

Aviation English Training in China: Challenges for Flight Attendants and Language Trainers

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Abstract

This study investigates the challenges faced by pre-service and in-service flight attendants, as well as Aviation English trainers, in the teaching, learning, and application of Aviation English within China's aviation industry. Aviation English, standardized by the **International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)** (n.d.), plays a critical role in ensuring safety, clear communication, and operational efficiency in aviation. However, flight attendants often struggle with technical vocabulary acquisition, accent comprehension, and high-stress communication, while trainers face challenges in curriculum adaptation, student engagement, and instructional time constraints. Utilizing semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, this study gathers qualitative insights from experienced Aviation English trainers and flight attendants across top aviation universities and international airlines. Findings reveal that flight attendants face linguistic and cognitive barriers, particularly in emergency communication, intercultural adaptation, and multitasking while using English. Meanwhile, Aviation English trainers highlight the need for improved scenario-based learning, differentiated instruction for mixed-ability students, and more engaging pedagogical approaches. The study underscores the necessity of structured training programs, continuous professional development, and innovative teaching strategies to enhance communicative competence in Aviation English. Addressing these challenges will ensure greater flight safety, improved passenger service, and enhanced global aviation standards.

Keywords

Aviation English, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Flight Attendants, Aviation English Training, Linguistic Challenges, China's Aviation Industry

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of Study

This study is situated within the concerns of the airline industry. Amid its global expansion, nations increasingly recognize aviation as an essential component of their economic strategies. This recognition stems from aviation's role in facilitating global trade, tourism, and economic growth by connecting markets and enabling the efficient movement of goods and people. Therefore, the complex challenges of modern aviation necessitate the establishment of specialized aviation regulatory institutions. These institutions are tasked with the responsibility of maintaining international standard requirements while addressing local concerns specific to aviation safety, security, and environmental implications.

To furnish information applicable to the current research, understanding the legislation implemented by aviation authorities is imperative. Historically, international aviation governance has stemmed from the collaborative efforts of international entities like the [International Civil Aviation Organization \(ICAO\)](#) (n.d.) together with the autonomous regulatory agencies of each state. Formally established by the international fraternity of nations back in 1944, the ICAO has had a major impact on the implementation of a harmonious governance standard applicable to international flight travel. The ICAO mandate includes the regulation of international aviation transport with the aim of promoting the aviation industry to observe globally accepted standards with respect to aviation safety, aviation security, and operational effectiveness. In recognition of the considerable impact of aviation on their economic sustenance, nations have established their independent aviation regulation entities with the responsibility of implementing the established governance systems within their jurisdictions. In the case of the United States of America, representation is by the [Federal Aviation Administration \(FAA\)](#) (n.d.), while the representation of the European Union is by the [European Union Aviation Safety Agency \(EASA\)](#) (n.d.), with the representation of the interests of China being by the [Civil Aviation Administration of China \(CAAC\)](#) (n.d.).

The China Civil Aviation Administration (CAAC) is involved in the making of state policies and regulations like other aviation regulatory institutions. The [International Civil Aviation Organization \(ICAO\)](#) (n.d.) also made a number of the aforementioned regulations into their policies and guidelines. In accordance with the ICAO requirements of the usage of Aviation English, the CAAC made the usage of a proficiency standard of Aviation English a requirement among its staff, including flight crews, air traffic controllers, and pilots. Proficiency of the usage of Aviation English is necessary to promote smooth communication to allow the aviation industry to remain a very secured means of transport following international requirements. Additionally, the proficiency of airline staff to carry out their work using English helps to enhance international coordination and the overall operational effectiveness of airlines globally.

1.2. Importance of English in Aviation

In the broad and complex framework of international communication, the aviation sector is one unique profession in which linguistic accuracy is not only appreciated but regarded as indispensable. Since commercial flight was initially envisioned, as flights started crisscrossing international boundaries, the necessity of a universal language became apparent. As pilots, air traffic controllers, and cabin crews communicate in various languages, the use of standardized English is essential to ensure the sustainability and safety of the airline industry.

The development of Aviation English by the **International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)** (n.d.) during the mid-20th century was a significant milestone towards the standardization of English usage in the airline industry. The aviation industry, by virtue of its global nature, demands a universally accepted medium of communication. Aviation English, standardized by the ICAO, is such a medium. The standards referred to as ICAO's Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) for language proficiency were codified officially in Annex 1 of the referenced document. In 2003, ICAO introduced amendments to Annex 1 (Personnel Licensing) of the Chicago Convention to include English language proficiency requirements for flight crew and air traffic controllers. They emphasized the necessity for aviation professionals to demonstrate linguistic competence for clear and standardized communication (ICAO, 2010). Aviation English is in fact distinct, focusing on specific vocabulary and contexts. Aviation English, with its unique lexicon and structure, ensures safety and precision in flight operations (Brown, 2015).

