

Flight attendants talk about pilots

Dr Barbara Clark

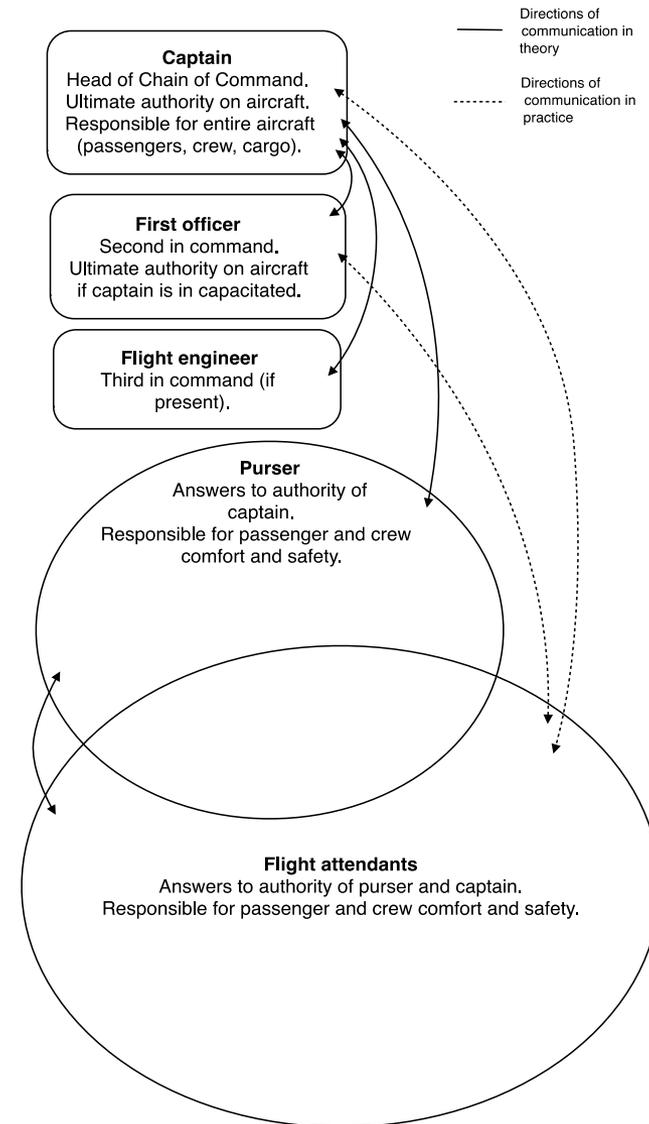
You Say Tomato

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Chain of Command

Figure 1 Chain of Command - © Dr Barbara Clark



Cabin/flight crew differences...

