

Do Maritime Students See English as A Career Asset or A Burden? A Perception Study

*Aqzhariady Khartha¹, Muhammad Fathur Rahman Khalik², Muthmainnah Bahri A. Bohang³, St. Hartina⁴

^{1,3} Universitas Sembilanbelas November Kolaka, Indonesia

² Universitas Islam Mulia Yogyakarta, Indonesia

⁴ Universitas Islam Negeri Palopo, Indonesia

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(*aqzhariadykhartha@gmail.com)

Abstract

This study examined maritime cadets' perceptions of English in relation to their professional careers, addressing a gap in understanding how vocational students positioned language proficiency within their occupational trajectories. Using a mixed-methods design, data were collected from 60 final-year cadets via a Likert-scale questionnaire and five participants through semi-structured interviews at a maritime polytechnic in Makassar. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions, while qualitative data were processed through thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns across interview responses. The quantitative findings revealed a striking contrast: cadets rated the importance of English highly (mean = 4.52), with 78.3% strongly agreeing that it was essential for maritime employment, yet their attitudes toward learning it were markedly low (mean = 2.48), with only 8.3% expressing strong positivity. Qualitatively, a key perceptual shift emerged as cadets tended to view English as an "academic burden" in formal classroom settings but reframed it as a "professional asset" following practical sea experience. Instructional support and authentic professional exposure were identified as decisive mediating factors. The study recommended embedding context-specific ESP content and professional communication simulations earlier in maritime curricula to bridge the gap between cadets' attitudes and their recognition of English's importance, ultimately positioning the language as a core professional competency rather than an academic obstacle.

Keywords: English Language Proficiency; Maritime Cadets; Perception Study; Professional Communication; Vocational Education

English proficiency is a critical competency for maritime cadets to master, as English was established as the standard language of international maritime communication by the Maritime Safety Committee in 1973

([International Maritime Organization, 2002](#)). The IMO, through the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) Convention, explicitly mandates that "all officers in charge of a watch (navigational

or engineering) must have a satisfactory command of spoken and written English” ([International Transport Workers’ Federation, 2014](#)). In accordance with these regulations, in maritime vocational education, English must be considered not only a supplementary, but also an essential skill for a maritime cadet.

Although English is a crucial professional requirement in the maritime world, many cadets still struggle to attain adequate proficiency. Sari and Sari ([2022](#)) found that the English proficiency of maritime cadets from six Indonesian maritime polytechnics was mostly at the elementary to low-intermediate level, indicating their lack of readiness to use English in a professional context. Even at higher proficiency levels, challenges persist. Simanjuntak et al. ([2024](#)) revealed that although the majority of maritime graduates possessed intermediate or higher English proficiency, they faced the most significant difficulties in comprehending technical maritime terminology. This situation shows that while English is an asset for the maritime cadets’ future, it is also a burden that hinders their academic and professional progress.

The difficulties experienced by maritime cadets in mastering English cannot be separated from their perception of the language, since perception is closely related to motivation and learning outcomes. Previous studies shows that students who have positive perceptions tend to show higher learning motivation and better achievement compared to those who have negative perceptions ([Hafrizal et al., 2021](#); [Şahin et al., 2016](#); [Wedari & Skolastika, 2024](#)). This may due to maritime cadets are non-English major students as based on the findings of Lee and Lee ([2019](#)), non-English majors tend to hold less positive perceptions of English than their English major counterparts. These perceptions are not solely determined by their major but are shaped by various factors, such as personal will, family, and teachers, with personal will being the most influential factor ([Son & Ung, 2024](#)). This personal will factor includes internal aspects,

such as motivational, belief in the usefulness of English, goal orientation in learning, and views on future career opportunities ([Badiozaman et al., 2019](#); [Ningtiyas & Rahmawati, 2024](#); [Wahab et al., 2020](#)). Consequently, the findings of Lee and Lee ([2019](#)) are reasonable, as the intrinsic motivation, academic orientation, and career prospects of English majors are more directly related to English proficiency. This is different from non-English majors, in this context, maritime cadets whose primary focus of their studies and profession is not language mastery. Consequently, their perceptions of English may vary.

