Maritime English instruction – ensuring instructors' competence

Clive Cole*, Boris Pritchard & Peter Trenkner*****
World Maritime University (Sweden)*, University of Rijeka (Croatia)** & Wismar University (Germany)***
clive.cole@wmu.se, bopri@pfri.hr & trenkner@sf.hs-wismar.de

Abstract

More than ninety percent of global trade is carried by sea. As a result it "has fostered an interdependency and inter-connectivity between peoples who would previously have considered themselves completely unconnected" (Mitropoulos, 2005). For the maritime industry which facilitates this activity, it is essential that a common working language, namely English, is competently used to safeguard the ship, its crew and the environment in which it sails. This presupposes that the graduates of maritime academies are well prepared and that their mentors are qualified to perform the task required by international regulations. This paper attempts to summarise a 2-year research project, funded by the International Association of Maritime Universities and completed by the authors in 2006, entitled "Profiling the Maritime English Instructor" (PROFS). It categorizes and describes the various types of Maritime English instructors presently employed at higher Maritime Education and Training institutions worldwide, defines the requirements regarding their professional qualifications in the areas of applied linguistics, methodology and the minimum maritime background knowledge demanded by the relevant international legislation, and thus provides a guideline for management and prospective instructors.

Key words: Maritime English (instructors), communicative competence, profiling, twinning, typology.

Resumen

La formación en inglés marítimo: garantizando la aptitud de los docentes

El transporte marítimo protagoniza más del 90% del comercio mundial y, en consecuencia, ha servido de nexo de unión entre pueblos que, de otro modo, se encontrarían completamente desconectados (Mitropoulos, 2005). Para el sector

marítimo, gracias al cual se puede desarrollar esta actividad, resulta fundamental utilizar de forma competente una lengua de trabajo común, como es la lengua inglesa, para salvaguardar el buque, su tripulación y el medio marino. Esta realidad parte del supuesto de que los estudiantes graduados en los distintos centros en los que se imparten carreras relacionadas con la marina civil finalicen sus estudios con una preparación adecuada y, además, que la cualificación del personal docente satisfaga los requisitos impuestos por la normativa internacional. El presente artículo tiene por objeto mostrar los resultados obtenidos tras la realización de un proyecto de investigación bianual concluido en 2006, titulado "Profiling the Maritime English Instructor" (PROFS) y financiado por la Asociación Internacional de Universidades Marítimas (IAMU). En primer lugar se presenta una clasificación descriptiva de los distintos tipos de docentes de inglés marítimo que en la actualidad están ejerciendo su labor en distintos organismos de educación superior por todo el mundo. A continuación se definen las prescripciones relativas a la cualificación profesional dentro de la lingüística aplicada, la metodología docente y el conocimiento mínimo sobre los fundamentos marítimos que se exigen en virtud de la legislación internacional pertinente. Por último se ofrecen unas directrices relativas a la gestión de la docencia y destinadas a futuros docentes de inglés marítimo.

Palabras clave: inglés marítimo (docentes), competencia comunicativa, perfiles, trabajo en equipo, tipología.

1. Introduction

This paper summarises the findings of recent research into Maritime English (ME) instruction carried out under the project "Profiling the Maritime English Instructor" (PROFS) funded by the International Association of Maritime Universities (IAMU). PROFS sets out to investigate the state of art of ME (i.e., its subject-matter and instruction) and the typology of ME instructors throughout the world. Its main aims were two-fold:

1. To create generally accepted guidelines/ recommendations for Maritime Education and Training institution management on how to qualify teachers of general English and other persons of substandard maritime-technical qualifications currently teaching English to navigational/ marine engineering university students to become lecturers in Maritime English, meeting at least the requirements of the relevant legislation.
2. To provide prospective candidates to the Maritime English teaching profession with an idea of what will be expected from them (both

> in terms of the necessary maritime background knowledge and the appropriate methodological qualification) when teaching navigational/ marine engineering students.

Since, within the general framework of the communicative approach to language teaching (CLT) and English for Special Purposes (ESP), many practitioners believe content-based instruction (CBI) to be particularly well suited for ME, the Project also investigated the necessary maritime background knowledge required of the contemporary ME teacher as well as the further qualification measures available and desirable for them to fulfil the basic requirements of the International Maritime Organization's International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW95) and beyond.[1] These requirements include the role played by ME in ensuring safer ships, protecting the marine environment and enhancing the efficiency of global business operations where ships and the sea are crucial elements.

One particular objective of PROFS was to study and propose how the world's leading maritime organisations and affiliations could best accommodate the ME competence demands of STCW95 on the one hand and, on the other, the more demanding requirements of the second stage ("Extension" STCW95 and above) and the third stage ("Enrichment" i.e., BSc or Diploma in Science courses of study in maritime transport), of the widely accepted 4E typology of Maritime Education and Training (MET) systems; namely, "Essentials, Enrichment, Extension, and Elevation," as described in the METNET Project, (Zade et al., 2000) and developed in the GLOMET Project (Zade, 2005). Further, the authors have observed that MET institutions, still often reluctant to recognise ME on an equal footing to Navigation or Marine Engineering, or to dedicate more instruction hours in already tight programmes, are nonetheless keen to find more effective instruction strategies. Often, however, this is attempted by paying little or no attention to the amorphous global body of ME instructors at their disposal. Thus, considering quality assurance as the foremost objective, the project aimed at heightening the awareness of these authorities and organisations to the importance and role of ME in meeting the above requirements. In doing so the authors adopted Trenkner's widely used definition:

> Maritime English is the entirety of all those means of the English language which, being used as a device for communication within the international maritime community, contribute to the safety of navigation and the facilitation of the seaborne trade (Trenkner, 2000: 7).

