

# MODERN TEACHING TRENDS IN MARITIME ENGLISH AS A GLOBAL INSTRUMENT IN SPREADING OF INDIVISIBLE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT IN MARITIME INDUSTRY

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## Abstract

*The role of globalization in spreading of English as a fundamental tool of a communication appears to become an effective characteristic in all the aspects of business environment in maritime industry as "turned-on" email chain and correspondence is completely established in the English language, thus building the challenging competency within maritime universities and nautical institutions. While overviewing the research studies over the last four decades we mainly see that the main "ladder" in the objectives of IMO Model Courses remains to be the promotion of contact and cooperation among maritime lecturers of all branches of knowledge and form a high level of professional expertise institution in enhancing the environment of teaching opportunities of English for Special Purposes in maritime and shipping industry. The obvious conclusion by examining the proceedings of the Sub-Committee on the International Maritime English Conference (IMEC) is that the English language is rapidly gaining ground on effective delivering of lectures within the maritime establishments because its composition, flexibility, vocabulary and pragmatics completely makes it to become the "Lingua Franca" of Maritime English.*

**Keywords:** Maritime English, IMO Model Course 3.17, English for Special Purposes, Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP), a learning – centered approach in Maritime English

## I. Introduction

English language has established its fixed position as a "must" for marine practitioners who have already chosen to study maritime sciences. Since all academic resources contain the basics of nautical disciplines in English, it makes hard to achieve high standards in obtaining the full professionalism in the management infrastructure in shipping industry, thus pushing forward the "to be" or "not to be" phenomena of English to arise in the course of common study process of maritime sciences. Every country in the world holds its particular education system and cultural background. This implies that academic establishments with maritime subjects in every location of the world has designed the basic professional targets to prepare students for careers in the maritime industry. This is namely that point where the language professionals and maritime specialists need to work out collaboratively on a language programme that will set and stipulate the teaching of simple basics of maritime sciences. Because IMO Model Course 3.17 for Maritime English recommends 'colleges and training institutions should note that this course more than fulfils the competences regarding English language contained

in the STCW Convention, 1978, as amended' [1]. It illustrates that English teachers and lecturers should have a deep insight into English to meet the specific objectives of IMO regarding the training programmes to achieve the standards for English set out in the STCW Convention, 1978, as amended

## II. The Position of Maritime English in Maritime Practice

The position that Maritime English holds in maritime practice is certain to be the provider of safe communication environment for navigation and conduct of the vessel to the final destination, thus standardizing the language used in professional "messaging" for navigation at sea, in port approaches, waterways and harbors and on board the ships with multilingual crews. It gives a conclusion that the implementation of Maritime English must consider the following aspects:

1. Properly qualified instructors of English;
2. Support staff
3. Rooms and other spaces
4. Equipment
5. English language course books that have a communicative aim
6. Technical papers, manuals, reports and nautical publications
7. Other maritime reference material and teaching aids as indicated in the Bibliography of IMO Model Course 3.17 [2].

While taking a thorough examination on the Communication skills according to the IMO Model Course 3.17 through listening, speaking, reading and writing, it becomes obvious that modern teaching trends in English prioritize fundamentals in maritime subjects, for instance, knowledge, understanding and proficiency in Maritime English alongside the grammar, vocabulary and phonology, required performance will maintain essentials of specific maritime science. Once again it proves that contemporary teaching approaches of ESP (English for Special Purposes) needs to be communicative and a learning – centered. Thus, IMO Model Course 3.17 puts the English instructors into the position of ESP lecturer for assisting the maritime students in obtaining a background knowledge in appropriate English level that will make possible to:

- describe types of vessels, safety equipment, navigational routes and geographic locations;
- understand helm orders;
- use numerical information for engineering;
- describe watchkeeping duties;
- understand standard engine orders;
- practice VHF exchange procedures;
- produce external written and spoken communications to request and give advice.

Elementary Maritime English level of IMO Model Course 3.17 is built in that way, which requires the implementation of communicative approach only because it contains the communication environment where maritime students can be easily involved in real conversations through role-plays, information-gap and Jigsaw activities and open-ended discussions.

Intermediate Maritime English level of IMO Model Course 3.17 is developed in that way, which aims at building fluency in four communication skills of Maritime English and here practices of language systems and communication skills correlate well with each-other. Presentation of new vocabulary is advised to be presented to the maritime students through the contextual analysis.

The teaching experience of skillful teachers shows that "contextualization" of a new vocabulary gives best fruits in explanation of explicit and implicit meanings of words. Students demonstrate a keen interest in learning new words when they are explained in context. Besides, monolingual dictionaries are highly helpful and they are great resources in introduction of new word stock to the students whose levels are considered to be pretty intermediate. IMO Model Course 3.17 supports

Maritime English trainers and practitioners to be flexible in vocabulary teaching because the main challenge before them is to guide students into independent self-study process. Thus, being able to encourage students to use English –English reference books (dictionaries, glossaries and thesauruses) is the best opportunity to immerse them in Maritime English. So, the Intermediate Maritime English level within the IMO Model Course 3.17 is targeted at:

- competences in the STCW Convention, 1978, as amended; maritime education and English;
- discuss and confirm travel arrangements for joining ship;
- make and confirm accommodation reservations;
- describe stages in preparing for sea and for arrival in port;
- write Note of Protest;
- understand SMCP (Standard Marine Communication Phrases) for pilotage;
- discuss aspects of safety and risk in the workplace;
- describe meteorological conditions;
- SMCP for briefing on special machinery events and repairs;
- comprehend and participate in communications by VHF radio and telephone;
- take and deliver messages accurately;
- explain MARPOL regulations regarding marine protection.
- use measuring and testing equipment for fault finding;
- deduce possible causes of events; establish and explain reasons for breakdowns or faults.

