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COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH TO TEACHING ESP FOR FUTURE AVIATION ENGINEERS

The article analyses modern requirements for aviation specialists that initiate the search for approaches, methods and techniques in teaching ESP for them. A communicative approach is considered as the optimal language teaching means. The article also gives examples of communicative activities that can be used during the teaching process. These activities provide opportunities for future aviation engineers to be engaged in real-life professional communication in English.

Modern democratic transformations in Ukraine, its integration with European countries, intensive development of information technologies, broadening political, economic and cultural relations with other countries have caused the significant increase in requirements to the level and quality of future specialists' training. The professional training of specialists is determined by individual requirements of the labor market and characteristics of a profession. Civil aviation is one of the industries with special conditions of production activities, determining the specific character of future aviation specialists' training. These conditions arise from such circumstances as increased responsibility for the results of work, strict requirements for professional knowledge and skills, and high responsibility in making decisions. Due to technological progress in aviation, growth of competitiveness of aviation companies, enhancing international cooperation, the demand for highly skilled professionals, ready for productive communication, is increasing. Correspondingly, the entire system of such specialists' training is designed to ensure reliability and competence of graduates.

Since Ukraine is training aviation specialists who are competitive in the global market, their training is carried out in accordance with the standards developed by international organizations, such as: the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (Eurocontrol) and the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). The Part-66 of Commission Regulation (EC) 2042/2003 of 20/11/2003 on the continuing airworthiness of aircraft and aeronautical products, parts and appliances, and on the approval of organisations and personnel involved in these tasks, adopted by EASA, clearly defined requirements for knowledge of aircraft maintenance engineers of A, B1, B2, C categories [5, P. 75–315].

In order to improve flight safety, ICAO has established English language proficiency requirements (LPRs) for all pilots operating on international routes and all air traffic controllers who communicate with foreign pilots (Doc 9835). These standards require pilots and air traffic controllers to be able to communicate proficiently using both ICAO phraseology and plain English. In order to conform to ICAO Language Proficiency requirements, pilots, air traffic controllers and all others who use English in R/T communication on international routes must be at ICAO English Language Level 4 (Operational) or above [9].

The problem of future aviation specialists' training was investigated by many researchers who were developing requirements for aviation specialists in ICAO. Among Ukrainian researchers are Ye. Kmit, T. Tarnavska, V. Piven, G. Paschenko, S. Tymchenko, I. Fainmann et al. However, their works are related to air traffic controllers and pilots, and the problem of aviation engineers' training has not been studied in details. Although today aviation engineers do not belong to the list of professionals with the required fourth level of proficiency (by ICAO), the current conditions of European integration processes increase the requirements for knowledge of aviation English by engineers to use it for professional needs. The factors influencing the requirements are as follows: Ukrainian transportation system is on its way to European integration, Ukrainian airlines operate on some aircraft of foreign manufacture (including Boeing 737, Boeing 767) along with locally produced aircraft An-24, An-26, An-32, An-30, An-140 etc, engineers are involved in joint projects with foreign countries. Furthermore, based on the analysis of job descriptions and educational-

qualification characteristics of aviation engineers and EASA requirements, the foreign language is becoming important today for their professional development, creation of joint projects of aircraft equipment with foreign counterparts, maintenance of aeronautical equipment with instructions in English, inspection of aircraft, keeping technical documentation and analysis of the influence of different factors on the condition of an aircraft, its systems and functional characteristics, opportunities to get a job in international aviation companies, train abroad in order to study the experience of other countries, professional interaction with foreign colleagues.

Nowadays English for Special Purposes (ESP) for aviation engineers needs special attention and more detailed studies. The main point is to guarantee the quality of higher education and future aviation engineers' proficiency in aviation English that promote mobility and more opportunities for employment, efficient international communication and access to information. The process of European integration requires a high level of foreign language competence, which is especially necessary for the realization of professional activity and mobility of future specialists. Our society needs aviation specialists able to behave correspondingly in different communicative situations, choose adequate communicative means, perceive and analyze the information actively, be logical, clear and persuasive while expressing their views, establish and maintain interpersonal business contacts and organize cooperation with foreign colleagues. That's why the problem of communication skills of future aviation engineers is becoming especially important.

Thus, the ever-growing need for aviation specialists with proficiency in profession-oriented English results in improving teaching ESP (it is aviation English in our case). It requires the involvement of different methods to develop students' communication skills. In our opinion, a communicative approach is one of the ways to improve teaching ESP, because the main goal of teaching ESP is using the language not only as an informative tool, but also as a means of communication in profession-oriented communicative situations. Communication-oriented learning involves the formation of students' communicative competence, i.e. ability to use English in different situations.

