified in the Report
S:0, L:0, R:0, W:0	Zero Proficiency	Unable to communicate in the language.	Unable to use the language for any purpose.		
S:0+, L:0+, R:0+, W:0+	Formulaic Proficiency	Able to perform in a very limited capacity within the most immediate, predictable areas of own need, using essentially formulaic language.	Produces or understands mainly single word utterances or simple formulae in predictable areas of need.		Gives basic greetings and farewell for courtesy purposes.
S:1-, L:1-, R:1-, W:1-	Minimum ‘Creative’ Proficiency	Able to satisfy own immediate, predictable needs, using predominantly formulaic language.	Can make simple material purchases or give predictable information about self or immediate others.	R: Recognises all of the letters of the printed form of the alphabet (both upper and lower case) and can name most of them. Is aware of the more frequent sound-symbol relationships, and is able to recode some unfamiliar phrases into spoken form, but errors are frequent.	Understands basic initial directions, which may be only a street name, a number and a suburb, basic stopping instructions or directions to find a particular location.

Number	Name	Short Description of Language Behaviour	Examples of Language Use at this Level	Elements of the ISLPR® Descriptors Cited in the Report	Taxi Driver Tasks identified in the Report
S:1, L:1, R:1, W:1	Basic Transactional Proficiency	Able to satisfy own basic everyday transactional needs.	Can make basic transactions in familiar shops, institutions, public transport, restaurant, or in very basic social interactions (e.g. making an appointment).	<p>R: Can understand a wide range of regulatory, warning and directional signs in public places (e.g. traffic signs, shop designations, and public transport destinations).</p> <p>Can scan lists (e.g. basic menus using essentially English terms or well established borrowings, timetables, TV programs, tables of contents) and isolate information required.</p>	<p>Asks for address clarification.</p> <p>Uses an index and is familiar with the order of the English alphabet.</p> <p>Fills in application forms and renewals, daily worksheets, BAS statements for the ATO, Transport Subsidy Scheme and Cabcharge/credit card dockets with assistance.</p>
S:1+, L:1+, R:1+, W:1+	Transactional Proficiency	Able to satisfy own simple everyday transactional needs and limited social needs.	In 'vocational' (e.g. work) situations can communicate simple routine needs and provide basic details of less predictable occurrences; in social situations, can make introductions, give basic biographical information, and convey simple intentions or attitudes.	<p>L: Understands very little of even the simplest radio news story presented at a slow pace by the most clearly articulating newsreader ... May have fair understanding of frequently heard simple texts such as community announcements, commercials and program promotions.</p> <p>R: Can understand simple transactional communications on familiar topics ...</p> <p>Can follow simple, clearly set out instructions on product labels and on signs at public facilities such as pay telephones or parking ticket machines, provided key vocabulary is familiar or can be deduced from graphics or from the context.</p> <p>Follows simple, high-frequency relationships expressed by a subordinate clause (e.g.</p>	<p>Draws on assistance when necessary, to complete pro formas and write short reports such as Driver Incident Reports comprehensibly even though not linguistically accurately.</p>

