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THE USE OF THE CALLAN METHOD IN MARITIME ENGLISH TEACHING

ЗАСТОСУВАННЯ МЕТОДУ КАЛЛАНА У ПРОЦЕСІ ВИКЛАДАННЯ МОРСЬКОЇ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ

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**Alona YURZHENKO¹, Olena KONONOVA²,
& Olena DIAHYLEVA³**



¹Ph.D. in Pedagogy, Associate Professor, Kherson State Maritime Academy, Kherson, Ukraine.

✉ E-Mail: yurzhenko.alona@ksma.ks.ua

ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6560-4601>



² Ph.D. Student, Maritime Applied College of Kherson State Maritime Academy, Kherson, Ukraine.

✉ E-Mail: konono2017@ukr.net

ORCID <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-1386-6590>



³ Ph.D. in Pedagogy, Associate Professor, Kherson State Maritime Academy, Kherson, Ukraine.

✉ E-Mail: mz@ksma.ks.ua

ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3741-4066>

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ABSTRACT

The **purpose** of this article is to analyse the use of the Callan method in teaching Maritime English to today's future ship engineers, in the context of e-learning. Our hypothesis is that online classes can successfully be used to implement the Callan Method in Maritime English for both teaching and learning.

Methodology. This study employed a quasi-experimental pedagogical research design to evaluate the effectiveness of an online learning approach in Maritime English training at the Kherson State Maritime Academy (KhSMA). A mixed-methods approach was used, combining quantitative analysis of test results and oral competence assessments with qualitative insights from teacher observations. The course implemented the Callan Method to develop all four language skills – listening, reading, writing, and speaking – and interactive online activities formed part of the learning process. Cadets' oral communicative competence was assessed through programmed online speaking tasks conducted via video conferencing tools. Teacher feedback and analysis of cadet participation in online discussions, quizzes, and speaking activities were used to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the outcomes of this online-only learning model.

Results: The pedagogical experiment at KhSMA showed that group 211ap, which used the Callan Method for Maritime English, achieved significantly higher results in comparison to the control group (212ap). In 211ap, none of the cadets were deemed to have reached a 'satisfactory' level only, whilst the number of those who achieved a 'very good' or 'excellent' level increased, including 11 cadets who were deemed 'excellent'. Previous to this experiment, none of the cadets had reached this level of competence. The control group, who were taught using traditional methods, were also found to have improved, but to a lesser degree: seven additional cadets reached a 'good' or 'very good' level, whilst one cadet was deemed 'excellent'. Overall, the findings confirm the Callan Method's effectiveness in

Мета цієї статті – проаналізувати використання методу Каллана у викладанні морської англійської мови майбутнім інженерам-судномеханікам в умовах сучасного електронного навчання. Наша гіпотеза полягає в тому, що викладання та вивчення морської англійської мови буде успішним у разі використання методу Каллана в онлайн-класах.

Методологія: Це дослідження використовує квазіекспериментальний педагогічний дизайн дослідження для оцінки ефективності онлайн-підходу до навчання морській англійській мові в Херсонській державній морській академії (ХДМА). Було використано змішаний метод, що поєднує кількісний аналіз результатів тестів та оцінку усної компетенції з якісними висновками, отриманими на основі спостережень викладачів. На курсі було впроваджено метод Каллана для розвитку всіх мовних навичок – аудіювання, читання, письма та говоріння, та включено інтерактивні онлайн-заняття. Усна комунікативна компетенція курсантів оцінювалася за допомогою запланованих онлайн-завдань з говоріння, що проводилися за допомогою інструментів відеоконференцзв'язку. Відгуки викладачів та аналіз участі курсантів в онлайн-дискусіях, вікторинах та обговореннях були використані для комплексної оцінки результатів цієї моделі навчання виключно онлайн.

Результати: Педагогічний експеримент у ХДМА показав, що група 211ap, яка навчалася за методикою Каллана з морської англійської мови, досягла значно вищих результатів порівняно з контрольною групою (212ap). У 211ap знизилась кількість задовільних оцінок, натомість зросла кількість курсантів з дуже добрим та відмінним рівнями, в тому числі 11 курсантів отримали оцінку "відмінно" - до цього жоден з них не мав такого рівня. У контрольній групі, яка навчалася за традиційною програмою, результати також покращилися, але з меншими темпами: на сім курсантів більше на хорошому і дуже хорошому рівнях і один – на відмінному. Загалом, результати дослідження підтверджують ефективність методу Каллана у підвищенні комунікативної

enhancing communicative competence in Maritime English for future ship engineers.

