

The MarEng Project – a Tool for Enhancing Safety in Navigation and Maritime Transport

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ABSTRACT: In the paper the MarEng project is presented as a tool for enhancing safety in navigation and maritime transport.

In recent years, increasing numbers of accidents at sea and in ports have been attributed to the poor level of verbal communication in English irrespective whether it referred to the case of the “Scandinavian Star” disaster in which the new crew was not familiar with the ferry and could not understand and communicate with the passengers when the fire broke out or the rescue operation during and after the sinking of the “Estonia” in the Baltic Sea or occupational accidents on board ships and in ports.

As nowadays multilingual and multinational crews prevail on board ships, it is very important for them to be able to communicate in a commonly understood language, that is English, which is widely used in maritime transport all over the world in order to make the shipping and sea transport operations safer and keep the seas cleaner. To be able to do this, the crews must have some tools at their disposal.

There have been various attempts at standardizing the English language used at sea and they resulted in the IMO recommendations for the implementation of the Standard Marine Navigational Vocabulary which has recently been replaced by the IMO Standard Marine Communication Phrases used in all maritime universities and educational institutions.

Many teaching materials have been designed to include Maritime English, as it is often called. Here, I would like to present the MarEng project, which is one of the EU projects in the Leonardo da Vinci programme. It is a multi-media teaching and learning tool aimed at both distance learners of Maritime English on board ships or at home and students and teachers at nautical colleges and maritime universities all over the world.

Gdynia Maritime University is one of the partners to the MarEng project.

The material-making partners include:

- University of Antwerp, Institute of Transport and Maritime Management, Belgium.
- University of Antwerp, Department of Business Communication, Belgium.
- University of La Laguna, School of Nautical and Sea-related studies, English and German Linguistic Studies, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain.
- University of Helsinki, Department of Translation Studies, Finland.
- Åland Polytechnic, The Åland Maritime Institute in Mariehamn, Finland.
- Sydvest Polytechnic, School of Maritime Studies in Turku, Finland.
- Latvian Maritime Academy in Riga, Latvia.
- Gdynia Maritime Academy, Poland.
- University of Turku, Finland.

Centre for Maritime Studies in Turku, Finland, has been the co-ordinator of the MarEng project and the company Lingonet Oy, in Turku, Finland, has been responsible for the task of putting the material and the exercises into a multi-media format.

The MarEng is an international project aiming at promoting the Maritime English competence of the people working in various maritime professions in different parts of the world.

The objective of the MarEng project is to produce an innovative Maritime English language tool, which will be available both for the students and the teachers on the Internet.

It is aimed both at those studying in nautical colleges and maritime academies on stationary basis and for distance education students, so the intended users include those actually working at sea as well as a wide range of sea-related areas.

The MarEng material is suitable for different language levels and has been divided into intermediate level and advanced level. It is based on language used on board ships, in ports, in shipping companies and in the shipping environment.

Intermediate level materials cover the following sections:

- 1 In Port.
- 2 The Ship and her crew.
- 3 Leaving port.
- 4 In the Fairway.
- 5 On the Watch – a working day on board.
- 6 A Storm – Mayday, Mayday.
- 7 An Accident on board.
- 8 Trespassing – An encounter with the Coast Guard.
- 9 Approaching the port of destination.

The MarEng learning material in the intermediate level section is based on the idea of a virtual ship on a voyage from the port of Santander in Spain to the port of Kotka in Finland, calling at a number of ports on the way. During the voyage, the crew of the mv “Marina” faces a number of routine situations as well as some unusual ones in which Maritime English is used both on board ship and in port loading and discharging operations. Most of the texts have been recorded as well as numerous vocabulary and grammar exercises have been provided. There is also a section on maritime glossary with explanations in each of the sections. There are clear instructions on how to use the programme and the students can listen to recordings as many times as they wish to do so.

The Advanced level materials correspond to the topics covered in the intermediate level sections and include:

- Ad 1 Port operations and Cargo Handling, Shipping and Maritime Management
- Ad 2 Types of Vessels
Navigation Bridge, Navigation Instruments
Cargo Space
Engine Room
- Ad 3 Port State Control
- Ad 4 Navigation, Seamarks, Lights, Lighthouses
Vessel Traffic Services
- Ad 5 A Working Day on Board
- Ad 6 Radio Communication
Weather reports, Navtex
- Ad 7 An accident on board – Radio Medical Search and Rescue
Helicopter Rescue
- Ad 8 Security Issues, ISPS Code
- Ad 9 Ice Navigation
VTS
Pilotage

The materials have been evaluated and tested by Advisory Partners including:

- APEC Antwerp/Flanders Port Training Centre in Belgium,
- Finnish Ship Officers Union, Finland,
- National Board of Education, Finland,
- Oy Rettig Ab Bore, Finland,
- Maritime Administration of Latvia.

The MarEng project started in November 2004 and finished in April 2007. Its final product is a web-based Maritime English learning tool in the form of an organized database of various Maritime English teaching and learning materials and a CDrom.

The MarEng material can be used online in the college classroom, in distance learning and for self-study purposes. There are not only recorded texts but a number of different exercises which the students are encouraged to do. Some parts of the MarEng material are also available in the PDF format. The entire MarEng tool will be available on the Internet in 2007, free of charge. However, user registration will be required.

The project has been partly funded by EU Leonardo da Vinci programme.

Those interested in it are welcome to visit the web-page of the MarEng project

[http:// mareng.utu.fi](http://mareng.utu.fi)

Using the MarEng materials in practice will hopefully improve the knowledge of Maritime English among the multi-lingual crews resulting in better communication on board, safer port operations and maritime transport.