The document primarily addressed pilots and air traffic controllers, who are naturally the main focus, given their immediate and direct impact on flight safety (Thompson & Roberts, 1998). The global aviation industry is not just about piloting aircraft. Among the vital cogs of this industry are flight attendants who, beyond ensuring the safety and comfort of passengers, communicate essential information with them and others. Thus, flight attendants began to be highlighted as part of the holistic picture of the importance of using Aviation English. Flight attendants were rightly more than just on-board service providers; they were the first line of defense in in-flight emergencies, liaisons between the cockpit and the cabin, and crucially, the primary interface with passengers of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Martin & White, 2001). With air travel becoming more accessible, the skies began to witness a mosaic of cultures. Flight attendants had to communicate safety instructions, address queries, and even mediate conflicts among passengers from varied linguistic backgrounds, all while ensuring that the crux of their communication, rooted in Aviation English, remained uncompromised (Liu & James, 2007). Aviation English has become the crucial universal language for the airline industry.

The importance of cabin crew, especially flight attendants, in this linguistic equation soon became very evident for language training. Their pivotal role as the primary interface between the airline and its passengers meant that they had to

not only communicate routine instructions but also manage potential in-flight emergencies effectively (Martin & White, 2001). As global travel burgeoned, the role of flight attendants expanded, becoming more multifaceted. Beyond safety, they became cultural mediators, addressing the needs of a diverse passenger demographic. This heightened the importance of linguistic proficiency, ensuring they could cater to passengers from different linguistic backgrounds while adhering to the standardized protocols of Aviation English (Liu & James, 2007). Within this context, flight attendants, as frontline ambassadors of airlines, require effective command over Aviation English, both in training and practice. Flight attendants, thus play an important role in the efficiency of the airline industry. They interact with a diverse clientele and crew, making effective communication pivotal.

One significant aspect of aviation regulation is the emphasis on English language proficiency. The context of this study focuses on the English language experiences of flight attendants and Aviation English trainers in China. Similar to ICAO's Aviation English policy, the CAAC has also recognized the need for Aviation English proficiency among stakeholders such as pilots, air traffic controllers, and flight attendants. English being the international language of aviation, proficiency in Aviation English is critical in maintaining effective communication and safety in international air space.

The spread of English as an international language, particularly under the conditions of world economic growth and China's increasing opening, brings forward the necessity for Aviation English learning and teaching. China's entry into the world family of aviation demands that Chinese aviation workers be proficient in English to a very high level in order to communicate well with their foreign counterparts, read technical manuals, and be consistent with world standards. For Aviation English teachers and flight attendants alike, proficiency in English not only saves lives but also enhances customer satisfaction and quality of service in a highly competitive international industry.

This study explores the language experiences of pre-service and in-service flight attendants, focusing on their learning trajectories, use, problems faced, and self-assessment of ability in learning Aviation English. The special features of Aviation English point out the need for specific training programs. Therefore, educators are sensitive to the particular language needs of flight attendants in order to facilitate their learning and use of Aviation English. In this study, potential gaps in instruction and learning and use of Aviation English for flight attendants also form a part of the study's concern for explication. In conclusion, understanding the regulatory framework and economic significance of the aviation industry, particularly the role of the CAAC and the importance of Aviation English proficiency, provides a foundational context for this study. This background underscores the critical need for effective English language training for flight attendants and Aviation English trainers in China, aligning with global aviation standards and enhancing China's position in the international aviation market.

1.3. English for Specific Purposes in China

English language education in China, especially at the tertiary level, is an area of considerable interest given China's continuous integration into the global economy which includes the airline industry. Historically, the development of ESP is an offshoot of General English language teaching policies and practices at the tertiary level in China.

Language practice and policy emerge as responses to the various challenges and the necessity for reforms. The reforms are mostly due to the varied demands of the students, considering the enormous number of students with various backgrounds and objectives; one of the principal challenges is rendering English teaching responsive to these varied demands. English language teaching at the university level in China is a dynamic field, influenced by national agendas, international trends, and educational research.