Conclusions: Maritime English is essential for the professional development of future seafarers, and in particular, for marine engineers. The Callan Method has proven effective in providing a greater number of opportunities for speaking practice than traditional approaches, particularly with regard to SMCP and simulated radio communication. It promotes rapid speaking and automates language structures and marine terms, making it highly suitable for ship engineers. However, it was also found to have some disadvantages, such as limiting learners' creativity. Low level of motivation amongst cadets learning maritime English was also a noted tendency, as a result of the format of the exercises themselves. Notwithstanding levels of motivation, these same exercises were also noted to be of great help in learning maritime English. Future research could explore its application for training ship navigators and electrical engineers.

Keywords: maritime education and training, maritime professionals, digitalization, e-learning, Maritime English, ship engineers, Callan Method, English Language Sessions.

компетентності з морської англійської мови майбутніх суднових механіків.

Висновки: Морська англійська необхідна для професійного розвитку майбутніх моряків, особливо суднових механіків. Метод Каллана довів свою ефективність у забезпеченні більшої розмовної практики, ніж традиційні підходи, особливо за допомогою SMCP та імітації радіозв'язку. Він підтримує швидке говоріння і автоматизує мовні структури і морські терміни, що робить його корисним для судномеханіків. Проте були відзначені і недоліки, такі як обмеженість творчого підходу. Низький рівень мотивації серед курсантів, які вивчають морську англійську мову, також був відзначений як характерна тенденція, що зумовлена самим форматом вправ. Водночас, незважаючи на рівень мотивації, ці ж вправи були відзначені як дуже корисні для вивчення морської англійської. Подальші дослідження можуть зосередитися на їхньому застосуванні для підготовки судноводіїв та суднових електромеханіків.

Ключові слова: морська освіта і підготовка, морські фахівці, діджиталізація, електронне навчання, морська англійська, судові інженери, метод Каллана, заняття з англійської мови.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of technology and digital transformation have resulted in the need to adapt education to new realities: higher education is now tasked with preparing students for international cooperation and competitiveness in a global labor market. Higher education must respond to the rapidly changing labor market by providing students with skills that meet market demands. In addition to technical knowledge, higher education must provide students with soft learning skills, such as communication, collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving.

Knowledge today quickly becomes obsolete, so there is a need for higher education to promote lifelong learning and the development of skills that can be adapted to navigate new knowledge. Knowledge of the English language is the basis for communication in the international community and opens the door to a vast amount of information published in English. Knowledge of English also makes it easier to study scientific articles, textbooks, and online resources and provides the opportunity to communicate with colleagues from all over the world.

The main goal of teaching a foreign language in maritime education institutions is to form students' communicative competence, based on communicative skills that are acquired through language knowledge and skills. Higher education is aimed at developing critical thinking, analytical skills, and in-depth knowledge in specific fields and preparing students for the challenges of the modern world and labor market.

There are of course many English teaching methods, but our focus was the Callan method created by Robin Callan in 1959. It is now used in 25 countries around the world.

The Callan method is a language environment in which the learning process is faster and more productive. The lessons take place in an intensive atmosphere: a native teacher speaks at his or her normal (fast) speed, whilst the students need to practice focused concentration throughout the lesson in order to learn effectively. This method is suitable for students of all nationalities and ages, allowing them to understand and express themselves fluently in English or Spanish as a foreign language.

The objective of our research is to analyse the use of the Callan method in teaching Maritime English to today's future ship engineers in the context of e-learning. Our hypothesis is that the Callan method can be successfully used to teach and learn Maritime English through online classes.

METHODOLOGY

Pedagogical research was conducted at a temporarily relocated higher maritime education institution – Kherson State Maritime Academy (KhSMA). According to Yurzhenko, A. Y. (2019), KhSMA uses a blended approach to maritime education and training (MET), including a system of online courses developed on the LMS MOODLE platform. The 'Maritime English' e-course on LMS MOODLE is described in this research. Example activities on this course are also listed and illustrated (e.g., Page, Quiz, Lesson). Cadets belonging to two groups (211ap and 212ap) participated in the research. The total number of cadets was 47. These were first-year cadets at KhSMA (attending an abridged study program). Their ages ranged from 18-22 and they were all male.

The Marine Engineering Faculty cadets and staff participated in the research. Krpová, V. (2019) proved that the Callan method was used in Maritime English teaching in all four spheres of learning: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. The activities on LMS MOODLE for the Maritime English e-course were developed by four English teachers according to International Maritime Organization (2000). To measure the progress in cadets' communicative competence by the end of the semester, Papadakis et al., (2022) noted, that the teachers developed an assessment method on LMS MOODLE, separate to the online course (two Progress tests). Teachers followed the ECTS grading scale to do so ('excellent', 'very good', 'good', 'satisfactory', 'sufficient' and 'fail').

