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ON SOME ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS OF EFFICIENT MARITIME ENGLISH TEACHING

Abstract. The article substantiates basic organizational pedagogical conditions which provide for the efficiency of the professionally-oriented communicative competency formation of future seafarers. It is argued that the implementation of the suggested organizational pedagogical conditions promotes the rational and efficient education process management, enables such organization of the teaching and learning activity which makes it possible to improve greatly the quality of professionally-oriented foreign language training thus providing future shipping industry personnel with adequate level of English language skills as required by the International Maritime Organization.

It is proved in the article that the positive dynamics of the foreign language mastery at all stages of education is guaranteed if they are distributed into groups according to their initial level of English language proficiency. The enrollees are given the initial test which shows their actual language level according to which the academic groups are formed. Such practice allows for the mitigation of the negative consequences which are usual when students with different language skills are forced to work together in collaboration. Having academic groups where cadets are of the approximately the same language enables the creation of the positive atmosphere, increases the level of motivation to develop and improve language skills. It is argued that the implementation of the dual form of education is also an important organizational condition of foreign language training efficiency provision. The dual form of education allows for the integration of the academic and practical professional training, brings the components of the teaching and learning process into the compliance with the requirements of the employment market. Having practical training aboard enables



students to test their Maritime English skills in real-life communication with multilingual crews and provides for the development of the socio-cultural and cognitive components of the professionally-oriented communicative competency. It is stated that among the important organizational conditions of the efficient Maritime English training there is the implementation of the continuing professional development policy for the Maritime English teachers. It is suggested how to practically implement this condition by means of faculty development sessions and expert classes on a regular basis.

Keywords: professionally-oriented communicative competency, education process management, dual education, motivation, teacher's professional development.

Problem Statement. The constant development and dynamical changes in all spheres of life nowadays demand for the improvement of professional training of future seafarers so that they can be competitive at the international employment market. The major of professional education today is the provision of highly qualified personnel competent to carry out their professional duties on board ships in compliance with the requirements stipulated by the International maritime Organization. Since the professionally-oriented communicative competency is a crucial component of professional competency of future seafarers as it ensures implementation of effective communication in professional environment with the purpose of defeating professional challenges by means of a foreign language and thus can guarantee the safety of navigation, environmental safety and even safety of human life it is argued that there is an urgent need in finding new and improving the existing means, methods, forms and technologies of teaching English for Specific Purposes including Maritime English.

It is considered that the recognition and the implementation of specific conditions into the Maritime English teaching-learning process will enable the efficiency improvement of seafarers' professionally-oriented foreign language training in the framework of continuous education.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. The researchers (A. Aleksyuk, R. Ardovska, Yu. Babanskyi, V. Boichuk, O. Hulai, A. Lytvyn, P. Pidkasystyi, I. Pidlasyi, M. Pryhodii and others) believe that pedagogical conditions are the important part of the academic process management as they influence the formation and development of pedagogical phenomena, systems and personalities greatly. A. Aleksyuk and P. Pidkasystyi define pedagogical conditions as specific circumstances that reflect certain requirements to the academic process which can provide for the appropriate results if met [1]. Pedagogical conditions should be substantiated and implemented in accordance with the learners needs [2] that is why there are different well-grounded approaches to the classification of such conditions suggested for each specific area of professional training (S. Amelina,



R. Hryshkova, O. Hulai, O. Kovtun, O. Pavlenko, K. Vyshnevskaya, etc.). Thorough analysis of the scientific sources and own teaching experience allow for the conclusion that it is possible to enhance the efficiency of Maritime English teaching if appropriate well-grounded conditions are implemented into the teaching-learning process.

The basic conceptual ideas of the synergetic and systematic approaches [3, 121] prove the fact that there should be pedagogical conditions related to each meaningful component of the academic process: the content of education (teaching and learning support materials, course syllabi, etc.); teaching methods and learning strategies (the way the lessons should be conducted, forms of interaction to be used, teaching-learning techniques to be applied, etc.) and organizational aspects of the teaching and learning process. As V. Boichuk states in his research “the appropriate organization and planning of teaching-learning process and efficient academic environment management are the key conditions of successful professional training of competent specialists” [2, 256]. So, it is considered to be necessary to determine the crucial aspects of Maritime English teaching organization in the course of professional training of future seafarers.

