

## Adaptation of New Curriculum with Alteration of Existing English Courses in Maritime Syllabus from Linguistics Perspectives

Md Saifujjaman Bhuiyan<sup>1</sup>, Md Ripon Ali<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Lecturer, Department of English, Atish Dipankar University of Science & Technology, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

**Corresponding Author:** Md Saifujjaman Bhuiyan [saifujjamanbhuiyan@gmail.com](mailto:saifujjamanbhuiyan@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

This paper aims to show the grammatical, lexical, and phrasal differences between maritime English and academic English. Here the writer discussed the necessity of maritime English for naval students in maritime institutions. The researcher observes the existing ESP courses in the institutions and recommends some essential courses to be undertaken at the level of post-graduation for better performance in professional life. Syllabus design for ESP students along with materials development have been studied in this paper for maritime graduates. Data has been collected from both primary and secondary sources. To collect information, online journals, articles, research papers, and documents have been studied. Primary data has been collected through questionnaires and testing.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Maritime English is an essential part of ESP in English language teaching. In ELT, the English language is discussed from two perspectives: ESP and EAP. EAP is applicable to all levels and categories of learners. On the other hand, ESP is only suitable for a specific group of people. ESP deals with the professional level of learners who use special English in their workplace. People who work in the maritime industry typically speak a type of English called maritime English. This includes people who work on boats and ships, as well as people who work in ports and other maritime-related businesses. Maritime English is a specific type of language used by seafarers, mariners, and maritime professionals. It involves the use of technical vocabulary, grammar structures, and phraseology that are unique to the maritime industry.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Numerous research from the past suggest that poor communication contributes to maritime accidents. Because marine professionals do not speak the same language, there is a communication gap. According to Verbek (2011), human factors account for 80% of maritime accidents, with a communication breakdown of one third. (Ziarati, 2006, Trekner, 2007).

From the CAPTAINS PROJECTS (Eu Leonardo Captains Project, 2010–12), one participant said that he had to leave the station in the cargo and travel to the deck to speak to the interlocutor directly and attempt to communicate by observing his hand motions. About three-quarters of the sailors in the same project agreed that cultural differences have an impact on the quality of communication on board. One participant claimed that when faced with emergencies, crew members of different nationalities respond and report in different ways.

During World War II a phrase was well known “Careless talk costs lives” (Winbow, 2002) and this phrase summarizes the dangers of ineffective communication. A report on 22 March 2006 from the Indian Master of MV Sea rose rescue operation stated that communication with other ships was not clear due to language difficulties, strong winds, and noisy seas.

English language proficiency among seafarers is one of the primary issues that has led to several maritime accidents and incidents, according to the UK's Maritime Coastguard Agency (2006). Another report on June 20, 2006, regarding the mv Hawk Limassol detailed multiple communication breakdowns, with the captain's inability to speak English being a key issue. One of the main causes of mishaps and accidents is a lack of communication on board (Ziarati 2006; Ziarati et al. 2009). Due to the senior officers' inconsistent use of proper English, the younger Deck officers find it challenging to pick up knowledge from them (Corina, 2009). Even a lowland Scot cannot comprehend the strange Scottish accents heard on many ships, and some Singaporeans have developed their own form of unintelligible English. (Corina, 2009).

Le Kang et al. (2013) polled 300 engineers, sailors, and machine operators to learn more about the challenges of English communication at sea. They discovered that 28% of mariners encounter challenges constantly, 24% encounter them frequently, and 1% encounter them never. According to the

writers, the majority of sailors are unable to converse with shipmates from different nations and are unfamiliar with abbreviations, inspection inquiries, and how to effectively respond to them. Communication challenges and cultural and national diversity are therefore key concerns for the maritime industry.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- Are the current ESP courses sufficient for working in real life?
- To what extent is ESP different from EAP?
- What are the authentic materials for maritime English teaching?
- What are the essential courses that should be included with the existing courses at the tertiary level of maritime English?

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- To find out the current rate of success of the learners existing courses in their professional lives.
- To distinguish ESP from EAP as a different form of ELT in maritime communication.
- To recommend using authentic materials in maritime classroom pedagogy.
- To suggest some new courses for the development of a future career in the maritime profession.

