

Foreign Language Learning and Capt. Marryat's Sailor-Heroes

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One of the most striking features of Capt. Marryat's sailor-heroes is their unusual enthusiasm for and the great ease with which they learn foreign languages during their long voyages and visits to many distant parts of the world. In *Peter Simple* the narrator-hero who enters the Royal Navy as a midshipman, observes: "There certainly is something in the life of a sailor which enlarges the mind" (90), and in *The King's Own* the author makes a similar reflection directly in his own voice: "much as travel by land may enlarge the mind, it never can be expanded to the utmost of its capabilities until it has also peregrinated by water. I believe that [...] the human intellect [...] is enlarged by going to sea" (239). The said expansion or enlargement perfectly applies to the study of foreign languages, and through them – different cultures and customs, at the same time giving the writer ample opportunity to incorporate into the text of his novels a large number of barbarisms and loan-words which represent a variety of languages. Barbarisms, as defined in dictionaries of literary terms, originate from foreign languages and are used in a given linguistic system without the familiar native phonetic adjustment (cf. Sierotwiński 299). On the other hand, loan-words belong to those borrowings that have become generally accepted in the lexical resources of a given language.

It seems that Capt. Marryat's sailor-heroes are keen on the study of foreign languages, among others at least, for the sake of realism. The discussed author always cared for the conformity of his descriptions of characters, places and situations to the empirical world as experienced by himself. Being a professional sailor with an impressive record of more than twenty years' service at sea, he was familiar with the linguistic cosmopolitanism in this environment and apparent-

ly had the capacity for languages that he bestowed upon his protagonists. In *Newton Forster* he takes his hero twice to the East Indies, which makes it possible for him to make the following comment on the fleet of the East India Company, known as the "Bombay Marine": "The crews are composed of a small proportion of English seamen, a small proportion of Portuguese sea-cunnies, a proportion of Lascars, and a proportion of Hindoo Bombay marines. It requires two or three languages to carry on the duty; customs, religions, provisions, all different, [...]" (295). Even on board of a lugger engaged in smuggling goods across the English Channel in *The King's Own*, the juvenile hero Willy finds a set of nationals who give him an impression of confusion that seems hardly possible to control:

The crew consisted of about eighty or ninety Englishmen, out of the full complement of one hundred and thirty men; the remainder was composed of Frenchmen and other Continental adventurers. Although the respective countries were at variance, the subjects of each had shaken hands, that they might assist each other in violating the laws. The quiet and subordination of a king's ship were not to be expected here, – [...] French, English, and Irish, spoken alternately or at the same moment, [...] (82).

The above-mentioned cosmopolitanism appears to be verified by the standards of the Enlightenment which made the study of foreign languages in 18th-century Europe one of the key issues. M. Cieśla notes that in this age the knowledge of French spread from Lisbon to Sankt Petersburg, and that it was used as a means of communication not only among the privileged classes, but also among the lower middle class (72). To the category of contemporary international languages the scholar also includes Spanish (outside Europe) and to a lesser extent Italian (mainly in the Mediterranean). Following Napoleonic Wars, foreign languages – now including English – have become the instrument of international business (cf. Cieśla 179-200).

Capt. Marryat documents his heroes' zest for languages with a number of different borrowings. As has been said, they contribute to the authenticity of his novels, but apart from that, they play an important stylistic role. Their very lexical "strangeness" attracts the reader's attention and thus they perform a distinct expressive function. In the older times Latin and then French intrusions were treated as exquisite ornaments testifying to the author's wit and learning. Borrowings are also used to characterize a local community, professional group, social and cultural milieu, for example French expressions in common understanding illustrate mannerisms of aristocracy. By way of contrast, they can play a satirical function when they are incompetently used by those aspiring to gentility. Sometimes borrowings occur so often that the author's style acquires the peculiar "macaronic" quality – a kind of a mixed jargon in which two or more languages

are mingled together (cf. Murray vol. VI 3). Capt. Marryat occasionally pursues this style, especially in the dialogue parts of his novels which are set abroad and involve genuine native speakers.

In his first and most closely autobiographical novel, *The Naval Officer; or, Scenes and Adventures in the Life of Frank Mildmay* (1829), the title-hero recalls in the first chapter the most lasting impressions of his schooldays. These relate to his study of Latin and Greek and to his classics master, one Mr. Higginbottom, who "in anything but Greek and Latin, was an ass" (15). As regards his method of instruction, he preferred "the fortiter in re" to "the suaviter in modo" of some other tutors (12). The former consisted in driving knowledge into pupils' heads with the help of a large knotted stick. Frank says that in such circumstances "we made astonishing progress; and whatever my less desirable acquisitions may have been, my father had no cause to complain of my deficiency in classic lore" (12). This must have been a very strong and painful impression, indeed; fifteen chapters later in the same novel the hero describes another frightful instance of teaching Latin and the Bible which he witnessed at Port Praya in the Cape de Verde Islands, a Portuguese colony at that time. The pupils being defective in their lesson, they are severely punished by their tutor with a formidable cowskin, that is a large whip:

