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SOME METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR SUPPORTING MARITIME ENGLISH CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: The paper deals with some techniques in teaching students of Maritime English (mainly scaffolding) in performing dialogues used over the radio at sea, while using SMCP. The importance of the SMCP has been pointed out referring to the safety of shipping as well as the importance of English and especially the importance of Maritime English in communication at sea is stated indisputable. The problem of effectively teaching SMCP in real-life context limited dialogues calls for developing new and effective methods and techniques of teaching. Firstly, the model of open language experience task is developed in the frame of General English. Then the model is used to work upon it and enlarge to suit the needs of oral discourse of the Maritime Radio Communications.
Keywords: Maritime Radio Communications, concept of Scaffolded Instruction, language instruction.

INTRODUCTION

The problem outlined in the title needs to focus attention first of all on one of its constituents in the wording. It need not say that maritime communications are playing an important role in shipping, and in this sense the ability of seafarers to reliably communicate on board the ship, between ships and with shore personnel is of utmost importance. The correlation between the importance of maritime communication reliability and the safety of shipping has long been realized by all involved in the shipping industry, associating it with the correlation of reliability of communication and economics. Actually, this is already an indisputable fact per se and does not need justification as it is clearly pointed out by Trenkner and Cole. (Cole & Trenkner, 2008). Today, more than ever before, we are all practiced communicators. Indeed communication, supported by an array of technical devices, is at the very heart of our modern existence allowing us to instantly access almost anywhere in the world. It may be a question of chickens and eggs but certainly communication and globalisation go hand in hand, as do the resulting increases in trade and the need for shipping to satisfy the demands. That competent (English) language skills not only facilitate but enhance our communication needs is surely indisputable."(Cole & Trenkner, 2008).

EXPOSITION

Defining and describing specialized Maritime English

There is a consensus among professionals in the field regarding the naming of a special purpose language used in a maritime professional environment as Maritime English (Trenkner, 2002).

Determining the aims, subject and field of Specialized English and Marine English in particular is done within the framework of a linguistic theory. The development of linguistics as a whole, influences the approaches to the definition and description of these areas. Different theoretical approaches indicate different definitions defining a language for specific purposes.

In each language there are specialized areas that correspond to the professional human activity. Clearly defined research into the language for special purposes began in the 1960s, but the idea of *Fachsprache* and *langue de specialite* existed a century ago. There are three main areas for the study and application of a language for special purposes: 1) linguistic description (characterization), 2) interaction with other disciplines, 3) research in teaching methodology (Pritchard, 2001).

Sager et al define language for special purpose as "semi-autonomous, complex systems based on and derived from the general language" (Sager et al,1980). According to the same authors (Sager

et al,1980), specialized language is "a subdivision of language from a pragmatic and extralinguistic point of view." Sager examines which levels of the linguistic system in the specialized languages are affected by this separation. According to him, they can be considered as separate systems at the grammatical, semantic and pragmatic level or as a combination of some of them. Sufficient justification is found for establishing a separate pragmatic level, for example a separate group of users, different topics, different situations. Not so clear are the signs of separation at the lexical and grammatical level. Therefore, the specialized language must be examined for both differences in modes of expression and field of use.

According to P. Trenkner, "... the specialized language must be seen in the context of human activities connected with the specific objectives of an activity, which for Maritime English means to be seen in the context of activities performed by seafarers in shipping" (Trenkner, 2002).

We accept P. Trenkner's (2002) definition of Maritime English.

"Maritime English is a collection of all those English language opportunities that are used as a means of communication by the international maritime community, contribute to shipping safety and support the maritime business."

This definition has been adopted by the maritime community and has served as a leading point in many of the studies related to the efforts to improve maritime communication as well as the developments connected with the standardization of the language used in maritime communications.

The maritime radio communications and their standardized language.

The key phrase in defining Maritime English related to the standardization of this language is " safety of shipping ". The formal reflection of this language is the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) standardized maritime communication phrases. When developing these phrases, attention is focused on the safety of shipping and they are designed to be used in situations of safety to be applied in ship-to-shore, shore-to-ship, ship-to-ship and onboard communications. They are adopted to support the verbal exchange of information, to reduce the risk of misunderstanding in an emergency or to prevent such a situation becoming more difficult. Standardized marine phrases are adopted by IMO legislation and should therefore be understood and used as required by the 1978 STCW Convention with the 1995 Amendments. On 29 November 2001, the Standard Phrases were formally endorsed by the IMO 22 Assembly as Resolution A 918 (22).

Following Alison Noble and her research in Maritime English, we would focus on the MARCOM project report (1999), which warns that " one of the basic lessons of sociolinguistics is that it is an impossible task to impose linguistic uniformity on any population, let alone one as diverse as seafarers" (Noble, 2017).

