



A Proposal to Enhance Cultural and Language Awareness in the Training Ships

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실습선 문화와 언어 인식 향상을 위한 제안

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Abstract

Mokpo National Maritime University have being aim of global competitiveness and recognition, employs foreign professors and lecturers. It also hosts foreign students to train onboard training ships in accord with the requirements of STCW 95 and its Protocols. This paper proposes the enhancement of inter-cultural and English language development onboard the training ships. It conducts a descriptive study and gathered feedback from the students on how best to enhance these professional skills in preparation for their professional lives. The responses to the questionnaire given to the cadets were tested for internal consistency and found to be very reliable at 0.951 using Chronbach's alpha method. Summarily, the cadets "agreed" to these proposals weighing 40.4 in percentile means, while the means for "undecided" has 31.7 percent. There were numerous studies about this topic and the need for intercultural and language skills is vital to prepare the apprentice officers in this age of maritime diversity onboard ships. It is recommended that these proposal be practice and activated. Further studies is also recommended in preparation of new-building training ship and adjusting the ergonomics in the existing training ship.

Key words : STCW 95, Training ships, Inter-cultural and linguistic diversity, Language-school, Dedicated library

I . Introduction

Mokpo National Maritime University aims for global competitiveness. It employs foreign professors and lecturers who conduct English instructions in a maritime context and in basic English. It adheres to the IMO directives through the STCW 95 Convention and Code and adopted the ISM Code that develops SMCP to promote English as the language of the sea. Language skills,

common understanding, the use of IMO-SMCP and culture play a great part in ensuring safe and efficient navigation (Kitada, 2015). Onboard the university training ships, SMCP is taught in a communicative-approach whereby practical usage is emphasized and tolerance for grammatical errors is allowed, however, these must not impede successful communication and enhances intercultural competence as well(Choi, 2016).

Transport, telecommunications, trade liberalization

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and international standardization are the four pillars of globalization. Shipping transaction may involve people and property from different countries: a Greek-owned vessel, built in Korea, maybe chartered to a Danish operator, who employs Philippine seafarers via a Cypriot crewing agent, is registered in Panama, insured in the UK, and transport German made cargoes in the name of a Swiss freight forwarder from a Dutch port to Argentina, through terminals that are concessioned to port operators from Hong Kong and Australia (Kumar and Hoffmann, 2006).

In these divergent settings, cultural identity issues play a important role in a safe and harmonious life onboard. It is said that the opening registry is one of the significant features of modern shipping. In 2014, UNCTAD reported that almost 73% of the world fleet are foreign flagged and are manned by ‘multi-national’ crews. These cultural issues related to native, ethnic, linguistic, national, racial, and religious identities (Rummens, 2001). Hence, culture is a sensitive topic to discuss. Various cultural background which seafarers bring onboard create dynamic social interaction in the workplace in the modern era of the globalized shipping industry (Sampson & Zhao, 2003). Under such development in information and communication technologies (ICT), it is important that MET(Maritime Education and Training) teachers should properly guide their students to approach cultural issues without distorting to certain cultural stereo-types. (Kitada, 2015). It is recommended that an early exposure to various cultures will encourage cadets to develop so-called soft skills to negotiate and harmonized in the multi-national crew(ibid).

For the last decade, the university training ships are hosts to different nationalities of cadets from neighboring countries in the region. They trained

foreign maritime cadets from the Philippines, China, Taiwan, and Vietnam. The program develops many constructive outcomes to the Korean cadets - most specifically on language and cultural development, enhance the university’s influence in the maritime world, introduce Korean culture and education to foreign professionals and build far-reaching brotherhoods among the maritime universities in the region.

II . Methodology

There were surveys that dealt with the satisfaction of teaching and methodology of instructions onboard the training ships and the outcome of the study dealt mostly about the difficulty in English language communication, either in the classroom, during free-time, the lack of information in the English language in the university websites and bulletins, and generally, on their whole life-stay onboard(Dimailig et al, 2016). The comments were shared despite their overall satisfaction with the equipment, facilities, instructional materials and skills they acquired and most especially, with the friendly and hospitable treatment they experience with the ships’ management: officers, professors and crews. They are all in common agreement that the training ships are the biggest, the most effective and mobile laboratory they had experienced in their maritime education (ibid).

This proposal wishes to alleviate the weaknesses and the ‘culturally-challenged’ foreign students’ concerns while onboard. Although the management of the training ships is doing its utmost to deliver the best training, dealing with different cultures brings challenges that are necessary in the multi-cultural environment. This paper hopes,

likewise, to bring the university as a forefront leader of excellence in the global maritime education.

