

Effect of test tasks on learning

Group 1 & 4

Task 1 – evaluating *effect or influence* of test tasks (washback) (5 mins group + 5 mins class)

- You are a working group made up of different stakeholders to source a valid and reliable test to assess your pilots/ATCOs. One of your criteria is to assess the effect that the test will have on training as you wish to implement a continuous training programme to increase language proficiency in the test takers. **Discuss in your groups how you would evaluate the effect of the test tasks on training.**

Task 2 – evaluating individual test tasks (8 mins group + 8 mins class)

- You have received several offers from test service providers and you now wish to evaluate the test tasks for their positive effect on training/learning. **Look at the tasks below and in your group decide if they will bring positive or negative washback and why.**
 - (NB: These are all taken from real LP tests for pilots and ATCOs!).

Speaking:

- An face-to-face oral proficiency interview (OPI) where the pilot Test Taker (TT) talks about his life uninterrupted for 10 minutes. No visual prompts.
- A voice-only classroom interaction between a pilot test taker and an Interlocutor role playing an ATCO. TT has a list of tasks he must complete in the air & on ground including non-routine and routine situations using standard phraseology plain language as appropriate. The ATCO has a script but may deviate where necessary.
- OPI where TT has to recount the events of a video showing a news report of an aircraft accident. The video is publicly available on Youtube and was well documented in the media.

Listening:

- TT (ATCO) listens to one short recording of a simulated Pilot/ATCO exchange taken from a commercially available aviation English book and answers questions on it.
- TTs (ATCOs) listen to a series of pilot/ATC exchanges in non-routine situations through headphones and must answer questions on what they heard. Answers are a mixture of multiple-choice and free response. TT can choose whether to enter answers in a computer or write on paper.
- TT (Pilot) listens to pre-recorded prompts on a PC and responds accordingly. The responses are recorded and sent to another assessor for later assessment.

(Continued...)

Task 3 – Developing real-life authentic material for testing and learning tasks

- Your group finally decides to develop your own testing system and learning programme in-house. Look at the piece of authentic material (only call-sign changed) below and decide:
 - What sort of test task this could be developed for (speaking and/or listening) and how would you develop this.
 - What would you focus on in your learning tasks and what methodology would you use for teaching. Discuss also what material you would use and what teaching techniques would be the most effective.

FASTAIR66W	<i>Just continue straight on ... we have no glidepath in the end and we ended up too high FASTAIR66W.</i>
ATC	<i>Roger</i>
ATC	<i>FASTAIR66W there is traffic departing RWY13R turning south and you just continue runway heading.</i>
FASTAIR66W	<i>Runway heading FASTAIR66W</i>
ATC	<i>FASTAIR66W would you like to try the VOR/DME runway 22L approach</i>
FASTAIR66W	<i>We'll just keep heading straight ahead for a second please FASTAIR66W</i>
ATC	<i>Is 3000ft ok altitude for you?</i>
FASTAIR66W	<i>'ffirmative</i>
ATC	<i>FASTAIR66W are you able to take a vector ?</i>
FASTAIR66W	<i>Er we're still sorting out a technical problem can we keep going straight ahead or we could turn right if you want to.</i>

FASTAIR66W	<i>And is the ILS radiating on 13L, we have no glidepath</i>
ATC	<i>Er, I'll just re-cycle it again</i>
FASTAIR66W	<i>And is there an approach available on 13R?</i>
ATC	<i>The only approach available for 13R is the VOR/GPS for runway 13R</i>
FASTAIR66W	<i>FASTAIR66W do you have any news on the glidepath please on 3 er 13L</i>
ATC	<i>Only that it is up and operational</i>
ATC	<i>There's nothing showing that it's not operational ... there's no one using it to land</i>
FASTAIR66W	<i>OK, are your indication saying it's working?</i>
ATC	<i>Our indication show that it is operational</i>
ATC	<i>If you're ready we're ready to take you round into the ILS runway 13L if you wanna try that one.</i>

ATC	<i>32N affirmative turn left at your discretion let me know what heading that's gonna be</i>
ATC	<i>FASTAIR66W turn left heading 130</i>
FASTAIR66W	<i>Left heading 130 32N ... just to let you know what's happening ... we have got a little ... we've still got some brake pressure left ... so we'd like to land on the longest runway available with the wind please.</i>

** Please note that the above examples are from authentic recordings and have not been modified. As such there are many instances where correct standard phraseology is not used. When preparing exam materials and tasks, correct standard phraseology should be used wherever necessary and plain language only as required.

Subject Matter Experts must be consulted on this at all times in order that test tasks fulfil the requirements of ICAO Doc9835 for testing plain language in aeronautical communications. It is not possible, nor is it desirable to separate the two to test plain language in isolation. Furthermore, even

though standard phraseology is not explicitly tested, it is the essential basis of good communications between pilot and controller and correctness of form and its use should be encouraged at all times.

For learning, such authentic tasks are a also really good source not just of identifying where and how plain language is used, but they also act as a reminder to students of identifying where the correctness of standard phraseology can be improved. Eliciting errors and poor standard phraseology from such tasks helps learners to appreciate the need for correct phraseology at all times.

For both learning and testing materials it is a good idea to prepare such tasks well in advance to identify the kind of language used as well as the technical content and operational context. Language specialists must therefore work with SMEs in preparation of material to ensure it remains authentic and contextually valid.

A good source of material is <https://www.liveatc.net/> although you will need to transcribe the recordings.

Please feel free to contact me further if you have any questions or ideas.

