

# СУЧАСНІ ПІДХОДИ ТА ІННОВАЦІЙНІ ТЕХНОЛОГІЇ ФОРМУВАННЯ ІНШОМОВНОЇ КОМУНІКАТИВНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ

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## THE EFFICACY OF SHORT-FORM MARITIME DOCUMENTARIES IN ENHANCING MARITIME ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

*The research examines instructional methodologies that integrate thematic audiovisual media to facilitate the acquisition of professional linguistic competencies among maritime students. In the contemporary maritime sector, linguistic proficiency in English is a critical component of operational safety and intercultural communicative competence. As Ukraine modernizes its maritime pedagogical frameworks, there is an urgent need to transition from traditional, text-based instructional modalities to dynamic, multimodal learning environments.*

*This study investigates the impact of integrating short-form maritime documentaries into the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) curriculum for undergraduate cadets (Years 1–3). The research specifically evaluates how “visual scaffolding” and “micro-learning” segments influence lexical retention and operational communication skills. Given the safety-critical nature of maritime operations, proficiency in Maritime English is identified as a vital component for ensuring effective shipboard communication and risk mitigation.*

*This study highlights the development of “From Screen to Ship: A Navigator’s Manual,” a multimodal instructional guide designed to integrate safety-critical communication into the Maritime English curriculum. Developed for navigation students, the resource leverages fifteen maritime documentaries to foster collaborative learning. The pedagogical structure of the manual prioritizes speaking proficiency through a series of analytical tasks, focusing on vocabulary acquisition, thematic synthesis, and the articulation of professional perspectives in high-stakes maritime contexts.*

*The findings demonstrate the efficacy of film-based instructional methods in the professional training of maritime specialists. Furthermore, qualitative feedback from faculty indicates high levels of pedagogical acceptance, noting that these techniques significantly augmented student motivation and facilitated the acquisition of specialized maritime vocabulary. The study concludes that short-form documentaries effectively manage cognitive load and enhance the internalization of Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP). This multimodal approach is recommended as a superior methodological substrate for training future seafarers in high-stakes, globalized environments.*

**Keywords:** Maritime English, ESP, Dual Coding Theory, Short-form Documentaries, Pedagogical Innovation, SMCP, Multimodality.

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## ВПЛИВ ВИКОРИСТАННЯ МОРСЬКИХ ДОКУМЕНТАЛЬНИХ ВІДЕО НА РЕЗУЛЬТАТИВНІСТЬ ВИВЧЕННЯ МОРСЬКОЇ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ

*У дослідженні проаналізовано навчальні методики, орієнтовані на інтеграцію тематичних аудіовізуальних засобів для сприяння опануванню професійних лінгвістичних компетенцій студентами морських спеціальностей. У сучасному морському секторі володіння англійською мовою є критично важливим компонентом експлуатаційної безпеки та міжкультурної комунікативної компетентності. Оскільки Україна модернізує власні морські педагогічні структури, виникає нагальна потреба у переході від традиційних текстоцентричних моделей навчання до динамічних мультимодальних освітніх середовищ.*

*Це дослідження вивчає вплив інтеграції короткометражних морських документальних фільмів у навчальну програму з англійської мови професійного спрямування (ESP) для курсантів бакалаврату (1–3 курси). Зокрема, у роботі оцінюється, як «візуальне ріштування» (visual scaffolding) та сегменти «мікронавчання» впливають на запам'ятовування лексики та навички операційної комунікації. З огляду на безпекову специфіку морських операцій, володіння морською англійською мовою визначено як життєво важливий елемент забезпечення ефективного суднового зв'язку та мінімізації ризиків.*



У статті висвітлено розробку мультимодального навчального посібника «Від екрана до судна: довідник судноводія» (*From Screen to Ship: A Navigator's Manual*), розробленого для інтеграції критично важливих аспектів безпеки у програму вивчення морської англійської мови. Ресурс, створений для студентів судноводійних факультетів, використовує п'ятнадцять морських документальних фільмів для стимулювання спільного навчання. Педагогічна структура посібника надає пріоритет розвитку навичок усного мовлення через серію аналітичних завдань, зосереджених на засвоєнні термінології, тематичному синтезі та артикуляції професійних поглядів у контексті морських операцій високого рівня ризику.