The purpose of the academic paper. The academic paper is aimed at substantiating the key organizational issues of professionally-oriented foreign language training of future seafarers in the framework of continuous education and providing the guidelines on their practical implementation.

Presentation of the Main Material. The organizational aspects of Maritime English teaching influence the way the academic process is organized by means of creating peculiar conditions allowing for the successful objective achievement, education process management, professionally-oriented communicative competency formation and development.

As it has been stated by the researchers (R. Ardovska, O. Pavlenko, L. Palamar, I. Sekret) teacher of ESP face a lot of challenges in the process of professionally-oriented communicative competency formation. One of them is closely related to the insufficient language proficiency of enrollees that results from the lack of adequate language training in school [4, 173]. So, one of the most complicated organizational issues a Maritime English (or any EPS) teacher faces in the classroom is the fact that an academic group is comprised of different-leveled students. As a result a first-year student with a much lower English level loses the motivation to improve his language skills as he is forced to work together in a pair or in a group with student(s) who show better results, understand and master the material faster and thus may express annoyance at his/her slower performance. The collaboration (which is crucial element in communicative language training) is at risk in such groups as the low-level students do not feel that they belong to the group and high-level students may show zero tolerance to the poor language skills of their group-mates as they want to

move forward, to develop their own skills, to master new aspects of professional communication. The situation becomes quite challenging for a teacher as it is really hard to arrange teaching-learning support materials in such a way that all students in a group can receive the appropriate tasks according to their actual English proficiency level.

To overcome this organizational issue it is suggested to introduce into practice **group formation on the basis of the actual English language skills** the enrollees show during the initial testing conducted at the very first Maritime English lesson. Such principle of group formation will provide for the comfortable teaching-learning conditions for both students (they will not feel embarrassed, shy, non-confident mastering language skills at slow pace, step by step, making mistakes, etc.) and teachers (they will be able to concentrate on the same language input and monitor the progress of the whole group instead of running from student to student trying to provide each individual with appropriate portion of language to be mastered). In Kherson State Maritime Academy (KSMA) this pedagogical condition has been introduced into practice since 2015-2016 academic year and is still being implemented as it proved to result in the increase of academic performance and the quality of foreign language training. This conclusion was made on the basis of the academic performance results analyzed during the past 6 years. The data is given in Table 1.

Table 1

The dynamic change of the academic performance in Maritime English

Enrollment year	Initial test results	I academic year results	II academic year results	III academic year results	VI academic year results
2015	«5» - 4,1% «4» - 14,75% «3» - 12,29% «2» - 68,86%	«5» - 5,6% «4» - 19,8% «3» - 42,4% «2» - 32,2%	«5» - 7,72% «4» - 22,12% «3» - 58,76% «2» - 11,4%	«5» - 5,7% «4» - 28,4% «3» - 62,9% «2» - 3%	«5» - 9,9% «4» - 24,3% «3» - 65,8% «2» - 0%
2016	«5» - 2,8% «4» - 14,02% «3» - 12,15% «2» - 71,03%	«5» - 4,1% «4» - 27,07% «3» - 34,8% «2» - 34,03%	«5» - 8,77% «4» - 33,78% «3» - 42,9% «2» - 14,55%	«5» - 7,3% «4» - 20,03% «3» - 67,03% «2» - 5,64%	«5» - 8,4% «4» - 22,35% «3» - 69,15% «2» - 0,1%
2017	«5» - 8,97% «4» - 19,31% «3» - 13,1% «2» - 58,62%	«5» - 13,73% «4» - 21,1% «3» - 41,14% «2» - 24,03%	«5» - 14,19% «4» - 23,76% «3» - 49,2% «2» - 12,85%	«5» - 11,53% «4» - 34,8% «3» - 51,07% «2» - 2,6%	still in progress

