

**IMLA-International Maritime English Conference**  
**IMEC 32**  
***SEAS OF TRANSITION: SETTING A COURSE FOR THE FUTURE***

**[Joint Conference Online with ICERS15 and INSLC21]**  
**World Maritime University, Malmö, Sweden**  
**8-10 September 2021**  
**Summary Report**

**Introduction**

The IMEC32 Papers and Activities Committee is pleased to announce that the online IMLA Joint Conference, which included the International Maritime English Conference (IMEC32), has been a successful event.

Due to the continuing uncertainty surrounding the situation with COVID-19, the IMLA 2020 Joint Conference with ICERS, IMEC, and INSLC, scheduled for 1-5 September 2020 at the World Maritime University (WMU), was postponed until 2021. The decision to postpone was taken after careful consideration together with the International Maritime Lecturers' Association (IMLA), the International Conference on Engine Room Simulators (ICERS), International Maritime English Conference (IMEC), and International Navigation Simulator Lecturers' Conference (INSLC). Based on the current global circumstances, the organizers agreed that postponement was necessary to ensure all the participants' safety and security. A new date for the Conference was announced in due course: 8-10 September 2021.

This year the World Maritime University hosted a unique online IMLA Joint Conference that brought together the International Maritime Lecturers' Association (IMLA) with all three of its Special Interest Groups: International Maritime English Conference (IMEC), International Conference on Engine Room Simulators (ICERS), and International Navigation Simulator Lecturers' Conference (INSLC). The Conference, entitled "Seas of Transition: setting a course for the future", provided an opportunity for interdisciplinary discussion and exchange of ideas on issues facing maritime education and training (MET) in the present era of rapid change in the global maritime community, intending to harness the past to navigate the future.

Since its beginning under IMLA (International Maritime Lecturers' Association) four decades ago, the total of 32 conferences, originating with WOME (Workshop on Maritime English) and followed by IMEC have aimed to provide an all-inclusive forum for Maritime English as a language used for specific purposes, namely in the maritime sector. In this respect, as one of IMLA's three Special Interest Groups (SIG), IMEC's drive to improve the methodology and efficiency of teaching and learning Maritime English reflects IMO's mission statement: "*Safe, Secure and Efficient Shipping on Clean Oceans.*" The initial WOME conference also aptly illustrated the relevance of IMLA's aims "*to promote contact and co-operation between maritime lecturers*" and "*to develop a body of professional expertise*" for the IMEC community, a tradition continued by recent IMECs.

**International Maritime English Conference (IMEC32)**

The International Maritime English Conference (IMEC32) has achieved a significant milestone in a series of conferences held in Hamburg, Germany, 1981; St. Malo, France, 1983; La

Spezia, Italy, 1985; Plymouth, UK, 1987; Cadiz, Spain, 1989; Lisbon, Portugal, 1991; Amsterdam, Netherlands, 1993; Gdynia, Poland, 1995; Malmo, Sweden, 1997; Shanghai, China 1998; Rijeka, Croatia, 1999; Dalian, China 2000; Varna, Bulgaria, 2001; Qingdao, China, 2002; St Petersburg, Russia, 2003; Manila, Philippines, 2004; Marseille, France, 2005; Rotterdam, Netherlands, 2007; Shanghai, China, 2008; Szczecin, Poland, 2009; Alexandria, Egypt, 2010; Constanta, Romania, 2011; Yangon, Myanmar, 2012; Istanbul, Turkey, 2013; Terschelling, Netherlands, 2014; Johor, Malaysia, 2015; Gothenburg - Sweden, 2016; Busan - the Republic of Korea, 2017; Manila - Philippines, 2018; Åland Islands - Finland, 2019 ".....to immerse you in a sea of English."

It has become common practice with IMEC conferences for the Papers and Activities Committee to summarize the main aspects of each IMEC in the preparatory period and, in particular, those experienced and shared with the participants during the IMEC32 program.