The old man then ordered the eldest boy to begin his Pater Noster; and simultaneously the whipper-in elevated his cowskin by way of encouragement. The poor boy watched it, out of the corner of his eye, and then began "Pattery nobstur, qui, qui, qui – (here he received a most severe lash from the cowskin bearer) – is in silly," roared the boy, as if the continuation had been expelled from his mouth by the application of external force in an opposite direction – "sancty fisheter nom tum, adveny regnum tum, fi notun tas, ta, ti, tu, terror," roared the poor fellow, as he saw the lash descending on his defenceless back -

(*Naval Officer* 306-7)

The lessons in "classic lore" as described by Capt. Marryat conform to the contemporary status quo; commenting on the study of Latin in English grammar schools, the social historian G. M. Trevelyan mentions "the usual brutalities of flogging" (75-6). He adds, at the same time, that familiarity with Latin was essential to any professional career. The discussed novelist proudly documents this in the pages of all his works, displaying his familiarity especially with Latin legal terms. Some of the examples in this category include corporeal strength as "the *condicio sine qua non*" of survival in the Navy (*Naval Officer* 35), a midshipman who fails his exam for a lieutenant and is returned by the board "re infecta" (ibidem 174), the ingenious argument in *Peter Simple* which is over-ruled "nem. con." (i.e. *nemine contradicente*) (36), the laws which are written and "the *lex non scripta*" (*Midshipman Easy* 81), the first-lieutenant acting captain "pro

tempore" (ibidem 171), a divorce "de thoro" (ibidem 315), a prisoner "convicto invito" (*Phantom Ship* 284), the principle of "Iusticia et Misericordia" (ibidem 320) and numerous others. It is very likely that Capt. Marryat used these terms for the sake of their univocal "international" meaning.

Apart from legal vocabulary, the author is always eager to boast of his knowledge of Latin that he gained at such a high cost at school. Consequently, Latinisms crop up in everyday situations both aboard and on land. In *Midshipman Easy* the title-hero challenges to a duel the ship's boatswain, which his friends think to be "infra dig." (i.e. infra dignitatem) of his rank (130). In *The Naval Officer* Frank grows weary of the naval campaign in North America and on his return home resolves to enjoy "the otium cum dig." (181). In *Newton Forster* the newly-wed couple exchange pledges of mutual love "ad lib." (i.e. ad libitum) (16). Most of such phrases are used in the suitable context without English interpretation, though sometimes the author is tempted to explain them to his reader: "felo de se, i.e. fell of itself" (*Naval Officer* 14), "there is a way of doing it – a modus in rebus" (ibidem 189). It is interesting to add that in a few novels Capt. Marryat reveals, after the manner of numerous earlier English writers, the deprivations of Catholicism, and especially the horrors of the Inquisition, on which occasion he uses a couple of ecclesiastical Latinisms relative to the liturgical rite of "exorcismus" and the exclusion of "excommunicatio" (cf. *Midshipman Easy* 201). We shall finally observe that the discussed novelist apparently prides himself on his knowledge of the classic authors, referring to and even quoting from their works in the original. A good example is the captain's toady purser who resembles "a living type of the Gnatho of Terence; and I never saw him without remembering the passage that ends 'si negat id quoque nego'" (*Naval Officer* 278).

Passing on to modern languages, French appears to be the only one that Frank Mildmay, the protagonist modelled on Marryat himself, learns at school. In the first novel he mentions by name his French dancing-master, one Monsieur Aristide Maugrebleu, to whom the hero is rather unceremoniously introduced by the headmaster's wife as a "mauvais sujet", that is a rogue (*Naval Officer* 16). This seems to be verified by M. Cieřła who claims that in the 18th century French took the lead among modern languages taught at schools. It is a noteworthy fact that contemporary English philosophy typified by John Locke, science by Sir Isaac Newton, and literature by Laurence Sterne, became widely known in Europe through their French translations. In his treatise "On Education" published in 1693, Locke himself encouraged English children to study French as the second language (after Cieřła 332).

Apart from school, a number of Marryat's sailor-heroes take the first opportunity to learn French during their service at sea. This observation coincides again with Cieśla's association of the Napoleonic Wars with a distinct increase in the ability to speak French across Europe. According to the scholar, during the said wars the opponents of the French emperor studied his language out of necessity while his advocates did that for pleasure (177). Marryat himself joined the Navy while the campaign against Bonaparte was in full progress and most of his heroes are actually engaged in it. We may also add that France had a powerful fleet and colonial interests to tend to in many distant parts of the world, starting from North America and the Caribbean Basin in the west, through parts of Africa and Madagascar in the south, to Indo-China in the Far East. In this situation it was impossible for English seamen not to come in the way of the French wherever they sailed. The title-hero in *Newton Forster* is taken prisoner by a French schooner off the coast of Guadaloupe. He then spends three months on the island where he is rather liberally treated, on giving his "parole of honour", by an agreeable French couple – Monsieur and Madame de Fontanges whose relative acts as the local governor. Newton's first lesson begins like this:

"Bon jour, monsieur", said the lady.

Newton bowed respectfully.

"Comment vous appelez-vous?"

Newton, not understanding, answered with another bow.

"Le jeune homme n'entends pas madame", observed Mimi.

"Que c'est ennuyant, monsieur", said Madame Fontanges, pointing to herself; "Moi, – Madame de Fontanges – vous", – pointing to him

"Newton Forster"

"Nu-tong Fasta – ah, c'est bon, cela commence", said the lady.

