The Existing Situation and Training about Maritime English Teachers in China

Ding Zi-hua

Jiangsu Maritime Institute, Nanjing, Jiangsu 211170, China

Abstract: Based on analyzing the existing situation about Maritime English teachers in China, a qualified maritime English teacher must not only have the good English competence but also be familiar with the related maritime knowledge. In this paper, the author proposes some effective ways to improve the qualities of maritime English teachers.

Key words: Maritime English, the existing situation of ME teachers, teaching effect, effective ways

1. Introduction

It's widely accepted that teacher's qualities are pivotal to the success of any education, which is the safeguard of teaching effect and teaching reform. In class, a teacher is not only the organizer of the student to positively participate in the teaching activity, but also the assessor of the teaching difficulties and teaching effect, especially in ESP (English for Specific Purposes). ESP is integrity of common English and professional English and has a great variety of major topics, such as, Maritime English (ME) which is a combination of language and professional knowledge, so a qualified maritime English teacher (MET) must master the general English (GE) and professional navigation knowledge, because the goal of maritime English is to cultivate the student having good professional navigation English skills. Therefore, as a maritime English teacher, he should not only have the solid English language foundation, but also have the corresponding maritime-technology knowledge.

2. The Requirements of METs

Language education is often discussed from the

point of the view of teachers, whose beliefs, goals, attitudes, and decision may influence the approach of teaching have already been examined. English for Specific Purposes covers the specialized language and vocabularies which need for a wide variety of careers and occupations, so there are a lot of questions emerging, such as, the teacher's native language/experience and/or training/knowledge of the second language and its culture/philosophy of education/personality characteristics. So how teacher and student interact with each other engaging in linguistic communication is the most important. Therefore, teachers should not only have some English language skills but also some specialized training for career purposes, especially in Maritime-English teaching. Many schools are shifting the teaching from traditional teaching methodology to innovating language teaching approach. In line with the requirements of the development of modern shipping enterprise and the demands of relevant international documents of IMO, a qualified MET must meet the followings.

(I) A qualified maritime English teacher should receive the better education in language because an English teacher must be not only skilled at the using of the language, but also familiar with the traditions in English-speaking countries. Therefore, he/she should be trained language systematically; moreover, he/she

Corresponding author: Ding Zi-hua, Master, research fields: ESP and maritime education, E-mail: johnsondh2004@yahoo.com.cn.

had better have the living experience in English-speaking countries;

(II) A qualified MET should be familiar with the maritime subjects and their vocabularies. As one kind of ESP, ME is more technical than any other ESP which has a lot of major vocabularies covering all maritime subjects, such as the international regulations, navigational technology, aids to navigation, cargo handling, vessel maneuvering, weather reports, standard maritime communication phrases, ship logbook and so on;

(III) A qualified MET should be familiar with some maritime operations. The practicality of ME requires better ability of case analyzing, but most English-trained maritime English teachers lack the experience on board which makes them not understand the textbook's content thoroughly, so they must go to the job-site to familiarize some specific operations.

3. The Analysis of Maritime English Teachers

From Table 1 (Investigation on maritime-English-teachers in some maritime college in China), there are two main kinds of teachers teaching English in maritime universities:

Chinese maritime English teachers

There are also two kinds of Chinese maritime English teachers. They are English-trained maritime English teachers and Maritime-trained maritime English teachers;

Foreign maritime English teachers from English speaking countries

Among them there are also two kinds, such as English-trained or other major trained maritime English teachers and Maritime-trained maritime English teachers. But only a few teachers who are familiar with the general English, maritime English and

Table 1 Investigation on maritime-English-teachers in some maritime college.

College	Professional title		Educational background		Age		Major		Sailing experience	
	Title	Total	Education	Total	Age	Total	Eng	Nav.	Yes	No
1 Dalian Maritime University	Prof.	2	Doc.	2	>50	2				
	Vice-Prof	4	Master	8	50--40	7				
	lecturer	4	Bachelor	0	40--30	1	0	10	8	2
	assistant lecturer	0			<30	0				
2 Wuhan University of Technology	Prof.	2	Doc.	3	>50	1				
	Vice-Prof	6	Master	6	50--40	7				
	lecturer	1	Bachelor	0	40--30	1	2	7	7	2
	assistant lecturer	0			<30					
3 Qin-dao Ocean-shipping Mariner College	Prof.	0	Doc.	0	>50					
	Vice-Prof	12	Master	9	50--40					
	lecturer	4	Bachelor	2	40--30		14	2	6	10
	assistant lecturer	0			<30					
4 Nantong Shipping College	Prof.	2	Doc.	1	>50	3				
	Vice-Prof	2	Master	12	50--40	2				
	lecturer	9	Bachelor	1	40--30	9	14	1	1	15
	assistant lecturer	1			<30					
5 Jiangsu Maritime College	Prof.	1	Doc.	0	>50	2				
	Vice-Prof	3	Master	7	50--40	2				
	lecturer	6	Bachelor	4	40--30	6	2	9	3	8
	assistant lecturer	1			<30	1				
6 Sum		60							25	35

maritime subjects, and most English trained maritime English teachers are poor in maritime English and maritime subjects, and most Maritime-trained maritime English teachers are not good at general English.

3.1 English-Trained Maritime English Teachers

This kind of maritime English teachers is very familiar with language, because they all graduated from foreign language college. In several years' college life, they have been trained language systematically, so they are good at teaching language, such as article structure analyzing, grammar, pronunciation. But they lack profound professional knowledge badly, especially maritime knowledge which covers navigation technology, shipping-handling, pollution-proof, the international regulations, meteorology, stowage, aids to navigation, ship's structure, cargo-handling, emergency actions and so on. Therefore, most English-trained maritime English teachers often complain that they have never received systematic maritime knowledge training and often meet difficulties in explaining the ESP's vocabularies or sentences in the class. As a result, they cannot understand the content of the text thoroughly and they are difficult to combine the maritime majors with the English teaching well.