Number	Name	Short Description of Language Behaviour	Examples of Language Use at this Level	Elements of the ISLPR® Descriptors Cited in the Report	Taxi Driver Tasks identified in the Report
S:2, L:2, R:2, W:2	Basic Social Proficiency	Able to satisfy basic social needs, and the requirements of routine situations pertinent to own everyday commerce and recreation and to linguistically undemanding 'vocational' fields	In social situations, can participate in informal conversations on everyday topics in face-to-face situations or on the telephone. In 'vocational' situations, can generally communicate own needs and wishes to those with whom they regularly interact. In academic situations, can give a simple spontaneous recount of a personal experience. Some TAFE courses in some institutions allow entry at this level.	<p>clauses marked by when, because, if).</p> <p>S: ... sustains basic social conversations on everyday topics, routine transactions pertinent to own consumption of goods and services, and routine tasks in a 'vocational' area which does not require high-level or specialised language skills. .. Can not express any significant degree of complexity or abstraction... there may be a significant difference between what the speaker wants or intends to convey and the total message (including purposive and attitudinal elements) that is actually conveyed...Idioms are noticeably lacking or misused. Pronunciation is generally intelligible... Register flexibility is limited. In very familiar situation types, language used may be appropriate to the situation in terms of, for example, level of formality, intimacy and technicality, but this appropriateness is unlikely to be sustained in a wide range of situations involving spontaneous language use ...</p> <p>May sometimes offend native speakers not used to interaction with such learners by unintended blandness or apparent aggressiveness, or irritate by over-deference where informality is expected. Has tentative use of modals such as 'could', 'would', for politeness in requests.</p> <p>Pronunciation is generally intelligible. Undue exertion on the part of the listener is not usually necessary in familiar situation types, although some repetition may be needed when there is relatively little support from the context.</p>	<p>Participates in a general conversation with passengers on everyday non-controversial topics.</p> <p>Reads and understands most of the training modules with trained teacher able to accommodate students with lower proficiency.</p>

Number	Name	Short Description of Language Behaviour	Examples of Language Use at this Level	Elements of the ISLPR® Descriptors Cited in the Report	Taxi Driver Tasks identified in the Report
				<p>On the telephone, can relay a simple, relatively concrete message from someone to a third party ... Will have problems in situations where the information is relatively complex or there is less support from the context (e.g. if required to make a telephone call to report unforeseen events ...).</p> <p>L: When listening to the radio, can get the essential information in simple community announcements within familiar registers, provided they are delivered at low rates of utterance (140 to 160 w.p.m.) with clear articulation and good acoustics. Can get the gist of some radio news stories with the delivery and acoustics described above.</p> <p>R: Has particular problems with any sections of texts where the information is dense (especially where there is little redundancy), or where important meanings are carried by complex or elliptical syntactic forms.</p> <p>... With plenty of time and full contextual support, can follow sequential instructions. ...</p> <p>... can generally get the sense of simple routine bulletins ... For simply-structured but less routine texts such as memos on a new venture and promotional material from a supplier, extensive use of a dictionary and/or other help will generally be needed for reasonable understanding.</p>	

Number	Name	Short Description of Language Behaviour	Examples of Language Use at this Level	Elements of the ISLPR® Descriptors Cited in the Report	Taxi Driver Tasks identified in the Report
				<p>Misses meanings realised by complex or unfamiliar grammatical forms or forms stripped of redundancies such as elliptical passives ... or low-frequency idioms.</p> <p>W: In 'vocational' (e.g. work) situations on an 'in-house' level (e.g. to immediate supervisor) can write informal memos and simple informal reports on routine situations or activities ...</p> <p>Can relay a simple, relatively concrete ... message ... to a third party in writing.</p>	
S:2+, L:2+, R:2+, W:2+	Social Proficiency	Proficiency at this level is significantly better than Level 2 but has not reached Level 3.	TAFE courses in some institutions require 2+ in all macroskills for entry.		Can undertake training with a suitably trained teacher able to accommodate students with lower proficiency.
S:3, L:3, R:3, W:3	Basic 'Vocational' Proficiency	Able to perform effectively in a wide range of informal and formal situations pertinent to social and community life and everyday commerce and recreation, and in situations which are not linguistically demanding in own 'vocational' fields.	Some universities accept this as the minimum level for entry to undergraduate degree programmes.	<p>S: ...conveys fairly precise meanings...however cannot pursue the argument to the complexity, depth, level of precision and/or abstraction that are often required in specialised fields. Gives relatively long narratives or descriptive monologues fairly effectively ... Errors are made ... but they rarely interfere with understanding, and do not generally irritate or amuse native-speaking interlocutors of a similar sociocultural background ... There may be a fairly strong accent, but other elements in utterances are sufficiently standard to compensate for non-standard phonological features, and problems with intelligibility rarely disturb the native speaker...</p> <p>Can generally handle the linguistic aspects of fairly tricky persuasive situations ... and handle</p>	<p>Speaking to calm down an irate or drunken passenger and avoid aggravating a difficult situation.</p> <p>Understands passengers using Broad Australian or who swear or use frequent colloquialisms.</p> <p>Can present a case to the Ombudsman.</p> <p>Reads and understands such documents as:  - Information Bulletins  - Taxi codes of conduct</p>