Many researchers were and are still investingating communicative training of professionals: development of communication skills (O. Bobrov, N. Butenko, N. Volkova, V. Kan-Kalyk, L. Leontiev, A. Mudryk, L. Savenkova et al.), communicative competence (L. Petrovska, E. Rudensky et al.). R. Makarov and V. Ponomarenko pointed out the importance of communication skills for aviation specialists, stating that communication skills are significant professional qualities. Unfortunately, the formation of communication skills is not always carried out during the process of aviation specialists' training.

Modern scholars identify communication skills as a set of actions that are based on theoretical and practical training that enables to use communication skills creatively to reflect and transform reality [1]. Communication skills are necessary for future aviation engineers for full-fledged and effective communication. That's why communication is a prerequisite for professional development of an aviation engineer.

O. Leontiev, V. Kan-Kalyk, A. Mudryk identify certain communication skills necessary for professional communication.

O. Leontiev considers language communication, understanding a collocutor and communicative tasks, establishment of the contact to be professional communication skills [2].

V. Kan-Kalyk gives the following list of professional communication skills: ability to communicate in public, ability to organize joint activities, communicate purposefully and manage this process [3].

A. Mudryk offers the following list of communication skills: ability to transfer knowledge and skills, variations of solutions, methods of communication that are already known into a new communicative situation; ability to find solutions for a new communicative situation; ability to create new ways of solving a particular communicative situation [3].

The purpose of teaching ESP for future aviation engineers' at higher educational institutions is the formation of their professional communicative competence by developing and improving reading, speaking, writing and listening comprehension. However, it is very difficult to achieve this

purpose in a limited number of hours for teaching ESP at higher technical educational institutions. Instructors have to take into account the lack of knowledge and skills of the first-year students and solve the problem of teaching students with different levels of knowledge. Under these conditions, reading profession-oriented texts is one of the main types of speech activity.

Professional reading plays an important role in the life and work of aviation engineers. Reading in English means for them to fulfill communicative and cognitive needs, as it allows to use all media (magazines, patents, documents, monographs, the Internet etc). The intensive reading mastering at technical higher educational institutions is proceeding from informative to active, creative and intensive forms of cognitive and learning students' activities focusing on professional and everyday communication [1].

But teaching ESP for future aviation engineers cannot confine itself only to reading texts, even informative ones, because language is communication. It is a diffucult task to teach students to communicate using English, because speaking is not stimulated by the need but by the demand for real communication. It is possible to implement this goal, though. The main thing is to overcome the speech barrier and students' fear to speak English. Students should be given the opportunity to use English in real professional situations at English classes. It will allow them to learn to use vocabulary and grammatical forms to express their own thoughts.

Thus, communicative language teaching makes use of real-life situations that necessitate communication. The instructor sets up a situation that students are likely to encounter in real life. Unlike the audiolingual method of language teaching, which relies on repetition and drills, the communicative approach can leave students in suspense as to the outcome of a class exercise, which will vary according to their reactions and responses. The real-life simulations are changing from day to day. Students' motivation to learn comes from their desire to communicate in meaningful ways about meaningful topics.

Margie S. Berns, an expert in the field of communicative language teaching, writes that "Language is interaction. It is interpersonal activity and has a clear relationship with society. In this light, language study has to look at the function of language in context, both its linguistic context (what is uttered before and after a given piece of discourse) and its social, or situational, context (who is speaking, what their social roles are, why they have come together to speak)" [4, P. 5].

Communicative techniques can develop students' productive, receptive and interactive skills that are necessary for effective communication. Activities with listening and reading aim at developing students' skills of receiving information. Activities with speaking and writing develop students' skills of producing information. Both can be interactive and thus promote communication.

Some activities are more associated with reading and listening (receptive skills), while others are more often used with speaking and writing (productive skills).

Methodologists interpret some types of speech activity differently. For example, W. Littlewood distinguishes two basic types of communicative activities: functional communicative activities and social interactive activities [8].

Jeremy Harmer thinks that the main types of work with students are: pairwork or groupwork, communication in a controlled way at first, use of "acting out" and reading aloud and role-plays [6, P. 131–132], whereas John Haycraft proposes the following activities: pairwork and groupwork, dialogues, chain stories, mime stories, storytelling, conversation, talk-lesturettes, improvisation, and role-plays [7, P. 53–55].