The need for English has never been more intense, given China's pivotal role in global affairs and commerce. One example of rapid transformation is drawn from China's Ministry of Education's College English Curriculum Requirements (CECR). This is a key directive for teaching the English language at the tertiary level. It specifies the goals, content, and testing of English education. In addition, the Ministry of Education also mandated the College English Test (CET) as a national English test in China that assesses the English proficiency of undergraduate students.

Educational Reform in China (2012) has recognized the need to update English language teaching emphasis on the development of communicative competency. This policy is also seen as a reaction to the criticism that English teaching in China has overemphasized the Grammar-translation method to detriment of communicative competence (Aiguo, 2007; Jigang, 2014; Si, 2019). Guidelines for Higher Education China (2020) spells out clearly that English language educators and teachers are to focus on the cultivation of communicative competence among learners (Lestari, 2017; Si, 2019) which can be seen as the precursor to ESP.

With this shift toward communicative competence and ESP development, there is a need for continuous teacher training as well. ESP English language teaching and learning is an expanding field and such growth will likely stimulate new research in ESP English language teaching and learning (Basturkmen, 2010; Si, 2019). Today, there is evidence of the growth of tertiary institutions that are ESP-oriented. However, these institutions are still considered as relatively underdeveloped in mainstream education (Liu, Lin, & Wiley, 2016; Lestari, 2017). Cai (2014) noted that as a result of the new demands of ESP in the aviation industry, there was an emphasis on Aviation English. In line with communicative language teaching and ESP development, aspects of pedagogical concerns have emerged. These concerns are articulated in curriculum design, benchmarking of English language proficiency and teaching methods.

1.4. Flight Attendant Training

According to the [CAAC Annual Report \(2018\)](#), 428 colleges and universities in China have started offering aviation-related courses. This figure attests to a growing aviation industry and the demand for the use of the English language. The emergence of such courses has led to new curriculum design, benchmarking of English language proficiency and teaching methods. Aside from following technical courses, trainees also need to learn Aviation English. Among the specialized programs offered, one of them is targeted for the training of flight attendants as evident in [Sanya Aviation College \(n.d.\)](#). The program consists of both technical and Aviation English. This program is offered to school leavers in China who exit the school education system at age 22.

The development process of China's aviation industry has required an exhaustive and extensive strategy towards the training of flight attendants, wherein the command over the English language has remained a fundamental element. The significance of language skills among flight attendants has been progressively understood in China, particularly in the context of growth in its aviation sector and expanding international routes operated by Chinese airlines. China's aviation industry, one of the fastest-growing in the world, places a high importance on effective communication, especially for flight attendants who are the front-line staff in dealing with passengers. While CAAC's language proficiency requirements are primarily targeted at pilots and air traffic controllers, the predominance of English in the aviation field has trickled down to flight attendant training. Many training programs stress English language requirements, due to the international scope of aviation and the requirement for effective communication on global flights.

Blending language training with cultural awareness is the key to delivering a smooth and enjoyable flight experience for customers of various international backgrounds. In light of the multicultural nature of travelers on international flights, China's training programs are centered on the knowledge and respect for various cultural norms. Such an integrated methodology guarantees that the communication is not just linguistically correct but also culturally appropriate.

Cultural competence is highly involved in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) since students are expected to deal not just with the language but also practices and conventions in target culture. Culture variations may contribute to misunderstandings and unsuccessful communication, especially in domains like international commerce or worldwide health. According to [Canagarajah \(2002\)](#), ESP programs should include cultural training in order to raise awareness and dealing in cultural specifics in students. Likewise, [Holliday, Hyde and Kullman \(2019\)](#) state that students have to cope not just with language and culture practices but also customs related to their professions. The learning process includes learning suitable forms of culture-specific communication, social manners, and context awareness required for efficient functioning in multicultural environments.

Many flight attendant training programs divide their courses into technical and non-technical categories. The overall curriculum typically includes Cabin Ser-

vice, Emergency Response, Emergency Medical Treatment, Civil Aviation Passenger Transport, Civil Aviation Dangerous Goods Transport, Flight Attendant Etiquette, and Flight Attendant English.

This study focuses on the Flight Attendant English course, though other courses also provide valuable insights into flight attendants' aviation-related knowledge. Aviation English training specifically targets:

a) Vocabulary: Courses begin with the basics, teaching flight attendants the essential vocabulary needed for cabin service, safety protocols, and passenger interactions.

b) Scenario-Based Training: Programs incorporate real-life scenarios requiring English communication, such as handling a passenger's food preferences or addressing medical emergencies.

c) Accent Training: Given the diversity of English speakers that Chinese flight attendants might encounter, some courses emphasize understanding different accents and nuances in spoken English.