(*Newton Forster* 145)

Soon the circle of friendly tutors comprises Madame's children and attendants plus her military husband who takes responsibility for the regular morning class in conversation. That Newton treats the task of mastering French seriously is also evident from "a little study of the grammar and dictionary" that provide the necessary portion of theory supported by daily practice. The lessons are documented with extensive dialogue parts recorded entirely in French, and, needless to say, the result is more than satisfactory – within the space of three months the Englishman becomes "a very tolerable French scholar" (ibidem 146-7).

A similar procedure is repeated in *Peter Simple* whose hero takes part in a cutter attack by sea on the French battery off the town of Cette in the Mediterranean. He gets badly wounded in the leg, is taken prisoner but allowed to stay in the house of the gentlemanly French officer who appears to be of Irish descent. As

he gets better, Peter becomes intimate with his pretty little nurse – the Frenchman's daughter Celeste: "Our chief employment was teaching each other French and English" (141). Having a good motive to learn quickly – and in this way to be able to court his lovely instructress – the hero becomes proficient in her language in about two months.

The knowledge of French proves very useful both to Peter Simple and his companion O'Brien in their captivity (the latter learned it earlier in the novel in the French colonies in South America). The two Englishmen can understand what is being said in their presence, including confidential messages passed by the unsuspecting French guards, which gives them a great advantage when they effect their escape from the prison at Givet in the Ardennes. They manage to tramp across France pretending, among others, French conscripts until they reach Holland and eventually find their way aboard an English cutter in the Channel. Like *Newton Forster* referred to above, the novel features a number of dialogues conducted partly in French (*Peter Simple* chapters XIX through XXV).

According to M. Cieśla, French was a most universal means of communication at the turn of the 18th century, widely used abroad by travellers and diplomats, scholars and the cosmopolitan-minded aristocracy and middle-class (178). All this is evidenced by Capt. Marryat's sailor-heroes. Frank Mildmay who sails on one occasion along the coast of Africa, touches at Port Praya to complete the ship's provisions. When he goes ashore to pay his respects to the Portuguese governor of the island, he does so in French (*Naval Officer* 304). In *Peter Simple*, the author takes us on a cruise in the Baltic. The English party soon spot a Swedish frigate and Peter is sent by his captain to board her, ask her name, by whom commanded, etc. The messenger does not even attempt English: "When I arrived on the quarter-deck, I asked in French, whether there was any one who spoke it. The first lieutenant came forward, and took off his hat [...]" A few moments later Peter is ushered into the captain's cabin and "[...] addressed him in French, paying him a long compliment, with all the necessary et ceteras" (427-8).

Speaking French in the discussed period of time was still considered to be the matter of bon ton (cf. Cieśla 178). In *The Naval Officer* the hero who wants to particularly impress his own countrymen, inserts a French word in his reply:

"Pray, sir, what ship do you belong to?"

"Sir", said I, proud to be thus interrogated, "I belong to His Majesty's ship, the Le –" (having a French name I clapped on both the French and English articles, as being more impressive) (24).

The ship in question is the English frigate christened by the French name "Imprieuse" (i.e. proud, majestic).

The fashionable society ashore, "le beau monde", try even harder to follow the French tiquette in their manners and speech. This may assume grotesque and satirical character, especially when aristocratic mannerisms are incompetently imitated by the middle-class nouveau riche. A very good example of this kind is the dinner party given out by Capt. Turnbull's wife and described in the XVIth chapter of *Jacob Faithful* subtitled "High Life Above Stairs, A Little Before The Mark – Fashion, French, Vertu, And All That". The hostess, Mrs. Turnbull, works hard at gentility and the party is meant to impress her English acquaintances and legitimize her final social triumph over them. Therefore, her visiting list for the party includes an exalted French couple, Monsieur and Madame de Tagliabue. It is Mrs. Turnbull's limited knowledge of the French language, among other deficiencies, that leads to a series of comic misunderstandings, provoking consternation at table, embarrassment of the guests and exposing the true face of the fashionable lady. In the first place, Monsieur Tagliabue's praise of the cook, as well as his other remarks, meet with her dull incomprehension which she tries to mask using without moderation the distorted form of assent ("ve" for "oui"):

"Vraiment, madame, tout est excellent, superbe! Je voudrais embrasser votre cuisinier – c'est une artiste comme il n'y a pas?"

"Ve", replied Mrs. Turnbull.

In the next moment, the hostess addresses Madame de Tagliabue, confusing the French "poisson" (fish) with the English word "poison":

"Madame, do you soup? Or do you fish?"

"Merci, no soup – poisson".

"Don't be afraid, madame; we've a French cook; you won't be poisoned here", replied Mrs. Turnbull, rather annoyed.

The worst blunder occurs at desserts:

"Let me see – hoh! Bidet du poms. Mamade, will you eat some bidet du poms?"

"Comment, madame, je ne vous comprends pas – "

"Ve"

"Monsieur Tagliabue, expliquez donc;" said the foreign lady, red as a quarter of beef.

"Permettez", said Monsieur, looking at the card. "Ah c'est impossible, ma chre", continued he laughing. "Madame Turnbull se trompoit, elle voudroit dire Beignets de pommes".

