

*O. Akmalidina,
Ph.D. (philology), professor,
L. Budko, assistant professor,
T. Shulga, senior lecturer
(National Aviation University, Ukraine, Kyiv)*

Competence based approach to teaching professional English in training aviation specialists

The article deals with the problems of teaching special aviation English course in the context of flight safety. It gives an overview of human factor issues in aircraft accidents occurrence including psychological aspects of human error nature. It focuses on the impact of linguistic, cultural and environmental barriers on the safety of civil aviation operations.

Today Ukraine is in the process of reforming the educational system in the aviation industry aimed at providing a sufficient number of skilled and competent specialists for international air transport effective operation, management and maintenance. Bringing the existing practices of studying, the criteria and standards of education to compliance with European requirements, implementing innovative solutions for attracting, and training a new generation of aviation specialists have become of paramount importance nowadays.

The process of learning Aviation English involves mastering both a narrow aspect of standard special phraseology and a wide range of conversational aviation lexis, combining them with a view of effective professional communication through everyday language practice. Traditionally professionally-oriented teaching a foreign language was carried out in the framework of the communicative approach, focusing on the formation of speech and linguistic skills of communication and perception by hearing.

Within the competence based approach to teaching professional English in training aviation specialists, the content and organization of the educational process should ensure students' foreign language professional communication competence, in other words proper command of English within the themes recommended by the ICAO considered to be sufficient for successful interaction of all civil aviation specialists involved in the organization of air traffic. The educational process should be result-oriented, i.e. aimed at the acquisition of language experience in solving the problems occurring in abnormal and emergency situations, performing key professional functions and playing social roles, ensuring efficient high-quality, clear and unambiguous communication among aviation personnel. The reorientation from the knowledge-oriented component to the complex of language skills and competences is realized through strengthening independent and productive students' activity, development of their personal qualities and creative abilities.

The language training program for future aviation personnel should include classes and exercises covering all six aspects of language skills formulated in the ICAO qualification scale and language skills descriptors, namely: pronunciation,

structure, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and communication. The competence-based approach shifts the focus from the process of accumulating the knowledge, skills and abilities defined by ICAO to the plane of formation and development of students' ability to acting practically and creatively applying the knowledge acquired.

The main indicator of aviation specialists' foreign language competence is their ability to properly conduct "air -ground" and "ground -air" communication using the means of the English language on one hand, and on the other, adequately perceive, analyze and respond to oral foreign language addressed to them.

The teachers are facing the task not only to create a certain complex of knowledge about the English language as a system, but also skills and abilities to use this knowledge in the process of communication. Therefore, our main goals are, firstly, to ensure that students have memorized a certain amount of linguistic material (lexical units on the course topics) and, secondly, to develop their skills and abilities to use the linguistic material in practice, as well as to form an active vocabulary as a language system and a complex of skills of using this system in the conditions of unprepared communication.

The content of training should include the following components:

1. Carefully selected linguistic (grammatical, phonetic and lexical minimum) and speech material (samples of language utterances, model phrases, texts and dialogues, etc.). One aspect of the language training content is teaching radio communication phraseology and the technology regulating the use of these linguistic means in radio communication.

2. Skills of operating carefully selected language material. As it has been stated above, the knowledge of a certain number of lexical units and technology of their usage don't always guarantee correct "air-ground" communication in English.

Speech activities may be successful only in case mastering linguistic material is gained at the level of practical skills and abilities.

The speech mechanisms are formed only in the process of communication activity realized in concrete actions and operations.

3. Thoroughly selected authentic texts accompanied by the corresponding system of exercises and other training supplies (various visual aids, manuals, relevant periodic publications scientific magazines, technical appliances, etc). The successful result may be achieved only with the help of their practical usage by listeners.

Studying motivation shall be increased through professional correspondence of the linguistic material.

The main purpose of creating the atmosphere of authentic communication is to combine the plot and the function of "air-ground" communication including such topics as landing approach, delay, adverse weather conditions, hydraulics failure, different defects, damage, human factor of course, etc. Linguistic targets stipulate on-time compulsory actions in such situations: distinct description, explanation, request. Due attention should be paid to creating skills of special communication: capability of the crew to interaction in emergency situations; calming passengers and providing medical help in case of necessity; giving exact flight information to ground personnel.

The methods of teaching professional English are determined by some factors: the students' level of the English language proficiency, rate/time of mastering aviation English terminology, demands for employment provision. It is possible to enhance the foreign linguistic comprehension effectively by: correct usage of rapidly developing new generation computer programs; creation of stimulating audio-visual materials (radio-navigation communication, computer graphics, etc); improving listening skills; enriching the vocabulary (words, word combinations, terms); organizing students practicing real working conditions; developing the ability of making independent decisions in the emergency situations.

Mastering Aviation English is divided into three modules (general English, aviation English, radio-navigation communication) with a corresponding set of linguistic activities each.

There are exact special peculiarities of aviation English comprehension of Aviation Higher School graduates:

- 1). mastering foreign language;
- 2). free operating special phraseology;
- 3). practicing English in the aviation context
- 4). skills of auditing and radio-navigation communication.

Summing up we can say that linguistic comprehension of Aviation University graduates is both the speech ability and psychological readiness to communicate without visual contact in aviation language context paying attention to the necessary grammar, lexical and phonetic peculiarities and rules of the English Aviation Register.

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