



Edukatif: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan

Volume 6 Nomor 1 Februari 2024 Halaman 996 - 1003

<https://edukatif.org/index.php/edukatif/index>

Exploring English Literacy and Communication Needs among New Cadets in Maritime Education

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji kebutuhan literasi dan komunikasi Bahasa Inggris di kalangan taruna semester pertama di Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pelayaran Jakarta. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, observasi fenomenologis, dan distribusi pengisian, kajian ini mengungkap wawasan tentang tantangan dan aspirasi dalam pendidikan maritim. Analisis dokumen menunjukkan penekanan yang jelas pada keahlian teknis dalam Bahasa Inggris Maritim, namun terdapat kesenjangan yang mencolok dalam mengatasi aspek sosio-pragmatis komunikasi. Observasi fenomenologis mengungkapkan spektrum tingkat keterlibatan kadet, mendorong penilaian ulang yang kritis terhadap strategi pedagogis. Distribusi pengisian strategis membawa ke permukaan perbedaan antara relevansi teoritis yang dirasakan dan penerapan praktis Bahasa Inggris, menganjurkan pendekatan pembelajaran bahasa yang lebih berbasis pada skenario. Implikasi menegaskan perlunya pergeseran paradigma dalam pengembangan kurikulum dan praktik pedagogis. Rekomendasi mengusulkan peningkatan kurikulum, inovasi pedagogis, dan kolaborasi dengan industri untuk menyelaraskan tujuan pendidikan dengan tuntutan dinamis sektor maritim. Sebagai kesimpulan, penelitian ini berfungsi sebagai pemicu perubahan transformatif dalam pendidikan bahasa maritim, mendorong para pemangku kepentingan untuk bergerak menuju pendekatan yang lebih komprehensif dan berorientasi pada industri, yang mempersiapkan kadet dengan kecakapan yang rumit yang diperlukan oleh skenario maritim dunia nyata.

Kata Kunci: Literasi Bahasa Inggris; Bahasa Inggris Maritim; Urgensi komunikasi.

Abstract

This study delves into the intricate landscape of English literacy and communication needs among first-semester cadets at the Maritime Institute in Jakarta. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive approach in conjunction with document analysis, phenomenological observation, and strategic filling distribution, the research uncovers compelling insights into the challenges and aspirations within maritime education. Document analysis indicates a distinct emphasis on technical proficiency in Maritime English, yet a noticeable gap exists in addressing socio-pragmatic aspects of communication. Phenomenological observation reveals a spectrum of cadet engagement levels, prompting a critical re-evaluation of pedagogical strategies. Strategic filling distribution brings to light a disparity between perceived theoretical relevance and the practical application of English, advocating for a more scenario-based approach to language learning. The implications underscore the necessity for a paradigm shift in curriculum development and pedagogical practices. Recommendations propose curricular enhancement, pedagogical innovation, and industry collaboration to align educational objectives with the dynamic demands of the maritime sector. In conclusion, this research functions as a catalyst for transformative change in maritime language education, urging stakeholders to navigate towards a more comprehensive, industry-oriented approach that equips cadets with the nuanced proficiency demanded by real-world maritime scenarios.

Keywords: English Literacy; English Maritime; Communication urgency.

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DOI : <https://doi.org/10.31004/edukatif.v6i1.6026>

ISSN 2656-8063 (Media Cetak)

ISSN 2656-8071 (Media Online)

INTRODUCTION

The maritime sector serves as a pivotal hub for global trade, where effective communication is essential for ensuring safety, efficiency, and proficient navigation (Harrison, 2009; Manuel, 2017). In this context, the English language plays a crucial role, acting as a bridge that connects diverse seafaring communities and facilitates the exchange of vital information (Aeni et al., 2017; Ahmmed et al., 2020). This study initiates an academic investigation into the literacy and communication requirements of first-semester cadets at the Maritime Institute in Jakarta, specifically those who have recently completed their senior high school education. The foundation of this research is established with the aim of comprehending and improving the language skills of future maritime professionals (Cicek et al., 2019).

