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Adapting to the Training Needs of Pilots

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ADAPTING TO THE TRAINING NEEDS OF PILOTS

ICAEA 2019 TOKYO

Eugenia B. Bava





PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

Language Degrees:

ES/EN Simultaneous and Consecutive Interpreter
EN/ES Literary, Technical and Scientific Translator

Aviation Accomplishments:

Certified ATCO (since 2012)
Certified Cabin Crew and Flight Dispatcher

Rater for Argentina's CAA in the ICAO Certification of ATCs and AIS Operators
Aviation English Teacher for Pilots and Cabin Crew





SOURCES

This work is derived from a survey to more than 250 pilots of different aviation backgrounds and experience, and the overall results of the last 10 years training pilots in English.





LANGUAGE LEARNING AS A PROCESS

As such, it would be positive if students decided to start their training with enough time to ensure the desired level can be reached successfully.

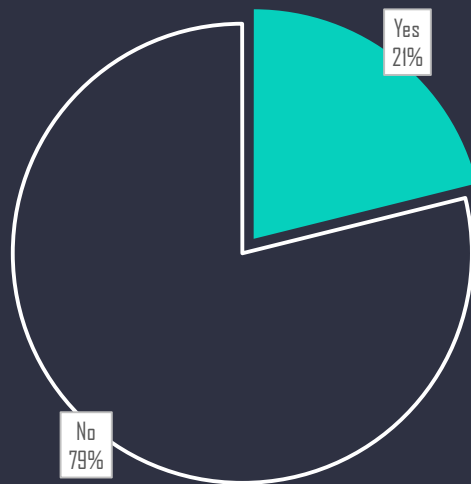
Unfortunately, many pilots did not have English as a subject in their courses to achieve the PPL or the CPL, therefore realising English is essential once they have accomplished the necessary hours for the latter Licence.



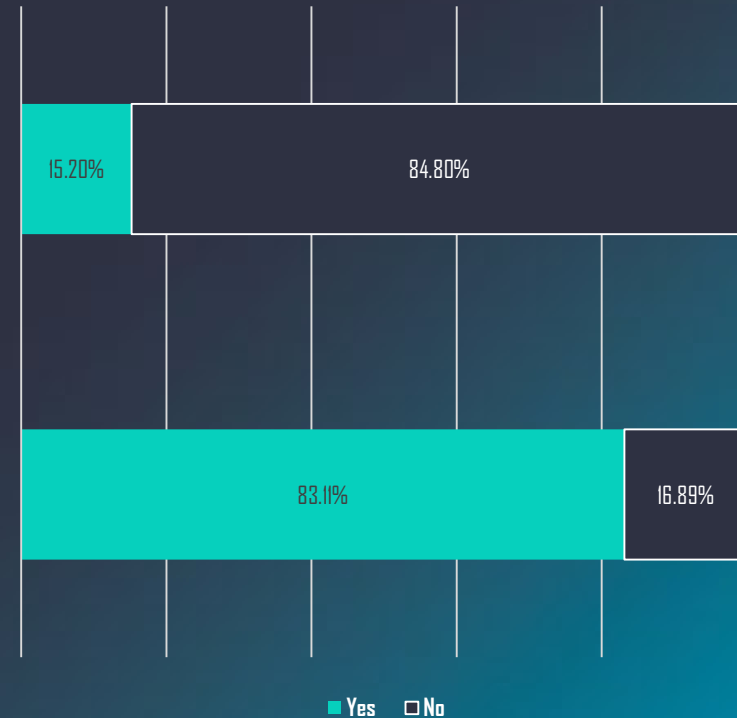


SOME STATISTICS

Did you have any English training during your PPL/CPL/ATPL?



Do you work for an airline?





GROUPS SHOULD BE SEGMENTED WISELY

Hedge (2000:339) suggests that “analysis of student needs” is the first stage for an ESP teacher, followed by consideration of the context, with the third step of “establishing goals and objectives.”