(*Jacob Faithul* 133-5)

The words mispronounced and confused in this last instance are "bidet" and "apple cakes".

To conclude the question of French influences and usage, it rests to observe that Capt. Marryat is also fond of loans that have already been absorbed into English. Some of these include terms like chevalier, garon (*King's Own* 335, 368),

fracas, hors de combat, parole of honour, protg(e), savoir-vivre (*Newton Forster* 247, 63, 143, 221, 149), rendez-vous, tte--tte (*Naval Officer* 165, 181), bivouac, vis--vis (*Peter Simple* 162, 235), sang-froid, sobriquet (*Midshipman Easy* 238, 72), chef d'oeuvre, vertu (*Jacob Faithful* 139, 129) and many others. The author occasionally explains their meaning, commenting on their origin, and especially pointing to their nautical application. An interesting example of the kind is "flotsam and jetsam" whose standard dictionary definition might confound many a reader (in the sense of "people who do not have jobs or homes"). In *Newton Forster* the author explains:

Reader, do you know the meaning of *flotsam* and *jetsam*? None but a lawyer can, for it is old law language. [...] a sort of *lingo*, compounded of bad French, grafted upon worse Latin, forming a mongrel and incomprehensible race of words, with French heads and Latin tails, which answered the purpose of mystification. *Flotsam* and *jetsam* are of this breed. *Flot*, derived from the French *flottant*, floating; and *jet*, from the verb *jeter*, to throw up; both used in seignoral rights, granted by kings to favourites, empowering them to take possession of any man who might happen to be unfortunate, [...] "Omnium quod flotsam et jetsam, et everything else-um, quod findetes; in plain English, "Everything floating or thrown up, and everything else you may pick up". Now the admiral of the coast had this piratical privilege: [...] (34-5).

As has been stated above, Spanish played the role of an international language in the 18th century mainly overseas as well as in the Mediterranean Basin. In some of his novels Capt. Marryat demonstrates that it is also worth learning, though, what is rather surprising, the main motive appears to be love. Jack Easy who captures a Spanish ship carrying valuable cargo and a couple of passengers with a noble Spanish Don and his two lovely daughters, finds his English useless: "He told them in English that they had nothing to fear, [...]. The ladies made no reply, because, in the first place, they did not know what Jack said, and, in the next, they could not speak English" (*Midshipman Easy* 94). The hero takes the nearest opportunity to make up for this deficiency. As the English crew of his prize-ship continue their drinking-bout on a desert isle (one of the Zaffarine Islands), he sets to the study of Spanish and his tutor is a captive Spaniard, a cook named Pedro. It is interesting to add that he does that at the instigation of his Negro mate Mesty who gives the following reason:

"Massa, why you no talk with Pedro?"

"Because I cannot speak Spanish".

"I know dat, and dat why I ask de question. You very sorry when you meet the two pretty women in the ship, you not able to talk with dem, I guess dat".

"I was very sorry, I grant", replied Jack.

"Well, Massa Easy, by-and-bye we see more Spanish girl. Why not talk all day with Pedro, and

den you able to talk with dem”.

(*Midshipman Easy* 108)

When two months later another Spanish vessel falls in Jack's hands, he has a good chance to sport his proficiency in a conversation with the captive seamen: “The Spanish captain complimented Jack on his Spanish, which was really very good for [...] he had made great progress” (124). Needless to add, before the wind-up of the novel Jack and Agnes, the pretty girl of the Spanish prize-ship, meet again to be eventually happily married.

In another novel, *Peter Simple*, the author tells the story of Chucks, the boatswain of the “Diomedé” whose ignorance of Spanish cost him not only the loss of his beloved, but also a humiliating decline in his reputation. On a visit to Valencia, 16 years prior to the time of the proper action, Chucks fell in love with the most beautiful woman he had ever met. By his own admission, he could only “mumble-jumble something or another, half Spanish and half English”, therefore, when asked by the girl's father what sort of officer he was, he could not find the Spanish word for “boatswain” and said he was a “corregidor” (i.e. one who punishes) (117, 128). That proved to be very unfortunate, for the “corregidor” in Spain was an official much above his real rank. When the truth, or rather falsehood, was revealed, the proud Spanish Don and his daughter contemptuously dismissed the Englishman as a “thief”.

Those Spanish occasions in Capt. Marryat's novels are flavoured with adequate lexical borrowings. Some of them have already found their way into English, like the loan “siesta” (*Peter Simple* 126); other barbarisms become obvious in the context, for example when Chucks offers the Spanish Don a few “segars [...] real Havannahs” (ibidem 117-118). Still others are explained by the author: “I walked to a posada (that's an inn)”, “Donna Seraphina (they call a lady Donna in Spain)”, “for carita, which means charity” (*Peter Simple* 127, 128, 129), “a short, square-built frame, with a strong projection of the sphere, or what the Spaniards call bariga” (*Naval Officer* 189). In the XLth chapter of *The Phantom Ship* the author gives a comprehensive explanation of “sanbenitos” and “samarias” which are different kinds of bags worn by penitents and introduced by the Holy Inquisition in Spain.

