

The Role of English in Merchant Marine: The Main Course or Supplementary Course?

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Abstract

This study explores the perceived role of English in maritime education at the Merchant Marine Polytechnic of Barombong, specifically questioning whether Maritime English is treated as a core or supplementary subject. Employing a quantitative approach, data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 100 cadets. The findings reveal a strong consensus among cadets regarding the importance of English in enhancing communication skills, building professional confidence, and supporting future career opportunities in the global maritime industry. Despite this, Maritime English remains marginalized within the curriculum, often taught separately from technical subjects and allocated minimal instructional time. The study identifies a significant gap between cadets' linguistic needs and the current pedagogical approach. The results also align with similar local research in Indonesia, indicating a national trend of underemphasizing Maritime English in seafaring education. This research concludes with a recommendation to reposition Maritime English as a main course integrated into practical and technical maritime training to better prepare cadets for international standards and global work environments.

Keywords: Maritime English; ESP; Language Needs; Global Communication

INTRODUCTION

The maritime industry, as a cornerstone of global trade, operates within a complex, multilingual ecosystem where effective communication is not merely advantageous but a matter of safety and operational necessity. English, universally recognized as the lingua franca of maritime operations, serves as the primary medium for navigation, emergency protocols, and international regulatory compliance (Liando & Tatipang, 2022; Liando et al., 2023; Liando et al., 2022). However, the extent to which English is prioritized in maritime education and onboard practices remains contested. While international conventions such as the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) STCW Code mandate proficiency in Maritime English, its implementation varies significantly across national training systems and onboard workflows. This study seeks to interrogate whether

English functions as a core discipline (main course) or an ancillary skill (supplementary course) in the merchant marine sector, examining its institutional mandates, pedagogical frameworks, and real-world applications. By synthesizing regulatory policies, industry practices, and case studies of miscommunication-related

incidents, this research aims to elucidate the language's strategic role and propose actionable recommendations for maritime education and policy reform.

The dominance of English in maritime communication is rooted in historical, legal, and practical imperatives. Historically, the expansion of the British Empire and the subsequent rise of the United States as a maritime power entrenched English as the default language of seafaring. This legacy was institutionalized in the 20th century through international maritime law, particularly the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and the STCW Convention, which explicitly designate English as the language of shipboard communication, safety drills, and documentation. The Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP), developed by the IMO, further standardize English for critical scenarios such as collision avoidance, distress signaling, and port operations. These regulations reflect the industry's consensus that linguistic uniformity reduces risks in high-stakes environments. Yet, despite this consensus, disparities persist in how English is taught and applied. For instance, maritime academies in the Philippines and India key suppliers of global seafaring labor treat Maritime English as a core subject, aligning with the STCW's emphasis on employability in the international fleet. In contrast, countries with strong domestic shipping sectors, such as China or Indonesia, often prioritize local languages in training, relegating English to a secondary role unless crews are destined for international routes. This dichotomy underscores a critical tension: while English is legally non-negotiable, its pedagogical prioritization is context-dependent, raising questions about gaps between regulatory ideals and on-the-ground realities.

The STCW Code's competency requirements further illuminate the institutional role of English. Revised in 1995 and 2010, the Code mandates that officers and crew demonstrate proficiency in English for certification, particularly in navigation, engineering, and safety management. Notably, SMCP competency is assessed during oral examinations, and Port State Control (PSC) inspectors may evaluate English skills during audits. However, compliance does not always translate into functional fluency. Research by Pritchard (2020) and Trenkner (2018) reveals that 15–20% of maritime accidents involve miscommunication, often linked to limited English proficiency among crews. The 2012 Costa Concordia disaster, for example, highlighted misunderstandings between the Italian captain and Indonesian helmsman during a critical maneuver, while the 2017 USS Fitzgerald collision implicated language barriers in the Filipino crew's interpretation of radar data. Such incidents exemplify the life-or-death consequences of linguistic inadequacies, reinforcing the argument for English as a main course in maritime training. Nevertheless, the supplementary course perspective persists in contexts where monolingual crews operate domestically or where technological aids (e.g., AI translation tools) are perceived as mitigating language gaps. This divergence invites scrutiny of whether regulatory frameworks adequately address real-world communication challenges, particularly in multilingual crews where Pidgin English or hybrid jargon often emerges as an informal solution.