This was the general framework for establishing the methodology of research that included both deductive and inductive reasoning processes. The deductive element consisted primarily of academic desktop research based on the researchers' own experience in combination with previous research, whereas the inductive element involved the evaluation of the response to a specially designed questionnaire[2], the evaluation of round-table discussions, personal interviews, and brainstorming sessions with international MET students and graduates as well as with representatives of the maritime industry. The International Maritime English Conference (IMEC) and its workshops, IAMU gatherings, as well as IMO's Maritime English Instructors Training Courses were optimal places both for collecting relevant information and testing the results of the research.

The key questions to be answered by the input from the respondents were:

- What types of ME instructors are currently employed at MET institutions and what is the usefulness and limitations of each type?
- What are the linguistic and methodological requirements of a "qualified" ME instructor and how can these requirements be met?
- What is the minimum maritime background knowledge required and how can this be best acquired?
- What further qualification measures for ME instructors in the maritime field and in language teaching/acquisition methodology can be identified?
- Which professional organisations or affiliations would best assist MET institutions and ME instructors to meet the requirements of STCW95 and beyond?

As a result, these five questions paralleled the themes of each of the IAMU approved work packages (WP):

WPIntro: Introduction to the project, including a description of the methodology employed.

WP1: Categorising the profiles of the various types of currently employed ME instructors, clarifying the usefulness and limitations of each.

WP2: Identifying the linguistic (WP2a) and methodical (WP2b)

requirements of a qualified ME instructor and the ways of meeting them.

WP3: Identifying the horizontal/vertical maritime background knowledge (scope/depth) to be expected of a ME instructor.

WP4: Identifying adequate, appropriate and practicable further qualification measures for ME instructors in the maritime field, in language teaching/acquisition methodology and course development.

WP5: Proposing an appropriate affiliation of the ME teaching staff within the structures of MET institutions in order to guarantee their involvement in the overall MET conception of the latter.

WP6: Executive summary.

The following is a summary of the most important findings and issues arising.

2. Identifying types of Maritime English instructor

The authors attempted to answer two fundamental questions concerning the categorisation of ME instructors:

1. What types of ME instructors are currently employed at MET institutions?, and
2. What is the usefulness and limitations of each type?

In considering these two questions, the term "typology" was understood as a system or method of classifying things or people as a particular type. Naturally, setting up and selecting categories to organize and analyze data can be fraught with difficulties and is often highly contentious. In this case, however, the typology presented below has been well received on those occasions when it has been proposed by the authors for discussion. Thus, it may be concluded that in MET institutions worldwide the following types of Maritime English instructors are found.

2.1. Career specialists

These persons are recognised as they

- are Graduates/Qualified Teachers,
- have become "marinated" – have seafaring credibility,
- have a reasonable institutional standing,
- may (or may not) be "qualified" to teach ME.

Such specialists are generally employed to teach ME to future seafarers and have thus been immersed into the world of specialised language teaching, in this case ME as a subset of ESP. They are normally willing to "marinate" themselves; a time consuming task estimated to take a general English language teacher at least two years to acquire the essential elements (Cole et al., 2005).

Career specialists enjoy a comparatively good standing in the workplace since consultation, and even co-operation with technical subject colleagues, is usually the rule rather than the exception. However, they are often looked upon as teachers of second-hand knowledge by both the lecturers in maritime-technical subjects and by the management, with the result that rank and the subsequent rewards can vary negatively.

Pressing general English teachers to take on ME teaching responsibilities has to be done with care, as not all language instructors are motivated to become fully engaged in this field. How then to motivate them? This may be optimised if teachers are sent aboard active merchant vessels or training vessels for at least half a year or for shorter periods if repeated at certain intervals.[3]

It is not at all necessary for ME instructors to hold a certificate of competence[4] as deck or engineer officers although the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System - General Operator Certificate could be a reasonable merit. A number of maritime academies/universities run training vessels where excellent facilities to acquire the necessary maritime background knowledge exist. Furthermore, shipping companies with a direct connection to MET institutions and/or an interest in quality training are willing to accept maritime laypersons on board their vessels for the cost of their nutrition, or under an agreement that the crew, in return, receive "free" on-the-job English language training. This experience, usually perceived by

the participants as highly motivating, not only allows the future specialist to soak up all kinds of maritime information from the marine environment at the corresponding maritime-technical faculties of their institutions, but also usually results in sufficient knowledge and hands-on experience being gained for sound and effective ME teaching to be practised. Indeed, confronted by a class of future seafarers an effective way of gaining respect is to demonstrate an awareness of life onboard, i.e., "seafaring credibility".