The positive results are achieved due to the comfortable, friendly atmosphere in academic groups as all of the students are of the approximately the same language proficiency level and abilities to master new required skills. This creates the proper learning environment where students are welcome to challenge their skills with no fear of criticism, mocking and the like. They feel free to express their opinions, thoughts, ideas, as well as to learn from peers. It is much easier for the teacher to assign problem-based, challenging tasks, apply active learning strategies without a



risk of failure because of the level of difficulty (now it is possible to give the tasks which are neither too easy nor too difficult for the individual students in a group).

Though, the system of initial testing has been showing some failures lately. It is believed it is greatly connected to the ZNO and EVI introduction in Ukraine. Because school students need to take their entrance exams in the form of tests school teachers have been paying too much attention to this aspect of language training, practicing grammar, vocabulary and reading exercises throughout the period of exam preparation, teaching students how to choose the appropriate answer from those suggested in the answer sheet. Meanwhile the most important language skill – speaking – is, unfortunately, left unattended. So, we face a problem nowadays of many students showing quite good results at the initial testing and allocated to the high language level groups though with extremely poor abilities of using language for communication. Naturally, having appeared in the group with the students who can actually use foreign language for communication the ones with satisfactory test results but with no speaking skills developed have no chance to make any progress due to their initial inability to participate in discussion, role-plays, simulations and the like communicative tasks due to the immense lack of necessary skills. They fail to master the input language in time which leads to failure of course mastery.

So, now KSMA Maritime English teachers are working on a solution to a new challenge in the way of group arrangement and performance improvement.

Another organizational issue a Maritime English teacher may face in the course of education is that the professionally-oriented communicative competency formation inside the classroom is limited to the quazi-professional activities, i.e. the professionally-oriented communicative tasks are artificially created by teachers and do not always reflect the real-life situations which seafarers may find themselves in. So, there is sometimes kind of a gap between the academic process and the real professional activities on board ships. To enhance the efficiency of professionally-oriented foreign language training in the framework of continuous education of future seafarers, to provide a link between the academic and real-life professional activities, to ensure the compliance of language training with actual workplace requirements it is recommended to ***implement the dual form of education***. This organizational pedagogical condition can allow for higher professional education reformation in compliance with the employment marker requirements and enable the development of professionally significant competencies and the increase of the professional level of students by means of acquiring practical skills on board merchant ships carrying out professional duties in real-life mode in accordance with the assigned rank.

A dual education system is such organizational approach to the process of obtaining higher education which is characterized by the combination of the theoretical professional training in the educational establishment with the apprenticeship in a company (in our case, in a shipping company on board any

merchant ship) on the terms declared by the contract. It is argued that such close cooperation of workplace industry (providing practical training in realistic conditions onboard) and the educational establishments (providing necessary theoretical preparation and minimum basic skills and competencies provision) meets the interests of all parties involved: employers, students, academic staff and the state [5, 145]. One of the first countries which implemented a dual education system into practice was Germany in 1960ies. After that the approach was implemented by the educational establishments of Europe, Canada, China, etc. In Ukraine the first attempt to implement a dual education system were made in 2013 and nowadays this approach is regulated by legal documents approved by the Ministry of Science and Education of Ukraine [6; 7]. Unfortunately, the approach is still not so widely implemented though its effectiveness is guaranteed by the fact that the practical training is carrying out at the real workplace under the supervision of employers and thus it provides integration of classic academic education and real-life practical training at the workplace.