A set of questions were constructed and carried out a survey. The subjects of the survey are the senior students undergoing the final phase of their STCW mandated one-year apprentice officer's training onboard the training ships. This proposal uses a descriptive research method. The data were collated and carried out a statistical analysis to test for internal consistencies (Chronbach's alpha) and it also tests for significance using the F-statistic for single-factor ANOVA.

The university training ships are the limiting scope of the proposal. However, it is hoped that further and continuum studies in different settings and subjects be conducted in the future in a dynamic and strong training needs and outcomes for future maritime professionals.

The effects of these endeavors are long-lasting, positive and vital in the maritime world, business and personal life. These were already discussed in the texts of the proposal.

It also cultivates the person's strength through training – psychologically, physically, mentally, intellectually and morally as a good and thinking citizen.

The most telling objective is to develop the university as a major player in maritime environment and a center of excellence in the maritime education(Heo et al, 2014).

III. Results and Discussion

1. The Proposal

Although some of these proposals are already in place, it is recommended to enhance these further

as explained below:

Assigning dedicated room/space for reading, studying and inter-acting with each other in a free-talking environment.

Providing a dedicated LIBRARY that contains the following materials in English language:

Culture and Life of the different countries in the region, example: Famous sites, food, activities of these countries

Whole-some movies – animated, drama, social or historical stories, etc. – that do not tackle historical and cultural sensibilities.

Collecting and/or Subscribing to English maritime magazines (e.g. "Seaways magazine of The Nautical Institute" Society, etc., and other Engineering magazines) and/or other reading materials conducive to motivate students to read (Site-seeing, culinary, food, etc. that will spark their interests and passions).

Conduct INTER-CULTURAL ACTIVITIES like games, shows, and contests. During the international sailing period, both ships celebrate Safe-Sailing Festival wherein the ships conduct ceremonies and contests. Enhancement of these activities is highly recommended that focus also on other cultures.

Establishing "LANGUAGE-SCHOOL" onboard. This can be pursued in a non-formal setting and instructional methods to ease awkwardness among students and promote friendly ambience:

ENGLISH-language sessions – conducted by foreign students themselves among their Korean classmates in a rotational-schedule, say, twice a week sessions.

KOREAN-language class – can be taught by Korean student volunteers, also on rotational basis.

To make these conversation sessions lively, useful and inspiring, it is suggested to introduce the Hangeul alphabet- reading and writing; and to

tackle everyday topics like “riding a taxi”, “buying something”; “asking directions”; “weather” etc. emphasizing on the polite common, everyday-spoken expressions and discouraging (prohibiting!) foul, malicious language so common among the young generations. Below are already in practice, however, suggested to enhance to a broader scope:

PA announcement of everyday routine activities and important information concerning (affecting) student life onboard

English communication (English Speech contests, free-talking activities)

Another hot-item issue, however, also important and necessary:

Inserting English explanations on subject taught during actual and lecture (classroom) instructions.

The issues above are the most prominent and outstanding “concerns” of foreign students. It was revealed, discreetly and sometimes during mentoring sessions, that most of times they sat in class and did not understand what was taught, but, they “somewhat understood” that the subject matter discussed was important for them to learn.

Another part of the study is about the inter-cultural diversity. As long as maritime regulatory agencies have not yet introduce a common standard for cross-cultural learning and development, cross-cultural competency development for maritime professionals and the delivery of such education and training programs rely on the training needs of the participants and the specific goals of the education and training provider, i.e. maritime institutions, private MET sector, and others (Parsons et al, 2011). There are studies on how to improve cross-cultural learning and competency by promoting meaningful opportunities for foreign language communication and intercultural exchange

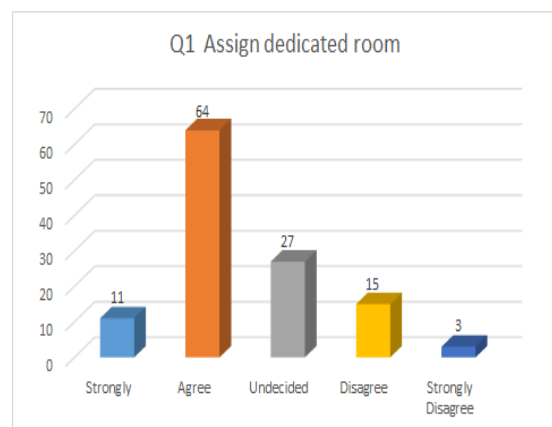
which helps the students succeed in a global environment and successfully cope with unfamiliar situations (Bachner & Zeuschel, 1994).