RESULTS

The Callan Method was chosen over a wide variety of different methods and approaches, including the traditional method known as the Grammar-Translation Method. Speaking plays an important role in a seafarer's work (e.g., the job interview itself and then the need to communicate with mixed, or multilingual, crews on board ships today).

While the Grammar-Translation Method focuses on learning grammar rules and structures and practicing writing tasks, the Callan Method focuses on the development of speaking skills, which is particularly suitable to maritime education and training.

The Communicative Approach has been used in the KhSMA since around 2010, as a teaching methodology. When comparing this technique to the Callan Method, we reached the conclusion that the latter has a more structured and repetitive system.

An analysis of sundry teaching methods, such as the Audio-Lingual method, and TPR, established that our choice of the Callan Method was the most suited to future ship engineers. A table comparing the Callan Method with other methods can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1
Comparative table of English teaching methods.

| Criterion | Traditional method | Communicative method | Callan method |
|---|--|---|---|
| Focus | – on language structure, grammar, translation | – on meaning, language functions, communication | – on rapid speaking, correct pronunciation, spontaneous response |
| Type of activity | – reading, written exercises, translation | – role-playing, dialogues, discussions | – constant oral repetition, questions and answers, minimum written tasks |
| Type of material | – -educational texts, grammar exercises, translations | – authentic materials, situational tasks | – methodically structured lessons, prepared dialogues, standardized questions |
| The role of the teacher | – the main source of knowledge, controls the process | – facilitator, organizer of communication | – active moderator, controls the pace and accuracy of speech |
| The role of the student | – passive recipient of knowledge | – active participant in language interaction | – active language practitioner: repeats, responds, practices correct pronunciation |
| Suitability for Maritime English | – suitable for mastering terminology and technical texts | – optimal for training communication in professional situations | – effective for automating language structures and terms, especially for oral exams or radio communications |

The Callan Method was developed by Robert Callan at the beginning of 1960s in the United Kingdom. Although it has evolved over successive decades, its core principles have remained much the same (e.g. an emphasis on fluency). In the present day, it has been adapted to modern digital educational tools.

The Callan Method teaches English vocabulary and grammar in 12 programmed levels, and implements a systematic assessment approach. The content covers a number of everyday life topics: travel, dating, work, study, and entertainment.

There are a lot of speaking and listening activities during the lesson, as well as reading and writing tasks, so students are continually repeating and reinforcing what they have learned. An added bonus is that there is no homework in this method.

As to the four core language skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking), the Callan Method prioritizes speaking fluently, in which it is most effective, followed by listening; it adheres to teacher-led input and students need to develop good listening skills to answer rapidly; reading is limited to the use of Student’s Book and in controlled activities only (eschewing both semi-controlled and essay based activities); the method is least effective in developing learners’ writing skills, as there is less focus on this core language skill.

Figure 2 sets out some additional findings (advantages and disadvantages) in the analysis of the Callan Method for this study.

Table 2

Additional advantages and disadvantages of the Callan Method

| Aspect | Advantage | Disadvantage |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Grammar and Vocabulary | Grammar rules and new lexical units aren't learned separately | Grammar rules and the correct meaning of lexical units aren't explained enough |
| | Correct grammar structures and suitable lexical units are used spontaneously (student doesn't need to think much before choosing the correct one) | There is little opportunity for contextual vocabulary use |
| | Vocabulary expansion is quick | |
| Students' motivation to study | Classes are interactive | A lot of class time is dedicated to drills |
| | Students don't have a fear of making mistakes | Not all mistakes are corrected by teacher in time |

When applied to MET, these findings align with existing research and industry requirements (e.g. speaking, listening, and emergency response) to Maritime English classes. However, additional classes are needed to develop learners' writing, as well as the analytical reading of emergency reports and logbooks that record malfunctions, etc.

According to Ow Yong (2022), regarding lesson structure, students don't copy theory from the board, repeat the same type of exercises in silence, or memorize grammar rules. Class time is divided into reviewing the material they've already covered and learning new content.

Most of the lesson time is devoted to conversational practice in the 'question-answer' mode (corresponding to around 35 minutes). The middle of the lesson can focus on reading (around 10 minutes) and dictation (5 minutes). The lessons are also divided into three sections:

- listening and speaking;
- repetition and memorization;
- reading and writing.

The listening and speaking section of the lesson helps students to hear the original pronunciation first. The students are then able to repeat and answer the questions because they can see the prepared answers in the book. This is especially important for future ship engineers, in order to simulate radio communication.