### **METHODOLOGY**

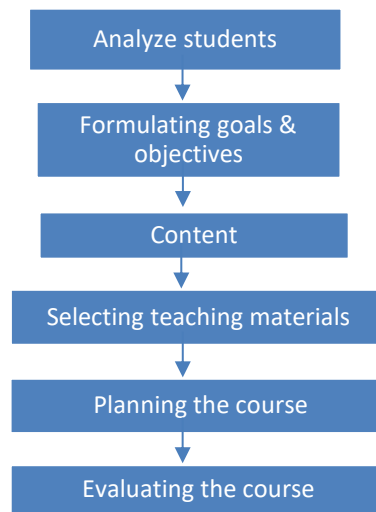
The researcher followed a mixed method. The researcher collected some data from secondary sources like articles, books, etc. Third- and fourth-year engineering students were picked because they might be the best candidates to make comparisons and contrast the effects on their learning of the existing courses. I applied Harvard referencing style for doing the research. In text citation has been used for literature review and discussion part. The same detail of existing literature has been added in the referencing part at the end of the paper.

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Learner- centred approach: It is based on the principle that learning is totally determined by the learner, even though teachers can influence what is taught. What the learners learn is determined by the learner alone. Learning is seen as a process in which the learners use the knowledge or skills they have to make sense of the flow of new information. Learning, therefore, is an internal process that is crucially dependent upon the knowledge the learners already have and their ability and motivation to use it. Design is a process that necessitates going through multiple stages. Graves (2000) states that classic as well as more recent models "agree on most of the components"; these components are: "setting objectives based on some form of assessment; determining content, materials, and method; and evaluation." She represented them in a flow chart, adding that the process of course design shouldn't be

considered a sequence of steps. Course designers may "begin anywhere in the framework, as long as it makes sense" for them (p.3).

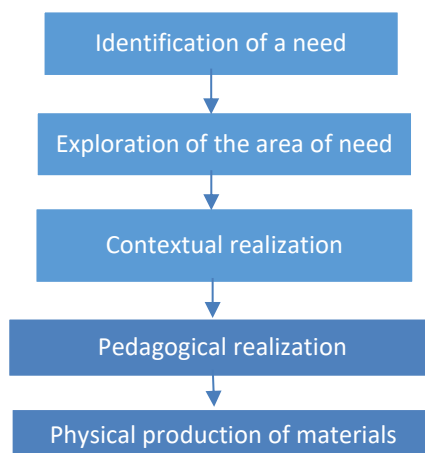
The following is the process in the Learner-centered model:



**Figure: 1** A learner-centered approach to course design (Graves, 2000, p.3)

*In a learning centered-approach, there are three chains of procedures:*

1. evaluating the learning environment, developing engaging resources, examining the language and skill content of materials, and making the required modifications; (2) reviewing target circumstances, generating engaging and fun materials, defining a general syllabus of themes and assignments, examining the language and skill content of materials, and making the required revisions; (3) Analyzing the issues that need to be addressed, creating a basic syllabus of subjects and assignments, creating a thorough language/skills syllabus, reviewing the language and skills content of the materials, and making any necessary revisions. There is a required format for adhering to the processes for developing materials:



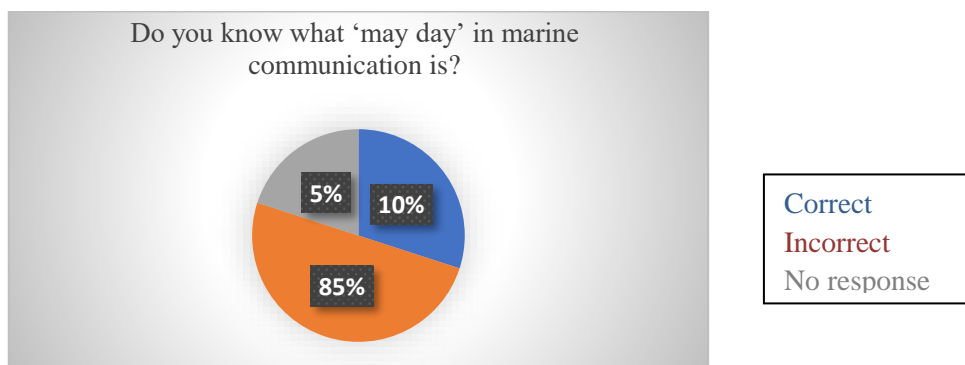
**Figure: 2** Process of materials writing (Tomlinson, 1998, p.97)

### DATA ANALYSIS

Since the main concern of the researcher was to see the communicative approach among the learners, the researcher took a sample collection of speaking abilities in a marine context. Two groups of students had been tested. 30 students had been taken from first-year students who were studying engineering subjects in public and private marine institutions. 30 students had been surveyed from 4<sup>th</sup> year students to make comparisons and contrasts in their level of proficiency after doing a three-year graduation study.