Enjoy 😊

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Effect of test tasks on learning

Group 2 & 5

Task 1 – evaluating *effect or influence* of test tasks (washback) (5 mins group + 5 mins class)

- You are a working group made up of different stakeholders to source a valid and reliable test to assess your pilots/ATCOs. One of your criteria is to assess the effect that the test will have on training as you wish to implement a continuous training programme to increase language proficiency in the test takers. **Discuss in your groups how you would evaluate the effect of the test tasks on training.**

Task 2 – evaluating individual test tasks (8 mins group + 8 mins class)

- You have received several offers from test service providers and you now wish to evaluate the test tasks for their positive effect on training/learning. **Look at the tasks below and in your group decide if they will bring positive or negative washback and why.**
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(Continued...)

Task 3 – Developing real-life authentic material for testing and learning tasks. 10 mins group / 20 mins class

- Your group finally decides to develop your own testing system and learning programme in-house. Look at the piece of authentic material (only call-sign changed) below and decide:
 - i) What sort of test task this could be developed for (speaking and/or listening) and how would you develop this.
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ATC	FASTAIR24R are you just about ready to go?
FASTAIR24R	No negative. We're just parked up Alpha ... on the ... err.. short of Alpha Alpha... and it looks like we may have to return to stand, I'll let you know in a minute.
ATC	FASTAIR24R do you require any assistance?
FASTAIR24R	We may do ... just stand by.
ATC	Wilco
FASTAIR24R	Ground FASTAIR24R be advised we're gonna need to return to stand and we're gonna need some medical assistance to meet the aircraft, the captain's not feeling very well.
ATC	BAW249 at your discretion turn left on Alpha Alpha turn left on runway 10L and taxi eastbound and er keep me advised.
FASTAIR24R	Can I just take two seconds to give the company a call to er I can't get hold of them on the radio ... I'm just going to SAT call them. I'll let you know when I'm starting to taxi FASTAIR24R ... just wanted to ask for medical services from you coz I can't get hold of anyone on the ground.
ATC	Epsom2241 Papa straight ahead on Papa Foxtrot cross 10L contact ground on the other set.
Epsom2241	OK, Papa Foxtrot cross 10L and ground X Epsom2241.
ATC	Epsom2241 in case ... as you come across ... if you happen to see another aircraft taxiing toward you on the runway there won't be a departure, it's just a reposition
Epsom2241	Epsom2241 roger
FASTAIR24R	And er ground sorry Tower FASTAIR24R I am now ready to taxi to stand
ATC	FASTAIR24R roger turn left on Alpha Alpha turn left on runway 10L
FASTAIR24R	Left on Alpha and left on 10L
ATC	And do you have a gate yet?
FASTAIR24R	Er negative I haven't been able to contact our ground staff ... I called OPS control in Riga trying to get hold of them ... so I have no gate.
ATC	We're gonna try ... locally, find out what your gate is but join runway 10L and we'll see what we can find out.
FASTAIR24R	Thank you very much Alpha Alpha and 10L BAW 24R.
ATC	FASTAIR24R we've called locally to find out about a gate ... in the meantime we'll get you back at least next to the international terminal so if they don't have something it'll be possible to try...
FASTAIR24R	That's wonderful thank you very much FASTAIR24R and just entering 10L now.
ATC	Er yes, join 10L and when you get a chance they'd probably like the information about the captain's age and possibly what the issue is ...
FASTAIR24R	OK thanks very much I'll speak to you when I'm just taxiing down the runway
FASTAIR24R	Tower FASTAIR24R Captain is er male of aged 50 years old he's suffering from severe abdominal pains er maybe gastroenteritis, he's also grey and clammy, no other symptoms as yet.
ATC	Roger copy all.

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Pilot	D-ILPM mayday, mayday mayday bird strike climbing to 2000ft... proceeding straight ahead
ATC	Roger mayday D-PM would you like RWY10L ?
Pilot	... via runway 28R proceeding straight ahead. Request radar vectors
ATC	D-PM identify ... what kind of problem
Pilot	OK climbing now to 3000ft and request radar vectors, say again the heading
ATC	D-PM Turn left heading 100
Pilot	Left heading 100 D-PM
ATC	D-PM what is the problem
Pilot	Say again
ATC	D-PM what is the problem ... mayday
Pilot	Bird strike ... bird strike
ATC	D-PM... you... did..catch... bird?
Pilot	Affirm we have a bird strike
Pilot	D-PM request 10m final
ATC	say again
Pilot	Req 10m final, D-PM
ATC	D-PM expect
Pilot	Roger
ATC	Erm... strike bird affirm, D-PM
Pilot	Say again?
ATC	you catch bird
Pilot	Say again
ATC	What you situation, D-PM
Pilot	I have vibration 1 and 2 engines ... 2 engines
ATC	D-PM, because... catch... bird?
Pilot	Bird strike, affirm, D-PM
ATC	D-PM descend and fly 2000ft QNH1022
Pilot	2000ft QNH1022 D-PM
ATC	D-PM report when ready to intercept localizer
Pilot	Will do
ATC	D-PM ready to turn left ?
Pilot	Stand by not yet ... ok turning left
ATC	D-PM turn left heading 300 ... clear ILS approach RWY28R
Pilot	Clear ILS approach RWY28R and request fire brigade
ATC	D-PM we ready for emergency landing and alert emergency services
Pilot	OK thank you very much, D-PM and confirm situation mayday now
Pilot	We have 2 engine problems, 2 engine problems D-PM
ATC	D-PM RWY28R visibility 4000m ceiling 200ft
Pilot	Thank you
ATC	D-PM report localiser established you're on final
Pilot	Will do
ATC	D-PM, contact Tower 118.1

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