Among Capt. Marryat's protagonists there are two who master Portuguese. One of them is an English enterprising sailor named Alexander Musgrave alias Elrington, the hero of a semi-historical novel entitled *The Privateer's-man, One Hundred Years Ago*. He goes in for the slave trade with Brazil and soon finds himself in a Portuguese jail in Rio de Janeiro. He is then sent down to toil in a diamond-mine. During his bondage, following the example of several earlier heroes

in similar circumstances, Musgrave learns Portuguese (ch. XVI). In the opposite quarter of the world the same task is accomplished by Amine Vanderdecken in *The Phantom Ship*. She is an adventurous sailor's wife who accompanies her husband on a long and perilous voyage to the Far East by way of the Cape of Good Hope. Their ship is wrecked in a raging typhoon off the Andaman Isles, the couple are separated and Amine's raft is washed up on the eastern coast of New Guinea. She is then transported by local people to a Portuguese factory in the island of Tidore. Here she is obliged to wait three months for a passage to Goa: "In a few weeks, by due attention, she gained the Portuguese language so far as to ask for what she required, and before she quitted the island of Tidore she could converse fluently" (287).

By having two of his protagonists learn Portuguese in two different hemispheres of the globe, Capt. Marryat gives credit not only for their natural propensity to languages, but also faithfully depicts the colonial power that Portugal wielded in the eastern and western hemispheres. Towards the end of the 15th century Portuguese navigators first reached the Cabo da Boa Esperana (Bartholomue Das), colonizing on the way the Azores, Madeira, Cape de Verde Islands and St. Thomas Island, then stretched over to India (Vasco da Gama in the service of the Portuguese King Manuel I) and the Far East, setting up a number of trading-posts and military bases from Mozambique, through the coasts of India and Ceylon, to Malacca, Moluccas and Timore. Their possessions in the Indian Ocean made up the so-called Estado da India Portuguesa with the capital city in Goa. About the middle of the 16th century they also reached China (Macau) and Japan (cf. Da Silva 324-364). In the western hemisphere the greatest Portuguese gain was Brazil discovered in the spring of 1500 by Pedro Alvarez Cabral who called it Terra de Vera Cruz. This discovery gave beginning to the colonization of the country.

Apart from the afore-mentioned protagonists who learn Portuguese, Capt. Marryat also documents his familiarity with this nation's sailors with several lexical borrowings. Those of the barbarism type include swear-words like "Sangué", "Corpo del diavolo!", "Caramba" (*Phantom Ship* 264, 328). Newton Forster who touches at the island of Madeira administered by the Portuguese, is treated to an "husteron proteron" medley of pies and puddings, remarks on the local "inamoratos" strumming their mandolins from sunset to the dawn, and at one point a Portuguese messenger addresses an English officer in his native tongue: "Carta por senhor commandante, (..) O senhor embaixo; que ir risposta" (*Newton Forster* 235, 237, 246). Among the English (and in fact international) loan-words adopted from Portuguese, perhaps the best-known examples include "auto-da-f" (*Phantom Ship* 320), "padre" (*Midshipman Easy* 240), and "pagoda"

(*King's Own* 286). The first of these relates to the cruel ceremony introduced by the Holy Office in Spain and Portugal at the end of the 15th century, and practised the longest in Portuguese overseas territories (well into the 19th century). "Padre", the same in Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, was adopted from the Portuguese colonists in India to designate a minister or priest of any Christian Church, including native priests. It was then applied by English sailors and soldiers to a chaplain, and it is in this sense that Capt. Marryat uses it in his novels [cf. Murray VII 371]. The third popular loan is a corruption of the Portuguese "pagode", itself found in India, the native form imitated by the Portuguese being of Persian or Sanskrit origin [ibidem 375].

As regards Italian, it used to be an international language in the 18th century only on a limited scale – mainly in the south of Europe [cf. Cieśla 72]. None of Capt. Marryat's protagonists undertakes to master it, though Jack who calls in the course of his service at Sicily, "could understand the whole" of Don Rebera's speech "from his knowledge of Spanish" (and possibly French!). Similarly, when Donna Clara "put an Italian word, Jack understood her perfectly well" [*Midshipman Easy* 153-4]. A couple of borrowings in this and other novels prove this competence: "rosolio" (or rosoglio) in *Peter Simple* [129] which is the Italian form of modified Latin meaning "dew of the sun" and signifying a sweet cordial made in Italy from spirits, raisins, sugar, popular in Southern Europe; "speronare" which the author describes as a light and graceful Mediterranean boat, "the padrone of the vessel", i.e. its captain, the "gregos" of the crew, "or night great-coats with hoods", forms of confirmation like "E vero vero" (indeed, really), personal weapons like "stiletto" [*Midshipman Easy* 136, 137, 139, 156, 162]; "sotto voce" which is a loan from Italy meaning "in a very quiet voice" [*Newton Forster* 324].

