DOI: https://doi.org/10.36719/2663-4619/82/51-55

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THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING AVIATION ENGLISH AS A DISTINCT LANGUAGE

Abstract

Aviation industry is growing at an enormous rate and highly sophisticated set of technologies are employed for achieving safety in aircraft operations. Though enormous efforts have been made to improve aircraft technologies, maintenance facilities, airports, and navigation aids, the industry still suffers from the aviation safety problems in other words tragic air accidents. One of the underlying problems leading to this problem is miscommunication. Communication problems, especially between pilots and air-traffic controllers, have a crucial role in the number of fatal air accidents.

These problems are even more severe for non-native English-speaking pilots and non-native English speaking controllers, since they have the highest probability of miscommunication and misunderstanding interacting with each other. Due to this growing we should learn why it is important and how can we teach Aviation English in a smooth way. Learning and teaching Aviation English will help us to avoid or to decrease accidents in this field. Knowing importance of Aviation English will help us to plan or to conduct correct way of learning, techniques and methods for safe flights.

Keywords: *aviation communication, communication problems, linguistics, English language, learning language*

Gülnar Zahirəli qızı Əlizadə

Aviasiya ingilis dilinin ayrı bir dil kimi öyrənilməsinin əhəmiyyəti

Xülasə

Aviasiya sənayesi böyük sürətlə böyüyür və təyyarə əməliyyatlarında təhlükəsizliyə nail olmaq üçün yüksək dərəcədə mürəkkəb texnologiyalar dəsti istifadə olunur. Təyyarə texnologiyalarının, texniki xidmət vasitələrinin, hava limanlarının və naviqasiya vasitələrinin təkmilləşdirilməsi üçün böyük səylər göstərilsə də, sənaye hələ də aviasiya təhlükəsizliyi problemlərindən, başqa sözlə, faciəli hava qəzalarından əziyyət çəkir. Buna səbəb olan əsas problemlərdən biri yanlış ünsiyyətdir. Ölümlə nəticələnən hava qəzalarının sayında, xüsusilə pilotlar və hava hərəkəti idarəçiləri arasında rabitə problemləri həlledici rol oynayır. Bu problemlər doğma ingiliscə danışan pilotlar və qeyri-ana dili ingiliscə danışan nəzarətçilər üçün daha ciddidir, çünki onların bir-biri ilə qarşılıqlı əlaqədə səhv ünsiyyət və anlaşılmazlıq ehtimalı yüksəkdir.

Bu böyüməyə görə bunun nə üçün vacib olduğunu və Aviasiya İngilis dilini hamar bir şəkildə necə öyrədə biləcəyimizi öyrənməliyik. Aviasiya İngilis dilini öyrənmək və öyrətmək bizə bu sahədə qəzaların qarşısını almağa və ya azaltmağa kömək edəcək. Aviasiya İngilis dilinin əhəmiyyətini bilmək bizə təhlükəsiz uçuşlar üçün düzgün öyrənmə üsulunu, texnika və metodlarını planlaşdırmağa və ya həyata keçirməyə kömək edəcək.

Açar sözlər: *aviasiya rabitəsi, rabitə problemləri, dilçilik, ingilis dili, dil öyrənmə*

Introduction

Communication is great importance for the smooth progress of the operation in aviation, as it is in every field where people are involved. Because flight crews; sharing information, transferring tasks, giving commands etc. has to communicate. This communication can be unidirectional or bidirectional. For example, systems that warn the pilot or information from radars are one-way communication; Communications with people in the cockpit, in the cabin or in operation are two-way communication.

As in every sphere, in aviation field also English language is the main language for communicating. That's why first of all, we should know why it is important and how to teach English in this field. As in every field in this field also there are so many challenges and difficulties in learning and teaching English (Cogo, 2008).

Communication is an important factor for human interactions. Of course, there has to be communication in all interactions between people. The main purpose of communication is to be understandable. If an understandable communication cannot be established, it is inevitable to experience problems between people. These problems can affect both people's lives and all business areas where people are involved. One of these fields is aviation.

When the accidents and various cases in the history of aviation are examined, it is seen that the majority of these accidents and cases are related to the human factor. The main cause of accidents and incidents caused by people is communication problems (Payne, 2017:3).