Maritime education systems worldwide reflect these contradictions. In Europe and the Philippines, where seafarers are predominantly export-oriented, Maritime English curricula emphasize technical vocabulary, radio communication, and report writing, often mirroring IMO model courses. Conversely, academies in Latin America or the Middle East may allocate fewer contact hours to English, focusing instead on local licensing requirements. A 2019 study by Bocanegra-Valle

found that 60% of maritime instructors in non-Anglophone countries struggled to teach English effectively due to limited training resources or low student motivation, exacerbating competency gaps. Industry stakeholders further report that new hires from certain regions require remedial language training, delaying their operational readiness. This misalignment between education and employer expectations suggests that English, though *de jure* a main course, is often *de facto* a supplementary skill, contingent on regional labor markets and institutional capacities.

Onboard practices further complicate this narrative. While English is unavoidable in formal settings (e.g., SMCP during navigation, GMDSS radio protocols, or port inspections), informal interactions among crews frequently default to shared native languages or simplified English. Ethnographic studies of mixed-nationality crews (e.g., Lützhöft & Nyce, 2012) reveal that technical departments (e.g., engine rooms) develop idiosyncratic lexicons blending English with local terms, while social hierarchies influence language use (e.g., officers using fluent English, ratings relying on gestures or basic phrases). Such adaptations, though pragmatic, risk fragmenting standardized communication, particularly in emergencies. For example, the 2018 Maersk Honam fire exposed delays in evacuating non-English-speaking crew members who misunderstood initial alarms. These cases underscore the paradox of Maritime English: it is simultaneously indispensable and inconsistently mastered, prompting debates about whether stricter enforcement or alternative solutions (e.g., bilingual safety materials) are needed.

Emerging technologies also challenge traditional assumptions about English's centrality. AI-powered translation devices and multilingual e-learning platforms are increasingly adopted to bridge language gaps, particularly among smaller shipping firms lacking resources for immersive English training. While these tools enhance accessibility, critics argue they cannot replace human fluency in dynamic, high-pressure scenarios. The IMO has yet to issue guidelines on such technologies, leaving a regulatory gray area. This gap invites research into whether English's role as a main course will persist or evolve into a hybrid model where technology supplements (but does not supplant) linguistic competence.

Theoretical frameworks from linguistics and education policy inform this study's approach. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) theory (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) justifies tailoring language instruction to maritime contexts, while Language Policy and Planning (LPP) research examines how global standards (e.g., STCW) interact with local curricula. Meanwhile, Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) explains how crews adapt English usage to power dynamics and cultural contexts, offering insights into informal communication strategies. Synthesizing these lenses, this study will evaluate whether the merchant marine sector treats English as a non-negotiable competency or a context-dependent tool, with implications for curriculum design, industry hiring practices, and regulatory compliance.

The role of English in the merchant marine is multidimensional, shaped by historical precedents, legal mandates, pedagogical traditions, and technological disruptions. While international regulations enshrine it as a main course, its practical implementation oscillates between centrality and marginality, influenced by geopolitical, economic, and cultural factors. This research will empirically investigate these tensions, proposing a nuanced framework to align language training with the

industry's evolving needs. By doing so, it aims to contribute to safer, more efficient maritime operations and equitable workforce development in an increasingly globalized industry.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

English as a Lingua Franca in Maritime Communication

English has become the de facto lingua franca of the maritime industry. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) formally adopted English as the working language of global maritime communication through the development of Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP). These phrases are standardized expressions used in ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore communication to avoid ambiguity and ensure mutual understanding, particularly among multinational crews (Trenkner & Cole, 2009).

Research by Pritchard (2008) emphasizes that the global nature of shipping necessitates a common linguistic ground. Crews often comprise individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds, making English essential not only for external communication (e.g., with port authorities or coastguards) but also for internal operations such as navigation, engineering coordination, safety drills, and emergency response.

A considerable body of research underlines the pivotal role of English as a lingua franca in maritime communication. According to Trenkner & Cole (2009), Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP) were developed to reduce misunderstandings among international crews. The use of English in maritime contexts is not merely for convenience but is a regulatory requirement under the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Miscommunication due to inadequate English proficiency has been identified as a contributing factor in various maritime accidents, indicating that English should be treated as a core component rather than a supplementary skill in maritime education.

