SEA NAVIGATION COMMUNICATION:
REALIZATION AND LEXICO-GRAMMATICAL FEATURES

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Abstract

Communication makes use of language with its inherent features which are determined by its contents: context of culture and context of situation. Maritime communication falls within closed register which provides fixed realization which is ritualized having no other variation. The ritual constraints can be seen in its unfolding sequence of communication: Summon-response; turn-over signal and useof explisit message markers.,

Key words: contex of situation, closed register, ritual constraints, Message-Markers.

Introduction

Language is a means of communication that arises in the life of individual through on ongoing exchange of meanings with significant others (Halliday 1978:1). In the process of exchanging meanings the participants of a given communication take turns creating and interpreting a text that make up discourse.

Halliday's view of language has the following as the main concept.

(1) language is a resource of making meaning

(2) the resource of language consists of a set of interrelated systems

(3) language users draw on the resource each time they use language

(4) language users create texts to make meaning

(5) texts are shaped by the social context in which they are used

(6) the social context is shaped by people using language

Discourse

Language as social practice should be analyzed in contexts. Malinowski, an American sociologist, (1923) introduced two types of contexts: (1) context of situation, and (2) context of culture (Halliday and Hasan, 1985:8). The context of situation is the immediate environment in which a text is actually functioning, while the context of culture serves as a broader background against which the text has to be interpreted (Halliday and Hasan, 1985:46)

According to Firth (Halliday and Hasan, 1985:8) the context of situation includes:

(1) The Participants in the situation: what Firth referred to as persons and personalities, corresponding more or less to what sociologists would regard as the statutes and roles of the participants;

(2) The action of the participants: what they are doing, including both their verbal action and their non verbal action;

(3) Other relevant features of the situation: the surrounding objects and events, in so far as they have some bearing on what is going on;

(4) The effect of the verbal action: what changes were brought about by what the participants in the situation had to say.

He further pointed out (Eggins, 1994:52) that learning to use a language is very much a process of learning to say what the other fellow expects us to say under the given circumstances. Once someone speaks to you, you are in a relatively determined context and you are not free to say what you please. Contexts, then govern language use.

The Three Features of Context of Situation

In functional- semantic tradition Halliday proposes three features of context of situation(Halliday and Hasan, 1985: 12; Eggins, 1994: 52), as follows:

(1) The field of discourse refers to what is happening, to the nature of the social action that is taking place: what is it that the participants are engaged in, in which the language figures as some essential component?

(2) The tenor of discourse refers to who is taking part, to the nature of the participants, their statuses and roles: what kinds of role relationship obtain among the participants, including permanent and temporary relationships of one kind or another, both the types of speech role that they are taking on in the dialogue and the whole cluster of socially significant relationships in which 'they are involved?

(3) The mode of discourse refers to what part the language is playing, what it is that the participants are expecting the language to do for them in that situation: the symbolic organization of the text, the status that it has, and its function in the context, including the channel (is it spoken or written or some combination of the two?) and also the rhetorical mode, what is being achieved by the text in terms of such categories as persuasive, expository, didactic, and the like.

Halliday (Eggins, 1994:78) further claims that: (1) The field of a text can be associated with the realization of experiential meanings; these experiential meanings are realized through the Transitivity patterns of the grammar; (2) The mode of a text can be associated with the realization of the textual meanings; these textual meanings are realized through the Theme patterns of the

grammar; (3) The tenor of a text can be associated with the realization of interpersonal meanings; these interpersonal meanings are realized through the Mood patterns of the grammar.

The Register Theory

The context of situation - with its three variables: field, mode and tenor - in which language is used determines the range within which meanings are selected and the forms which are used for their expression. In other words, they determine the register (Halliday, 1994: 31). The theory of register attempts to uncover the general principles which govern the variations of language use. Registers differ from dialects and the table below summarizes the differences.