At KSMA, educators are allowed to use LMS MOODLE to create a limited number of activities on its e-courses. One of the tools is Page, which is used to present grammar rules and structures for Maritime English (see an example in Figure 1).

Figure 1

Questions and answers on LMS MOODLE.

The screenshot shows the Moodle LMS interface for a course titled "Maritime English 211ap 212ap 2024-2025". The user is logged in as "Юрженко Альона". The breadcrumb trail is: Dashboard / My courses / ME task 211ap 212ap 24-25 / Check your competency / Q. The main content area displays a question: "no, it is not (isn't)". Below the question, there are two sub-questions: "Is this a tanker?" with the answer "No, it isn't a tanker; it's a bulker" and "Is this a bulker?" with the answer "No, it isn't a bulker; it's a container carrier". The question was last modified on Thursday, 30 January 2025, at 2:02 PM. There is a "Jump to..." dropdown menu at the bottom right of the question area.

Mistakes are part of the learning process, and they help students measure their progress. While the student is speaking, the teacher is simultaneously correcting their grammar and pronunciation mistakes, which helps them to improve their communication skills. The teacher does this by repeating the student's mistake (for example, the teacher says: *it's not 'come', it's 'comes'*), which helps the student understand the difference between what they actually said and the correct English form.

Students learn to speak just like native speakers do in everyday situations. Conversational practice and the opportunity to hear the foreign language continuously allow them to learn the language four times faster and more effectively than traditional methods.

Students consolidate the material covered in earlier lessons, repeating previously learned words and rules whilst improving their speech (and pronunciation). The material covered is continuously reviewed during lessons, and the method relies on the constant repetition of vocabulary and grammar structures.

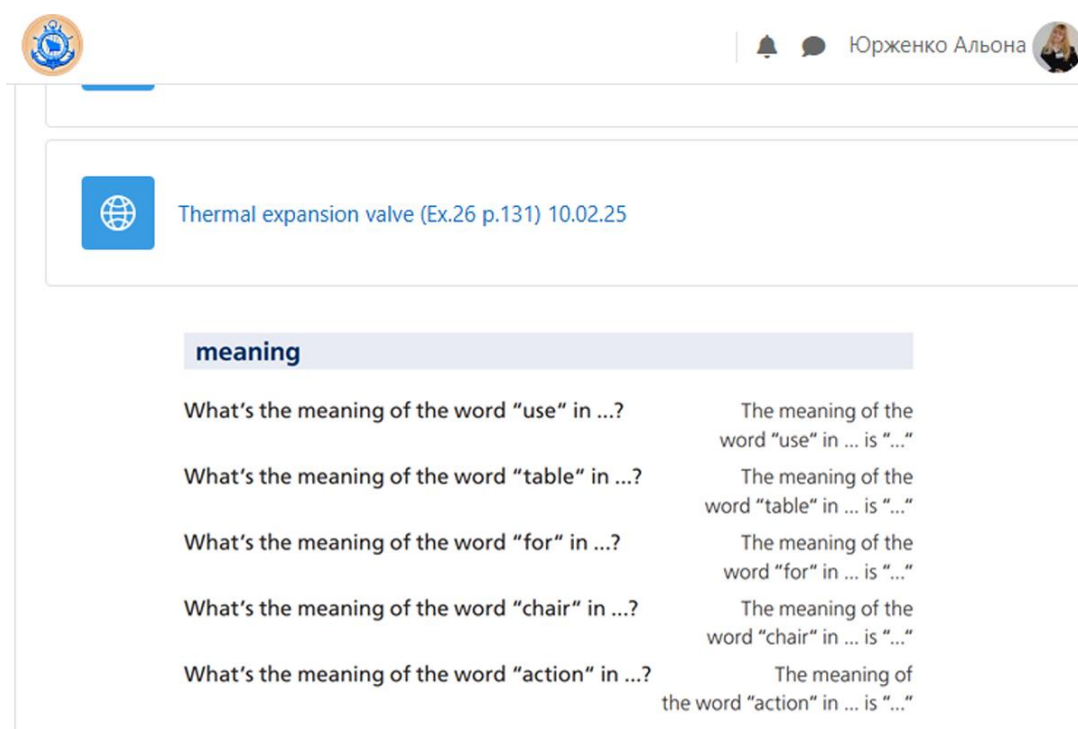
The teacher asks a question and then provides the answer simultaneously with the students. This means students do not get the chance to stop and translate the question (or answer) into their native language. The meaning of many words depends on context, so translating can confuse students and hinder their ability to freely perceive the fast pace of a foreign language.

