



MARINA PROJECT

NEEDS ANALYSIS SYNTHESIS REPORT





MARINA PROJECT WP-4

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Countries: Austria, Greece, Italy, Norway, Slovenia,
Spain, and Sweden

Regions: Lower Austria, Ionian Sea, Province of
Cagliari, Rogaland, Adriatic Sea, Province of Alicante
and South Sweden

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1. Introduction

The original idea for MARINA project arose from concerns on the lack of foreign languages spoken especially by low skilled workers in coastal tourism areas. Marina project constitutes a rare initiative, as it aims to make a useful addition to the training of the low skilled coastal tourism workers, i.e. workers in marinas, yachting harbours, and cruise ports. On the assumption that it is precisely these low-skilled and usually seasonal employees, who have direct contact with foreign visitors in kiosks, information booths, ticket offices, petrol stations, repair bays, shops, restaurants, internet cafes etc. the Marina project foregrounds foreign language learning for low skilled workers.

By adapting, testing, disseminating and mainstreaming language learning materials using CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) as well as Open and Distance Learning (ODL) methods- those are still regarded as innovative in many areas- and by focusing on content related to work in coastal tourism, the project aims to make an important contribution to foreign language teaching combined with skills training. Furthermore the ability to speak a foreign language not only increases technical skills but also social competence and is therefore a valuable measure in developing the skills of adults in the labour market.

2. Needs analysis- why and how

In this light and against this background and in order to develop language learning material in various languages, it was important to proceed in a twofold way; on the one hand to collect background information on marine tourism sector in all participating countries- areas (see WP2) ; and on the other, to discover the target languages most needed by marine tourism operators, as well as other variables, such as the situations for language learning, the desired modes of learning etc. we proceeded to conduct a needs analysis.

Needs analysis (also known as needs assessment) has a vital role in the process of designing and carrying out any language course, and its centrality has been acknowledged by several scholars and authors. The term needs analysis generally refers to the activities that are involved in collecting information that will serve as the basis for developing a curriculum that will meet the needs of a particular group of students. In the case of language programs, those needs will be language related. Once identified, needs can be stated in terms of goals and objectives which, in turn, can serve as the basis for developing tests, materials, teaching activities, and evaluation strategies, as well as for re-evaluating the precision and accuracy of the original needs assessment. Thus, needs assessment is an integral part of systematic curriculum building. For example, when a curriculum is being developed from scratch for a completely new language program, the best place to start is with needs assessment. However, even for well-established foreign language programs, there is a need to occasionally re-evaluate its goals and objectives as the training group necessities change over time.

3. The Questionnaire: its logic

Marina Project is based on methods and materials transferred from another Leonardo Da Vinci project (transfer of innovation), the TalkIT project, promoted in Sweden and aimed at small tourist entrepreneurs. In so doing the structured questionnaire used in the TalkIT project was in need of adaptation, in order to uncover the type of content needed as well as the preferred modes of delivery, among other things.

The questionnaire (see appendix) is made up by the following three sections:

- a. Language related questions
- b. Questions related to the company
- c. Personal/motivational factor questions

The questionnaire aims at data collection both *about* the learner and *from* the perspective of the learner, and establishes the profile of needs, as well as of learners and their environment through the processing of the following strongly interconnected parameters:

1. **Participants:** information about the identity and language skills of the learners: nationality, jobs, present command of foreign languages met at their job, the extent of their command, modes of learning foreign languages so far, access to internet, factors which may affect the way they learn (wants, means, subjective needs), attitudes towards foreign visitors
- 2 **Environmental situation- Company culture:** information about the context in which the needs arose and the target situation will be perhaps met
3. **Communication Needs:** investigates the particular communication needs and language skills according to socio-cultural (i.e. company culture), and stylistic variables which interact to determine a profile of such needs

