MarTEL
Maritime Tests of English Language

MarTEL is the unique solution to improving the Maritime English competency of seafarers.MarTEL solution contains a series of study units supplemented by a set of tests in Maritime English.The intention is to teach English in a Maritime context therefore as well as providing a sound framework for teaching of English, MarTEL helps to motivate to learn english in the context of the profession. A new and standardized method of delivery and assessment of Maritime English competency will help to reduce the extremely high percentage of accidents and incidents at sea and in ports, and virtually save lives.

Establishing a set of standards for Maritime personnel working in the water transportation sector is of outmost importance in terms of maintenance of effective and safe working environment for each and every class and rank of seafarers.

MarTEL Project is the result of this recognized need primarily by TUDEV and C4FF and brought into life through a collaboration with various prestigious educational institutes and universities in Europe.The wide geographical distribution of these institutions in Europe adds to the strength of the project by contributing in their own unique way of instruction methods and specific local needs and knowhow of their respective shipping and maritime industry.

The ecclectic combination of different scopes and cultures will enable the MarTEL Team to produce a standardized system that will help the language competency needs of a non-native speaker working in ports and onboard vessels and hopefully will set the benchmark for Maritime English education not only in Europe but in worldwide at its later stage.

Here is a brief introduction of Project Owners and Partners that bring MarTEL to life.

Project Owners

C4FF-Centre of Factories for the Future was established as a EUROTECNET project when the UK joined the EU in 1984.Factories for the Future Projects are prestigious programs of either education and training or research and developments funded through EU's framework programs, as well as EU's funded education and training programs.Several Factories of the Future projects were supported by EUREKA Council of Ministers.

In 2005, TUDEV and CFF established a partnership called MarEdu.The partnership has developed a number of national and European projects including the MarTEL project.(for details see www.maredu.co.uk)

TUDEV-Turkish Maritime Institute (Turkey)

An institution that provides high quality education and training to meet the needs of Turkish Shipping Industry. Establishing Partner of Piri Reis University.

Project Partners

GCNS-Glasgow College of Nautical Studies (SCOTLAND)

The Faculty of Maritime Studies. Accredited by BS EN IS09001 for its entire Education and Training provision.

University of Strathclyde, Glasgow (SCOTLAND)

Established in 1796, Strathclyde is known for its focus on research, science and engineering disciplines and it is the third largest University of Scotland.

Satakunta University of Applied Sciences (FINLAND)

University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Technology and Maritime Sciences. One of Finland's Largest Universities of Applied Sciences

Akademia Morska w Szczecinie (POLAND)

ISO 9001 certified Training and Certification Centre in support of Navigation and Marine Engineers.

Tromso University - College (NORWAY)

Faculty of Health Sciences, Faculty of Engineering and Economics, Faculty of Art, Music Conservatory, Faculty of Education

Spinaker (SLOVENIA)

Award Winning E-learning Site Founder, Delivering Marine GMDSS Communication, Courses in eight languages

MarTEL / MARITIME English Project

Recent research reports indicate that one of the major causes of the human error related accidents at sea is due to problems with English Language Competency.There are no international or European standardsfor Maritime English. MarTEL project makes an attempt to overcome this problem by transferring innovation from existing English Language models and establish a set of standards for Maritime English and concurrently develop study units for these standards.This project also covers maritime language competency assessment for the language certification and intends to develop these standards at Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced levels as well as at Deck and Marine Engineering officers ranks and higher.

First Meeting Photo

Left to right: Capt. Marco Ottolini, Dr. Osman Turan, Mrs. Bahar Çalbaş, Capt.Taner Albayrak, Mr. Tomaz Gregoric, Capt.Heikki Koivisto, Prof. Reza Ziarati, Capt. Hilde Kjerstad, Capt. Janusz Uriasz, Dr. Martin Ziarati, Mrs. Nesrin Gülsaran, Mr. Serhan Sernikli, Capt. Tezer Ülküatam

The first Group Meeting of the MarTEL /Maritime Test of English Language took place over a two-day period at TUDEV on 6-7 December 2007.There were partner representatives from U.K., Scotland, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Finland and Turkey.

NEW HORIZONS – The IMAREST Visit

As the success level elevates to higher standards, TUDEV's line of sight has been enlarging to reach distant horizons with the aim of, not only to maintain the leadership in Turkey on Maritime Education and Training, but also to become a regional leader on MET as well as to take her deserved place in the EU maritime community. The very recent success story of TUDEV was the accreditation visit of IMAREST.