There are five types of messages in aviation:

1. Verbal messages; cabin crew and cockpit, cockpit and controller, cabin crew and passengers etc. It is used when communicating between people. This message type is the most error-prone. An example of this is the Tenerife District. The accident that took place at Tenerife Airport in 1977 was caused by the problem experienced in the communication between the pilots of 2 separate planes and the tower controller due to the weather conditions and the traffic density at the airport. When the pilot of one of the planes asked for permission to take off, the tower said, "Okay, I will inform you about your take-off turn." Only the "OK" part of the message was heard in the cockpit of this plane. Afterwards, these two planes collided as the pilot took off and another plane could not establish a connection with the tower at that time. This event, which shows how great the consequences of communication errors, cost the lives of 583 people ("Communication and crew resource" journal, 2010).
2. Nonverbal messages are very common in aviation. For example, when the operations officer knocks on the plane's door three times, it sends a message to the cabin crew that the area is safe and they can open the door. This clicking method helps to establish communication in noisy environments where the aircraft engine is running.
3. Written messages, on the other hand, prevent the loss of information and contribute to the emergence of reasons in a possible negative situation, since they are usually documents. As an example of communication with these messages; flight record and maintenance logbooks, maintenance manuals can be given.
4. The target audience addressed by written and visual messages is usually airline passengers. Illustrated and written brochures informing passengers about what to do in situations such as emergency landing or turbulence are examples of these messages.
5. Communication messages carried out using technology can be exemplified as computers that are far from each other communicating using some specially defined rules and transferring information among themselves.

Communication in aviation is often vital, as even the smallest communication error during takeoff, landing and landing, which are the most critical stages in the flight process, can lead to an accident. While in the 1980s, the communication of the cockpit crew at these stages was seen as positive in terms of performance and safety, today this idea has changed and is called the "Sterile Cockpit" rule. According to this rule; Off-duty talking, joking, making phone calls, making announcements and eating and drinking are prohibited during these critical moments, which coincide with flying at an altitude of less than 10,000 ft (Hopkin, 1995).

In aviation, the safe and speedy operation of air traffic depends on the effectiveness of communication between pilots and controllers. In order to ensure effective communication, the type of communication should be chosen according to the place, time and the information to be given in the message. For example, using written communication rather than verbal communication in a very noisy environment helps communication to be effective. One of the necessary factors for effective communication is listening. The

majority of flight accidents are caused by pilots and controllers hearing but not listening to messages ("International civil aviation organization" journal, 2004).

In order to prevent these accidents and to perform the listening act in a healthy way, some messages are repeated while communicating. For example, when the controller conveys the message that he has authorized the landing, the pilot repeats this message and gives approval. This confirms that the message was transmitted correctly.

Individual differences can also cause communication problems. For example, messages go fast due to fast speech, which can cause flying at an incorrect altitude (altitude). One of the communication problems is the lack of "open communication". This concept means that people can freely express and defend their opinions.

Communication, especially between pilots and air traffic controllers, is vital. Ambiguity in communication, repetition errors, confusing phrases, similar call signs, poor English or heavy foreign accents, miscommunication or poor communication can cause plane crashes or malfunctions.

You've probably heard that English speaking, understanding and writing skills are essential on international flights. But do you know why? English is the universal language used by all pilots, air traffic controllers, cabin crew and ground personnel who wish to operate in any international aviation environment (Deniz, 2016:3).

Simply, Aviation English is the de facto international language for both civil and commercial aviation. On November 1, 1944, in response to a British initiative, the United States government invited 55 allied and neutral countries to meet in Chicago. 52 people attended this meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the international problems encountered in Civil Aviation. As a result of the meeting, it was decided to establish the International Civil Aviation Organization with the Chicago Convention on Civil Aviation (Beneke, 1993:12).

So how did English become the standard language for aviation? The Chicago Convention saw Aviation English as the official standardized language to be used worldwide in aviation. Why English? English-speaking countries dominated the design and manufacture of aircraft as well as their operation, so it made sense to choose English as the standard language that all countries involved in aviation around the world would use. The main reason for having a standard language was to avoid misunderstandings and confusions that have an impact on air safety.

Aviation English is a unique combination of phraseology and basic English language standardized by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). According to The Sun's report, Aviation English consists of nearly 300 words of professional jargon and basic English. It was created to prevent pilots and air controllers from misunderstanding each other and fatal accidents (Gizauskas, 2018:47). But it is the main question that how can I learn English in aviation?

1. Read books. Any book or English language text helps, but reading about aviation English is especially useful;
2. Listen to English. You can listen to radio broadcast;
3. Listen to ATC communication;
4. Aviation English course;
5. On-line learning;
6. Expect unexpected.

Phraseology was invented by operational and linguistic experts to improve communication in aviation. Messages in phraseology are short and concise. These succinct statements help avoid ambiguity and are perfectly suited for predictable situations. However, phraseology alone is not enough. Although ICAO standardized phraseology has been developed to cover many situations, it cannot meet all pilot and controller communication needs. The ICAO standardized phraseology only suffices until an unexpected event occurs. Therefore, good knowledge of English is extremely important in a non-routine situation (Jones, 2003:46).

