

# English for Seafarers: Need Analysis and Course Design for Cadets

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## ABSTRACT

Any different professions use English for communication media. For the last decade many different levels of schools and institution have taught English to fulfil the learners need. For example, English for academic writing, public speaking, hospitality, English for seaman and other professional fields. The purpose of this study was to investigate the need for maritime English in the professional area. The objectives of the study were to figure out the difficulties and the necessities of using Maritime English, to figure out the English skill proficiency and to conduct ESP course design based on the users' need. The data was collected through a questionnaire. The result of the findings said that cadets have difficulties in Equipment checking report, Radiotelephone communication, Traffic operation exchange and Presentation in English. They had a high need in daily English, Presentation in English, IMO standard Marine Communication phrases, English daily report, Vessels particulars and specifications. ESP course design should be divided into general Maritime English and specific Maritime English.

**Keywords:** *Course design, English proficiency, lack and need, maritime English*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Maritime English is a specific language. People mainly use it in the Maritime field. It is an active language in the shipment business, and it has particular terminology. Mercado, Raza, Sarmiento, & Jalbuena (2013) say that Maritime English (ME) develops students' ability to use English at least to intermediate language level. Maritime English is an applied course in which the seafarers have to contact with the foreigners. However, Maritime English not only assists communication at sea but also used in various professional roles (Brunton, 2009)

English in the maritime industry has become a language personalized to satisfy exceptional needs. If people have good training on it, it would precisely adequate into the English for Specific Purposes area. Munby (1978) explained that conducting lesson plans for ESP course must fit with learners' communication need. Most experts and teachers of ESP approve on some ideologies in the extent that the standard has to encounter the distinct needs of the learner. Seafarers will have to interconnect in a language in their generalized ground which empowers them to navigate the seas proficiently and securely. Their language necessities are not similar to those of a student at high school or a restaurant

manager set up the menu. Their language requirements diverge allowing to the job description, position or responsibility they are allotted to onboard.

Demirel, and Ziarati (2010) stated that numerous studies designated that most accidents at sea correlated to human inaccuracies. Many of which were as a result of communication problems and on a deficiency of suitable acquaintance of the English language. This language obstacle was the more common among transnational staffs and seaport authorities, predominantly in regulated waters. The accurate usage of English in the global Maritime work is essential to prevent unpleasant occasions at a maritime field. It not only enables a better operative way of communication among vessels and seaport but also to correspond supervision and manoeuvres on ships with an international team. The quantity of crafts with international staff is swiftly growing, and this drift is estimated to strengthen in the future.

Pejaković (2015) found that 41% of cadets obtained B1 level, and 34% of them got the grade of B2. It was a substantial result since it denoted that the test of maritime English and the tools of learning aimed to create a significant effect and reported the needs of users. 24% of them existed at the level of beginner, and just 1% of them

remained at the level of C1. This low level was causing inappropriate interaction. The unsuccessful communication became the main reason for many collisions. Likewise, to advance the more actual communication in English among seafarers, the author formed a base knowledge of realistic settings on language and social varieties with admiration to real English communication among ships crews. The design was called The CAPTAINS project was in 2010-2012. This mission will progress a two-dimension reproductions application. This software application would establish English for the real-like situation maritime field. The other emphasis of the venture program was to coach the ships' crews in managing accidents on ships. The simulation used the previous experience. They expected that based on that simulation, they have any solution on how to solve it. By having this study, the assessors could evaluate the language use while they the interaction how to handle the problems. Based on this evaluation, they can make some recommendations about their language skills. Ziarati, Ziarati, Bigland, and Acar (2011) additionally stated that outgoing linguistic drill established in the sea circumstance setting was a significant training course for officers of the merchant navy. This study discovered the ships' crew had a low English language skill.

There are other investigations about the importance of communication. When the interaction failed, it could cause accidents. Mönnigmann, and Čulić-Viskota (2017) pointed out it was necessary to have training for maritime English. Not only have the course but also increasing the standard of a language test. In the investigation, they found that there was a ship accident because the crews had limited ability of English skills so that the communication among ship crews did not run well. Furthermore, it is necessary to have a uniform of international language certification.

Recently, Aeni, Jabu, Rahman, Ismail, and Bin-Tahir (2018) reported the students' needs in evolving a general Maritime English instructional course. The investigation informed that global maritime business demanded interaction skills which fit the need of Maritime field. Most of the participants believed that the fundamental of English language skill was important. Moreover, they said that constructive abilities such as writing and speaking were the ultimate significance. Therefore, designing the teaching material should consider the outcomes of this examination. According to those studies above it can be concluded the following points: 1) most accidents happen in ships because of the inaccuracy of English ability among crews and port, 2) People who work in maritime industries need Maritime English. 3) Maritime English course should base on students' need.