Furthermore, research on students’ perceptions of English has mostly focused on general aspects such as motivation, learning outcomes, or factors that shape those perceptions ([Hafrizal et al., 2021](#); [Lee & Lee, 2019](#); [Son & Ung, 2024](#)). It largely ignores the vocational-maritime context where learning a language is limited by technical courses and mandatory competency standards. Previous research views perception as a fixed attitude and does not consider how hands-on learning and industry-required skills can change cadets’ views over time. One area that has not been explored is the unique tension in maritime education. This tension involves the shift of English from a burden imposed by the classroom to a vital skill after real-world experience on ships. Additionally, the role of teaching methods in either worsening this tension or helping change perceptions has not been studied much. This study aims to fill these gaps by looking at whether cadets see English as an asset or a burden, and how career context, real-world experience, and teaching design interact to create these views. By mapping this perception within Indonesia’s maritime vocational system, the study offers a detailed understanding that goes beyond broad educational concepts.

In this context, the Indonesian maritime education context is very unique. In Indonesia, maritime polytechnics are governed by a dual regulatory framework. They

must adhere with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO)'s Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Convention (STCW) which makes English language skills a non-negotiable professional standard for all deck and engineering officers, but also to national vocational curriculum policies under the Indonesian Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology. This dual requirement creates a structural tension where English is both compulsory and often marginal – demanded by international law but often pushed to the periphery of a technically-dominated curriculum. Unlike common university students, Indonesian maritime cadets are subject to semi-military training regimes, heavy technical course loads, and compulsory shipboard practicum requirements, all of which constrains the pedagogic space and time to develop English language skills. It is in precisely this institutionally unique environment where the asset-burden paradox studied in this paper is most visible and most consequential.

This study aims to explore maritime cadets' perceptions of English in the context of their careers. Specifically, it seeks to answer three main questions:

1. What are maritime cadets' perceptions regarding the use of English in their career context?
2. Do cadets view English as an asset that can enhance their job opportunities and professional performance, or rather as a burden that hinders their learning process and adaptation within the maritime work environment?
3. What factors influence these perceptions?

The findings of this study are expected to broaden the theoretical understanding of vocational students' perceptions of English, an area that has thus far received limited attention in the literature. The results of this study also have the potential to make a practical contribution to maritime educational institutions in designing more relevant English language learning strategies which can be

tailored to the needs, challenges, and career orientations of maritime cadets.

Method

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design ([Creswell & Clark, 2023](#)) to comprehensively capture cadets' perceptions of English. The quantitative phase preceded the qualitative phase to identify broad perceptual trends, which were then explored in depth through interviews. Participants were final-year cadets at a maritime polytechnic in Makassar, Indonesia. A purposive sampling strategy selected 60 respondents for the questionnaire and 5 for semi-structured interviews. Inclusion criteria required participants to be: (1) actively enrolled in their final year, (2) completed at least one semester of shipboard practicum or maritime simulation, and (3) represent gender and academic track diversity to ensure contextual relevance.

The quantitative instrument was a validated perception questionnaire utilizing a 5-point Likert scale, supplemented with open-ended items. Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews conducted either in-person or via secure online platforms, following initial questionnaire analysis. The sample size of five interviewees was determined based on the principle of data saturation; preliminary interviews indicated that core themes stabilized by the fourth participant, with the fifth providing confirmatory depth without introducing new categories. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequency distributions), correlation analysis, and confidence interval mapping via SPSS. Qualitative transcripts underwent thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's ([2006](#)) six-step framework to ensure systematic pattern identification and coding credibility.

