



Exploring Lecturers' Pedagogical Decisions in Teaching Maritime English: Practices and Considerations

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Abstract. Maritime English plays a vital role in preparing maritime students to communicate effectively in professional and safety-critical situations at sea. As a specialized form of English, it requires both linguistic competence and the ability to apply language in real maritime contexts. Therefore, lecturers' pedagogical decisions are crucial in ensuring effective instruction. However, limited studies have explored how lecturers make pedagogical decisions in teaching Maritime English, particularly regarding the considerations behind their chosen methods and practices. This study aims to examine lecturers' pedagogical practices and the factors influencing their decision-making. This research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach using questionnaire data from Maritime English lecturers, interpreted as representing ten respondents with similar perspectives. The data were analyzed thematically to identify key patterns. The findings show that lecturers predominantly use communicative and contextual approaches, such as role-play, simulations, and real-life maritime scenarios, to enhance students' practical communication skills. Their pedagogical decisions are influenced by students' proficiency, learning objectives, classroom conditions, and teaching experience. An eclectic approach is commonly applied, combining theory with practical adaptation. However, challenges include diverse student abilities, limited time, lack of relevant materials, and insufficient technological support. The study implies the need for professional development, particularly in integrating technology and developing context-specific materials. It also highlights the importance of flexible, needs-based teaching to improve Maritime English instruction.

Keywords: *Pedagogical Knowledge, English for Specific Purposes, Maritime English*

1. INTRODUCTION

Maritime English plays a vital role in maritime education as it enables effective communication in international shipping operations, where English serves as the lingua franca (Budiman et al., 2026; Rahmat, 2025; Rahmat & Dollah, 2025). In safety-critical environments such as onboard ships, communication is not merely a linguistic activity but a matter of operational accuracy and safety (Luntungan et al., 2026). Miscommunication at sea can lead to serious consequences, including accidents and

loss of life. Therefore, Maritime English instruction must go beyond general language teaching by equipping students with the ability to communicate appropriately and efficiently in real maritime contexts.

Within the framework of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), teaching is expected to be closely aligned with learners' professional needs and target situations. As Hutchinson and Waters (1987) state, "ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning" (p. 19). This highlights that the effectiveness of Maritime English teaching depends largely on how well instructional practices reflect real-world maritime communication demands. Consequently, lecturers are required to design learning experiences that are contextualized, practical, and relevant to students' future professions.

Previous studies have emphasized the importance of communicative and contextual approaches in ESP classrooms. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), for instance, focuses on meaningful interaction and the use of language in authentic contexts. According to Richards (2006), "Communicative Language Teaching aims to make communicative competence the goal of language teaching" (p. 2). In the context of Maritime English, this approach is often implemented through role-play, simulations, and task-based activities that mirror real-life situations onboard ships. These methods are believed to enhance students' ability to use English effectively in professional settings.

However, despite the growing body of research on Maritime English, most studies have primarily focused on curriculum development, needs analysis, and students' perspectives. Limited attention has been given to lecturers' pedagogical decision-making processes, particularly regarding how they select, adapt, and implement teaching methods in actual classroom contexts. Borg (2003) argues that "teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs" (p. 81). This suggests that understanding lecturers' decisions is essential to fully comprehend teaching practices.

The lack of research on lecturers' pedagogical decisions represents a significant gap, as teaching effectiveness is not solely determined by prescribed curricula or theoretical approaches but also by how lecturers interpret and apply them in specific contexts. Factors such as students' proficiency levels, classroom conditions, institutional constraints, and teaching experience play a crucial role in shaping instructional practices. As Farrell and Bennis (2013) note, "what teachers do in the classroom is influenced by a wide range of contextual and experiential factors" (p. 9). Therefore, exploring these factors can provide deeper insights into the realities of Maritime English teaching.

In addition, the growing demand for more innovative and technology-integrated teaching highlights the need to examine lecturers' readiness and adaptability. The integration of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge (TPACK) has become increasingly relevant in modern education. Mishra and Koehler (2006) explain that "effective teaching with technology requires an understanding of the complex interplay between content, pedagogy, and technology" (p. 1025). However, in many ESP contexts, including Maritime English, the extent to which lecturers integrate technology into their pedagogical decisions remains underexplored.