In a nutshell, the position of English teaching in maritime industry is believed to study the technical and lexical features of Maritime English and help students to spot differences between General and Maritimes English.

### III. Active Learning

Active learning is a part of communicative approach, which mainly comprises a student-centered activity to expose the students to frequent learner participation, thus stimulating the quick learning environment. The main purpose of active learning is to drive students into real communication situation is to:

1. Assess the level and knowledge of English, i.e., to make clear the language capacity of the student.
2. Stimulate interest in a topic.
3. Increase opportunities to interact in English.
4. Recycle and reuse language previously taught.
5. Give both strong and weak students the chance to speak in class.
6. Encourage independent thinking by helping students to work out “rules” for themselves.

Active learning, it is apparent that is a very successful stage within the learning process with pair and group work. It is needless to say that Teacher Talking Time during the Maritime English Teaching becomes undesirable as it causes the boredom and drudgery, learners briskly tend to direct their attention to more suitable discussions rather than formal presentations. There are cases when students have virtually no chance to practise the language. Teacher Talking Time during the active learning stage of Maritime English sees a lot of active vocabulary and useful expressions. The interpretation and perception of the language structure of Maritime English features eliciting technique that can be employed successfully by English teachers in during presentations of rules and explanations to the cadets. Language learning directly collaborates with psychology and directly depends on the “power grid” of a certain student, implying that the “teacher to student” interaction will be crucial only in the event of penetration of production stages of lessons that demands “aces” from the teacher because the increase in speaking environment with students obviously relies on how the ESP language

practitioner will define and satisfy “student to student” communications. The more the pair and group work is enhanced in the Maritime English lessons, the more a non-threatening speaking environment will improve itself. All the matter is that the capability of mastering the fluency in ESP by maritime students “rest in their hands” of confidence. Less confident students do not allow themselves to get the chance to put their knowledge of new “acquisitions” into practice because of feeling shame during the “word up” in a foreign language. Our teaching experience witnesses that pair and group arrangements let the teacher notice the “well-cooperated” students and the ones who have specific learning needs. Therefore, IMO Model Course 3.17 of Maritime English attempts to equip teachers with recommendations with a flexible “teaching package” which they are expected to be creative, as the language training needs their knowledge, skills and dedication. These are the key components in the communication of expertise to students being trained through IMO Model Course material.

#### IV. Learning Maritime English Vocabulary

Maritime English Vocabulary is a framework of maritime sciences since it inherently uses precise expressions and the length of SMCP is usually restricted. This kind of vocabulary features “strange” words that are complicated to be literally comprehended. For instance, the collocations of ‘reference line’; ‘breast line’ and ‘head line’ are used to imply ropes or cables in the berthing or mooring as they secure a ship close to the pier alongside it. The terms of ‘leeward’, ‘windward’, ‘variable’, ‘backing’ refer to express the wind, its direction, windy side, or the sheltered side of the vessels at sea. The definition of the ‘fire party’ in Maritime English means the group of crew members trained for fighting fire on board a ship. These are the bright examples of specific phrases that are impossible to understand literally because these collocations will be taken wrongly and it will lead to misconceptions by the message recipients thus confusing them. The conclusion is that in order to learn the Maritime English the mariners should possess the satisfying level to produce necessary content in delivering the proper messages during external and on-board communications. Teaching maritime vocabulary is considered to be an inherent part of STCW Code of the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers Convention, 1978, as amended. While taking a deep insight into the STCW Code Part A: it is easy to see that the competency level of mariners is proposed to be in that sufficient extent of good written and verbal command of IMO SMCP to deal with the safety of navigation. So, knowledge, understanding and proficiency of the well-qualified staff should cover all modern conditions at sea. Thus, correctly interpreted and drafted SMCP messages as well as the adequate knowledge of English in reading and writing navigational publications will serve the safe environment in the management of multilingual crew because personal safety and social responsibilities are the core values of STCW 78/95. IMO Model Course 3.17 highlights the personal safety and social responsibilities as the follows:

Administrations should bear in mind the significance of communication and language skills in maintaining safety of life and property at sea and in preventing marine pollution. Given the international character of the maritime industry, the reliance on voice communications from ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore, the increasing use of multinational crews, and the concern that crew members should be able to communicate with passengers in an emergency, adoption of a common language for maritime communications would promote safe practice by reducing the risk of human error in communicating essential information [2]. This concept contributes that Vocabulary Consolidation Self-Assessment Round-up activities in vocabulary teaching will provide a good basement for effective delivery of ESP because problems of communication arising from the lack of knowledge of nautical English among the crew members that use and speak more than one language contributes to the confusion surrounding the initial phases of the emergency circumstances. Therefore, Self-Assessment

drills in Basic Marine Vocabulary will assist students in becoming independent learners thus motivating them to expose themselves to immersive Maritime English Self-Study Programmes. It would be reasonable to share a sample pattern for Maritime Vocabulary Revision Self-Assessment “workouts”.