Maritime education signifies a critical transition for individuals moving from general education to the specialized domain of maritime studies. The cadets under scrutiny are positioned at the outset of this educational journey, having recently concluded their senior high school curriculum (Jamil & Bhuiyan, 2021; Norris, 2021). As they embark on Semester 1 at the Maritime Institute in Jakarta, the demands on their linguistic capabilities shift significantly. The maritime domain, characterised by a distinct set of communication requirements, necessitates a nuanced approach to language acquisition and utilisation. English literacy, in this milieu, emerges as a multifaceted entity (National Academies of Sciences and Medicine (U.S.) et al., 2018). It extends beyond conventional language proficiency to encompass a spectrum of skills essential for effective communication in the maritime sector. The cadets' proficiency in English is not merely a measure of academic accomplishment but a fundamental tool for fostering safety, collaboration, and adherence to international maritime standards (Plaza-Hernández et al., 2021; Καλλέργη, 2020). Recognising this, the research seeks to dissect the various dimensions of English literacy, scrutinising the cadets' language proficiency, attitudes towards English, and their perceptions of its relevance in the maritime context.

The impetus behind this research is rooted in the recognition that the dynamics of language acquisition undergo a transformation when applied to specific professional domains. Maritime English, as a subset of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), demands a nuanced understanding of the communicative needs peculiar to the maritime industry (Ghosh et al., 2014; James et al., 2018). The academic journey of Semester 1 cadets serves as a critical juncture for in-depth examination, given that they are at the threshold of their maritime education. Understanding the needs and interests of these cadets is imperative for several reasons. Firstly, it provides insights into the efficacy of the current English language curriculum in meeting the demands of the maritime industry. An academic exploration of their language proficiency and attitudes towards English will inform educators and curriculum developers about potential gaps and areas for improvement. Secondly, gaining a comprehensive understanding of their perceptions regarding the relevance of English in the maritime context is crucial for aligning educational goals with the practical demands of the industry.

Furthermore, the research addresses the lacuna in the current literature concerning the language needs of maritime professionals at the inception of their academic journey. While studies on Maritime English exist, there is a dearth of research specifically focusing on the perspectives of Semester 1 cadets. This research seeks to fill this void by providing a granular examination of the language dynamics within this specific cohort. The urgency of this research is underscored by the critical role language plays in maritime operations. The consequences of miscommunication in the maritime domain can be dire, leading to accidents, environmental hazards, and compromised maritime security (Cicek et al., 2019). As the maritime industry becomes increasingly globalised, effective communication in English becomes not just a facilitator but a requisite for safe and efficient navigation (Kusanagi, 2015; Navarro et al., 2015; Saray et al., 2021). Consequently, the urgency of this research lies in its potential to inform pedagogical practices, influence curriculum design, and contribute to the overarching goal of enhancing maritime safety through effective communication.

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DOI : <https://doi.org/10.31004/edukatif.v6i1.6026>

This study navigates through the complex terrain of English literacy and communication requirements among first-semester cadets at the Maritime Institute in Jakarta. Rooted in the acknowledgment of the crucial role language plays in maritime operations, this research aims to serve as a guiding beacon, illuminating the existing landscape of English proficiency, the perceived significance of English, and the particular communication needs within the maritime context.

METHOD

In the quest for a comprehensive understanding of English literacy and communication needs among first-semester cadets at the Maritime Institute in Jakarta, this research embraces a qualitative descriptive approach (Katz, 2015; Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Acknowledging the inherent value of qualitative inquiry in exploring intricate phenomena, this methodology aims to delve into the diverse dimensions of the cadets' language experiences without imposing preconceived frameworks. The study's design involves a meticulous examination of existing literature, coupled with keen observation of relevant phenomena within the maritime education landscape. The qualitative descriptive approach stands as the cornerstone of this research, facilitating an in-depth exploration of the cadets' experiences and perspectives (Padgett, 2016). By refraining from imposing predetermined categories or theoretical frameworks, this method allows for an organic unfolding of themes and patterns within the data (Saldana, 2014). Given the contextual and nuanced nature of language acquisition and usage, a descriptive approach seamlessly aligns with the exploratory nature of the study.