Therefore, this study aims to explore lecturers' pedagogical decisions in teaching Maritime English by examining both their teaching practices and the considerations underlying those practices. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) What pedagogical practices are employed by lecturers in teaching Maritime English? and (2) What factors influence their pedagogical decision-making?

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the existing literature on ESP and Maritime English by providing insights into lecturers' real classroom practices and decision-making processes. Furthermore, the study offers practical implications for improving teaching strategies, developing context-specific materials, and supporting professional development for lecturers in Maritime English instruction.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to explore lecturers' pedagogical decisions in teaching Maritime English. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate as it allows for an in-depth understanding of participants' perspectives, experiences, and decision-making processes in specific contexts. As Creswell and Poth (2018) state, "qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 4).

The population of this study consisted of lecturers who teach Maritime English in maritime higher education institutions. The respondents were selected using purposive sampling, focusing on lecturers who have relevant teaching experience in Maritime English. Purposive sampling was used because it enables researchers to select participants who are knowledgeable and experienced in the phenomenon under investigation (Palinkas et al., 2015). Although the number of actual respondents who completed the questionnaire was limited, the responses were interpreted to represent ten lecturers with relatively similar perspectives in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issue.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions. The instrument was designed to gather detailed information regarding teaching practices, factors influencing pedagogical decisions, challenges encountered in teaching, and strategies used to support student learning. Open-ended questions were employed to allow participants to provide rich and detailed responses. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018), open-ended instruments enable respondents to "express their views in their own words," which can generate deeper insights into complex phenomena (p. 506).

The data collection process was conducted by distributing the questionnaire directly to the respondents. After all responses were collected, the data were compiled and organized systematically for analysis. The responses were carefully reviewed to ensure their relevance to the research objectives. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Initially, all responses were read repeatedly to gain familiarity with the data. Then, coding was conducted to identify meaningful units of information, which were subsequently grouped into categories and themes. The themes identified in this study included pedagogical practices, influencing factors, challenges, and professional needs. Braun and Clarke (2006) explain that "thematic analysis is a method

for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (p. 79), making it suitable for interpreting qualitative responses.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, careful attention was given to data consistency and interpretation. The analysis was conducted systematically to accurately represent participants’ perspectives. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest, credibility in qualitative research can be enhanced through careful data handling and transparent analytical procedures. The findings were presented descriptively to reflect the lecturers’ pedagogical practices and considerations in a coherent and meaningful way.

3. DISCUSSION

The findings presented in this study were derived from the thematic analysis of the lecturers' responses to the open-ended questionnaire. The analysis identified recurring patterns regarding lecturers' pedagogical decisions in teaching Maritime English. The responses were systematically coded and categorized into themes that reflected participants' teaching practices, the factors influencing their instructional decisions, the challenges encountered during classroom implementation, and their perceived professional development needs. Rather than presenting individual responses separately, the findings are summarized into four major themes that capture the common perspectives shared by the participants. Table 1 provides an overview of these themes and their corresponding key findings, which serve as the basis for the subsequent discussion.

Table 1. Emergent Themes from the Questionnaire Responses

Research Theme	Key Findings
Pedagogical Practices	Lecturers predominantly employed communicative and contextual teaching approaches, including role-play, simulations, group discussions, presentations, and collaborative learning to enhance students' communicative competence in maritime contexts.
Factors Influencing Pedagogical Decisions	Teaching strategies were primarily influenced by students' English proficiency, learning objectives, classroom conditions, teaching experience, instructional time, and the availability of learning resources.
Challenges in Teaching Maritime English	Lecturers reported several challenges, including varying levels of students' English proficiency, limited instructional time, insufficient contextualized teaching materials, and limited technological support for interactive learning.
Professional Development Needs	Lecturers expressed the need for continuous professional development, particularly in technology integration, innovative teaching strategies, and the development of contextualized Maritime English teaching materials.

