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# THE STANDARD LANGUAGE OF MARITIME RADIO COMMUNICATIONS IN THE LANGUAGE SYSTEM

Summary. The paper deals with the maritime radio communications and their standardized language. The key phrase in defining Maritime English related to the standardization of this language is " safety of shipping". The formal reflection of this language is the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) standardized maritime communication phrases. When developing these phrases, attention is focused on the safety of shipping and they are designed to be used in situations of safety to be applied in ship-to-shore, shore-to-ship, ship-to-ship and onboard communications. They are adopted to support the verbal exchange of information, to reduce the risk of misunderstanding in an emergency or to prevent such a situation becoming more difficult. Standardized marine phrases are adopted by IMO legislation and should therefore be understood and used as required by the 1978 STCW Convention with the 1995 Amendments. On 29 November 2001, the Standard Marine Communication Phrases were formally endorsed by the IMO 22 Assembly as Resolution A 918 (22). For the purpose of dealing with maritime radio communications in the language system, the terms *register* and *genre* and their theoretical applications are also dealt with. Due to the overlapping usage of these terms, conclusions are made on their application in the field of maritime radio communications.

Keywords: maritime radio communications, standard marine phrases, genre, register.

If the position of the standardized maritime phrases for communication and their administrative application is clear, the theoretical question of the position of their language from a linguistic point of view remains. It must be clarified that the language used in the maritime professional environment is a *register* of the English language that is perceived to be called Maritime English Language (or Maritime English) by the maritime community.

The specific features of the language of maritime radio communications, in particular, would be related to the means of communication – they are carried out as auditory communications with the resulting from that specificities.

We adopt the following diagram of B. Georgiev [3, p. 55], which distinguishes between the types of direct and indirect communication: spontaneous and non-spontaneous.
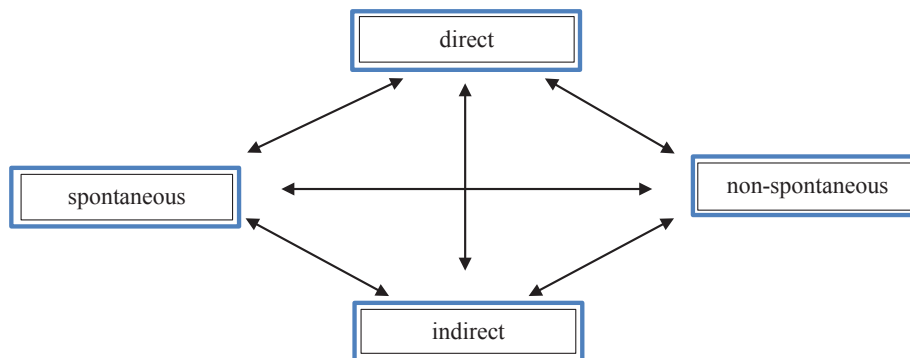
Based on this scheme, the following types of communication are referred to: direct spontaneous, direct non-spontaneous, indirect spontaneous and indirect non-spontaneous.

According to the communication scheme we adopted, maritime radio communications are indirect / non-spontaneous. Here we have to note that we are dealing with the modern maritime radio communications, implemented through modern means of communication. If we track maritime radio communications in their development, we will find that they have evolved in the direction of primarily nonverbal to verbal communication and direct / spontaneous to indirect / non-spontaneous. This development of maritime communications is related to the development and implementation of the modern means of communication. This necessitates the development of the language of maritime radio communications in the direction of linguistic means standardization.

The question of the standardization of Maritime English is raised. According to Pritchard [9, p. 52–68], through the repetition of certain language forms in typical linguistic contexts and extralinguistic situations the elements of the register (field, tenor, mode) are perceived by the respective professional group first and then become the norm, the standard and even prescribed rules. Pritchard [9, p. 52–68], uses the term *variant* versus *standard* in the following two cases: First, to denote a specific maritime linguistic unit and the specific use of a linguistic unit of the commonly used English language in a marine communication environment. Second, to mark Maritime English itself as an option. In this way, he defines the different functions of Maritime English as linguistic variants of that language. Reason for this is found in the various extra-linguistic situations or contexts of the situation, subordinate to the objectives of communicative intent. Pritchard [9, p. 52–68], views the standardization of the maritime communication language as a linguistic option and calls it a *standard option*. According to him, the linguistic version becomes

standard when a specific variant or combination of features of different lexical, grammatical and discourse variants are approved or elevated to a range of linguistic forms prescribed or recommended for use (as is the case with marine communications) from specific communicators in specific situations.

Although we agree with the conclusions that B. Pritchard [9, p. 52–68], does and find the theoretical grounds for them, we believe that adopting this terminology would hamper our further research. For example, Maritime English is called a variant, as variants are called the context-specific and situation-specific fields of this language. Pritchard [9, p. 52–68], also speaks of a standard version of Maritime English.

In order to make the terminology that we will use for the purposes of our research more precise, we find it appropriate to introduce the notion of genre. The concept of *genre* is closely related to the term *register*.