To complement the data gleaned from document analysis and phenomenological observation, the research employs a strategic filling distribution method. Cadets are provided with carefully crafted fillings that prompt them to express their perspectives, attitudes, and experiences related to English literacy and communication needs in the maritime context (Russell, 2014). These fillings serve as instruments for collecting rich, qualitative data without the need for direct interviews, allowing the researcher to respect the cadets' autonomy in responding while ensuring the acquisition of valid and insightful information. The chosen research methodology integrates qualitative descriptive approaches, document analysis, phenomenological observation, and strategic filling distribution to comprehensively explore English literacy and communication needs among Semester 1 cadets at the Maritime Institute in Jakarta. This methodological design aligns with the intricate nature of language acquisition and usage, offering a nuanced understanding of the cadets' experiences within the maritime education landscape.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The investigation into English literacy and communication needs among first-semester cadets at the Maritime Institute in Jakarta has yielded nuanced insights through the application of a qualitative descriptive approach, document analysis, phenomenological observation, and strategic filling distribution. The subsequent findings, outlined below, encapsulate the diverse dimensions of the cadets' language experiences within the context of maritime education.

The thorough examination of academic papers and literature concerning Maritime English and language acquisition in educational settings has uncovered a distinct emphasis on the technical facets of language (Kinginger, 2013; Segalowitz, 2016). The predominant discourse revolves around proficiency in standardized English, navigational terminology, and adherence to international maritime communication standards. However, a noteworthy nuance has surfaced, revealing a significant gap in addressing the socio-pragmatic aspects of communication, particularly in comprehending the intricacies of language use within the specific contexts of Engine and Deck officers.

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Phenomenological Observation Results:

Observations within the Maritime Institute underscored a vibrant linguistic environment where English is the medium of instruction. However, a notable variance was observed in the degree of engagement and enthusiasm among cadets (Brenker et al., 2017). While some exhibited a proactive approach, seamlessly integrating English into their daily interactions, others demonstrated a more perfunctory engagement, seemingly viewing English as a compulsory rather than an integral aspect of their maritime education.

Strategic Filling Distribution Results:

The strategic distribution of fillings provided valuable qualitative data regarding cadets' perceptions and attitudes towards English literacy (Mohaideen et al., 2020). Responses indicated a general awareness of the importance of English in the maritime domain. However, a discernible divide was noted between the perceived relevance of English in theoretical aspects, such as academic assignments and exams, and its practical application in maritime communication. Cadets expressed a desire for a more pragmatic, scenario-based approach to language learning that aligns with the real-world challenges they anticipate in their future roles.

Table 1: Academic Table for key themes and findings

The following table summarises key themes and patterns derived from the research findings:

Theme	Key Findings
Technical Proficiency in Maritime English	Emphasis on standard English and navigational terminology
Socio-Pragmatic Aspects of Communication	Gap in addressing the nuanced language use in specific contexts of Engine and Deck
Degree of Engagement with English	Varied enthusiasm among cadets, ranging from proactive to perfunctory
Perceived Relevance of English	Disparity between theoretical importance and practical application in communication

The table serves as a succinct visual aid to comprehend the diversity of findings, facilitating a comprehensive overview of the key themes and nuances uncovered during the research. It offers a structured presentation that aids in the critical analysis of the data, allowing for a deeper understanding of the interplay between theoretical expectations and practical implications in the maritime education landscape. The results and findings of this research illuminate the intricate landscape of English literacy and communication needs among Semester 1 cadets at the Maritime Institute in Jakarta. The integration of various research methods provides a holistic perspective, offering a nuanced understanding of the challenges and aspirations within the maritime education context. The academic table serves as an effective tool for synthesising and presenting these findings, enhancing their accessibility and facilitating further scholarly discourse.

Discussion

The findings of this research underscore the complex interplay between English literacy and communication needs among Semester 1 cadets at the Maritime Institute in Jakarta. The emphasis on technical proficiency in Maritime English, as revealed in the document analysis, reflects the industry's longstanding focus on adhering to international standards (SEP, n.d.). However, the notable gap in addressing socio-pragmatic aspects of communication unveils a critical oversight in the current discourse. Effective communication in maritime settings requires not only adherence to linguistic norms but also a nuanced understanding of context-specific language use, especially for Engine and Deck officers.

The observed variance in the degree of engagement with English among cadets during phenomenological observation raises questions about the pedagogical approaches employed in maritime education. While some cadets exhibit a proactive embrace of English as an integral part of their learning journey, others manifest a more perfunctory attitude. This discrepancy suggests a need for pedagogical strategies that foster a more holistic and intrinsic motivation towards language learning.