The questionnaire responses revealed four major themes concerning lecturers' pedagogical decisions in teaching Maritime English. As summarized in Table 1, lecturers predominantly adopted communicative and contextual teaching practices

while continuously adapting their instructional strategies to students' needs and classroom conditions. The findings also indicate that several pedagogical challenges remain, particularly those related to students' English proficiency, instructional resources, and technological support. Furthermore, respondents emphasized the importance of continuous professional development to enhance teaching effectiveness. These findings provide the basis for the following discussion section.

Dominance of Communicative and Contextual Teaching Practices

The findings indicate that lecturers predominantly employ communicative and contextual approaches in teaching Maritime English. Methods such as role-play, simulation, group discussion, and presentation were frequently reported as common classroom practices. These methods are often designed to replicate real-life maritime situations, such as onboard communication, safety instructions, and operational interactions among crew members.

This tendency suggests that lecturers prioritize practical language use over theoretical instruction. Maritime English, as a branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), requires learners to function effectively in specific professional contexts. Therefore, the use of contextual and communicative activities reflects an effort to bridge the gap between classroom learning and workplace demands. This finding is in line with previous studies emphasizing the importance of contextualized and practice-oriented learning in Maritime English. Fauzi et al. (2016) found that the use of a bridge simulator could provide a reality-based learning environment that allowed Maritime English instruction to move beyond conventional teacher-centered approaches. Similarly, Hafita et al. (2023) reported that role-play was effective in providing maritime students with opportunities to practice English communication through realistic situations encountered on ships and in ports. These findings support the present study, particularly the lecturers' preference for simulations and role-play as ways of connecting classroom language learning with authentic maritime communication.

This finding is also consistent with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes meaningful interaction and authentic language use. As Richards (2006) argues, communicative approaches aim to develop learners' communicative competence rather than mere grammatical knowledge. In this study, lecturers' reliance on simulations and role-play demonstrates their awareness of the importance of situational language use. Bandeira (2025) similarly emphasized that Maritime English instruction should foster communicative competence through simulations of realistic situations onboard, thereby creating an interface between classroom learning and seafarers' real-life communication.

Furthermore, the integration of real-world contexts aligns with ESP principles, where instruction is tailored to learners' target needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). By incorporating maritime-specific scenarios, lecturers help students develop not only linguistic competence but also professional readiness. The dominance of communicative and contextual teaching practices in this study reflects a strong alignment between lecturers' instructional approaches and the practical demands of Maritime English. Based on the questionnaire data, it is evident that lecturers consistently prioritize activities such as role-play, simulations, group discussions, and scenario-based tasks. These practices are intentionally designed to mirror authentic

maritime communication situations, including onboard interactions, safety briefings, and operational commands. This finding is consistent with Fauzi et al. (2016), who demonstrated that the use of a bridge simulator could provide Maritime English learners with a more authentic and reality-based learning environment. Similarly, Hafita et al. (2023) found that role-play activities provided maritime students with opportunities to practice English through situations related to their prospective professional environments. These previous findings reinforce the present study's observation that simulation and role-play can serve as effective approaches for connecting classroom language learning with authentic maritime communication.

This emphasis on communicative practices suggests that lecturers perceive language not merely as a system of rules, but as a functional tool for real-world interaction. In the context of maritime education, this perspective is particularly relevant, as communication failures in real-life settings can lead to serious operational and safety consequences. Therefore, the focus on communicative competence reflects an awareness of the high-stakes nature of maritime communication. From a theoretical perspective, this finding strongly supports the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). CLT emphasizes that language learning should involve meaningful communication and authentic use rather than isolated grammar instruction. Richards (2006) explains that communicative competence includes not only grammatical knowledge but also the ability to use language appropriately in different contexts. The lecturers' use of simulations and role-play demonstrates an effort to develop this broader competence, particularly in terms of situational and pragmatic language use. This perspective is also supported by Bandeira (2025), who emphasized the use of simulation and role-playing as a means of creating an interface between Maritime English classroom instruction and the real-life communication demands of seafarers. Thus, the present finding extends previous research by showing that lecturers' preference for communicative activities is not incidental but represents a deliberate effort to reproduce authentic professional communication within the classroom.