There are noteworthy procedures where general English teachers who wish to become qualified ME instructors are able to do so but these are the exception rather than the rule. In fact, the authors have observed reluctance on the part of most MET institutions to promote activities to "marinate" them.[5] On raising this issue with institutional managers the authors found that cost, time and the frequent turnover of personnel in this niche area are given as reasons.

Career Specialist ME instructors may be found in ones and twos at MET institutions but never in the sort of numbers that would be desirable, or in fact required under STCW95. Where they do exist it is possible to find them employed as regular members of the faculty, even at the professorial level. They are well respected and are on professional and contractual terms regarded equal to their colleagues in the maritime/ technical fields. However, today's significant shortfall of career specialists remains. If the majority of institutions were to promote and encourage ME qualifications the problem would be solved and this paper made redundant. However, reality looks quite different and begs the question why this is the case.

2.2. English language and literature graduates

These persons are recognised as they

- are lovers of English,
- are not necessarily interested in applied linguistics,
- prefer to teach general English,
- are often asked to teach ME but fail to meet the STCW standards.

This category of "Maritime" English instructors consists mostly of qualified teachers holding a university degree in English language and literature. They are enthusiastic lovers of the beauty of the English language and its literature but less enthusiastic towards applied linguistics, especially ESP and

the variety called Maritime English, as they are not trained nor motivated for the task. They are satisfied with teaching general English and often play third fiddle at their individual schools. However, as English language instruction is an STCW95 subject and not dispensable in an accredited curriculum, the managements of many MET institutions often turn a blind eye to what they actually teach in their classes in the knowledge that better qualified staff are not at their disposal. On occasion individuals who enter ME through the language and literature door realise the potential of the subject and gain respect and promotion through developing and upgrading their teaching and research skills.

2.3. Former seafarers

These persons are recognised as they

- are technical experts but
  - not necessarily skilled at English,
  - not necessarily skilled at teaching,
  - often over-challenge their students,
- could deliver technical subjects in English.

Former seafarers are perceived by many managers as an attractive solution, but in reality such persons are not widely available or willing to work at substantially reduced rates of pay, where they are unlikely to receive remuneration in line with the competitive, tax free salaries they were used to as international seafaring officers. Further, as a result of their research the authors seriously question the suitability of ex shipmasters, deck, engineer or radio officers, who are thought to have, or claim to have, a good command of the English language, replacing trained (Maritime) English instructors. Naturally those who have successfully completed an English language degree course and graduated with a teaching qualification in ESP could be perfect employees. However, such persons are rarely encountered; a situation that is likely to remain until the shipping industry and its regulators and educators undertake a suitable initiative.

The authors have observed many different "Maritime English" classes in progress given by ex-seafarers and based on these experiences conclude that:

1. In most cases the teacher's command of English, i.e., pronunciation, grammar, fluency, intelligibility, etc., ranked from just tolerable to very poor.
2. In most cases the students were over-challenged, i.e., they either hardly understood the language used or the language applied was so sophisticated that they failed to grasp the subject matter.
3. In most cases if ME teaching or language teaching in general was taking place it was in a haphazard manner, basic pedagogical skills being noticeable in their absence.
4. In most cases there was no adherence to a curriculum where students could follow their progress, there being no revision, briefing or preparation at the beginning of the class and no follow-up or debriefing.

2.4. Native English speaking persons

These persons ("backpackers/nomads", housewives, spouses, retirees, etc.) are recognised as they

- are often employed to motivate students to listen/speak in English but
  - – not necessarily skilled at English,
  - – not necessarily skilled at teaching,
  - – rarely knowledgeable in maritime matters,
- are usually employed on short-term contracts.

"Native" English-speaking persons[6] are usually temporarily hired[7] to help solve the problem of motivating students to listen and speak in English. The authors find this an honourable and worthwhile aim but found that in a significant number of cases individuals are expected to satisfy greater demands, even those of STCW95. When this occurs managers are in serious breach of the legislation, since such persons seldom have the necessary teaching skills or maritime knowledge, let alone the required qualifications.

Further, the widespread notion that a good English speaker must also be a good English teacher is simply misleading and can even be detrimental to the students. Advocates of this standpoint completely neglect that even native English speakers need to qualify to become professional English language

teachers. Qualifications and the means to attain them, paramount to STCW95, underpin the drive for improved, sustainable quality within the shipping industry.

Generally these persons are left to their own devices to work outside the main curriculum and have little or no contact with the nautical and engineering faculties. Nonetheless, most of the native English speaking persons at MET institutions interviewed by the authors have been willing to give their classes a maritime flavour but lack the know-how and assistance. This could be successfully achieved by establishing a "buddy" system where experienced ME instructors are appointed to introduce the native English speaking "teachers" to this special language and to integrate their class activities within the core programme. More generally speaking, the role of such "teachers", and the benefits to be gained, have clearly to be defined within the context of the General and ME curricula in order to draw optimum profit from their work.