Current level of language proficiency of the students:

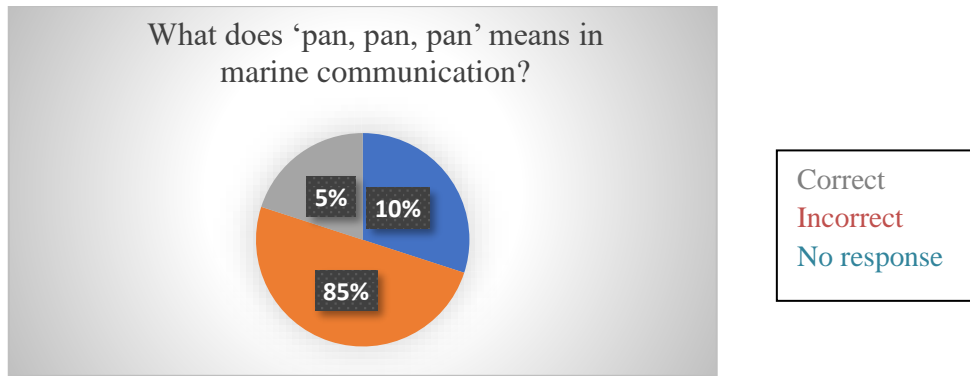
Do you know what 'may day' in marine communication is?



**Figure 3** 'May Day' term interpretation in marine communication

In marine communication, the term 'May Day' term is used before the most severe and urgent request for help, such as if the vessel is in danger of sinking. But learners could not answer correctly. Among 30 students 85% responded wrongly and few of them responded correctly. Some of them remain silent.

What does 'pan, pan, pan' mean in marine communication?

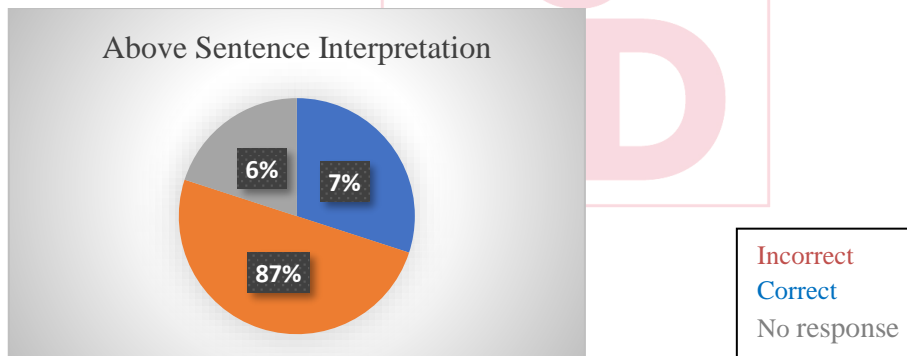


**Figure 4** 'pan, pan, pan' term interpretation in marine communication

There were 10 questions asked about International Standard Marine Phraseology (ISMP). 'Pan, Pan, Pan' is used before a serious request for help. However, learners could not answer correctly. Among 30 students, 85% responded wrongly, and a few of them responded correctly. Some of them remain silent.

Almost 10 questions were asked to determine their level of familiarity with the regular phrases and clauses in maritime communication. Only 2 to 3 students answered a few questions correctly. For example:

'We have to change our course to starboard'. A. Better stb. Q. I purpose we go back on course A. Rudder midships. Now, what do you understand from this conversation?



**Figure 5** Short conversation interpretation

From the response, it was reported that 3 people answered correctly, 25 of them answered incorrectly, and 2 of them did not respond to anything. 'Stb.' This word is interpreted wrongly, and they thought it meant something. But in reality, it means the approval of the instruction.

## DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Needs analysis is an essential part of syllabus design for any ESP course. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), the first and foremost thing a course designer should do is analyze the needs. The goal of the learners gets the highest priority when designing courses. In ESP, a learner learns to work in their professional life. Most of the activities in engineering departments are conducted practically. Their learning of languages should serve their interests.

It is necessary to learn academic English because it is the most common form of communication in day-to-day life. Along with these academic English courses, a few specific English courses should be introduced at the graduation and post-graduation levels.

***Usage of lexical items in Maritime communication***

Mariners are individuals who are involved in activities related to the sea, such as navigation, fishing, transportation, and exploration. They may include sailors, fishermen, merchant seamen, naval officers, and other professionals who work on ships or vessels. Their jobs may require them to travel long distances across the ocean, often facing challenges such as storms, rough seas, and other hazards associated with life at sea.