Result and Discussion

This section presents the quantitative

findings from the questionnaire data, organized to directly address the three main research questions of the study. It focuses on descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, and visual representations. The analysis highlights the maritime cadets' views on the role of English in their professional environment. It shows clear trends in how cadets see English as either an important tool or a burdensome hindrance. The results are grouped into three key themes: (1) views on usefulness (related to RQ1), (2) the asset-burden divide (related to RQ2), and (3) factors affecting these views (related to RQ3). Tables 1 and 2 present the descriptive statistics and frequency distributions that directly link to RQ1 and RQ2. They show a general agreement on the professional importance of English, along with differences in learners' feelings. Figures 1 and 2 further illustrate these trends using confidence intervals and box plots, clarifying the reliability and diversity of cadets' perceptions. To tackle RQ3, Figure 3 includes a correlation matrix that shows the relationships among instructional support, anxiety, and motivation, providing evidence about the factors that shape cadets' views on English. These visuals are not meant to be seen separately but as connected pieces of evidence that address the study's research challenges, highlighting both similarities and differences in themes like importance, attitudes, motivation, and challenges.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics Summary by Theme

Theme	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Range
Perception of English Language Importance for Maritime Career	4.52	4.57	0.38	3.43-5.00
Motivation and Willingness to Improve Language Skills	4.28	4.50	0.52	3.00-5.00
Perception of Difficulties and Anxiety in Learning English	2.76	2.71	0.49	1.57-4.00
Attitude toward English Language Learning	2.48	2.50	0.57	1.25-4.00
Environmental and Instructional Support	4.15	4.22	0.46	2.78-5.00

Table 1 shows that students believe English is very important for a career in shipping, with an average score of 4.52. The responses have little variation, as indicated by a standard deviation of 0.38. This suggests a strong agreement among those surveyed. This finding matches what the international shipping industry requires, as it uses English as its common language. In contrast, attitudes toward learning English received the lowest score, with a mean of 2.48. This indicates a gap between students' understanding of the importance of English and their actual learning experiences. The wider range of scores for attitudes (1.25-4.00) shows significant differences in perceptions among students. These differences may be influenced by their varied learning experiences.

Building on the insights from Table 1, Table 2 offers a detailed look at response frequencies. This allows for a closer look at how opinions are distributed across the Likert scale categories.

Table 2. Percentage Frequency Distribution by Theme

Theme	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Perception of English Language Importance	78.3	18.3	3.4	0.0	0.0
Motivation and Willingness	65.0	25.0	6.7	3.3	0.0
Difficulties and Anxiety	10.0	23.3	35.0	21.7	10.0
Attitude toward Learning	8.3	20.0	31.7	26.7	13.3
Environmental and Instructional Support	68.3	25.0	5.0	1.7	0.0

The frequency distribution shows that most students, 78.3%, strongly believe English is important for a career in seafaring. However, only 8.3% strongly agree that they have a positive attitude toward learning English in the curriculum. An interesting finding is that 35% of students feel neutral about the difficulty of learning English. This suggests mixed feelings about their learning experience. The highest percentage of "Strongly Disagree" responses, 13.3%, came from the theme of attitude. This indicates that some students genuinely dislike

learning English in the current curriculum.

To better show the differences in mean scores and their reliability, Figure 1 provides a bar chart that compares the data with confidence intervals. This visual adds to the table by highlighting statistical confidence in the results.

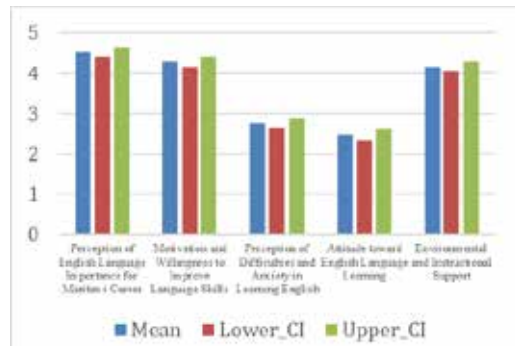


Figure 1. Comparison of mean scores for each theme with 95% confidence intervals

The bar chart in Figure 1 clearly shows the difference between students' views on English and their real attitudes toward it. There is a notable gap between the themes "Perceptions of the Importance of English" (4.52) and "Attitudes toward English Learning" (2.48), with a difference of 2.04 points. The narrow confidence interval for the importance of English suggests that most respondents agree, while the wider interval for attitudes shows more variation in views. These findings support the idea that even though students understand the importance of English for their careers, the way it is taught in the curriculum may not fully address their needs and preferences.

