Teaching Maritime English with Innovative Technologies

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Abstract

Language is our primary source of communication. Nowadays, in our current time several factors make the English language as an essential component for communication, thus the importance of learning foreign language enables to communicate easily with our global citizens. As usually, use English is a common language to communicate and everyone needs to learn the language in order to get in touch on an international level. Speaking it will help you communicate with people from countries all over the world, not just English-speaking ones.

English is essential to the field of education. It is also accepted as common working language of the maritime world and being competent in its use is essential to the safety of ships, their crews and the marine environment. The necessity for the establishment of ME (maritime English) proficiency standard is mandatory used by all maritime based professionals and become an important tool to ensure safety at sea, on shore or in ports.

In the Maritime industry being able to communicate effectively in English and preventing intercultural misunderstanding can be a matter of life and death. Maritime communication programs help professionals in the maritime industry communication better in English and cross cultures. Communication at sea is the essential part for the effective and safe running of the ship. It takes place within the ship herself, between the ship and shore station, between the ship and other ships and sometimes between the ship and aircraft. It is needed to be sure that the speech communications are as precise, simple and unambiguous as possible and that language confusions and errors are avoided that are often at the root of accident and other circumstances.

According to the STCW 1978/95, future deck and engineer officers have to render a welldeveloped command of this specialized language, otherwise they will not be granted a certificate of competence. The legislation nowadays emphasizes the importance of the English language proficiency in relation to safety at sea. Learning courses which has developed business English course for the shipping industry and other maritime sectors, help professionals with different nationalities and cultural backgrounds communicate effectively and with ease. This is imminent for safety reasons, but it also supports companies that employ people from all over the world maintain main quality standards in a very dynamic and competitive environment.

Key words: Maritime English, leaning, integrated management system of teaching, training, teaching methodology.
Introduction

Communication on board the ships consists of a sender passing information to a receiver by various means. Necessary communications include telephone, radios operating on international distress frequencies, long-range terrestrial and satellite systems, and other equipment, depending upon geography, the capabilities of mobile facilities within that area, and other factors affecting the ability of persons to contact each other. Reliability is a measure of whether equipment and systems used by persons in distress and providers of e.g. SAR (search and rescue) services are in good working condition whenever they are needed. Because of the time-critical nature of different services, communications must work well at all times. So it is necessary to have adequate Knowledge of the fundamentals of navigational or engineering instruments, to operate and analyse information obtained from them, which requires knowledge of the English language to use different nautical publications, for the ship’s safety and operation. [1]

In recent years a growing awareness of the necessity of choosing the best techniques in teaching Marine English has become evident. Lecturers should choose the best approach in teaching Marine English aiming to develop main language skills: oral and aural speech, grammar, reading and aural comprehension. As an international language, Maritime English is used as the means of communication in Maritime Industries.

Special ship operations present communication problems and challenges with multicultural crews. The International Safety Management (ISM) Code concentrates on communication in a common language that makes clear the implementation of shipboard procedures, the interpretation of written and oral procedures and commands as well as responses to them are often different from the original intention. The concept of Maritime English is thus restricted by the requirements of the IMO Standard Marine Communication Phrases and the IMO Model Course 3.17 Maritime English. Adequate knowledge of the English language to enable the officer to use charts and other nautical publications, to understand meteorological information and messages concerning ship’s safety and operation, to communicate with other ships coast stations and VTS (vessel traffic service) centers and to perform the officer’s duties, including the ability to use and understand the IMO standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP). [2]

Lack of operational-level knowledge of English can cause the casualties and that’s why the management-level knowledge of English helps to minimize the communication problems and to prevent the recurrence of these casualties. It is also required for corrective and preventive action processes, knowledge of written English in order to submit commitments to external parties. The common language of claim handling is English as well, with relevant correspondence and objective evidence stated in a reporting mechanism.