***Some examples of Maritime Registers***

**Front of ship** - bow/fore

**Propeller region** - oft/stern

**Region in between the oft and bow** - mid ship

**Left hand side of vessel** - Port

**Right hand side of vessel** - Starboard

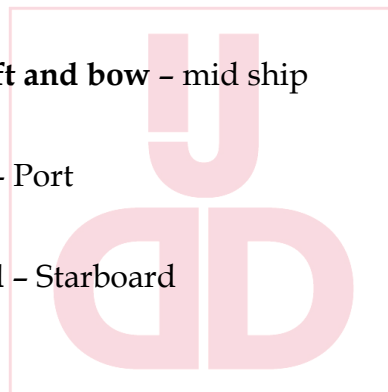
**Ship levels** - decks

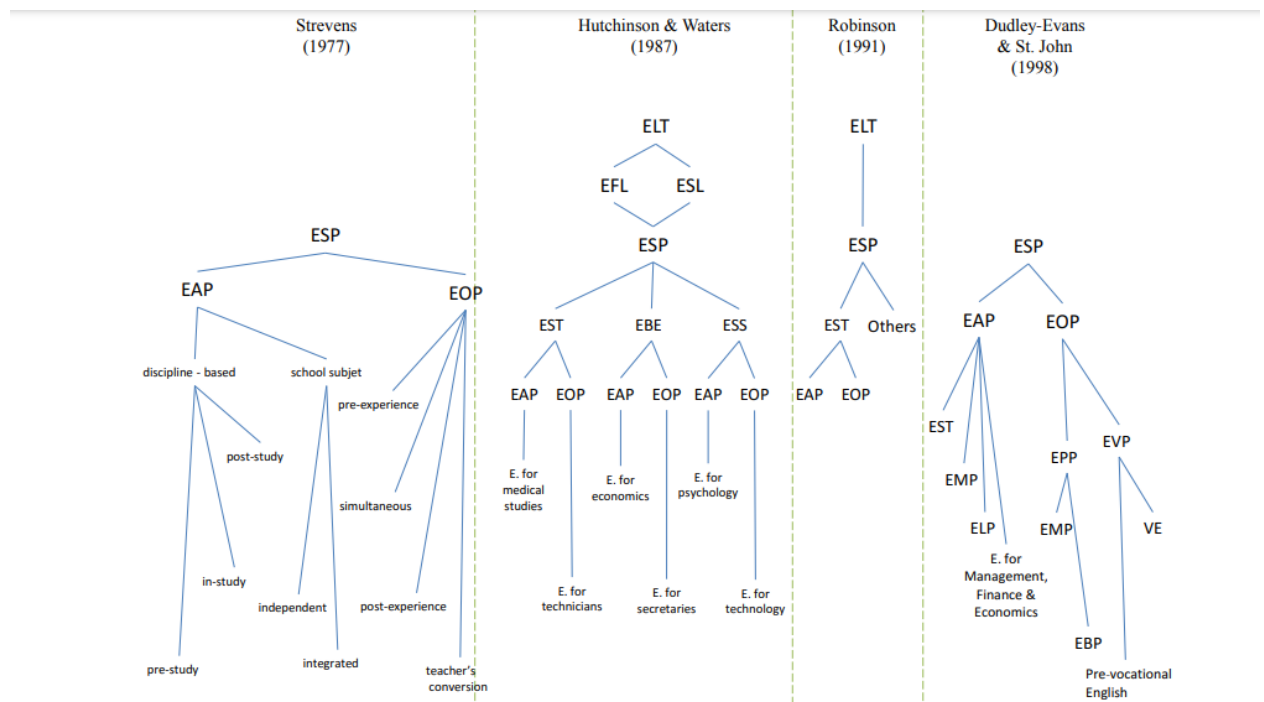
**Base of ship** - keel

**Where captains/officers operate** - bridge

**Pan, pan, pan** - used before a serious request for help

**Mayday, mayday, mayday** - used before the most severe and urgent request for help such as if the vessel is in danger of sinking.





**Figure: 6** Classifications of ESP

### *Importance of Maritime English for Mariners*

Even if we believe that we are proficient in English, it does not follow that we are also proficient in maritime English. There are some characteristics that set maritime communication apart from normal English. In order to communicate with other experts in the maritime business, we will refresh our mastery of the English language by listening to Maritime English. Maritime English is a resource for professionals. It comprises jargon for a ship's systems, interior and external parts, navigation, and maintenance. Trade, management, and administration are made easier by Maritime English. It might be used to communicate with other ships or other ports, for instance. Anyone working in the maritime industry, including brim administrators, seafarers, and ship owners, can benefit from learning maritime English. Additionally, maritime

English plays a significant social and emotional role in improving coworkers' interpersonal relationships and overall quality of life on board. It makes it possible for mariners and other professionals to communicate effectively. Consequently, marine English aids in eradicating, preventing, and assuring their safety from miscommunications.