**A. Vocabulary Consolidation Self-Assessment.**

- Tick ✓ what you can do. Cross ✗ what you still find hard to do in English:
- Dictate and note ship’s call signs and messages using the international maritime alphabet.
- Give and receive information that contains times.
- Understand SMCP signals.
- Repeat and understand helm orders.
- Say vessel’s position, bearing, course, speed and draught.

**B. Work in pairs to dictate and note down information.**

- Student A: Ask your partner the following questions. Fill in your card.
- What is the date?
- What is your ETA?
- What time does loading start?
- Who is the officer in charge?
- How much cargo do you expect to load? [3]

	A	B	C
Date:			
ETA:			
Loading starts:			
Cargo:			
Officer in charge:			
Cargo to be loaded			

**C. Class Project. 1.**

Bring to class a seafarer job application form from a shipping company or the web. Fill it in with the rest of the class. Act out an interview between the crew manager and yourself, with questions and answers on basic personal information [3].

**D. How well can you talk in English on the following topics. Tick ✓ accordingly and give as many examples possible.**

Very well [ ]	moderately well	poorly	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Personal LSAs and survival craft <input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Where safety equipment is on board
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Conventions on safety
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	SOLAS requirements
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	IMO safety signs [3]

**E. Class Project. 2.**

Choose one of the following to present in class:  
 Find out more about the history of SOLAS and its various parts.

Research another convention that relates to safety, the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR) 1979.

Free – fall lifeboats: How do they operate? What are their advantages and disadvantages? How widely are they used in comparison with conventional lifeboats? [3].

All these Self –Assessment Activity samples meet the requirements of STCW78/95 as they are designed in the way to develop the skills in the “standard language of communication for maritime safety purposes [2]. Administrations should consider the benefits of ensuring that seafarers have an ability to use at least an elementary English vocabulary, with an emphasis on nautical terms and situations [2].

## V. Why does IMO Model Course 3.17 Consider Communicative Approach in Teaching Maritime English to be recommended method?

As IMO Model Course 3.17 manual is intended to imply the effective communication at contemporary sea conditions for seafarers, it prioritizes English language proficiency of them in dealing and interpreting with various situations at sea within the maritime sector. Being able to use English means that the seafarer can combine the ‘building blocks’ of language to express him/herself clearly and appropriately in speech and writing. Being able to understand English means that the seafarer can interpret messages that he/she hears and reads correctly and can respond to these messages appropriately and comprehensibly. When a seafarer can demonstrate the ability to do this, he/she proves his/her communicative competence in English [2]. So IMO proposals of SMCP (the External Communication and the On-board Communication Phrases) can be envisaged the best suit for communicative approach development as the operative language of maritime industry is the base-line of safety at sea. Moreover, communicative approach maintains the pace of student- centered teaching. Students are involved in active learning environment [2]. Furthermore, learning tasks of Maritime English reflect real life communications [4], for instance, the following task properly illustrates the real communication life situations at sea:

*Listen to the helm orders and circle [a] or [b] accordingly.*

*When you hear this order, you must...*

- a. Reduce the amount of rudder and hold.
- b. Hold rudder in the fore and aft position.

*When you hear this order, you must ...*

- a. Check the swing of the vessel’s heard in a turn.
- b. Reduce the vessel’s swing rapidly.

*When you hear this order, you must...*

- a. Reduce the vessel’s swing rapidly.
- b. Reduce the amount of rudder and hold [3].

The abovementioned extract from the task restates the importance of language for communication. That is why the developments of proper glossary, practice drills and reading materials will be the highest standards in maritime language teaching [5]. Moreover, it is interesting that communication approach of Maritime English Teaching aspects also cover the economic achievements in shipping industry because of the outlets of certain countries into the “high waters”. So the economic flourishing within the various marine sectors integrates the penetration of “Indian English” as well as “International English” into the communicative approach, thus making it the most practicable methodology in Maritime English Study Programmes. Role–plays, team collaboration,

group activities and project work make the communicative approach to be the intensive format in preparing maritime students to understand and produce purposely the language patterns in real situations at sea [6].

## VI. Conclusion

Maritime English is considered to be the crucial part of ESP [7]. In terms of the rapid growth of Maritime Industry it had already obtained vitality to be taught within the nautical institutions. It implies that Maritime English course materials should be carefully developed so that its meaning is fully comprehended [8]. It once again, proves the necessity to follow recommendations and proposals stipulated in the IMO model course 3.17 and fully encompass the objectives specified in it. Therefore, selected materials and assignments should include a review of the appropriate course objectives because they have to reflect the “musts” of all relevant IMO international conventions and standards of the other instruments as presented in the IMO Model Course 3.17.

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