

FOCUS ON THE USE OF A MARITIME ENGLISH VISUAL DICTIONARY IN ESP CLASSES

Delia LUNGU¹

Laura CIZER²

¹Associate Professor, PhD. Department of Navigation and Maritime and River Transport, Faculty of Navigation and Management, "Mircea cel Batran" Naval Academy, Constanta, Romania

²Lecturer, PhD. Department of Electrical Engineering and Naval Electronics, Faculty of Marine Engineering, "Mircea cel Batran" Naval Academy, Constanta, Romania, lauracizer@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract: *Whether in paper or online formats, dictionaries are more than just collections of words, and used properly, they could lead towards the development of learners' autonomy. Once students are taught how to use them effectively, there are hundreds of hours of self-guided study. Dictionaries can constitute an ideal way of enriching students' vocabulary due to the fact that they generate an extremely varied collection of communicative activities, ranging from basic dictionary use to vocabulary and reading skills. This paper aims to put forward 10 dictionary activities tapping an in-house material (the Online Maritime English Visual Dictionary) as an effective means of boosting students' specialist vocabulary.*

Keywords: *online dictionary, Maritime English, language skills, materials development*

INTRODUCTION

Why using a visual dictionary?

The visual online dictionary is an interactive dictionary with pictures offering an innovative approach for learning the meanings of words. It is an all-in-one reference book in which the picture of a word can be quickly located. It provides an easy and accessible way of learning words, turning it thus into an ideal tool both for teachers and students. Nowadays, dictionary software is also available in PDAs format that can be easily downloaded on computers. Not only on computers can dictionary software be downloaded, but also on mobiles, thus making them accessible anywhere and at any point of an hour.

There are numerous advantages of online dictionaries in general, and of visual dictionaries in particular.

Firstly, they provide complete search regarding definitions, pronunciation, spelling, thesaurus entries and etymology results for any word. The online dictionary can be browsed alphabetically or by the terms related to the word to find the exact meanings and synonyms of the word.

Secondly, they are very user-friendly and convenient to use. By simply entering the word in the search box, one will be automatically directed to the word they are looking up. It is not even necessary to type in the entire word, the very first letters will do the rest and all words beginning with those specific letters will be displayed and thus, the researcher will be able to choose the word they are looking for.

This can be extremely useful especially when one has doubts about the spelling of a certain word. Having a picture displayed next to the searched word will automatically eliminate any ambiguity as to the meaning of that specific word.

METHOD

The dictionary-based activities devised by the authors of this paper are as follows:

1. Icebreaker (I): What is your priority?
2. Icebreaker (II): Finish off the sentence
3. Developing dictionary skills
4. How do you spell that?
5. Explain that word!
6. Maritime wordsearches
7. Fishing for syllables
8. True or False?
9. Question grid
10. Phonemic contest

The **format** that each activity follows includes: (1) a *brief* description that gives a general idea of the activity itself, (2) the *level* the activity is suitable for, (3) an indication of the *time* the activity requires, (4) its *aim*, (5) *type* of activity (pair or group work, group size), (6) *preparation* (any material that should be previously prepared), (7) *procedure* (how to carry out the activity), and (8) *remarks* (difficulties or other points of general interest that may occasionally occur are pointed out under this heading). The dictionary can be found at this (temporary) address [1].

1. Icebreaker (I): What is your priority?

- (1) *Description:* The students decide what is important for them when using dictionaries
- (2) *Level:* intermediate
- (3) *Time:* 10 minutes +
- (4) *Aim:* to raise awareness of students' priorities in using dictionaries; to teach the contents of a dictionary
- (5) *Type of activity:* plenary, in pairs
- (6) *Preparation:* copy of Worksheet 1 for each student
- (7) *Procedure:* The teacher (T) invites the students (Ss) to think about the reasons they use dictionaries. Then, T gets them to compare their answers with their partners. T distributes WS 1 and asks Ss to complete it. After a few minutes, Ss start discussing their choices with their partners. The activity finishes off with a quick feedback conducted by T and a final discussion whether anyone is willing to change their opinions.
- (8) *Remarks:* This activity has been designed in order to find out how students feel about using dictionaries, the problems they face, and it has also been intended as a springboard for discussion.