2.5. A special group

A current trend, which is on the increase at MET institutions in non-native English speaking countries worldwide, is the delivery of technical subjects in English.[8] This may be considered as an emerging fifth category, consisting namely of those instructors who are encouraged or ordered to use English (as a foreign language) when teaching their technical subjects. The authors hesitate to call these true ME instructors since they are seldom trained nor qualified to teach the subject, but they are increasingly seen by management as a/the source of supplying students with the perceived ME dosage required. It is, therefore, imperative to point out that MET institutions are obliged in STCW95, to meet the requirement in Section A-1/6(3) the relevant part of which reads: "All instructors (…) are appropriately qualified for the particular types and levels of training (…) of seafarers either on board or ashore".

The authors recognise that this approach could play a supporting role but have yet to see an institution providing a considered list of the intended language learning outcomes, suggesting that standards have yet to be established. They are also concerned that institutional managers will be tempted, in financially stretched situations, to do away with the ME instructor altogether, hoping that the English competence of the remaining technical teaching staff will be sufficient compensation.

The advice for institutional managers to consider is that:

1. This specific form of teaching is regarded as one element in contributing to trade-related ME teaching which is not suited to fully or even partly replace the teaching of "proper" ME linguistics/ communication.
2. The instructor has a command of English which is suitable for the task.
3. The instructor has received basic training in communication strategies.
4. The students are neither over-stretched by the language used nor by the subject content.
5. Each technical class is prepared in such a way that a co-operating ME instructor is able to support it before and/or after (so-called "twinning").

Since a significant body of trained and qualified ME instructors is not likely to exist overnight or in the foreseeable future, "twinning" is the best practical way to put ME instructors and those who teach technical subjects, in one and the same boat. This, the authors wish to ascertain, will be to the benefit of all graduates and to the industry while raising the reputation of ME instructors and the essential as well as responsible task they are being asked to perform. Further, it will also promote the ME proficiency of the technical subject teachers in the longer term (Cole et al., 2002).

2.6. Categorising Maritime English instructors – final considerations

It is important to emphasise that each of the identified categories can play a role in upgrading the level of English at every MET institution; indeed globally there are committed instructors striving to do their best often with large classes, limited resources and little guidance. The problem that tends to occur, however, is the mismatching of the type of instructor with the stated aims, objectives and learning outcomes of the course(s). Naturally, matching one with the other is the responsibility of the management and it is imperative here that managers are fully aware that native speakers, former seafarers and English language experts and even on occasion career specialists, will not necessarily fulfil their expectations and satisfy the

demands of the profession, the requirements of the law, and, indeed, the individual students and hard-pressed end-users.

While clustering maritime instructors into types may not reflect the situation of each and every individual, these categories do accurately reflect the current global situation in broad terms. Such a typology also facilitates the reasoning behind the authors' deliberations that follow.

3. Linguistic and pedagogical aspects of Maritime English instruction

Having identified the types of ME instructors currently employed at MET institutions and discussed the usefulness and limitations of each, the authors assessed what requirements on linguistic and pedagogical knowledge and skills were necessary in order to qualify teachers of general English to become instructors in Maritime English, meeting at least the requirements of STCW95 and other relevant legal instruments.

To be able to do this it is fundamental to ascertain what linguistic and methodological knowledge and skills are required for the contemporary ME instructor to successfully perform his/her job. PROFS analyses these in work package 2 and evaluates their impact on the profile of future instructors in order to meet the challenges of change in the function of ME in shipping (predominantly marked by safety of navigation), as well as the role to be played by ME in the education and training of communicatively competent seafarers at all levels of employment as required by law.

The authors thus propose that the linguistic and methodological knowledge and competence in (Maritime) English required of ME instructors essentially depends upon the following items:

1. The levels of knowledge and competence in the English language as laid down in STCW95 for the operational, management and support levels, and other IMO conventions or documents.
2. The levels of knowledge and competence required for teachers in post-secondary and tertiary education (maritime academies, colleges, universities) in their individual countries and those requirements set out by such international associations as IAMU, IMLA-IMEC, etc.

3. The requirements of other relevant international organisations.
4. The requirements of a potential employer or end-user (MET institutions, ship-owners, crewing agencies, in-house requirements of employers, especially concerning ME for occupational purposes).
5. Awareness of the nature and linguistic features of ME.
6. Awareness of modern developments in English for General Purposes (EGP) and ESP and the ability to evaluate and apply those methodologies most suitable for ME instruction.
7. Awareness of and ability to evaluate and apply the results of ME research.

Such requirements naturally need to be adjusted to the particular language learning level determined through a needs analysis and described in the aims, objectives and expected learning outcomes prepared before the ME instructor engages in a ME course of instruction. Of equal relevance is the ME instructor's awareness of the requirements of ME knowledge, skills and competence as set out in STCW95 for the operational, management and support levels.

3.1. Some linguistically-related issues in Maritime English instruction

ME shares most of the features of other types of ESP (especially technical and legal English) such as monoreferentiality and precision of the lexis on the one hand and lexical ambiguity on the other (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Gotti, 2005). For example, "beam" is a specific term in ship design (a girder carrying the deck), denoting a ship's width or breadth ("beam of 23.5 m"), and is used in referring to orientation around the ship ("on the port beam"), etc. Based on the study of the literature on ME (Strevens & Johnson, 1983; Weeks et al., 1988; Trenkner, 1997; Pritchard & Kalogjera, 2000), previous projects on ME (MARCOM, SEASPEAK), and numerous papers on the nature of ME delivered at International Maritime English Conferences (IMECs), PROFS gives a full account of the linguistic nature and features of ME. Knowledge of these, summarised below, is an essential requirement for ME instruction to be successful.

