

UDC 81.111. 629

## THE IMPACT OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ON THE FLIGHT SAFETY

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**Key words:** safety, aviation English, level of English, impact, accidents.

**Introduction.** Aviation English has become the international language of civil aviation in 1951, when with the expansion of air travel in the 20th century there were safety concerns about the ability of pilots and air traffic controllers to communicate. Therefore, it was important to investigate the impact of English language skills on real life aviation operations to ensure aspects of safety and to exclude the possibility of accidents as much as possible. Since that time aviation English has been greatly improved and learned, however, the question of its role in safety aspects stays open till nowadays.

**Materials and methods.** Analytical method was chosen for scientific papers analyses. We used the various ideas expressed by the scientists, generalized and systematized them. A comparative study of aviation emergencies and ICAO established English language standards and proficiency requirements took place. We integrated information about the reasons of safety for better comprehension.

**Results.** Miscommunication and language barriers have always been human errors that could gravely impact flight safety and put those on board at risk. Elizabeth Mathews, a former linguistic consultant for the International Civil Aviation Organization, believes that language factors have played a role – and in different ways – in more accidents than is generally acknowledged. In the aviation history there are numerous examples when the lack of English knowledge led to emergency accidents and became fatal, unfortunately. For instance, on 25 January 1990, the Avianca flight from Bogota, Colombia, to JFK Airport in New York crashed. The aircraft was running out of fuel in the most appalling weather conditions. After being kept in a holding position by air traffic control (ATC) in New York, the plane's fuel tank was running dangerously low. As far as the word "Emergency" was not used and the situation was reported not properly, ATC was not aware of the gravity of the problem and, as a result, the aircraft crashed killing almost half of passengers being on board, including pilots.

For the reasons of safety ICAO established English language standards and proficiency requirements ("ICAO Annex 10 ICAO (Vol I, 5.2.1.1.2) to the International Chicago Convention") for pilots and air traffic controllers, such as level 4 (which is the minimum level requirement for operation), level 5 (extended level) and level 6 (expert level). Regardless of the proficiency level, testing assesses listening, comprehension, and speaking skills in addition to pronunciation, sentence structure, vocabulary, and fluency. In addition to this, ICAO also established standard requirements when performing radio communication during the flight. They include:

1. Keep instructions short and clear.
2. Use plain English when giving instructions.
3. Always do a "read back".
4. Pronounce numbers separately.
5. Use aviation alphabet etc.

Aviation English is known globally for the phonetic alphabet, specific terminology and phraseology, and the universal jargon that people are likely used to hear in films or on-board a flight. It is actually a lot more complex. While much of the language is technical, functional

command of English is necessary to pass along essential messages as clearly, fast, precisely and as naturally as possible, particularly when there is an emergency. Another advantage of having a standard language for pilots and air traffic controllers to communicate in is that pilots flying in the same airspace can monitor air traffic transmissions and increase situational awareness

### **Conclusions**

All things considered, safety is a number one priority in aviation, and effective communications are a contributing factor. Therefore, establishing of standard rules in aviation radio communication regarding English language and compliance with them helps not only to avoid misunderstanding between pilots and air traffic controllers, but also to minimize the risk of accidents in general, which is greatly important for the modern aviation safety.

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