

## THE STRATEGIES OF STUDENT-CENTERED APPROACH AT THE MARITIME ENGLISH LEARNING PROCESS

**Tymofyeyeva O. Ya.**

*PhD in Pedagogics, Associate Professor,  
Senior Lecturer at the Department of Humanities  
Danube Institute of the National University "Odessa Maritime Academy"  
Fanagoriyska str., 7, Izmail, Odesa region, Ukraine  
[orcid.org/0000-0001-6645-5604](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6645-5604)  
[tymofoksana@gmail.com](mailto:tymofoksana@gmail.com)*

**Konstantynova T. M.**

*Assistant Professor at the Department of the Humanities  
Danube Institute of the National University "Odessa Maritime Academy"  
Fanagoriyska str., 7, Izmail, Odesa region, Ukraine  
[orcid.org/0000-0002-6374-343X](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6374-343X)  
[tanyuscha29051979@gmail.com](mailto:tanyuscha29051979@gmail.com)*

**Key words:**

*Maritime English, student-centered approach, seafarers, soft skills, group work.*

The article deals with the student-centered teaching as an integrated part of the communicative approach at the Maritime English learning process. The modern marine industry requires a certain set of soft skills of future seafarers. The communicative approach in the Maritime English learning process is considered to be the most appropriate one giving the opportunities to develop these skills. The required skills and opportunities are highlighted in the article. The research is based on fundamental ideas and principles of the student-centered approach such as individualization, humanization, differentiation of learning and personal development. Student-centered learning reflecting some ideas of the social constructivist view gives prominence to the activity and the importance of communities of practice with others in the learning process. The notion learning situation is clarified. It includes standards-based goals for learning languages, multiple intelligences, affective filter, brain compatible strategies, as a part of socio cultural theory. Consequently this approach enables the teachers or instructors to choose the forms and methods of teaching at different levels and with different initial data of the cadets or students. The principle of selectivity of the learning context and the forms of the subject under study are utilized for improving the learning outcomes. The authors represent the practical issues of this approach at the Maritime English classes. The following tasks are given in the research: "Pass the Problem", "The Same Problem", "Trust Fall", "Tell some stories", "Collaborative dialogue" or "Collaborative story" and the jigsaw activities for the development of four language skills. Special attention is given to teamwork and personal responsibility as well as to the various forms of group work for the purpose of interconnection and collaboration. Such methods of student-centered approach as case-based instruction, problem-based and project-based learning and similar ones are considered to be advantageous and appropriate for the Maritime English learning process.

## СТРАТЕГІЇ СТУДЕНТСЬКО-ОРІЄНТОВАНОГО ПІДХОДУ В ПРОЦЕСІ ВИКЛАДАННЯ МОРСЬКОЇ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ

**Тимофєєва О. Я.**

*кандидат педагогічних наук, доцент,  
доцент кафедри гуманітарних дисциплін  
Дунайський інститут*

*Національного університету «Одеська морська академія»  
вул. Фанагорійська, 7, Ізмаїл, Одеська область, Україна  
orcid.org/0000-0001-6645-5604  
tymofoksana@gmail.com*

**Константинова Т. М.**

*старший викладач кафедри гуманітарних дисциплін  
Дунайський інститут*

*Національного університету «Одеська морська академія»  
вул. Фанагорійська, 7, Ізмаїл, Одеська область, Україна  
orcid.org/0000-0002-6374-343X  
tanyuscha29051979@gmail.com*

**Ключові слова:**

*морська англійська мова,  
студентсько-орієнтовний  
підхід, моряки, софт («м'які»)  
навички, групова робота.*

У статті розглядається студентсько-орієнтовний підхід до навчання як складник комунікативного підходу в процесі вивчення морської англійської мови. Сучасна морська галузь вимагає від майбутніх моряків наявності певного набору софт («м'яких») навичок. Комунікативний підхід у процесі навчання морської англійської мови вважається найбільш гідним і доречним. Він дає можливості для розвитку цих навичок. Висвітлюються необхідні навички та можливості використання зазначеного підходу. Дослідження базується на фундаментальних ідеях і принципах студентсько-орієнтовного підходу, таких як індивідуалізація, гуманізація, диференціація навчання та особистісний розвиток. Студентсько-орієнтовний підхід відображає деякі ідеї соціального конструктивістського погляду, відзначає активність і важливість спільнот у процесі навчання комунікації та вивчення іноземної мови. Розкрито поняття «навчальна ситуація». Воно включає цілі, засновані на стандартах вивчення мов, множині інтелекту, афективний фільтр, мозкові стратегії як частини соціокультурної теорії. Отже, такий підхід дає змогу викладачам чи інструкторам обирати форми та методи навчання на різних рівнях і з різними початковими даними курсантів чи студентів. Для покращення вихідних результатів навчання використовується принцип вибірковості навчального контексту й форми тем, що вивчаються. Автори представляють приклади практичного застосування такого підходу на заняттях з морської англійської мови. У дослідженні надаються такі завдання: «Вирішити проблему», «Така сама проблема», «Падіння з довірою», «Розкажіть кілька історій», «Спільний діалог» або «Спільна історія» та завдання мозаїчного («пилка») типу для розвитку чотирьох мовленнєвих навичок. Особлива увага приділяється роботі в команді й особистій відповідальності, а також різним формам групової роботи з метою співпраці. Такі методи студентсько-орієнтовного підходу як ситуативне навчання, проблемне та проектне навчання тощо, вважаються продуктивними й відповідають навчальній меті, кінцевим цілям процесу навчання морській англійській мови.