In 1990, Avianca on flight 052 ran out of fuel; The message from the cockpit to the control tower did not adequately explain the situation. As a result, 65 of the 149 passengers on board died. In 1996, Kazakhstan Airlines Ilyushin 76 and Saudi Arabian Boeing 747-100 collided in midair. All 349 people on board both aircraft were killed. Only one of the three people in the Kazakh cockpit could understand

the English language. One of the deadliest aircraft disasters in history was also due to communication problems. In 1977, the Dutch captain on a flight to Tenerife in Spain's

Canary Islands asked permission to take off from the tower. The air traffic controller's response was "Okay, I'll let you know when it's your turn to take off." was in the form. Tragically, however, the pilot could only understand the word "OK" amid the scratchy sounds. And due to bad weather, the control tower was unable to see the two planes headed for collision. Thus, a KLM Boeing 747 and a Pan Am Boeing 747 collided on the runway. At least 583 people died in the incident, which is considered the deadliest accident in aviation history. As a result, over 1000 people lost their lives due to the miscommunication between the cockpit and the tower (Turner, 1981).

Following such air traffic accidents, ICAO suggested that English should be the international language of aviation, saying that pilots and air traffic controllers should have at least a basic knowledge of English. But this English was not like the English we know. According to the description on the Oxford Dictionary blog: “Learning to speak on airplane radio is one of the most challenging aspects of learning to fly, and new pilots must take written and oral exams to prove proficiency”.

To be able to speak and understand aviation English, you must first learn the international phonetic alphabet. Then you'll learn about a dozen coded words you may have heard on flights such as "roger" meaning "understood" or phraseology. For example, “affirm” means “yes” in Aviation English and “approach” means “approaching the ground” (Kırkgoz, Dikilitash, 2018).

As the language of aviation is constantly changing, pilots must pass strict language tests in order to fly airplanes with confidence. English language proficiency requirements for pilots and air traffic controllers have been determined by ICAO. ICAO ranks English proficiency levels as “pre-elementary (Level 1), elementary (Level 2), pre-operational (Level 3), operational (Level 4), extended (Level 5) and expert (Level 6)”. Pilots and air traffic controllers are expected to have a minimum Level 4 English proficiency (Gizauskas, 2018:4).

Candidates are required to take the TEAP (Test of English for Aviation Personnel) exam in order to prove that they have achieved the specified competency. This exam is in the form of a face-to-face interview. Employees with Level 4 English proficiency are retested every 3 years. Employees with Level 5 English proficiency are retested every 5 years. Employees with Level 6 English proficiency are not retested. Employees who are retested but fail the exam cannot be assigned to international flights.

In general, Aviation communication is one rare area where standards are rigorously maintained by any central body. Aviation English is a highly specialized language (Tajima, 2014).

When it comes to radio-based communications, there are two styles that are followed. Air workers use ‘standard phraseology’, a very specialized phrasing used in a formal way during critical moments such as take-off and landing, and so-called plain language which is more of an everyday style of speaking, used for less formal communications over the airwaves.

Aviation English is a very formalised and technical way of speaking – even native English speakers need to spend time learning it.

In a development that’s rather worrying for anyone planning a plane trip, an independent report recently revealed aviation workers were cheating in their language proficiency exams and bribing their way to a pass. The report.

Commissioned by the UK’s CAA, shows that poor English standards remain a concern in the aviation industry, nearly ten years on from the introduction of formal language proficiency requirements. More than half a century after it was accepted as the language of aviation, the industry’s English skills still need some work (Demetrius, 2010).

At the time in the mid-twentieth century when air travel was becoming more common, English-speaking countries dominated the design and manufacturing of aircraft, as well as much of their operations.

At a 1944 convention in Chicago aiming to resolve some of the problems of air travel at the time also established English as the language of aviation. The aim was to help avoid misunderstanding and confusion over the radio and between international crews.

Although air travel is now much more widespread, with many non-English speaking countries participating in air transportation, English still persists as the language of the skies. Is English still a good choice? Well, there’s still a few arguments why English works in aviation (Peralta, 2021).

For a start, English is a much-used language when it comes to international communications. It's the official language of a number of major global institutions, it's the accepted language of the scientific community, and it's the most-learned language in the world.

Of course, the most important thing is for all players in air traffic communications to be able to communicate clearly. It's arguably unimportant whether that happens in English, French or Xhosa – the language itself is less important than its clarity.

But in many parts of the world, anyone who wants to get ahead in life learns English. It's not just the aviation industry that values English. Many people coming into the industry are likely to have found other reasons in life to learn the language.

Conclusion

In order to avoid many communication problems mentioned above, the following should be considered when communicating;

1. The words used in the messages should be clear and understandable;
2. There should be cooperation between pilots and controllers;
3. Messages from controllers should be confirmed by the pilot by repeating;
4. To confirm the messages, a question-answer application should be made and feedback should be received;
5. Standard terms should be chosen as much as possible to avoid misunderstandings.

In periods of heavy air traffic, where the workload of the controllers increases, rest intervals should be well adjusted and working (sitting on the bench) intervals should be reduced

Therefore, working in the aviation industry; It is of great importance that everyone responsible for the flight process, such as pilots, flight crew, controllers, maintenance personnel, receive training that includes communication-related knowledge and skills.

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Received: 19.06.2022 Accepted: 23.08.2022