According to J. Sheils, the following common techniques fall down into two groups:

1) information gap: jig-saw, interviews, reading the cues, communicative games etc;

2) simulation: role-play, problem-solving, socialization, project work etc. [10, P. 45].

Information gap is organized to promote speaking activities. Information gap is a situation when a participant or a group possesses the information, which others do not have, while others have the information that this group is missing. Their task is to use communication for finding out complete information on how to solve the problem. Information gap can take the format of an opinion gap when the participants differ in their opinions. The gap is filled in the course of active communication.

Any activity with an information gap can be turned into a communicative game if there are rules to name the winner. Information gap is a frequent technique used in order to organize a communicative game.

Jig-saw reading activity is organized most often with the texts that are meant for reading or listening (jig-saw reading and jig-saw listening). A text is divided into several parts. Every participant has access to only one part of the oral or written text. They ask each other questions and provide information to joint the parts of the text together and to know the contents of the whole text. Another variant is the jig-saw listening when each participant or a small group listens to only some information as a part of the whole. These pieces can be brought together only in the course of active communication efforts.

Productive skills of speaking and writing are developed in simulations. A simulation means that an episode of the real world is reproduced in the classroom environment in the form of the role-play, discussion (problem solving), a piece of writing or a project work.

It is very effective to use role-plays or dramatization in which students interact with each other in pairs or in groups. Such techniques allow to make a lesson more diverse and also enable students to implement communication skills and language skills.

Dramatization is a reproduction of certain situations that may arise in future professional activity. The task of students is to put the topic and subject in communication. The participants of a role-play act different roles. At the same time their task is to solve a profession-oriented problem.

A set of problem tasks gives the possibility of using English for everyday communication, as well as for professional tasks. By ensuring the formation of appropriate types of speech activity, they help realize the basic function of ESP learning at a higher educational institution – professional formation of students' communicative competence. Creating problem situations, it is necessary for the tasks to correspond the level of students' knowledge and intellectual abilities, reflect real situations of professional activity, and give a problem in an unexpected way.

A very interesting type of work during teaching ESP is using discussion games to discuss topical questions interesting for students. Each student chooses a role and speaks on behalf of the chosen character. The content of discussions can be any real-life problem. You can also create professional-focused discussions related to their future profession using appropriate profession-oriented vocabulary. The information taken from profession-oriented technical texts and articles can be the basis of such discussions.

Creating problem situations promotes creativity in the search for joint decision-making. This is how a discussion – the most active form of thinking – is born. Its advantages for ESP learning are undoubted (e.g., the ability to express one's opinion). Educational and training activities using the method of group discussion take place in the following stages: group creation, identifying and discussion of problems, listening to another point of view, finding a compromise with other students. All these stages develop the ability to speak English. In order to increase the effectiveness of this method of ESP teaching, it is proposed to deal with current problems of the future specialists in their field of activity. Thus an interactive form of learning is particularly important for ESP learning, because a student is constantly in the language environment while being in active work.

The communicative approach to teaching ESP for future engineers is focused on learning through communication. The use of aviation English in real communicative situations has generated some trends relevant for teaching ESP:

1) communicative orientation of all types of training;
2) "learner-centred approach";
3) "the whole person approach";
4) teaching materials are given on the situation-thematic or functional principle;
5) the main types of students' activity are pairwork (dialogue) and groupwork (polylogue).

Communicative teaching is often organized in the three-phase framework. Three-phase framework means subdivision of the teaching process into three phases: pre-activity, while-activity and post-activity. Pre-activity is organized to provoke students' interest towards the main task, to motivate performance, to activate in students their prior knowledge and to prepare them for the

language that can be necessary to perform the main task. While-activity is organized as oral or written communication and is based on engaging students in the communicative tasks. Post-activity is reflection on the ideas and language that was produced during the main activity. This phase also includes additional language drill and integration with other skills. [10].

Conclusions

The integration of Ukraine with other countries, special conditions of activities in aviation and as a result modern requirements for future aviation specialists have caused radical changes in higher education and set challenges to improve the quality of future specialists' knowledge of aviation English. Such requirements to higher education result in using the communicative approach to teaching ESP as one of the most effective methods. Its implementation depends entirely on the willingness, competence and knowledge of an instructor. The ability to engage students in active English learning is a very complex task and in many cases it is determined by the efforts of students to acquire and improve their language skills. The communication-oriented techniques of teaching ESP, mentioned in the article, influence not only communication and speech-thinking activities, but also cognitive and creative activities. They train attention, memory, develop thinking and have high motivation characteristics of future aviation engineers.

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