Accreditation visit to TUDEV of The Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology (IMarEST) took place on 3 – 4 March 2008. The two day visit was carried out by three distinguished members of the IMAREST; Capt. J.N. McGrath,BSc, MSc, PhD, CEng, FIMarEST, FIMMM,Captain, Royal Navy (Retired), Capt. Tom Proctor (Capt.Royal Navy retired,PhD, FIMarEST, FIMMM) and Mr. Ed Hansom(Royal Navy retired, FIMarEST, FIMMM).

On the first day of the visit, the accreditation team was briefed by the key staff about the programmes and discussed the main issues of the documents which they were provided earlier. They toured all school facilities freely including laboratories, workshops and simulators, asking questions to individuals they met. They've concluded the day by interviewing a group of students from different cohorts.

On the second day the team expressed their observations and impressions to the key staff and inquired the points that need to be clarified. They continued their tour to facilities freely and checked all the documents they deemed necessary and talked to staff members as they wish. The team held several private meetings and even had their second day lunch on their own to continue their assessment.

On the final meeting at the end of the visit, the IMAREST team expressed that they were amazed and very impressed with the facilities and academic programmes of TUDEV as well as it's staff's and cadets' quality and that they would recommend TUDEV to be accredited to IMAREST as the first Turkish Maritime Institute, in consensus. It was also mentioned that the accreditation of a Nautical Science/ Navigation Engineering Department (Deck) will be the very first in the world underlining that even in the U.K. there is no deck department yet registered or applied for registration.

Accreditation of TUDEV will not only contribute to TUDEV's present programmes, but will also have significant impact on future initiatives of the Piri Reis University for worldwide recognition. Moreover, the IMAREST team has also mentioned the possibility establishing an IMAREST Branch in Turkey, which would have strong links to TUDEV, as well as many other initiatives which would be mutually beneficial to both parties.

Capt. Taner Albayrak, Senior Lecturer,
Dep. Programme Leader Navigation Engineering, EU Projects Manager

COMPETENCY ORIENTED TEACHING AND LEARNING - A new approach

After having a reasonable and sufficient basic English background, Maritime English (MarE) taught as an ESP, may better be competency oriented.Officer Level should be able to talk, listen and respond orally, read & comprehend, and finally write of course; but after a careful job analysis, we can see that officers use some of these language competencies in different areas more than the others. A good example might be the SMCP usage. It is all talking; (listening & comprehending - responding orally) or (speaking & waiting/expecting an oral response).There is no reading or writing here.

Therefore; when teaching how to use the SMCP, the teaching methodology should be focused on talking. Likewise, the assessment should be oral if possible. As most of the SMCP usage is on the bridge, (inboard and outboard communication both), the most effective way of teaching and assessing would be in the bridge simulator. We call this new approach at TUDEV “Job Oriented Usage of English Language” (JORUEL).

The preliminary results are quite promising.We will be more than pleased to share the viewpoints of the other Universities and Training Centres as well.

Tezer Ülküatam
Head of Department, MarE TUDEV

Left to right: Ms. Lena H. Moussly, Capt.Tezer Ülküatam, Mrs. Nesrin Gülsaran, Mr. Serhan Sernikli, Mrs. Bahar Çalbaş. A snapshot of a typical day of MarTEL workgroup April 2008.

Dr Martin Ziarati – MarTEL Project proposal instigator

I became interested in developing the MarTEL proposal when I read Professor Ziarati's report to the IMarEST's Technical Evaluation Board (TEB) in 2007. The report originated from the notes taken at IMO MSC 82 (2006) meeting when Professor Ziarati represented IMarEST (and incidentally Turkey) at the event.

Included in Professor Ziarati's report were two IMO reports from the UK delegation identifying that 'there is a compelling need to promote a high level of working maritime English language skills'. Several EU member states were reported to have invited STW sub-committee to consider how the requirements in the STCW-Code can be strengthened in this connection. It was noted that deficiencies in maritime English causes accidents and therefore needs to be seriously taught in the basic and the main training of all Chapters of the STCW Code of practice. It was interesting to note that both of these issues were also the findings of two IMarEST papers (Ziarati, 2006; Ziarati, 2007).

The MarTEL Project primarily is a maritime language competency assessment project for the language certification of the following target groups: i) young people aged 17/18 years old wishing to enter the Merchant Navy as ratings, ii) those embarking on a career as Merchant Navy officers, iii) those intending to hold senior posts as a Chief Mate/Master/Captain and as a Second/Chief Engineers, and iv) those who are working at ports with different degree of seniority including pilots.

This project intends to establish a set of standards by transfer of innovation from existing English language standards and maritime English model courses such as International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) SMCP (Standard Maritime Communication Phrases, 2001).