However, SMCP must be imposed as the standard language used over the radio and seafarers must be taught in that language. This fact provokes for developing more and newer methodological methods in order to achieve better knowledge of the trainees in the teaching institutions. One of the steps in teaching the students SMCP at the Naval Academy, Varna, Bulgaria is developing a true to life discourse of Maritime radio communications using the so-called cue cards.

Example:

This is m/v FLAME. She is approaching the fairway.	This is Varna Pilot Station. It is acquiring information and giving instructions of the vessel.
the vessel requires the pilot.	Ask if the vessel requires a pilot.
Ship's position is….	Ask what her position is.
	Ask about the distance to the pilot station.
Ship's distance to the pilot station….	
	Ask if the pilot boat is on station.
Pilot boat on station. Where can the pilot	

boat be taken from.	
	The pilot can be taken at …. (Pilot Station)
At what time pilot will come on board.	
	at …. hours local time. Pilot boat coming to your vessel. Keep pilot boat on port side.
Confirm.	Ask about the height of the freeboard.
	Vessel must stop in position and wait for the pilot.
The freeboard's height is….	
Confirm.	

The task uses bullets of the speech acts of the communicants to develop a real-life dialogue to be led at sea over the radio. That method has proved its usefulness. Yet, by providing the trainees with the description of the speech act that should be transferred into SMCP model, some limitations occur that prevent them from being able of developing a procedure of the dialogue by themselves. In search of a more creative technique, the scaffolding effect was considered in order to annihilate the limitations and prepare students for the real communications on board.

The term scaffolding refers to a process in which instructors make a model or demonstrate how to solve a problem, and then step back, offering support as needed. Psychologist and instructional designer Jerome Bruner first used the term 'scaffolding' in this context back in the 1960s.

In order for EFL learners to meet the changing demands of the society, they should learn how to construct their knowledge, understand through interaction, and connect their experience with the current situations using metacognitive strategies that guide them to think, plan, and evaluate their learning. This entails the necessity of English mastery in its whole and in its specific components. In this perspective, the active role of students is the backbone of the success of learning.

The Concept of Scaffolded Instruction is the systematic sequencing of prompted content, materials, tasks, and teacher and peer support to optimize learning. Some form of scaffolding is essential for helping students to develop thinking skills and higher-order thinking skills. Scaffolded instruction can be integrated with other strategies such as peer tutoring, cooperative learning, and direct instruction.

When applying scaffolding theory in the teaching activities, instructors should give students higher level support and help, and teach them some principles or rules that can be used to solve some problems in order to let learners strengthen the sense of learning independently, build the learning ability of self-control and self- responsibility. With scaffolding, the learning task is transfered to the students gradually and finally it is withdrawn from the learning process.

Firstly, having in mind the above said, we would like to focus on the materials used in the English language classroom (Rodrigues, White, 1993). It has become obvious for many teachers of ESL trainees that most of the available texts and materials are based on artificial situations following grammatical structures and sometimes irrelevant dialogues and topics. Actually, the idea is that we, instructors of English as a Second language should strive for using texts that would meet the needs and requirements of the students, the language they need to function successfully in everyday situations and settings where they will use English. Thus, stratifying the communicative approach in teaching as stated by Zhelezova-Mindizova: "According to the object of labor the main types of occupations can be professions dealing with the social dichotomy: "man-nature", "man-technique", "man-sign system", "man-artistic image" and "man-man". The teaching profession, as is known, belongs to the latter type, called a more communicative profession. Why is this so? Communication on all levels and formats is "embedded", "fit in", "coded" in pedagogical

interactions."(2016) These holds true even more for the students of Maritime English as their needs are closely connected with their profession and they must be able to communicate successfully in their future professional settings and situations. Consequently, it is necessary to follow open language experiences with more intensive structured situations, dialogues and roleplaying.

According to Zhelezova-Mindizova: "Pedagogical situations, regardless of location, type of school and professional orientation, are similar in nature. (2016) Based on this premise we will deal first with the model in the environment of the classroom for General English, then our approach will be to have some changes in order to adapt the model for the purpose of Maritime English and more exactly, for the purpose of studying SMCP.

In the structured situation phase of model of open language experience, students are presented with simple but natural narratives of no more than 100 words based on the open language experience. Such a material is found to be too long for quick memorization, thus the emphasis in this phase for the students is to concentrate on the meaning of the material. In addition, guide questions are presented to the students following the narration. Furthermore, an additional stage involving learning of short dialogues will be helpful for the students to build their confidence in participating in the role-playing activities. Reading and writing in this stage will be very useful and should be started with the assistance of the instructor. Visual materials, word cards and others can be used to help students transition from the narration to the oral task. Some students may be assigned to practice the dialogue until they feel confident to present it to the class.