Upon completion of the flight attendant training, the graduates will be able to seek employment in the relevant sectors of the aviation industry. Flight attendants can be employed by airlines to serve domestic or international routes.

For the purpose of investigating the teaching, learning and use of Aviation English in this study, Aviation English language trainers and pre-service and in-service flight attendants form the sample population. However, the study makes a distinction in terms of the sampling method of pre-service and in-service flight attendants. While the pre-service sample is obtained from various Aviation Colleges, the in-service sample is limited to those serving China international airlines. The rationale for choosing the samples of flight attendants from China international airlines is the prevalent use of English at their workplace. In the domestic setting, flight attendants are assumed to use very little English.

1.5. Research Objective

This study aims to explore the challenges perceived by both flight attendants and English language trainers in the teaching, learning, and application of Aviation English.

1.6. Research Questions

The objectives of this study are crystallized in the ensuing research questions:

- 1) How do pre-service and in-service flight attendants perceive their challenges in the learning and use of Aviation English?
- 2) How do English language trainers perceive their challenges in the teaching of Aviation English?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Bachman and Palmer's (2010) Model

In the current study, *Bachman and Palmer's (2010)* model is the primary theoret-

ical reference for communicative competence. Although originally designed as a model for language assessment, it has been widely cited and used by researchers in the field of language studies. The model also facilitates ESP needs analysis, particularly in Aviation English, the main context of this research. It aids in assessing flight attendants' and ESP instructors' responses to the learning, use and teaching of Aviation English, ensuring the necessary targeted competences are met (Si, 2019). This model emphasizes the structural and functional aspects of language and its applications in real-world contexts, providing a robust framework for understanding and teaching specialized language skills (Figure 1).

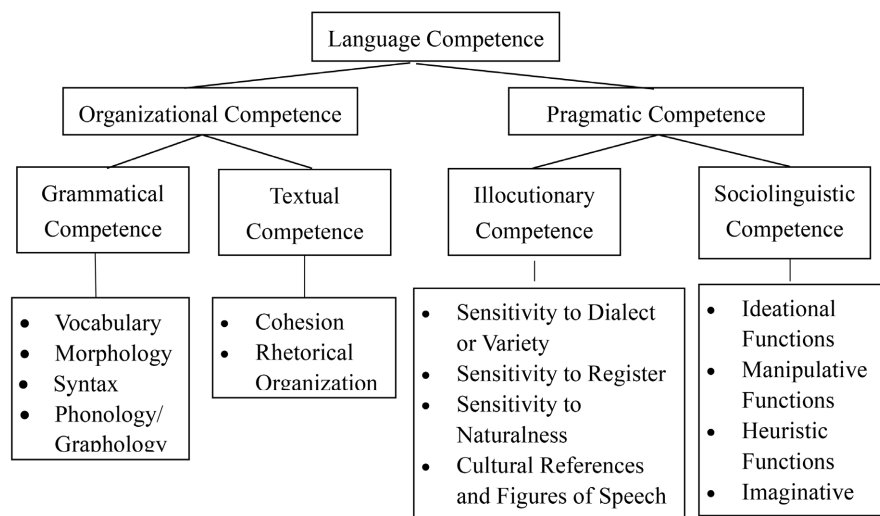


Figure 1. Language Competence Model (Bachman & Palmer, 2010).

Bachman and Palmer's (2010) language competence model analyse this construct under two general components: pragmatic competence and organizational competence. Within the organizational competence, there is another dichotomy between textual competence and grammatical competence. Grammatical competence is understood as the fundamental components of language structure, such as vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and phonology/graphology that are essential to the correct and coherent production of language. Textual competence emphasizes the importance of cohesion and rhetorical organization of language, both of which are essential to the construction of coherent and systematically organized texts. The aforementioned qualities all build a base that enables the comprehension of and the creation of grammatically correct and context-sensitive language.

Pragmatic competence, the second of Bachman and Palmer's key components of their theory, includes both the illocutionary competence and the sociolinguistic competence. Illocutionary competence is the competence to use various linguistic functions to serve the purpose of transmitting ideational meaning, encompassing actions like providing information to others, persuading others to do certain actions, and engaging in the testing of concepts to enhance creativity. Sociolinguistic competence is the competence to use various linguistic functions within various

social circumstances to interact with others, a very important component of Bachman and Palmer's theory.