The Callan Method teaches them to speak and think like a native speaker, without pausing to translate. It helps students immediately start to think in the language they are learning. The teacher asks every question twice, to aid students' understanding.

A further example of activities used on the LMS MOODLE 'Maritime English' course is the 'Text and media area' which is also used to present information on the course page. Figure 2 shows an example.

Figure 2

Answer practice on the LMS MOODLE ‘Maritime English course’.

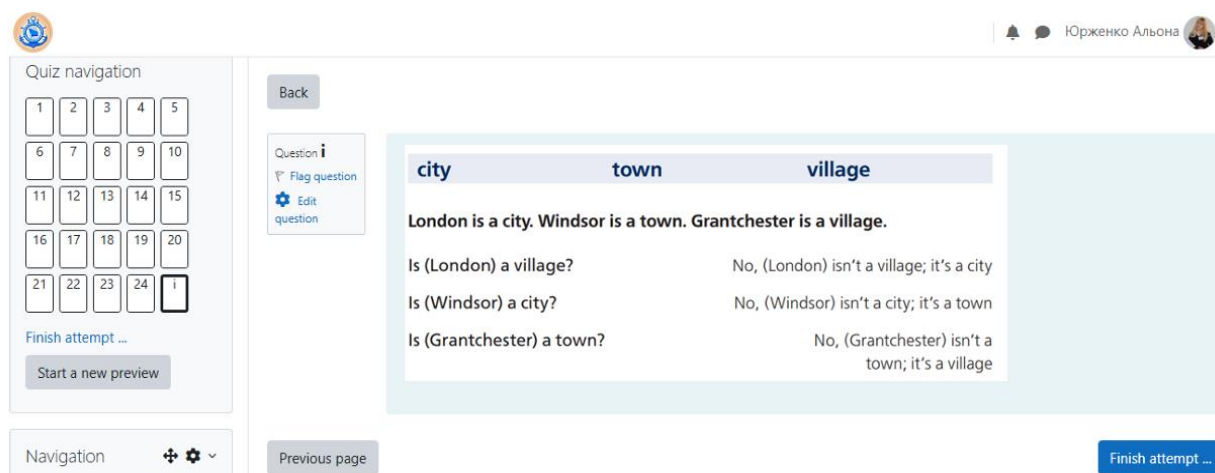


After repeating previously learned material, students begin to learn new words and rules. The teacher explains the meaning of the new words and then asks questions that contain the new material. Students therefore immediately apply the new vocabulary and grammar rules that they have just learned, by putting them into practice. The teacher is constantly helping students (with sentence construction and pronunciation, for example), so there are no pauses in the dialogue, and the pace of speech is maintained.

Quiz activities are also used in the Callan Method course on LMS MOODLE, with 17 types of questions. R Core Team (2000) and Striuk, A. (2022) noted that description question type is used to add some instructions, rules, or other content to the activity. An example of Description in Quiz is given in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Example of Quiz on LMS MOODLE.



Research by Yuksel, Soruç, Altay and Curle (2023) showed that with regard to reading practice, students read simultaneously with the teacher, which gives them the opportunity to hear the correct pronunciation and intonation and correct any mistakes. According to Barzii, Litikova, Ohorodnyk, Solovei and Usova (2020), the focus of the Callan Method is conversation, with reading taking up 20% of the lesson and writing 10%; although the main goal of each student is to learn to speak fluently, it is impossible to completely eliminate these two aspects.

Shishido (2021) and Nosov et al. (2020) noted that to develop the reading skills established by IMO Model course 3.17 the 'Lesson' activity on LMS MOODLE is sometimes used. An example of a 'Lesson' activity and content page for the Maritime English online course for future ship engineers (abridged program) is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Example Lesson activity on LMS MOODLE.

The screenshot displays a Moodle Lesson activity interface. On the left is a navigation menu with sections for 'Badges', 'Competencies', 'Grades', and a list of modules including 'MODULE 1: Marine Diesel Engine', 'MODULE 2: Safe Engineering Watch', 'MODULE 3: Ship's systems', and 'MODULE 4: Refrigeration Plant'. The main content area is titled 'where' and contains a list of five questions with corresponding answers. Below this is a 'Content' section with 'Content 1: next' and 'Jump 1: This page'. At the bottom, there is a 'Jump to...' dropdown menu and a 'Module 1' link.

Students studying new material need to be able to write down vocabulary and grammatical structures correctly. Dictations are used to help avoid future mistakes and improve spelling. For example, according to Ceylan, Karatuğ and Arslanoğlu (2022), Emad and Kataria (2022) to focus students on the difference in spelling of the words 'man' and 'men' or learn the order of the letters in the word 'queue'. By reviewing previous lessons, students consolidate the material they have already learned.