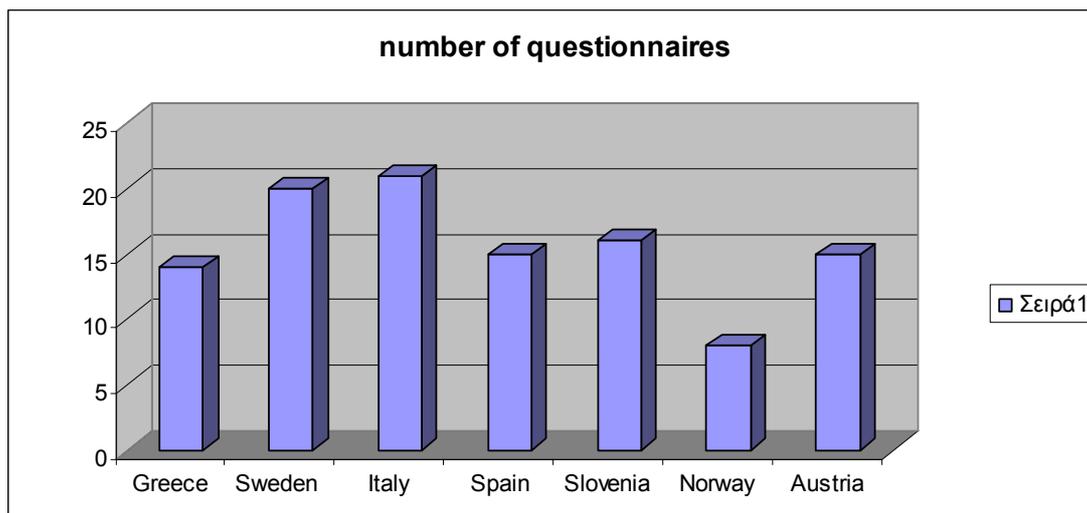
4. The Survey – Sample

The Marina Needs Analysis was conducted in **7 partner countries** in the period between March and April 2010. The table below indicates the specific regions where the survey was conducted in each country. In so doing it reveals the great geographical distribution of the survey in the south and north of Europe, as well as in central Europe. Furthermore, the chosen regions reflect differences in the degree of development of marine tourism (i.e. differences between sea and river tourism).

COUNTRY	REGION
Austria	Lower Austria
Greece	Ionian Sea
Italy	Cagliari Province
Norway	Rogaland
Slovenia	Adriatic Sea
Sweden	South Sweden

In order to gain an overview of the situation in all the countries involved and possible internal differences among different sites in the same country, the needs analysis survey was conducted in 5 different marine tourism centres/sites/locations per country/region.

Approximately 5 questionnaires/interviews had to be filled in each site- although in very small sites the number of questionnaires filled was ultimately less. The chart below indicates the number of questionnaires filled per partner-country.



The needs analysis was conducted by interviewing more than 100 persons, who have been actively involved in the coastal tourism sector.

The table below indicates the sub-sectors, where participants in the survey were involved, revealing the multiplicity of jobs and skills involved in marine tourism.

Type of jobs/company types

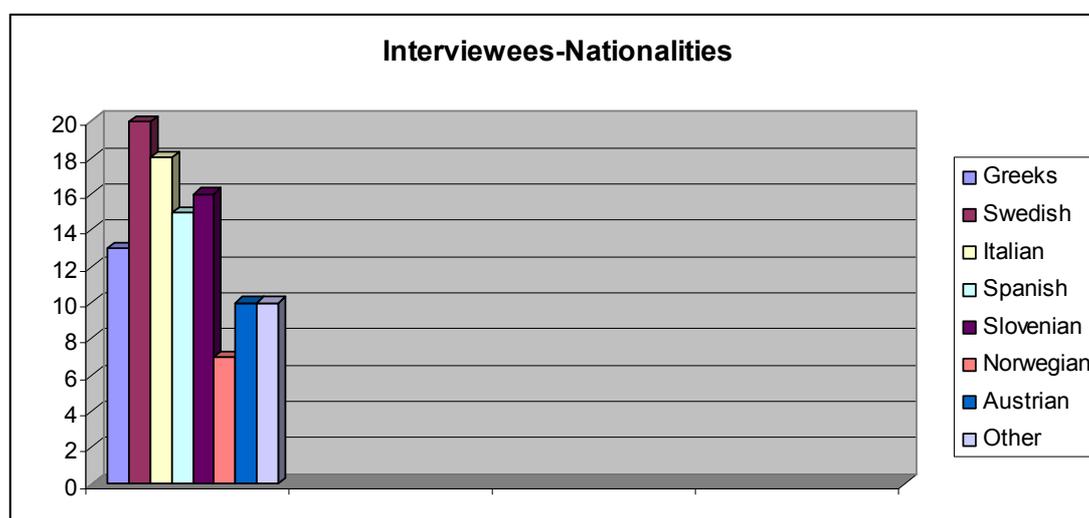
- Marinas
- Campings
- Tourist tours
- Hotels
- Farm holidays
- Sailing- watersports
- Stores
- Travel agencies
- Boat and Bicycle Rental
- Restaurants- Cafes (Gastronomy)
- Repairs- Maintenance

The questionnaire has been developed to be completed by the respondent after a brief explanation by the interviewer. The interviews were conducted either in person, or through telephone, or, in very few cases by email. The data obtained

was also important to make it possible to contact the respondent in case of difficulties interpreting the data during data processing.