By incorporating these various components, Bachman and Palmer's model offers an integrative perspective on language capacity that extends beyond limited linguistic knowledge to encompass the functional and sociocultural aspects of language use. The model gives attention to both the structural and functional components of language use, and as such, it is an indispensable basis for language teaching and testing. It also guides the development of curriculum design and instructional methodology that addresses the multi-faceted nature of communicative competence. Using this model in Aviation English training programs guarantees that flight attendants and ESP teachers acquire the competences necessary to address the demands of their respective work environments, which will ultimately lead to improved performance and safety in aviation.

2.2. ESP and Aviation English

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is the application of English language teaching to particular professional or academic fields. In contrast to General English (GE), ESP is concerned with specialized vocabulary, grammatical structures, and communicative strategies for use in a particular discipline or field. Whatever the discipline may be, whether business, academics, or specific industries, an ESP course aims to fulfill the particular linguistic needs of students in a given area.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) define English for Specific Purposes (ESP) as a pedagogical approach in which all content and methodological decision making is determined by the learner's purpose in learning the language (p. 19). This tailored approach ensures that learners acquire the linguistic tools and other pragmatic complements essential for their respective fields. ESP is not merely about teaching a specialized vocabulary; it represents a paradigm shift in language instruction. Imagine a medical professional and a pilot; both proficient in English but requiring vastly different linguistic tools. While the former might need to know terms like "laparoscopy" or "antibiotic resistance," the latter needs language terminologies like "turbulence" or "airspace." Hutchinson and Waters (1987) said, "ESP is not just science or computer English." It encompasses a wide range of disciplines, making English instruction meaningful and relevant for diverse professions.

Tracing back to its origins, the 1960s witnessed the embryonic stages of ESP, primarily driven by the realization that GE courses were not adequately preparing students for the linguistic challenges of specific professions or academic disciplines. The oil crisis of the 1970s, coupled with the economic boom in several parts of the world, fuelled the demand for English training tailored for professionals in sectors like medicine, law, and, of course, aviation (Strevens, 1988). As international collaborations expanded, so did the need for specialized English courses, leading to the institutionalization of ESP. During its formative years in the 1960s, ESP was seen as a supplementary course – an add-on to GE instruction. However, global economic dynamics, such as the rapid industrialization of Asia in the 1970s,

necessitated communication in specialized fields transforming ESP from a supplementary course to a primary need (Robinson, 1991). For example, when Japan emerged as a technological powerhouse, engineers and technicians required the learning of English language skills tailored to their profession, driving the demand for specialized ESP courses in technical domains. Similarly, the aviation industry witnessed its fair share of rapid development. Aviation, by its very nature, is a global enterprise. As air travel burgeoned and connected corners of the world, there was an imperative need for a standardized communication system. This niche area of ESP, Aviation English, developed out of the need to reduce confusion and ensure safety in the air. ESP has developed as a specialized area of language teaching to meet precisely the specialized linguistic needs of professionals in a wide range of fields. In fact, there are few industries like aviation that have such widely dispersed a need for sharp, unambiguous communications in English.

Within the ESP context, Aviation English stands out as not just a subdiscipline but a critical one that underscores the very essence of why ESP was established to begin with. Aviation English represents the pinnacle of standardized terminology, programmed communication protocols, and even a prescribed speech rhythm, all carefully crafted to minimize vagueness and maximize accuracy.

It was on this background that Aviation English has emerged as a key pedagogical field based on the insight that general language skills are not necessarily sufficient. ESP aims at adapting language learning to the specialized needs of each profession. More than a broad-brush strategy, ESP tries to enter the specific linguistic complexities demanded by professional fields to supply professionals with more than lexis but the understanding of how to communicate within a professional environment.

3. Method

Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with Aviation English teachers to explore the teaching challenges they faced in teaching Aviation English to flight attendants. For example, teachers were asked to explain the most challenging language competencies for their students and to state the approaches they found helpful to alleviate these challenges.

Furthermore, focus group interviews were conducted with in-service and pre-service flight attendants to reveal their firsthand experience with Aviation English. The discussion points were particular challenges they faced, such as comprehending and using specialized terminology in announcements broadcast on board or overcoming linguistic constraints in interactions with passengers. The focus group interview facilitated an interactive setting where the subjects were allowed to give more elaborative explanations of one another's experiences and offer a clearer general picture of challenges they are facing.

