November 12, 1996, Aviation History’s worst mid-air collision.
Kazakhstan Airlines Flight 1907 collided with Saudi Arabian Airlines Flight 763
killing all 349 people on board both planes.
Root cause of the disaster was communications difficulties in the Kazakhstani plane.
None of the Kazakhstani flight crew, except the radio operator, understood English.
Sustaining Language Proficiency

Pilot’s Perspective

By

Yousaf Hashmi
Horizon International Flight Academy
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OVERVIEW

• Brief History of Horizon
• English Language Proficiency
• Horizon’s strategies
• Conclusion
HORIZON AT A GLANCE

- Owned by Mubadala
- Inception in 2002 as a GCAA approved Rotary Wing Training Organization
- First batch of RW students graduated in 2003
- Fixed Wing Training started in 2007
- Total Students (to date) : more than 1500 (RW & FW)
- JAR Approval in 2010
- EASA Approval June 2015
- Approved ISO 9001 : 2008
- Aviation English Training and ELP Testing since 2010
- ELPAC approval by Euro Control in 2015.
ELT & ELP TESTING AT HORIZON

• Horizon identified a great demand for ELT in the aviation industry

• Started ELT and ELP testing in 2010

• Evolved into a very important element of Horizon Training.

• Offers Basic English Language Training (ELT) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) i.e. Aviation English

• Provides ELP testing.
ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

ELP

ACQUIRE

SUSTAIN
AQUIRING ELP

L1 Native English Speaker

Aviation Training
ICA0 LEVEL 6

L2 Non-Native English Speaker

High ELP

Duration needs to be identified

No significant gain in ELP

Weak ELP

ELT

ELT

Aviation Training
ICA0 LEVEL 4
SUSTAINING ELP

L1
Native English Speaker

ICAO LEVEL 6

• Non Standard RTC
• Slang
• Diverse Accents
• Idiomatic expressions
• Intonations

• Validity period
• Accountability

L2
Non-Native English Speaker

High ELP

ICAO LEVEL 5

• Good language skills
• Good RTC skill
• Will have more tendency to adhere to standard RTC

L2
Non-Native English Speaker

Weak ELP

ICAO LEVEL 4

Validity 3 Years

No regulation if L4 continue
POTENTIAL PROBLEM

L1 Native English Speaker

ICAO LEVEL 6

L2 Non-Native English Speaker

Weak ELP

ICAO LEVEL 4

Communicate
Ground: Air china 981 make a right turn here at Juliette, join Alpha, hold short of Mike Alpha
Low ELP poses a potential hazard for safety in terms of:

- RTC

- Professional Aviation training
  - Flight crew
  - ATC
  - Engineers and Technicians
  - Ground handling staff
ELP Vs TRAINING & SAFETY

FLIGHT TRAINING

THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE TRAINING

ELP
Holistic Perspective

Design and Development

Training

Testing
Limitations resulting from mass produced curriculums:

- One size fits all concept
- Aviation English designed to address candidates with higher ELP levels (generally CEFR B1)
- Most programmes do not cater for target demographics and cultural sensitivity.
- Important pre-requisite for ESP: “Needs Analysis” is missing
- Scenario based designs that may not be applicable.
- Most focus on fixed wing
Memorization of ICAO phraseologies alone does not constitute language proficiency and aviation English training should not be limited to phraseologies.
Design

ELT

Aviation English

SYSTEM
- Aviation terminology
- Grammar

SKILLS
- Listening
- Reading
- Speaking
- Writing
Limitations and issues:

- Lack of regulatory framework
  - Pre-entry level
  - Training duration and requirements
  - ICAO Level 4 minimum at the time of issuance of aircrew license
- Fossilized Errors
- ELT Instructors
  - Native speaker??
  - Qualification
  - Experience
  - Lack of appreciation and sympathy (for/from)
- Customer approach
  - No regulations for Non-licensed flight crew training
  - “Language training providers encounter unrealistic expectations on the part of clients and sponsors who want short term language training solutions, a “magic bullet” for language learning.” ICAO Doc 9835 Page 4-11
EXISTING MODEL

THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE

FLIGHT TRAINING

3 YEARS

NO ELP PREQUISITE

ICAO LEVEL 4

COGNATIVE OVERLOADING

ICAO LEVEL 4

21
Significant ELP improvement is not expected during aviation training. Part time ELT/ESP to be provided to avoid digression.
ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Holistic Perspective

- Design and Development
- Training
- Testing
Limitations and Issues:

- Most of the tests being used are:
  - Not ICAO approved
  - Not all tests require the evaluators to be formally trained and approved.
- Regulatory authorities accept test even if its not approved by ICAO
- ICAO Level 4 validity period needs to be revised
- ICAO Testing scales leave a room for margin
- ICAO Level 6 criteria; a potential risk for RTC?
POTENTIAL CONFLICT

ICAO RATING

LEVEL

VOCABULARY

Vocabulary is idiomatic, nuanced and sensitive to register.

ICAO Doc 9835 Part 2

CHAPTER 3 LINGUISTIC AWARENESS

Pilots and Controllers should:

• Avoid jargon, slang, and idiomatic expressions
• Be clear, concise, and direct
• Speak slowly and clearly

ICAO Doc 9835 Page 3-1

ICAO Doc 9835 Appendix E Page E-13 Para 3.6.1

Gives an account of RTC between two native English speakers using non-standard language and causing stress on non-native listeners on the same frequency
OUR STRENGTHS IN ELT

• Qualified and Experienced Instructors

• Aviation Background

• Indigenously designed and developed unique Aviation English program, tailor made for our customers, based on “Needs Analysis”

• Ability to customize and design ESP program to customer requirements

• Feedback system to continuously monitor training effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement

• Work in close harmony with flying department to cater for student needs.

• Measurable improvements in our students.
• In March 2015 Horizon achieved approval by EURO CONTROL as a English Language Proficiency Test center.
• In October 2015 Horizon got GCAA approval for ELPAC
Blended Learning

CLASS ROOM LEARNING

TECHNOLOGY

ACTIVITIES
Group of 20 Students

English Comprehension Test (ECT) Score Average = 39

Horizon ELT + ESP training = 1100 hours (average)

After HIFA ELT/ESP programme ECT Score Average = 70
CONCLUSION

- Global Harmonization for ELT and testing systems
- More regulatory oversight of ELT and ELP Testing
- Level 4 validity needs to be revised
- Mandatory to enhance Level 4 to 5 after 3 re-validations
- Level 6 training to be ensured for effective communicative interaction with low ELP (Pilot-ATC)
- Minimum Level 4 requirement for all aviation personnel involved with RTC of any sort, e.g. Fire fighters, Mechanical Sweepers, airport security personnel etc
- Refresher RTC course before re-validation of ELP test, including Level 6
- All other aviation personnel to acquire a minimum basic ELP