

## DEVELOPING SECURITY – RELATED ACTIVITIES FOR MARITIME ENGLISH INSTRUCTION

**Dr. Galina Velikova, Assoc. Prof.**  
*Nikola Vaptsarov Naval Academy (Bulgaria)*

**Abstract.** The paper deals with developing teaching materials dedicated to the ISPS Code and issues related to handling stowaways on board ship. It points out the main considerations in designing materials for Maritime English and specifies the place of such topics in the Maritime English Syllabus. Then it offers several activities intended to make the issue of shipboard security more practicable and user-friendly while developing all macro-skills and providing skills-integrated work.

*Keywords:* ship security; stowaways; skills development; task-based learning

The English language proficiency of future seafarers requires a special emphasis to be placed on maritime law in terms of IMO conventions and related documents. The Model Course 3.17 explicitly sets out requirements for familiarisation with the ISPS Code regarding security of ships and port facilities and actions to be taken for ensuring a vessel's security. The purpose of the present paper is to dwell on the development of teaching materials in this respect, namely dealing with stowaways on board ship, taking into account all restrictions and requirements of the specific communication situation. The texts are extracted from various websites the links to which are cited immediately after each task.

### **Considerations in Designing Materials for Maritime English**

According to Tomlinson materials development is a practical undertaking, involving the production, evaluation, adaptation and exploitation of materials intended to facilitate language acquisition and development. (Tomlinson 2016). Materials writing is an indispensable part of the practice of any Maritime English lecturer. There are various reasons for that. First and foremost, it “can be more facilitative in providing the personalised, relevant and engaging experience of language in use and opportunities for observing how the language is used and for meaningful communication” (Tomlinson 2012). Then there is the lack of materials available and accessible commercially as well as restrictions in terms of

time, syllabus and level of students to take into consideration. Last but not least, a Maritime English lecturer is ‘a language consultant’ rather than a guide who must motivate the learners to use their own expertise in the subject-matter in a particular profession or discipline in the maritime industry (Pritchard 2001).

So, having defined the setting in which the students will be using Maritime English, the lecturer must decide on appropriate input and content-based instructions. In this case, we will apply a task-based approach and make sure that our material is:

- a. authentic – involving learners in communication
- b. appropriate – related to the right language and professional level
- c. valid – linked to a particular target group with its specific setting and relations
- d. suitable – to address the students and optimize their learning rate.

The model underlying their development is Hutchinson and Waters’ materials model (Hutchinson & Waters 2001). The input is usually a text but may also be a diagram, a dialogue, etc. Language items and structures are set in a certain context. The content combines the student’s own knowledge of the language and the particular situation and generates meaningful communication. Language and content are drawn from the input and are put into practice according to what the students will need to do the tasks assigned to them and feel involved in learning through use.

### **Survey of the Materials Designed**

The starter to the topic could be a number of questions for students to brainstorm, e.g.

1. What is a stowaway?
2. Why is it illegal to be a stowaway?
3. Why do people become stowaways?
4. What vessels attract stowaways most?

They will reveal the learners’ knowledge in the field in terms of language and content and activate their attention to the issue.

Then their attention will be drawn to the following passage with further questions accompanying it:

1. Where do stowaways come from?
2. How does the problem affect the shipping industry?
3. What precautions are taken to prevent stowaways boarding?

The International Maritime Organization carries out global research on stowaway incidents. According to their 2017 figures (the latest they have), there were 432 incidents that year, involving 1,420 stowaways. The majority of them – over 250 – were Nigerian nationals. Other nationalities included around 175 Tanzanians, 150 Albanians, well over 100 Syrians, over 100 Moroccans and 70-odd Ghanaians. The two ports where most stowaways secreted themselves on ships were Durban in South Africa and Lagos in Nigeria. Other problem ports included Bilbao in Spain,

Casablanca in Morocco and Douala in Cameroon. The estimated cost to the shipping industry in terms of delays, repatriation and safeguarding human life was US\$9.5 million, which works out at \$6,700 per stowaway<sup>1</sup>.

Alternatively, students can be warmed up to the topic by watching the video<sup>2</sup>. Then they can be asked questions like:

1. Where were the stowaways found?
2. How long did they travel?
3. Where do they come to the Canary Islands from?

The next step can be an instruction on how to avoid embarkation of stowaways. While scan reading it students can try to answer questions such as where? how? why? what? and by whom?

