USING MARINETRAFFIC.COM IN TEACHING MARITIME ENGLISH TO NAVIGATORS

Olena Frolova

Kherson State Maritime Academy

Professional training of navigators within the system of higher maritime education of Ukraine shall meet the requirements of national (industry standard) and international documents (resolutions, conventions, codes), adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Hence, training of future deck officers interconnected with their professional requirements is a key issue for maritime institutions.

Consequently, these institutions shall develop / apply learning materials to develop communicative skills at its core so necessary for safe practice on board. The main goal of such materials is to prepare maritime officers and ratings who apply their professional knowledge and skills, communicate efficiently with the team in a natural working environment.

Over the last few decades, the application of different computer technologies has influenced greatly on the way in which both teachers and learners access and use corresponding learning materials. The role of newly appeared technologies in the field of Maritime English teaching has been highlighted in the researches of M. S. Aung, P. Bjökroth, J. Bolmsten, B. Brooks, Y. Dittrich, H. E. Elsayed, P. John, M. Kitada, A. Noble, T. H. Pham, N. Tagaki and others. For instance, H. E. Elsayed emphasizes that Maritime English teachers – just like their students – should become autonomous learners in this digital era if they intend to develop professionally [1, p. 372].

This paper is aimed at introducing the website **MarineTraffic.com** to teachers of Maritime English and suggesting some recommendations how to integrate it effectively into the Maritime English lesson.

Effective maritime communication constitutes one of the principal learning outcomes of navigators' training. A major challenge for Maritime English teacher is to find or develop material which facilitates the cadet's path to effective communication on board. The learning material has not only to promote learning of the specialized language, Maritime English, but has also to approximate reality on board the ship. It therefore has to be authentic [5, p. 8]. The website MarineTraffic.com powered by Google Maps meets the above mentioned criteria, as it is both authentic and live.

With a focus on a successful use of MarineTraffic.com in teaching Maritime English to navigators we consider the main advantages of its application in the learning process in the language classroom, which are the following:

1. Engagement: the learning environment should provide a certain level of engagement that is very much dependent on the learning activities planned and their relevant to the environment. The relationship between the nature of learning activity and the environment should show be pedagogically associated. The availability of meaningful interactive objects is important to support the

imagination, making reference to the real-world and facilitate cognitive process of the learner.

2. Realism: the accuracy and the level of details required by primary object is important to foster the user's sensory experience, which in turn contribute to increase the engagement level of the learner inside the virtual world.

3. Technical interface: this can be the user-interface which users use to interact with the virtual environment. In such cases, user-friendly features should be taken into account [3, p. 68].

In view of the foregoing, this paper provides the teachers of Maritime English with practice on how to make the best use of **MarineTraffic.com** in teaching. These learning activities are used to familiarize learners and their instructors with a variety of ways in which Maritime English can be applied.

1. Module "Types of Ships", topic "Ship Classification"

a) The textbook "Welcome Aboard" gives 3 basic variants of ship classification. The first classification focuses on the purpose the vessel serves (cargo ships, passenger ships, fishing ships, naval ships and special purpose ships). The second – focuses on the vessel's route and schedule (tramps with non-fixed schedule and ports of call and liners with fixed schedule and ports of call). The third one defines if the vessel is suitable for coastal or oceanic voyages (coasters and sea-going ships). The teacher may suggest one more classification applied in MarineTraffic.com (picture 1). The vessels are coloured differently: passenger vessels are blue-coloured, cargo vessels – green-coloured, tankers – red-coloured, high speed craft – yellow-coloured, tug and pilot boats – light-blue-coloured, yachts and others – violet-coloured, etc.

Pic. 1. Shipping notations used in **MarineTraffic.com**

The teacher may elicit the students' ideas about the classification they prefer most of all. The students can discuss this problem in pairs, groups or in a class.

b) The students can be given a task to find 3 tramps (the vessels which sail according to the unfixed schedule) and 3 liners (the vessels with the fixed schedule). The students shall analyze the menu named *Vessel's Itineraries List* which provides the data about vessel's daily positions and ports of call. The same task can be applied to the ship classification according to the area of sailing

(coasters and sea-going ship). The students shall present the results of their work in a class.

2. Module "Around the World", topic "Geography of Merchant Shipping"

a) The teacher may ask the students to consult the world map (the menu *Live Map* and *Ports*) and discuss the following:

1. What are the busiest ports in the world?

2. Where are they located?

3. What purpose does the *Live Map* serve for?

b) The students are given a task to describe the route for each vessel using the MarineTraffic.com (menu *Vessels*). The teacher provides the students with some vessel's names.

c) The students are given a task to describe the current route of the vessel they had their first/last shipboard training using the MarineTraffic.com (menu *Vessels*).

d) Describe the most efficient route for the vessel to deliver her cargo to the port of destination as quick and safe as possible. The teacher provides the students with the names of last and next ports of call. The students shall use the menu *Voyage Planner*.

The MarineTraffic Voyage Planner is a novel tool for sea route distance calculation. What sets this tool apart is the fact that the routes are based on actual voyage data recorded by MarineTraffic, as opposed to algorithmic routing that does not respect maritime traffic restrictions, such as Traffic Separation Schemes, safe waterways, turning points etc.

e) Latitude Longitude Scavenger Hunts [2; 4]. The students are given certain positions (Latitude & Longitude) by the teacher or their group-mates to find the vessels. The students shall present the results of their work in a class.

Of course, these are just few examples of MarineTraffic.com application at Maritime English class. Having realized all the potential educational values that the website MarineTraffic.com might bring, it can be concluded that there are various possibilities of its use in maritime institutions. Like any other educational discipline, Maritime English should prepare for change in teaching by exploring new technology in education.

REFERENCES

1. Elsayed H. S. Using Google Maps in Teaching Maritime English / Heba Saber Elsayed // Proceedings of IMEC-22. – Alexandria : Multimedia Center AASTMT, 2010. – P. 372-373.

2. Jarrett N. Engaging Students Through Google Maps [Electronic resource] / Neil Jarrett. – Access mode: https://www.edutopia.org/discussion/engaging-students-through-google-maps. – Title from the screen.

3. One World Classroom for Future Seafarers : A design of a new virtual E-learning environment for Maritime Education and Training : IAMU 2013 Research Project (№ 2013-4) / Ho Chi Minh University of Transport ; [Trong Hieu Pham (Research Coordinator)]. – Tokyo : IAMU, 2014. – 104 p.

4. Utecht J. 10 Ways to Use Google Maps in the Classroom [Electronic resource] /Jeff Utecht. – Access mode: http://www.thethinkingstick.com/10-ways-to-use-google-maps-in-the-classroom/. – Title from the screen.

5. VTS-Bot: analysis and implementation of a student-centred learning approach by using a ChatBot computer programme to provide for outcome-based maritime communication training : IAMU 2015 Research Project (№ 20150104) / Jade University ; [Peter John (Research Coordinator)]. – Tokyo : IAMU, 2016. – 68 p.