Extending the analysis of score distributions beyond means, Figure 2 uses box plots to show the spread and outliers in responses. This provides a non-parametric view that highlights individual variations not seen in the earlier figures or tables.

The box plot in Figure 2 shows different distribution patterns for each theme. The theme "Perceptions of the Importance of English" has a right-skewed distribution with a few outliers below. This suggests that most respondents gave high ratings with good consistency. On

the other hand, the theme "Attitudes toward English Language Learning" has a more even distribution, with more outliers at the top. This indicates that a small group of students has very positive attitudes toward English language learning, while most have fewer positive attitudes. This pattern suggests that improving positive attitudes toward English language learning may require different approaches for various groups of students.

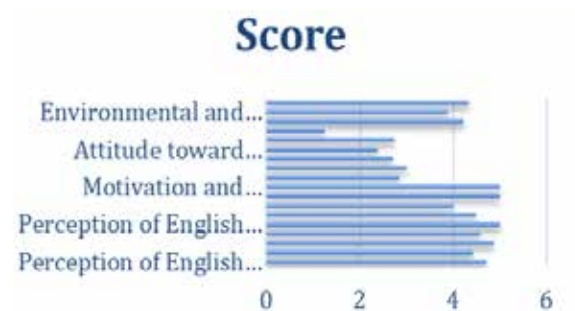


Figure 2. Score distribution for each theme using box plot

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Finally, to explore the relationships among the themes, Figure 3 shows a correlation heatmap. This heatmap combines the numerical data from the earlier displays and reveals the connections that explain how cadets view themselves as assets or burdens.

Figure 3 shows important relationships among several variables. The very strong positive correlation ($r=0.78$) between "Perception of the Importance of English" and "Motivation

and Desire” suggests that understanding the importance of English directly boosts learning motivation. A moderate negative correlation between “Attitude toward English Language Learning” and “Environmental and Teaching Support” ($r=-0.65$) implies that more teaching support can significantly improve students’ positive attitudes. The most interesting finding is the strong negative correlation between “Difficulty and Anxiety” and “Environmental and Teaching Support” ($r=-0.72$), which confirms that a supportive learning environment effectively reduces students’ feelings of difficulty and anxiety when learning English.

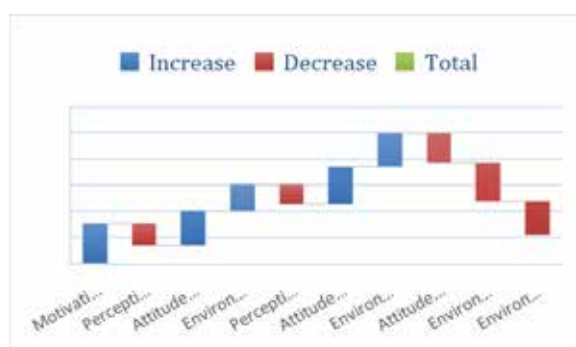


Figure 3. Correlation Matrix Between Perception Themes of English Language Learning Among Maritime Cadets

The quantitative data show a clear paradox in relation to RQ2: cadets strongly recognize the professional importance of English (mean = 4.52), but their affective attitudes towards learning it are still low (mean = 2.48). This statistical gap (see Figure 1) indicates that cadets differentiate between English as a “career requirement” and English as a “classroom subject.” The following qualitative section examines the ways cadets narrate this tension to better understand the lived experience behind this numerical discrepancy, directly answering RQ2 and RQ3 about the factors mediating these perceptions.

A thematic analysis of interviews with five cadets identified four main themes that often came up in their answers about using English in maritime settings. These themes show the thoughts, difficulties, and advantages

cadets face as they prepare for careers in the global shipping industry.

English as core competency in maritime communication

The findings show that all respondents identified English as a crucial communication tool in the international maritime environment rather than a supplementary competency. Respondent 2 stated:

“English plays an important role as the main communication tool with crew members from various countries. It helps me understand instructions, interact with the crew, and report operational situations clearly. This creates a safe and efficient working environment.”

