



Maritime English Language – General Features

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to point out at the real role of English for specific purposes and its importance for the development of modern society (where English for specific purposes is accepted as the international language) and that the essential characteristics of English of maritime profession - as simultaneously creative and limited professional language are clearly and accurately defined. Under the linguistic creativity is primarily implied the ability of any natural language to create from a limited resource of linguistic units an unlimited number of linguistic units at all levels- the phonetic, phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactic and semantic level. Thus, limitation of linguistic units accompanied by linguistic unlimited creativity allows linguistic functionality, respectively the ability of language to respond to all challenges of civilization, man and society. With its creativity language transcends all boundaries and is ready to respond to any new accomplishment, invention or appearance of the modern age.

Keywords: register, lingua franca, interference, general language, specific purpose.

Introduction

Conversation is the widest field of social action, it is the system of the richest articulation, an inexhaustible potential and the widest opportunities. It is superior to the other (restrictive and narrowing) systems of discourse exchange; it is their origin and always alive source. The distinction between spontaneous and imposed creativity can be observed in the examples from the media and everyday conversation. Instead of connecting, which is the primary and natural function of one's language, the language can also separate and form the artificial boundary. In order to conclude this segment with the positive example in linguistic terms - diametrically different cultures, mentalities and people in the United States officially communicate in one language. The *Linguistic relativity hypothesis* purports about the limits of language based on which every man's view of the world is affected by the specific structure of the mother tongue at least in some aspects, therefore, European, Chinese, Arab and

Indian, from that very reason do not live in quite the same world. This assumption, very inspiring though unproven and probably not verifiable has long historical roots but is particularly associated with the American anthropological linguists Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf, during the half of this century. Around the same time, similar views induced a philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein to concise but deep conclusion that the limits of one's language are simultaneously the limits of his world.

In philosophy, psychology and other sciences has been written a lot about the existence of the "real world" (as it is) and the "projected world" (the world as we experience and see). For example, in the framework of linguistics this distinction is systematically applied by Jackendoff to the semantics of natural language. Thereby, he also enters in the field of cognitive psychology and observes linguistic structure as a product of the mind in which mental processes occur automatically and unconsciously. Contemporary researches in human and animal psychology support the statement of our inborn ability to create projected world and to understand each other (Jackendoff, 1983: 30).

English language as the global *lingua franca*

The only real option for overcoming the language barrier is the usage of a natural language, which serves as the global *lingua franca*. The English language has already become a world language, thanks to political and economic progress made over the last 200 years by the people who speak English. English is used in more than 60 countries as the official language and it takes a prominent place in more than 20 others. It either domineers or has a secure position on all six continents. English is the main language of publishing, journalism, international business and academic conferences, science, technology, medicine, sports, international competitions, pop music and advertising. More than two-thirds of the world's scientists write in English. From the total amount of information stored in the memories of English systems, 80% is in English. Radio-programs in English have been received by more than 150 million listeners in 120 countries. More than 50 million children have been learning English as an additional language at primary level; over 80 million students have been learning it in high schools (these numbers do not include China). It would not be difficult to fill in the next few pages with similar statistical data.

The number of native speakers of English now reaches around 300 million; another 300 million use English as a second language; and also 100 million speak it fluently as a foreign language. Some more radical assessments, which also take into account the speakers at a lower level of language fluency and knowledge show that the total number of speakers nowadays exceeds one billion.

Maritime English basic features

Although English has already been recognized as an international language both on land and at sea, it is necessary to be followed by clear rules in order to reduce the possibility of ambiguity and vagueness while sending and receiving messages. In contrast to the everyday communication, i.e. the conversation in which one statement performs a lot of different functions depending on the context, seafarer's English is precise and far more limited than everyday language. This linguistic limitation, respectively adjustedness is the key presumption for effective communication in the maritime profession.

For successful transmission of messages and communication in the maritime until nowadays have appeared several variants of maritime English, in linguistics known as *restricted languages*. British linguist (J.R.Firth) (1890-1960) introduced this term as a label for strictly reduced linguistic system that is used for a particular activity. This language is so contextually closed, that only a little linguistic variation is allowed. Such "languages" may be oral and written, and they can be found not only in specialized but also in everyday contexts. They usually consist of routinely-used formulaic structures, with conventionalized prosody or typographical layout, as well as the restricted vocabulary. Such languages are called "special languages" by Škiljan under the explanation "And within the society which overall uses one linguistic system, different forms of social and economic determinants encourage the emergence of particular, for the other participants of society at least partly incomprehensible "subsystems" - which are commonly referred to as *special languages*. Although the causes of their occurrence are quite diverse, they can probably be divided into three main groups: special languages emerged out of the need to be communicated a specific sub-set of non-linguistic universe, which is interesting as an object of traffic only for a particular group of speakers, or they have grown out of desire and intent that other speakers do not understand what is communicated about, or finally they are the result of the tendency of a social group to be identified by the linguistic labels within itself and distinguished from other groups.