The main aim is to develop a series of Maritime English language standards incorporating also the IMO's SMCP, at three different standards: i) Foundation – Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced, ii) Officer – Deck and Engineering, and iii) Senior Officers – Deck and Engineering, also senior officers at port and pilots. The tests will be piloted in at least two partner countries (Turkey and the UK). The other partner countries with experience in developing and testing of maritime English will be encouraged to pilot the tests in their own institutions.

The strength of the project emanates from the composition of its partnership. The partnership is composed of major education and training centres in seven EU member states supported by their awarding, accrediting and certification authorities. Three of the partners are involved in Leonardo proposed projects concerning e-learning (E-GMDSS) and three are involved in another and well-known Leonardo project (SOS, 2005) concerning the development and implementation of an integrated programme of education and training for merchant navy cadet officers.

The MarTEL project proposal was developed jointly with several industrial and commercial organisations in seven partner countries. There are seven (eight if a English University decides to join the partnership) active and many silent partners and two are major awarding and validating bodies. The contracting organisation and the co-ordinating (technical) organisation have substantial experience of instigating and implementing EU funded projects.

There are several main tangible outcomes such as - i) The Foundation standards which include tests at three levels of proficiency: Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced. All levels will include active skills i.e. Speaking, Comprehension and Writing. The content would be based on active learning and on maritime terminology and usage with less emphasis on grammar. The Foundation test at advanced level will benchmark

the well-known English qualification standards TOEFL 500 and IALTS 5.5 in terms of testing methods rather than their contents, ii) The Officer standards will be based on TOEFL 550 and IALTS 6.0 standards but content will be primarily based on Navigation English and Marine Engineering English. These tests will focus on all skills but with less emphasis on grammar, iii) The senior officers standards will be equivalent to TOEFL 600 or IALTS 6.6. Again the emphasis will be on active skills. For the senior officers in charge of vessels over 3000 GRT, the standard will include a section on language requirements for these vessels and the term Unlimited will be added to the end of the qualification designation. All standards for Officer and Senior Officer Levels will have different weights on different skills and different proficiency requirements at different ranks and duties. For example, a Chief Engineer should be competent on comprehension (especially reading) and writing but a more moderate level of speaking may be tolerated. The success would lead to vocational qualifications in Maritime English and usage which is expected to be recognised Europe-wide.

In addition there are a number of main intangible outcomes. The main ones being the standards and their associated study units, will provide an opportunity for many companies particularly smaller ones to become involved particularly taking advantage of learning materials and the intended e-learning and e-assessment and facilities for self-learning and self-assessment which is expected to be developed in the course of the project implementation. Impact is expected to be substantial as the project responds to a European and international acknowledgment of the problem which this project intends to address at source and through industrial lifelong learning.

It is encouraging to note that there are many organisations including awarding, accrediting and licensing bodies that are interested in the project.

Dr Martin Ziarati
MarTEL Project Manager
Centre for Factories of the Future

A SINUOUS CHALLENGE

Testing one's English Language in general is not much to fuss about. Select the skills which you consider important, apply the desired level of proficiency, then there you have it; a fine, solid test to assess the applicant's English competency for the pre-determined degree or stage.

Alas, things are not so clear when it comes to the testing of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). On the wide green fields of language competency there lie, scattered in multitudes, the dark and big boulders of professional competency. The path you have

to follow around these boulders is so vague and serpentine that you can easily lose your direction and orientation. At the end of the day you may find yourself frustrated and confused, not so sure about what you are testing; the applicant's language competency for that profession or his competency in that profession. This is a sinuous challenge.

Native speakers of English language probably won't understand this challenge, since to them the language for a specific purpose, say Maritime, is a natural part of the learning when one studies Maritime Sciences. But to those who study Maritime in another language, it is an additional study, an extra effort to comprehend and express their learning in a foreign language, which happens to be English.

When we are to test the outcome of this extra learning, great care and a fine focus are needed for staying on the right side and avoiding trespassing too much into the realm of professional background. Although the maritime competency of a person is not totally separable from the language one uses to express his/her learning, when you dig too much into one's learning to test "Maritime English (MarE)" you may not achieve what you are intending, and you find his/her whole background in his/her profession interfering with the results of your assessment.

Therefore, as we are building MarTEL, we are spending much effort to overcome this challenge and design our tools of assessment to achieve the most sound and referable results of MarE proficiency.

Final Remark by the Editor

In summary what makes MarTEL so unique is that such a system of standards does not exist and also the fact that MarTEL system is a comprehensive set of standards for all types of seafarers at different ranks and classes. The standards focus on specific skills needed for given rank and class of seafarers and MarTEL tests are set to the minimum competency levels defined by seafarers.