Linguistically speaking, Maritime English represents a specific type of ESP differing only from other types of ESP in (a) the frequency of occurrence

of certain linguistic forms and their uses and (b) the specific choice of some (i.e., lexical, grammatical or pragmatic) features of EGP. It is a variety of the English language, not a separate language, chosen and adopted by the general maritime community and frequently expressly recommended for use by seafarers, to achieve effective communication in everyday life on board, and in ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore communication (Pritchard & Kalogjera, 2000). In contrast to other types of ESP (i.e., English for scientific purposes or legal English) and as far as language function and use is concerned, ME involves a combination of distinctive registers according to field or subject-matter, hence its register complexity (nautical, technical, communications, legal and commercial) and medium (especially the language of international maritime communications).

For the purpose of PROFS the term Maritime English is primarily a conventional label for a subset of the realisations of the English language:

- Appropriate to a specific maritime setting or background (i.e., in the act of navigation, resolving a close-quarters situation, enquiring about berthing accommodation, a cargo handling operation, an act of reading an operational or maintenance manual for the auxiliary engine).
- Used in a determined context of situation (i.e., on board at sea or in port, on shore in the docks or at a Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) centre, and within maritime administration).
- Involving the participants from a specific shipboard or port speech community often marked by specific jargon (i.e., boatswain's talk and docker's jargon).
- Occurring in maritime-related speech events influenced by a number of factors affecting (successful) communication, (i.e., in sending and receiving VHF messages, in spoken interaction in the wheelhouse).
- Operating and shaped under specific sociolinguistic circumstances (i.e., specific speaker-hearer relationships, often developing under various degrees of stress and panic).

The future ME instructor is required to acquire knowledge of the linguistic features of the English language appropriate to maritime discourse/text and communication as exemplified below. These mainly include typical or frequently used technical lexis and certain grammatical structures (i.e., for

expressing speech acts in VHF communications or passive voice). A brief account of the features given below is the result of a restricted corpus study of sample texts encompassing the reports of the Maritime Accident Reporting Scheme:[9]

- A very limited number of maritime-only lexical items, i.e., monoreferential words (Gotti, 2005) that can stand alone outside context while always (and only) referring to maritime subject-matter (Gustafsson, 2000; Pritchard, 2006). Such words are mainly restricted to ship construction, ship handling, seamanship and navigation (i.e., *heave to*, *haul in*, *bulwark*, *garboard strake*, *halyard*, *wharf*, *dead reckoning*, and such archaisms as *abeam*, *aloft*, *ashore*, *athwartships*, *bosun*, *hard-a-starboard*) within the technical vocabulary in the linguistic competence of a modern seafarer. Their incidence is naturally much higher in the nautical register than in other registers of ME.
- Register and situation-dependent specialisation of lexical meaning of general English vocabulary (i.e., semantic broadening or narrowing, specific lexical range of the words of general vocabulary, ellipsis, metonymy and technical metaphor); for instance, *cable* (=anchor chain; thick rope; distance measure); elliptic adjectival nouns: *low/high water/pressure area*, *head*, *eye*.
- High incidence of complex compounds, especially those of the type noun+noun (often including 2-4 pre-modifying nouns), particularly in the technical register.
- As in any type of ESP, collocations (especially those of the verb+object noun type) are one of the most productive ways of enriching vocabulary and terminology in modern ME (*slacken/let go/heave on/haul in a line*). Mastery of these is of utmost importance to a ME instructor.
- A high degree of recurrence and fairly predictable frequency and distribution of the vocabulary, formulaic expressions, and some grammatical structures.

In addition, to a certain extent ME linguistically influences the conceptual framework of non-English-speaking maritime communities, which is evidenced everyday in the process of constant code-switching and linguistic borrowing involving English as the donor language on all levels. Therefore, English has today become an important learning and teaching tool for

acquiring knowledge in maritime science and technology. The results of PROFS corroborate this important feature of modern ME, which also has significant repercussions on its instruction. Such a role of ME calls for the introduction of "twinning" in the language learning process, i.e., team teaching involving the English language teacher and the subject-teacher (Cole et al., 2002).

