

 **大连海事大学**
DALIAN MARITIME UNIVERSITY

学汇百川 德济四海

Validity Analysis of ME Speaking Evaluation

Li Yan
Associate professor
Dalian Maritime University



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Outline

- **Background introduction of Maritime English exams in China**
- **Validity analysis of ME Speaking Evaluation**
- **Suggestions to test designers and users**



Role of ME exam

- One component of exams for Certificate of Competence
- Compliance with International conventions
- Wash back effect on ME teaching & learning



Structure of ME exam

- Theory test (written exam)

- I. Vocabulary and structure 68'
- II. Reading comprehension 12'
- III. Translation/ writing 20'

- Listening and Speaking evaluation

Listening Test: (all multiple choice questions)

- I. Vocabulary and sentence understanding 30'
- II. Short dialogue understanding 30'
- III. Long dialogue and passage understanding 40'

Speaking Test: (Computer-based)

- I. Reading aloud 20'
- II. Talking about the topic 20'
- III. Answering questions 60'

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ME exam VS GE exam

	ME	GE (IELTS as an example)
Purpose	to test whether a candidate would communicate effectively in English to fulfill his responsibilities at work	to test whether a candidate would survive in English speaking social and academic environments
Content	work-place situations	real life situations
Language	GE and ME White, spelt as whisky, hotel, indian, tango, echo Intention: I will alter course to port.	GE White, spelt as W-H-I-T-E I want to turn left.

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Validity analysis of speaking evaluation for operational deck officers

- I Rubric
- II Needs analysis
- III Task authenticity
- IV Issues of concern



Rubric

- **Part 1 Reading aloud (20%)**

Directions: In this part, you are required to read a passage related to the marine subject. You'll have 1 minute for preparation. After that, press the "record" button and start recording your reading. Your performance will be judged according to your pronunciation, intonation and ^{t1} fluency. You can only record it ONCE.



Need analysis

- Clear and eligible pronunciation is needed due to the concern that intelligible communication poses safety threat to marine operations
- a majority of maritime oral communication is conducted through radio or telephone where gesture or body language cannot be employed to compensate for blurred language

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t1 linguistic oriented
think, 10/06/2013



Task authenticity

- genuine texts from marine-related subjects which have connection with 2nd and third navigation officers' work
- test takers are not engaged in a communicative situation simulating the responsibility-related working environment



Issues of concern

- Lack of a simulated situation for interaction to engage the test taker
- Little reference to the unique language feature of ME
- Unbalanced readability

Comparison of 5 articles for reading



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Text	Words	Lexical Density	Fog Index	Actions
weather information at sea	132	54.54%	16.9	
incidents at sea	145	64.84%	13.3	
accident at sea	171	57.94%	9.3	
berthing and unberthing	201	53.74%	10.0	
injuries	203	48.34%	12.1	



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Rubric

Part II Talking about a topic (20%)

Directions: In this part, you are required to talk on a particular topic about one or two minutes. You've got one minute to prepare. Then press the "record" button and start to talk. The recording can be done only ONCE. Your performance will be judged according to your fluency and coherence, use of professional words, pronunciation, grammatical range and accuracy.

Describe the responsibilities as a watch officer while the ship is at anchor.

Need analysis

- Second and third navigation officers are under the responsibility of giving instructions and explaining problems encountered as well as describing incidents and working procedures to persons related. Therefore, it's essential to assess their language ability in these functions.
- The topics are responsibility-relevant and the content covers the domain area to be tested.

Task authenticity

- the topics in the task are closely related to the communicative needs of seafarers in fulfilling their work responsibilities, and they reflects the features of the communication needs in the real subject situation
- a lack of creation of a situation where the communication will be used so as to engage the test takers in simulated interaction



Issues of concern

- There is a lack of interactional authenticity.
- Test raters are likely to concentrate more on content knowledge over language competence due to highly expected response from the candidates.
- The candidates tend to recite answers to the topic due to limited number of topics which jeopardize the inference drawn from his performance.



Rubric

Part III Answering questions (60%)

Directions: This part consists of a range of questions about professional vocabulary and background knowledge. You are required to provide particular information with accuracy. After the question is played, click the “record” button and answer the question. Each question can be played only ONCE and the answer can be recorded only ONCE. Your performance will be judged according to your fluency and coherence, use of professional words, pronunciation, grammatical range and accuracy.

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Sample questions analysis

Q.1 What should be prepared before the pilot comes on board?

Q.2 If you are ordered: "Stand by both engines!" How should you reply and report?

Q.3 What does "Abandon Vessel" mean?

Q.4 Why is it important to sound fog signals?

Q.5 What kind of fire extinguisher can you use for an electric fire?

No. Question	Content covered	Suggested answer
Q.1	Pilotage	Prepare pilot embarkation gear and accommodation ladder. Get pilot ladder and equipment ready for lee side embarkation. Prepare master/pilot information exchange form.
Q.2	Engine order	Reply: "Stand by both engines." And then report: "Both engines stand by."
Q.3	Safety management	To evacuate crew and passengers from a vessel following a distress.
Q.4	Watch-keeping duty	The sound fog signals can help vessels attract the attention of another vessel in restricted visibility and take proper action to avoid collision.
Q.5	Fire-fighting practice	Non-conducting extinguishing agents must be used such as CO2 and dry chemical.

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Need analysis

- In the course of marine operations, second and third officers need to respond to questions from the crew on their ships, the crew from other ships as well as people ashore.
- The ability to understand the exact meaning of the questions and give prompt and accurate response is essential for the safe and efficient operation of the ship.



Task authenticity

- The questions used in this part are closely related to the communicative needs of seafarers in conducting marine operations, and they reflect the features of the communication needs in the real domain situations.
- The real interaction situation is simulated and test takers are engaged in one turn of mutual communication.



Issues of concern

- The interaction is one direction and inconsistent because questions are not logically related, which may cause test takers to focus more on the answer to the questions instead of successful and effective communication.
- Subject knowledge is also tested which may affect the inference made about language competence from the test taker's performance.
- The interaction is not representative of the work-place communicative situations.



Suggestions

- Creation of interaction situations in test tasks
 - Sentence repetition
 - Picture description
 - Simulated job interview/ accident investigation
 - Role play
- More emphasis on Maritime English language features in test task design
- Further validation based on LSP assessment theoretical framework



References

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