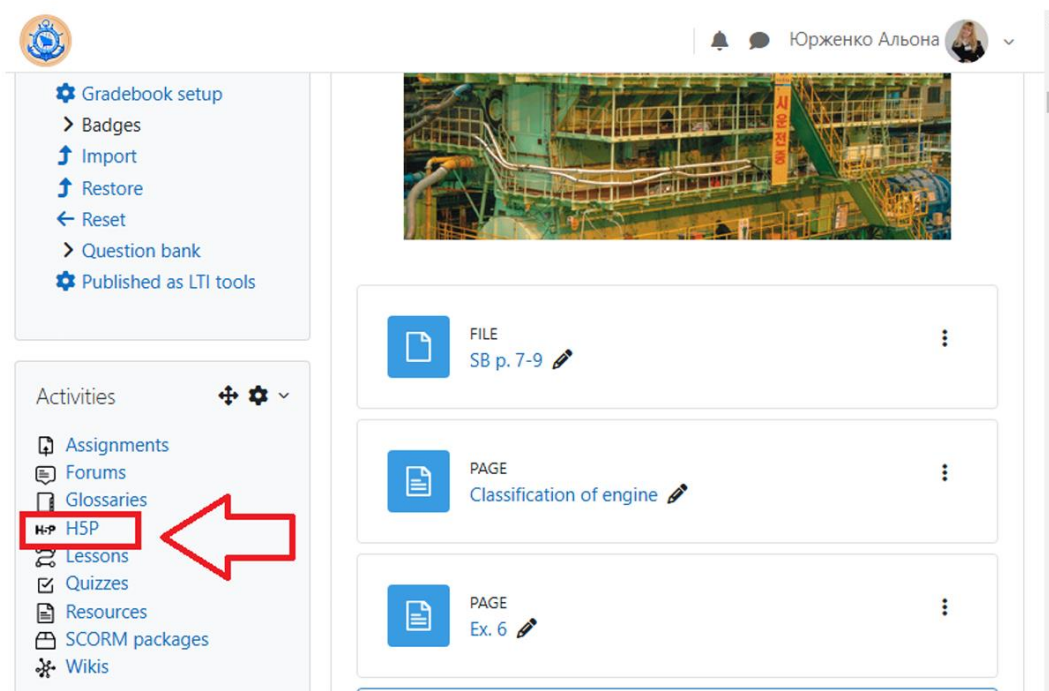
H5P is a very popular tool used on LMS MOODLE, noted Brownlee et al. (2025), Theivarani and Nagarathinam (2024), for Maritime English teaching. One advantage is the tailored nature of the exercises (including Listening and Recording or Dictation). Figure 5 shows some of the H5P activities included in the Maritime English course.

Students are given a simple explanation of the words and how to use them, to ensure clarity and understanding. After this, according to Vakaliuk et al. (2021), Rahmatova and Xojikulov (2024), the teacher practices the 'question-answer format'.

Viediarnikova (2023), Holovko (2023) and Báčová (2017) noted that Callan Method books are full of questions. Each question is designed to teach a new word or grammar structure. The teacher remains standing during the lesson and chooses students in turn to answer the questions. Gabryś-Barker (2022) and González Clemente (2022) commented that students have to stay focused throughout the lesson because they don't know who the teacher will choose next to answer a question.

Figure 5

Example of H5P activities on LMS MOODLE.



According to Tkachuk, Yechkalo, Semerikov, Kislova and Hladyr (2021), the teacher also uses abbreviations during the lesson (for example, saying *no* instead of *not*) to mirror natural spoken English, which students need to learn to understand.

Authors Simakhova, Artyukhov and Shmarlouskaya (2022) pointed that the Callan Method, unlike other methods, has proven its effectiveness with the majority of ESL learners and can furthermore teach students in a quarter of the time. According to Yurzhenko (2019), if the student's objective is to achieve the level of the Cambridge Preliminary English Test (PET), the Callan Method can take as little as 80 hours, whereas reaching the level of the Cambridge First Certificate in English (FCE) can take 160 hours only emphasised Diahyleva, Gritsuk, Kononova and Yurzhenko (2021).

According to Dyagileva, Goridko, Popova, Voloshynov and Yurzhenko (2020), Fraga-Vinas (2022), this method also offers students more speaking practice than other conventional methods. The Callan Method takes a direct, fast-paced, and highly interactive approach, focused primarily on continuous speaking and listening, whilst minimizing passive learning. The lessons can be online/offline, using different tools, PCs, tablets, and even mobile phones.

