

# **Communicative method in competency-based teaching of Maritime Engineering English**

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We must confess that sometimes getting of educational certificates by our graduates – future seafarers – doesn't guarantee availability of correspondent to their occupation professional skills. These skills are of utmost importance to ensure safe running of the ship equipment and survival at sea. Otherwise, lack of critical competencies leads to unintentional carelessness and even criminal negligence on the working place and the consequences may range from ridiculous to striking.

To enhance sufficient professional training of future seafarers in 2013 in KSMA was provided besides communicative learning of English also a competency-based approach.

So the intent of my report (paper) is to encourage the use of well proven communicative method of teaching maritime English in a competency-based learning environment. This hopefully will give cadets the chance to develop and form not only communicative skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing in professional sphere but also will facilitate the formation of important professional skills by means of English language.

Considering competency-based learning as a process of learning, developing and forming of concrete skills unlike to abstract learning, it's necessary to underline its extremely fine grained nature. It means learners move gradually from one mastered competence to the next in order to gain a larger learning goal. And to each competence corresponds to a certain necessary set of individual skills, which together constitute a common learning outcome.

For example, people learning to drive manual transmission, might first have to demonstrate their mastery of such competences, as rules of the road, safety, defensive driving, parallel parking. Based on these competences, manual transmission competence will be focused on the following independent skills: using the clutch, brake with right foot, shifting up and down, over-arching (from full stop to a slow roll, followed by sudden stops, shifting up and down). Besides, the learner would repeat each action a few times until they can demonstrate their mastery. It is important to understand that this learning methodology is common in many skills-based fields and learning environments.

Attentive viewing of STCW Code (1995) and STCW Manila amendments (2010) reveals the same graduated manner of seafarers Maritime Engineers competency-based training for different ranks beginning from ratings and ending with the chief engineer of a ship. First of all,

professional training of marine engineering personnel is accomplished on three levels: the 1<sup>st</sup> is the support level (ratings, wipers, oilers, fitters, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> class motormen, forming part of engineering watch); the 2<sup>nd</sup> operational level (officers in charge of an engineering watch in a manned or periodically unmanned engine room) and the 3<sup>rd</sup> management level (chief engineers and 2<sup>nd</sup> engineers on ships with main propulsion machinery of 3000kw propulsion power or more). Gaining of each professional level is ensured by learners in course of gradual mastering of certain number of competences: 13 – on the support level; 17 – on the operational level; 14 – on the management level. Besides, mastering of each competence must be confirmed by the availability of formed learning outcome in form of correspondent individual skills. Further this student may be permitted to proceed with higher learning and still be missing some skills that are crucial to that higher level.

Up to STCW in process of Maritime Engineering English learning succession of competences on the highest management level shows that mastery of the last competence – use of leadership and managerial skills – becomes possible as the result of gaining of communicative competences sufficient for doing the following actions: 1 /managing the operation of propulsion plant machinery; 2/ operations of planning and scheduling; 3/ assessment and maintaining safety of propulsion plant and auxiliary machinery; 4/ managing fuel lubrication and ballast operations; 5/ managing operation and troubleshooting of electrical and electronic control equipment; 6/ managing safe and effective maintenance and repair procedures; 7/ detection and identification the causes of machinery malfunctions and faults correction; 8/ management of measures to ensure safety of life at sea, security, marine environment protection; 9/ maintaining life-saving, fire-fighting and other safety systems. And certainly this last competence of “leadership and managerial skills” has its own learning outcome in the form of individual communicative skills set, among which are the following: 1) planning and coordination; 2) personal assignment; 3) time and resource management; 4) prioritization; 5) effective communication; 6) situation and risk assessment; 7) assertiveness and leadership; 8) ability to select course of actions [3].

Accordingly to STCW Code all skills of marine engineers independently on their rank must be accomplished by means of the working language of mixed crews – English language. The IMO acknowledged communicative method the only suitable for a competency-based teaching of English language in 2000 already. In that year there was published and launched into learning the International Model Course 3.17 for seafarers which is based on principals of communicative method.

There are some explanations why this very method was acknowledged as well for Maritime Engineering English language learning.

There is a common for some practicing teachers (S.Tomniac [2011], P. Trenkner [2010], A.Gabrielli [2012]) consideration that “Engineering Maritime English is a symbiosis between language, communication and alligator spanner wrench” [1, 2]. This subject demands from learner accumulation and elaboration a plenty of linguistic, communication and technical knowledge.

On a certain stage it becomes impossible to accumulate details without their rearrangement; a learner will be unable to move further if does not deny the previous knowledge model in favor of its new structure and content. If we introduce new pieces of learning information as different shapes we will understand that only their displacement makes process of information accumulation progressive and able to develop.

If we use traditional learning with just thoughtless plain reading of professionally oriented texts and doing homogeneous exercises for linguistic competence formation, this method activates mostly the left half of learners’ brain, which is logical, verbal, linear, vertically analyzing, non-emotional and is occupied with details, and is responsible for knowledge deepening, without putting these details into order. But if we use communicative method with its motley interactive teaching techniques, the right side of the learners’ brain considerably activates during horizontal processing of information and putting all accumulated details in emotionally-spatial order with further synthesizing them in one big picture. Using interaction as both the means and the goal of study, this method is focused on communicative competence with learning outcome in form of individual communicative skills.

Thus we see that communicative method is greatly contributing to maintain self-extending system of Maritime Engineering English learners’ linguistic and technical knowledge, puts the most number of learning information details into spatial order, facilitates development of communicative skills of learners and graduated formation of Maritime Engineering professional competences.

## **LITERATURE:**

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