Lastly, while it should be noted that human language is not the only system of communication used at sea (it is frequently combined with other non-verbal and semiotic systems, like sign language and paralinguistic elements such as warning and indication signs on deck or in the engine room, buoy marks, sound signals) it is, in its spoken and written form, nevertheless the most efficient and reliable means of inter-ship, ship-to-shore, or on-board communication. As for English, it also represents the principal means of understanding among the participants who constitute a specific multi-lingual, multi-national and multi-cultural sea- and ship-bound speech community. In fact, communication in English most typically takes place among those who are predominantly non-native speakers of English, i.e., speakers of English as a foreign language, in ports, straits, fairways, waterways, and along international shipping routes, making it the modern lingua franca of the sea. However, this alone does not ensure failsafe and successful communication. Therefore, after the pioneering role of the Seaspeak Project (Strevens & Weeks, 1985), in 2001 the International Maritime Organization adopted a set of phrases recommended, and partly made mandatory, for use in international maritime exchanges to ensure minimum norms of efficient communication for the purpose of safety of navigation and protection of the marine environment (Trenkner, 1997 & 2000). It is therefore essential that the ME instructor masters the discourse and other linguistic features of marine radio communications and also becomes aware of the existing dichotomy jeopardising safety of navigation: standard versus real spoken communications at sea.

3.2. Pedagogical requirements on a qualified Maritime English instructor

The pedagogical requirements on the ME instructor are similar to those engaged in teaching other types of ESP, or even EGP (Cole & Trenkner, 2004). Based on previous research, especially that of MARCOM (the EU project on the impact of multicultural and multilingual crews on maritime communication), the analysis of the PROFS questionnaires and the feedback

from peer-instructors at round-table discussions, the authors identified some of the most important issues concerning the methodology of ME instruction. These include:

- the communicative approach to learning and teaching ME;
- the role of content-based learning;
- competence-based learning as the basic IMO requirement;
- the typology of ME and ESP;
- the ME instructor as user, adaptor and developer of ME teaching resources (textbooks/course books and related materials);
- modern ME teaching resources and computer-assisted language learning tools (reviewed in depth by Pritchard, 2004);
- the ME instructor as curriculum developer and course designer – conducting needs analyses;
- issues of Assessment and Evaluation (STCW95 requirements on assessment, EU CEF standards, programme credits, etc).

As a general rule, the methodological requirements placed on the ME teacher are, on the whole, more or less in conformity with the approaches, principles and methods of teaching EGP and other types of ESP. The methodology of ME therefore draws on the principles and approaches valid for EGP and ESP, especially for students for whom English is a foreign language. The specific features of ME instruction mainly result from conducting a needs analysis for a course and the cognitive processes required in the acquisition of knowledge and skills in the maritime science/sector.

The methodological requirements must be in conformity with the level of learning and purpose of the MET programme (overall curriculum) of which ME is a constituent part. Thus, the methodological requirements of the ME instructor will largely depend on whether an MET programme is a part of:

(a) a degree course of studies upon the completion of which an academic degree (i.e., BSc) or an associate or higher national diploma is conferred, or

(b) an occupational/vocational course (mainly short-term) enabling the trainee to perform specific and restricted functions within the maritime industry.

Clearly the default requirements of ME instruction refer to acquiring a degree in Maritime Transport (Navigation, Marine Engineering, Management and Logistics of Maritime Transport, etc.). The academic degree (BSc), i.e., university education and further education courses, is assumed to comply with the requirements of STCW95, the International Safety Management Code, and other related IMO documents on English knowledge and competence for the management and operational levels, as shown in (a). On the other hand, category (b) refers to the support level of STCW95 (i.e., ratings forming part of a navigational/engineering watch) and special STCW courses (fire fighting, survival courses, etc). All of these comply with the aforementioned "4E typology" of MET. Further, the research tabulated in PROFS reveals that most of the linguistic and methodological requirements placed on the ME instructor's shoulders are the same as for teachers of other types of ESP and comparable also to those in English for General Purposes.

The results give rise to the conclusion and recommendation that the ideal ME instructor should hold the default qualification (BSc/MSc) in English language and teaching reinforced with an obligatory period of successful "marinisation" (Cole et al., 2002; Trenkner & Cole, 2004), which should include:

- acquiring knowledge of and competence in the main linguistic features of ME as well as the methodology of teaching ME for general and specific purposes (taking note of the specific cognitive processes in the maritime field), and
- gaining knowledge of the subject matter (maritime studies) acquired through "twinning" (i.e., in cooperation with the technical subject teachers and during occasional on-board training).

The communicative approach to learning and teaching (CLT), which the ME instructor should not only be well aware of, but also be competent in practising, is the prevailing approach.[10] Nonetheless, depending on the level of the course about to be run, the ME instructor is also expected to master the methodology (principles, strategies, activities and tasks) of content-based instruction and match this to the objectives and expected outcomes within competence-based training.

PROFS provides substantial information on the methods, materials and other references useful to the ME instructor for acquiring linguistic and

methodological knowledge and competence in teaching ME. Acquiring such knowledge and competence is a lengthy process which the future ME instructor can achieve only by closely cooperating with other MET institutions, international governmental and non-governmental organisations working within the maritime field (IMO, International Shipping Federation, etc), and international associations of MET institutions such as IAMU. Also, through participation in international conferences, seminars, workshops and other activities of the (world's) global ME teaching family, self-education and training, and peer instructors/teachers.

If heeded, the result will be a corpus of expert career specialist ME instructors capable of producing internationally acceptable and recognised ME syllabi/curricula where specifically designed courses, materials and methods of assessment, integrating modern methodologies and technologies, would play the central role.