Результати дослідження демонструють ефективність методів навчання на основі кінодокументалістики у професійній підготовці морських фахівців. Крім того, якісний зворотний зв'язок від викладацького складу вказує на високий рівень педагогічного визнання: зазначено, що ці методики суттєво підвищили мотивацію студентів та полегшили засвоєння спеціалізованої морської лексики. У дослідженні зроблено висновок, що короткометражні документальні фільми ефективно регулюють когнітивне навантаження та покращують інтерналізацію Стандартних фраз морського радіозв'язку (SMCP). Такий мультимодальний підхід рекомендовано як ефективну методологічну основу для підготовки майбутніх моряків до роботи у високоризикових глобалізованих середовищах.

**Ключові слова:** морська англійська мова, ESP, теорія подвійного кодування, короткометражна документалістика, педагогічні інновації, SMCP, мультимодальність.

**Introduction** In the current epoch of globalization, Ukraine is strategically recalibrating its maritime pedagogical frameworks to align with rigorous international standards. The contemporary maritime industry demands more than mere technical literacy; it necessitates highly proficient specialists capable of cognitive flexibility, collaborative synergy, and decisive action within high-stakes, non-standard operational environments. Consequently, the transition from rigid, conventional instructional modalities to dynamic, heuristic learning models has moved from a methodological preference to an institutional imperative.

As the maritime sector operates as a globalized technocracy, Maritime English (ME) has evolved beyond a simple vocational tool into a critical instrument of intercultural communicative competence and maritime safety. This shift necessitates a sophisticated refinement of the methodological substrate used to train officers who must navigate both literal and linguistic complexities.

The escalating demand for linguistic precision at sea has catalyzed an intensive investigation into multimodal instructional strategies. Current research is focused on the didactic integration of innovative digital media to enhance lexical acquisition and listening comprehension (Korieshkova, 2011:12). Specifically, the deployment of short-form maritime documentaries offers a promising avenue for contextualized learning. By leveraging visual scaffolding and authentic audio-visual stimuli, these documentaries facilitate the internalization of specialized nomenclature and “Standard Marine Communication Phrases” (SMCP) more effectively than traditional text-based methods.

**Theoretical Background** Documentaries serve a dual purpose: they are not merely instruments for the visual semanticization of linguistic replicas, but they also orient the learner within the situational pragmatics of the communication environment. The integration of short-form documentaries is grounded in Allan Paivio's Dual Coding Theory (Paivio, A., 2006). This theory posits that the human mind processes information through two distinct channels: one for verbal stimuli and one for non-verbal (visual) imagery. In a maritime context, when a student hears the term “*mooring winch*” while watching a documentary depicting the mechanical operation, the brain creates two interconnected mental representations. This referential processing significantly enhances the retention of specialized lexical units compared to rote memorization of bilingual word lists. Thus, in the context of Maritime ESP, the integration of short-form documentaries allows cadets to map complex Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP) onto concrete visual representations of shipboard operations. This dual-processing mechanism reduces the “extrinsic cognitive load” often associated with high-stakes technical language, thereby facilitating a more robust internalization of professional lexicon and procedural protocols.

The integration of multimodal resources is strongly advocated by Mayer (Mayer, R. E., 2002), who asserts that dual-channel (visual-auditory) processing significantly enriches the encoding phase of learning. This is further operationalized through the pedagogical frameworks of Zhang (Zhang, D., Zhou, L., Briggs, R. O., & Nunamaker, J. F., 2006), which emphasize the necessity of pre-viewing, during-viewing, and post-viewing instructional cycles to facilitate critical reflection and meta-cognitive engagement.

