

Phonetic mistakes of a pilot and crew members as passengers' safety hazard

Airline announcements are the part of each passenger flight and their correct pronunciation by the Ukrainian pilots and flight attendants is an important factor of the passengers' safety. Correct pronunciation of the in-flight announcements makes more comfortable flight for the passengers or makes more understandable possible emergency situations during the flight.

Survivability in an aircraft accident is dependent on multiple factors. Certification standards for crashworthiness and ditching are designed to enhance passenger survivability. Cabin crew evacuation procedures further improve survivability. Passengers' survival rates are improved when they are informed about the correct use of equipment and the actions they should take in the event of an emergency situation. ICAO standards address the need for passengers to receive safety information on board aircraft. Well-informed, knowledgeable passengers have a better chance of surviving a life-threatening situation that may occur on board an aircraft. Operators should communicate specific, accurate information and instructions to passengers in a variety of methods, to facilitate understanding. These methods include verbal briefings and visual safety information, such as passenger safety briefing cards [3].

Pilot and flight attendants communicate with the passengers mainly via in-flight announcements. In-flight passenger announcements are pronounced during almost each passenger flight. Airline announcements include the following ones:

- Pre-flight Announcement
- Captain's Announcement
- Safety Briefing
- Prepare for Take-off
- Turbulence
- Descent/final
- Landing

During air travel by Ukrainian airlines one can notice mistakes in the pronunciation of a pilot and flight attendants while they make the flight announcements. We have detected the typical mistakes in the speech of Ukrainian pilots and flight attendants while making flight announcements in English. They are:

1. Loss of aspiration.

Pilots and crew members pronounce aspirated consonants [p], [t], [k] at the beginning of words without puff of air which is called aspiration.

e.i. Please return your seats and keep your seat belts fastened.

e.i. Please turn off all personal electronic devices, including laptops and cell phones.

In the following examples the words with aspirated English consonants in the initial position of the words could be pronounced without aspiration that means not in a soft manner as native speakers do, but in the strong manner as Ukrainian

speakers pronounce Ukrainian consonant [ɲ] in the word пилот.

2. Incorrect pronunciation of the sound [w].

In the English language there are two sounds to indicate Ukrainian sound [ɐ] which are [v] and [w] and usually pilots and crew members pronounce sound [v] instead of [w].

e.i. We are now crossing a zone of turbulence.

e.i. The weather looks good and with the tailwind on our side we are expecting to land in London approximately fifteen minutes ahead of schedule. The weather in London is clear and sunny, with a high of 25 degrees for this afternoon. If the weather cooperates we should get a great view of the city as we descend. The cabin crew will be coming around in about twenty minutes time to offer you a light snack and beverage, and the inflight movie will begin shortly after that.

Examples above show the words with the English sound [w] which is usually mispronounced and changed by the Ukrainian sound [ɐ] like in *twenty* – “*мєєнми*”, *will* – “*єїл*”, *with* – “*єїз*”, *weather* – “*вєзє*”.

3. Incorrect pronunciation of the sound [θ].

In the English language there are two sounds to indicate Ukrainian sound [c] which are [s] and [θ] and usually pilots and crew members pronounce sound [s] instead of interdental sound [θ].

e.i. Place the mask over your mouth and nose, like this.

The word *mouth* could be pronounced without English interdental consonant [θ] and changed by the Ukrainian consonant [c].

4. Incorrect pronunciation of the sound [ð].

In the English language there are two sounds to indicate Ukrainian sound [ʒ] which are [z] and [ð] and usually pilots and crew members pronounce sound [z] instead of interdental sound [ð].

e.i. Ladies and gentlemen, the Captain has turned on the Fasten Seat Belt sign.

e.i. Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the crew I ask that you please direct your attention to the monitors above as we review the emergency procedures. There are six emergency exits on this aircraft. Take a minute to locate the exit closest to you.

In the above mentioned examples words ‘the’ usually are mispronounced by the flight attendants as “*зє*”, which doesn’t sound naturally and in the English manner of pronunciation as the tip of the tongue should take the position between upper and lower teeth. The word *there* is usually incorrectly pronounced as “*зєа*”.

5. Incorrect pronunciation of the sound [ɲ].

In the English language there are two sounds to indicate Ukrainian sound [ɲ] and usually pilots and crew members pronounce sound [ɲ] instead of nasal sound [ɲ].

e.i. We ask that you make sure that all carry-on luggage is stowed away safely during the flight.

The word *during* is almost always pronounced with the Ukrainian consonant [ɲ] instead of English nasal consonant [ɲ].

6. Incorrect pronunciation of the sounds [o] – [o:], [u] – [u:].

Ukrainian vowel sounds [o] and [y] are pronounced with the protruded lips, while the English vowel sounds [ɔ] – [ɔ:], [u] – [u:] are pronounced with the lips in the neutral position.

e.i. We also ask that your seats and table trays are in the upright position for take-off.

e.i. Pull the strap to tighten it.

In the examples above the words *also* and *pull* could be mispronounced as “олюоу”, “нул” because of moving lips forward as in Ukrainian vowels [o], [y].

7. Incorrect pronunciation of the sound [æ].

English sound [æ] doesn't have any equivalent in the Ukrainian language and is usually changed by the Ukrainian vowel [e].

e.i. We ask that you please fasten your seatbelts at this time and secure all baggage underneath your seat or in the overhead compartments.

e.i. Oxygen masks will drop down from above your seat.

The words *baggage* and *masks* could be pronounced with the help of Ukrainian close vowel sound [e], while in the English language the vowel [æ] is open.

8. Incorrect pronunciation of the sound [ɜ:].

English sound [ɜ:] doesn't have any equivalent in the Ukrainian language and is usually changed by Ukrainian vowel [o].

e.i. We are currently third in line for take-off and are expected to be in the air in approximately seven minutes time.

e.i. Please return your seats and keep your seat belts fastened.

In the examples above the words *third* and *return* are usually mispronounced because English sound [ɜ:] is changed by the Ukrainian vowel sound [o], so the words sound like “цьод”, “пимон”.

9. Incorrect pronunciation of the sound of.

English word *of* is pronounced as [ɒv], while Ukrainian pilots and flight attendants mispronounce it like “оф”.

e.i. Make sure your seat belt is securely fastened and all carry-on luggage is stowed underneath the seat in front of you or in the overhead bins.

To make the conclusion we'd like to say that correct pronunciation of flight announcements by the Ukrainian pilots and flight attendants is extremely important in urgent situations during the flight and during the standard flight it makes the flight more comfortable and shows high level of education of a pilot and crew members, especially to the native speakers, who are travelling by the Ukrainian airlines. We have pointed out 9 typical phonetic mistakes of a pilot and crew members, which are mispronunciation of the word *of*, sounds [ɜ:], [æ], [ɒ] – [ɜ:], [u] – [u:], [ɒ], [δ], [θ], [w], [p], [t], [k].

References

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