5. Overall Results

a. Participants



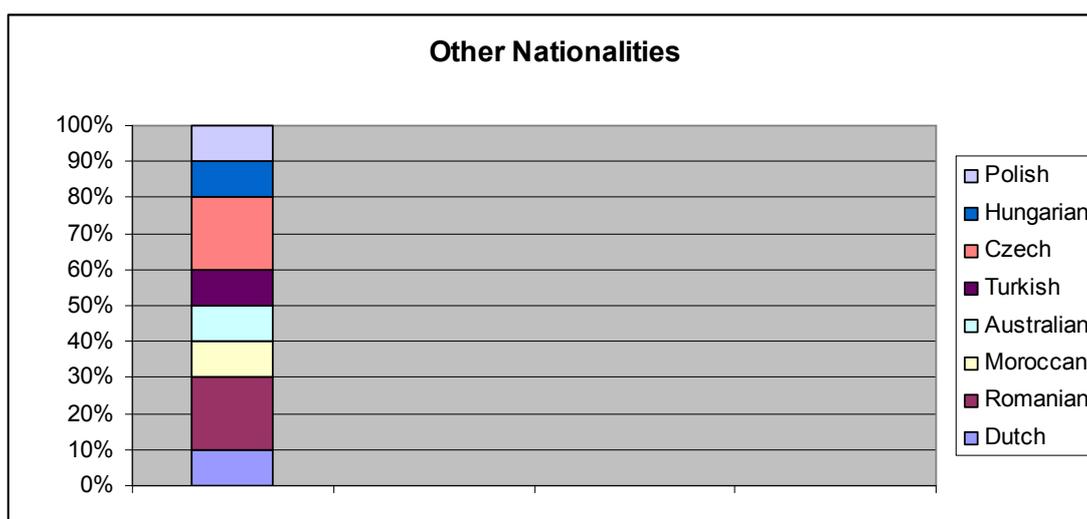
The chart above indicates the number of nationals participating in the survey; it is worth noting that, if one is to compare the overall number of questionnaires filled per country/region (see chart in section 4) and the number of participants being interviewed, it becomes evident that the vast majority of the participants were country nationals -for example in Slovenia all responders were Slovenians, while in Austria 2/3 of the responders were Austrian and the rest migrants.

Partly because coastal tourism tends to be seasonal, most of the companies surveyed during the period of March and April 2010 had not yet employed their

seasonal labor force, which in many cases tends to be comprised by migrant workers.

A mere look at the chart below that demonstrates the make up of the other nationals interviewed reveals the multicultural environment of the marine tourism sector. Again as indicated above, should the survey had conducted during the coastal tourism high season, i.e. summer, there is a strong indication that this chart would include a further number of nationalities.

Perhaps an added question about whether these migrant workers speak the local language or the degree of their competence in it should be able to reveal interesting insights into their language skills.