The most ingeniously used Italian loan occurs in *Newton Forster*. The term in question is "conversazione", introduced into England from Italy at the close of the 18th century and chiefly applied to assemblies of an intellectual character, in connection with science, art or literature [cf. Murray II 119]. In the XLIVth chapter of the said novel Capt. Marryat uses the word 15 times (!) with the aim of exposing middle-class pretensions and hypocrisies. On their safe return from India, Newton is invited by a couple of ex-passengers of the "Bombay Castle" to a fashionable social gathering in London. The party given by Dr. and Mrs. Plausible – people of vaulting ambition – is calculated to eclipse those organized by Dr. and Mrs. Feasible who live in the same street and strive to gain favour with the same circle of wealthy people and potential patients. Accordingly, on the Plausibles' guest-list for their conversazione there are "all the scientific men of

the day, and a very pretty sprinkling of nobility”, the latter including a rather suspicious prince from Tartary. Singular refreshments prepared by the frugal host and hostess appear “too ethereal to eat” and feature “Negus and cherry-water added to tea”, whereas the pseudo-scientific character of the meeting consists in the private exhibition of the wax figure of a female in the first stage of parturition (poor Mrs. Plausible is not even able to pronounce this last word correctly) (*Newton Forster* 311-322).

The action of two novels by Capt. Marryat takes place on board of Dutch ships plying in the English Channel, the North Sea, the Indian Ocean, Atlantic and Pacific, as well as in Dutch settlements on the western coast of Africa and Indonesia. Consequently, several protagonists and secondary characters are Dutch sailors: Lieutenant Cornelius Vanslyperken and his crew sailing in the cutter “Yungfrau” with despatches between Portsmouth and Amsterdam in *Sna-rleyyow, or the Dog Fiend*; Captain William Vederdecken, the legendary Flying Dutchman haunting the area of the Cape of Good Hope, and his dutiful son Philip who goes to sea and roams almost the whole globe in order to secure salvation for his sinful father in *The Phantom Ship*. These characters speak Dutch as their native tongue and the only foreign learner of their language is a Portuguese Catholic priest whom Philip Vanderdecken meets aboard the “Batavia” in the East Indies (*Phantom Ship* ch. XII). In these two and a few other novels Capt. Marryat draws a comprehensive picture of the Dutch seaborne empire in the 17th century, containing many historical facts and figures. In the course of their Gouden Eeuw, or Golden Age, Holland set up colonies in both Americas (Hudson Bay, New Amsterdam in the island of Manhattan, Guiana), in Africa (Capetown and the Boer Republic), and in the Far East (Indonesia, Irian and southern Japan). In this last place (Nagasaki) the Dutch were the only Europeans until the middle of the 19th century, whereas Irian (western New Guinea) continued as their dominion well into the 60’s of the 20th century (cf. Boxer 300-1).

While the treatment of historical material deserves a separate study, we will observe that in the discussed novels Dutch realities are spiced up with several lexical borrowings. In *The Phantom Ship* these include geographical names such as the “Zuider (or Zuyder) Zee” (123, 148), or polite forms of address such as “mynheer” (39 and the following pages), a shortened of “mijnheer” for a “gentleman”, or “Sir” when it appears in front of a proper name. In *The Naval Officer* the author makes an ironic reference to “a Dutch schuyt” (29), a distorted form of the Dutch “schuit” for a boat or barge; in *The King’s Own* he uses the loan “monsoon” (289) which is an English modification of the Dutch “monssoen”, itself adopted from Arabic “mausim” (literally “season”) (cf. Murray VI 630). In

Peter Simple two Dutch borrowings occur in satirical context: the title-hero and his shipmate who are runaway English officers, put on women's clothes in order to escape captivity in the Netherlands (invaded by the French Republic that was in the state of war with Britain). Looking at Peter's disguise, his companion wittily calls him "you ugly Dutch vrow" (186), which is a distorted form of the Dutch "vrouw" for a woman. The same companion critically remarks on his own appearance as well: "in this dress I look as much of a boor as any man in Holland" (184), where the old-fashioned "boor" is a loan of the original Dutch "boer" meaning a peasant, yokel.

On one occasion, at least, Marryat's hero, Peter Simple, sails in a British military convoy to the Baltic Sea. Their order is to frustrate Napoleon Bonaparte's attempts to extend his coalition to all northern states. We will observe at this point that a few years earlier, in an artful move, the French dictator presented the island of Malta to Paul I, the Tsar of Russia, who demanded its cession from Britain. Meeting with a flat refusal, Paul tried to revive the old Confederacy of the North with Denmark which held the key to the Baltic and which then also included Norway. Britain could not tolerate any seafaring restrictions in this area, as she depended on the local supply of timber, sail-cloth and rope for her naval power (cf. Callender 202). Therefore, in the spring of 1801, no one else but the famous Nelson was sent to destroy the Danish fleet at the (first) battle of Copenhagen. The expedition to the Baltic described in chapters LVIII to LX of *Peter Simple* was the second in turn. It took place in September 1807 and was commanded by Admiral Gambier who bombarded Copenhagen from the sea and captured some 70 Danish warships. In the discussed novel the hero and his ship are indeed attacked by a squadron of flat-bottomed Danish gun-boats called "prams" and they fight a fierce battle in sight of Copenhagen. Next they anchor at Carlsrona where Peter makes sure that the notorious "Riga balsam" (a medicine as well as a strong alcoholic drink) does not find its way aboard. At this point in the novel a very interesting incident occurs which has relevance both to the actual history and the study of another foreign language successfully undertaken by Capt. Marryat's sailing hero.