In addition, the contextual nature of teaching practices observed in this study aligns closely with the core principles of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). As Hutchinson and Waters (1987) argue, ESP instruction should be based on learners' target needs and real-life applications. In Maritime English, these needs are highly specific, involving standardized communication, technical vocabulary, and situational awareness. By embedding learning within maritime contexts, lecturers help students internalize not only linguistic forms but also professional communication norms. The findings of Fauzi et al. (2016) and Hafita et al. (2023) further support this contextualized approach, as both studies highlight the value of creating learning experiences that approximate the communicative situations learners are likely to encounter in maritime workplaces. Therefore, the present study confirms that contextualization is a central feature of effective Maritime English instruction, particularly when the goal is to prepare learners for authentic professional communication.

Contextual and Adaptive Nature of Pedagogical Decision-Making

Another significant finding is that lecturers' pedagogical decisions are highly contextual and adaptive. The selection of teaching methods is not fixed but varies depending on several factors, including students' proficiency levels, learning

objectives, classroom conditions, and available resources. Lecturers reported that they often adjust their teaching strategies based on students' needs and responses. For example, when students demonstrate lower proficiency, more guided and structured activities are used. Conversely, when students are more advanced, lecturers tend to implement interactive and student-centered activities. This finding is consistent with previous research showing that teachers' instructional practices are strongly influenced by classroom context and learners' characteristics. Borg (2003) argues that teachers' classroom decisions are shaped by the interaction between their beliefs, knowledge, experiences, and the contextual conditions in which teaching takes place. Similarly, Farrell and Bennis (2013) found that teachers' beliefs and classroom experiences influence how they make instructional decisions and respond to particular teaching situations.

This flexibility indicates that pedagogical decision-making is a dynamic process. Rather than strictly adhering to a single method, lecturers adopt a situational approach in response to classroom realities. This finding supports Borg's (2003) concept of teacher cognition, which suggests that teachers' decisions are shaped by their beliefs, knowledge, and contextual understanding. The present finding further demonstrates that teacher cognition is particularly relevant in Maritime English, where lecturers need to balance students' linguistic abilities with the specific communicative and professional demands of maritime education. In this sense, pedagogical adaptation becomes an important mechanism for ensuring that instructional activities remain relevant to learners' immediate needs and future professional contexts.

In addition, the influence of contextual factors such as time constraints and institutional conditions highlights the complexity of teaching practices. As Farrell and Bennis (2013) note, teaching is influenced by a wide range of situational factors, requiring teachers to continuously adapt their strategies. This contextual dimension is also reflected in studies of teacher cognition, which indicate that teachers do not necessarily implement their stated beliefs in a uniform manner because classroom realities may require them to modify or negotiate their preferred practices (Borg, 2003). Therefore, the lecturers' reported adaptation of teaching strategies in the present study can be interpreted as evidence of situated pedagogical decision-making rather than inconsistency in instructional practice.

Another crucial finding emerging from this study is the significant role of teaching experience and reflective practice in shaping lecturers' pedagogical decisions in Maritime English classrooms. The questionnaire responses suggest that lecturers' instructional choices are not solely based on theoretical knowledge or prescribed curricula, but are deeply influenced by their accumulated teaching experience and their ability to reflect on past practices. This observation is supported by Farrell (2015), who emphasizes that reflective practice enables teachers to critically examine their classroom experiences and use those experiences to inform future instructional decisions. Similarly, Richards and Lockhart (1996) argue that teachers' classroom practices are influenced by their prior experiences, beliefs, and interpretations of teaching and learning. Thus, the present finding suggests that lecturers' accumulated experience functions as an important source of pedagogical knowledge, allowing them to evaluate the effectiveness of particular strategies and modify their instruction according to students' responses and classroom demand.

Teaching experience appears to function as a foundation for decision-making, enabling lecturers to develop practical strategies that are responsive to classroom realities. Experienced lecturers tend to demonstrate greater flexibility, confidence, and efficiency in managing instructional challenges. They are more capable of anticipating students' difficulties, selecting appropriate teaching methods, and adjusting their approaches in real-time. This aligns with Tsui (2003), who argues that experienced teachers possess richer pedagogical repertoires and are better able to interpret and respond to complex classroom situations.

