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## WORLD WIDE JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

# A Study of Linguistic Complexity in Nautical Historical Fiction with Reference to Patrick O' Brian's Master and Commander

**Abhijeet Nanasaheb Pawar,**

### Abstract

It is the reading of the Nautical Historical Fiction inevitably raises the question in front of reader that "How much vocabulary do I need to know?" and it recurs again and again. It is because O'Brian's Master and Commander provides a deep presentation of nautical and naval terms, medical and scientific terms, people, place and political groups, historical events, weapons, armaments, and the military words, flora, fauna and nautical history, food and drink and customs and culture. The reality is that we are completely unaware of the historical and nautical background. The novel weaves around the language of sea and science into the narrative and stopping to consult a reference book the intimacy between reader and tale and between reader and author disturbs. Thus every follower of Jack Aubrey and Stephen Maturin the central characters of the novel, has discovered finding of one's way through the complex vocabulary of novel, which can be as challenging as navigating, uncharted waters. The novel enlightens readers on sociolinguistic perspectives through nautical terms, medical and scientific terms, weapons, people, places and political groups, flora fauna and nautical history and medical and scientific terms.

**Keywords:** Nautical Historical Fiction, nautical and naval terms, sociolinguistic, linguistic.

### Introduction

No man can easily surpass me in ignorance of naval terms," claims Stephen Maturin (Patrick 31)

Early in , the first novel of Patrick O'Brian in which Maturin's continuing ignorance of the ways of the sea and nautical terminology is one of the chiefs of humor in the Aubrey Maturin series. Therefore, ignorance of 18th-century naval cant, to associate ourselves with the novels, is the paragon of intelligence. So that is a mainstay,' said Stephen, looking at it vaguely. 'I have often heard them mentioned. A stout looking rope, indeed, likewise confronted, we can imagine ourselves uttering these lines with Maturin's boggled look and feigned disinterest. Dean King has rightly spoken on the language of naval world conversed by O' Brian's men: Your mariner is an honest fellow, none better, but he is sadly given to jargon. (King 1)

When reading the novels the question is always in front that "How much vocabulary do I need to know?" inevitably arises, and it recurs again and again. Dr. Pawar has rightly mentioned in his doctoral thesis:

O'Brian's prose provides a deep presentation of nautical and naval terms, medical and scientific terms, people, place and political groups, historical events, weapons, armaments, and the military words, flora, fauna and nautical history, food and drink and customs and culture. (Pawar)

The reality is that we are completely unaware of the historical and nautical background. The fact and beauty of these novels are that these tales spark a thirst for knowledge; suddenly an era seemed to be remote- that of the French revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. It founds itself that we wanted to know more. So we needed maps, nautical manuals, instructive illustrations, and historical essays. The novels are weaves around the language of sea and science into the narrative. Stopping to consult a reference book the intimacy between reader

and tale and between reader and author disturbs. For the naval man, there is a direct analogy between climbing the mast to extend the horizon at sea and climbing up the hierarchy of command to view the wider operation of the navy. The top of the Royal Navy hierarchy was not in a ship at sea, but ashore, in London. It was only there that one's vision was global, encompassing from grand strategy to pay from ship construction to uniforms, from navigation charts to food allowances. Officers of the crown, including naval officers of the Crown, including naval officers like Jack Aubrey, were ultimately governed by the Parliament, the king's cabinet, and King himself. Then the power of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty comes. The principal officers and Commissioners of the Navy formed the navy board for material conditions, naval expenditure and health and substances of a seaman. Ordnance board an independent board at the Ordnance was responsible for supplying both the army and the navy with the guns. It worked closely with Admiralty, its principal channel of communication on sea affairs, in determining with the navy board and its subsidiaries. The Navy of the period is made up of a wide variety of ships with various specific roles to play. Some were designed for combat, others for support activities. The most important combat vessels were designed to fight an organized enemy fleet in a line of battle; they were called the line of the battleship of the line. Battle tactics involved sailing ships in a line, bow to stern as the most efficient way of concentrating their gunfire, at the same time protecting the ship's weakest point. The most battle took place at relatively close range. They didn't begin until the ships were as close as 1000 yards. Broadly, speaking the ships on line they were also rated ships, falling into five or six classes. All were commanded by a sea officer trained in navigation, seamanship, and gunnery and holding official rank and title of Post Captain. There were gradations of seniority among these men, depending on their length of service. The biggest ships in the Navy, the first-rate ships of the line, were all armed with 100 or more heavy canons on either two or three decks and a total complement of about 837 naval officers and men plus 170 Royal Marines. The next class of ships of the line, the second rates carried 90 to 98 guns usually on three decks and total complement is 738 naval officers. Thus according to the rate, there are the decks, guns and naval officers are in number. In the same way, different types of small ships are designed according to their purposes. Frigates are the most glamorous ships. They were the fleet's fast fighters, involved in all sorts of duties and high drama. These convoyed merchantmen with valuable cargoes, raided rich enemy fleets, served as the eyes of the battle fleet and carried earth-shattering news from all quarters of the globe. Unrated ships and vessels consist of a wide variety of other warships principal ones being sloops, bomb vessels, fire ships, brigs, cutters, and gunboats. Sea officers came from every class of society. All sea officers held written documents that gave them their rank and authority. Admirals also known as flag officers because they flew a colored flag denoting their rank were the highest rank officer. Commodores are a lower-level officer. This rank was neither permanent nor necessary. The senior captain has been appointed as commodore. Just as in Jack Aubrey is appointed as Commodore. Sea officer with rank is known as Captain. He is also known as Post Captain. Commanders, Lieutenant, Midshipmen, Cadets, Masters,