3.1. Selection of Pre-Service and In-Service Flight Attendants

The participants in this research—involving 10 in-service and 10 pre-service flight

attendants, who are all Chinese in origin—had varied degrees of English-language proficiency, ranging from intermediate to upper-intermediate. The in-service and pre-service flight attendants, who are at the beginning stages in their vocational training, mainly had an intermediate level in English, possessing good general English foundation but lacking in learning and practicing industry-mandated specific English terminology and phrases. The in-service flight attendants, who have actual experience in the profession, tended to have a general level of English proficiency at the upper-intermediate level. The latter had a proficient level of comprehension and use of Aviation English, and could use terminology in everyday situations but had problems in using this type of expression skillfully in situations requiring pressure, like in-flight incidents. Overall, while there is a general level of English comprehension in both groups, there are variations based on the level and comprehensiveness of studying and using Aviation English.

3.2. Selection of English Language Trainers for Focus Group Discussion

The intentional inclusion of 10 highly qualified English language instructors from the top 10 aviation schools and colleges with greater than a decade of educational experience was a deliberate choice. It was a choice to gather expert opinion on training methodologies of the English language within the aviation industry and pedagogic approaches unique to the aviation industry. In bringing aboard the experienced instructors, the research attempted to gain a greater understanding of the teaching of the English language within the unique area of aviation English training.

The utilization of the focus group research approach is highly suitable to the present research. It enables the interactive interaction of participants to occur, allowing instructors to discuss their pedagogic approaches and learning strategies jointly. It thus maximizes the quality of the information collected and enables comparative analysis of the educational approaches of various institutions to occur. It is envisaged that interaction will provide information regarding the shared challenges of instructors, the best pedagogic strategies applied by various learning institutions, and possible areas of innovation of learning approaches.

The deliberate sample of a group of ten English instructors at the top aviation schools and institutions of higher learning in China is a key component of this research effort. The use of this unique approach to sample taking is to provide a broad range of opinion on the usage of the English language within the aerospace industry. Having sampled a single instructor at each training institution helps this research to have a broad overview of the educational and communicative requirements that are present among the various training environments within the sector.

In conclusion, the intentional choice of participants with varying backgrounds and levels of experience was imperative to the attainment of a complete understanding of the challenges of aviation-related language training. The research ap-

proach provided the opportunity to critically examine the intricacies involved with the attainment of linguistic skills necessary within the aviation sector.

3.3. Data Analysis

The complex qualitative analysis includes a number of necessary stages with the aim of drawing meaningful conclusions from the extensive descriptive information collected within the research itself.

Transcribing Interviews: The first activity was the lengthy exercise of transcribing the interviews. Transcription is a key component of qualitative research that translates speech into text. Accurate transcription of the interviews allows researchers to work with the text systematically, providing a base upon which to carry out later coding and analysis (Gibbs, 2007).

Coding and Thematic Analysis: Coding is a key qualitative approach to data analysis that involves the systematic assigning of descriptive terms to parts of the data, e.g., the transcript of a qualitative interview. The first time that coding is applied is central to the extraction of the emerging themes or patterns within the data set. Thematic analysis with a recursive approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) entails the examination of the emerging themes to identify the central elements of the participants' lived experience and cognitive activity.

Recognizing Patterns Linked to Participants' Perceptions of Challenges: Qualitative analysis requires a deep analysis of the patterns that are inherently connected to the participants' perceptions of challenges. Closely examining the coded information enables the examination of recurring themes or patterns that provide information regarding the ways participants think about challenges within the research environment (Guest et al., 2012). Following strictly established qualitative analysis protocols maximizes the ability of the researchers to go beyond mere comprehension and examine the complex, context-sensitive determinants of participants' knowledge and beliefs (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

4. Findings

This research identifies key challenges for prospective and current flight attendants, along with Aviation English instructors, in the processes of learning, using, and teaching Aviation English. Results show essential linguistic, cognitive, and pedagogical issues that detrimentally affect communication competence in aviation contexts.

4.1. Challenges Encountered by Pre-Service Flight Attendants

Aspiring flight attendants have a serious hurdle to overcome to learn the specialized lexicons necessary to the aviation domain of English. It is of the utmost importance that the specialized vocabulary is learned not merely by rote memory but also remembered quickly under pressure circumstances. In addition to this, the highly dynamic character of the aviation sector compounds the challenges of learning the dynamic lexicons that are continually changing.

Another significant issue is with regards to maintaining fluency and confidence amid stressing circumstances. In crisis conditions, the need to communicate at a quick pace with exactitude is present; stress and psychological pressure tend to undermine the effectiveness of this by interfering with proper expression. Therefore, intense, scenario-training to develop automaticity of speech is necessary.