4. The background knowledge of the Maritime English instructor

Among the key questions to be considered when a decision has to be taken regarding the maritime background knowledge of prospective ME instructors are:

- What must the management of an MET institution expect of applicants for ME teaching positions regarding their maritime background knowledge so that they are able to at least meet the requirements of STCW95 and IMO's International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS74) as revised?
- What can fairly be expected of ME instructors by the management of an MET institution regarding their maritime background knowledge?
- What have applicants for ME teaching positions to reckon with in this respect?

A highly motivating aspect essentially influencing the attitude of navigational or marine engineering students towards the subject of ME, and which has to be carefully taken into consideration, is the maritime subject matter itself. Other conditions and circumstances, which may exert a motivating or de-

motivating impact on the teaching/learning attitude of instructors and students alike, are, for example, the qualification requirements set by IMO legislation, motivation by institutional affiliation at universities/colleges, scheduling within the curricula of MET institutions, or motivation through maritime-technical contents.

How these four complexes impact upon the formation of a generally accepted position of ME within MET institutions is considered at length in PROFS. Furthermore, PROFS provides candidates for a ME teaching position at a maritime university or college with a solid idea of what might be expected of them regarding the subject matter contents to be taught with respect to basic ME terminology, and basic maritime communication knowledge.

Regarding the scope of the terminology, a qualified ME instructor is supposedly familiar with the five comprehensive terminological areas that PROFS identifies and breaks down into 13 terminological fields, 51 terminological subjects and numerous terminological units. Complementary to the basic ME terminology the scope of essential maritime communication expected to be mastered by a ME instructor has been defined and listed. This comprises four main communication areas broken down into 11 communication fields, 31 communication subjects and diverse communication events. Since these items are entirely based on activities involving language, they demonstrate the application of ME as a device of communication.

The findings and recommendations made in this section of PROFS may also serve as a guideline for institutional managers of what can fairly be expected of ME instructors regarding minimum maritime background knowledge. When followed, these would satisfy the relevant legal instruments, in particular STCW95 and SOLAS74 as revised, at least as far as the specialized vocabulary used and the communicative activities applied in shipping and navigation are concerned. If candidates for the corresponding teaching profession are not sufficiently qualified in this respect, but their methodological and language competence is beyond doubt, then they should be offered further qualification opportunities and be rewarded if successful. In this respect, as indicated earlier, the management of MET institutions have a duty to uphold the requirements of STCW95, Section A-1/6(3) where the relevant part does not distinguish maritime-technical instructors from other instructors.

5. Further qualification measures for Maritime English instructors

When MET managers justifiably demand that their ME instructors undertake a maritime qualification (they are, after all, answerable to their appropriate governmental authorities for implementing ratified treaties), then fair ways and opportunities have to be created and organised to enable and motivate the instructors to meet the relevant requirements. Having said this it must be noted, however, that PROFS revealed that just 49% of MET institutions demand a maritime qualification from their ME instructors, whilst the remainder "do not seem to care".

PROFS undertook to assess the role different international organizations play, or should play, within the field of further qualifications outlined above. The organizations evaluated for this purpose were the International Maritime Organization, the Association of Maritime Education and Training Institutions in Asia Pacific, the International Maritime English Conference of the International Maritime Lecturers' Association, and the German Association for Maritime English. Each of these organizations offers seminars, workshops and professional development courses covering areas of further qualification in the maritime sector for ME instructors (specific details are presented and discussed in PROFS).

Moreover, personal or individual as well as institutionalized further qualification measures conducted at higher MET establishments have been identified and investigated, and their benefits described. In particular, the following activities are expanded upon: (i) Personal or individual initiatives; and (ii) Institutionalized qualifications. Considering the latter the following institutionalized qualification measures are identified and discussed:

- "Simulator-twinning" programmes focusing predominantly on ME "twinning" using simulators.
- On-board qualifications, where ME instructors become part of the teaching staff on board training vessels, often teaching hands-on English.
- The combined programme, where newcomers to a ME teaching career are subject to a tutorial system which combines classroom tuition, observing classes in progress conducted by experienced ME instructors, a testing scheme and programmed sailing on board training vessels or vessels of the active merchant fleet; the successful

candidate receives certification, is promoted to the rank of ME lecturer and receives a commensurate rise in salary.

- The "Special Group" programme, where former ships officers who have a good command of general and ME but are lacking sufficient knowledge of applied linguistics, methodology and teaching skills, join specific programmes tailored to their needs, accumulate credits, and on successful completion are awarded a Certificate of Pedagogy.

Generally speaking the authors favour a four-stage process involving familiarisation, examination, qualification and professional promotion, where familiarisation involves filling in the knowledge and competence gaps required to become a qualified ME instructor and where examination involves successfully completing a process of assessment leading to a formal qualification resulting in an incentive in the form of promotion. However, all of the above qualification measures no doubt have their specific place within the system. In attempting to evaluate the best, much depends on the concrete situation and the prevailing conditions at the individual MET institution and/or the needs of the individual ME instructor. Thus, each should strive for the most promising qualification method while bearing in mind that whatever the outcome they are still subject to certain legal obligations.