Basil Bernstein, who originally developed the term, during the 60-ies of the last century (which we must admit, given the course of linguistic thought is by now ancient history) the restricted speech or code defined as a speech with short, grammatically simple, often incomplete sentences, simplicity and repetition of the same conjunctions, limited use of adjectives and adverbs (Bernstein, 1979: 19-22), so all in all speech that is incomplete, grammatically incorrect and with poor vocabulary. Bernstein attempted to prove that children from lower social classes use **exclusively** restricted speech as opposed to children from middle and upper social classes. Also in Bernstein's works is being observed the fact that even these so called limited speakers can be extremely knowledgeable in a particular area or when it comes to a particular area they are more skilled, more familiar, and even more educated from the so-called elaborated code. The farmer will be taken as an example, a man who spent

his lifetime in the countryside cultivating the land and being surrounded by parents or friends who are illiterate. Neither he nor his parents went to school, so maybe he did not have anyone to teach him about chemistry, physics or mathematics. If you ask him what is a resonance, interference or sinuous, very likely he will not know what it represents. However, if you ask him what is a mulcher very likely he will laugh at you and might even say: "It is impossible that you do not know!" He will explain to you not only what it is, but also how it works, what effect is achieved, of which is better than, etc. Does this mean that he comes under restricted speakers and therefore less intelligent people? Whether such man can demonstrate his overall knowledge in an artificial atmosphere of testing and in a situation where he is required to respond to just certain questions? A doctor of engineering science talking with a doctor of philology will also be taken as an example. The latter, in some kind of context might mention the ellipse, referring to the elliptical sentence that lacks a part of the sentence, and the first might think that it is a closed oval curve line and asked oneself what this has to do with what is discussed. Maybe on a given topic they will not have much to say but instead they will be silent and listen, does that mean that he comes from a lower social class, perhaps he is less educated, etc.? Who would agree with this? Some of the world's greatest experts are only experts when it comes to their specialty, beyond it or some other areas outside their interest they may know a lot less, be less knowledgeable, use poor vocabulary, etc.

English language as a life-saver

The needs and profile of our seafarers who are now sailing around the world have changed as well as the overall structure of the maritime industry. When it comes to teaching English, the easiest way is to stick to the old-fashioned methods because they are "most effective" for teachers who feel secure in familiar territory and do not want to change anything in their work with future seafarers. Maybe their classes are under control and predictable but a completely different atmosphere prevails on the open sea, i.e. aboard. There are people, without their families, left to the sea and to their knowledge of "the trade". They go to work every morning without abandoning the ship.

Any error is paid dearly – from technical to language ones. In methodology can be distinguished two types of errors in foreign language learning: *mistake* and *error*. This distinction can be also applied to errors in maritime communication depending on the weight and consequences of failures. The consequence is too mild word for what can follow an error or a mistake in the communication between ship-to-ship, ship-to-shore or the navigational bridge - engine room. Material loss is not worth mentioning in comparison to a human life. Multinationality of ship's crews requires one common internationally recognized language, which is followed by certain rules of communication. English became the world, and thus the maritime language number one, not because of its linguistic qualities, but of the economic and military superiority

of the United Kingdom. The race for that position was long lost for Spanish and Italian even for German language.

As it has already been mentioned, maritime English should be precise, and it can never be overdone in emphasizing of the *accuracy* in the register of maritime profession. Thus, the limitation of maritime English is just as important, if not, even more important characteristic of professional language - precisely that adjustedness, respectively standardization is essential for communication between ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore. It can even be concluded that safety of lives at sea primarily depends on that limitation, respectively standardization. In other words, successful communication in the field of maritime transport is impossible without the use of standardized marine communication phrases, which were introduced by the IMO organization in 2001. Communication in maritime and air transport is unthinkable without standardization of these registers.

Registers and sub-registers

In achieving its primary task - and that is communication in such a complex phenomenon as the society is - no language, regardless of its standardization, is homogeneous but complex, composed of numerous differences. It is not realized as a single entity, but with non-linguistic influences *is stratified* into linguistic layers, respectively speech variations, which despite their peculiarities, are difficult to separate - as the transitions are continuous. Speech variations are sociolinguistic forms that show functioning of non-linguistic impacts on language and their connection. Thus, all speech variations are the layers of unique system - *language*. That the language is not homogeneous and that is very creative, the proof lies in every individual who in his speaking knowledge has a number of speech variations that are often used unconsciously, depending on non-linguistic impacts, i.e. situations in which language is realized as a means of communication. There is a sociolinguistic term for this substitution of speech variations - *change of the code*, and the English term *code switching*. There are several classifications of language layers, and some of them have inconsistent names. We can meet terms such as *style, variant, type, dialect, sociolect, idiolect and jargon*. Idiolect represents a linguistic style of the individual. It reflects individuality and characteristics of speech representative (education, professional and social affiliation).