A heavy emphasis is placed on repetition, which helps students hone their pronunciation and, at the same time, improve their fluency.

DISCUSSION

Students studying with the Callan Method quickly improve their speaking and listening skills, which helps them communicate well in English, especially with regard to Standard Marine Phrases (SMCP). Lessons are conducted entirely in English, which allows students to study all of the content in English without the need to translate into their native language. Maritime English within the Callan Method included specific terms related to the maritime industry, the most useful grammar structures needed when working on a

ship, and in particular, the engine room, as well as understanding the most frequent accents found amongst mixed crews, etc.

The Callan Method requires students to learn English at a natural, fast pace, similar to how native English speakers communicate. As a result, students practice speaking quickly, as the teacher is also speaking the language quickly. Moreover, the speed of the lesson does not give students time to translate or worry about the correct grammar structure. Instead, they practice spoken English as a reflex, just like everyone who learned the language in childhood.

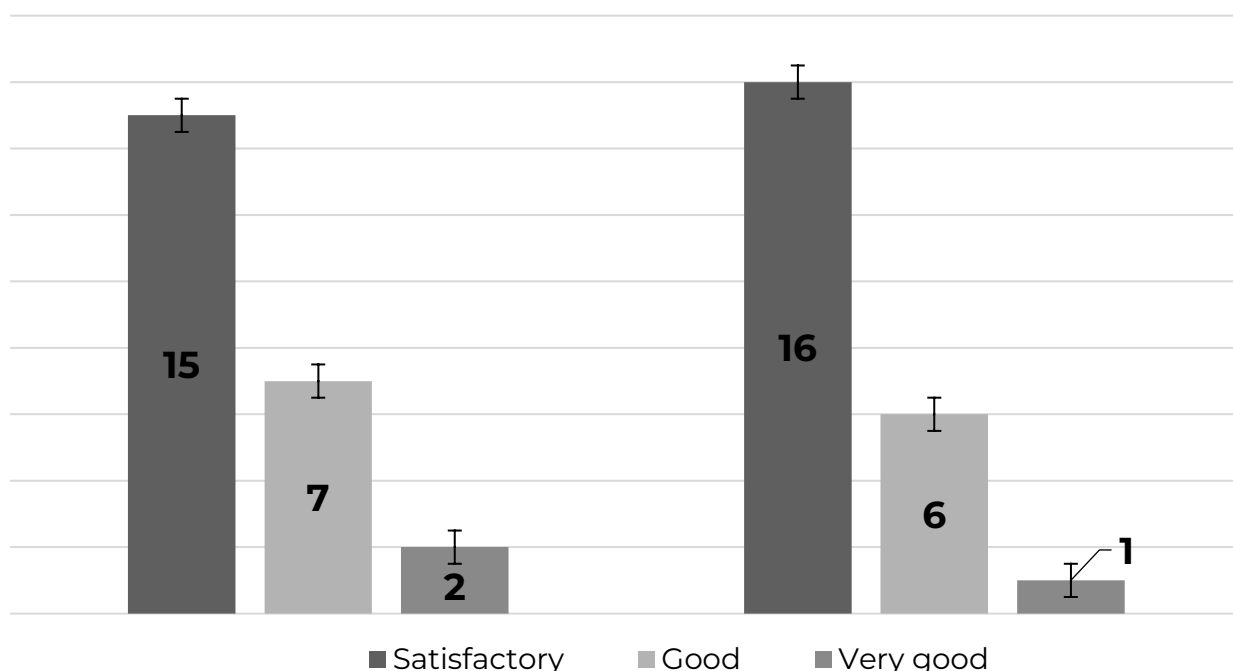
Despite the aforementioned advantages of this method, we also found some disadvantages, namely limited creativity; cadets' reading and writing skills were also not as developed as their speaking and listening skills; the use of drills can lead to a low level of motivation amongst cadets studying Maritime English.

The results of this pedagogical experiment at KSMA showed that the cadets in group 211ap who were using the Callan Method to learn Maritime English achieved higher results in two Progress tests on LMS MOODLE (the first test was conducted at the end of the second module, and the second test was conducted at the end of the semester, corresponding to the fourth module).

The first test included 30 questions with three levels of difficulty: 18 easy questions (2 points each); 10 moderate questions (5 points each) and 2 difficult questions (7 points each). The maximum number of points was 100. A score of 60–73 corresponded to 'sufficient'; 74–79 corresponded to 'satisfactory'; 80–85 was deemed 'good'; 86–90 'very good' and students who achieved between 91–100 points were deemed 'excellent'. The test questions included listening, writing, and grammar tasks. The results of the first Progress test are shown in graph form in Figure 6.