The need for competence in the English language by all seafarers and a means to measure these competencies are vital because, in case of emergencies, rote memorization of SMCP alone will not be effective in time of panic(Ziarati et al, 2009) No. 5.

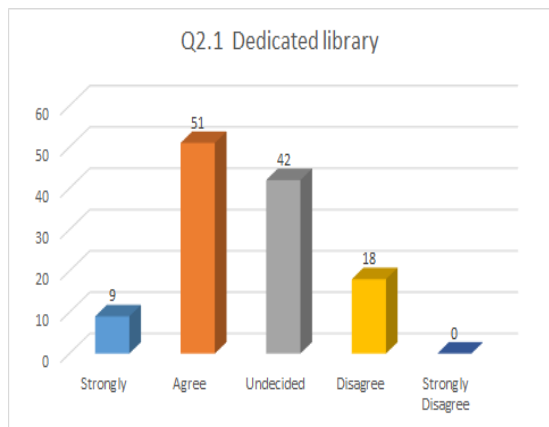
2. The Survey

The proposals in Section 3.1 were made into questions. The questionnaires were given to the senior cadets onboard the training ships. There are 120 respondent-cadets that participated in the survey who are composed of the total navigation and engineering apprentice officers onboard at that time.

This is a descriptive study and the questions use the Likert scale in the responses to the items posted where it is arranged from ‘strongly agree’ (A), ‘agree’ (B), ‘undecided’ (C), ‘disagree’ (D), and ‘strongly disagree’ (E) shown in Table 1. The responses were culled together and graphed shown in below figures according to each question’s responses.



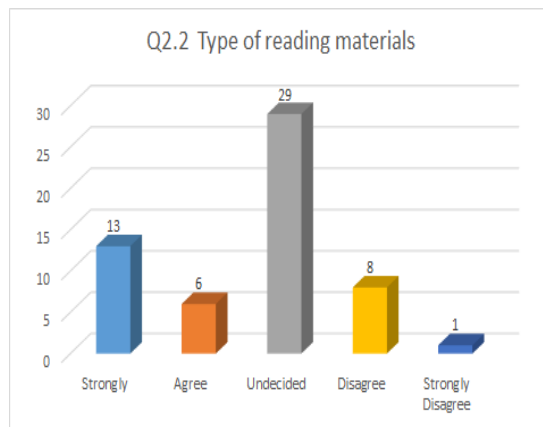
[Fig. 1] Assign dedicated space



[Fig. 2] Q2.1. Dedicated library

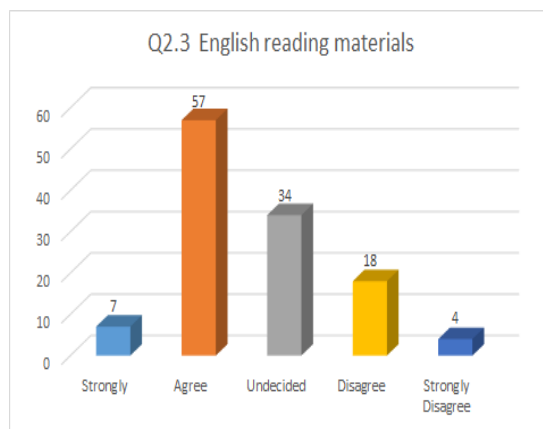
Question 1, shown above in [Fig. 1], has most cadets agreeing to assign dedicated space or room for them to interact in a semi private-social setting. It means that the room has the necessary tools and equipment for such interactions.

Question number 2 has 3 sub-topics about having a dedicated library where reading materials and cyber-supports are fitted. It deals with the contents and arrangement of the proposed dedicated library. [Fig. 2] (Q2.1) is about the culture of Korea and other countries. It shows that the “Agree” and “Undecided” have the most responses consecutively. It is recommended to conduct more info-drive regarding these matters. This reading room-library should have the proper reading materials to attain the purpose of inter-cultural awareness and improving the English language skills. The materials proposed, [Fig. 3] (Q2.2), are maritime and non-maritime magazines and books. Historical and cultural materials of Korea and other maritime countries. It is prayed that these materials, when subscribed to, have a bigger impact on the cadets’ cultural awareness.



[Fig. 3] Q2.2. Types of reading materials

Since the proposal is about enhancing English language proficiency, the materials therein should be in English language whether they pertain to maritime and non-maritime topics. The responses are graphed in [Fig. 4] (Q2.3) where majority agreed to the proposal.