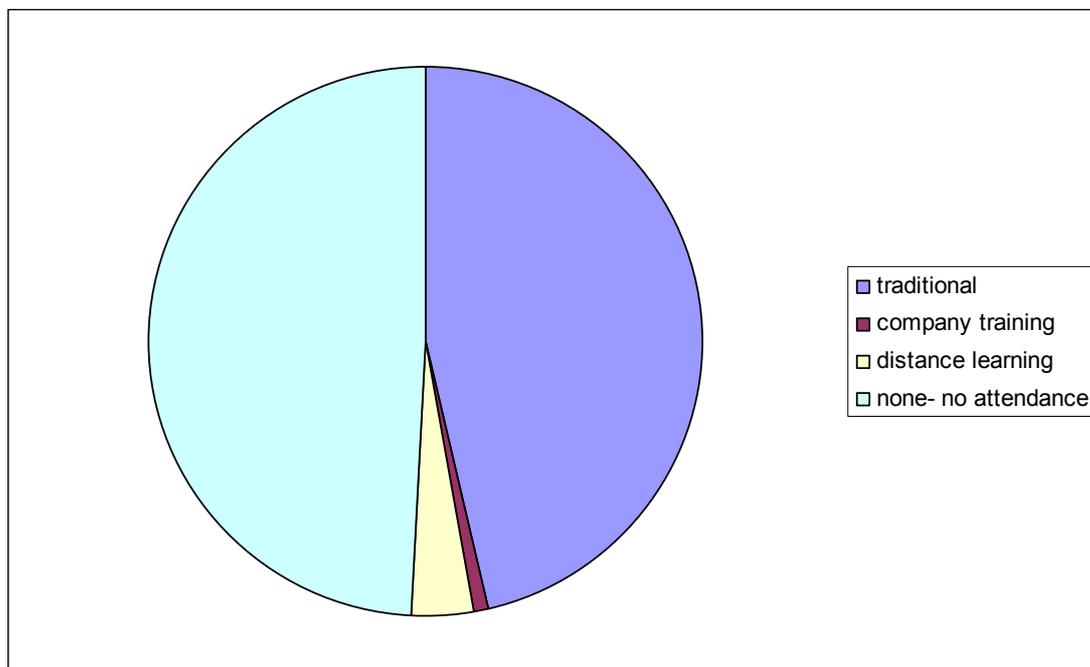


In so far as the participants' kinds of employment is concerned, the results of the survey reveal a mixture of permanent managerial and low skilled jobs, with a relatively low percentage of seasonal workers, a situation that is related to the period the survey was conducted (see above).

Participants' attitude towards the foreign tourists is very positive; only 4 people out of the sample of 109 said that they feel scared and nervous about the presence of foreign tourists for reasons different that the possible difficulty in

communication. Almost all participants are very well disposed towards foreign tourists, arguing for the importance of tourism in local economy, as well as its potential value in enhancing the economy of their company.

What is striking but expected according to the proposal of the Marina Project has been the language skills of the participants: as the chart below eloquently demonstrates almost half of the participants have never attended any language course (55 participants out of 109); and for those who did attend a language course, that was of a traditional type (93 %)



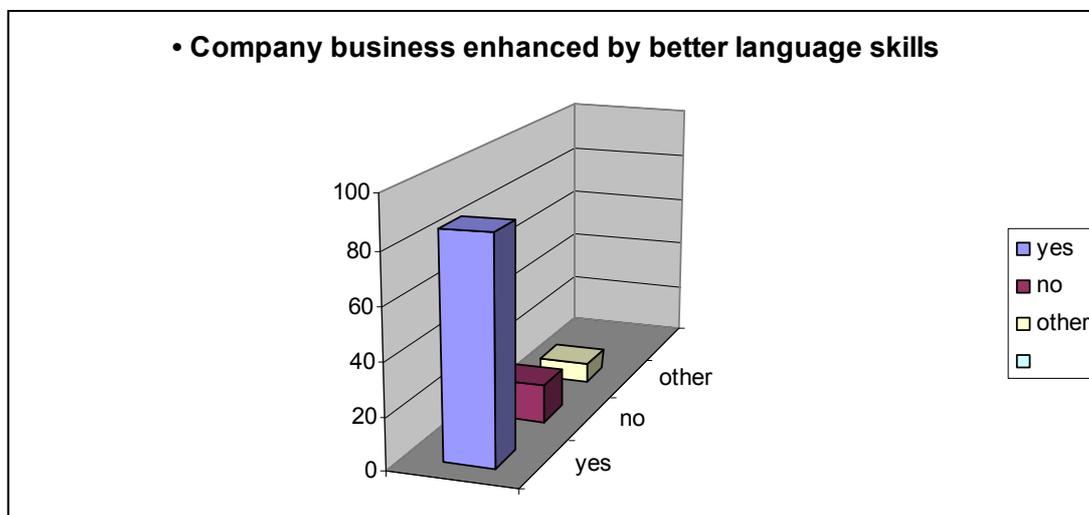
In this light the high percentage of participants (86 %) who have never participated in learning through the internet was to a certain extent to be expected. As for the issue of internet use and access, the results showed no actual difference between the areas of south and north of Europe: over 90% of the participants have internet access. Yet, what is rather interesting is that internet is still used for entertainment is participants are not eager to follow an internet based language learning- an issue that will be discussed also in the context of communication needs