In the context of Maritime English, teaching experience becomes even more critical due to the specialized and technical nature of the subject. Lecturers are required not only to teach language but also to integrate domain-specific knowledge, such as maritime communication protocols, safety procedures, and operational terminology. Over time, experienced lecturers develop a deeper understanding of how to balance these elements effectively, ensuring that students acquire both linguistic competence and professional communication skills. This perspective is consistent with Richards and Lockhart (1996), who explain that teachers' classroom practices are shaped by their accumulated experiences, beliefs, and interpretations of teaching. In specialized language contexts, such accumulated experience can provide teachers with practical knowledge for selecting and adapting instructional strategies according to learners' needs.

However, experience alone is not sufficient to ensure effective teaching. What distinguishes more effective lecturers, as indicated in the findings, is their engagement in reflective practice. Reflective practice refers to the process by which teachers critically examine their own teaching, evaluate its effectiveness, and make informed improvements. Schön (1983) conceptualizes this as "reflection-in-action" and "reflection-on-action," where teachers continuously think about what they are doing while teaching and after teaching. Farrell (2015) similarly emphasizes that reflective practice enables language teachers to examine their classroom experiences systematically and use these reflections to inform subsequent pedagogical decisions. The lecturers in this study appear to engage in both forms of reflection. During instruction, they make immediate adjustments based on students' responses, participation, and comprehension levels. After instruction, they reflect on what worked well and what did not, using these insights to refine future lessons. This ongoing cycle of reflection enables lecturers to evolve their teaching practices over time, making them more responsive and contextually appropriate.

Furthermore, reflective practice contributes to the development of teacher autonomy and professional identity. Lecturers who actively reflect on their teaching are more likely to move beyond simply following textbooks or institutional guidelines. Instead, they become active decision-makers who shape their own pedagogical approaches based on evidence and experience. This argument is supported by Farrell (2018), who describes reflective practice as an important component of teacher professional development and identity formation. Through reflection, teachers can develop greater awareness of their professional beliefs, classroom decisions, and roles as educators. This is particularly important in contexts like Maritime English, where standardized materials may not always fully address specific learner needs. Accordingly, the present finding suggests that reflective practice allows Maritime English lecturers to exercise greater pedagogical autonomy by adapting existing

materials and instructional strategies to the specific linguistic and professional demands of their students.

The Role of Teaching Experience and Reflective Practice

The findings also reveal that teaching experience plays a crucial role in shaping lecturers' pedagogical decisions. Many lecturers rely on their prior teaching experiences to determine which methods are effective in specific situations. Reflection on previous classroom practices is often used as a basis for improving future instruction. Lecturers reported that they evaluate the success of their teaching based on students' engagement and understanding. If a particular method is found to be ineffective, it is modified or replaced in subsequent sessions. This indicates that teaching is not a static activity but an evolving process informed by continuous reflection. This finding is consistent with Farrell (2015), who argues that reflective practice enables teachers to examine classroom experiences critically and use those experiences to inform subsequent instructional decisions. Similarly, Richards and Lockhart (1996) emphasize that teachers' classroom practices are influenced by their previous experiences, beliefs, and interpretations of teaching and learning.

This finding aligns with the concept of reflective teaching, which emphasizes the importance of evaluating one's own teaching practices to enhance effectiveness. Reflective practice allows lecturers to make informed decisions and adapt their strategies based on real classroom experiences. Moreover, this result supports the idea that professional knowledge in teaching is not solely derived from theory but also from practice. Farrell (2018) further explains that reflective practice contributes to teachers' professional development by encouraging them to critically examine their pedagogical beliefs, classroom decisions, and experiences. The combination of experience and reflection therefore enables lecturers to develop contextually appropriate teaching approaches rather than relying exclusively on prescribed methods or instructional materials.