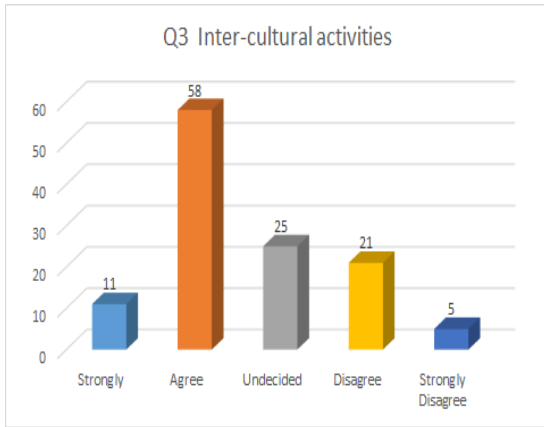


[Fig. 4] Q2.3 English reading materials

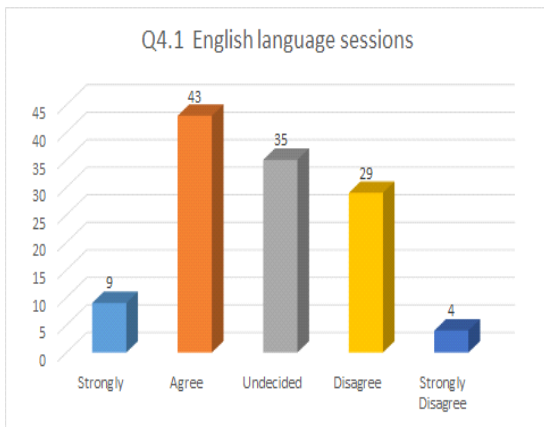
Question 3 is about enhancing inter-cultural activities onboard. During the whole stay of cadets onboard (one semester) they having special events. Highlighting cultural diversity in these events, especially during international sailing, can boost

interaction and understand different cultures particularly when foreign students are onboard. [Fig. 5] graphs the response to the proposal where 58 agreed.

[Fig. 6] (Q4.1) graphs the responses to the proposal to conduct English language teaching during the students free time. The agreed are 43 but the disagreed are 29. It is viewed that the unwillingness number to this proposal is due to inferiority complex felt by students in the English conversations. It is this very deficiency that this proposal wishes to address.

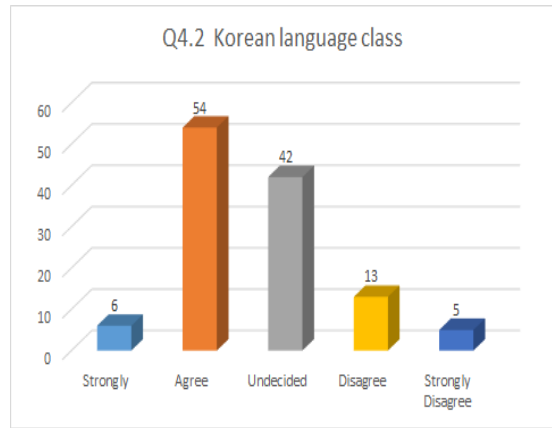


[Fig. 5] Q3 Inter-cultural activities



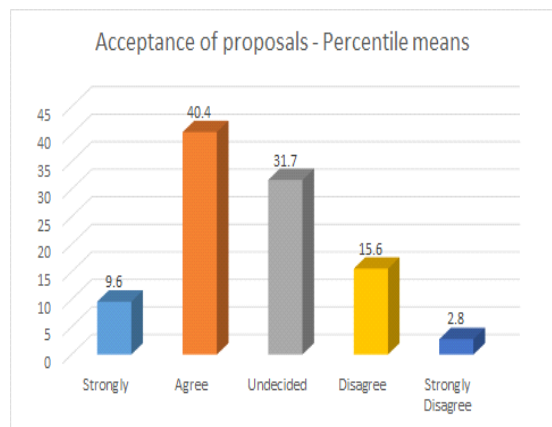
[Fig. 6] Q4.1. English language sessions

[Fig. 7], Q4.2, is the counter-part of English language class. It is proposed to have Korean class also conducted by cadets themselves with the foreign students onboard. The agreed responses likewise got the majority but the undecided also is deemed high at 42.



[Fig. 7] Q4.2. Korean language class

Overall, the data from all topics and responses were averaged together and taken their percentile means. These are presented in [Fig. 8] which shows the 40% agreed to all questions posed and only 2.8% strongly disagreed.



[Fig. 8] Accept sum of all proposals in percentile means

Noticeably, the ‘undecided’ stood at about 32% which the authors assumed is due to the students’ lack of understanding or their nonchalant attitude of the pros and cons of the subject matters being proposed.