Based on the explanation above, this paper examines the following research questions: 1) What kind of seafarers' English need for their specialized profession?

2) What is the seafarers' English skill ability? 3) How to conduct an ESP course based on the result of this current research?

**2. METHOD**

The method of collecting data for this study used questionnaires. The analyzed data applied descriptive analysis. The result was presented in the form of a table. We chose the varied technique methodology to manage the data gathered. It comprised both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The participants were cadets who finished sea project works. A sample of the research was conveniently from Polytechnic Ilmu Pelayaran (Merchant Marine Polytechnic) Semarang, Indonesia.

The first phase of the development of the questionnaire structure was collecting evidence about the participants' background. The second phase was asking about the participants' English competency. The third phase was asking about the participants' weakness in learning maritime English. And the fourth phase was asking about the respondents' need for Maritime English. The comprehensive explanation of questionnaire for seafarers can be seen in Table 1. The first part of the questionnaire was asking about respondents' personal information for instance age, the gender and the English proficiency level. The second part asked some information about the weaknesses in understanding maritime English. Respondents answered the questions using the four-points Likert scale of agreement within the mark 1 to 4. Mark 1 indicates strongly disagree. Mark 2 signifies a disagree level. Mark 3 represents agree, and mark 4 denotes strongly agree.

**Table 1.** Questionnaire descriptions.

Part	Part name	Description of parts	Scale
1	Demographic information	This part asked for participants' background information.	There was no scale.
2	English proficiency	This part was asking about the participants' English ability.	5 points Likert scale of quality.
3	Problems faced in understanding maritime English	This part examined the participants' opinion about their weakness in understanding Maritime English. It has 14 questions.	Four points Likert scale of agreement
4	The needs of understanding Maritime English	This part examined the opinions of need in understanding Maritime English. There are 14 questions	Four points Likert scale of agreement

The third part of the questionnaire was asking information about the necessities of maritime English. These examined the needs of the respondents. Respondents answered 14 questions using the four-points Likert scale of agreement within the score 1 to 4. Grade 1 denotes strongly disagree, grade 2 signifies disagree, grade 3 indicates agree and grade 4 represents strongly agree.

**3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part was the demographic evidence. It tells about the respondents' info. The second part was telling the participants' English proficiency. The third part was telling participants' lack of understanding about Maritime English. The last part was describing the participants' need for maritime English language skills. This part provided quantitative analysis regarding the problems in Maritime settings. For this purpose, four-point Likert scales determined the opinion of respondents.

As we can see in Table 2, there were 73 participants for this study. It consists of 14 females and 59 males. The age range is from 18 years old to 23 years old with the average is 19.6 years old. The determination of English proficiency scoring based on the English language test equivalency table. The table presents the various test scores and level systems. This table can enable comparisons of scores with the equivalent scores of the other tests. It summarized that grade 1 represents very poor, grade 2 indicates poor, grade 3 denotes average, grade 4 signifies good, grade 5 implies very good. The distribution score of English proficiency can be seen in Table 3. Based on the Table 3, it is clear that 60% of participants acquire listening ability at the level of 3. 54% of participants were at the level of 3 in reading. And 64.7 % of participants at the level of 3 in speaking. 66.7 % of participants were at the level of 3 in writing. It means that they were limited users. They convey and understand the only general meaning in very familiar situations. They sometimes found any problems in communication.

The purpose of the segment was to recognize the respondents' opinions about maritime English learning. The graph illustrated some respondents strongly disagreed, some disagreed, some agree, and others strongly agree on the language skill use. As we can see in Table 4 denoted that general learners' survey responses were 80.8% respondents agreed that they had problems equipment checking report, 79.5 % agreed they have difficulties in traffic operation exchange, and 75.3% agreed they had a problem in radiotelephone communication. The data signified that most of the participants assumed that they had difficulties in equipment checking report, Traffic operation exchange and Radiotelephone communication.

**Table 2.** Demographic information

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender	73	1.1918	.39643
Age	73	19.6849	1.16520
English Proficiency	73	2.7671	.58974

**Table 3.** English proficiency

	1	2	3	4	5
Listening	4.3	20.7	60	15	
Writing	8.4	14.4	66.7	10.5	
Reading	5	25.4	54	15.6	
Speaking	4	20.7	64.7	10.6	

**Table 4.** problems faced in understanding maritime English

Maritime English	1	2	3	4
Daily English	4.1	21.9	64.4	9.6
Radio telephone communication		21.9	75.3	2.7
Traffic operation exchange	1.4	17.8	79.5	1.4
Presentation in English		21.9	71.2	6.8
Reading English journal about Maritime	2.7	38.4	56.2	2.7
English daily report	1.4	24.7	65.8	8.2
Equipment checking report		16.4	80.8	2.7
Maritime communication systems		27.4	68.5	4.1
Cargo handling instructions		24.7	69.9	5.5
Emergency on board		32.9	61.6	5.5
IMO standard Marine Communication phrases		28.8	64.4	6.8
Safety equipment on board		27	60.3	2.7
Work activities on board		26	60.3	4.1
Vessels particulars and specifications	1.4	23.3	71.2	4.1