The rivalry between the terms "register" and "genre" has its own history and requires a broad explanation of our choice of one or the other.

One of Haliday's definitions focuses primarily on the semantic model and context: "[The Registry] is a set of meanings, a configuration of semantic patterns that are usually derived under certain conditions, along with words and constructs that are used in the realization of these meanings" [5, p. 25]. The register is determined by what happens, who is involved, and what role the language plays [5, p. 31].

We can also note that Haliday places a stronger emphasis on the broad social context: "The registry can be defined as a configuration of the semantic resources, which a member of a certain culture usually associates with the type of situation. The potential significance becomes available in a given social context" [5, p. 111]. Consequently, the most important elements are, first of all, contextual and secondly linguistic. Further, Halliday [5, p. 111] notes that while the register can be recognized by the form's characteristics, its structure is semantic.

Halliday's definitions of the language register have a great influence on the further perception of these ideas on a number of linguists. Gregory and Carol regard the register as a "useful abstraction linking language variants with the variations of the social context", "a contextual category linking groups of linguistic characteristics with recurring characteristics of the situation" [4, p. 64]. This is an observation that similarly connects the text and the context and defines the register as a "linguistic category that binds a text in terms of its formal, phonological, graphological or basic characteristics, with similar texts in similar situations and hence with characteristics in the situations of speaking or writing " [13, p. 251]. Ur and Ellis conclude that "a language is defined as a register only if there are linguistic and situational differences at a given time" [13, p. 252].

The common feature of these definitions is the view that situational and linguistic variables are an essential part of determining the characteristics of the language register. It is these variables that determine the function of the statement, define the register as a variation depending on the use, ie. the function is a product of interrelated variables of the situation and the register is a product of functional variation.

Here is the place to introduce the term *genre* by making a comparison with a register to identify the differences and to support the use of one or the other term in the cases we specify. It is necessary to emphasize that the comparison should be made from the examination of the critical statements regarding the register of linguistics. This is necessitated by the very development of the theoretical postulates, as the genre has long been considered a certain area without intersections with the register. Consideration of the problem arises when a certain group of linguists working in the field of functional linguistics became aware that the theory of the register is not sufficient to cover this connective phenomenon. These linguists believe that the genre category is more effective in describing this theoretical construct that fits between the function of language and its form. As a result, there are significant differences in the conceptualization of the two terms, a certain degree of transfusion of one concept into another, as well as some fundamental differences in the use of the two concepts and the terminology associated with them.

Some linguists emphasize social and cultural factors as key factors that generate all the activities, including linguistic ones: "Genres are mainly defined as socially validated types of texts in a community" [7, p. 216]. For them, the value of the genre as a functional and social semiotic category is that it offers "a presentation of the relation between the socio-cultural world and the form of the text ... the ways in which the text and the social representatives who produce it construct it and how they themselves are organized by social and cultural factors" [7, p. 216].

On the other hand, Halliday [5, p. 145] uses the term "register" to close the link between text and social processes and uses the term "genre" in a more limited sense. He does not deal with the "generic structure" as the personification of the text as a social process, but as a separate feature of the text, such as its organizational structure "out of the linguistic system". One of the three factors – generic structure, text structure and consistency distinguish the text and these factors can be included in the basic framework of the concept of a register [5, p. 145]. However, he relates these factors to the characteristics of all texts, including spontaneous conversations, without limiting them to the treatment of literary texts. In other words, for Halliday, [5, p. 145] the genre is a lower-order concept, while the register is a concept of a higher order, including the genre itself. The genre of the text is part of its register. That is why he thinks that a "register" is the concept that best represents the relationship between text and context.

Typical of the early interpretations of the genre is the interpretation of Hymes [6, p. 61], which considers genres such as poem, myth, fairy tale, etc. He says that "the notion of a genre involves the possibility of identifying the formal characteristics that are traditionally recognized". We would reject these restrictions, which are reduced to purely formal categories, as they do not take into account the nature of language as a social process.

Swales [12, p. 1–261], considers the theory of the register as a theory that emphasizes the linguistic structure at the expense of context features and

prefers to use the concept of genre. He believes the genre analysis "differs from the traditional analysis of the registry or sub-register in the importance they attach to communicative goals within the communication environment. Swales [12, p. 1–261] defines the genre as follows:

• The genre includes communicative events whose participants have common communicative goals.

• Objectives are recognized by members of the speech community and determine the logical basis of the genre.

• The foundation defines the structure of discourse, limits and influences the choice of content and style.

• Speech communities name the genres according to the kind of communicative event they consider repetitive. The named genres are expressed through written and spoken texts.

• The names of genres inherited or created by a speaking community and adopted by other communities are valuable ethnographic communication, but need further validation.

This definition of the genre differs from previous definitions of a register not so much in its meaning but in what it emphasizes. While the definitions of the register seek to link the factors of the situation with the linguistic structure, Swales interprets the genre as socially recognized communicative events that have an explicit communicative purpose. Swales [12, p. 1–261], also emphasizes the genre character as a whole text. On the other hand, the register is more easily referenced to incomplete events or parts of text.