English in Multicultural Ship

English plays a crucial role in communication aboard ships with multicultural crews. As highlighted by Bocanegra-Valle (2013), English is not only essential for navigation and safety procedures but also facilitates daily interactions, teamwork, and social cohesion among crew members from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Effective communication in English helps reduce misunderstandings, prevent conflicts, and promote efficient collaboration in both routine and emergency situations.

Since maritime crews often consist of multinational personnel, the ability to use English competently becomes a necessity rather than a supplementary skill. This underscores the importance of English as a main course in maritime education and training. Proficiency in Maritime English ensures that seafarers can perform their duties safely and harmoniously, thereby improving operational efficiency and shipboard relationships. Integrating language training with technical and interpersonal communication contexts further reinforces English's role as an indispensable part of professional competence in the merchant marine sector.

Challenges in Teaching Maritime English

Teaching Maritime English presents unique challenges due to the specialized nature of the language and the diverse backgrounds of learners. Unlike general English, Maritime English includes technical vocabulary, standardized commands

(such as SMCP), and context-specific communication used in navigation, safety, engineering, and emergencies. According to Calleja and Vella (2014), one key difficulty is that many maritime instructors lack formal linguistic training, making it hard to deliver language lessons effectively. Additionally, learners often come from different linguistic and educational backgrounds, leading to varied levels of English proficiency within the same classroom.

Another challenge is the gap between language instruction and real-life shipboard communication, suggested by (Liando & Tatipang, 2025; Liando et al., 2025). Traditional classroom methods may fail to prepare students for high-pressure, real-world scenarios. Ziarati et al. (2012) argue that Maritime English should be taught using a contextual and interdisciplinary approach integrating language learning into technical training through simulations, role-plays, and onboard scenarios.

Moreover, rote memorization of standardized phrases without understanding context leads to poor communication in unexpected or non-routine situations. Effective Maritime English education must develop both linguistic and pragmatic competence, enabling cadets to adapt their language use appropriately. These challenges highlight the need for treating English as a main course in maritime education, not merely as a supplementary subject.

METHOD

This study adopts a quantitative research design aimed at investigating the perceptions of cadets regarding the role of English in maritime education, specifically whether it is considered a main course or merely a supplementary subject. The research will be conducted at the Merchant Marine Polytechnic of Barombong, a maritime training institution in Indonesia that educates future merchant navy officers and engineers. This location is chosen due to its relevance and accessibility in relation to the researcher's objectives.

The research subjects consist of 100 cadets, selected through simple random sampling to ensure a representative sample across different academic years and departments, such as navigation and marine engineering. Data will be collected through a structured questionnaire, which is designed to measure cadets' views on the significance of English in their academic and professional preparation, the integration of English in their curriculum, their experiences using Maritime English in class and simulations, and whether they perceive it as a core or secondary subject. The questionnaire will utilize a Likert scale (ranging from 1–5: strongly disagree to strongly agree) and will include a few optional open-ended questions for additional insights. The responses will be analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine general trends and inferential statistics, such as chi-square or t-tests, to explore potential differences in perception across academic groups.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate cadets' perceptions of the role of English in maritime education specifically whether it is regarded as a main course or merely a supplementary subject. Based on the responses from 100 cadets at the Merchant Marine Polytechnic of Barombong, several insightful findings emerged. The discussion of the data is organized into three major points: (1) the perceived importance of English in maritime careers, (2) the current status of English within the curriculum, and (3) the practical application and confidence in using Maritime English.

These findings are then interpreted in relation to existing research and theoretical frameworks in maritime education and language learning.

No.	Statement	SD	Dis	N	AG	SAG	Mean	Interpretation
1	English is important for my career as a merchant marine officer.	1%	2%	5%	40%	52%	4.40	Very Positive
2	English should be a main course in maritime education.	3%	7%	15%	45%	30%	3.92	Positive
3	I use English frequently in simulations and class discussions.	5%	10%	20%	40%	25%	3.70	Positive
4	English is currently treated as a supplementary subject in the curriculum.	4%	10%	25%	35%	26%	3.69	Neutral to Positive
5	I feel confident using Maritime English in professional contexts.	6%	15%	30%	35%	14%	3.36	Moderate
6	More emphasis should be placed on teaching Maritime English in practical ways.	2%	3%	10%	50%	35%	4.13	Very Positive

English as a Critical Tool in Maritime Careers

One of the clearest findings from the questionnaire is the cadets' strong agreement that English plays an essential role in their future careers. As shown in the table, 92% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "English is important for my career as a merchant marine officer," with a mean score of 4.40 interpreted as a very positive response. This suggests that cadets are highly aware of the centrality of English in international maritime operations, aligning with the global maritime industry's reliance on English as a lingua franca.