In contrast to the territorial stratification of language which creates variants of standardized language and dialects, *functional layers* occur by functional stratification, respectively speech variations characterized by specific choice of linguistic resources, their frequency, and they are determined by situation as non-linguistic category. The situation in which the language is realized, includes the function, the type and the domain of activity, place and time, the theme and participants in communication.

Sociolinguistic forms are the result of the usage, and depend on the use of certain groups of people who share common interests, professional orientation and activities. There are several terms in our language for this linguistic layer, namely: *professional language, language of the vocation, special language and scientific language*. In English, this linguistic layer has these terms: *special languages, technical languages and languages for specific purposes*.

Despite their linguistic characteristics, professional languages do not separate their users from other members of the speech communities, unlike sociolect (register of certain social class) or, for example, a secret language (the language of thieves, soldiers, students). On the contrary! Professional languages strive to provide an easier and more economical use of language. Linguistic limitation, in this sense, is another key aspect of professional language.

On the other hand, by their professional orientation, and from the standpoint of linguistic creativity, professional languages can be economic, maritime, medical, technical, business - in every professional field there is a specific language of that field, i.e. the profession. At the linguistic macro level, language has branches like a tree in our illustration.

Regarding that the professional language is used for special areas and special purposes, it may be considered as the sublanguage of the language as a whole, or the type of language in which can be seen multiple registers. By its structure, professional languages are not homogeneous, they are also multi-layered structure, which again points to linguistic creativity. In different situations, there is a further stratification of sublanguage, i.e. a type of language and creating sub-layers, i.e. *registers* further narrowing in *sub-registers*, covering smaller areas.

Therefore, keeping in mind the usage and outspread, the language can be divided into:

- general language used by all members of a speaking community;
- language for specific purpose

Modern approach to the study of language is interdisciplinary. In studies of language, which is observed in its use, just knowledge which is directly related to language is not sufficient. When attention is focused on the language of a certain profession/science, knowledge of linguistics and applied linguistics cannot be bypassed, as well as knowledge belonging to the fields of sociolinguistics, cultural linguistics, psycholinguistics and other disciplines related to language. However, a good knowledge of the methods and contents of certain professional/scientific field is also necessary. Language is the most expressive instrument that allows communication between people. Both experts and scientists from around the world, who belong to a certain profession/science communicate through language, but that language has its own peculiarities and differs from everyday conversation - general language. As it has already been pointed out, English is now the most represented

language in professional and scientific communication in most discourse communities which are formed in order to satisfy the need of communication. The question is raised about the rules that apply in English which is used by members of such discourse community, if English is their mother tongue or a second, respectively foreign language. Keeping in mind today's role of English in the world of different professions and sciences, knowledge of the rules, respectively conventions of shaping and usage of this language should be applied in everyday practice of professionals and scientists who use English as their language of communication.

When it comes to the methodology of this paper, analysis of the functional segmentation is based on the sub-registers of maritime English, which will be taken into account when necessary. Some of the components and levels of English language, which is used for this purpose, can be elucidated primarily using synchronous studies. If more levels are included in the testing and various forms of analysis are applied, there is a possibility that the language is comprehensively perceived. If this approach is consistently applied, i.e. constantly bearing in mind the objectives of the research, results revealing the function of individual components and the structure of the analyzed language levels, their connection and completeness of language can be obtained. It then provides a picture of the way the language is actually manifested in reality.

The peculiarity of professional language is its vocabulary, which depends on the usage of people who rely on it. In addition to the terminology, it contains parts of the general lexicon. Vocabulary is the most powerful communicative barrier for the layman, who recognizes professional language by a large number of unknown words.

It is important to emphasize that the lexicon of general and professional language has been mutually enriching, because there is a mutual activity of general and professional language, which is reflected in the presence of parts of general lexis in professional language and penetration of professional words in the general language.

Taking into account this internal differentiation, we can extract the registers used only by certain group of people, using specific terminology. This limited communication can be further narrowed in the sub-registers that have already been mentioned, and which include more specific areas of scientific disciplines, as shown in the following illustration.

