

Linguistik

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**Linguistics and flight safety:
Aspects of oral English communication in aviation**

Shaker Verlag
Aachen 2009

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

Cover photographs courtesy of FMG, Deutsche Lufthansa AG and Mr Andreas Milde.

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Printed in Germany.

ISBN 978-3-8322-8233-2

ISSN 1613-4532

Shaker Verlag GmbH • P.O. BOX 101818 • D-52018 Aachen

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Abstract

Spoken is not yet heard; heard is not yet understood; understood is not yet agreed; agreed is not yet applied; and applied is not yet always applied. The quotation of the Austrian ethologist and Nobel-Prize winner Konrad Lorenz reflects general aspects of human behaviour, especially when it comes to communication. Successful *verbal* communication is a human activity, which concerns the lives of many people when it is used for aeronautical purposes. This book gives a linguistic overview of how the English language has been adopted and adapted to serve the demands of international aeronautical communication. More specifically, it explains how Standard English has been modified to improve efficient communication between pilots and air traffic controllers from all over the world. After a brief historical outline of the development of English as *the* language of aviation, its standardised use will be exemplified by means of a hypothetical flight. This follows a general discussion of a code suitable for aeronautical communication and the newly introduction of language proficiency requirements in plain English with all its implications. The ensuing presentation of structural layers of Standardised Phraseology as the procedural-operational part of Aeronautical English starts with the conscious reduction of the phonemic inventory which ensures better understanding and easier pronunciation, followed by a description of the lexical core areas including criteria for the preference and selection of certain expressions and word groups. A discussion of the (morpho)syntactic simplifications and the semantic features shows the goal of this application of English: to deliver unambiguous messages as efficiently as possible in a professional environment where speedy communicative exchange is vital. After each chapter, and under the heading “linguistics and flight safety”, findings are presented that highlight the ambiguities in communication which have occurred and resulted in accidents or near-accidents, involving both non-native and native speakers of English worldwide. Ultimately, this book connects two systems: the aeronautical system and language, being considered a system itself.