9. Grammar _____	information
10. Notes _____	about words

2. Icebreaker (II): Finish off the sentence
 - (1) *Description:* Ss will discover what they find most useful in using dictionaries and what they need help with.
 - (2) *Level:* elementary and above
 - (3) *Time:* 20 minutes
 - (4) *Aim:* to assess how Ss feel about using dictionaries; identify their problems and find strategies to overcome them
 - (5) *Type of activity:* plenary, in pairs
 - (6) *Preparation:* slips of paper with unfinished sentences (WS 2)
 - (7) *Procedure:* T hands out WS 2 and tells Ss that they must complete the beginning of the 4 sentences themselves. Ss are given a couple of minutes to complete each sentence, individually. Then, in pairs, they compare and contrast their answers, with a focus on discussing the reasons for their different answers.
 - (8) *Remarks:* See previous activity

WS 1

WHAT IS YOUR PRIORITY?

Rank the following from 1-10 according to their importance when you use a dictionary. (1- the most important and 10 - the least important)

1. Spelling _____
2. Pronunciation _____
3. Examples _____
4. Translations _____
5. Explanations _____
6. Meaning _____
7. Illustrations _____
8. Understanding when to use words _____

WS 2

FINISH THAT SENTENCE!

I _____ generally use dictionaries to _____.

I _____ think dictionaries should _____.

One of the biggest problems I have with dictionaries is _____.

What I like about dictionaries is _____.

3. Guess that word!
 - (1) *Description:* Ss are supposed to guess maritime-related words from their definitions.
 - (2) *Level:* elementary and above
 - (3) *Time:* 20 minutes
 - (4) *Aim:* to use menu definitions to understand meaning of words
 - (5) *Type of activity:* small groups

- (6) *Preparation:* short definitions taken from the dictionary (WS 3)
- (7) *Procedure:* T divides the class into groups and asks them to examine the short definitions so as to guess which word they are describing. They write down their suggestions, discuss them, and then check in the dictionary
- (8) *Remarks:* This type of activity allows for practically choosing any word in the dictionary, provides the opportunity to group words under a specific topic (such as anchoring, navigational aids, lifesaving or firefighting equipment, etc.), and may well function as a revision activity. This activity can be further developed by asking Ss to look up maritime words in the dictionary, make a list of 4 short definitions in the same way, pass it to their neighbors, and test each other.

WS 3

1. a chain or rope for mooring a vessel 2. the means by which a ship or boat is moored 3. a mooring rope 4. a mooring line securing a ship to that part of a pier alongside it	1. a device attached to a vessel by a cable and dropped overboard so as to grip the bottom and restrict the vessel's movement 2. that portion of a harbor or area outside a harbor suitable for anchoring or in which ships are permitted to anchor 3. to release (a rope) gradually 4. chain attached to the anchor
1. a very strong rope made of strands of metal wire used for towing 2. a specially designed vessel which tows other vessels 3. a system of maritime signals	1. a boat, propelled by oars or a motor, used for rescuing people at sea, escaping from a sinking ship, etc. 2. any of various kinds of buoyant device for keeping people

adopted by many of the maritime nations of the world, using flag, semaphore, and Morse codes 4. a large, heavy rope used for towing	afloat in an emergency 3. a device used to alert search and rescue services in the event of an emergency 4. US officialese for a life jacket, life sling, or other buoyance aid
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Answers: Mooring: fast, mooring lines/ropes, headline, breast line; Anchoring: anchor, anchorage, to pay out, anchor chain; Towing: towline, tug, International Code of Signals, hawser; Lifesaving appliances: lifeboat, lifebuoy, EPIRB, PFD

4. How do you spell that?

- (1) *Description:* Ss will deal with the most commonly misspelt maritime words that they need to know how to spell for future work.
- (2) *Level:* elementary and above
- (3) *Time:* 20 minutes
- (4) *Aim:* to sensitize students to spelling problems
- (5) *Type of activity:* individual work, then pairs
- (6) *Preparation:* a list of words (WS 4), a two-column table (WS 5)
- (7) *Procedure:* T hands out WS 5 and tells Ss that s/he is going to dictate some words. They must write each word in one of the columns depending on whether they are sure how to spell it or not. If Ss do not know how to spell a particular word, they will simply put it in the “Not sure” column. T dictates the list of words, giving each a number (Ss should write the number as well). Then, they compare their answers in pairs, and finally check them in the dictionary at <https://ebooks.anmb.ro/dictionar>.
- (8) *Remarks:* The competitive element could be introduced by giving two points for each correct answer (in the “sure” column).

WS 4

LIST OF WORDS

accommodation	crew	forecastle	moor	row
athwartships	customs	forward	muster	
splice	awning	dunnage	frigate	
ore	tug	berth	ensign	gauge
binoculars	EPIRB	gunwale	quarter	
wharf	boatswain	fairlead	hatch	
quay	whistle	buoy	flood	headquarters
roadstead				wreck

WS 5

Write the words you hear in one of the two columns below according to how sure you are of their spelling.