**Problem statement.** The world maritime industry states a number of requirements for the professional qualities of seafarers. The task of higher marine educational institutions is to train future employees and develop both their professional and personal skills. This dual vision of the final goal of the whole training process enables the cadets to perform their duties safely and effectively in future. The working environment of the seafarers is diverse in cultural, religious and linguistic fields and they are supposed to be able to adapt to fast-paced conditions of the international crews and the adversities namely confined space, vibration, change of time zones, everyday routine, limited social circle. Furthermore the task of higher marine educational institutions is to develop the cadets' desire for self-education or life-long learning as a part of professional realization. This notion can comprise the knowledge of one's strengths and weaknesses, and thus person will manage to mitigate gaps in personal development. The implementation of student-centered learning strategies is one of the most effective ways of achieving it.

Maritime English training or teaching field represents a variety of the studies of the researchers and methodologists all over the world. General overview is given by R. Ahmmed [1], N. Demydenko [2], J.D. Navarro [3], H. Ahmed [4, p. 12–25], others [5]. The gap of the question in the study of the student-centered approach in Maritime English teaching process is not studied to the full extent thus it determines **the purpose of the article**. The study attempts to provide the practical issues of the mentioned approach.

**The main material.** The training process of future seafarers should be student-centered. The cadet or student being the subject or source of this process gains the opportunities for personal vital activity and development. The learning process becomes personal oriented. It allows transforming the cadets' acquired subjective experience, what they have already known and experienced, into required professional knowledge, what they should learn, and prioritizing properly.

Modern researchers regard the student-centered approach as psychological and pedagogical principle of organization of educational and vocational learning process which directly affects the efficiency of the cadet's personality development. For higher marine educational institutions such learning is of particular importance due to the definition and the possibility to choose the forms and methods of teaching at different levels and with different initial data of the cadets, that is, his or her personal experience and level of knowledge of the learning material. Moreover the cadet has the opportunity to express his abilities and to use the principle of selectivity of the learning context and the forms of the subject under study. The subjective experience

of the cadet is in constant interconnection with the scientific content of the acquired knowledge and practical skills during the learning process.

The basic ideas of student-centered approach are individualization, humanization, differentiation of learning. These concepts intersect with ideas of personal development provided by Carl Rogers (1983), Burnard (1999), Rogoff (1999). Carlile and Jordan integrated the constructivist view of learning and its importance with the activity, discovery and independent learning. [6] Student-centered learning also reflects some visions of the social constructivist view, in emphasizing the activity and the importance of communities of practice with others in the learning process.

Student-centered learning can be presented as the continuum of the three concepts, namely the level of student choice, student activity and the power; the higher level of these concepts the more student-centered educational environment becomes [6]. The main objective of the learning process is the creation of the educational setting by means of context and methods for self actuating and fulfillment of the personal skills and capabilities of the cadet or student.

The ideas of taking responsibility for own learning, directly involving students in the learning process and raising their social activities like collaboration, meaningful communication, choice and cooperation are highlighted by Lynch (2010) in the view of the principles of the student-centered approach [7]. Some of these principles are as follows: firstly, students should develop their own knowledge by communication, critical thinking, and problem solving. These skills are deservedly considered to the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Secondly, learning of irrelevant materials could be substituted by the students' opportunity to learn directly related materials to their real life and future occupation.

The main procedural characteristic of the student centered approach is determined as the learning situation [8]. Student-centered approach focuses on students: what students need to learn (standards-based goals for learning languages), how students learn (multiple intelligences, affective filter, brain compatible strategies, socio cultural theory). The learning situation can be constructed with the consideration of the following technologies: task based (the elements of the context are multi-level personal oriented tasks), dialogue oriented (dialogue is didactic and communicative environment of the learning process) and role play (imitation of social and professional roles under various time conditions). The algorithm is "task – dialogue – play". Such learning situation requires the student engagement considering that learning is improved when students are inquisitive, interested or inspired, involved. Consequently allowing the development of non-cognitive skills such as

motivation, responsibility, work habits, social skills, self-regulation.