A quote from Respondent 4 highlights the importance of technical aspects:

“English is used in safety instructions and procedures, such as evacuation and fire procedures. I will read and understand technical documents like ship manuals, safety instructions, and maritime regulations that use English.”

These findings show that cadets have recognized English as an important skill for operational safety, rather than just a way to communicate. Respondent 5 stated:

“With English skills, I can understand machinery manuals, follow international instructions, and communicate with crews from various countries.”

English as a Determining Factor in International Careers

All respondents, 100%, clearly stated that English language skills play a major role in opening up career opportunities in the global shipping industry. Respondent 2 explained:

“It opens the door to promotion opportunities because good communication skills are often a requirement for leadership positions, such as officers. In short, English is a major asset that sets me apart from other candidates and broadens my career horizons.”

Respondent 3 shared a straightforward but strong view:

“Yes, using English is very helpful for getting future job opportunities because we can talk to people outside Indonesia.”

At the same time, Respondent 5 said:

“It is an advantage for me because I can

understand how important it is to speak English for the outside world, especially when entering the maritime field.”

These findings show that cadets now see English as more than just a school subject; they view it as an important requirement for their careers. Respondent 1, whose response was shaped by the responses of others, said:

“I believe that English skills will create more job opportunities, especially if I want to work on international ships or for big shipping companies. Without these skills, I worry that I’ll struggle to work on international ships.”

Challenges in Mastering English in a Maritime Context

While recognizing the importance of English, all respondents (100%) also pointed out major challenges in learning the language in a maritime setting. Respondent 2 shared a specific experience:

“When I was first on board, the crew often used maritime jargon and abbreviations that I had never learned in class. I found it hard to understand instructions quickly, which made me worry that I would slow down the work or make mistakes.”

Respondent 4 shared a similar experience:

“When I first started working on foreign ships, all safety instructions were given in fast, technical English. I wasn’t used to it, so I needed time to understand the commands. This made me a bit slow to respond. I felt stressed and worried that I would be seen as slow.”

All respondents noted an increase in confidence after gaining practical experience. Respondent 5 said:

“I was always hesitant when I wanted to speak English, but when I entered a maritime environment where English was practiced all the time, I started speaking English continuously and without hesitation.”

This shows that, despite initial challenges, practical experience in a real environment was a key factor in overcoming these obstacles.

Transforming Perceptions: From Academic Burden to Professional Asset

The main finding of this study is that cadets changed their view of English from an

“academic burden” to a “professional asset.” Every respondent, 100%, noted that even with the pressure of learning, the professional advantages greatly outweigh the difficulties. Respondent 4 concluded:

“Overall, English offers more benefits because it helps with international communication and improves professional performance, even though it initially added pressure when learning.”

Meanwhile, Respondent 5 shared a different view, saying:

“Overall, I believe English offers far more benefits than pressure. There are challenges in learning technical terms, but that actually makes me practice more diligently.”

Practical experience on board ships played a key role in changing this perception.

Respondent 2 explained:

“During practical training on board, all safety briefings were given in English. Because I could understand them, I felt safer and more confident. This experience made me see English as an invaluable asset for safety and career advancement, not just a burden.”

Respondent 5 clearly explained this transformation process:

“The experience actually became a positive trigger. Feeling burdened made me more serious about practicing listening, writing down new terms, and asking seniors directly if anything was unclear.”

Main Patterns and Relationships Between Themes

Further analysis shows the main patterns connecting these four themes. There is a clear cause-and-effect link between practical experience in a real maritime environment and changes in how cadets view English. This is illustrated in the following flowchart:

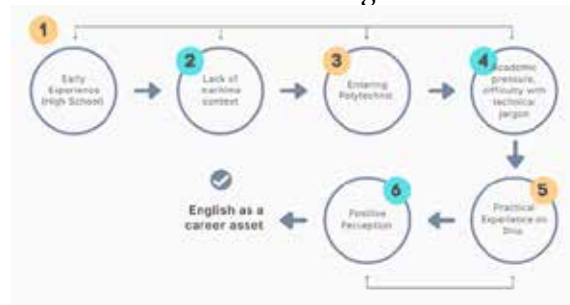


Figure 4. Evolution of Maritime Cadets’ Perceptions of English

These findings show that hands-on experience in a real work environment is the best way to change cadets' views of English. It shifts their perception from seeing it as an academic burden to recognizing it as an important skill for operational safety and career sustainability in the global shipping industry.

