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"Aviation Communication Between Theory and Practice", eds. Silvia Hansen-Schirra, Karin Maksymski, Frankfurt am Main 2013 : [recenzja]

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Silvia Hansen-Schirra, Karin Maksymski (eds), Aviation Communication Between Theory and Practice. (= FTSK 62 Publikationen des Fachbereichs Translations-, Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaft der Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz in Gernersheim). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2013, 143 pp.

The book is based on the conference *Languages and cultures above the clouds – International English between Standardization and Everyday Aviation Communication* (4–5 November, 2010, Gernersheim) and it is a selection of articles introduced during the conference.

The volume is subtitled 'Between Theory and Practice', so evidently the aim is to link theoretical knowledge, mainly linguistic, with practical applications in the context of aviation. Moreover, editors' purpose, as they state in the preface, is to promote the dialogue between researchers, operative aviation staff and language trainers, to enhance awareness of their need to work together as well as the efficiency of aviation communication, whilst simultaneously improving aviation safety.

The editors, although linguists themselves, target the wider audience of non-linguists, which results in a very contemporary and significant approach for this field of knowledge.

The primary audience is not only academics and postgraduate students, but also all other researchers in aviation English communication. Those who are beginners in the field of aviation linguistics should not be discouraged from reading the book, as a lot of the elementary issues are introduced, e.g. the article by Silja Koble and Patricia Roh 'Linguistic Characteristics of Aviation English and their Practical Use – an Analysis' where they describe basic grammar and phonetics of aviation English. Another example is the paper by Wendy L. Fox 'Play Again Please! – Transcribing Aviation Communication' where the authors describe *inter alia* transmission of letters, numbers and basic phraseology. Nevertheless, this work might be of more interest to devoted professionals and researchers than students.

This volume consists of 143 pages, comprising 12 articles organized thematically into 5 chapters, whose titles introduce a range of language issues in the aviation context. The wide range of authors are in most cases professionals who are involved in aviation communication every day. The professions include the following: 2 pilots, 1 ATC, 5 linguists, 3 language trainers and examiners, 1 researcher, 1 employee of Eurocontrol, 1 graduate and 1 MA student. The list

shows just how many diverse professions should cooperate to achieve one common aim.

The first article 'Operational Use of the English Language – ATM Safety around Europe' provides a succinct and engaging introduction to the major themes and issues. Further, it also gives a context for the collection of essays that follows by presenting aviation incident data collection according to EVAIR 2011 (EUROCONTROL Voluntary ATM Incident Reporting). It confirms that the majority of aviation incidents in Europe is still caused by communication problems. The author also mentions the status of the English language in national regulations worldwide, and it would have been welcome, had the author given examples of states where English is not a prerequisite. The author also indicates the need for improvement in the training field both for non-native as well as native speakers of English. Similar remarks are presented in the following article that is rich in linguistic observations of pilot-ATC-pilot dialogues and again underlines the fact that native users of English should be blamed equally as non-native ones for communication breakdowns. These remarks are significant when it comes to cross-cultural awareness in aviation communication (see A. Borowska *Shaping Cross-Cultural Awareness in Aviation English Communication*, www.icaea.pata.pl).

The very professional article by Markus Bieswanger, where knowledge of aviation English and phraseology is required for understanding the fascinating examples, is followed by one that is oriented towards pure beginners in the field, which should rather have been placed in the introductory part of the volume.

The same level of knowledge is presented in the abovementioned article 'Linguistics Characteristics...', namely that there are basic characteristics of aviation English. These are detailed as the occurrence of parts of speech and various types of phrases. However, the usage of the term 'Aviation English' itself seems to be confused. The authors refer to it as 'an artificial language based on English grammar and vocabulary' (p. 45), but they probably meant standard phraseology here, not the language used in aviation communication, i.e. standard phraseology and plain English (which is not really artificial). One might also recommend using the term 'phrase' instead of 'sentence' at this level of research.

Two articles written from a pilot perspective provide a fascinating insight into the pilots' spoken habits, as well as ways to avoid the pitfalls. There are authors who also analyse the way English is used by ATCs. Alice Muller-Leonhardt suggests a constructivist approach that can lead to some new solutions, while Silvia Hansen-Schirra presents a rich linguistic analysis emphasized by interesting statistical data. Moreover, readers can also find pieces of advice on professional language training, strategies and examination.

It is worth asking, in what sense the book might be considered 'basic', or an 'introduction' to aviation language issues. This collection is the obvious choice for anyone looking for an initial grounding in the theory. Since in aviation there is

no time to waste, slender, basic knowledge is quickly transformed into a broader, deeper one, by promoting the exploration of various but complementary approaches.

Although the issues presented in the volume are of constant interests to the International Civil Aviation English Association (ICAEA), the authors do not refer to this fact. However, those ideas are still of great importance for aviation communication and allow researchers to keep up-to-date with all the aspects presented. Anyone wanting to continue such research is here provided with all the essential tools, such as regulations, descriptions of possible problems, statistics, access to live aviation personnel dialogues, as well as a useful bibliography.

The book is a practical compendium for professional communication within the ESP-domain. As there are not many publications that deal with the issues discussed in this volume, it fits not only within the range of already published works, but also demonstrates the urgent need for improvement. It discovers and proposes relevant ideas. It takes an evaluative and critical stance towards acknowledged theories and approaches, introduces fresh views, suggestions, and responses to aviation communication issues. This book is highly recommended to anyone interested in aviation.

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