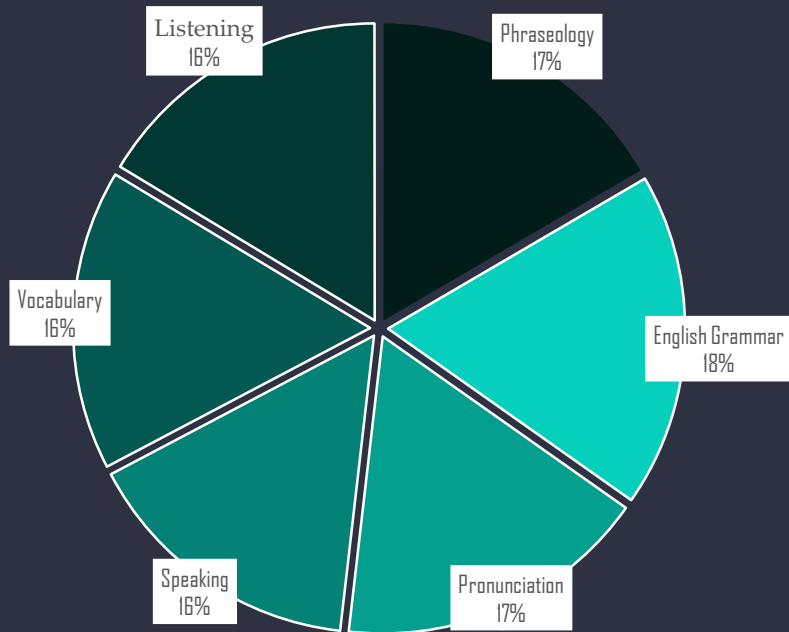
After a placement test, students were segmented in groups of no more than five, together with the colleagues that had the closest level of English. Generally, this led to two divisions: Basic and Intermediate/Advanced.

The idea behind this segmentation is for the class to be more efficient and as tailored as possible for the student.



WHY IS IT NECESSARY TO BE ADAPTABLE?

Which area do you think you are weakest at?



The skills to be reinforced vary from student to student. Consequently, it is vital to have a thorough understanding of what the student needs and his/her goals in order to help them make a quick and effective progress.

Research has shown that as with any language, students are prone to feel insecure about diverse aspects of the evaluation per se.



CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE CURRICULUM

It is key to let the students know how a real exam is, together with the explanation of ICAO LPRs and suggested material right from the first class.

Following the explanation of each descriptor and its expectations for each level, students become more aware of the errors that they frequently incur in and become even more interested in knowing how to avoid them.





COMPLEXITIES OF AVIATION ENGLISH

- Khosravani et al: communication without visual cues is “more challenging and requires higher levels of proficiency.”
- Phillips (in Breul, 2013:75): language in aviation has a “structural sub-grammar” with “referential values common to its domain and the speech community within.”
- Communications have to be brief, concise and aligned with the correct phraseology.
- The frequency usually has interference/the transmission is affected by background noise.



USES AND CUSTOMS

Despite having standardized phraseology as well as measuring systems to be used, meteorological manuals, etc., the fact that each place has its own uses and customs should not be overlooked.

In some facilities, wind is expressed in metres/second, visibility is expressed in the exact amount despite exceeding 10km (e.g. 30km of visibility.) Sometimes even frequencies are not given with all the digits (e.g. contact TWR on .7.)





REINFORCING PRONUNCIATION

Rate of speech, together with intonation, have proven to be vital for the understanding of the English language even when pronunciation of segmental features is accurate.

Additionally, teaching the student about Phonology can be an asset when it is introduced from the start of the training (provided we have time.)





AB-INITIO PILOTS

As most of the students will be at the start of their aviation career, it is very likely that technical questions arise.

Although the training is for an oral examination, it is very positive to give the students written tasks for a better incorporation of concepts and vocabulary.

Articles on pioneering technology or procedures tend to be of high interest and trigger vivid discussions and speculation within the group.





RESOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

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THANK YOU!

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