3.2 Maritime-Trained Maritime English Teachers

This kind of maritime English teachers is very familiar with maritime subjects, because in their college life they have studied the maritime knowledge systematically and have at least half-a-year on-board experience which enables them to help students in Maritime English reading, especially in National Seafarers' Examination for High Certificate of Competence. But most of them have never received systematical training on English, so they are not good at pronunciation, vocabularies, language backgrounds, grammar and article-structure analyzing which make them difficult to well explain what they want to

discuss and say in English well. A teacher who speaks English well does not mean he is a qualified teacher, not to mention a teacher who cannot speak English well.

3.3 Foreign Maritime English Teachers from English Speaking Countries

Now some maritime universities have invited some foreigners to take part in maritime English teaching, but the number is small, and some of them are not familiar with maritime knowledge, so they are only teaching English speaking and listening or other practical English. Due to the fact that they do not often communicate with the other Chinese maritime English teachers well, they cannot teach according to the teaching requirements.

3.4 All the Maritime English Teachers

In China, all maritime English teachers lack close co-operations, and most of them are poor in researching and investigation. A qualified Maritime English teacher must do some researches, so the researching ability is very important, which covers:

(I) To investigate the effectiveness of teaching

Maritime English teachers must assess the effectiveness of course and materials and so on, because the effectiveness of teaching is the key of class-teaching;

(II) To understand maritime English learners' need

If a teacher cannot understand maritime English learners' need, he/she cannot take appropriate methods to improve his/her teaching efficiency;

(III) To do some academic researches

A qualified maritime English teacher should take part in some academic researches which cover English teaching, maritime majors and some relating academic activities.

The academic researches are the crucial factor in evaluation of professional title which is judged by how many papers are published on the public magazines. Most papers written by maritime English

teachers in foreign language department focus on English language teaching, not maritime English teaching; however, as a MET in maritime university, he/she must improve his/her Maritime English academic researching ability.

4. The Methods for Improving Maritime English Teachers

Based on the existing situations, it's necessary and imperative to take some proper methods to train maritime English teachers and to improve the qualities of maritime English teachers.

4.1 Training on English Maritime English Teachers

Because of knowing little about maritime knowledge, English-trained maritime English teachers must be trained the maritime knowledge systematically by diversifying training programs.

(I) Before starting teaching ME, they must take at least 6-month intensive courses to train general knowledge of maritime, such as: to organize the maritime teachers to give them lectures about the maritime knowledge regularly or to sent English-trained maritime English teachers to the maritime companies to get more chances to communicate with the mariners to get to know the maritime situations and so on;

(II) With the fast developing of shipping industry, more and more new vocabularies and new rules and advanced technologies appear in maritime, so English-trained maritime English teachers should often take some time to attend some courses to update their maritime knowledge. Maritime is a sort of nature science which has a lot of diagram constructing, digit analyzing and so on, which is difficult for English-trained maritime English teachers to understand, so they can learn it by PPT, diagram, pictures;

(III) To take some methods to enhance the communications between the English-trained maritime English teachers, English-trained maritime English

teachers and maritime-trained maritime English teachers, English-trained maritime English teachers and English-trained maritime English teachers;

(IV) To send the maritime English teachers aboard or to Maritime universities to further study.

4.2 Training on Maritime-Trained English Teachers

Now there are a lot of maritime teachers who take part in teaching maritime English, but most of Maritime-trained English teachers are poor in English, such as: their awareness of English teaching theory, ESP theory, as well as key roles of teachers in ESP teaching, who easily make mistakes in grammars and sentence structure analyzing, even some of them cannot communicate in English, so they should be trained English by some ways, or they cannot be competent to teach ME. "Practice makes perfect", language environment is very important and effective, so more chances should be given to train Maritime-trained English teachers' language abilities, especially in oral English, English structure, English teaching theory, ESP theory and so on.

(I) To send Maritime-trained English teachers to foreign language universities or aboard to learn some English majors: English linguistic, English teaching methodology and so on, to improve Maritime-trained English teachers' abilities to comprehend and to organize ESP class;

(II) To encourage them to foreign vessel to work to exercise their Maritime English communication, because they are rich in maritime, but poor in English. With the fast developing of shipping, information is updating quickly, so they must be on board regularly to experience the new things board;

(III) To encourage the communication between Maritime-trained English teachers and English-trained English teachers.

4.3 Both Maritime-Trained English Teachers and English-Trained English Teachers

Because Maritime-trained English teachers and

English-trained English teachers have their own advantages and shortages, but most of them lack enough key theory of maritime English, different training programs should be used. Especially intensive training course should be open to all Maritime English teachers, which covers the definition of ESP, teaching methods, teacher-student relation in ESP and implications for the roles of the ESP practitioners. It might be easier to learn ESP theory, but it is a long way to put the ESP theory into practice.

4.4 Foreign Maritime English Teachers

To foreign Maritime English teachers, language is not a problem, but they must learn something about the theory of teaching maritime English.

5. Summary

It's obvious that teacher is vital in the teaching process whose qualities are the guarantees for realizing the teaching goal. Therefore, teachers must be trained their teacher's ethics, language ability,

maritime affair class specialized knowledge, teaching theory and so on, which can enhance Chinese crew international competition qualities. It needs to explore the maritime affair to develop the effective new pattern to train the maritime English teachers.

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