## **Background**

The IMLA-IMEC website (<http://www.imla.co/imec>) explains that the International Maritime English Conference held its first gathering in Hamburg from 11-12 June 1981. According to the conference report, one reason for the gathering was to allow lecturers to have the opportunity to meet and network following the formal adoption by IMO (formerly known as IMCO) of English as the international language of the sea and the introduction of SMNV (a predecessor of IMO SMCP) three years earlier (1977). The report stated that "*many of the lecturers are graduates in English and well equipped to teach English at various levels, but they have found themselves ill-prepared for working to the technical idioms which the new emphasis demands.*" Today's situation has changed considerably, and the background knowledge and competence of the Maritime English teacher in maritime subjects have significantly improved. Our colleagues who gave presentations at IMEC32 demonstrated quality and subject competence and the papers contributed to the Proceedings corroborate this claim.

## **Conference Theme/Opening Session/Parallel Presentations/Panel Discussions/IMLA General Meeting.**

The theme of the online Joint Conference was *Seas of transition: Setting a course for the future*. A total of 112 people from 24 countries participated in the virtual Joint Conference, including representatives of the IMEC community.

Dr. Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry, President of World Maritime University, Head of Local Organizing Committee for IMLA (2020)/2021, addressed the opening session, welcoming all the virtual delegates to Sweden and providing initial information about the Joint Conference. Dr. Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry presented the COVID-19 challenges for MET institutions concerning academic skills and knowledge. Prof Jin Yongxing, Chairman of the International Maritime Lecturers Association (IMLA), headquarters at IMLA office Shanghai, delivered a speech on the significant changes in the global maritime community, highlighting the need for highly qualified human resources for "*better shipping and better seafarers.*"

The IMEC32 speakers presented their papers from the virtual floor during **Session 4: Effective Communication and MET**, and **Session 5: Digitalization and MET** of the Joint Conference.

The papers at IMEC32 upheld the tradition of issues related to the teaching and learning of Maritime English and cross-cultural matters within the maritime sector. The focus on a particular

theme once again attracted a considerable number of papers dealing with this topic. Therefore, we strongly agreed that IMEC32 met the standard of previous years in terms of paper presentations.

There were six speakers from the virtual floor during Session 4: **Effective Communication and MET**, and two speakers during session 5 **Digitalization and MET**.

The main points raised addressed the essentials for successful communication in English based on the recommendations of IMO SMCP, the utilization of non-verbal language in the engine room, prosodic interference in maritime communication, English as a second language in the Navy, Moodle as an e-learning alternative to kinesthetic approach for Maritime English, and developing the communicative competence in remote operations. Reference was also to transferable education and training, the need to analyze the Maritime English Course in vocational higher education and develop intercultural competence as a key to “merge” different worldviews.

Here are the links to the abstracts of these contributions:

1. Uwe-Michael Witt [Communicating with VTS via VHF: What a VTS controller expects from a Master. An approach to teaching the essentials for successful communication in English based on the recommendations in the SMCP and proposed from the perspective of VTS](#)
2. Yutaka Emi and Nagisa Muramatsu [Utilization of non-verbal language in the engine room training](#)
3. Nurmala Elmin Simbolon [Needs analysis of Maritime English course in vocational higher education: Transitioning toward the future.](#)
4. Bozhena Dokuto and Igor Smirnov [Prosodic interference in maritime communication: Nature and means of eliminating](#)
5. Carmen Chirea-Ungureanu ["What's wrong with these folks?" Developing intercultural competency as the key to "merge" different worldviews](#)
6. Gro Frølund [Language under pressure: English as a second language in the navies of NATO](#)
7. Shamsul Rizal Mohd Rosedi [Developing Moodle as an e-learning alternative to Kinesthetic approach for Maritime English subject during the Movement Control Order \(MCO\) period in Malaysia](#)
8. Paraskevi Papaleonida [Communicative competence and auto remote operations](#)

In addition, the current Chair of IMLA-International Maritime English Conference (IMEC), Alison Noble, took part in two significant items on the joint conference programme, namely the IMLA General Meeting and a panel on “Resilience in MET in the face of COVID-19”.

At the IMLA General Meeting, the IMLA report, given by the IMLA chair, is traditionally followed by updates from each of the three Special Interest Groups (SIG). Thus, on day 2 of the joint conference, at the IMLA GM, Alison Noble provided the update on IMEC activities. Understandably, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, over the last 18 months activities have been scant. Nevertheless, the update included a brief overview of the last conference, IMEC31, which took place in Turku and Mariehamn (Åland Islands), Finland, and looked forward to the next conference (IMEC33) which will be hosted by Admiral Ushakov State Maritime University in Novorossiysk, Russia. The Chair continued by reporting that IMEC was looking at how to

optimalise communication with the IMEC community by making greater and better use of (social) media. This is an ongoing activity. Details were then given of the restructured IMLA-IMEC Steering Committee and Papers & Activities Committee before the chair concluded by thanking the IMEC community for their continuing support and interest in the conference.