**Table 5.** Necessities of maritime English

Maritime English	1	2	3	4
Daily English	1.4		35.6	63.0
Radio telephone communication	1.4		50.7	47.9
Traffic operation exchange	1.4		52.1	46.6
Presentation in English	1.4		43.8	54.8
Reading English journal about Maritime	1.4		49.3	49.3
English daily report	1.4		46.6	52.1
Equipment checking report	1.4		50.7	47.9
Maritime communication systems	1.4		52.1	46.6
Cargo handling instructions	1.4		52.1	46.6
Emergency on board	1.4		49.3	49.3
IMO standard Marine Communication phrases		1.4	45.2	53.4
Safety equipment on board		1.4	49.3	49.3
Work activities on board	1.4		50.7	47.9
Vessels particulars and specifications	1.4		46.6	52.1

This part aimed to identify opinions about the need for using and learning maritime English. The graph presented the number of participants who strongly disagreed, disagreed, agree and strongly disagree with the need for language skill usage. The figure also showed that some participants disagreed, strongly disagreed regarding the language skills used in the maritime field. From the table 5 we can see that 63% of participants strongly agree that they need to master daily English. 54% of respondents strongly agree that they need to master presentation in English. 53 % said that they need to learn IMO (International Maritime Organization) standard Marine Communication phrases. 52 % strongly agree that they need to master English daily report and Vessels particulars and specifications. It revealed that most of the participants thought that they need to master English as the media communication of their everyday life. Furthermore, they need to be able to have a presentation in English, to understand IMO standard Marine Communication phrases, to make a daily report and to understand vessels particulars and specifications.

Drawing from the questionnaires' result, it implies three notions. First, it was found that most of the participants agreed that English was significant for them. They assumed that English for the maritime setting was crucial. There were two types of Maritime English. The first is Maritime English for general purpose and the second was Maritime English for the specific purpose. General purposes maritime English is English for academic activities. For example, English for having a presentation, English for reading journals or articles, English for discussion, English for writing checking report, and takes notes during duty. Those activities take place on campus and dormitory while they were in the learning process. Maritime English for the specific purpose was English in their professional job. For example, for Maritime communication system, IMO standard marine communication, vessel particulars and specifications. Second, it was found that 60% of cadets had limited listening skills. Not only in listening but also in other language skills like writing, speaking and reading. Sequentially, the percentage was 64%, 55% and 66.7 %. For speaking ability, 64% of cadets comprehended average. For reading ability, 54% of students apparent average and for writing ability, 66.7% of learners perceived average ability. The difficulties appeared when they had to write and present it in English. Consequently, it is necessary to start the English course mainly focus on speaking and writing. In Indonesia, there is a high demand for English related to the work field.

The existing English proficiency was average. It is not enough to have the only average ability in English proficiency. Basically, there is no standard language certificate for seaman. However, comparing to the civil aviation field, they follow the standard introduced by the ICAO (International Aviation Organization) that the crewmembers should have minimum English proficiency

at level 4 (operational). This level 4 the same as B2 for languages used in European standard. B2 indicated greater intermediate level.

Third, the cadets stated that it was significant to have English maritime training, not only the general-purpose but also for the specific purpose. They need to have the training begin within their college. So that when they graduate, they already had the language ability to communicate. The training content should be maritime English for general purpose (general ESP) and Maritime English for a specific purpose (specific ESP). It is significant to design training based on what they need in the maritime field. The teaching method should be different from general English. They need English material and simulation practice. Teachers have to share their expertise, teaching methodology and previous learning experience among themselves in various seminars and international conferences. In designing a language course and its syllabus, the teachers need to think about the social and professional communicative skills which will be required for students to participate in conferences, seminars and communicate the community efficiently. The teaching and learning process needs to consider authentic materials like documentaries, online news and journal articles.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The most important things from this research were to distinguish the cadets' English need. There are some explanations about why maritime English was significant. For the academic field, it is important to master English so that they can write and present in English well. They also need English ability to attend classes and to read English articles. Not only mastering academic English but they also need English for their workplace in the maritime field. There is a large number of Indonesian seafarers work abroad. That is why there is a high demand for conducting Maritime English course based on the users' need. The suggestions related to maritime English course are as follows: first, the Maritime English course had better tackle the need of Maritime workplace field. Second, the general purpose and specific purpose of Maritime English should start in the first year of the maritime academy. And the third, there should be English language refresher courses for the next specialized expansion of seafarers.

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