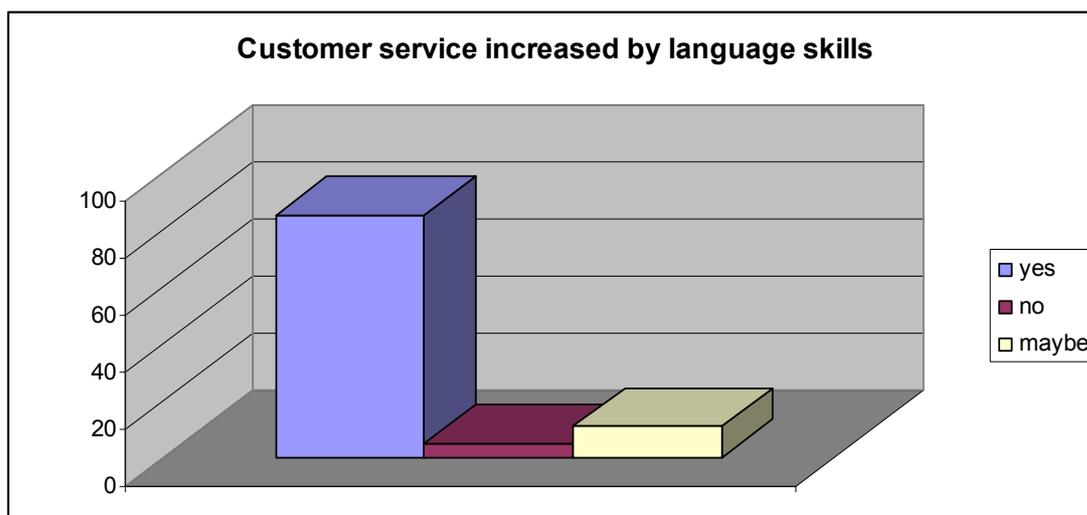
b. Environmental Situation- Company Culture

Coastal and river tourism is a rapidly growing sector in Europe, constituting the largest employer among all maritime activities and making a vital contribution to the economies of coastal communities, providing ultimately not only direct employment but also spin-off benefits.

An interesting insight drawn by the survey relates to the size of companies where the responders worked. The majority of those (approximately 67%) are small – scale ones, employing a number of up to ten workers.

As the two charts below reveal, according to the participants there is a strong link between language skills and company business- value added customer service.



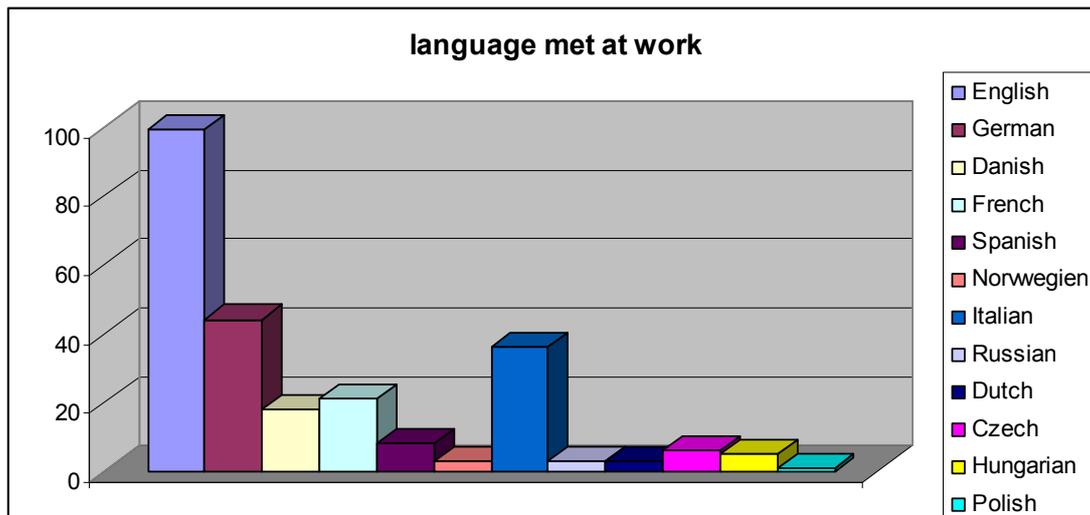


It is perhaps due to this fact that more than 50% of the employers are willing to send their employees to a language training. Yet, it is crucial to note that a very high percentage of those foreground the importance of factors, such as the low or free cost of training (i.e. provided my regional funding- Italy), the applicability of the course to the company needs, etc.

c. Communication Needs

Having already established the profile of participants- future learners and their environment, one is now well equipped to focus on the particular communication needs and language skills foregrounded by the participants in the survey.