Table 1 Varieties in Language

Dialect ('dialectal variety') = variety 'according to user'	Register ('diaptic variety') = variety 'according to the use'
A dialect is : What you speak (habitually) determined by who you are (socio-regionof origin and/or adoption), and expressing diversity of social structure (patterns of social hierarchy)	A register is: what you are speaking (at the time) determined by what you are doing (nature of social activity being engaged in), and expressing diversity of socia1process (social division of labour)
So in principle dialects are: different ways of saying the same thing and tend to differ in: phonetics, phonology, lexicogrammar (but not in semantics)	So in principle registers are: ways of saying different things and tend to differ in: semantics (and hence in lexicogrammar, and sometimes phonology, as realization of this

Extreme cases: Anti languages, mother-in-law languages	Extreme cases: restricted languages. language for special purposes
Typical instances: structural varieties (standard/nonstandard)	Typical instances: occupational varieties (technical, semitechnical)

Principal controlling variables: social class, caste; provenance (rural/urban); generation; age; sex	Principal controlling variables: field (type of social action); tenor (role relationships); mode (symbolic organization)
Characterized by: strongly-held attitudes towards dialects as symbol of social diversity	Characterized by: major distinctions of spoken/written; language in action/language in reflection

Open and Closed Registers

Different registers reflect variation according to the 'use'. Many situational factors such as degree formality, domain or professional setting determine the speaker's choice of a given register or style. In formal use of language the total number of possible meanings is fixed and finite and maybe quite small, while in informal use the range of the discourse is much more unlimited. The former is associated with closed register and the latter is related to the open register. In closed register participants have to communicate by using a fixed language in which there is no scope for individuality, or for creativity. It is strict and rigid in nature. An example of such register is found in the international language of air or sea navigation. The paper will address the situational features of the language of sea navigation which will be referred to as the Maritime English in the coming discussion.

Purpose of the Study

The paper attempts to describe features of closed register in Maritime English by addressing the following questions:

(1) How is the sea navigation communication unfolded?

(2) What are the features of lexico - grammatical choices used in the communication by referring to the realizations of the language functions used?

Limitation of the Study

The paper will focus on the communication between officers of the watch on board a ship(OOW) and the officers of the vessel

traffic service (VTS). In this case the communication is carried out when the ship is entering a harbour.

Review of Related Literature

The unfolding sequence of a communication encounter is determined by what Goffman (1976) named *communication constraints* (Hatch, 1992:6). Gofman divided these constraints into two types: (1) *system constraints,* that is the components required for all communication systems, and (2) *ritual constraints,* that is the social constraints that smooth social interaction. These two constrains provide a systematic framework for the description of discourse that governs, for example: (1) ways a communication is opened and closed by using channel open/close signals; (2) ways how participants hold and turn over the floor by using turn over signals; (3) ways how participants maintain communication by using backchannel signals; (4) ways how participants repair messages to make them interpretable. Those signals can be realized through verbal and nonverbal means like eye contact, smile, physical gestures.

McCarthy (1994: 144) is of the opinion that spoken discourse type can be analyzed for their typical patterns and the linguistic realization that accompany them (e.g.

lectures, business negotiation, telephone calls, etc.) The analysis can be very useful for language teachers and material writers who want to create systematic speaking skill programmes and whose goal is to design activities that will generate output as close as possible to naturally occurring talk. Complete naturalness, is probably impossible in the classroom, but the feeling that learners are engaging in an authentic activity is important to them, as is the feeling that they are being taught authentic and naturally occurring structures and vocabulary to use in simulation of real -life talk.

The present paper attempts to analyze a spoken discourse used in maritime communication that differs quite significantly from daily, casual face-to-face conversation. It is a kind of *telegraphic, face-to-face* communication that has a particular patterns and realization. More over, although it is realized formally, it lacks some of the features of formal language like politeness phenomena and modalization to express deference and suggestion because the communication should be carried out in a straightforward, concise and unambiguous, business-like manner (IMO Model Course 3.17, 2000).

Research Methodology

This is a descriptive qualitative research which the data of which were analysed descriptevely by referring to the realization of the language used in sea navigation communication

Object of the Study

The object of the study was the External communication (Shis to shore communication) between the Officer of the watch (OOW) of the vessel MV. Stoertebeker who has to report to VTS Warnemuende Traffic one hour before passing Warnemuende breakwater, according to the local reporting scheme.VTS is Vessel Traffic Services: services designed to improve the safety and efficiency of vessel traffic and to protect the environment.