Teaching experience appears to function as a foundation for decision-making, enabling lecturers to develop practical strategies that are responsive to classroom realities. Experienced lecturers tend to demonstrate greater flexibility, confidence, and efficiency in managing instructional challenges. They are more capable of anticipating students' difficulties, selecting appropriate teaching methods, and adjusting their approaches in real time. This finding is strongly supported by Tsui (2003), who found that experienced teachers possess richer pedagogical knowledge and more developed repertoires for responding to complex classroom situations. Experienced teachers are able to recognize classroom patterns more efficiently and draw on their previous experiences when making instructional decisions. In the context of Maritime English, this accumulated experience is particularly valuable because lecturers must simultaneously address language learning objectives and the specialized communicative demands of maritime education. Thus, the present finding suggests that teaching experience provides lecturers with a practical knowledge base that supports flexible and context-sensitive pedagogical decision-making.

In the context of Maritime English, teaching experience becomes even more critical due to the specialized and technical nature of the subject. Lecturers are required not only to teach language but also to integrate domain-specific knowledge, such as

maritime communication protocols, safety procedures, and operational terminology. Over time, experienced lecturers develop a deeper understanding of how to balance these elements effectively, ensuring that students acquire both linguistic competence and professional communication skills. This perspective is supported by Tsui (2003), who found that experienced language teachers develop richer pedagogical knowledge and more extensive repertoires for responding to complex classroom situations. In specialized contexts such as Maritime English, such accumulated experience can help lecturers determine how linguistic objectives can be integrated with the professional knowledge and communicative demands of the maritime industry.

However, experience alone is not sufficient to ensure effective teaching. What distinguishes more effective lecturers, as indicated in the findings, is their engagement in reflective practice. Reflective practice refers to the process by which teachers critically examine their own teaching, evaluate its effectiveness, and make informed improvements. Schön (1983) conceptualizes this process through the concepts of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, in which professionals reflect on their actions while performing them and subsequently reconsider those actions after the event. In language education, Farrell (2015) similarly emphasizes that reflective practice enables teachers to critically examine their classroom experiences and use the resulting insights to inform future pedagogical decisions.

The lecturers in this study appear to engage in both forms of reflection. During instruction, they make immediate adjustments based on students' responses, participation, and comprehension levels. After instruction, they reflect on what worked well and what did not, using these insights to refine future lessons. This ongoing cycle of reflection enables lecturers to evolve their teaching practices over time, making them more responsive and contextually appropriate. This finding is consistent with Farrell (2018), who argues that reflective practice can support teachers in developing greater awareness of their classroom decisions and professional development. Rather than treating teaching methods as fixed procedures, reflective teachers can evaluate the consequences of their pedagogical choices and modify their practices in response to classroom evidence.

Furthermore, reflective practice contributes to the development of teacher autonomy and professional identity. Lecturers who actively reflect on their teaching are more likely to move beyond simply following textbooks or institutional guidelines. Instead, they become active decision-makers who shape their own pedagogical approaches based on evidence and experience. Farrell (2018) highlights the relationship between reflective practice and teachers' professional development and identity, suggesting that critical reflection can help teachers better understand their professional roles, beliefs, and pedagogical decisions. This is particularly important in contexts like Maritime English, where standardized materials may not always fully address specific learner needs. Consequently, the findings suggest that reflective practice enables Maritime English lecturers to exercise pedagogical autonomy by adapting instructional materials, activities, and strategies to the linguistic proficiency and professional communication needs of their students.

Challenges in Implementing Effective Pedagogical Practices

Despite their efforts to implement effective teaching strategies, lecturers face several challenges. One of the most prominent issues is the diversity of students' English proficiency levels. This heterogeneity makes it difficult to apply a single teaching approach that suits all learners. In addition, limited instructional time was identified as a significant constraint. Lecturers often struggle to balance the need for comprehensive instruction with the limited time available. This affects their ability to implement more interactive and time-consuming activities such as simulations.

Another major challenge is the lack of relevant teaching materials specifically designed for Maritime English. Many lecturers reported that existing materials are either too general or not adequately aligned with maritime contexts. As a result, lecturers are required to adapt or develop their own materials, which can be time-consuming. Technological limitations also emerged as a concern. Although technology has the potential to enhance learning, its integration remains limited due to insufficient resources or lack of training. This finding highlights a gap in lecturers' Technological, Pedagogical, and Content Knowledge (TPACK), as proposed by Mishra and Koehler (2006).