*Observation of existing credit English courses in the engineering department*

I have found some English courses for students in the first and second years. There were no English courses in the 3rd and 4th years. It proves their reluctance towards the English language. The existing courses are also in EAP (English for Academic Purposes). The name of the course is English Comprehension and Speaking, Elementary English. In one institution, a phonetics and phonology course was found to be a mandatory course at the graduation level. Researchers appreciate such courses as part of academic discipline. However, there are no ESP courses at any level of graduation discipline, which proves the inefficiency of graduates in their professional lives. For designing courses for ESP, it is mandatory to add a few courses according to the needs of the learner. However, we can find that no ESP courses were found at their graduation level. This is why the researcher suggested all of the syllabus designers introduce ESP courses for marine students and engineering students based on their working activities. For example, a Glossary of Marine Phrases, Speaking in Marine Language, Writing for Mariners, Technical Writing, Comprehension of Mariner's Speech, etc. are essential to be introduced

in all levels of education for future mariners and engineers so that the nation can build qualified graduates for the global market.

### ***Necessity of teamwork in the fieldwork***

Working as a team allows us to learn from your team members. One can leverage the other's strengths and provide due support to one another. In the event something goes awry, the team can work together to efficiently fix the problem and, in the process, learn how to do things differently compared to if they did it alone.

### **IMO Standard Marine Communication Phrases**

***ICS Marlins English Language Test For Seafarers Practice Test:*** This is a special way of practicing maritime listening skills that a professional can practice in the same way that he will do in his workplace. The Marlins English Language Tests are taken online at our Test Platform. Our tests use contemporary English testing methodology and enable employers to assess their employees understanding of English quickly and accurately. The Marlins Study Pack provides companies with the means to comply with legislative requirements by offering crews a proven system of English language training.

Dead slow ahead, half a head, starboard ten, midships, steer 003, pass the buoy—these are some words and phrases that are used in marine communication among sailors, crew members, and captains. For example, the word 'buoy' sounds like 'boy, whereas the meanings of the two words are

completely different. 'buoy' means an anchored float serving as a navigation mark.

Maritime grammar is also different from academic grammar, along with words and phrases. In maritime English, for better understanding, a speaker may repeat the same word in a different format. This repetition is called redundancy in academic English.

"My present speed is 14 knots" - Mistake.

Correction: My present speed is 12, one-two, knots.

Do not say: "May I enter the fairway?"

.....Say: "QUESTION. Do I have permission to enter the fairway?"

.....Do not say: "You may enter the fairway."

.....Say: "ANSWER. You have permission to enter the fairway."

Pronunciation creates a great barrier to maritime communication. People from different nations may skip some sounds or utter them in their own native tones. So it creates an impending risk for marine life. For example, zero is pronounced as 'ZEERO', one is pronounced as 'WUN' etc. This is why numeric pronunciation and some special registration are taught in the marine class during undergrad.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is mandatory to test the level of English proficiency before final recruitment. The industry must also arrange some English communication during the training session before entering professional life. These courses should be designed according to the needs of the learners in their careers. In the

case of maritime, it is mandatory to design the courses based on daily marine communications for the crew members, sailors, and other ship controller officers.

In maritime institutions, especially in tertiary education, drills and activities must be practiced in maritime situations. All materials have to be designed in accordance with maritime graphs, phrases, pronunciations, and lexis so that the learners become habituated to these phrases and feel no affective filter hypothesis in their professional lives.

It is advisable to teach materials in a maritime context because once learners become accustomed to these words, they will learn some special words subconsciously. For instance, to practice reading skills, the teacher will take passages from maritime-related topics that will help the learner understand maritime terms. For listening practice, the teacher will collect lessons from ICS Marlins English Language Test for Seafarers Practice Test tutorials and related materials.

## **CONCLUSION**

Therefore, it is time to think about existing courses for engineering students in maritime institutions. The existing courses are useful and necessary. But these courses are not enough to satisfy the needs of the young professionals in their workplace. The most visible problem, in the eyes of the designer, is the lack of working ESP-related materials. ESP materials are different in their presentation and visibility of the lessons in the text. No ESP for maritime courses is available during the whole session of graduation or undergrad courses. In some institutions, English courses are taught as noncredit courses, and the learners have no concentration on these courses. However, other institutions take these courses as credit courses. Unfortunately, these courses are not enough to meet the needs of the learners. New and newer courses must be designed based on ESP-related topics where maritime English will be taught in a maritime context from maritime-related sources.

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