The Dialogue

OOW : Warnemuende Traffic, Warnemuende Traffic, Warnemuende Traffic, this is Stoertebeker, Stoertebeker, Stoertebeker, call sign Yankee Three Charlie Sierra, come in please, over.

VTS : Stoertebeker, Stoertebeker, Stoertebeker, Yankee Three Charlie Sierra, this is Warnemuende Traffic, Warnemuende Traffic, Warnemuende Traffic. Advice. Change to VHF Channel 73 - over.

OOW : Warnemuende Traffic, this is Stoertebeker, Yankee Three Charlie Sierra. Information. Changing to VHF Channel 73 - over.

VTS : Stoertebeker, Yankee Three Charlie Sierra, this is Warnemuende Traffic. Question. How do you read me - over.

OOW : Warnemuende Traffic, this is Stoertebeker, Yankee Three Charlie Sierra. Answer. I read you good - over.

VTS : Stoertebeker, Yankee Three Charlie Sierra, this is Warnemuende Traffic. Question. What is your call sign. What is your flag state - over.

OOW : Warnemuende Traffic,Warnemuende Traffic, this is Stoertebeker. Answer. My Call sign Yankee Three Charlie Sierra. My flag state Germany - over.

VTS : Stoertebeker, Yankee Three Charlie Sierra, this is Warnemuende Traffic. Question. What is your position, present course and speed - over.

OOW : Warnemuende Traffic, this is Stoertebeker, Yankee Three Charlie Sierra. Answer. My position North East, distance 9 miles of fairway entrance. My present course 2 2 3 degrees, speed 18 knots - over.

VTS : Stoertbeker, Yankee Three Charlie Sierra, this is Warnemuende Traffic. Question. From what direction are you approaching. What is your destination - over.

OOW : Warnemuende Traffic, this is Stoertebeker, Yankee Three Charlie Sierra. Answer. I am approaching from North East. My destination berth number 6 3 - over.

VTS : Stoertebeker, Yankee Three Charlie Sierra, this is Warnemuende Traffic. What is your present draft. What is your air draft - over.

OOW : Warnemuende Traffic, this is Stoertebeker, Yankee Three Charlie Sierra. Answer. My present draft forward 6 meters, aft 7 meters. My air draft 44m - Over.

VTS : Stoertebeker, Yankee Three Charlie Sierra, this is Warnemuende Traffic. Question. What is your ETA in position buoy number 1 - over ...

OOW : Warnemuende Traffic, this is Stoertebeker, Yankee Three Charlie Sierra. Answer. My ETA 1700 hours local time - over.

VTS : Stoertebeker, Yankee Three Charlie Sierra, this is Warnemuende Traffic. Information. You may enter fairway in position buoy number 1.

Units of Analysis

In analyzing the external communication, the features of the Context of Situation are applied. The unit of analysis is *clause* which is analyzed on the mode, field and tennor

Data analysis

Mode

Mode means the role language is playing in an interaction that according to Martin (1989) involves to simultaneous continua which describe two different types of distance in the relation between language and situation. Communication can be expressed either in written or spoken forms that differs in their mode characteristics as can be seen from the following table: Mode characteristics of spoken/written language situation (Eggins 1994:55)

Table 2 Typical Situations of Language Use

Spoken discourse	Written text
+interactive	non-interactive
2 or more participants	one participant
+ face-to-face	not face-to-face
in the same place at the same time	on his/her own

+ language as action	not language as action
using language to accomplish some task	using language to reflect
+spontaneous	not spontaneous
without rehearsing what is going to be said	planning. drafting and rewriting
+casual	not casual
informal and everyday	formal and special occasions

Yet when we see the dialog understudy which is similar to telephone conversation it lacks visual feedback because it is not in the form of face to face communication. Furthermore the style of the realization cannot be set to be casual because it is a formal transactional communication. The spatial or interpersonal distance of ship-to-shore communication is like the one of a telephone communication describe in the figure below.