Shipboard safety as well as environmental management systems require the implementation of English as a second language. This directly affects the training needs and methodologies at Maritime Education and Training Institutions. Maritime English is an example of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and it is mainly used in maritime sectors. In order to work safely on board and keep up quality standards, necessary to be able to communicate in English easily and without misunderstanding. The maritime organization IMO (International Maritime Organization) has created a list of phrases, like SMCP (IMO Standard Marine Communication Phrases) and words, that are important for workers in shipping and logistics. The purpose of usage SMCP (Standard Marine Communication Phrases) is to assist in the greater safety of navigation. These phrases help seafarers improve their English pronunciation, expand their maritime vocabulary and understanding of spoken English. Uses innovative speech technologies,
which consists of videos on the English central platform, provides users with detailed feedbacks about their pronunciation. These phrases are also important in order to work safely and efficiently, communicate with colleagues, workers and officials in port and on shore.

There is a standards of competence, that have to be met by seafarers are defined in STCW Code in the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers Convention, as amended in 1995. This course explains the use of various methods for demonstrating competence and criteria for evaluating competence as tabulated in STCW Code. Appendix C in this model course contains supplementary notes specific to the assessment of competence in English language. [3]

We make relevant courses and programs with technical specialist. There is often a strong motivation for young people to become seafarers in order to learn history and experience the cultures of other countries. But seamen have to live and work together with people of different cultures in a closed community over a long period of time. It will be impossible to live so long time with multi – lingual crew without knowledge of the international language. Most seafarers are not native speakers of English; they do try to carry out their professional activities in English. Thus the English training needs of masters, senior and junior officers should be reviewed and will be discussed more precisely in the following sections of this article.

In the maritime field, one of the most important component for a specialist is a communication. Good communication is the basic principle for safe work practices and prevention incidents on board. People’s cooperation and coordination within a team can be achieved only by effective communication, which is essential in creating a safety culture in a workplace. Language is a means of transmitting ideas, views, instructions, warnings and the working language of the ship should be used at all times.

At the present, a key goal in the shipping business to be involved top management of ship management companies in the establishment, maintenance, and improvement of the quality management systems. The masters and chief engineers, all persons of this business, need to establish procedures and methodologies for measuring satisfaction, for defining the standard to be achieved as well as complying with the Resource management requirements to be ensure that the staff is competent and continuing to improve.

**Methods**

The traditional teaching approach is always lecturer - centered with students or learners in a passive position. This will lead to low study interests of trainees and inactive atmosphere in auditory and makes teaching inflexible and boring, which will naturally result in bad teaching effects. We do everything to heighten the English level of students, to improve the education system and teaching method. For effective language teaching and learning, it is necessary to take the best methodology in order to be able to create tasks appropriate to their students’ learning needs, to develop training courses, communicative competence and to implement a syllabus that meets the requirements defined by the STCW 1995 Code.

Teaching marine English covers many spheres, geographic navigation, celestial navigation, navigation equipment, meteorology, cargo stowage, marine law and regulation, ship handling, marine communication and so on. There are so many vocabulary and terms in each courses, their theory and principle are different. Its vocabulary and writing forms are different from general English. It requires a long time to have a good command of them. When explain professional content, it is hard to arise the interest of students and gave them a heavy impression without professional knowledge, without cases, without incidents and all of them require a long time study and sea experiences.
Learners need to be competent in each of these skill areas in order to combine and utilize language systems effectively. Successful knowledge requires more than the ability to integrate language systems and skills, however. They need to know the conventions for using the language in specific situations (e.g., using the telephone; writing telex) and, as so important, they should know some strategies for coping with misunderstandings in the event that communication breaks down. Teaching needs to reflect genuine use of language so the student is equipped for communicating in “the real world”. [3]

When the new materials are explained, the students may not understand everything, every word, they can be helped through the use of pictures, diagrams and gestures. Very important part of developing the skills, they need for understanding language in real situation. Advantage of active teaching method has been recognized in world pedagogic for many ten years. Advantage of active teaching method has been recognized in world pedagogic. The one and the best method of teaching is learning by doing. Learning by doing – the main teaching mean includes students’ activity, when they learn in the process of working. Such learning may be provided under trainer’s instructions (e.g., traditional relations of master and apprentice or assistance of scientific adviser), on relative’s or elder friend’s advice or in conditions of self-education. Generally, learning process in any fields is as follows: active knowledge may be gained only through learning by doing, although “doing” shall be understood not in the literal, but wide, generalized sense. For example, in natural mastering of native or foreign languages (when students learn through speaking, i.e., “texts making”); the same is in learning of reading and writing (only through “doing”); the same is in psychology and mathematics, as students do not really learn the things which they listen, but do by themselves. [4]