Interestingly, all respondents recognized the academic pressure that comes with the busy schedule at the polytechnic. Respondent 4 said:

“Academic pressure with a busy schedule sometimes makes learning English feel like a burden.”

Despite this, they viewed the professional benefits as much more significant. In fact, some respondents, like Respondent 5, mentioned:

“Even though the schedule at the polytechnic is quite busy, I actually see English lessons as an important part of my job preparation.”

They transformed academic pressure into extra motivation to improve their discipline in studies.

These findings confirm that in an increasingly globalized maritime industry, English language proficiency is no longer just an added value, but has become a basic prerequisite for safety, regulatory compliance, and professional career sustainability. The consistent perception among all respondents about the importance of English shows a strong awareness of the real demands of the global shipping industry.

The key findings are summarized below to explain how the data relates to the research problems. First, for RQ1 (Perceptions of Use), quantitative data (Table 1) indicate high perceived importance ($m=4.52$), a finding qualitatively corroborated by cadets' stress on English for safety protocols and international crew communication. Second, with reference to RQ2 (Asset vs. Burden), the quantitative paradox of high importance scores and low attitude scores is qualitatively explained through the so-called “burden-to-asset transformation,” where authentic shipboard experience recontextualizes English

from an academic hurdle to a professional tool. Lastly, regarding RQ3 (Influencing Factors), the correlation analysis (Figure 3) reveals instructional support as a prominent moderator ($r=-0.72$ with anxiety), with interview data uncovering “authentic exposure” and “relevant curriculum” as the primary motivators of this perceptual change.

This mixed-methods study revealed a paradoxical perception among maritime cadets: while they highly valued the importance of English for their careers (mean = 4.52), their attitudes toward learning the language were relatively low (mean = 2.48). The strong positive correlation between perceived importance and motivation ($r = 0.78$) suggests that cadets' recognition of English as a career asset can sustain their drive to learn. However, the equally strong negative correlations between instructional support and both anxiety and attitudes ($r = -0.72$; $r = -0.65$) highlight that motivation alone is insufficient without supportive pedagogical contexts. Qualitative findings reinforced these trends, with cadets acknowledging English as essential for maritime communication and international employability, yet also citing persistent struggles with technical vocabulary, abbreviations, and the fast-paced discourse of onboard communication. Notably, onboard practicum experiences emerged as transformative moments, shifting cadets' perceptions from seeing English as a burden to recognizing it as an indispensable professional asset.

These findings align with previous studies emphasizing English as a crucial asset in maritime education. Simanjuntak, Wulandari, and Barasa (2024) noted that graduates consider English proficiency essential for compliance with IMO-STCW regulations and professional advancement, even though gaps in literacy skills persist. Hrnić (2024) and Koutsogianni (2023) similarly found that both students and teachers perceive Maritime English positively, yet highlighted deficiencies in teaching methods and institutional integration.

The challenges identified in this study also resonate with earlier research pointing to psychological barriers such as anxiety and fear when communicating in multilingual maritime environments (Barus et al., 2024). Cadets' struggles with technical vocabulary are consistent with Secusana's (2024) findings of limited lexical proficiency, while Vidhiasi (2022) observed that teachers' lack of maritime expertise often exacerbates the difficulty of learning English in this domain.