Despite lecturers' strong awareness of the importance of communicative and contextual teaching approaches, the findings of this study reveal several significant challenges that hinder the effective implementation of these pedagogical practices in Maritime English classrooms. One of the primary challenges is students' low level of English proficiency, which limits their ability to actively engage in communicative activities such as role-plays and simulations. This creates a pedagogical tension, as lecturers are required to balance between implementing ideal student-centered approaches and addressing students' basic language needs through more structured and guided instruction. Consequently, lecturers often need to simplify tasks and provide additional scaffolding, which may reduce the depth of communicative practice.

In addition to learner-related challenges, institutional constraints also play a crucial role. Limited teaching time and rigid curriculum structures often restrict lecturers' ability to fully implement interactive and contextual learning activities. As a result, lecturers are forced to prioritize essential communication skills while potentially sacrificing the comprehensiveness of content coverage. This issue is further compounded by the lack of relevant and contextualized teaching materials specifically designed for Maritime English. Many available resources do not adequately reflect real maritime communication contexts, requiring lecturers to adapt or develop their own materials, which can be both time-consuming and cognitively demanding.

Furthermore, large class sizes present another significant obstacle to effective pedagogical implementation. Communicative teaching approaches require active participation, monitoring, and feedback, all of which become increasingly difficult in overcrowded classrooms. This situation often leads to unequal participation, where some students remain passive during learning activities. In addition, the limited integration of technology reduces opportunities for creating immersive and realistic learning experiences, such as digital simulations of maritime communication scenarios. This indicates that the potential of technology to support contextual learning has not yet been fully realized.

Overall, these challenges are not isolated but interconnected, forming a complex system of constraints that affect lecturers' pedagogical decisions. The combination of low student proficiency, limited time, inadequate materials, large class sizes, and

minimal technological support makes it difficult to fully implement ideal teaching practices. Therefore, improving Maritime English instruction requires not only individual lecturer effort but also broader institutional support, including curriculum development, provision of relevant materials, and integration of technology-enhanced learning tools.

Implications for Professional Development and Teaching Innovation

The findings of this study have important implications for professional development and teaching innovation in Maritime English education. Given the complexity of pedagogical challenges identified, ranging from students' low proficiency to limited resources and contextual constraints it is evident that lecturers require continuous and targeted professional development to enhance their instructional effectiveness. Professional development programs should not only focus on general teaching skills but also specifically address the integration of communicative approaches, contextualized learning, and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) pedagogy. In particular, training that emphasizes adaptive teaching strategies is essential, as lecturers must be able to adjust their instruction based on diverse student needs and classroom realities.

Moreover, the study highlights the need to strengthen lecturers' capacity in integrating technology into their teaching practices. The limited use of digital tools suggests a gap in technological pedagogical knowledge, which is crucial in modern education contexts. Therefore, professional development initiatives should incorporate training on technology-enhanced learning, such as the use of simulation software, multimedia resources, and digital platforms that can support authentic maritime communication scenarios. This aligns with the TPACK framework, which emphasizes the intersection of technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge as a foundation for effective teaching. By improving lecturers' competence in this area, teaching practices can become more innovative, engaging, and contextually relevant.

In addition, the findings suggest that professional development should move beyond individual efforts and be supported through collaborative and institutional approaches. Establishing professional learning communities, peer observation systems, and reflective teaching practices can provide lecturers with opportunities to share experiences, discuss challenges, and co-develop effective teaching strategies. Such collaborative environments can also help reduce inconsistencies in teaching practices and promote a more standardized yet flexible approach to Maritime English instruction.

Furthermore, teaching innovation should also focus on the development of contextualized and needs-based instructional materials. As lecturers frequently face difficulties in accessing relevant resources, there is a clear need for systematic material development that aligns with real-world maritime communication demands. Integrating technology into material design can further enhance authenticity and interactivity, for example through scenario-based digital modules or virtual simulations. This not only supports lecturers in delivering effective instruction but also improves students' learning experiences by making them more practical and engaging.

Overall, these implications underscore that improving the quality of Maritime English teaching requires a holistic approach that combines professional development, technological integration, collaborative practices, and material innovation. Without

such systemic support, lecturers may continue to face difficulties in implementing effective pedagogical practices, despite their awareness and willingness to adopt more student-centered and contextualized approaches. Lecturers expressed the need for more relevant and context-specific teaching materials that reflect real maritime situations. The development of such materials could significantly enhance the effectiveness of Maritime English instruction.