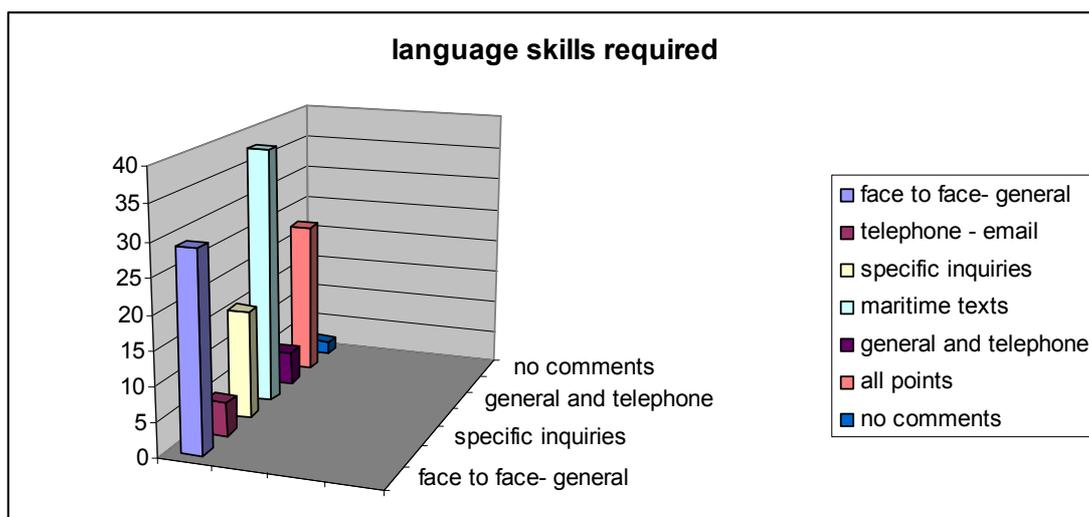
If the ability to speak a foreign language is reported to provide a value added customer service, it is important to establish firstly the foreign languages the participants usually meet in their job, as well as the level of their competence in them.



As the chart above demonstrates English is the most frequently met foreign language, followed by German, Italian, French. The relatively high presence of languages such as Danish, Spanish, Czech and Hungarian is very much country- linked- for example in Sweden there is high percentage of Danish tourists, while in Austria the number of Czech tourists is rapidly developing.

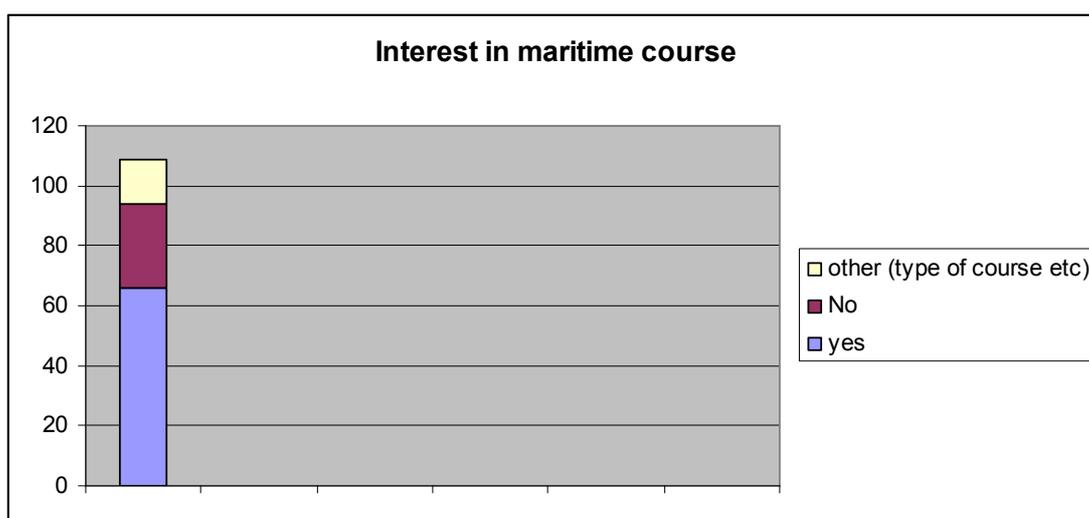
The level of knowledge responders have in each of the above mentioned languages varies a lot from country to country; another important factor is also the type of jobs participants do. For example while in Slovenia, Greece, Norway, Austria, Spain almost all responders have medium to good knowledge of English, in Italy the level of English (as well as French, Spanish) reported is low. Also high qualified jobs (i.e. managers) usually tend to speak better English and have a medium to good level in languages such as German and French.

