

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN AVIATION ENGLISH TRAINING AND TESTING

Buenos Aires, September 29th & 30th 2011

INTRODUCTION

The Seminar brought together representatives of a variety of professions within the Aviation community, all there with one aim - to improve the safety of the skies through a new proficiency in the use of English for international aviation. We were privileged to have Nicole Barrette-Sabourin from ICAO and grateful for her interventions and steady guiding hand throughout. Also present were the following representative groups from 24 States (11 from Latin America itself) - teachers and trainers, pilots and air traffic controllers, technical instructors and trainers, licensing authorities and regulators, aviation text book authors, civil aviation authorities, directors of flying schools, managers of training centres, airline representatives, training managers, instructors, university professors, aviation English language experts, testing specialists and researchers.

Well-known Speakers such as Captain Rick Valdes of IFALPA and Comte Eduardo Macadam of APLA honoured us. In all, the seminar attracted 137 registrations from 24 States (Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, China, Columbia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Luxembourg, Paraguay, Peru, Spain, Trinidad & Tobago, Turkey, United Kingdom, Uruguay, United States of America, and Ukraine). There were a number of last minute cancellations so the final participation was 119 from 21 States. The event had a distinctly Latin America stamp on it and was conducted in a warm atmosphere from the opening welcoming speeches to the concluding appreciation of the organisers and speakers. The evidence of the passionate interest in Aviation English by colleagues in Latin America was manifest throughout the proceedings that were characterized by the spontaneity and readiness to exchange ideas by all present. The Seminar was lively, even vibrant with a clear final call for more of the same across Latin America. The 21 States present demonstrated the solidarity of aims of the Aviation English community not only in Latin America, but globally. As a first ICAEA event in Latin America the bar has been set very high.

The Seminar presentations offered a well-balanced mix of informative updates of recent ICAO deliberations and documents, notably Circular 323 on Guidelines for Training and Circular 318 on Language Testing Criteria for Global Harmonization, combined with a series of thought provoking interventions developing the themes of best practice in training and testing led by colleagues from Argentina, Brazil and Cuba. There was also an update of the ICAEA Rater Speech Samples project. Finally, the latest information on ICAO's Test Endorsement scheme was presented and was the subject of considerable discussion.

The afternoon breakout sessions deserve a special mention; they were particularly appreciated. The discussions followed plenary sessions made during the morning. On Day 1 they followed the Training Guidelines (ICAO Circular 323) and on Day 2, the test parameters outlined in ICAO Circular 318. Four discussion groups were formed which gave everyone an opportunity to participate, to talk of current issues and exchange views in smaller group sessions. The four moderators were Elizabeth Mathews (USA), William Aranda (Peru), Ana Bocorny (Brazil) and Juliet Greco (Argentina). All four did an excellent job in encouraging their groups, summarising discussion and presenting the results to the afternoon plenary session. (See below for more detail). Mention too must be made of the presence of the 6 exhibitors (9 exhibitor-delegates) from the world of publishing and training. Their exhibits were impressive and colourful and were headed by representatives who were energetic and giving. During the coffee breaks - also lively occasions where new friendships were forged and the exchange of ideas continued - the delegates crowded into the exhibitors' room to discover the latest Aviation English books, training courses and Tests. The exhibitors provided another interesting dimension to the Seminar.

Much was said about the warm and lively atmosphere of the Seminar and this was further enhanced by two key events, namely CIPE's welcome cocktail and the ICAEA sponsored final dinner in the Hotel Colon downtown. Both events helped to encourage new professional friendships and cement the overall positive feelings of an event well planned, supporting a call for future ICAEA events in Latin America in the near future.

You will find below a list of all the presentations with a brief résumé on each Presentation itself. The first day largely concentrated on Training and the second Day on Testing.

Once again, special thanks should be made to our host CIPE without whose hard work, organisation and preparation, this successful event would never have happened.

THE PRESENTATIONS

1. Implementation of ICAO language proficiency requirements: progressing solutions.
Nicole Barrette-Sabourin, Training Officer/LPR Project, Manager Aviation safety Training Section, ANB ICAO.

The presentation shows first that we cannot afford to be complacent about safety, highlighting runway safety related fatalities as being one of the four main killers and emphasising that we need to improve our safety performance. An explanation of the development of an ICAO Standard shows how, in the case of language proficiency requirements, it is a long process - more than 13 years to date - before real progress is seen. States' progress can be followed on the ICAO FSIX website. Only 8 South American States are considered to be totally compliant at this time. ICAO's test endorsement project is intended as an independent verification of a test's validity and reliability, as a measurement of ICAO LPRs.

2. ICAO Circular 323 - Guidelines for Aviation English Training Programmes.
Dr. Terence Gerighty, ICAEA Vice-President.

This ICAO Circular is an example of the close co-operation between ICAO and ICAEA. It provides guidance on Design and Development of aviation English training programmes, training delivery, trainer profiles and background and trainer training. The guideline provides a focus for those involved in the teaching of aviation English. It is an example of a harmonised approach to teaching.