The requirements to the competences of seafarers of all ranks of the international fleet are stated in the STCW Convention by the IMO. The mentioned non-cognitive skills are of the utmost importance in the view of the management requirements to the seafarers, especially when they occupy the position of senior officers. The skills often referred to as soft ones are teamwork, leadership, critical thinking, prioritization, decision making and problem solving, motivation, human resources, cultural awareness, communication strategies, self awareness (described as personal and professional development, knowledge of personal abilities, strengths and weaknesses), self-control and self-regulation. The knowledge and practical applicability of these fields should be developed during the course of study at the higher institutions. The English classes with the implementation of the prominent principles of the student-centered approach are considered to be one of the most appropriate ways and places for this development.

Maritime English as a subtype of English for specific purpose is mostly taught and learnt via the communicative approach, the goal of which is the communicative competence of future seafarers. The STCW requires the proper use of English in oral and written forms [9]. The seafarers should use the English language for professional and social purposes, for on- and off-duty situations. Such efficient level of English supposes the active involving into the learning process: the participants, cadets and teachers, are equally immersed. This way of learning process actually reflects the principles of student-centered approach. The learning environment activates the hidden capabilities of the individual and the group as a community via the interconnection and collaboration by means of various forms of group work. This method of the maritime English teaching enables the cadets to communicate complex professional and social ideas in a clear and concise manner by means of pair work (think-pair-share), small group work, interviewing speakers.

The important point of the student-centered learning is the question of motivation with the consequent success of the activity. It is appropriate to use the elements of motivation, instruction and advancing techniques. It gives the opportunity to create the conditions for the pattern “expected success – personal success – collective success”. This pattern enhances the understanding or realization, development and application of teamwork principles in the further professional activities. Moreover the feeling of respect for the other person and proper appreciation of everyone's contribution to the success of the common activity is regarded to be an important personal trait to work under the conditions of international crews

and is also developed during the teamwork activities. The respect for a partner is impossible without self-esteem, that is the acceptance of the subject of social or professional communicative interaction as he or she is. We deal with the formation of tolerance and intercultural dialogue. The crew at sea works as a unique system all elements of which cooperate, interconnect and substitute one another in case of necessity or emergency. The idea of “success of one person is the success of the whole crew” is not just words in the air; it means lives of the crewmembers and safety of the environment. Thus creation of the teamwork skills is of the significant value.

The active learning allows creating the conditions under which the cadets become eager to communicate while solving problems, formulate questions of their own and search answer to the deliberative questions. Learning with the help of teamwork gives the student such abilities as teaching others, practicing by doing, having skills of in group discussions, immersion in audio-visual language environment, reading and also listening to any person. It means the readiness for discussion activities (explain, debate, or brainstorm during class); cooperative and research learning, in which cadets work in teams on problems and projects under conditions that assure both positive interdependence and individual accountability.

An effective process of team work succeeds as cadet acquires skills like individual responsibility and accountability, constructive feedback, problem solving, knowledge of roles within a group (facilitator, idea-generator, summarizer, encourager and so on). For the development of teamwork skills the following forms of work are worth being used. The task “Pass the Problem”: cadets are divided into groups of 3 or 4, the first group is given the problem (the case concerning the topic under study, such as any aspect of marine legislation, emergency situations or disaster at sea, engineering problems), their task during the limited time is to identify the first step in solving it or to determine the first reason of it or stating the first lesson that can be learnt from this situation. Then the task is passed to the second group and they identify the second step, reason or lesson. The passing circle continues until all subgroups give their decision. The last stage is the whole group discusses pros and cons of the final result and how the subgroups manage to follow the sustainability and sequence of the question. The task “Fishbowl Debate”: teacher asks cadets to sit in groups of three. Then the roles are assigned. The first person takes one position on learning topic for debate, the second person takes the opposite position, and the third person takes notes and decides which side is the most convincing and provides an argument for his or her choice. And then teacher with the group summarizes their discussions. The task “The Same Problem” will add the elements of competitiveness between the

