Developing Cross-Cultural Communicative Competence

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Cross-cultural communicative competence

*Can these skills be developed through training?*

Michael Kay
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INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ENGLISH ASSOCIATION
supporting the use of English for aviation safety
www.icaea.aero
Background

- Aviation English training/testing since 1996
- MA in Applied Linguistics: language testing (ICAO LPRs)
- Designed and implemented RELTA, Australia (2003-2010)
- Trainer and curriculum developer: AEROTHAI (2011-)
Overview

Typical AEROTHAI ATCO profile

- Negative towards local licensing test
- Proud and confident but reserved
- Staff shortage
- Minimum time available for language training
- View language training as ‘test preparation’
- Low on motivation
- Value memorisation of and language (grammar and vocabulary) over creative spontaneous communication
- Passive language learners

Culture (work and national)

- Collectivist
- Value saving face
- Respect elders and rank (hierarchy in authority important)
- Avoid conflict
- Focus on immediate situation
- May offer minimum content in communication
Training programme objectives

• Develop/maintain language proficiency (for on-the-job radio communication)
• Raise awareness of cross-cultural communication issues (exposure)
• Raise awareness of need for communication strategies (exposure)
• Provide opportunities to integrate development of language skills with development of communication strategies:
  • Practise using communication strategies to incorporate into work practices (ATC-pilot comms)
Workshop

Explore:

• The notion of developing cross-cultural communicative competence of operational personnel using English as a second language

• Consider what elements of CCCC could be developed through training

• Ideas for how these could be developed

• Share some examples
• **Information engagement skills**
  • Share relevant information and enquire

• **Accommodation skills**
  • Modify communication for weaker speakers

• **Strategic and interactional competence**
  • Recognise and repair communication breakdowns, share relevant information

• **Pragmatic competence**
  • Interpret intended meaning based on context

• **Socio-linguistic competence**
  • Use language appropriate for the situation

• **Efficiency skills**
  • Be succinct and immediate
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATC</th>
<th>Air Spring 8972, reduce your speed to Mach .73 to arrange your flight to arrive after time 00. Expect hold.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>PILOT:</td>
<td>Ahh, unable, we have minimum fuel, Air Spring 8972.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATC:</td>
<td>Air Spring 8972, roger. ... ah... Phuket is not available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PILOT:</td>
<td>Ah, ... ah, we have minimum fuel.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information engagement skills

- Failure to convey relevant information
- Failure to enquire
ATC: Air Spring 8972, reduce your speed to Mach .73 to arrange your flight to arrive after time 00. Expect hold. Phuket is not yet available due airport closure.

PILOT: Ahh, unable, we have minimum fuel, Air Spring 8972.

ATC: Air Spring 8972, roger.... ah... advise intentions.

PILOT: Bangkok Control, ... ah ok, due minimum. We will need to divert to Surat.
Who needs to develop which CCC skills?

NES
(AAL pilot)

NNES
(Thai ATCO)

Information engagement skills
- Share relevant information and enquire

Accommodation skills
- Modify communication and language for weaker participants

Strategic competence
- Recognise and repair communication breakdowns

Pragmatic competence
- Interpret intended meaning based on context

Socio-linguistic competence
- Use language appropriate for the situation

Efficiency skills
- Be succinct and immediate
Which skills could we develop through training?

Incorporate in language training:
Develop as communication skills?

Incorporate in language training:
Raise awareness?

Information engagement skills
Share relevant information and enquire

Accommodation skills
Modify communication and language for weaker participants

**Strategic competence**
Recognise and repair communication breakdowns

**Pragmatic competence**
Interpret intended meaning based on context

**Socio-linguistic competence**
Use language appropriate for the situation

**Efficiency skills**
Be succinct and immediate

NNES
Cross-cultural communicative competence

Information engagement skills
- Failure to convey relevant information
- Failure to enquire

Accommodation skills
- High rate of speech
- Failure to simplify vocabulary
- Failure to simplify structure
- Failure to paraphrase

Strategic competence
- Failure to seek modification
- Failure to detect miscommunication
- Lack of rephrasing

Sociolinguistic competence
- Lack of appropriacy
- Incorrect register/context

Pragmatic competence
- Failure to understand implied meaning

Efficiency skills
- Lack of succinctness
- Lack of immediacy
Raise awareness of issues in cross-cultural communication

- **Pragmatic competence**
  - Recognise implied meaning

- **Efficiency skills**
  - Respond/initiate with immediacy (and accuracy)
  - Communicate succinctly

- **Accommodation skills**
  - Recognise when ↑ELP pilots are adjusting communication
  - Adjust communication to aid understanding of ↓ELP pilots
Developing CCC skills through training

• **Information engagement skills**
  Share relevant information and enquire
  > Offering *(Would you like? Do you need? I can offer you... or...)*
  > Explaining, giving reasons *(...because, ...so...)*
  > Enquiring *(Are you able to?)*

• **Strategic competence**
  Repair communication breakdowns
  > Avoiding creating impression of understanding *(e.g. saying roger, silence)*
  > Clarifying *(Do you mean...? Confirm you ...)*
  > Synonyms with vocabulary ranges *(difficult to easy)*
  > Paraphrasing skills *(complex to simple sentence structures)*
  > Requesting rephrasing *(I don’t understand, Request you rephrase)*

• **Socio-linguistic competence**
  Use language appropriate for the situation
  >
  >
Activity

Discussion topics

1. What are the communication breakdowns in each scenario?
2. Can you identify causes of the breakdowns, based on the Communication as a Human Factor Taxonomy?
3. How could each stimulus be used for training purposes? (What communicative strategies could be developed and how?)

1. TGW2368 – SIN APP
2. AAL182 – TOK CTL
3. TAM8078 – JFK TWR/APP/DEP
4. SIN970 – BKK CTL
Examples of ‘our’ training ideas

1. TGW2368 – SIN APP
2. AAL182 – TOK APP
3. TAM8078 – JFK TWR/APP/DEP
4. SIN970 – BKK CTL