The responses from strategic filling distribution highlight a disparity between the perceived relevance of English in theoretical aspects and its practical application in maritime communication (Chircop, 2015). Cadets express a desire for a more pragmatic, scenario-based approach to language learning that aligns with the real-world challenges they anticipate in their future roles. This misalignment between educational objectives and industry demands signals a crucial area for intervention and improvement.

Implications

The implications of these findings extend beyond the immediate scope of this research, permeating into the realms of curriculum development, pedagogical practices, and industry expectations. The emphasis on technical proficiency in Maritime English should be complemented with an equal focus on socio-pragmatic aspects of communication. This necessitates a paradigm shift in curriculum design to incorporate scenario-based learning that simulates the communication challenges Engine and Deck officers might encounter in their professional lives. The observed variance in cadets' engagement levels calls for a re-evaluation of teaching methodologies. Pedagogical strategies should be designed to instil intrinsic motivation and foster a genuine appreciation for the role of English in maritime communication. Incorporating interactive, real-world scenarios into the curriculum can enhance cadets' engagement and bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

The discrepancy between the perceived relevance of English in theoretical aspects and its practical application underscores the need for a more industry-oriented curriculum. Maritime education institutions should collaborate with industry stakeholders to ensure that language education aligns with the evolving demands of the maritime sector. This collaborative approach can inform the development of curricula that not only meet academic standards but also prepare cadets for the linguistic challenges they will encounter in their professional careers.

Recommendations

- Curricular Enhancement:** Revise the Maritime English curriculum to include socio-pragmatic aspects of communication. Develop scenario-based learning modules that simulate real-world communication challenges faced by Engine and Deck officers.
- Pedagogical Innovation:** Introduce innovative teaching methodologies that foster intrinsic motivation among cadets. Incorporate interactive activities, simulations, and practical exercises to make English learning more engaging and applicable to their future roles.
- Industry Collaboration:** Establish partnerships between maritime education institutions and industry stakeholders to ensure the alignment of language education with industry needs. This collaboration can inform curriculum development and bridge the gap between academic expectations and professional requirements.
- Professional Development:** Provide professional development opportunities for English language instructors in maritime education. Continuous training on industry trends and communication dynamics will enable instructors to deliver more relevant and effective language education.

5. **Integrate Technology:** Leverage technology to enhance language learning experiences. Incorporate simulation software, virtual reality, and interactive online platforms to create realistic scenarios for cadets to practice and improve their communication skills.

The discussion, implications, and recommendations emanating from this research shed light on the intricate dynamics of English literacy and communication needs among Semester 1 cadets at the Maritime Institute in Jakarta. The holistic integration of technical proficiency and socio-pragmatic understanding, coupled with pedagogical innovation and industry collaboration, is pivotal for equipping future maritime professionals with the language skills necessary for effective communication in the maritime domain. This research serves as a catalyst for transformative change in maritime language education, fostering a more comprehensive and industry-relevant approach.

CONCLUSION

This research reveals a complex picture of English literacy and communication needs among first-semester cadets at the Maritime Institute in Jakarta. Explored through various methods, including qualitative descriptive approaches and document analysis, the study sheds light on challenges and aspirations in maritime education. While there is a strong emphasis on technical proficiency in Maritime English, particularly in adhering to international standards, a significant gap is identified in addressing socio-pragmatic aspects of communication, especially for Engine and Deck officers. Phenomenological observation indicates varying levels of cadet engagement with English, highlighting a need for pedagogical strategies that foster intrinsic motivation. The strategic filling distribution reveals a disconnect between the perceived relevance of English in theory and its practical application, signalling an opportunity for curriculum enhancement. The implications extend to curriculum development, pedagogical practices, and industry collaboration. The recommendations call for a paradigm shift towards a more comprehensive, industry-oriented approach in maritime language education. This research acts as a catalyst for transformative change, urging stakeholders to reassess and realign their approaches to better prepare cadets for linguistic challenges in their professional careers. It emphasises the importance of a holistic understanding of Maritime English that resonates with real-world scenarios, guiding maritime professionals through linguistic and maritime challenges effectively.

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