3. Statistical analysis

The items were statistically analyzed using the Chronbach’s alpha for internal consistency. <Table 1> distributes the responses. The highest responses are in the ‘Agree (B)’ scale and shown in the ‘mean’ column and the standard deviation also has the greatest values.

<Table 1> Distribution of responses

	1	2.1	2.2	2.3	3	4.1	4.2	Mean	SD
A	11	9	13	7	11	9	6	9.4	2.3
B	64	51	6	57	58	43	54	47.6	18.0
C	27	42	29	34	25	35	42	33.4	6.3
D	15	18	8	18	21	29	13	17.4	6.1
E	3	0	1	4	5	4	5	31	1.8

<Table 2> Inter-item correlation – Coefficient alpha

1	2.1	2.2	2.3	3	4.1	4.2
1						
0.905	1					
0.063	0.447	1				
0.975	0.968	0.212	1			
0.991	0.896	0.024	0.972	1		
0.845	0.948	0.357	0.925	0.878	1	
0.919	0.983	0.373	0.975	0.898	0.899	1

The internal consistency of the items was proved in <Table 2> and the calculation of coefficient alpha follows.

$$r_{\alpha} = \frac{k \times \text{mean}(r_1)}{1 + \text{mean}(r_1) \times (k-1)}$$

Where r_{α} is the Chronbach’s alpha, k is the number of items, \bar{x} is the overall mean of the responses. The average of the data in <Table 2> was found to be 0.736.

$$r_{\alpha} = \frac{7 \times 0.736}{(1 + 0.736) \times (7-1)}$$

$$r_{\alpha} = \frac{5.151}{5.415} = 0.951$$

The coefficient (Chronbach’s alpha) of 0.951 shows a very strong correlation of the items in the questionnaire. This can be predicted that the items can stand a single test because of strong relationships among themselves and can prove reliability.

<Table 3> Anova: Single-factor, single-replication Summary

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
1	5	120	24	575
2.1	5	120	24	472.5
2.2	5	57	11.4	115.3
2.3	5	120	24	478.5
3	5	120	24	424
4.1	5	120	24	283
4.2	5	120	24	507.5

Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F-crit
Between Groups	680.4	6	113.4	0.278	0.943	2.445
Within Groups	11,423	28	407.97			
Total	12,104	34				

The responses in <Table 1> is further tested whether the means are equal. The factor being measured was the acceptance or the rejection of the proposal posited. It tests whether the variances of the factors differ significantly.

<Table 3> is the F-statistic for ANOVA test used and it shows the P-value 0.943 is greater than the 0.05 alpha. The F-value (0.278) is also less than the F-critical (2.445). These results mean that there is significant differences in the means of the factors - the acceptance level to the proposal. Observation of <Table 1> gives the differences of the means of responses and, thus, support the ANOVA test result.

IV. Conclusion

1. Conclusion

This study highlights the importance of developing inter-cultural skills and English language enhancement to the apprentice officers leading to their leadership roles in the maritime profession. The authors believe that this is the first empirical study conducted for cadets onboard the university training ships on the issues of cultural and language development. The ergonomics of ship's designs undisputedly play a greater part in the assignation of spaces so posited on this study onboard the training ships. Albeit the limitation, it can be achieved by activating un-used spaces and transforming these into learning centers discussed in this study. The acceptance level is high from the respondent-students. The authors likewise believe that the students, on their level of education and experiences, first onboard merchant ships and followed up onboard the training ships, are the best gauge and source of the ways to improve cultural and language learning skills.

2. Recommendations

The responses are skewed on the positive acceptance which means that when these

observations merit approval, the recommendations herein may be achieved into fruition;

With the incoming newly built training ship later this year 2018, the assignation of dedicated space can be realized and activated;

The re-valuing of extra rooms onboard the existing training ship 'Sae Nuri' which can be converted into learning centers where ambience for cultural development give more motivation and invite free-talking activities during the free time hours;

Inserting activities in the training ship curriculum that offer a more pro-active approach to cultural learning;

Improving the offering of English language in the daily life of cadets onboard the training ships; and

Inserting English language teaching in the lecture hours and routine shipboard operations and training.

More information drive should be conducted to make the students understand the advantages and the long-term benefits they will get from the proposal.

Re-indoctrination or re-orientation of professors and ships' officers and staff is a vital step in the overall success of this endeavor.

Abbreviations

MET	- Maritime Education and Training
IMO	- International Maritime Organization
STCW	- Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping
ISM	- International Safety Management
SMCP	- Standard Marine Communication Phrases

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- Received : 19 December, 2018
 - Revised : 07 May, 2019
 - Accepted : 16 May, 2019