groups thus enforcing the members of one group to unite more closely for achieving the goal to win. For this task the problem is given for all subgroups, some tips can be presented but the task is to find answer or solve it and then compare with others, the activity is performed simultaneously. The group work of cadets can also benefit from some dispute video; the main task of teacher here is to allow cadets to choose the topic. Tasks that get students trusting each other are as follows. The task “Trust Fall” involves one team member standing backwards, relying on the rest of the team to catch them when they fall. Consider tasks that have cadets sharing personal stories or information about themselves with their team. This may be a game of “Tell some stories” and through a series of questions, one group has to guess which one is a lie; or it may be a “Show and Tell” where group members have to choose a photo from their mobile phone to share with their group. Alternatively, the class is shown a video and has one cadet sit with his or her back facing the screen. The other group mates then should tell the “blind” learner what they have seen on the screen. The task “Collaborative dialogue” or “Collaborative story” is one of the favorite tasks for cadets. It is applied at the end of some topic or section of program, some titles or essential phrases of the topic are written down on pieces of paper, put into box and mixed. Every team takes out randomly 2 or 3 items and during given time composes dialogue or story on the topic. Then the cadets present their story or dialogues. Any jigsaw type of work for language activity is also very productive, it can be reading or listening task, the extra-points are attentive listening,

interdependence, interaction and complete immersion into the learning process. Jigsaw tasks are an excellent way to integrate the four language skills, as the cadets read or listen to the text, or speak and listen to others to reconstruct the information in the text.

The Maritime English gives the platform for wide use of such methods of student-centered approach as case-based instruction, problem-based and project-based learning and similar ones. The question or case or problem should be realistic, future job related, the source of such tasks should be reliable. The requirement to the cadets is the interest, motivation and use of English as the target language. The practice areas for student-centered approach distinguished by Maryellen Weimer’s are affected sufficiently at the Maritime English classes [10]. The content of the learning is future job related and authentic, the role of the teacher is facilitating and instructing, the responsibility for learning lies with the cadets, the processes and purposes of evaluation coincide with the requirements of the future employment and the balance of power is distributed evenly between the participants of the learning process.

**Conclusions.** The student-centered approach encourages independent thinking by means of assisting the cadets in working out own strategies. The independence of thinking and solving the problem is highly required when they are aboard the ship. This method prepares future seafarers, the officers of the merchant fleet to take responsibilities. It helps to develop the characteristics of lifelong learning such as motivation, self-evaluation, time management and skills to access information.

### References

1. Raju Ahmmed. (2018). The Approaches of Teaching and Learning Maritime English: Some Factors to Consider. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327890823\\_The\\_Approaches\\_of\\_Teaching\\_and\\_Learning\\_Maritime\\_English\\_Some\\_Factors\\_to\\_Consider](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327890823_The_Approaches_of_Teaching_and_Learning_Maritime_English_Some_Factors_to_Consider) (accessed 27 August 2020) (in English).
2. Nadiya Demydenko. (2012) Teaching Maritime English: A Linguistic Approach. *Journal of Shipping and Ocean Engineering*. Vol. 2. pp. 249–254 (in English).
3. Jomarie D. Navarro, Zenaida Z. Garbin, Edwin M. Agena, Olympio B. Garcia. 2015. Maritime Students’ English Proficiency and Their Feedback on Instructional Materials. *Asia Pacific Journal of Maritime Education*. 2015. Vol. 1. No. 1. Retrieved from <http://oaji.net/articles/2016/2552-1465785486.pdf> (accessed 27 August 2020) (in English).
4. Harth J. Ahmed. (2013). The impact of maritime English communication training for non-native English language speakers concerning the competency of seafarers : Iraqi maritime sector case study. *World Maritime University Dissertations*. pp. 12–25. Retrieved from [http://commons.wmu.se/all\\_dissertations/235](http://commons.wmu.se/all_dissertations/235) (accessed 27 August 2020) (in English).
5. Learning and teaching issues. (2008) *The International Maritime English Conference IMLA-IMEC “The Role of Maritime English – Promoting Communication and Understanding Culture”*. Shanghai, P. R. China October 27–30. Retrieved from <http://imla.co/sites/default/files/imec20.pdf> (accessed 27 August 2020) (in English).
6. O’Neill, Geraldine & McMahon, Tim. (2005). Student-centred learning: What does it mean for students and lecturers? *Emerging Issues in the Practice of University Learning and Teaching*. Vol. 1. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/241465214\\_Student-centred\\_learning\\_What\\_does\\_it\\_mean\\_for\\_students\\_and\\_lecturers](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/241465214_Student-centred_learning_What_does_it_mean_for_students_and_lecturers) (accessed 27 August 2020) (in English).

7. Lynch, D. N. (2010). *Student-Centered Learning: The Approach That Better Benefits Students*. Virginia Wesleyan College (in English).
8. Serikov V.V. (1999). *Obrazovanie i lichnost'. Teoriya i praktika proektirovaniya pedagogicheskikh sistem* [Education and Personality. Theory and Practice of Projecting of the Educational Systems]. Moscow (in Russian).
9. International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 Retrieved from <http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/HumanElement/TrainingCertification/Pages/STCW-Convention.aspx> (accessed 25 August 2020) (in English).
10. Weimer, M. (2013). *Learner-Centred Teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, A Wiley Company (in English).