In different countries the level of German, Italian and French fluctuates between medium and little knowledge, an element that obviously depends on tourist flows over the years. There is an upcoming need for languages like Czech and Hungarian in certain countries (i.e. Austria). A revealing element that came out of the survey but it is not actually well reflected in numbers is the developing need for Russian.

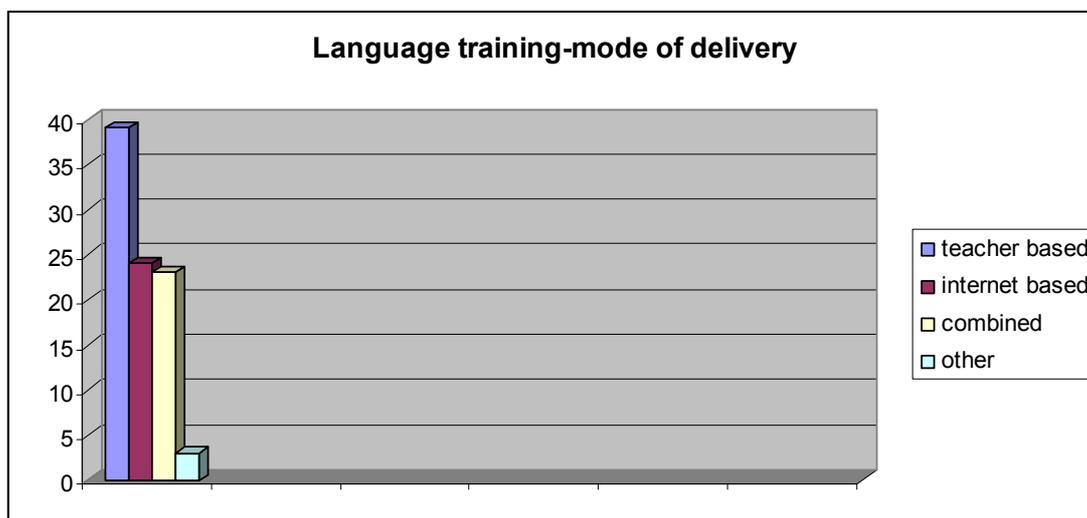


As the above chart demonstrates responders indicated a strong need for certain word skills important in their sector. Expectedly there is a high need for specific maritime vocabulary and terminology, as well as general face to face conversation.

Given the above detected needs, and in the light of the importance attributed to language skills as an element that enhances the company business, responders showed a very high motivation for participating in a language course focusing on the maritime tourist sector.



In so far as the preferred mode of delivery of this course the results reflect the participants tendency to follow a traditional, teacher based method or a combination of traditional and internet – based learning. Only 24 of the 109 participants preferred an internet only based learning.



As already mentioned above although over 90% of the participants use, they do not seem particularly eager to follow an internet-based learning. The above preference is well cross-checked by other findings as well:

- 86 % of the participants have never participated in learning through the internet
- Past contexts of language learning

6. Conclusion

The Needs Analysis Synthesis Report has been conducted during phase 1 of the Marina Project activities. The principal objective of this synthesis report has been to identify the language needs to be met by the Marina Project.

- Languages in demand: English, German, French, Italian
- Language skills required: specific maritime texts, general face to face conversation
- Preferred mode of delivery: traditional, teacher based method, combined with internet use

b. Questions related to the company

8. Do you think better foreign language skills would enhance your company's business ?
9. How many people work in this company ?
10. Do you think increased language skills of the staff in the Marina would give value added customer service to your workplace ?
11. Would you as an employee send your staff to a language training course ?
In case yes - under what conditions ?

c. Personal/motivational factor questions

12. Would a language course that is directly focusing on the maritime tourism sector be interesting for you to participate in ?
13. What do you feel about foreign tourists visiting your Marina ? Create jobs for us / are tiring and interrupt our work / very nice and positive in general / scares me or make me nervous / enhances the economy of my company
14. Have you ever participated in learning through internet ?
15. What kind of job do you have and what kind of services does your company deliver ?
16. Your nationality
17. Do you have access to the internet ? Is it broadband or modem speed ?
18. Any other things you would like to mention ?