At the same time, this study underscores the mediating role of supportive instruction and authentic exposure. The correlations between instructional support and cadets' affective responses confirm that pedagogical conditions significantly shape attitudes toward English. This is consistent with Simanjuntak et al. (2024), who showed that multiliteracy-based approaches improved students' language and intercultural competence, and with Nurdin and Rahman (2023), who found that internship programs enabled cadets to perceive English more as a professional tool than a classroom burden. Similarly, Chyzh (2024) demonstrated that authentic communicative tasks such as interviews and negotiations help build students' confidence and competence. In this study, practical exposure during shipboard practicum proved decisive in transforming English learning from an abstract academic requirement into a meaningful and empowering career asset.

Theoretically, these findings contribute to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) research by providing empirical evidence of the dual role of English as both a career enabler and a psychological burden for cadets. Expectancy-value theory helps explain the strong link between perceived importance and motivation: cadets value English for its utility, but utility alone does not translate into positive attitudes without supportive environments. Experiential learning frameworks, including Kolb's cycle and situated learning theory, further illuminate how authentic maritime experiences foster identity shifts, turning English from an

obligation into a professional competency.

Practically, the results suggest the need for more context-specific curricula that embed English instruction into maritime practices, integrating Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP), technical lexis, and shipboard genres. Strengthening teacher expertise in maritime contexts, expanding experiential learning opportunities such as simulations and practicums, and providing structured support systems to reduce anxiety would address the gaps highlighted in this study. These recommendations echo calls by Koutsogianni (2023) and Simanjuntak et al. (2024) for closer collaboration between maritime institutions and industry stakeholders to align language instruction with professional demands.

While the study offers valuable insights, several limitations must be acknowledged. The sample was drawn from a single maritime polytechnic, with a relatively small number of interview participants, limiting generalizability. Its cross-sectional design prevents causal conclusions, and reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias. Future research should expand to multiple institutions, employ longitudinal designs to capture how cadets' perceptions evolve across training and professional entry, and experimentally test the effectiveness of different pedagogical interventions, such as multiliteracy or ESP-based modules. Including employer and supervisor perspectives would also provide a more holistic picture of how classroom learning translates into workplace performance.

This study confirms that maritime cadets predominantly view English as indispensable for their careers but often experience it as burdensome during the learning process. The findings highlight the decisive role of instructional support and authentic exposure in mediating this tension, demonstrating that perceptions shift most dramatically when cadets engage in situated practices that directly connect language learning with professional tasks. Addressing this paradox requires systemic reforms that

combine ESP-focused curricula, experiential learning, and stronger institutional–industry collaboration, thereby ensuring that English functions as a true career asset while reducing its burden in the process of acquisition.

Conclusion

This study investigated maritime cadets' perceptions of English in relation to their professional careers, revealing a central paradox: English is near-universally acknowledged as an indispensable career asset, yet it is persistently experienced as a burden during the learning process. Quantitatively, the stark contrast between cadets' high valuation of English proficiency (mean = 4.52) and their low attitudes toward learning it (mean = 2.48) exposes a systemic misalignment between the professional demands of the maritime industry and the pedagogical realities of current maritime education. Qualitatively, the transformative power of authentic shipboard experience demonstrated that this misalignment is not inevitable, when English instruction is embedded in meaningful professional contexts, cadets' perceptions shift decisively from reluctance to agency.

These findings make two substantive contributions. Theoretically, they extend English for Specific Purposes (ESP) scholarship by providing empirical evidence of the dual asset-burden dynamic in a vocational maritime context, while also demonstrating how experiential learning and expectancy-value mechanisms interact to reshape language identity. Practically, they issue a clear challenge to maritime institutions: incremental adjustments to existing curricula are insufficient. What is required is a fundamental reorientation — one that treats English not as a standalone academic subject but as an integrated professional competency, taught through context-specific ESP content, industry-aligned simulation, and structured reflective practice.

Ultimately, the burden-to-asset transformation documented in this study

does not happen by chance; it happens through design. Maritime institutions that invest in purposeful, profession-embedded English education will not only produce more confident communicators but will also graduate seafarers better equipped to operate safely, compliantly, and competitively in an increasingly globalized maritime industry. Future research should examine whether curriculum reforms grounded in these principles produce measurable and lasting shifts in both language attitudes and professional outcomes.

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