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REFORMATTING THE MARITIME ENGLISH SYLLABUS

Acting as a sample program of the ESP for future seafarers, the IMO model course 3.17 – Maritime English [1] like documents of this type provides the aims and objectives, a syllabus structure and content, as well as the methodology of the given course. It also suggests educational technologies, methods for monitoring the learning efficiency and the assessment of the Maritime English communicative competence development. As an important tool for interpreting of the requirements and recommendations of the STCW Convention, 1978, as amended, the model course 3.17 varies with every Convention revision.

So, the implementation of the Manila amendments in 2012 revealed a number of serious shortcomings and inconsistencies caused by the merchant fleet evolution and the intensive introduction of new technologies and sophisticated equipment, along with the ship automation systems, and the like [2, p. 250; 3, p. 232]. As a result, the model course, once again revised, was launched in 2015. Basic changes analysis is of a vital interest both for maritime education and training authorities and for Maritime English instructors.

The research is based on the comparative analysis method with the main task to compare the new updated model course 3.17 – Maritime English with its earlier edition and to understand the general trend of course development.

Actually, the model course 3.17 – Maritime English in its 3rd revised edition has already been analyzed by some experts and scientists from different perspectives. X. Jieying and R. Wei (2014) have devoted their study to the ways of orienting the model course on Maritime English toward a specific field. In his work X. Wang (2015) has brought up the issue of the language content revision due to the changes in the Maritime English nature. The updated language content implementation by means of genre-based approach has been discussed by Y. Cole and C. Zhang (2018).

The purpose and the structure of the course are presented in the introduction. describes the varied basis of the organization of training based on the actual (initial) level of language proficiency; noted a flexible approach to regulating the goals, scope and content of the course, as well as its other modifications regarding the future professional duties of graduates, and, most importantly, the communicative approach has been proclaimed the leading success factor in mastering competence in professionally oriented English speaking [1, p. 2-6].

In the updated version, the changes affected both the structure and the course content itself. Thus, the Maritime English is represented by two components: General Maritime English (GME) and Specialized Maritime English (SME). By contrast, there were General English and Maritime English in the previous edition.

The two main sections which represent the sequential phases of the training process have the identical structure and, in fact, make a standardized basis for the syllabus development, taking into account the professional language needs of future seafarers. Each section starts with short explanatory notes on the content and procedural aspects. Thus, the purpose of the first stage of training is to proceed from elementary or medium, i.e. A1 or A2 levels of English to the intermediate B1 level, taking into account the minimum standards of professional competence set forth in the STCW Code [4].

The second stage is aimed at achieving the advanced B2 level of professionally oriented communicative competence according to the requirements set out in Part A of the STCW Code, which describes the required competence standards for maritime specialists in various professional areas with different responsibilities [4, p.77] .

Based on the model course analysis, researchers of all its characteristic features emphasize such as:

- absolute professional orientation, regulated by international professional standards under the STCW Convention;
- genre-based approach to teaching and learning process, i.e. taking into account typical for maritime domain models of communication, or speech genres;

– complex and integrative nature, where the formation of professional English language speech activity is carried out by involving and developing all its components by means of a wide information field created by learning material of various disciplines [5].

Defining the Maritime English as “the code-tailored English for specific purposes” [3, p.150], the scientists underline the solid legal basis on which a model training course for the discipline has been developed including all its components:

– *a course framework* as the basis for its development in the specified subject area, where an appropriate learning model is created, presenting the expected results, ways for their achievement and evaluation;

– *a course outline*, or a brief description of the course content and the logic of its deployment;

– *a detailed teaching syllabus* based on a coordinated subject area.

Thus, the model course 3.17 as a program document including basic principles and arrangements for the implementation of the Maritime English teaching and learning process provides its clear-cut and targeted regulation via internationally recognized standards.

At the same time it provides a balance between the code-tailored standardization of a learning content, which generally acts as a narrowing and limiting factor, and a professional discourse, represented by a wide range of professional communication genres aboard a ship. The effectiveness of genres acquisition is provided by means of complex and integrative nature of the learning process.

References

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