Characteristics and objectives of initial and recurrent aviation English training.
Norma Bravo and Cecilia Denis, CIPE Argentina.

To achieve Operational level 4, CIPE has closely studied the available material and devised a teaching programme to suit their needs. Lessons focus on communication and on issues that are relevant and meaningful for students. Assessment encompasses not only students but also the material, the syllabus, the lessons and the teachers - the whole process.

Language training for Brazilian pilots.
Prof. Dr. Ana Eliza Pereira Bocorny, Pontifca Universidade Catolica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS) Brazil.

A short history on the development of aviation training in Brazil shows how teaching has adapted to today's requirements. The testing process in use for pilots in Brazil is outlined. But, we need to be aware that "Teachers sometimes do strange things in class many times because they do not understand the rationale behind a test".

Success of Cuban strategy in implementing ICAO LPRs

Marina Brizuela Pierre, Centro de Capacitacion Aeronutica del Instituto de Aeronuatica Civil de Cuba.

How the Cuban civil aviation authorities set up a National Language Group to develop a Technical Methodological Plan to meet the ICAO LPRs.

ICAO Circular 318: Language Testing Criteria for Global Harmonisation.

Adrian Enright, Vice-President ICAEA, Member ICAO PRICESG.

Circular 318 is an indispensable guideline for CAA regulators, test providers, aircraft operators and air navigation service providers. It focuses on English as the language for which most training and testing programmes need to be developed. Set out as Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) in the form of self-contained statements, the Circular explains what a statement means, why it is important and provides additional information.

Aviation English - A Crossroads

Capt. Rick Valdes, IFALPA

IFALPA recognises that if there is to be a single aviation language, this must from a practical point of view, be English. To date the safety threat of insufficient language proficiency has been managed by denial, cosmetic compliance and reform - to solve safety concern. IFALPA accepts that language training is influenced by a complex cross section of expertise and interests. The language training industry would benefit from regulation, long overdue.

Pilot Testing in Argentina

Cmte. Eduardo Macadam, APLA.

The presentation first outlines the approach to English language training for pilots in Argentina before briefly describing the language test employed. The second part illustrates some of the pitfalls for Spanish speakers trying to improve their pronunciation of English.

ICAO Test Endorsement Process

Nicole Barrette-Sabourin, ICAO & Adrian Enright, ICAEA.

What the test endorsement process is about and what is the current situation. There are 5 steps to obtaining a test endorsement and these are clearly demonstrated in the presentation. It is always the individual test that is endorsed, not the test service provider. Trial/pilot testing is now complete and test developers are invited to apply for test endorsement (www.icao-aelte.org).

Level 4: Language proficiency - the challenge for ATC

Esteban Mendoza, ANAC, ATC Argentina.

An exposé of the different characteristics of air traffic controllers and how the individual attitude can affect performance in language proficiency. How these attitudes are changing as the benefits of English language proficiency can be seen.

THE BREAKOUT SESSIONS Day 1:

1. TRAINING DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT - Ana Bocorny

- a. Curriculum aims/objectives
- b. Content issues
- c. "Aviation English"

2. TRAINING DELIVERY - Juliet Greco

- a. Pedagogy
- b. Blended learning

- c. Intensive/non-intensive
- 3. TRAINER PROFILES - Elizabeth Mathews
 - a. ELT +
 - b. CELTA
 - c. Aviation knowledge etc.
- 4. TRAINER TRAINING - William Aranda
 - a. Aviation English Trainer
 - b. ICAO Scales

And on Day 2:

- 1. TEST TYPES - Juliet Greco
 - a. Identifying different types and their uses
 - b. Aviation related
 - c. Specific to meet ICAO LPRs
- 2. TEST TASKS - Ana Bocorny
 - a. What tasks required for proficiency (aviation English)
 - b. What tasks in (your) test
 - c. Task proficiency or language proficiency
- 3. ONE TEST FOR ALL - Elizabeth Mathews
 - a. Advantages
 - b. Disadvantages
- 4. TEST COMPLACENCY - William Aranda
 - a. What is required
 - b. How do we know we have it
 - c. Test endorsement

THE EXHIBITORS

There were 5 stands, one of which was shared. There were 9 exhibitor-delegates representing major publishers, an English language School from the UK, an international aviation English training organisation and a Testing specialist from Australia.

The delegates were most appreciative and the display room where all the exhibitors were situated was busy during each coffee and lunchtime break. Clearly a successful component of the Seminar.

CONCLUSION

This first venture of ICAEA to Latin America has been a valuable experience in organising an international event at distance. That it can be considered a success is due in no small measure to those dedicated individuals who gave up so much of their free time. Most noticeable was the enthusiasm, interest and active participation to discussion by all participants. We again thank ICAO for their participation and active support in ICAEA events as we do all the speakers who entertained and informed us.

Since the seminar a number of delegates have expressed to us their appreciation for the two days in Buenos Aires - a most encouraging start for ICAEA in South America.

Terence Gerighty & Adrian Enright ICAEA Vice-Presidents