



Development Paper

IMLA-IMEC 2014 Key developments in Maritime English

This month the MariFuture Development Paper focuses on key developments in Maritime English as reported in the IMLA-IMEC Conference which took place in Island of Treschelling in Holland during 6-11 July 2014. The Paper will also report on the progress of the IMO's initiative to revise its 3.17 Model Course.

Several MariFuture partners attended the IMLA-IMEC 2014 Conference and during this event the SeaTALK project partners presented several papers and workshops viz., a paper called "**Which teaching materials? Mapping linguistic competences, learning outcomes and professional standards to build an integral Maritime English syllabus**", as well as a workshop called: "**Using Authentic Maritime Materials to Improve English Language Skills**" which explored converting everyday on board materials like COLREGs, NAVTEX messages, maintenance manuals, operating instructions, emergency procedures etc., into language skill exercises so that seafarers of the future can be better prepared for the effective use of English at sea. There was also a paper titled, "**The SeaTALK Project Survey of Maritime English – Current Practices and Challenges for the Future**", by authors based at Nicola Vaptsarov Naval Academy, Bulgaria, also a SeaTALK Partner.

The highlight of the event was a presentation by Captain Sibrand Hassing. In his keynote speech he explained that there is a difference between practice and reality when it comes to the assessment of competence in English (Maritime). The question he raised was - *Is English necessary on board cruise ships?* Although the question contained the term cruise, his speech was more wide ranging stressing the need for seafarers to have competence in English language on board all types of ships.

His own response to the question was, 'Yes'. He also emphasised that this need is not limited to deck and engine personnel but also to personnel with designated safety function(s). He made references for such requirements in the STCW such as A-V/2 and AVI/ 2 training. He stressed that the requirements should not be seen as only communication between crew members but also with passengers and other non-safety personnel in emergency situations. He is of the view that 'English is the language of the sea and fundamental for all communication in modern maritime world'.

The second question he raised was - *How do we assess competence?* He argued that training has to go beyond STCW, which he stressed only regulates safety/security competence. The need to go beyond STCW, he explained, is due to the increase in inspections and reporting which now require more effective verbal communication. He emphasised the need for more demanding techniques with regard to speaking and writing skills, improved/adapted to the current requirements which are not included in STCW.

There were several other presentations at the conference, all directly or indirectly stating that the STCW is inadequate when considering the need for Maritime English for seafarers as the IMO's STCW

uses to the term 'Effective Communication' without specifying what this term actually means and without specifying meaningful standards with regard to English language (or Maritime English) competence.

There was also an excellent presentation by Milhar Fuazudeen, the Head of the Maritime Training and Human Element Section, Maritime Safety Division, International Maritime Organisation (IMO) reporting on the latest developments at the IMO regarding the revision of model courses with specific references to the revision of the IMO Model Course 3.17 which concerns Maritime English.

There were several outstanding papers, with one by Jane D. Magallon detailing work being carried out in the Phillipines which is similar to the Marifutre SeaTALK Project. The title of her paper was, **"Assessing Maritime English in Outcome-based Framework: Measuring Student's Competence as per STCW 2010 as amended"**. The paper set out identifying the competences as stated in the STCW code and then cross-referencing these to KUPs (Knowledge, Understanding and Proficiency). Then each competence was assigned a Learning Outcome with an specified teaching and learning methods/activity with a suggested assessment which was underpinned by a one or more assessment/testing criteria. There was also grading criteria of 1, 2 and 3, not dissimilar to SeaTALK assessment and grading which applies MarTEL standards of Distinction, Merit and Pass..

The August 2014 Development Paper will report on the outcome of the SeaTALK Partner meeting which is expected to take place later this month, on 11-12 July, immediately after the IMLA-IMEC conference.