

Workshop H

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How have the ICAO LPRs influenced attitudes to Aviation English training?

FOREWORD

A short presentation was made (see ppt.) as an introduction to the workshop and as a reminder of the different ways in which the ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements (LPRs) had affected Aviation English training, i.e. by:

- The Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) themselves
- The Rating Scale
- The very constitution of a group of experts in the PRICE Study Group and the official encouragement of SME / academic cooperation
- Document 9835
- The ICAO Seminars in Montreal
- The ICAO regional workshops
- The work of the European & North Atlantic ICAO Coordination Group in its engagement with the regulators
- The publication of Circular 323
- The Rated Speech Samples Training Aid
- The ICAO test recognition process

The intention of the workshop sessions was to obtain feedback on three areas in which attitudes, and changing attitudes, may have affected Aviation English training, i.e. from the points of view of:

- Teachers and Teaching Practice
- Regulators and Management
- The Students

In point of fact, the brevity of the sessions only allowed the surface of the subject to be skimmed, while generating a lot of useful discussion and hopefully paving the way for further reflection.

The question of whether, after the fourteen years since the SARPs were issued, and in a changed environment, the community did not need a second wind to pursue its work.

Comments from the workshop sessions are summarised below under various topics.

Theme 1: Teachers & Teaching Practice

Subject matter & Teaching Materials:

- SMEs are included in the teaching process
- Teaching materials come mainly from commercially available materials, but are also developed by the teachers.
- Move from Phraseology to Aviation English
- In 1990s there was a need for shared resources, but now a wealth of resources. However, the challenge is how to use the material.
- Croatia has found the LPRs useful as guidelines
- The training industry has grown
- Different test formats tend to result in different training preparations
- More specific material for ATCOs is needed.
- There is an absence of phraseology refresher courses
- Russia, 300 hours of initial training with refreshers every 3 years
- Teachers' objectives had to change and become more job-related
- Text books have not evolved
- Problem of the price of published material
- Teachers engage in the mutual rating of material
- Material development is time-consuming
- There are copyright issues around the use of material such as videos and documents
- Need to address more emergency situations in training to prepare for the effects of stress on cognitive ability

Teacher training:

- Takes place regularly but tends to concentrate on the professional environment of ATCOs and pilots as this is perceived as the greatest deficiency in teachers' awareness
- Move from self-study towards organised training by SMEs from abroad but also the CAA. CAA accreditation
- Training teachers is more important than training students

Teacher-Student Interactivity:

- Much better than 7 years ago when my organisation entered the Aviation English program
- Not only SMEs as teachers but also English language experts
- In the last 6 years in Japan, Level 6 pilots (non-linguists) training English at JAL due to budgetary constraints
- In Croatia, English teachers have always been used
- In Poland, self-study before LPRs
- In Japan, there is a difficulty about finding English training expertise, so Aviation English expertise is virtually impossible. A solution has been the use of on-line self-study tools and 1-to1 on-line tuition. Each teacher has 6 months teacher

training, but no Aviation English training

- At the beginning there was a certain tension
- Initially, especially the younger students were interested in learning per se, but now the focus is on the test
- Engagement was easier, freer, without the LPRs

Awareness of proficiency tests:

- Quite big especially when it comes to the results produced by certain test providers
- Awareness high, especially among ATCOs
- Introduction of first ELPAC, then Polish generic test, makes the choice of a test difficult

Other:

- Progressing from plain English instruction to Aviation English is perceived as an upgrade among the trainers in my organisation, so in a way fosters a culture of continuous learning

Theme 2: Regulators & Management

Understanding of Initial & Recurrent Training Objectives:

- Remains very vague
- In Japan, we are considering to implement outsource training for aviation English. There is no doubt that LPR raised awareness of the necessity to improve pilots' English skills. However, for most pilots, primary motivation is to pass the test.
- For the company, the primary intention is to keep pilots flying.

Time, Availability & Budgets

- Constrained, but still controlled in terms of regularity of training
- Numerous offers available to the target group
- Since our company started the consideration of English training, I can say LPR is influencing the time, availability and budgets for aviation English education. Managements are paying more attention to this subject than before.

Theme 3: Students

Motivation & Involvement:

- Higher in the ab initio students, lower in those operationally active as the latter group often perceives the training / exam cycle as a necessary evil
- A certain resistance to the 'dictatorial' approach
- Students have become more concentrated on test results rather than learning and proficiency
- Since our flight training for cadets is conducted in United States, motivations are fairly high.

Learning Practice, Classroom Behaviour:

- Self-learning promoted among both ab initio and others
- At this moment improving English skills are up to cadets themselves using e-learning materials. Smooth progress is often observed (Japan).