SURE	NOT SURE
1.	1.
2.	2.
.	.
.	.
.	.

5. Explain that word!

- (1) *Description:*
- (2) *Level:* intermediate and above
- (3) *Time:* 20 - 30 minutes
- (4) *Aim:* to develop students' skill in using definitions
- (5) *Type of activity:* small groups
- (6) *Preparation:* online dictionary
- (7) *Procedure:* T divides the class into small groups, directs each group to the online dictionary and invites them to choose several words. One member of each group explains one word but without saying the actual word. The other group must try to remember and call out the word. Once the word has been guessed, another member of the group gets to use the dictionary and explains another word. They continue until everyone has had a go.
- (8) *Remarks:* This is a variation of activity no.3 (Guess that word!).

6. Maritime wordsearches

- (1) *Description:* Ss will complete and create wordsearches.

- (2) *Level:* elementary and above
- (3) *Time:* 25-35 minutes
- (4) *Aim:* to practice word recognition skills and spelling
- (5) *Type of activity:* pairs
- (6) *Preparation:* a sample wordsearch (WS 6), a blank grid with 100 squares (10X10) for every two students (WS 7); dictionary
- (7) *Procedure:* Ss are presented with a wordsearch (WS 6) which contains a number of hidden words that begin with the same letter and come from the same page of the dictionary; they could be written horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, and forwards or backwards. They are told the first word on the page and asked to report how many words they can find in two minutes. Then, Ss are put in pairs, each pair is given a blank wordsearch grid (WS 7), asked to find a page of their dictionary (all should choose a different one) and keep it a secret. The pairs look through the words together for a couple of minutes, choose ten words from their page and write them in their blank grid horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, forwards or backwards, as in the previous example. They fill the rest of the grid with random letters to “hide” these words in the wordsearch. Pairs swap completed wordsearches and have five minutes (or more depending on students' level) to find as many of the ten hidden words as possible.
- (8) *Remarks:* The word search has been devised by using *Puzzlemaker* [2] which is a puzzle generation tool that helps create and print customized word search from your own word lists. The sample word search is based on the following ten words: abaft, abeam, aboard, abreast, admiral, adrift, afloat, aground, aloft, anchor, which have been extracted from letter A of the maritime English visual dictionary.

WS 6

T	B	W	S	N	S	U	L	E	D
M	S	J	D	R	W	I	Q	T	N

A	L	A	R	I	M	D	A	A	U
E	P	C	E	T	D	O	Y	L	O
B	T	X	P	R	L	D	A	O	R
A	Q	E	H	F	B	R	N	F	G
H	D	R	A	O	B	A	C	T	A
A	D	R	I	F	T	T	H	H	U
B	I	A	B	A	F	T	O	A	I
M	D	K	W	W	F	Z	R	E	A

Answer key: ABAFT (3, 9, E); ABEAM (1, 6, N); ABOARD; (7, 7, W) ABREAST (7,7,NW); ADMIRAL (8,3,W); ADRIFT (1,8,E); AFLOAT (4,7,NE); AGROUND (10,7,N); ALOFT (9,3,S); ANCHOR (8,5,S)

WS 7

7. Fishing for syllables

- (1) *Description:* Ss will combine syllables to find maritime-related words within a time limit.
- (2) *Level:* false beginners and above
- (3) *Time:* 20 – 30 minutes
- (4) *Aim:* to understand how words are formed in terms of syllables; to learn how to pronounce words, to practice pronunciation
- (5) *Type of activity:* groups (of four preferably)
- (6) *Preparation:* online dictionary, copies of WS 8 (on to thin cardboard and cut out so that each syllable is on a different piece of card; cards are put into sets, then shuffled so that they are out of order)
- (7) *Procedure:* T puts Ss into groups of four and gives each group a set of cards. Ss must try to recombine the syllables to make as many words as possible in five minutes and list their words in alphabetical order. Each group is put together with another

group with a view to comparing their words and discussing the meanings of any new words.

- (8) *Remarks:* The example below is based on letter A of the dictionary and contains 16 words, but other letters can be successfully used.