The panel on “Resilience in MET in the face of COVID-19” took place on the last morning of the conference. Three paper presentations set the scene for the ensuing discussion. These were, in order, “Development and implementation of online teaching at Shanghai Maritime University” presented by Xin Shi, “Building a resilient university: ensuring academic continuity – transition from face-to-face to online in the COVID-19 pandemic” presented by Inga Bartuseviciene and “Developing Moodle as an e-learning alternative to kinesthetic approach for Maritime English subject during the Movement Control Order (MCO) period in Malaysia” presented by Shamsul Mohd Rosedi. Following the presentations, the panel, comprising of the chairs of the three IMLA SIGs, Michael Baldauf (INSLC), Takeshi Nakazawa (ICERS) and Alison Noble (IMEC) each gave a short, related talk on behalf of each SIG before opening the floor to discussion.

### **Preparatory work**

In 2021 IMLA 27 combined all three SIGs (IMEC32, ICERS15, and INSLC21 ) under one roof at World Maritime University, Malmö, Sweden. Anne Pazaver, Lecturer and ESSP Coordinator at World Maritime University, headed up the Local Organising Committee (LOC). The LOC worked closely with the Steering Committee and the IMEC Papers and Activities Committee to prepare for the conference.

The EasyChair.org platform served as reliable sources of conference work: abstract and paper submission, reviews, assignment, updates of authors and papers. Throughout the months leading up to the conference, the LOC provided highly professional support to the Steering Committee and prospective participants.

The Papers and Activities Committee, chaired by Carmen Chirea-Ungureanu (Constanta Maritime University), kept regular contact with the LOC of the Joint Conference. The Papers and Activities Committee continued the policy started at IMECs of reviewing all papers submitted and providing feedback to ensure the conference's success and establish standards of excellence in the conference Proceedings. The review of abstracts/papers was mainly conducted by email between the Papers and Activities Committee.

Special thanks to fellow members of the IMEC-PapCom, Sandra Tominac (University of Rijeka, Faculty of Maritime Studies, Rijeka, Croatia), Annamaria Gabrielli (Chalmers University of Technology, Division for Language and Communication, Department of Communication and Learning in Science, Gothenburg, Sweden) and Wang Xian (Shanghai Maritime University, China) for their thorough and prompt revision of the papers. Without their dedication in reading, reviewing, and collating abstracts and papers, the work of PapCom would not be possible.

### **Next International Maritime English Conference (IMEC33)**

During the closing ceremony of the virtual Joint Conference, the traditional presentation of the next destination for IMEC took place. In 2022, Admiral Ushakov Maritime State University, Novorossiysk (Russia), will host the IMEC33. Prof. Igor O. Smirnov, heading up the IMEC33 Local Organising Committee for Admiral Ushakov Maritime State University welcomed all the

delegates to Novorossiysk and provided initial information about the venue. The dates for IMEC33 are 10 to 12 October 2022, with 13 October serving as an add-on for sightseeing and additional activities.

### **Acknowledgements**

The IMEC Steering Committee extends its sincerest gratitude to World Maritime University in Malmö, Sweden. The LOC, coordinated by Anne Pazaver, merit special thanks for a superbly handled virtual Joint Conference. In addition, special thanks to the IT team for their assistance. All concerned did their very best in hosting IMEC32, contributing to the smooth running of the conference.

### **Concluding remarks**

IMEC32, just like past IMECs, was again full of new topics and stimulating presentations. Due to the continuing uncertainty surrounding the situation with COVID-19, the speakers took the virtual floor. Again, IMEC32 has provided a global forum for all the participants, allowing them to share experiences, teaching materials and techniques, and exchange ideas.

We believe that not a single participant took part in this event without learning something new, and in this respect, this IMEC may be considered another success.

The destination for IMEC33 is Novorossiysk, Russia.

We look forward to meeting you there at Admiral Ushakov Maritime State University, in October 2022!

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