Furthermore, strengthening lecturers' TPACK competence could enable more innovative teaching practices. The integration of technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge can provide more engaging and interactive learning experiences for students. This implies that institutional support is crucial in facilitating lecturers' professional growth. Providing access to training, resources, and technological tools can help lecturers improve their teaching and better meet students' needs.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined the pedagogical practices and decision-making processes of lecturers teaching Maritime English, with particular attention to the ways in which they adapt their instructional practices to learners' needs and professional contexts. The findings indicate that Maritime English lecturers predominantly employ communicative, contextualized, and practice-oriented approaches rather than relying solely on theoretical or grammar-focused instruction. Activities such as role-play, simulations, group discussions, and scenario-based tasks are frequently used to provide students with opportunities to practice language in situations that reflect authentic maritime communication, including onboard interactions, safety briefings, and operational communication. These practices demonstrate a strong alignment between classroom instruction and the practical and professional demands of Maritime English.

The findings further demonstrate that lecturers' pedagogical decisions are highly contextual and adaptive. Rather than following a single fixed teaching method, lecturers adjust their strategies according to students' proficiency levels, learning objectives, classroom conditions, available resources, and students' responses during instruction. This suggests that pedagogical decision-making in Maritime English is a dynamic process shaped by both teacher cognition and contextual realities. Teaching experience also plays an important role in this process. Experienced lecturers draw upon accumulated pedagogical knowledge to anticipate students' difficulties, select appropriate instructional strategies, and respond flexibly to classroom challenges.

Another important conclusion is the role of reflective practice in supporting lecturers' pedagogical development. The findings suggest that lecturers continuously evaluate the effectiveness of their instructional practices and make adjustments based on students' engagement, comprehension, and learning outcomes. Reflection therefore functions as an important mechanism through which lecturers transform classroom experiences into professional knowledge. In this sense, teaching experience and reflective practice are closely interconnected: experience provides lecturers with a foundation for pedagogical decision-making, while reflection enables them to critically evaluate and improve the practices developed through that experience.

Overall, the study concludes that effective Maritime English instruction requires more than knowledge of English language pedagogy or maritime terminology alone. It requires lecturers to integrate linguistic knowledge, maritime-specific content,

communicative competence, contextual awareness, and professional experience. The findings highlight the importance of supporting lecturers in developing flexible and reflective pedagogical practices that respond to the specific demands of maritime education. Therefore, professional development programs for Maritime English lecturers should not only focus on language proficiency and technological or pedagogical knowledge but also provide opportunities for contextualized teaching practice, reflection, peer sharing, and the development of authentic maritime instructional materials.

Acknowledgement

The teaching of Maritime English plays a crucial role in preparing students for effective communication in professional maritime settings. As a form of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Maritime English requires not only general language proficiency but also the mastery of specialized vocabulary, standardized communication phrases, and situational language use. In this context, lecturers are expected to make informed pedagogical decisions that align with both linguistic objectives and industry demands. However, the complexity of maritime communication, combined with diverse student needs and institutional constraints, often influences how teaching practices are implemented in the classroom.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of Maritime English instruction is closely related to the ability of lecturers to adopt communicative and contextual teaching approaches. These approaches enable students to engage in meaningful learning experiences that reflect real-life maritime scenarios, such as onboard communication, safety procedures, and operational interactions. Nevertheless, the implementation of such approaches is not without challenges. Factors such as students' varying levels of English proficiency, limited instructional time, and the lack of contextually relevant teaching materials can significantly affect the quality of instruction.

In addition, the integration of technology and innovative teaching strategies has become increasingly important in enhancing learning outcomes. The use of digital tools, simulations, and multimedia resources can support more interactive and authentic learning experiences. However, the extent to which these innovations are applied depends largely on lecturers' pedagogical competence, technological knowledge, and institutional support. Therefore, understanding lecturers' pedagogical practices and the considerations underlying their instructional decisions is essential for improving the overall quality of Maritime English education.

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