International Civil Aviation English Association

ICAEA Workshop 2017, The ICAO LPRs – 10 years on: Progress or Pain?

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Language, culture and effective radiotelephony communications

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Language, culture and effective radiotelephony communications: Analysing case studies from aviation stakeholders' perspectives

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ICAEA Workshop – Dubrovnik, Croatia

April 25, 2017

Workshop Purpose

➢ This workshop aims to explore cultural differences in international pilot-air traffic controller radiotelephony communications and to better understand how culturally influenced factors may impact **the safety of air-ground communications.**

In this intercultural and occupation-specific context, would a wider range of knowledge, skills and attitudes be required for **effective RT communications?**

Setting the context of aviation radiotelephony (RT) communications

➤ **Aviation English (AE)** – two distinct registers (Bieswanger, 2016):
- English-based standardized phraseology
- Plain English for the specific purpose of RT communications

➤ Characteristics of intercultural RT communications:

- Interactions involve NS-NS, NS-NNS and NNS-NNS;
- Disparities in linguistic proficiency;
- Different cultural frames of reference;
- Different values, expectations and interpretations;
- Different perspectives and standpoints.

Background

➤ Study 1: Cultural Discourse Analysis – case study of two pilot-ATCO communications (Monteiro, 2016a)

➤ Study 2: Mixed Methods Study – analysis of six cases of pilot-ATCO communications (Monteiro, 2016b)

Informed by:
- ➤ Cross-Cultural Communication Theories:
    - Gudykunst (2005)
- ➤ National Cultural Dimensions:
    - Hofstede (1991)
- ➤ Intercultural Communicative Competence – ICC:
    - Byram (1997)
- ➤ Face-work:
    - Brown and Levinson (1987)
- ➤ Politeness and Impoliteness Theories:
    - Brown and Levinson (1987) and Culpeper (1996)

Study 2: Mixed Methods Study

➤ Analysis of six cases: 2 NS-NS, 2 NS-NNS, 2 NNS-NNS
➤ Outcome of phase 1: Taxonomy of intercultural factors
     (14 sub-categories)
➤ Data mixing with phase 2: Online survey (ongoing)

THEME	CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES
Intercultural factors in international pilot-ATCO communications	Power Distance	
	Face-work strategies	
	Conflict management	
	Communication styles	
	Non-collaborative behavior	
	Collaborative behavior	

Relevant concepts

Interculturality: "A phenomenon that is <u>not only</u> interactionally and socially constructed in the course of communication <u>but also</u> relies on relatively definable cultural models and norms that represent the speech communities to which the interlocutors belong" (Kesckes, 2014, p. 14).

Skills of multilingual communicators (Baker, 2012)

➢ the role of accommodation, negotiation and mediation skills;
➢ the need to aid understanding and solidarity, adjust and align, and cooperate in communication;
➢   between different culturally based frames of reference.
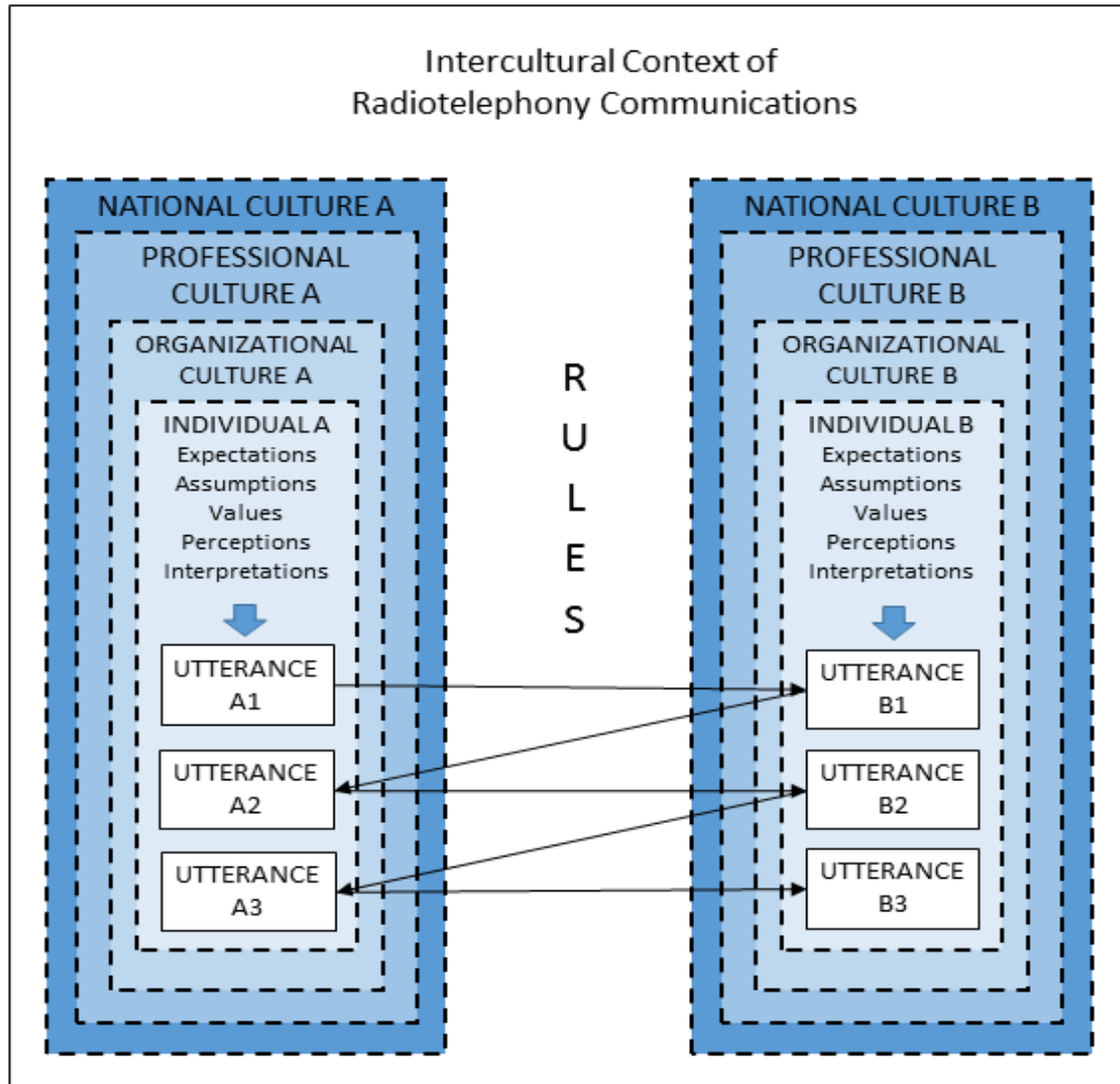
A model of intercultural RT communications