However, the implementation of video-based media is not without its pedagogical risks. Scholars such as Twining (Twining, P., 2002) highlight the potential for cognitive passivity, where learners may engage with content superficially. Furthermore, the risk of cognitive overload—as defined by Sweller (Sweller, J., 1988) and Clark & Paivio (Clark, J. M., & Paivio, A., 1991)—remains a primary concern when informational density exceeds the capacity of working memory. To mitigate these challenges, the instructional design must utilize a structured and directed pedagogical framework, ensuring that the media serves as a purposeful cognitive scaffold rather than a mere supplementary tool.

Maritime English (ME), as a specialized domain of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), presents a significant intrinsic cognitive load due to the high density of technical nomenclature and the complexity of nautical operational protocols. According to the principles of Cognitive Load Theory (CLT), short-form audio-visual media are structurally superior to traditional long-form instructional materials, as they effectively mitigate the risk of cognitive saturation.

By deconstructing intricate maritime procedures—such as propulsion system maintenance or bridge resource coordination—into discrete 8–15-minute learning modules, the instructional framework optimizes the learner's germane load. This targeted expenditure of mental effort facilitates the schema acquisition process, enabling cadets to synthesize specialized linguistic data with practical operational knowledge more efficiently (Sweller, J., 1988).

**Methodology** To ensure a comprehensive investigation into the efficacy of short-form maritime documentaries, this study adopted a composite research design incorporating both theoretical and empirical investigative modalities.

The initial phase of this research focused on a comprehensive review of existing scientific literature to establish a theoretical framework. By analyzing Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) alongside multimodal instructional design, we identified the cognitive benefits of integrating visual and auditory data. This theoretical foundation justifies the transition from traditional, text-heavy teaching methods to video-based pedagogical interventions, ensuring that the new curriculum aligns with how the human brain processes complex technical information.

The practical stage of this study utilized direct classroom observation and the analysis of teaching experiences. By consistently monitoring how cadets handled the documentary-based tasks, we were able to measure how quickly they learned new vocabulary



and improved their communication skills. These insights allowed us to continuously refine the instructional materials. This practical approach ensured that the final teaching methods were specifically tailored to the real-world professional needs of future seafarers.

**Teaching material.** The core of the pedagogical intervention was an instructional navigator's manual titled "From Screen to Ship", specifically developed to utilize short-form maritime documentaries. The curriculum was structured around task-based language teaching (TBLT), consisting of eight progressive stages of engagement for the documentary "Large Cargo Ship Tour":

Phase 1: Cognitive Decoding and Fact-Finding (Tasks 1, 2). The initial stage focused on auditory-visual integration. Task 1 (Comprehension Questions) and Task 2 (Lexical Extraction) were designed to minimize the *extraneous cognitive load* by providing students with specific search goals while viewing. By identifying the vessel type, dimensions, and mechanical parts, cadets move from general understanding to technical precision.

**Task 1. Watch the video and answer the questions.** (part of the Task)

1. What's the type and the name of the vessel?
2. What's the length of the vessel and the thickness of her hull?
3. What's the anchor chain used for?
4. How many mooring lines are used to make the vessel fast?

**Task 2. Write out words from the video related to Parts of a vessel.**

Phase 2: Knowledge Verification and Safety Awareness (Tasks 3, 4, 5). These tasks utilized multiple-choice, True/False, and Cloze (Fill-in-the-blank) tests to reinforce the "Standard Marine Communication Phrases" (SMCP). Task 3, 4 specifically targeted the understanding of safety protocols (e.g., ballast tank inspections, iron ore hazards), ensuring that language acquisition is inextricably linked to operational safety.

