

Maritime Students' English Proficiency and Their Feedback on Instructional Materials

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine the English proficiency of Maritime students and to assess the English instructional materials of LIMA as basis for enhancement. The descriptive study was participated in by 586 respondents, 222 first year maritime students, 189 second year maritime students, 168 third year maritime and 7 English teachers assigned in LIMA. Based on the findings, the maritime students agreed that English is required in their chosen course and is useful in securing a job especially in metro manila area and abroad. On the other hand, Maritime students are incompetent in vocabulary and reading comprehension and fairly incompetent in grammar. Both respondents disagree that the examples for each topic presented on the text manual are realistic, that the contents are clearly organized into units or chapters and that there is available graphics and pictures for each major topic that will let the students clearly visualized the topics. Finally, there is a proposed enhancement in the English maritime text manual and program for marine students' English proficiency. However, the English proficiency level of maritime students should be improved particularly along vocabulary, grammar and reading comprehension. In this aspect, the institution should give way to the reproduction and utilization of the text manual upon the approval of the text book committee. The General Education Department may implement the proposed enhancement for the English Maritime Text Manual.

Keywords: *Maritime Students, English Proficiency, Instructional Materials*

INTRODUCTION

Maritime Education is one of the most in demand courses in the Philippines. The country has already set its standards in the past decades where Filipinos occupy 25 percent of maritime positions in the sea faring industry all over the world (Tinig ng Marino, 2000). It is a high paying job that people from different countries like China, Thailand and India are entering in this field. Seafarers are doing their best efforts to develop their skills in order to globally compete with their counterparts. It is a must to develop their craft by entering into trainings so they could have an edge not only in technical know-how and work attitude but also in public relations which require very good communication skills needed in all aspects of seafaring.

Because of such situation the decline in English proficiency of one country can be seen in the industry. Ship owners would prefer a sea farer with an excellent communication skills because it

means not only safety but also smooth sailing business.

English proficiency is now a business of everyone. It is also one of the requirements of the new revised Standards of Training Certification and Watch Keeping (STCW) for seafarers. It is a means of global communication in the maritime industry and is considered as an important tool to maintain safety of life and property at sea. It is the language used by multilingual crews towards understanding of daily on-board and external communication.

English language proficiency is a major qualification in getting a job whether local or international. As such, college graduates are expected to demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively both in speaking and writing. It is the reason why Maritime schools today are faced with the biggest challenge of developing seafarers with high standards of competence and professionalism with good English communication skills.