Figure 1. Model of radiotelephony communications in intercultural contexts (Monteiro, 2016b)

Relevant research

➢ **Aviation English and English as a lingua franca (ELF)**

Kim and Elder (2009); ICAO (2010); Kim (2012);
Douglas (2014); Estival and Farris (2016)
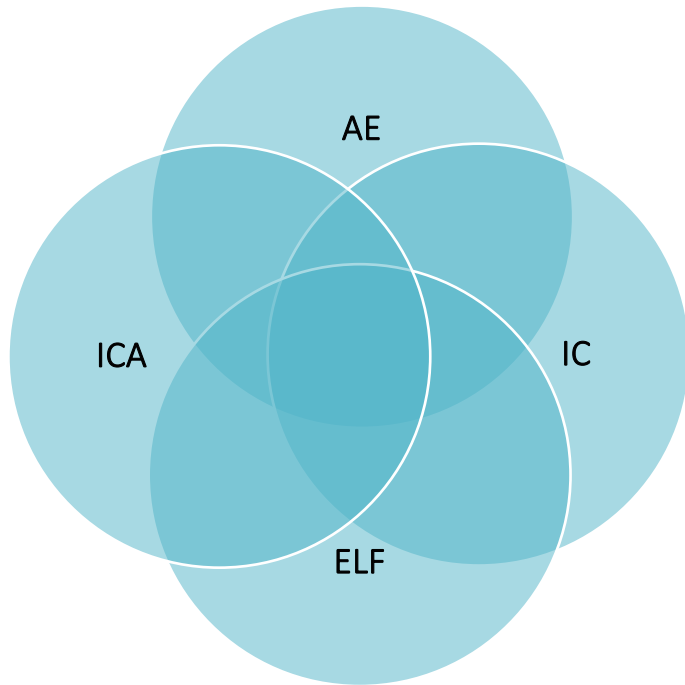
➢ **Aviation English and Intercultural Awareness (ICA)**

Helmreich (1994); Helmreich and Merritt (1998);
Douglas (2014); Hazrati (2015), Monteiro (2012, 2016a, 2016b)

➢ **Aviation English and Interactional Competence (IC)**

Kim and Elder (2009); Read and Knoch (2009); ICAO(2010);
Kim (2013); Douglas (2014); Farris (2016)

Understanding the interfaces:
Aviation English (AE), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), Intercultural Awareness (ICA) and Interactional Competence (IC)

Figure 2. AE, ELF, ICA and IC overlap
    (Monteiro, 2016c)

These four areas have a crucial role in pilot-ATCO communications, showing several points of contact. However, the core features of effective communication in international radiotelephony most likely rest in the intersection of all four.

Our practical activity: addressing cultural diversity

➤ Participants will be divided in groups, each including ideally at least one representative of each stakeholder category: an operational participant (pilot or ATCO), a teacher/material developer, an examiner/test developer, a researcher, etc.

➤ In light of:

▪ The taxonomy of intercultural factors;
▪ The model of intercultural RT
  communications;
▪ The AE, ELF, ICA and IC overlap…

➤ … each group will analyze a case study (a pilot-ATCO interaction involving NS-NS, or NS-NNS or NNS-NNS), guided by a few questions (30 minutes) and then will share their comments and responses with the presenter and the other groups (30 minutes).

You are all welcome to participate in this multicultural activity!!!

Thank you for your attention!

"Every airline flight is not just a technological triumph but is also a triumph of human performance: every airline flight is an interactional accomplishment" (Nevile, 2004, p. 215).

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