Soon after leaving the harbour of Carlsrona, Peter's frigate encounters a Swedish man-of-war. The hero is sent on a "diplomatic mission" to meet her captain and inquire about their doings. To his surprise, in the captain of the Swedish ship – introduced as Count Shucksen – Peter recognizes his former shipmate of the "Rattlesnake", the long-missing boatswain Chucks. The story of his professional and social advancement is a string of lucky coincidences well grounded in naval history, but it is also due to his flair for languages. As it appears, a

few years prior to this meeting, boatswain Chucks was captured by the Danes who were then shipwrecked in a gale on the Swedish coast. Being Russia's allies, the Danes found themselves imprisoned while Chucks regained his freedom. He witnessed the preparations of the Swedes for the war against Russia: they were busy fitting out their vessels and Chucks saw that he could be useful to them as an able and experienced officer. However, he could not speak French, the contemporary international language in the area, which proved to his advantage. In order to remove this impediment, Chucks learned Swedish, greatly distinguishing himself in the new service, and was eventually made a count (cf. *Peter Simple* 429-430).

The story of his advancement may well seem unlikely at first sight. During the earlier naval conflict, the American War of Independence, Sweden had been a member of the Maritime Confederacy of the North, directed against Britain and involving Russia and Denmark with Norway. In the course of the Napoleonic Wars, however, Sweden became Britain's ally. One good reason for this transformation was her sovereign's dislike of Napoleon Bonaparte, next, the long-standing rivalry with Denmark which soon led to the seizure of Norway, and last but not least, the invasion by the new Tsar (Alexander) of Finland which had long been regarded as an integral part of the realm of Gustavus IV. Thus, history verifies the possibility of Chucks' career in the Swedish navy on the side of the anti-Napoleonic coalition, together with his obligation to learn the local language, since "the language of the court of Britain's ally, Sweden, was French" (Kemp 148). We will remember that Capt. Marryat made this particular character a perfect stranger to French.

The French wars that spread over Europe at the turn of the 18th and the first quarter of the 19th centuries, may also serve as an opportunity to remark on the very limited number of German borrowings in the discussed novels. During this eventful period, "Prussia's role at sea was small enough to be disregarded" (Kemp 129). Consequently, none of Capt. Marryat's English sailors sports any German except the Dutchman Philip Vanderdecken who uses one borrowing from German which has long become international property. The word in question is "schnaps" (or "schnapps") (*Phantom Ship* 79, 83, 92). In another novel there is a genuine German cook who shouts out "Ah, mein Gott, mein Gott!", but he is merely a landsman servant employed in an English country mansion (*King's Own* 332).

We will observe that this linguistic scarcity corresponds to the contemporary status of Germany as a state: it continued in its fragmented condition until the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 when the German Empire was proclaimed with

Wilhelm I of Prussia as a hereditary emperor. It was only later, at the turn of the 19th century, that the 2nd Reich reached the position of an economic and military power, and still much later, between 1880-1900, that its naval fleet made colonial conquests possible in Africa (Togo, Cameroon, South-West Africa) and in the Oceania (the Bismarck Archipelago, Solomon and Caroline Islands, Marianes and others). By that time, however, Capt. Marryat's novels had been half a century in circulation.

Far away from the cold Baltic, Jack's friend in *Midshipman Easy*, Ned Gascoigne, learns some Arabic in Tetuan on the northern coast of Africa. The background here is the warm Mediterranean, very suitable for Ned's courtship of a pretty Moorish girl named Azar. His tutor in Arabic becomes the local English vice-consul and the method of instruction consists in his putting down words on a piece of paper together with their phonetic transcription. The first lesson comprises the Arabic translation for "Don't be afraid - I love you - I cannot speak your tongue" (*Midshipman Easy* 185). Ned's courtship in Arabic works miracles for the girl continues meeting him nightly in the garden of her house in spite of their different races and religions. To make things easier for Ned, and for the reader to follow the progress of this amour, the lovers carry on their affair in "Lingua Franca" (*ibidem* 187-8). Nevertheless, the author takes the opportunity to introduce a couple of Arabic loans. Azar, the Moorish beauty, is thus likened to a "hourii" from the *Arabian Nights* (188), originally a nymph of the Mohammedan paradise. Her father, Abd el Faza, "put his hand to his forehead, salaamed, and told Gascoigne that his zenana, and all that were in it, were his, as well as his house and himself" (190). "Salaam" is the popular Oriental salutation meaning "peace be upon you", and the other variants in the novel include "Allah be praised!" or "Allah protect you!" (188). As for the zenana, it is that part of a house in Muslim countries in which women of a family are secluded. Inside her "zenana", Azar idles her time away contemplating the Moon from an "ottoman" (187).

Another occasion to use a few more Arabic borrowings arises in *The Phantom Ship*. This is connected with Philip's Arab-born wife Amine whose father used to work as a "hakim", or Muslim doctor in the service of an Egyptian "bey" (59). In spite of her European breeding, Amine herself appears to cherish a supernatural fear of "ghouls" (evil spirits in Eastern fairy tales that prey on human corpses taken out of graves), as well as of "Iblis" and "Ifrit" (the Devil, Satan, evil demons in Mahometan mythology) (*ibidem* 67, 144, 145).