Casual Conversation	telephone	e-mail	fax	radio	novel
-visual contact +aural +immediate feedback	-visual +aural +immediate feedback	-visual -aural +rapid feedback	-visual -aural +rapid feedback	-visual one-way aural delayed feedback	-visual - aural feedback

In the analyzed dialogue we can see that the language is used to accompany the activity participants are involved in *(ancillary function of the language)*

Tenor
Tenor is defined as the social role relationships played by participants (Eggins 1994:63).

Up to now analysis of spoken discourse has distinguished between two types of situation according to their typical tenor dimensions into the informal and the formal reflecting the power possessed by each participant, which can be presented in the table below.

Table 3 Formal vs. Informal Situations

Informal	Formal
Equal power	unequal. hierarchic power
Frequent contact	or one-off. contact
High affective involvement	low affective involvement

However, the conversation under study is deviant from the above characterictics of formal situation in which the participants are equal in power. Consequently, the conversation can be said to be a non-hierarchical, with low affective involvement.

In low affective involvement, conversations tend to be very brief and carried out in a business like manner emphasizing consensus and agreement (Eggins 1994: 66).

Field

The field of discourse is reflected in the vocabulary and the grammar structures (Halliday & Hasan 1989:25). The paper analyses the grammatical structure of the dialogue under study. The structures are associated with the types of Process that are being talked about, which are mostly Processes of material and relational.

The unfolding sequence of the conversation under study: In all communic-ation, there must be ways to show that communication is about to begin. The *channel opening signals* differ according to the channel (e.g. phone calls, letters, meetings, classrooms). The first move is produced by an officer on watch (OOW) a ship entering a harbour. The channel opening signal is in the form of a *summon* calling the Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) of the port of destination followed by self-identification of the ship and its call sign. The summon is repeated three times to make sure the intended addressee that s/he/it the one being addressed to. The self-identification is also repeated three times to enable the addressee recognize the caller easily. The response is in the form of identification of the two participants to establish the communication that will follow. This *summon-response* sequence is *ritualized* in the sense that it does not have other variation, with no exchange of greetings between the two participants of the communication.

From the data, we can see that every move made by each participant is ended by the word *over* as a turnover signal that is not found in face-to-face communication, because it will sound strange to say 'over' each time we reach the end of a move. The signal provides cue for the addressee to begin the next move. In the maritime communication, *overlaps,* which is typical of daily, casual conversations, is something that is lacking. This means that the transmission of the message by the speaker is never interrupted by the addressee. To ascertain the clearness quality of the transmitted sound, there is a fixed procedure of asking the addressee *'How do you read me'* to find out whether or not they can continue using the channel being used (e.g. in the analyzed data: Channel 73). If the answer is 'I *read you good',* they can go on to the next exchanges.

The contents of the message are made explicit by using *message markers* like: *advice, information, question, answer,* as found in the analyzed data of this paper. In casual conversations, participants sometimes need to make use of *conversational implicature* when there is discordance between the mood realized and the speech function intended.

Such a feature is never found in this telegraphic communication of sea navigation because each speech function is realized *congruently* to avoid misinterpretation which can be very fatal resulting in accidents.

Linguistically, some features of informal speech like *omissions* and *elision* are also found in sea navigation communication (e.g. *'Changing to VHF* 73' in which the subject and the auxiliary verb are omitted as found in the analyzed data; and *'Letgo'* for *Let'sgo).*

Conclusions

Telegraphic sea navigation communication shares some of the characteristics of spoken discourse in terms of it : (1) is interactive, (2) has immediate feedback, (3) uses language to accompany action. It shares some of informal speech characteristics in terms of equal power that creates non-hierarchical communication. However, it lacks some of casual conversation features because it: (1) non visual (2) not casual, (3) is non face-to-face.

It reveals some conversational features which are lacking in daily, casual conversations namely: (1) it has ritualized opening signals in the form of self / identification of the speaker and explicit identification of the intended addressee, (2) it has ritualized turn over signal, that is the word 'over'at the end of each move, (3) it has message markers to make explicit the speech

function realized. On the other hand sea navigation communication lacks several features of casual conversation as follows: (1) it has no greetings sequence, (2) it does not employ politeness strategies except the word *'please',* (3) no overlaps due to a clear turn over signal (4) no backchannel signals which are usually used by an addressee to indicate that he/she is paying attention to the speaker.

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