The peculiar feature of dual education implementation for future seafarers is the prolonged period of shipboard practice (from 5 to 11 months long) which is explained by the specific working conditions of the shipping industry. In KSMA the educational process is organized in such a way that students are provided with the possibility to obtain minimum required sea-going experience before they graduate to receive appropriate maritime documents. The first and second year cadets of KSMA have two shipboard practices from one to two months duration at the end of each academic year. The third and the fourth year cadets are provided with an opportunity of a longer practice – up to 6 months duration (the typical duration of a seafarer's contract in the position of a rating or a Junior Officer). For that purpose the whole fifth and seventh semesters are dedicated for the seagoing practice. Though, the KSMA management treats with respect and understanding the peculiar features of the shipping industry operation and the need of practical training and that is why the cadets are rendered the opportunities to complete their voyages according to the individual schedules even when the academic process is in progress if the employers send an official request. During the period of shipboard training the cadets carry out their professional duties in accordance with the contract as well as complete specific training tasks received in Academy from the teachers. The tasks are given either online individually through the Moodle learning platform or in Training Record Books (official documents approved by the Practice, Certification and Employment Department).

KSMA management has signed a number of cooperation agreements with national and international shipping and crewing companies (Marlow Navigation, Columbia Shipmanagement Ltd., V.Ships Crew, Tsakos Columbia Shipmanagement S.A., Mediterranean Shipping Company, etc.) which actually enable the implementation of the dual education approach. According to the agreements the management of the shipping and crewing companies requests a predetermined



number of seafarers to work on their ships. They have a right to participate in the process of decision making as for the content of education and syllabi formation as well as to select the best cadets for the employment. Due to the fact that the employers are greatly interested in the competency and qualification of their future employees, the shipping and crewing agencies ensure appropriate conditions for the improvement of the practical training on board vessels as well as in the Academy, i.e. they invest the money to buy the newest and the best training equipment, simulators; they motivate students by means of sponsoring their education fees or presenting new up-to-date gadgets and devices, pay adequate salary and cover completely all the expenses on their practical training; they also annually reward the best teachers with the bonuses to motivate the academic staff for constant improvement and development of their professional skills.

It is argued that the implementation of the dual education is crucial organizational aspect of professionally-oriented foreign language training as it enables the students to test their language skills in real-life situations in communication with multilingual crewmembers to make sure if their language skills comply with the international requirements of the employment market. Because students need to stay aboard 24/7 and communicate with the crew both on professional and social matters they receive a good chance to develop the socio-cultural component of the professionally-oriented communicative competency which implies the knowledge of cultural peculiarities, the ability of polite and tolerant communication with the representatives of different nationalities, races, religions [8]. Besides it is noticed that the practical training on board vessels provides for the development and improvement of the cognitive component of the professionally-oriented communicative competency (which includes professional knowledge, ideas, concepts, facts, etc.) as the trainees are given a chance to actually work with shipboard mooring/anchoring equipment, bridge devices and cargo gear and the like, take part in all shipboard operation (loading/unloading, ballasting/deballasting, watchkeeping, hold/tank cleaning, etc.) [9].

So, to summarize the way it is suggested to organize the dual education in Maritime institutions for future seafarers in the following way: students start their education (first and second year of education) in the Academy or Maritime College to obtain necessary amount of theoretical knowledge and develop basic skills of using some equipment (fire-fighting equipment, life-saving appliances, mooring equipment, etc.) by means of using simulators and training facilities. After the second year of education students are invited to the interviews to crewing and shipping companies and in case they meet all the requirements they are suggested certain position aboard ships in accompany. The company sends the official request to the Academy/College and students go to the voyages to continue their education on board in real-life professional conditions. Though, because the shipboard practice is a part of the

academic process, students onboard ships carry out their professional duties in accordance with the employment contract as well as work upon some tasks given by teachers and recorded in Training Record Books. When the contract is over and students come back to the Academy/college they present their practical projects and get appropriate marks for them.

To assess students' performance in the appropriate way, the teachers (especially teachers of Maritime English) should be well qualified and competent in the area of their professional subject. That is why it is argued that one more organizational issue which may be faced in the process of professionally-oriented language training in the teachers' qualification as all the language teachers usually graduate Philology Departments and are not trained in any specialized area of language use. So, after graduation language teachers are experts in methodological aspects of language teaching but, unfortunately, they have a little or no idea at all of any specialized terms, professional items of the future specialists they are going to work with. Thus, there is usually an urgent need for ESP teachers to master the basic concepts of specific workplace and to master the peculiarities of professionally-oriented language training as there are great differences in methodological approaches to general and professional English teaching.