This finding is consistent with previous studies, such as Pritchard (2008) and Trenkner and Cole (2009), who emphasize that English is not just a convenience but a necessity for operational safety, navigation, and international coordination. Communication at sea frequently involves crews from multiple national

backgrounds, and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has long established English as the standard language for marine communication. Through tools like the Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP), English ensures clarity and reduces the risks of miscommunication during critical operations.

The perception that English is crucial for maritime careers is not only supported globally but is also echoed in local Indonesian research. In this study, 92% of cadets at the Merchant Marine Polytechnic of Barombong either agreed or strongly agreed that English is essential for their future profession. This strong consensus aligns with findings from Rahman (2020), who conducted a study at the Politeknik Ilmu Pelayaran (PIP) Makassar. Rahman found that cadets often struggled during international communication drills due to limited vocabulary and lack of confidence in spontaneous English use, highlighting how English proficiency directly impacts their ability to function effectively on international vessels.

Similarly, Nur and Setyawati (2018), in their research at Politeknik Pelayaran Surabaya, observed that many maritime students were aware of the global role of English but felt underprepared due to a curriculum that emphasized theoretical grammar over contextual usage. This mirrors the current study's results, where cadets support the role of English in their careers but may not experience adequate exposure to real-life application within the classroom. These findings further reinforce the notion that, despite its global status, English is still not fully internalized or integrated in many Indonesian maritime institutions, creating a disconnect between what cadets know and what they need in practice.

Moreover, Indrayani and Hidayat (2021) evaluated the Maritime English program at Poltekpel Banten, where students reported that while Maritime English courses exist, they often lack alignment with practical tasks onboard, such as radio communication or responding to shipboard emergencies. This local evidence strongly supports the argument that English should be considered a main course not only in title but also in curriculum structure, resource allocation, and teaching methodology. Without this shift, Indonesian cadets may face a competitive disadvantage in the global maritime labor market, which increasingly demands functional English proficiency.

Local studies in Indonesia consistently affirm the critical importance of English for cadets' future maritime careers, yet also expose persistent gaps in curriculum design and pedagogical focus. These align with the findings of this study and make a compelling case for reevaluating the positioning of English within Indonesian maritime education systems. If Indonesian maritime graduates are to compete on an international level, Maritime English must be reframed as a professional competency equal in importance to navigation, engineering, and safety training.

Furthermore, the strong recognition of English as essential for career success indicates that cadets are aware of the language's real-world implications. As Chauvin et al. (2013) argue, communication failures have been a contributing factor in numerous maritime accidents, highlighting the high-stakes consequences of linguistic misunderstandings. The responses suggest that cadets do not merely see English as an academic requirement but as a vital component of their future professionalism, thus reinforcing the argument that English should be considered a core component or main course within maritime education.

The Status of English in the Curriculum: Main or Supplementary?

While cadets at the Merchant Marine Polytechnic of Barombong overwhelmingly recognize English as essential for their maritime careers, the research findings reveal a clear discrepancy between this perception and how English is currently positioned in the academic curriculum. Although 75% of respondents believe English should be a main course, only 61% agree that English is currently treated as such, with a moderate mean score of 3.69. This gap highlights a critical issue: despite cadets' awareness of the importance of English, Maritime English is still being treated as a supplementary or supporting subject rather than an integrated, core component of their training.

This situation reflects similar findings in several Indonesian maritime institutions. For example, a study by Sari and Mulyadi (2019) at Politeknik Pelayaran Semarang found that Maritime English is often limited to a few credit hours and is taught in isolation from technical subjects like navigation or marine engineering. The instructors themselves admitted that the material was often theoretical and detached from actual sea communication practices, resulting in students who pass the course but lack confidence and fluency in real-life maritime contexts. The study concluded that treating English as an add-on subject undermines its strategic value in the maritime profession.