We have to conclude that any characteristic of a language or its variant should deal with concepts such as a register and a genre. Depending on the point of view when dealing with the research subject, we would use one or the other term. As a result of the above-mentioned superimposition of unambiguous terms in the definition of maritime radio communications, and since the deduction of the importance of discourse requires not only focusing attention on vocabulary and grammar but also more than one level of analysis, we perceive the naming of maritime radio communications as a genre in Maritime English. Reason for this is given by Swales' specific examples [12, p. 1–261], when determining the conversation. He considers the non-formal conversation as a pre-genre, as a "pre-generic" form of life, on the basis of which more specific types of communication have developed or separated" [12, p. 1–261].

According to Swales, the interaction that exists between genres and pre-genres has a completely different dimension when "the face-to-face conversation is replaced by telecommunication". Following Shegloff [11, p. 23–78] and his analysis of telephone conversations, Swales [12, p. 1–261] concludes that personal phone calls can not be given the status of a genre, and could be part of the pre-genre, "regardless of their comparatively brief history".

But when he talks about a radio call, Swales [12, p. 1–261] notices its peculiar character. Referring to Robertson, he points out the purpose of airplane-land talk in radio-telephony mode. Following these goals, we would like to point out the purpose of ship-to-ship, ship-to-shore, shore-ship and ship-to-air.

1. Preventing of collision in the high seas.
2. Preventing a ship-to-ship or ship-obstuction collision in maneuvering areas.

3. Vessel traffic service and control.
4. Providing advice for the safe and efficient handling of the ship.
5. Carrying out of search and rescue operations for ships in distress.

To meet these objectives, the VHF radio calls are conducted according to strict turn-taking rules [9, p. 7–55], and established practice to clarify rhetorical function and identification. These rules should be studied by both people who use English as native language and those for whom it is second one.

Following Swales' analysis [12, p. 1–261], we assume that maritime communications in radio-telephony meet the criteria of a genre.

Since the separation of the genre from the register in theoretical research is relatively recent, the relationship is still too strong and there are many differences in interpretations. In an effort to solve the conflict in terminology (conceptualization) between a genre and a register, Martin [8, p. 2] views the two concepts in a relationship. He took Halidey's idea of the register "as a theory of the relationship between language and its context" and notes that there are two aspects in determining the register. "The first implies an understanding of the impact of the context of the situation on the use of language and the second involves knowing the description of the English language." Martin, however, distinguishes the register from the genre and puts the register as a semiotic system between the genre above it and the language under it, where "language is treated as a phonology of the register, and the register as a phonology of the genre" [8, p. 2].

We should not forget that the interpretation of the term register is developing, and some linguists speak of a "discourse or register genre" Frow [2, p. 93–105]. Others use the term register as "ideologically defined, situationally-determined potential meaning" [1, p. 112]. For Fairclough [1, p. 112], the register is "ideological" because it represents a certain social foundation. He argues that "it makes little sense to study verbal communications if they do not relate to the social structure and treats them as different social activities that involve a set of structures that are reflected in the" knowledge base "or" background knowledge, which includes:

• knowledge of language codes;
• knowledge of the principles and norms of language use;
• knowledge of the situation;
• knowledge of the world.

While recognizing the particular importance of basic knowledge, Fairclough [1, p. 112] takes account of cases where it is "neutralized" or assimilated by "common sense" and thus separates itself from the social basis. To make sure that the term "register" includes both the ideological and discourse structure, it introduces the term "ideological-discourse structure," which combines the advantages of the term "register" and the sociosemotic position of the genre.

By comparing these interpretations, we come to the conclusion that there are many pragmatic coincidences between a register and a genre, and it is not quite easy to separate the genre as a level above the register, as Martin [8, p. 2–40] suggests. For example, Halliday's [5, p. 25–145] view is that separating the notion of genre as a level above the register is not necessary, as the concept of a register is

sufficiently sophisticated to define the relationship between text and context at all levels.

However, we believe that for the purpose of the study on Maritime English and maritime radio communications, the adoption of this provision is an "easy" solution with a theoretical rationale behind it. We accept Martin's [8, p. 2] assertion that the use of both concepts, a register, and a genre means "instead of applying the variables of the field, the general direction and the way for whole texts, as is usually done in register theory, the values can be applied by following one step to another" [8, p. 40] i. e. the genre limits the ways in which variables can be combined into a particular community such as the maritime professional community.

Regarding the register we accept the definition of Halliday:

"[The Registry] is a set of meanings, a configuration of semantic patterns that are usually inferred under certain conditions, along with the words and constructs that are used in the realization of these meanings" [5, p. 23].

Regarding the genre, we accept Swales' postulates:

"The genre includes a class of communicative events whose participants share a set of communicative goals. These goals are recognizable by the expert participants of the respective speech community and thus determine the root cause of the genre" [12, p. 58].

Based on these two genre and register definitions, we use the term "genre" in the course of the study when we deal with real maritime radio communications and analyze discourse in this genre, and when analyzing standard maritime phrases for communication, we use the term "register".

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