To overcome this issue it is recommended to implement into practice of ESP (and namely Maritime English) teaching such organizational pedagogical condition as the ***continuing professional development policy implementation***. It will ensure the improvement of the teachers' professional competency, their readiness to teach specialized professional language in compliance with the work place requirements, the development of their methodological skills in accordance with the newest achievements and discoveries in the area.

At English Language departments of KSMA continuing professional development policy is implemented by the means of conducting Faculty development sessions and Expert classes at the regular basis.

Faculty development sessions (FDS) are conducted by the Maritime English teachers and concern important methodological issues aimed at improving pedagogical mastery of teachers. At the end of each academic year the number of FDSs for the next year is preplanned, the topics are determined, teachers responsible for the conduct of the FDSs are assigned. All faculty teachers have a chance to suggest the topic for FDS based on the methodological items which seem interesting or which they have problems with and require additional explanation or recommendations on their implementation into teaching practice. Teachers responsible for the conduct of the FDS are given ample time for the preparation: they thoroughly study the issue to be discussed in different sources, consult with other teachers and specialists and prepare materials for the sessions. Those responsible for FDSs conduct are free to choose the way of how to organize the session in



accordance with its aim and objectives; they are not limited in the number and types of tasks or activities to use; they prepare different support materials which can be used by other teachers in their teaching practice (e.g. booklets, samples of lesson plans for different stages of education, samples of tasks for different topics, video materials, presentations, lists of useful links, etc.). The most efficient forms of FDS organization there proved to be interactive seminars with discussions, group and pair work, round tables, role-playing games and the like. The pedagogical mastery of Maritime English teachers during FDSs is done by means of implementing the methods of problem-based and task-based activities, group work and project-based technologies as they provide for the free discussions, experience sharing, non-formal education in the course of guided interaction.

Another important aspect of Maritime English teaching is the knowledge of professional maritime terminology and general understanding of professional aspects of seafarers' job (rules of navigation, rules of safe loading/unloading, requirements to cargo stowage and securing, working principles of different shipboard equipment and devices and the way how to use them, safety aspects and lots of other things). Of course, when preparing for a lesson a Maritime English teacher can learn the necessary information himself/herself using different sources but it is not always efficient and productive way of obtaining professional knowledge and comprehension. That is why another useful activity has been introduced into practice at KSMA English Language departments – expert classes. The expert classes are conducted by seagoing specialists who also teach professional subjects in academy. During the expert classes seagoing specialists explain in a simple and easy to understand manner certain aspects of maritime industry specialists' activities. Expert classes ensure the implementation of cross-curricular coordination and constant cooperation of Maritime English and vocational subject teachers which allows for the 'plunging' of ME teachers into professional aspects of their students' future workplace and thus becoming experts in both teaching methodology and professional area. Such expert classes are organized in specially equipped classrooms and training facilities (mooring stations, full mission navigation bridge simulator, survival complex and the like) to provide a better understanding and comprehension of what is learnt as well as to provide a possibility to practically use some of the devices or prices of equipment in real-life mode.

Conclusions. It is argued that the organizational issues of Maritime English teaching can hinder the efficiency of professionally-oriented foreign language training of future seafarers. Though, it has been proved that the practical implementation of the suggested organizational pedagogical conditions into the teaching-learning process can mitigate the problems and provide for the improvement of students' language skills and abilities as well as for the successful professionally-oriented foreign language training objective achievement. But, at the same time, it is

strongly recommended to implement the organizational aspects of Maritime English teaching into practice together with the adequate provision of teaching-learning support materials and the appropriate procedure of lesson planning and conduct in compliance with the stage of education. The further perspective of the research is to substantiate the specific aspects and peculiar features of the process of the lesson conduct at different stages of professional maritime training in the framework of continuous education and to provide some guidelines on their practical implementation.

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