Memorizing these presentations will build students 'confidence in role playing. After being involved in several structured situations and after mastering some related dialogues, students will be able to respond to the role-playing situations planned by the instructor. Usually, they should be directly related to some parts of the original open language experience. Students will be given short description of a situation and asked to act out the roles of the people in these setting without looking at the printed dialogue material memorized previously. The role-playing activities should be similar to the narratives, but sufficiently different to encourage free use of the language.

MODEL OF THE OPEN LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE TASK
Structured Situations
Text A
I want to make a grocery list. I get a pencil a piece of paper to write down what I need, Let's see. What do I need? I open my refrigerator. I need milk. I need eggs. I need butter. Also, I need orange juice. I have plenty of vegetables-onions, carrots, celery, and tomatoes. So, I don't need to buy any vegetables. Do I have any fruit? I have oranges. But I don't have any apples. I need apples. So, here is my grocery list.

Guide questions
1. What is a grocery list?
2. How do I make grocery list?
3. What do I open to see what I need?
4. What vegetables do I have?
5. What vegetables do I need to buy?
6. What fruit do I have?
7. What fruit do I need to buy?
8. Which three dairy products do I need to buy?
9. What kind of fruit juice do I need to buy?
10. What items are on my grocery list?

Dialogue
Making a Grocery List
A: What do you need at the grocery store?
B: I don't know. Let me see.
A: Do you need any vegetables?
B: No, I have plenty.

A: Do you need some fruit?

B: Well, I have oranges, but I don't have apples.

A: Then you need some apples.

B: Yes, I need some apples.

A; I;m going to make my grocery list

B: Here's a pen and a paper. Let me write it for you.

A: Okay. Write down milk, eggs and butter.

B: Okay. Milk, eggs and butter. What else?

A: Write down apples.

B: Okay. Apples.

A: Write down orange juice. That's all.

B: Okay. I've got milk, eggs, butter, apples, and orange juice.

Role-Playing Activity

This is the stage where students built their own dialogues with the guidance of the instructor.

MODEL OF THE OPEN LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE TASK REFERRING TO MARITIME DISCOURSE

Having in mind the task designed for students in General English, we developed a similar task referring to maritime discourse, particularly connected with the acquisition of SMCP.

Structured Situations

Text A

Berthing alongside

A ship may berth port or starboard side to, with no wind or tide, with the tide ahead with the wind onshore or offshore. It should proceed towards the pier at slow speed and at an angle of 20-30 degrees. When the ship approaches the berth, the engine is stopped and the ship's headway is used to bring her alongside. During the mooring operations should run astern to counteract the ship's headway. The mooring lines used to secure the ship to the bollards on the pier are named according to their use, e.g. head line, stern line, breast line, or spring line. The head line and the forward spring lines prevent the ship from drifting astern. The stern line and aft spring lines prevent the ship from drifting forward. Breast lines control the distance to the pier.

Guide questions

1.   What is berthing?

2.   How does the ship approach the berth?

3.   How do the engines assist in berthing?

4.   What are the main mooring lines?

5.   What is the purpose of each line?

Dialogue

The Master of m/v Rila receives mooring instructions from the pilot on board,

M: Pilot, what is her berth?

P: Her berth is ahead of the white ship, next to the four cranes.

M: Pilot, the speed should be decreased.

P: Slow astern!

M: Pilot, the speed is too high to run off her headway. Half astern should be ordered.

P: Don't worry, Master. The stern tug is powerful enough.

Let go the forward spring!

Pass the heaving line ashore!

M: Pilot, Keep the ship's bow away from the pier.

P: Let go the breast line!

 Dialogue with cue cards

You are the Master of m/v Rila. Receive mooring instructions from the pilot	You are the pilot. Give mooring instructions
Confirm	Ask if the vessel is ready to sail
	Tell the Master to have the mooring party prepare the ropes. Ask if the engine is ready.
Agree and say that the engine is ready.	Give the following instructions: Front positions to have the head line and the spring line on shore, Back positions to have the head line and the spring line on shore.
Give instructions to the mooring party all lines on the stern and the bow to be on shore.	All lines on the stern and the bow to be on shore.
Confirm that all lines are cast off.	Say that the tugs are coming to the ship. Front and Back positions to pass the lines to tugs. Recover all lines on board.
Tugs are moored. All lines are recovered. There is nothing behind the stern.	

CONCLUSION

The scaffolding effect on the oral discourse of Maritime English is a perfect tool for the language instruction. The students can comprehend the target language forms in the beginning stages and then they can perform what is required from them to construct real life dialogues performed over the radio. The benefit gained is that students learn the relevant forms and access them whenever they are actually in the appropriate context.

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