6. Conclusions

The authors have, on many occasions, been approached by managers and teachers alike to provide guidelines for MET management and prospective ME instructors which categorize and describe the various types employed at institutions worldwide and define the requirements regarding professional qualifications in the areas of applied linguistics, methodology and the minimum maritime background knowledge demanded by the relevant IMO legislation. PROFS attempts to do this. It is, however, a means to an end and not an end in itself, and as such the relevant administrations, associations, institutions and related bodies still need to take appropriate measures in an effort to ensure ME instruction competence is achieved to the full. Thus, as a result of their research the authors modestly suggest that administrations, associations, institutions and other bodies involved in maritime education and training in general, and ME instruction in particular:

1. Check that each MET instructor type/profile matches the learning objectives and outcomes required.
2. Support the use of English as a tuition language for teaching technical subjects but do not regard this as a replacement for qualified ME instruction.
3. Instigate a quality audit for evaluating the standards of ME instruction that would, among other things, advise how the recommendations set out in PROFS may be realised.
4. Assign ME experts to conduct quality audits and/or quality assurance reviews at institutions requesting assistance.
5. Support and conduct a series of specially designed "Marinaid" programmes to assist ME instructors in acquiring, updating and upgrading the appropriate linguistic competence, methodology and minimum background knowledge, as required by STCW95 and other international legal instruments.
6. Promote the general requirement that ME instructors engaged in MET institutions offering bachelor degree courses hold at least a degree or equivalent qualification.
7. Promote specifically the communicative method in teaching ME together with content-based learning and competence-based training in an effort to satisfy STCW95 and beyond.
8. Note that issues concerning assessment have not been considered in depth but should be the topic of further research (in this respect standards should be established and assessment tools could be developed).

By taking such actions the authors are convinced that Maritime English instruction will be in a position not only to satisfy the desires of tomorrow's end-users but also to fully contribute to the urgent need to make ships safer and oceans cleaner.

(Revised paper received March 2007)

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Clive Cole thirty-six years as teacher, course director/designer, public examiner, researcher and consultant, all within English language training. Employed at World Maritime University since 1984, currently as Assistant Professor; has authored over 25 papers on Maritime English; Vice-Chairman of IMLA's, International Maritime English Conference; registered consultant to IMO; involved in various international R/D projects.

Dr. Boris Pritchard thirty years as lecturer. Since 2001 full professor, Maritime English, Lexicology, Translation Studies. Published two

coursebooks and numerous papers on Maritime English. Chairman of Croatian Association of Applied Linguistics (1996-2000). Since 2004 Chairman of IMLA-IMEC Papers Committee; registered consultant to IMO; involved in various international R/D projects.

Dr. Peter Trenkner forty-two years as lecturer. Since 1994 full professor of Maritime Communications. Sailed as training officer. Frequent conference presenter; numerous publications. Principal author of IMO's SMCP. 2007 Honorary Member of German Association for Maritime English; Chairman of IMLA-IMEC; since 2006 Honorary Member of IMLA; registered consultant to IMO; involved in various international R/D projects.

NOTES

[1] The International Maritime Organization is a specialised agency of the UN responsible for measures to improve the safety and security of international shipping and prevent marine pollution from ships.

[2] The questionnaire was distributed extensively throughout the world, primarily at meetings and conferences, through email and websites, as well as at maritime institutions and via personal contacts. Using such methods of distribution meant that it was impossible to calculate the distribution/return ratio. By the deadline (31.03.2005) 129 responses had been received; the initial target of 100 replies, having been surpassed suggests that the outcome in general terms could be regarded statistically representative. It should be noted, however, that the majority of respondents represented ME instructors, 80%, with mariners teaching or expecting to teach ME, and managers responsible for, but not teaching ME, sharing 20% equally. The raw data can be accessed on http://www.IMLA-IMEC.com

[3] The research indicates that only 1 in 4 ME teachers have had this opportunity.

[4] In this paper the term *competence* is not linguistically but professionally based. It does not refer to "the student's ability to apply [through language] different kinds of basic skills in situations that are commonly encountered in everyday life" (as defined in the *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching*, page 94) but to the standards of competence for seafarers as required by IMO's STCW95.

[5] In responding to the statement "At your institution ME study is recognised by the students as being important for future employment" the respondents' average score (5.1) was close to a "strong yes", whereas the average response to "At your institution incentives are in place for teachers of English to improve their qualifications and become qualified ME teachers" the average score (3.1) leant towards a "no", revealing a significant discrepancy between the perceived importance of the subject and the qualifications of those employed to teach it.

[6] In practice the authors found that a significant number of these instructors, while competent users of English, are not in fact native speakers.

[7] This is often a mutually satisfactory arrangement for both parties since major contractual commitments are not required.

[8] The authors note the emergence of a new acronym EMI (English as the Medium of Instruction) suggesting that worldwide, more and more further education courses are being delivered in English, regardless of the local language, and that the problems and solutions arising are probably not unique to ME.

[9] Available at http://www.nautinst.org. For further corpus studies of various aspects of ME see also Gustafsson (2000) and http://www.imla-imec.com

[10] For further detail see *IMO Model Course 3.17, Maritime English*, published by the International Maritime Organisation.