1. Members of the crew, or reliable external guards, should be posted at the gangway and on ro-ro vessels at each open ramp. Access points to the vessel should generally be kept to a minimum.
2. Stevedores and other people who are authorized visitors on the vessel should carry identification cards or tags which they should wear so as to be easily visible. Records should be kept of people boarding and disembarking the vessel.
3. Mooring lines, the outboard side of the vessel and containers, whether sealed or empty, are common access points. To eliminate such possibilities, security has to be tightened in the cargo handling routines and the deck area should be patrolled regularly. Make sure that proper deck lighting is maintained during the night.
4. The crew should be encouraged to report anything that looks suspicious.
5. All doors and entrances to the accommodation, stores and similar should be kept locked in port.
6. A search of the vessel including the cargo holds should be made before departure. Stowaways are often unaware of the hazards on board a vessel. They may hide in places which would seem highly unsuitable such as reefer holds, rudder trunks, ventilation fan shafts, funnels and cargo tanks. Such areas should not be overlooked when the vessel is searched<sup>3</sup>.

Further, the text may be used for grammatical purposes, e.g.:

**1. Convert the instruction into a checklist.**

**2. Give an account of the activities carried out during the last stowaways search.**

The following text answers the question “What happens if a stowaway is detected on board?” Here students are given a chance before reading to hypothesize and evaluate alternatives and then look for the correct answers below. The exercise that is given here suggests traditional reading for gist.

**Read the instructions list and find sentences concerning:**

- a. Precautions taken in port
- b. Access control
- c. Stowaway search
- d. If a stowaway is found
- e. Dealing with stowaways on board
- f. Stowaway healthcare
- g. Reporting
- h. Repatriation arrangements

The Master must not just rely on port security. He should ensure all crew are aware of the threat of stowaways before arriving in port. Watch keepers and deck watch should be briefed, to report ports /door seals broken and/or spaces open. Ship's staff should:

- ensure regular and random patrols are maintained
- ensure the ship is equipped with securing wire, tape, padlocks, seals to show spaces have been sealed and inspected.
- lock and seal all outside doors, hatches, accesses to holds, spaces, store rooms, electrical and machinery spaces on all decks including funnel decks and poops.
- only keep one door available for accommodation
- keep vigilant account of all people boarding the ship including checking identification
- check regularly ship's spaces, doors locked, seals in place, check containers if possible
- ensure lighting is good on all deck spaces
- ensure good overboard lighting on the outboard side
- after sailing from high-risk ports maintain the locked down status and restricted accommodation access for at least 24 hours
- for at least 48 hours after sailing, a deck patrol should be maintained for the whole ship.

Many stowaways give themselves up once the vessel is at sea. The place where the stowaway was found should be searched for further stowaways and any documents left behind. In addition, the master should arrange for searching the stowaway's clothing for concealed weapons, drugs and identification documents. An interview should be held to ascertain the following information:

- Port of embarkation
- Details of documents held
- Name
- Date and place of birth
- Address

- Nationality
- How he got on board the vessel
- Purpose of the unauthorized passage

as well as a photo taken of the stowaway to speed up the acquisition of travel documents.

The owner, P&I club and the agents at the next port of call should be informed immediately of the incident. A “Stowaway List” should be prepared for production to Port Officials. Other documents necessary for procedures for disembarkation and deportation are a “Statement of Facts” giving details about the stowaway(s) and living conditions on board and an “Agreement of Disembarkation” to be signed by the stowaway.

The discovered stowaways should be placed in a locked cabin, guarded if possible and provided with adequate food and water to remain healthy. The stowaways should not be allowed to move freely about the vessel. When more than one stowaway is found, they should preferably be detained separately. The Master and crew should act firmly but humanely. Crew members should be advised never to make friends with stowaways.

Stowaways should not be put to work on board. When working they will be at an increased risk of sustaining injuries which may entail significant medical expenses and even claims for compensation. Moreover, many stowaways are unpredictable and may represent a safety hazard if put to work. If medical treatment of the stowaway is needed during the voyage, it should be recorded by video or photos<sup>4,5</sup>.

A good approach would be to familiarize the students with a report on a marine incident related to the topic and make them comment on it. This is a real problem-solving activity in which reading comprehension and speaking skills are combined. It activates the learners’ specialist knowledge and stimulates them to analyze a situation, to express their opinion and offer an alternative viewpoint.