The presence of various English accents is a major issue with regards to comprehension. With the ethnically rich staff of airlines together with the multi-compositional travelers, speech-related misunderstandings can have serious repercussions. Therefore, strong phonetic skills have to be built up and familiarity with various English accents needs to be achieved.

Both cultural and language adaptation are also rated as a high-priority concern. Aviation English requires clear and assertive communication, which may be in conflict with existing cultural norms of politeness and indirectness. Such conflict usually results in ambiguity and suboptimal communication and supports the necessity for intercultural communication training.

Aviation English requires a direct and assertive communication style, contrasting with cultures that prioritize indirectness and politeness. This cultural gap can lead to misunderstandings, especially for flight attendants who must quickly adjust their communication style to align with aviation norms. [Gumperz \(1992\)](#) highlights the need for this shift, as it ensures clarity and efficiency but challenges cultural norms of respect and humility.

Pre-service Attendant 1 noted the struggle of balancing respect and assertiveness, feeling unnatural in adopting the aviation communication style. Pre-service Attendant 4 also expressed difficulty with the assertive tone required, linking it to a lack of confidence, especially when issuing commands. Pre-service Attendant 9 added that cultural norms create hesitation in high-stakes situations, underscoring the need for cultural sensitivity training to help integrate these communication shifts ([Scollon & Scollon, 2001](#)).

Furthermore, those interested in flight attendant careers need to develop the skill of handling a number of actions with cognitive requirements while utilizing the English language. The need to carry out simultaneous actions with proper communication necessitates orderly cognitive training to improve both linguistic accuracy and operational effectiveness.

4.2. Challenges Experienced by In-Service Flight Attendants

For incumbent cabin crew, high-pressure communication ability is a persistent issue. Assertive and adaptable communication during emergencies is necessary, yet stress and fatigue work to decrease effectiveness and clarity. The ability to simplify technical jargon and provide tactical repetition to ensure comprehension is essential.

The presence of linguistic diversity among passengers also creates added challenges. Flight attendants are often confronted with passengers with minimal English skills, requiring the usage of a range of communicative strategies like body

language and physical action. It is imperative to maintain linguistic adaptability to ensure the comprehension of passengers, especially at times of crisis.

The impact of physical fatigue and mental fatigue on linguistic skills is a serious issue of concern. Extended work duration with the accumulation of fatigue impairs cognitive flexibility and results in less-than-optimum communicative performance. Enhanced performance requires the institution of measures to counter fatigue that include regular breaks and training to enhance cognitive resilience.

Moreover, modern flight attendants are also forced to adapt to assertive speech requirements imposed by the requirements of Aviation English. Many of them face a significant struggle to reconcile the sector's need to speak directly with their socio-cultural backgrounds that value respect and favor the usage of indirect speech patterns. Therefore, habituation training is necessary to develop both assertiveness skills and the corresponding confidence levels.

Notwithstanding the existence of formal training, the need to continually update knowledge and develop knowledge of certain aviation-related terms is still imperative. The dynamic nature of the aviation sector necessitates continuous enrichment and enrichment of the vocabulary to provide the staff with the broadest possible knowledge of aviation-related topics.

4.3. Challenges Encountered by Aviation English Trainers

Instructors of aviation are confronted with a significant issue of aligning their training approaches with the constantly changing environment of the aviation industry. The quick change of aviation legislation, the advent of innovative technologies, and the need to raise the levels of safety call upon educators to constantly reassess training courses. It is necessary that educators constantly update their knowledge of the latest advancements to make their course material relevant and applicable.

A principal dilemma for trainers is related to ensuring consistency between the course and constantly evolving in the aircraft industry. The rapid advancement in technology trends, ever-changing security procedures, and ever-changing nature of communications standards require course content to be constantly updated. It is thus mandatory for trainers to use imagination and imagination when creating course content (Kim & Elder, 2009).

An in-service teacher, Trainer 8 at Beijing Institute of Technology, highlighted problems related to staying up to date.

The ongoing advancement in novel technologies, security mechanisms, and modes of communications poses a dilemma in ensuring relevance in our instructional content.

His analyses identified some concerns related to ensuring maintenance in a curriculum that is aligned with current industry trends. The need for reforms still exists in ensuring appropriate training is offered in line with current sector demands (Boyd & Heritage, 2006).

Trainer 5 from Tongji University added,

We need to continuously update our curriculum to reflect these changes, which requires time, effort, and resources.

His assertion related to the enormous funds involved in updating course content that is current and relevant, especially in cases involving limited institutional support or budget constraints.