Number	Name	Short Description of Language Behaviour	Examples of Language Use at this Level	Elements of the ISLPR® Descriptors Cited in the Report	Taxi Driver Tasks identified in the Report
				<p>uncomplicated complaints from a customer or colleague about a product or service.            Can generally handle the linguistic aspects of fairly tricky persuasive situations (e.g. a personal misunderstanding or an undeserved traffic ticket). While learners may not be able to convey exactly what they would like to in such situations, this is often nor obvious to interlocutors. ...</p> <p>Can elaborate own emotional and intellectual attitudes.</p> <p>May [have] a fairly strong accent, but other elements in utterances are sufficiently standard to compensate for non-standard phonological features, and problems with intelligibility rarely disturb the native speaker.</p> <p>In more complicated and/or stressful situations, lack of precision and slower rate of imparting information are likely to frustrate the interlocutor</p> <p>L: Provided the utterance rates and clarity of articulation are normal, and there is little acoustic interference, gets the gist of ... most radio and TV interviews ...</p> <p>Can get the gist of straightforward radio and TV interviews ... provided the speakers do not significantly and/or continually exceed 180 w.p.m. and the speech is coherent and in the target variety or a very closely related variety.</p> <p>In key situations, particularly when under stress</p>	<p>- Information relating to changes in the road rules.</p> <p>Requires the assistance of another person to fully understand and complete a bailment agreement before signing up with an owner.</p>

Number	Name	Short Description of Language Behaviour	Examples of Language Use at this Level	Elements of the ISLPR® Descriptors Cited in the Report	Taxi Driver Tasks identified in the Report
				<p>(e.g. confrontations with angry colleagues or customers) misreading of important verbal and non-verbal signals can cause problems.</p> <p>In situations which involve registers remote from everyday language or from the language of own 'vocational' fields, and particularly when under stress ... is likely to misunderstand key meanings realised by unfamiliar lexis or by structures such as modal or tensed verbs, embedded clauses or question tags.</p>	
S:3+, L:3+, R:3+, W:3+	Basic 'Vocational' Proficiency Plus	Proficiency at this level is significantly better than Level 3 but has not reached Level 4.	Some universities require this as the minimum level for entry to undergraduate degree programmes. Some accept 3+ for entry to postgraduate degree programmes.		
S:4, L:4, R:4, W:4	'Vocational' Proficiency	Able to perform very effectively in almost all situations pertinent to social and community life and everyday commerce and recreation, and generally in almost all situations pertinent to own 'vocational' fields.	Teacher registration authorities in Australia generally require 4 as the minimum level of proficiency in English for a non-native English speaker applying for teacher registration. In some situations, may produce language which is virtually indistinguishable from that of native		Understands passengers' attempts at humour, especially humour with a significant linguistic or cultural component and make appropriate responses.

Number	Name	Short Description of Language Behaviour	Examples of Language Use at this Level	Elements of the ISLPR® Descriptors Cited in the Report	Taxi Driver Tasks identified in the Report
			speakers of the same sociocultural variety.		
S:4+, L:4+, R:4+, W:4+	Advanced 'Vocational' Proficiency	Proficiency at this level is significantly better than Level 4 but has not reached Level 5.	At this level, people are able to operate as effectively as native speakers in most situations with only slight features of the language differentiating one from the other.		
S:5, L:5, R:5, W:5	Native-like Proficiency	Proficiency equivalent to that of a native speaker of the same sociocultural variety.	In even the most complex situations (e.g. delicate diplomatic or business negotiations), no limitations are attributable to language proficiency. In everyday situations and own 'vocational' fields, can convey meaning accurately and fluently in informal consecutive interpreting from the person's first language.		