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Developing Cross-Cultural Communicative Competence

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Cross-cultural communicative competence

Can these skills be developed through training?

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ICAEA President
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
ATC: Air Spring 8972, reduce your speed to Mach .73 to arrange your flight to arrive after time 00. Expect hold.

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

ATC: Air Spring 8972, roger. ... ah... Phuket is not available.

PILOT: Ah, ... ah, we have minimum fuel.
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
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
1. TGW2368 – SIN APP (PIL)
2. AAL182 – TOK CTL (ATC)
3. TAM8078 – TWR/APP/DEP (PIL)
4. SIN970 – BKK CTL (ATC)

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

Cross-cultural communicative competence
Examples of ‘our’ training ideas

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