A comparable sentiment came across in Trainer 3 at Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics:

The implementation of simulation and role-play in line with modern trends is highly in demand.

He acknowledged the relevance of experience-based learning in aviator training and the perennial challenge faced in meeting the need for simulation of real-life situations in improving trainees' learning experience (Stokoe, 2011).

A significant issue within pedagogy is the issue of motivating and engaging learners. Many learners view Aviation English merely as a statutory requirement instead of a necessary vocational skill, with little enticement to enroll on the course. In a bid to improve the engagement of learners, incorporating innovative learning approaches like virtual simulations and collaborative learning is key to the solution.

The constraints of training time worsen the challenges of high-quality pedagogy. It is hard to find a balance between the delivery of theory and practice exercises of linguistic skills within time-limited training sessions. Enhanced practice-oriented linguistic training is necessary to ensure competence to apply technical terms to actual circumstances.

The second key challenge is addressing varied levels of English proficiency within one cohort. Mixed-ability classes present challenges to lesson planning and equitable participation, demanding differentiated teaching strategies to meet diverse learner needs without diluting high industry expectations.

In summary, the training of individuals to operate with standard technical jargon while also being adaptable with the informal speech is a significant area of issue. Flight staff have to learn not only the traditional vocabulary of aviation jargon but also the skills of interaction necessary to deal with unexpected circumstances like flight malfunction or disagreements with passengers. Role-playing sessions and simulation training are necessary to develop communicative flexibility to deal with real-world circumstances.

The results support the need for highly detailed, scenario-based training methodologies, on-the-job training, and innovation in pedagogic practice within the domain of Aviation English training. With the inherently dangerous conditions of aviation, linguistic accuracy and competence are key skills that both flight attendants and instructors must develop. Special interventions to deal with the problems will significantly enhance communicative competence, operational effectiveness, and overall aviation safety.

When considering situation-based learning (SBL) as a viable tool for learning specialized terminology, it is apparent that SBL is pivotal in training for Aviation

English. Role-playing and simulation training allows flight attendants to practice terminology like “decompression” and “evacuation” in pressured situations. Technologies like Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) are able to mimic real aircraft conditions and thus allow for multiple repetitions in simulation conditions conducive to the smooth automatic use of key terminology (Kim & Elder, 2009).

Novel methodologies, including the blended and flipped class modes, augment this learning paradigm. In the context of the flipped class paradigm, independent vocabulary learning is undertaken while contextual learning is undertaken in class. Blending online and in-classroom learning techniques allows for flexible learning experience and extensive opportunities for practical use. Task-based and collaboration-based learning frameworks in which participants build their own context encourage teamwork and real-world application in task-based situations (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Visual depictions utilized by Emirates, Singapore Airlines, and Lufthansa are good indicators of the effectiveness of these practices. These organizations use virtual reality simulation, situation-based training, and ongoing staff training programs to ensure flight attendants achieve competency in foreign-language competency and exhibit good communication in interactive and stressful situations (Alderson, 2010; Stokoe, 2011).

5. Conclusion

The study underscores the imperative value of Aviation English to improve safety, maximize operational effectiveness, and promote smooth communication within the international aviation industry. Both prospective and operational cabin crews are shown to struggle with recalling the specialized vocabulary of the industry, communicating at high-pressure real-world conditions, comprehending various accents of English, and dealing with the assertive needs of intercultural interactions. Teachers of Aviation English are concerned about the flexibility of course material, the intensity of learners’ participation, and the time restrictions that curtail the delivery of lessons to stress the need to develop case-study oriented training techniques.

In light of the emergent and critical character of the aviation industry, flight attendants must interact with native linguistic settings to a large degree, as this will improve their communicative skills both in case of emergencies and with passengers of various backgrounds. The training of aviation English must go beyond the rote learning; instead, it must include experiential learning techniques like role-playing exercises, simulated training sessions, and group problem-solving sessions.

The findings also state that instructors of Aviation English need continuous professional training, updated course material, and adaptive pedagogic approaches to manage the varying linguistic skills of their learners successfully. In addition to this, all the key partners within the sector—including aviation author-

ities, educational institutions, and airlines—need to work together to develop curricula, standard of proficiency levels, and educational approaches.

The removal of educational and linguistic impediments is anticipated to lead to increased safety measures, a higher quality of service within the flight environment, and a staff with highly qualified international skills. With increased participation of China within the international aviation sector, knowledge of the latest areas of Aviation English will increasingly be necessary to satisfy and surpass international requirements within the industry.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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