Differences can
lead to divisions
between the two
employee groups



Institutional separation



Occupational separation

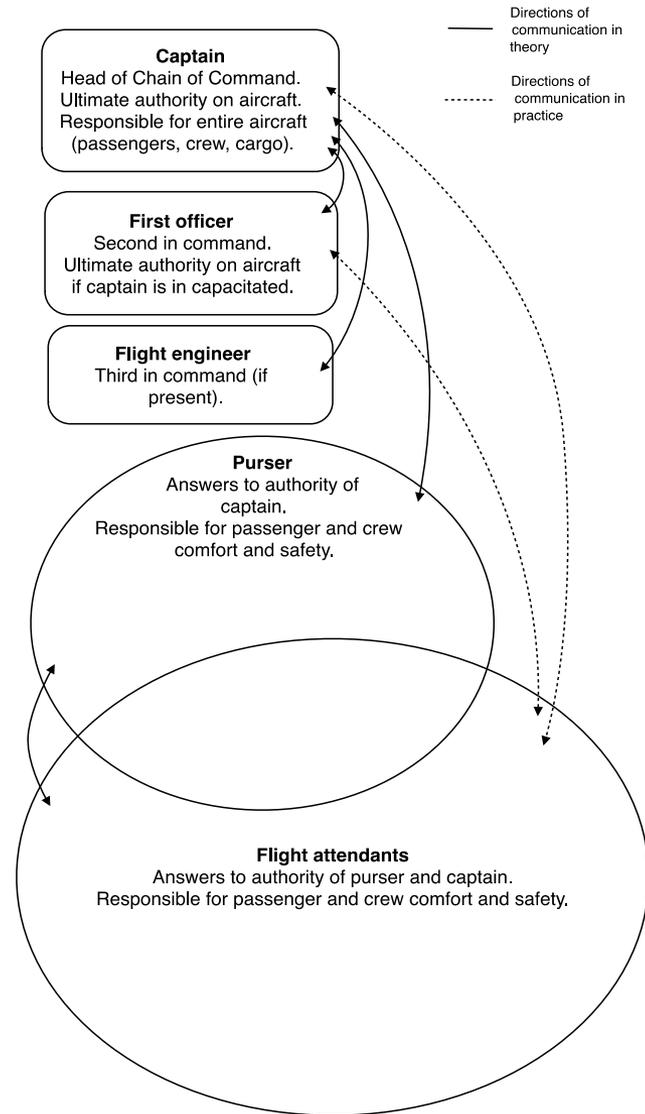


Hierarchical separation



Hierarchical separation

Figure 1 Chain of Command - © Dr Barbara Clark



Historical separation



Gendered separation



Stereotypes





Us and them

Table 1 Interpretations of ‘we/us/our’ in safety report corpus

	Interpretation of ‘we/us/our’	Frequency (n/%)
1.	Flight attendants only	428 (57.4%)
2.	Flight attendants, pilots, and passengers	123 (16.5%)
3.	Flight attendants and pilots	25 (3.4%)
4.	Flight attendants and others not included above (e.g., commuter; gate agent)	19 (2.6%)
5.	The airline	12 (1.6%)
6.	Flight attendants and passengers	6 (0.8%)
7.	Ambiguous	132 (17.7%)
	Total	745 (100%)

Table 2 Interpretations of ‘they/them/their’ in safety report corpus

	Interpretation of ‘they/them/their’	Frequency (n/%)
1.	Pilots	33 (25.6%)
2.	Other flight attendants	28 (21.7%)
3.	Passengers	24 (18.6%)
4.	Gate agents	9 (7%)
5.	Mechanics	9 (7%)
6.	Caterers	2 (1.6%)
7.	Ambiguous	1 (0.7%)
8.	Other	23 (17.8%)
	Total	129 (100%)

Table 3 Pilot terms

	Safety reports	Discussion forums
1.	3 sets of pilots	A baby
2.	A capt	A class act
3.	Capt	A God Captain
4.	Cockpit	A great guy
5.	My capt	Douchebag pilots
6.	Our capt	Most pilots I have flown with
7.	Relief pilot	Our pilots
8.	The capt and FO	That fool
9.	The flt crew I was flying with	The 737 and Airbus pilots
10.	The FO	The big bad captain
11.	The plts	The big f*cking hero
12.	The same plt	The older senior guys
13.	This captain	The Scabtain

Example 1 'smoke in the cabin'

604034 (2003-12-4.13)

1. RIGHT AFTER TKOF, WE STARTED TO SMELL SMOKE.
2. IT SEEMED LIKE ELECTRICAL SMOKE.
3. I WENT TO THE GALLEY AND TURNED OFF THE OVENS, COFFEE MAKER AND CHILLERS.
4. CHIMES STARTED TO GO OFF AND I SAW, BY THE PHONE, IT WAS A LAVATORY SMOKE BUTTON BLINKING RED.
5. I WENT AND GRABBED THE PBE (PERSONAL BREATHING EQUIP) AND HALON AND STARTED TO CHK THE 4 AFT LAVATORIES FOR SMOKE.
6. WE STARTED TO SEE SMOKE IN THE CABIN.
7. FOR ABOUT 10 MINS, WE WERE ALL LOOKING FOR THE SOURCE, BUT COULD NOT FIND IT.
8. THE COCKPIT FINALLY TOLD US THAT IT WAS A HEATING PACK ON THE R SIDE OF THE ACFT AND THAT IT GOT DEICING FLUID INSIDE WHICH CAUSED THE BURNING SMELL.
9. THEY SAID THEY HAD TURNED IT OFF.
10. THE ENTIRE TIME THEY DIDN'T REALIZE THAT SMOKE WAS IN THE CABIN AND PAX WERE PANICKING WHILE THE CREW WAS TRYING TO FIND THE SOURCE.
11. THEY FAILED TO COMMUNICATE WITH US AND LET US KNOW THE CAUSE OF THE PROB.

Discussion and conclusions

- Language reflects, reproduces, and creates reality.
- ‘Us’ and ‘them’ talk is counter to CRM and training.
- The united inflight team of pilots and flight attendants isn’t 100% there – at least as reflected in the talk of flight attendants.

Thank you!

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