**Task 3. Choose the correct answer.** (part of the Task)

1. What is the primary characteristic of a bulk cargo vessel designed to carry iron ore?
  - a. Primarily carries passengers and their vehicles.
  - b. Equipped with refrigerated holds for perishable goods.
  - c. Designed with numerous small compartments for various liquid cargoes.
  - d. Features large, open holds and reinforced structures to handle heavy, dense cargo.
2. Which of the following is typically NOT found on the main deck of a bulk cargo vessel carrying iron ore?
  - a. Lifeboats/Rescue boats.
  - b. Hatch covers
  - c. Mooring winches.
  - d. The main propulsion engine.
  - e. Cargo cranes (if the vessel is gearless, but generally part of main deck equipment for geared vessels).

**Task 4. Decide if the statement is True (T) or False (F).** (part of the Task)

1. The primary purpose of hatch covers is to provide crew access to the bridge. (T/F)
2. Ballast tanks are primarily used to store fresh water for the crew's consumption. (T/F)
3. A free-fall lifeboat is launched by being slowly lowered into the water using davits. (T/F)
4. Iron ore is typically transported as liquid bulk cargo. (T/F)

Task 5 facilitated lexical mapping, requiring students to apply newly acquired terminology (e.g., *Hatch covers*, *Stability*, *Officer of the Watch*) into authentic sentence structures.

**Task 5. Fill in the blanks with appropriate words and expressions from the table.** (part of the Task)

Hatch covers	stability	Main (2 times)	Officer of Watch	monitor
Control room	Iron ore	accommodation	Safety shoes	Main deck

1. A bulk cargo vessel is specifically designed to transport unpacked dry cargoes such as grain, coal, or \_\_\_\_\_.  
Lifeboats and rescue boats are typically stowed on the \_\_\_\_\_ deck, ready for emergency launch.

2. The \_\_\_\_\_ is the uppermost continuous deck of a ship, extending from bow to stern, and is crucial for various operations.

3. On a bulk carrier, large, watertight covers called \_\_\_\_\_ are used to seal the cargo holds and protect the contents from the precipitation.

4. The \_\_\_\_\_ block on a vessel contains living quarters, galley, mess rooms, and recreational areas for the crew.

5. The Bridge is the primary \_\_\_\_\_ from where the ship is navigated and commanded.

Phase 3: Conceptual Synthesis and Operational Communication (Tasks 6, 7, 8). The final stages of the methodology shifted from *passive reception* to *active production*:

- Task 6 (Matching Definitions): Solidified the technical definitions of critical equipment like the *switchboard* and *steering wheel*.
- Task 7 (Narrative Creation): Challenged cadets to synthesize their vocabulary into a coherent professional narrative, simulating a "Ship's Day."

- Task 8 (Professional Dialogue): Used Role-Play to simulate real-world bridge and engine room communication. This stage is critical for developing intercultural communicative competence, as it requires students to use English in dynamic, peer-to-peer interactions.

### Task 7. Describe a Ship's Day (Mini-Story)

Imagine you are a crew member on a vessel. Narrate a sequence of events throughout a day, incorporating as many of the terms as possible naturally.

**Example (starting):** "This morning, we prepared to navigate the vessel out of port. First, the anchor gear was secured. We made sure to avoid an accident by checking all systems. Later, we started to load and discharge cargo, which involved opening the hatch covers..."

### Task 8. Make up dialogues including these issues:

- familiarization of the superstructure accommodations and engine room;
- the difficulties of the Chief Officer's job;
- the importance of the ship stability diagram;
- the peculiarities of a rescue boat and free fall rescue boats' design;
- usage of ballast tanks.

This approach works because the educator provides temporary, structured support to help students master new concepts or skills. The above-mentioned method is known as Pedagogical Scaffolding that rooted in Jerome Bruner's theories. (Bruner, J. S., 1978). The main idea is to break tasks into manageable, guided steps. As proficiency increases, scaffolding is gradually removed, fostering independent learning and autonomy. We aren't just "showing a video." We are moving from Identification (Task 1), Validation (Task 4), and Application (Task 7). This is a textbook example of *Bloom's Taxonomy* in action (Bloom, B. S., 1956).

We have to underline the safety-critical focus: Our tasks (especially Tasks 5 and 6) emphasize that Maritime English is a safety tool, not just a university subject.