To develop lexical and grammar skills on the material e.g.: Accidents and incidents on board the ship, ship handling, drills and etc. it’s also very important to understand how one should behave in an emergency. To develop practical skills, the one of the best method of teaching is learning by doing, which includes students’ activity, when they learn in the process of working. To develop the practical skills of immediate response and reaction in any professional situation, it’s recommended to take actions in drills. Drill is a creation of a real situation, which is conducted integrated by English teacher and technical instructors. To get the cadets familiarized with sufficient formation and instruction, to be able to: communicate with other persons on board on elementary safety matters and understand safety information symbols, signs, alarm signals and etc. “Integrated learning” and “learning by doing” methods will help to develop competencies which enhances individual and organizational performance and meet the requirements defined by the STCW 1995 code.

Results

It is vital that English instructors who have limited knowledge of technical aspects of seafaring are given real opportunities to liaise with staff from other departments in order to increase their understanding. Technical instructors will also benefit from improving their knowledge of English. Collaboration between departments should be ongoing and will require formal approval, co-ordination and review to be effective. To improve the teachers’ knowledge of marine English, it is a way to arrange the English teacher and professional teacher work together assuming the marine English course. Professional teacher can learn English from English teacher, promoting the level of English, English teacher can get professional knowledge from Professional teacher to enrich their study direction. Suitable English culture is necessary for the teacher of marine professional. [5]

Some students were enquired about integrated learning. 146 students were participated in query. Feedback was collected from all students. In this, 95% of the students opined that ILM (integrated
learning method) improved their understanding and learning skills. 77 % opined that ILM enhance their intellectual aspiration and brought concept clarity. 84% stated that the knowledge gained in ILM would help them in research activities practice. 88% stated that they are able to score better in exams when taught in ILM whereas only 12 % stated that they are able to score better in exams even when taught by TLM (Teaching Learning Material). 39% students stated that repetition of similar points during integrated lecture causes distraction and made the session boring. 96% of students are in favor of conducting periodical integrated lectures. 21% of students stated that they were excited by practical aspects explained by English teacher. 60% of students state that these integrated lectures are more useful if they are interactive.

The present study comprised of 96 students of 3rd semester Maritime Engineering and Maritime Navigation. A pretested questionnaire was given to study their existing level of knowledge. The students were divided into two groups by simple random method - a study group of 48 students, who receive integrated teaching including didactic lectures, whereas the control group of 48 students received traditional lectures. Post test was conducted after 3 days.

In the post test, the mean knowledge score between traditional and integrated groups were 12.40 and 14.46 respectively with standard deviation of 1.869 and 1.864. Whereas the mean values of attitude is 36.95 and 60.00 with standard deviation of 1.972 and 1.977. There was a significant improvement in both knowledge and attitude of students of integrated group as compared to traditional group.

**Conclusion**

Language barriers and confusions are often mentioned as causes of maritime incidents. Language learning programs help to prevent misunderstandings and develop cross – cultural communication competences. English language navigational publications and messages relevant to the safety of the ship are correctly interpreted or drafted. A knowledge of the English language, both written and spoken, for the communication of information relevant to the requirement of the safety of life at sea, safety of the ship and crew members on board and marine environment protection.

When the syllabuses are planned for a new term, it should be asked to the heads of department to arrange a meeting with the aim of linking the English teaching into other subject areas. We, English teachers collaborate with instructors from other departments in order to maintain integrated teaching links between departments. English instructors and technical instructors can observe each other’s classes. This helps us both parties understand how to learn and what to do to solve any problems.

English teachers should also find out how technical subject teachers prepare students for the practical skills they will require at sea. If students are required subject that include some elements of the maritime English, the English teacher should use this context for teaching language and practicing e. g communication skills and strategies. In this way, English teachers will be sure of using authentic tasks as well as authentic material.
References