During several longer voyages to India, Marryat's sailor-heroes also get a chance to boast of their acquaintance with some Hindi. Few of them can actually speak it, as for example the first mate of the "Bombay Castle" who "addressed,

in the Hindostanee language, two or three Lascars (fine olive-coloured men, with black curling bushy hair)" (*Newton Forster* 204-5). By way of contrast, the title-hero who listens to the talk of native Hindoo seamen, does not seem impressed by the sound of their tongue, remarking: "Lascars jabbering in their own language, British seamen d – g their eyes, as usual, in plain English" (*ibidem* 206). In the Madras section of the discussed novel (ch. XXXVIII), Newton disembarks his ship to court a lovely young lady, however, he hardly needs to know the local language as she is English. We may observe here that starting from the second half of the 16th century, British colonists gradually drove the Portuguese from continental India (though the latter kept the island of Goa until 1961). In 1600 the formidable East India Company was established which carried out systematic and efficient colonization of the country. One hundred and fifty years later the British thwarted French ambitions in India, following the Seven Years War which they won. By the middle of the 19th century two-thirds of the Indian sub-continent had been subordinated to British rule (cf. Bowle ch. 8).

To come back to Newton Forster in Madras, though he may feel quite at home, his stay there gives the author a good chance to render the local colour with a number of lexical loans. Thus, the English visitors are transported from their ship ashore in a "masulah" boat (or "massoola", Anglo-Indian of obscure origin) and they hire the services of "dubashes" or Indian interpreters (Hindi "dbhshiya"). Their countrymen turned colonists have amassed "lacs of rupees", that is hundreds of thousands, or indeed indefinite number of the local currency (Sanskrit "laksha" and Hindustani "lkh"), and they live the life of rich "nabobs" (Hindi "nawb") in spacious "bungalows" (Hindi "bngl") floored with "chunam" (Sanskrit "chrna"), i.e. lime and ground mortar. They are respectfully addressed as "saibs" (Hindi "shib") and are carried about the town in "palanquins" (Sanskrit "paljanka" and new-Indian "pallak"), a kind of covered sedan-chairs; their numerous domestics include "syces" (Hindi "s'is") or grooms whose task involves fanning away the flies with "chowries" (Hindi "chaurn") (all these loans come from ch. XXXVIII of *Newton Forster*, whereas their etymology is given after *The Oxford English Dictionary* edited by Sir James Murray).

In *The King's Own* the hero, Willy Peters, and the ship's company also find themselves temporarily in the East Indies. They first sail up the river Ganges to Calcutta and then change the Bay of Bengal for the more tranquil, that is western side of the Indian peninsula, where they call at Travancore and Goa, finally reaching the third important British stronghold in India – Bombay (chapters XLII to XLV). Some of the borrowings in this section of the novel include "ghaut" (Hindi "ght"), explained in the text as a landing-place; "nullah" (Hindi "nla"), made

clear by the author as a creek, brook, rivulet; "raja" and "rajahpoot" (Hindi "rj" and "rjpt") for the native king and his son; "howdah" (Urdu "haudah") which can be identified in the context as a seat for riding an elephant. Apart from the examples quoted above, the two novels feature several other words used locally and of more complex origin pointing to Tamil, Malayan or even Chinese roots, such as "bamboo", "cassowary", "gamboge", "nankeen", "tom-tom", etc.

Summing up, Capt. Marryat's sailor-heroes possess uncommon zest for learning foreign languages. This is connected, to a great extent, with their seafaring profession. They are constantly on the move, visiting far-away exotic places, meeting and mixing with representatives of different nations, races, cultures and religions. They realize that their command of languages can contribute to their career, promote them socially, bring personal success (e.g. popularity with women leading to a happy marriage), and more generally "enlarge their mind" and expand their full human potential, making them more sensitive, tolerant and cosmopolitan. Proficiency in this field can also save them from numerous traps and perils, ranging from small blunders to captivity. The author's use of lexical borrowings contributes to the authenticity of his voyages, battles, conquests and transactions, staged in different remote parts of the world. They impart special local and artistic colouring, help to individualize the scenes and characters, introduce elements of stylization into his novels, enliven the dialogues, and enrich the resources of Capt. Marryat's means of expression.

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Nauka języków obcych a bohaterowie morskich powieści kapitana Marryata

Niniejszy artykuł koncentruje się na marynarzach, bohaterach powieści kapitana Marryata pod kątem jednej z najbardziej uderzających cech – ich zapału do nauki

języków obcych. Protagonści jego dziewięciu powieści morskich rozpoczynają od nauki w szkole klasycznej łaciny i greki oraz jednego języka nowożytnego – francuskiego, będącego najbardziej uniwersalnym środkiem komunikacji międzynarodowej na przełomie XVIII i XIX wieku. Bohaterowie uczą się również tych języków, które kapitan Marryat słyszał zarówno na pokładzie statków na morzach i oceanach całego świata, jak również w zamorskich posiadłościach największych potęg kolonialnych. Należą do nich portugalski, hiszpański i holenderski. Autor włącza też do swoich tekstów wiele zapożyczeń z włoskiego, arabskiego, hindi i kilku innych języków. Artykuł wskazuje także na ważne funkcje stylistyczne, które odgrywają zapożyczenia leksykalne w jego dziełach.