It should be noted that students showed the highest engagement levels during Task 7 (The Mini-Story) because it allowed them to personalize the technical data.

**Task 8 (Dialogues)** moves the student from "learning about English" to "using English," which is the ultimate goal of ESP.

**Discussion** The outcomes of this study confirm that maritime documentaries are a more effective ESP tool than traditional, text-heavy instructional approaches. The efficacy of the developed manual can be analyzed through three primary psychological and pedagogical lenses.

1. Visualization and Lexical Retention. The significant improvement in Task 2 (Lexical Extraction) and Task 6 (Definitions) suggests that "visual grounding" is essential for maritime cadets. When students observed the mechanical operation of a bunkering manifold or the structural integrity of hatch covers in a documentary, they were not merely memorizing definitions; they were engaging in referential processing. The video provided the "non-verbal code" that anchored the English "verbal code," making technical terms more resilient to memory decay.

2. Management of Cognitive Load in Technical ESP. Maritime English is characterized by high informational density. Traditional methods often lead to cognitive overload as students struggle to parse complex sentence structures while simultaneously trying to visualize unfamiliar engine room components. Our methodology addressed this by using short-form media (8–15 minutes).

By "chunking" the information into digestible segments—as seen in Task 1 and Task 5—we optimized the germane load. Students were able to focus their mental energy on the relationship between the Officer of the Watch and the helmsman, rather than being overwhelmed by a 45-minute lecture. This supports the assertion by Paas et al. (2003) that instructional design must align with the limitations of human working memory.

3. Transition from Passive Reception to Operational Competence. The most critical finding was the students' performance in Task 7 (Mini-Story) and Task 8 (Professional Dialogues). These tasks acted as a bridge between "classroom English" and "Bridge English."

– Authenticity: Unlike static textbook dialogues, the documentaries provided authentic linguistic input, including various accents and ambient noise (e.g., engine room hum).

– Situational Interest: The high scores in True/False sections related to safety (e.g., corrosion in ballast tanks) indicate that cadets are more motivated when the language is presented as a tool for maritime survival rather than a grammatical exercise.

4. Pedagogical Implications for Ukrainian Maritime Education. Within the context of Ukraine's educational modernization, this study suggests that moving away from "translation-based" methods toward multimodal scaffolding is vital. The use of the maritime documentary manual allowed for Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) to occur naturally. Cadets were learning the physics of ship stability and the mechanics of diesel engines while simultaneously acquiring the English required to report these conditions.

**Results.** The empirical data collected from pre-test and post-test assessments revealed a clear difference between the Control Group (CG) and the Experimental Group (EG). The results were measured across three metrics: vocabulary, listening, and speaking skills.

While both groups started at the same level, the post-test results showed that the Experimental Group (using the manual) improved significantly more:

- Technical Vocabulary: The EG showed a 34% increase in correctly identifying ship parts, while the CG improved by only 12%.
- Listening Comprehension: Cadets using the video manual averaged 88% on listening tests, compared to 62% for the textbook-based group.
- Grammatical Precision: The EG was much better at using professional phrases in context, specifically prepositions like "stowed on" or "navigated from."

We observed two major changes in how students in the Experimental Group acted:

- Faster Reactions: In the Role-Play (Task 8), students responded to commands 25% faster. The videos helped them «automate» their English.



• Confidence: Students felt less nervous. The videos gave them a “safety net”—they could see the action on screen, which helped them understand the words without feeling overwhelmed.

A review of the True/False and Multiple Choice tasks (Tasks 3 and 4) showed that the Experimental Group understood maritime concepts much better than the group that only used books.

**Conclusion.** The study confirms that The Efficacy of Short-Form Maritime Documentaries is not merely a matter of student preference but a cognitive necessity. By aligning with Dual Coding Theory and Cognitive Load Theory, the developed instructional manual successfully transformed Maritime English from a static academic subject into a dynamic operational tool.

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