

SECTION 6. GENERAL PEDAGOGY

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AVIATION RADIOTELEPHONE COMMUNICATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES OF FUTURE PILOTS AND AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS

АВІАЦІЙНИЙ РАДІОТЕЛЕФОННИЙ ЗВ'ЯЗОК В ІНШОМОВНИЙ КОМУНІКАТИВНИЙ ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ МАЙБУТНІХ ПІЛОТІВ ТА ДИСПЕТЧЕРІВ УПРАВЛІННЯ ПОВІТРЯНИМ РУХОМ

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Today, a foreign language, particularly English, has become an integral component of future pilots and air traffic controllers' (ATCs) foreign language training for the successful performance of their professional duties.

For aviation specialists, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is not considered merely an auxiliary part of training but rather an integrated aspect of overall aviation education. Future pilots and ATCs recognize the significance of foreign language competence in their careers, while high school teachers, in turn, take a more creative approach to language training in aviation higher educational establishments.

In 2004, the first edition of Document 9835 (Manual on the Implementation of ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements) was published, providing comprehensive information on various aspects related to language training and testing, aimed at supporting states in complying with the strengthened language proficiency requirements. In 2007, the ICAO Assembly adopted Resolution A36-11, "Proficiency in the English Language Used for Radiotelephone Communications," which mandated the Council to assist Contracting States in meeting language proficiency requirements by supporting standardized language testing criteria for the international aviation community [1].

The scope covered by the term "aviation language" is quite broad, encompassing language users from various aviation-related professions. However, the main focus of ICAO language proficiency requirements is aviation radiotelephone communication – a specialized subcategory of aviation language restricted to the use of language by only two aviation professions: pilots and ATCs. This communication includes ICAO standard phraseology and the use of plain English. ICAO's standardized words and phrases for radiotelephone communications have been developed over the years and form a sublanguage characterized by "non-standard" linguistic structures and highly specialized terminology [1, p. 32]. Therefore, it is reasonable to consider aviation language, radiotelephone language, and phraseology as aviation sublanguages within the broader category of "English."

Aviation radiotelephone communication is characterized by: 1) listening and speaking skills (although for the Controller-Pilot Data Link Communications (CPDLC) system, reading and writing skills are also necessary); 2) context dependence, as its use requires technical knowledge related to aviation; 3) lack of visual contact, increasing reliance on precise and clear language; 4) the necessity to exchange more information for mutual understanding due to the spatial separation of ATCs and flight crews; 5) the inability of participants to interact simultaneously, as only one interlocutor can transmit a message at a time; 6) background noise, poor acoustic conditions, and microphone handling issues, which may cause communication failures [1, pp. 32–33].

The language of aviation radiotelephone communication differs from standard literary language at all linguistic levels – phonetic, lexical, and

syntactic. When communicating with each other, interlocutors approach the task from different perspectives, and this divergence leads to the use of spoken English. Thus, radiotelephone communication unites the international aviation community, but membership in this community is based on knowledge of aviation-related issues and, in particular, radiotelephone rules. This common knowledge is balanced by differences in language proficiency and accordingly obliges some radio participants to undergo foreign language training to achieve the appropriate level, and users with a high level of language proficiency to adapt their language use in order to remain understandable to less experienced language users. However, one crucial factor must be considered: in aviation radiotelephone communication, inaccuracies and misunderstandings pose a direct threat to human life. Any number of reasons can lead to misunderstandings, such as:

- a) two words may sound the same;
- b) there may be significant differences in pronunciation, even among native speakers;
- c) loss of message clarity due to ambiguous phrasing; the content of the message may be missed because it is veiled;
- d) insufficient language proficiency makes for ineffective communication [1, p. 33].

Standard phraseology is intended for flight crews and ATCs, whose characteristic function is to ensure effective and safe communication. However, professional language users do not always adhere to standard phraseology due to negligence, inertia, or workload, which can result in misunderstandings and accidents. But in the case of unexpected or non-standard situations, pilots and ATCs should resort to plain English, meaning the spontaneous, creative and uncoded use of plain English, although limited by aviation topics and language and safety requirements, but containing intelligibility, directness, relevance, clarity and conciseness of expression. Plain English must maintain clarity, directness, appropriateness, and conciseness.

Therefore, it is undeniable that the main component of communication is language proficiency. "Language proficiency is not just knowledge of a set of grammatical rules, vocabulary and ways of pronouncing sounds. It is a complex interaction of this knowledge with a certain number of skills and abilities. In this, language proficiency differs significantly in nature from many other subjects in school education and in aviation training [1, p. 21]".

Foreign language training for pilots and ATCs primarily focuses on improving listening and speaking skills. Oral language proficiency involves both basic competence-based skills and a complex set of subskills integrated in real-time to form communicative competence. These subskills include, among others: activating stored words and phrases that belong to the

vocabulary of the language; applying learned grammatical rules; perceiving and articulating sounds and tones that make up a meaningful sound stream; and, in the context of interactive communication, adapting to multiple discourses, social, cultural, and professional norms. The successful integration of these sub-skills constitutes foreign language communicative competence, which is very closely related and largely based on general knowledge and skills [1].

Foreign language communicative competence, including linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competencies required for language proficiency, cannot be directly observed. They can only be determined by observing language performance, which itself is not competence but provides the only means by which language proficiency can be assessed. Performance in natural language use is rarely error-free. Acknowledging these errors led to the establishment of ICAO's Operational Level 4, which is considered the minimum acceptable proficiency level to ensure aviation safety.

In conclusion, foreign language communicative activity in aviation is based on aviation radiotelephone communication to ensure flight safety.

Bibliography:

1. Doc 9835 AN/453, Manual on the Implementation of ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements URL: <https://skybrary.aero/sites/default/files/bookshelf/2497.pdf> (last access: 03.02.2025).