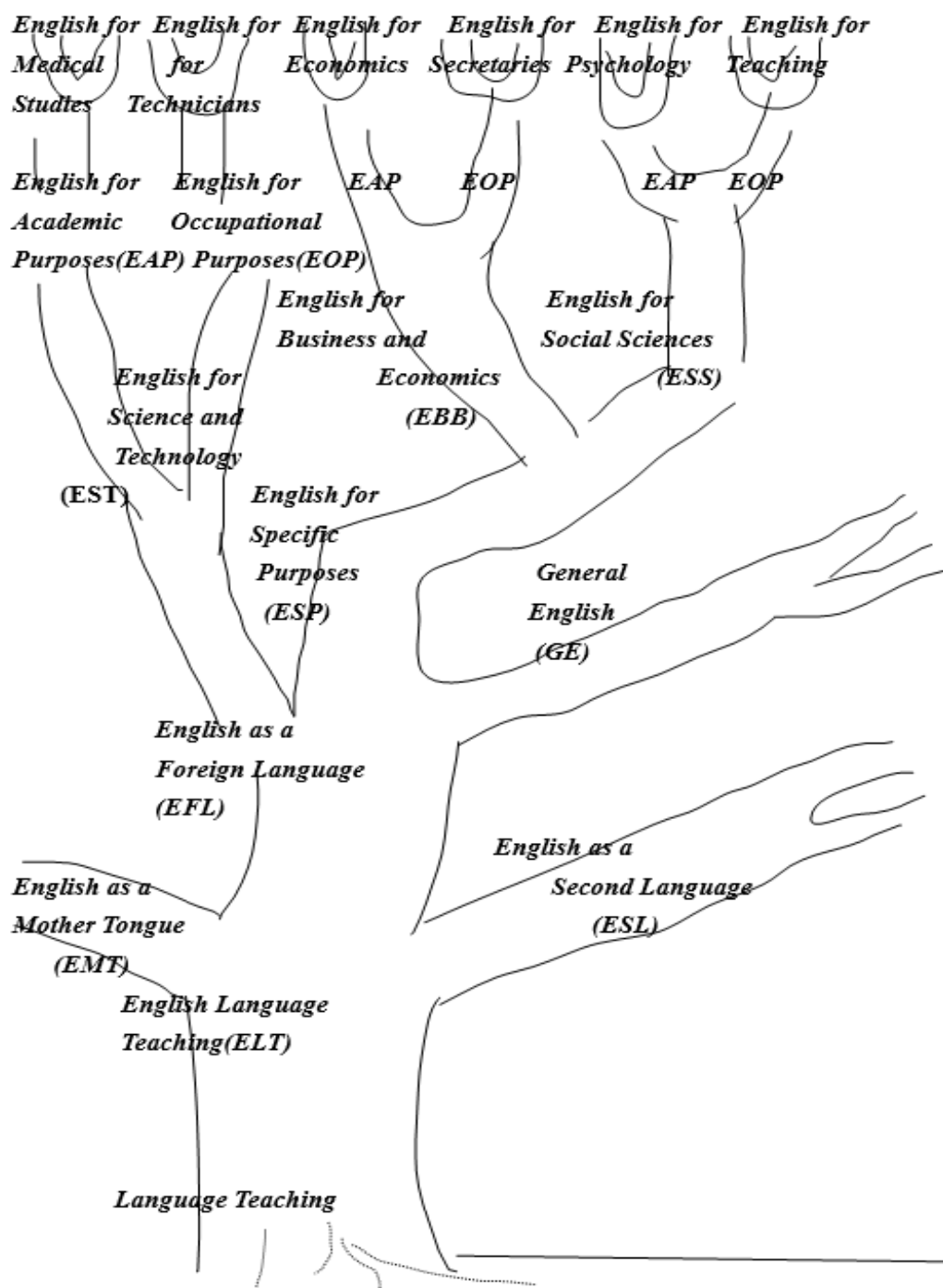


Figure1: The tree of English language registers

Conclusion

Nowadays in maritime of the world English is widely accepted as a means of communication, and is exclusively used in most of the world's ports and countries. Only in Latin American countries Spanish is used in maritime and, partially, Portuguese. English for seafarers is an instrument of communication which they use not only for the performance of professional activities, but also in everyday contacts. It has a long-term goal for its users. Among other maritime languages (Spanish, Italian, French and Russian), it is a means of international communication at sea, considering the spread of its use. It has developed on a large scale, as an instrument of communication - from everyday communication, written and oral information, documentation, to scientific presentations. rite a short review about work and research done in paper and indicate paper highlights.

Unlike English, our maritime language has no role in the global maritime communication. Its function is limited to local area use. Due to its specific development, our maritime language is the subject of study both linguists and maritime experts. The characteristic of our maritime language is borrowing from other languages (in earlier centuries, especially from Italian, and more recently from maritime English) and fighting for local expressions. In addition to that , present language of our seafarers is based on lexical heritage of the whole our Adriatic coast, which gives it a diversity, semantic and stylistic abundance and flexibility of use. This is contributed by numerous maritime school, where unjustifiably little attention is paid to our maritime language. Each seafarer requires a good knowledge of the mother tongue, as well as the knowledge of other vocational subjects, but the written culture of our seafarers has not been satisfactory yet.

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