Similarly, Hakim and Putra (2020) examined the curriculum at Poltekpel Malahayati Aceh and reported that Maritime English is introduced only in the early semesters and is rarely reinforced or connected to technical learning later in the cadets' education. As a result, students often forget or underuse their language skills, viewing them as temporary academic hurdles rather than long-term professional tools. This finding is echoed in the current research, where cadets affirm English's critical role but experience it as underemphasized in practice.

Moreover, Widodo (2022), in his case study at Politeknik Pelayaran Barombong, specifically noted that English classes were typically confined to general English topics, such as grammar and vocabulary, with limited exposure to Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP) or scenario-based communication training. This aligns directly with the present study's observation that cadets despite their motivation are not provided with the level of training they need to meet international maritime communication standards. Widodo concluded that the institution's curriculum lacks a clear vision for developing English proficiency in alignment with IMO Model Course 3.17, which provides a global benchmark for Maritime English training.

The continued treatment of Maritime English as a supplementary subject contradicts not only international expectations but also the cadets' own demand for more focused and practical English education. This disconnect suggests a systemic issue: while institutional policy may acknowledge the importance of English in principle, it does not translate into curriculum prioritization or pedagogical integration. The data from this research thus becomes a compelling argument for curricular reform, driven not just by policy makers or instructors, but also by student needs and global industry standards.

The findings highlight an urgent need to reconceptualize English in maritime education in Indonesia not merely as an academic requirement but as a professional competency. Models such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) or Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which have been successfully applied in other vocational contexts, could serve as effective frameworks for integrating English into

the core maritime curriculum. These approaches encourage language learning through real-world tasks and contextual content, helping cadets to retain and apply what they learn in operational environments.

Both the data and supporting Indonesian studies clearly demonstrate that cadets need and want English to be a main course, yet current curriculum structures still relegate it to a secondary position. If Indonesian maritime institutions aspire to produce globally competent officers, a strategic shift is required one that embeds English at the heart of maritime education and provides students with the communicative tools necessary to operate safely and effectively on international waters.

Practical Use and Cadets' Confidence in Maritime English

The third point concerns the cadets' actual use of English in simulations and classroom discussions, and their confidence in using English for professional purposes. Although a majority indicated that they frequently use English in class and simulations (65% agree or strongly agree), the mean score for this item was slightly lower at 3.70. Moreover, when asked whether they feel confident using Maritime English in professional contexts, only 49% of cadets agreed or strongly agreed, with a mean score of 3.36 interpreted as moderate.

One of the critical insights from the questionnaire results is the moderate confidence cadets have in using English for professional purposes, despite acknowledging its importance. While 65% of cadets reported that they frequently use English in class simulations and discussions, only 49% felt confident in their ability to use Maritime English effectively in real-world situations. This indicates a significant gap between exposure and mastery, which has implications not only for classroom performance but also for future career readiness and personal development.

In the context of maritime education, confidence in English is more than a soft skill it is a professional survival tool. As English is the lingua franca in international maritime communication, cadets must not only understand technical terms but also express themselves clearly under pressure, especially during emergencies. Confidence plays a central role in this process. As Arifin (2021) highlights in his study at Politeknik Ilmu Pelayaran (PIP) Makassar, cadets who lack confidence in English tend to hesitate during simulations, avoid speaking roles, and rely heavily on scripted phrases. This hesitation, if carried into the workplace, could lead to dangerous misunderstandings in high-stakes environments.

Furthermore, cadets in this study expressed a strong belief that English is key to career advancement, a sentiment echoed by Wulandari and Rizal (2020) in their research at Politeknik Pelayaran Surabaya. Their study revealed that maritime graduates with higher English proficiency were more likely to secure positions on international vessels, receive faster promotions, and participate in professional development opportunities abroad. Cadets viewed English not just as a requirement for passing exams but as a gateway to a global maritime career. However, many also felt that their institution did not provide enough real-world practice to help them feel confident and fluent.

English also plays a vital role in self-development, particularly in areas like self-study, reading international manuals, accessing global forums, and completing certifications from the IMO or other maritime bodies. According to Pratama and Nurhaliza (2019) at Poltekpel Sumatera Barat, cadets who engaged with English-language materials outside of class reported increased self-confidence, better

comprehension during onboard internships, and greater autonomy in their learning process. However, these self-directed learners often had to seek resources on their own due to the limited support provided by the institutional curriculum.