Surgeons, Pursers, Chaplains, Boatswain, Gunners, Carpenters, cook, etc. are the personal works on the ship. The daily routine of the sea was monotonous. The day officially began at noon, when the date and day of the week were changed on the log board. Just before noon on a clear day, the Master, Master's mate, Midshipmen measured with their quadrants the angle of the sun as it reached its highest point of the horizon, thus determining latitude and correcting the time kept by any chronometers on board. Noon was reported to the captain, and eight strokes were struck on the ship's bell followed by the Boatswain Pipe to dinner, executed on his high-pitched silver whistle. Itself is divided into watches of four hours apiece, measured by sandglasses and marked by a ringing of the bell. Sailors stood their duty hours in watches of four hours off, throughout the day and night. Furthermore, in the comprehension of the novel, the overview of the war during the time of the plot also plays an important role. The War of Second Coalition, Peace of Amiens, War of Third Coalition, The Naval War of Trafalgar, Peninsular War and War of 1812 are the significant historical events in the novel. These events are the cues for the interpretation of the work of art and help to understand the context and background. The medical and scientific terms bring linguistic complexities in the plot. Although the sailors were predominantly healthy young men, they were still susceptible to the most acute contagious disease. Besides, chronic illness contributed to the loss of considerable manpower at sea. As on Aubrey's ship, the most frequent diagnoses on St. Madrid's cruise were catarrhs, influenza, consumption, and pneumonia. These respiratory ailments accounted for nearly 50 percent of all diagnoses made in the British or American Navies. Other leading diagnoses included malaria, diarrhea, dysentery and bilious fever. Syphilis and gonorrhoea, predictable risks of shore leave almost everywhere, completed the list of the most common illness, although rheumatism and related debilitating conditions such as lumbago and sciatica could remove significant numbers from a ship's workforce for weeks on end. As Jack Aubrey was well aware, the most frightening illnesses were exotic tropical infections, especially malaria, yellow fever, cholera, and perhaps, plague. Most Commanders and their surgeons considered some of these to be hazards of specific stations visited by the Royal Navy. Medicine chest for Navy ships contained up to one hundred of the more than two hundred remedies prescribed by doctors on land and, sea the specific contents of each ship's chest differed somewhat, according to sea preferences. The most frequently prescribed drugs were cathartics, which were assumed to flush out unbalanced humor with the faces and to relax the abnormal tension that had existed. Opium and opium preparation such as laudanum were correctly regarded as sedative, anti-diarrheal and analgesic. Maturin used laudanum frequently as an escape from his worries appears to have been addicted, and it is unclear how he managed to wean himself from it. The drastic treatment doctors favored was bleeding, on humoral grounds that chemically it removed or otherwise unbalanced blood-producing symptoms. Thus, the occurrence of catharsis, vomiting, sweating, or blisters after the administration of drugs simply confirmed that the remedy had indeed altered the humor and tone. Trauma and surgery during naval warfare is the part of sailors' life. Ironically more battle wounds occurred when the ships fought at the distance than

in close engagement. Maturin a trained as a Physician, not a surgeon, he had at least read the most influential works on naval surgery that had been published by the time met Aubrey. Among the common occupational risks of a life at sea that might require manipulative surgical treatment were burns, inguinal hernias, falls from aloft, limbs crushed under falling barrels, ropes or not only in the battle, ropes, or chains and injuries incurred during fights. Thus the Maturin's medical practice has brought medical terminology that has made novels linguistically complex. The illustration related masts, sails and rigging is fetched reader the new jargon and add the new terminology in his knowledge. The expression of word such as lower mast, topmast, topgallant, cap, the hull, the maintop, topgallant masthead, the truck, the main wale, the gun ports, the main channel, pendant, clew lines, reef points, leech lines, fore staysail sheets, halyards, downhaul, mizzen staysail, driven, spanker, poop deck, quarterdeck, waist, forecandle, upper deck, gun deck, or lop, etc makes reader to know the new words belongs to the jargon of sea world. Thus, every follower of Jack Aubrey and Stephen Maturin has discovered finding one's way through the complex vocabulary of novels, which can be as challenging as navigating, uncharted waters. The novels enlighten readers on nautical terms, medical and scientific terms, weapons, people, places and political groups, flora fauna and nautical history and medical and scientific terms. It guides us on the structure and workings of the Royal Navy during the period, the political situations of the time and the state of medical science. Maps, diagrams and ship illustrations enrich us to understand the naval society. Thus, the reader needs to take and handy reference while they have to read.

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