WS 8

AN	CHOR	AC	COM	MO	DA
TION	LAD	DER	A	BOARD	AD
MI	RAL	AL	BA	TROSS	AMID
SHIPS	AN	CHOR	AGE	WIND	LASS
A	THWART	SHIPS	AU	TO	MA
TIC	AWN	ING	AZI	MUTH	AN
TENNA	ALONG	SIDE	AN	EMOM	ETER

8. True or False?

- (1) *Description:* Ss decide whether statements are true or false in terms of meaning, spelling and pronunciation, and produce other statements in a similar way.
- (2) *Level:* elementary and above
- (3) *Time:* 30 – 40minutes
- (4) *Aim:* to practice general dictionary skills, to encourage close reading of dictionary entries
- (5) *Type of activity:* pairs
- (6) *Preparation:* copies of WS 9 for everyone, online dictionary
- (7) *Procedure:* Ss are given the worksheet and asked to complete it in pairs, using the dictionary for reference. T checks the answers (see Answer Key), then tells the pairs to make a similar worksheet with 6 questions using the entries of one dictionary letter; questions should include spelling, meaning, pronunciation. T monitors as the pairs produce their worksheets and helps with any problems. The pairs swap finished worksheets with their neighbors and answer them.
- (8) *Remarks:* This can be assigned as homework.

WS 9

THREE TRUE, THREE FALSE
Three of these statements are TRUE,

and three are FALSE. Which is which?

1. *Abaft* and *astern* mean the same.
2. *Adrift* has one syllable.
3. The correct spelling of a *cabin* or *other facilities* onboard is accommodation.
4. *Anchor* is pronounced [ˈæŋkə].
5. An *antenna* is used for measuring the speed of wind.
6. The word that defines the length from one side of the ship to the other is spelt *athwartships*.

Answer Key: True – 1, 4, 6; False – 2, 3, 5

9. Question grid

- (1) *Description:*
- (2) *Level:* elementary and above
- (3) *Time:* 30 minutes
- (4) *Aim:* to provide skills practice, to revise question formation, to develop vocabulary
- (5) *Type of activity:* groups
- (6) *Preparation:* online dictionary, WS 10
- (7) *Procedure:* T demonstrates the task through WS 10, then divides the class into groups of three or four, asks each group to open up a dictionary page at their choice and to study it for several minutes. T also asks them to draw a noughts and crosses grid (3X3 squares) on a separate piece of paper and put nine different words from the page into the boxes, one into each box. Next step is to swap completed grids, use their dictionaries to compose their questions or prompts for which the nine words are the answers. They can include pictures, opposites, pronunciations, or translations. Make sure the questions are not in the same order as the nine words in the grid. The groups pass the grids and questions to another group, who match the questions and answers without using dictionaries. They should discuss the questions

and work by consensus, not just guesswork. Dictionaries should be used in order to check the answers.

- (8) *Remarks:* This may very well function as a revision activity (if words come from a recent class), or to introduce new vocabulary items.

WS 10

anchor	aloft	anchor chain
a horizontal winch for raising the anchor – anchor windlass	[əˈθwɔ:tˌɪps]	behind a ship
at sea/aboard	alarm bell	geamandură de ancoră

What do you use to grip the ship to the bottom of the sea?	Where are the cadets? 	What do you call a chain that is attached to the anchor?
How would you describe this device? 	What is the pronunciation of this word?	Where are you if you are ASTERN ?
What is the opposite of ASHORE ?	What do you sound in case of emergency?	What is the Romanian equivalent of ANCHOR BUOY ?

10. Phonemic Contest

- (1) *Description:* Ss will be engaged in a sound recognition of words that will be dictated to them.
- (2) *Level:* elementary and above
- (3) *Time:* 20 minutes +

- (4) *Aim:* to develop awareness of phonemic symbols and practice using them
- (5) *Type of activity:* plenary
- (6) *Preparation:* list of words – WS 11 (teacher’s use), chart – WS 12
- (7) *Procedure:* Ss receive the 3X3 grid and are explained that T is going to read out some words. They have to listen out for their sounds and try to complete their grids. Every time they hear a word with one of their sounds in, they write it in the respective square. Then, T starts dictating the words, Ss fill in their squares and the winner is the first to complete the grid.
- (8) *Remarks:* This activity is mostly suited for practicing sounds Ss have problems producing and

differentiating. It can also be done in pairs.

WS 11

abeam, admiral, afloat, aground, alongside, athwartships, azimuth, berth, boatswain, breeches buoy, bucket, bulbous bow, bulkhead, bulwark, buoy, chain, etc.

WS 12

æ	ou	I
ɔ:	ʌ	i:
tʃ	aɪ	θ

CONCLUSIONS

Diving into dictionaries in general and into the Maritime English Visual Dictionary in particular offers multiple avenues for interesting activities to hold students’ attention and boost their specialist vocabulary in attractive and useful ways.

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