**Read the MARS report. Give your opinion. Do you agree with the author’s view?**

Recently, whilst on passage from Agadir to Barcelona, my crew discovered three stowaways hidden in the void spaces in the engine room. As the vessel had also previously called at Casablanca, I was not surprised to learn that they had boarded there.

As we had no spare cabin I was forced to keep them in the accommodation spaces under the guard of two armed men. In Italy, the stowaways attacked the guard and jumped ship. They were arrested by the Police and brought back on board, in this case, no fine was given. They tried to set fire to the ship and then refused to eat for several days.

Whilst in Spain they tried to commit sabotage to the machinery so I was forced to empty the paint locker and get the Spanish police to escort them there as I was told it was inhuman to handcuff them. They were asked by the police if we fed them well.

On return to Casablanca, they were taken away by the Police. My lesson is that when stowaways are found on board, one should be very careful not to harm them. One should treat them well and if possible give them a cabin in order to avoid trouble when visiting other countries. After these experiences, it is not difficult to understand that sometimes stowaways "disappear" from a ship. This is of course not the way but the rules make it very difficult for those on the ship when confronted with stowaways<sup>6</sup>.

The next activity could be used as a stand-alone task. It could be guided or free depending on the students' level. In groups (of at least 5) they work on the following case:

Some 12 hours after leaving a port in West Africa a crewmember found several stowaways hiding in a lifeboat on board your vessel. Even though it was unclear how they managed to embark, they were well treated, given a hot meal and water and locked up until a decision was taken concerning their future. They also explained they were looking for political asylum but had no documents whatsoever and begged the Master not to be returned to their home country.

The group should act as the ship's committee and select one of the following options:

1. Get rid of the stowaways as soon as possible (even if this involves abandoning them in the open sea).
2. Proceed back to the same port where they boarded and hand them over to the authorities.
3. Allow them to stay on board, give them some work to do in the kitchen and let them sneak out in the next port of call.
4. Inform the shipowner, deviate from the planned voyage to disembark them in the nearest port. (However, this will incur an unnecessary delay and extra expenses. Furthermore, there is also the risk that a permission for disembarkation may be refused).

The next stage could be a class discussion in which groups report, present, and compare the choices they have reached with regard to any factors that affected their decision, e.g. economic considerations, human rights (whether these have been considered or violated and how), etc. If time allows, they must consult excerpts from legal documents such as:

1. The International Convention Relating to Stowaways<sup>8</sup>.
2. Note on Stowaway Asylum Seekers<sup>9</sup> and maybe support or reconsider their decisions.

Yet another option can be a role-play in which students work in pairs using either cue cards or a situation given in English or Bulgarian. They do not have much room to improvise; they just formulate the questions or comments they have to make.

### Make a dialogue

<p>You are the Master of m/v Akhinora. The Port Facility Security Officer gets on board to ask a few questions. Answer them.</p>	<p>You are the Port Facility Security Officer who has come on board the m/v Akhinora to ask a few questions.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Stowaways in lifeboats during a boat drill</li> <li>– Before departure maybe by mooring lines</li> <li>– Kept in a secure place</li> <li>– No documents found or any dangerous objects</li> <li>– Last port of call Lagos in Nigeria</li> <li>– In good health, fed and kept away from crew</li> <li>– Present stowaway list with three names on it, their photos; ask about time of disembarkation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– A security incident</li> <li>– How they got on board and when</li> <li>– Their location now</li> <li>– If stowaways searched and interrogated</li> <li>– Nationality</li> <li>– Their health condition</li> <li>– If stowaway list filled in</li> <li>– When clearance by authorities is obtained</li> </ul>

Finally, good finishing off activities may be writing a witness statement covering the following details:

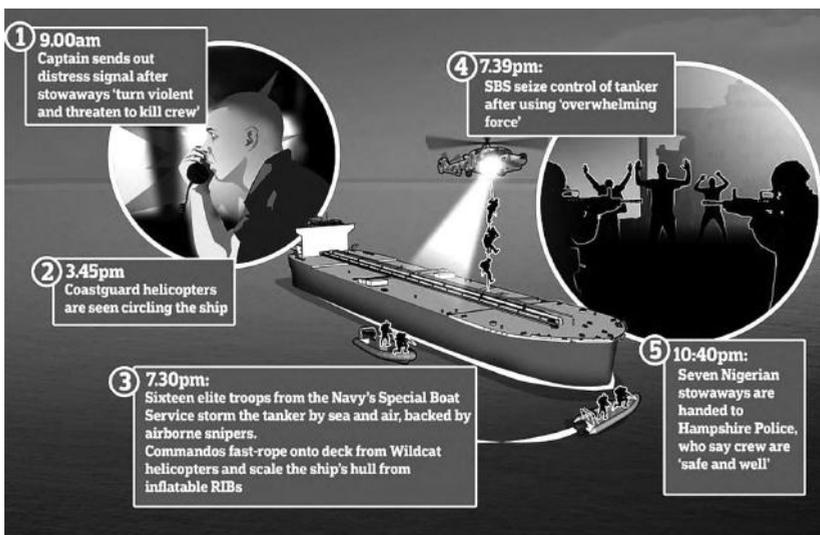


Figure 1. Nave Andromeda disaster

Source: Web site<sup>7</sup>.

- how, when and where the stowaways got on board
- where they were found
- how they were treated
- if they were repatriated immediately.

Alternatively, students may be asked to make a webquest on the Nave Andromeda incident and write about it using the infographic below<sup>7</sup>.

### **Conclusions**

Apart from being an issue of global concern, stowaways have been an ever-present problem for the shipping industry. In this paper we tried to approach it from the seafarers' point of view.

One of the aims of this paper was to present a number of activities related to stowaways boarding a vessel, making the issue of shipboard security more practicable and user-friendly while developing all macro-skills. Some of these have been practiced with different groups and prove once again the interrelation between General English and Maritime English competence. The better the students are at English, the more they tend to participate actively in the activities.

The other goal was to share experience with other Maritime English lecturers who may have encountered the same problem and found a completely different solution to it.

Last but not least, we all know that there are no ideal teaching materials. However, if they have been realistically set, if they can improve the learners' linguistic skills and contribute to their professional and linguistic awareness, then probably they have served their purpose.

### **NOTES**

1. The problem of ship stowaways. Website. MS Amlin - Global Specialty Insurer and Reinsurer. Available from: <https://www.msamlin.com/en/chart-hub/english/Stowaway.html>.
2. Stowaways found on ship's rudder after surviving 11-day trip. Video. Infinity News, 26 Jan 2022. Available from: YouTube (distributor) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6WwNVY6c14>. [Viewed 2023-01-28].
3. Stowaways. Website. The Swedish Club. Available from: <https://www.swedishclub.com/loss-prevention/security/stowaways>.
4. Stowaways. Website. Standard Club. Available from: [https://www.standard-club.com/fileadmin/uploads/standardclub/Documents/Import/publications/standard-safety/2013/23802-standard\\_safety\\_april\\_09-2.pdf](https://www.standard-club.com/fileadmin/uploads/standardclub/Documents/Import/publications/standard-safety/2013/23802-standard_safety_april_09-2.pdf).
5. Stowaways. Website. Nautical Institute. Available from: <https://www.nautinst.org/resources-page/200848-stowaways.html>.

6. Problems with Stowaways. Website. Nautical Institute. Available from: <https://www.nautinst.org/resources-page/problems-with-stowaways.html>).
7. What is a Stowaway? Website. Hellenic Shipping News Worldwide. Available from: <https://www.hellenicshippingnews.com/what-is-a-stowaway/>.
8. The International Convention Relating to Stowaways. Available from: <https://www.unhcr.org/4d9486c39.pdf>.
9. Note on Stowaway Asylum Seekers. Available from: <https://www.unhcr.org/excom/exconc/3ac68c4374/stowaway-asylum-seekers.html>.

## REFERENCES

- HUTCHINSON, T.; WATERS, A., 2001. *English for Specific Purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 978-0-521-31837-2.
- PRITCHARD, B., 2001. *The Role of General English in ESP – the Case of Maritime English*. In: WOME 11. Varna: n/a. CD.
- TOMLINSON, B., 2012. Materials development for language learning and teaching. *Language Teaching*, vol. 45, no. 2, pp. 143 – 179. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444811000528>.
- TOMLINSON, B., 2016. The Importance of Materials Development for Language Learning. In: *Issues in Materials Development*, pp. 1 – 9. Leiden: Brill Publishers. eISBN: 9789463004329.

✉ **Dr. Galina Velikova, Assoc. Prof.**

Web of Science Researcher ID: D-5980-2012

ORCID iD: 0000-0001-5870-8341

Nikola Vaptsarov Naval Academy  
Varna, Bulgaria

E-mail: [g.velikova@nvna.eu](mailto:g.velikova@nvna.eu)