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Aviation English Training for Aviation Personnel

Aviation English language training is based on the use of phraseology and plain English. It is designed to develop the ability to say intentions, to explain unknown words, to rephrase and reformulate, to give instructions, to describe actions and position, to identify and respond to problem. While speaking, pilots and air traffic controllers have to follow the rules of aviation communication.

Task-based teaching paradigm is a current efficient teaching concept. Aviation English teaching implies English teacher cooperation with a flight instructor to implement task-based language teaching (Marantika, Rusdyansyah, & Hadi, 2022).

We share the idea that the methodology of teaching Aviation English differs from both general English teaching and English for specific purposes. Kovtun et al. consider that “training should have a predominantly communicative focus that enables involving trainees into various interactive activities that mirror pilots’ and air traffic controllers’ working environments” (Kovtun, Harmash, Struk, 2021).

Rossydi et al. studied the ways to adapt information and communication technology to the hybrid approach of teaching and learning Aviation English. They researched “the learners’ perception of a virtual classroom in English for Aviation and concluded that “implementing a virtual classroom could build a relationship, increase engagement between teachers and students, and students’ participation in the classroom” (Rossydi & Masita, 2021).

Communication in aviation environment is mainly done in English. Aircrew members can communicate to each other in their native language, however radio communication is done in English as it is the official language of aviation. While speaking, aviation personnel have to follow the rules of aviation communication. These two requirements provide flight safety. McMillan (1998) developed a four-step communication technique that is ‘confirmation/correction closed-loop’:

- the sender transmits a message;
- the receiver listens to the messenger;
- the receiver repeats the message back to the sender;
- the sender listens for the correct readback.

Here is an example which proves the fact that breaking the four-step communication technique can result in people’s death. In 1992, Flight 148, a French domestic flight with 90 passengers and four crew members on board, crashed, killing 87 people. It showed that one of the reasons that led to the plane crash was poor communication between the flight crew members, the pilot, and the controller. Investigations into causes of the accident revealed that “less-than-optimum phraseology by both the flight crew and the controller, their respective intentions and expectations were ambiguous” (Pariès, 1996), moreover, being opposite personalities,

pilots engaged in little communication, even when it was necessary to discuss important points concerning the flight.

This plane crash proves that pilot and air traffic controller should be highly proficient in their use of standard phraseology. They have to be able to use and understand phraseology, even if they are not native speakers. But when they get into a non-routine situation or an emergency situation, they are to interact effectively. To avoid miscommunication, pilot and air traffic controller must check, confirm and clarify the messages they receive. This ability is provided by a sufficient level of English proficiency.

Therefore, English language training of air traffic controllers and pilots, is oriented at clarification strategies development. The students are suggested to do the activities which focus on saying intentions. To do these activities properly, they have to know the difference in meaning of the following structures: we plan to, we intend to, we are going to – refer to a decision already taken; we'd prefer to, we'd like to – need the approval.

The ability to explain unknown words is crucial in case of communication breakdown. Misunderstanding of unknown word can potentially lead to emergency situation. To avoid it, student pilots learn how to paraphrase. They build the sentences using the structures:

- It's made of + material
- It's something for + -ing
- It's used to + verb
- The thing that + verb
- This is something that + verb

When a pilot or an air traffic controller do not understand the whole phrase, they need to ask to say it another way. To develop students' ability to rephrase and reformulate, they are suggested speaking activity, working in pairs. Acting out the variety of situations, the students should check, confirm and clarify the information they get. It is recommended to change pairs and roles. To make tasks more difficult to complete, the teacher can ask the interlocutor to deliberately read back wrongly some messages.

Situation. Students work in pairs and perform the roles of a pilot and an air traffic controller. The pilot is lost and experiences the problem with fuel. The plane is low on fuel. The air traffic controller asks the pilot to describe the plane's position using visual objects to direct the aircrew to the runway. They both need to give confirmation or disconfirmation what they see on the way. The students are encouraged to practice structures: *Can you fly into VFR? Confirm that you can see..., Affirm. I can see..., Can you clarify, Can you see...*

In an emergency situations pilots and air traffic controllers need to react quickly and make quick and efficient decisions. Using of imperative forms and clear sequencing connectors are typical for these situations. To develop the ability to give instructions the students should practice the following grammar points to understand the difference between 1) *stop doing something (finish, give up) and stop to do something (stop briefly to do something else); try to do something (attempt, do one's best) and try doing something (do something as an experiment); mean to do (intend to) and mean doing (involve); 2) sequencing connectors: first (when you begin); next /*

then / after that (all have similar meanings); finally (when you finish) / before / after (have opposite meanings).

The ability to describe actions and position implies knowledge of grammatical tenses and the ability to use them correctly. An efficient way to learn this grammar point is to contrast the usage of tenses.

The ability to identify and respond to problem or the problem-solving skills help find available resources to find the right solution.

Thus, Aviation English language training is based on the use of phraseology and plain English. It is designed to develop the ability to say intentions, to explain unknown words, to rephrase and reformulate, to give instructions, to describe actions and position, to identify and respond to problem. The skills provide effective radio communication.

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