Figure 6

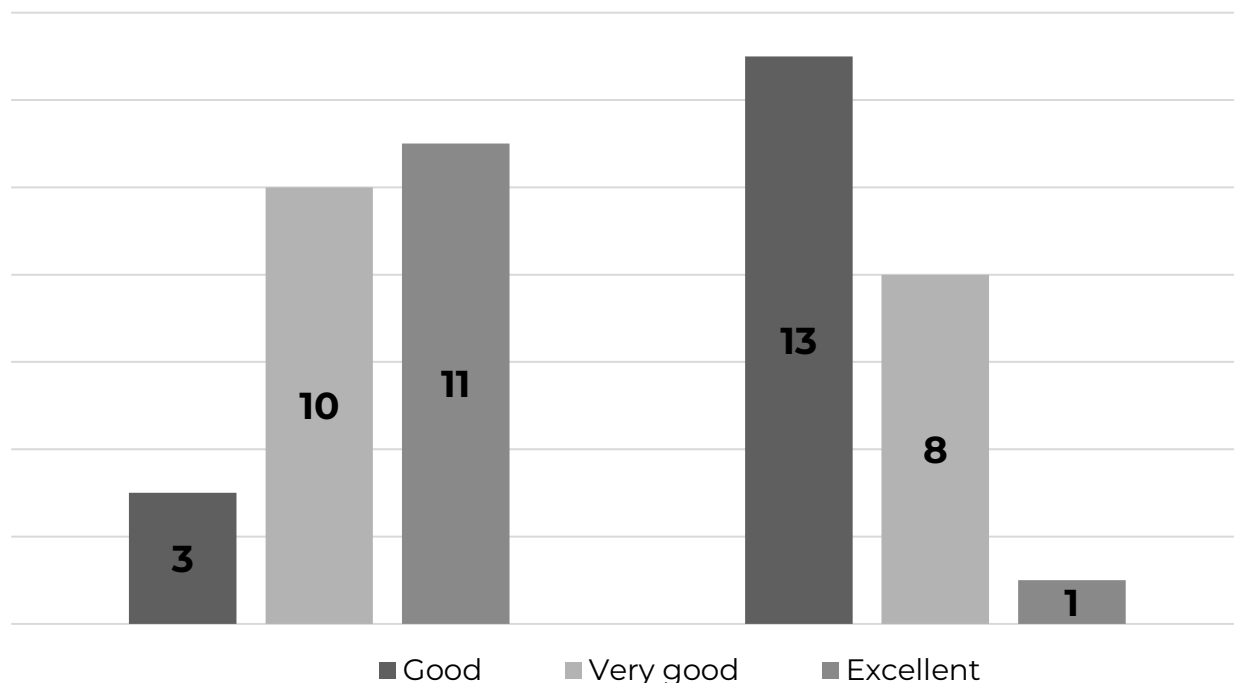
The results of a communicative competence assessment before the pedagogical experiment



The second Progress test was an end-of-course assessment. It had the same characteristics as the first one, but comprised questions related to all of the course topics (four modules). Cadets' results in the second Progress test are shown in graph form in Figure 7.

Figure 7

The results of an assessment of cadets' communicative competence after the pedagogical experiment



Comparing the results of the experimental group (211ap) we can conclude that there were no longer any cadets with only a 'satisfactory' level of communicative competence after the experiment; the number of cadets with a 'good' level had decreased by three cadets; those deemed to have a 'very good' level had increased by eight cadets; and finally, there was now a group of eleven cadets with an 'excellent' level, whereas there had been none, previous to the experiment.

The results of the control group, who studied English using traditional methods, (212ap) had also improved by the end of the course: there were now an additional seven cadets with a 'good' level, an additional seven people with a 'very good' level; and one cadet with an 'excellent' level. Comparing the changes to both groups, we can conclude that the results of the pedagogical experiment confirm the effectiveness of the use of the Callan Method in Maritime English course for future ship engineers.

CONCLUSIONS

Maritime English classes are essential for the professional development of future seafarers, and specifically marine engineers. Teachers of higher maritime education institutions continue to look for new methods in MET. The Callan Method has been proven as one of the effective methods of Maritime English teaching, which offers greater opportunities for speaking practice than other conventional methods, especially with SMCP or Simulated Radio Communication.

The Callan Method proved to be the most suitable for future ship engineers, compared to other methods, as it provides training in speaking at a fast pace, and is effective for automating language structures and marine terms. Nevertheless, some drawbacks were found to this method (e.g. a heavy reliance on the use of drills during classes). Future research prospects could focus on the use of the Callan Method to enhance communicative competence amongst future ship navigators and electrical engineers.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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