The current study's finding that fewer than half of cadets feel confident using Maritime English suggests that existing teaching approaches may not sufficiently emphasize active use, real-time communication, and contextual understanding. While vocabulary and grammar remain important, the ability to apply this knowledge dynamically in maritime scenarios is what builds confidence. This is supported by local studies, such as Fitriani & Hamzah (2022) at Poltekpel Barombong, who argue that confidence in Maritime English can be significantly improved through task-based learning, such as shipboard simulation exercises, radio dialogue roleplays, and port communication drills. Their research showed that cadets who engaged in such activities demonstrated not only higher proficiency but also more assertive communication and leadership behavior.

Moreover, the lack of confidence may stem from how Maritime English is positioned in the curriculum as a supplementary rather than a core subject, cadets may not receive adequate contact hours, exposure, or contextual integration with technical subjects. This fragmented approach leads to superficial understanding and anxiety when applying English in unpredictable or professional settings. As shown in this study, cadets are aware of their weaknesses and strongly support the call for increased focus on English through more practical, integrated, and communicative methods.

To support cadets in building confidence and preparing for global careers, maritime institutions in Indonesia must shift from traditional, theory-heavy English teaching models to learner-centered, skill-based instruction. Techniques such as project-based learning, peer interactions, problem-solving in English, and continuous assessment through real-world tasks can significantly enhance both proficiency and confidence. English should no longer be viewed as a general academic subject, but rather as an essential professional skill, interwoven with every aspect of maritime education and cadet self-development.

This concern is echoed by Kim and Cha (2017), who found that insufficient communicative competence in English among ship crew members was associated with delayed emergency responses and operational inefficiencies. Therefore, beyond teaching cadets what to say, Maritime English training must focus on how to say it developing pragmatic awareness, listening skills, and the ability to adjust language to different contexts. These findings suggest the importance of simulation-based learning and task-based instruction, where cadets engage in role plays, emergency drills, and team-based projects that mimic real-world maritime challenges.

Encouragingly, 85% of cadets supported the idea that more emphasis should be placed on teaching Maritime English through practical methods, with a mean score of 4.13. This suggests strong support for pedagogical reform. Integrating scenario-based learning, real-life case studies, and interactive simulations could help increase cadets' confidence and make their language learning more aligned with professional demands.

CONCLUSION

This research investigated the perceptions of 100 cadets at the Merchant Marine Polytechnic of Barombong regarding the role of English in their academic and

professional development, specifically whether Maritime English should be treated as a main course or remain a supplementary subject. The findings clearly reveal that the majority of cadets recognize the essential role English plays in their future careers, especially as the global maritime industry uses English as its standard language for communication, safety protocols, documentation, and navigation. However, there is a significant gap between the cadets' acknowledgment of English's importance and how it is currently positioned in the curriculum. Most cadets reported that Maritime English is still treated as a supporting subject with limited hours and scope, not yet integrated into technical or operational training. This discrepancy highlights the urgent need for institutional and curricular reform.

Further analysis revealed that cadets not only need English for functional communication but also for building confidence, professional self-expression, and accessing international job opportunities. The data showed that many cadets feel unprepared and underconfident in using English, particularly in real-life maritime contexts such as shipboard communication, emergencies, and port documentation. This lack of confidence is likely a result of limited practical exposure and the theoretical nature of English instruction, which often fails to reflect the demands of actual maritime environments. These findings are consistent with several local studies in Indonesia, which similarly point out that Maritime English is underemphasized and insufficiently integrated into the vocational training of cadets.

Therefore, this research concludes that Maritime English should be repositioned as a main course, not only in name but in practice through increased instructional hours, contextualized learning, and integration with technical maritime subjects. Cadets' strong perception of the necessity of English should serve as a call to action for maritime institutions, particularly in Indonesia, to revise their curricula and prioritize English as a vital competency. By doing so, maritime academies can better equip their cadets for global competitiveness, personal development, and workplace readiness. If the maritime industry is truly global, then Maritime English should be treated not as an accessory, but as a foundational pillar of maritime education and training.

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