

An enquiry of English learning materials appropriacy for nautical students

Kesesuaian materi pembelajaran bahasa Inggris untuk mahasiswa pelayaran

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ABSTRACT

Nautical students are required to have communicative competence in English that will be beneficial for their future careers. However, the teaching and learning implemented remain insufficient in terms of sources, learning topics, and learning materials. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate teacher's and students' preferences in teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and elaborate the learning needs. This study utilizes a mix-methods approach which involves fifty-three nautical students and an ESP teacher at a maritime polytechnic located in East Java. The needs analysis was conducted by distributing online questionnaires containing three sections, such as (1) students' current level of English competency, (2) skills priorities, and (3) learning topics needs. The semi-structured interview was conducted virtually with the teacher. The results of the questionnaire and interview were synthesized and summarized. The findings demonstrate that students' English proficiency is at beginner to low intermediate level. Furthermore, speaking is stated as the most imperative skill among the students. However, in order to maximize speaking ability, the development of listening topics and sources is required. In addition, some developments for other skills are also required due to the inadequacy and unavailability of learning topics in the syllabus. Future research is worth conducting aiming at developing the ESP syllabus for Nautical students.

KATA KUNCI

desain ESP;
studi
pelayaran;
kebutuhan
belajar

ABSTRAK

Siswa pelayaran dituntut untuk memiliki kompetensi komunikatif dalam bahasa Inggris yang akan bermanfaat untuk karir mereka di masa depan. Namun, pembelajaran yang dilaksanakan masih belum memadai dari segi sumber dan bahan ajar. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki preferensi guru dan siswa dalam mengajar *English for Specific Purposes* (ESP) dan mengelaborasi kebutuhan pembelajaran. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran yang melibatkan lima puluh tiga mahasiswa pelayaran dan seorang guru ESP di sebuah politeknik pelayaran yang terletak di Jawa Timur. Analisis kebutuhan dilakukan dengan membagikan kuesioner online yang berisi tiga bagian, yaitu (1) tingkat kompetensi bahasa Inggris siswa saat ini, (2) prioritas keterampilan, dan (3) kebutuhan materi pembelajaran. Wawancara semi-terstruktur dilakukan secara daring dengan guru. Hasil kuesioner dan wawancara disintesis dan dirangkum. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kecakapan bahasa Inggris siswa berada pada tingkat pemula hingga menengah rendah. Selanjutnya, berbicara dinyatakan sebagai keterampilan yang paling penting di kalangan siswa. Namun, untuk memaksimalkan kemampuan berbicara, diperlukan pengembangan bahan dan sumber menyimak. Selain itu, beberapa pengembangan keterampilan lain juga diperlukan karena ketidakcukupan dan tidak tersedianya topik dan materi dalam silabus. Penelitian di masa depan perlu dilakukan dengan tujuan mengembangkan silabus ESP untuk siswa pelayaran.

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Introduction

Communicative competence is one of the main targets of the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course. The aim of the ESP course is to acquire professional vocabulary and to develop communicative competence with a focus on all four skills – reading, listening, speaking, and writing (Kováčková, 2020). ESP courses are effective because students learn English based on their needs and interests. Therefore, it is important to prepare the students to be able to communicate effectively in the task prescribed by their study or work situation, for instance in a nautical major.

A nautical major usually uses maritime English as the operational language. People working in this sector (in this case seafarers) need English for oral and written communication. In addition, as cadets deal with an international world and regulations, the use of English becomes even more important. While shipping, they use English to send and receive messages. English is used for communication between ships and land, between crew members, between the crew and the captain, and between the crew and passengers, where the cost of a communication breakdown can damage property, the environment, or even fatalities (Nicolas & Fauziningrum, 2018). Additionally, knowledge of the English language is required as students will need to read and understand navigation-related books, magazines, and publications that are commonly published in English (Oktarin & Maisarah, 2022). Thus, nautical students are required to have communicative competence in English that will be beneficial for their future careers.

Another urgency of English communicative competence is also stated by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). According to IMO, to be a competent seafarer it is necessary for maritime student graduates to have a good knowledge of maritime affairs and a standard of English proficiency. In addition, STCW 2010 required a working knowledge of written and spoken English sufficient to comprehend nautical charts, nautical publications, weather information, ship safety, and operational messages, and to communicate with other ships. The requirement emphasizes the importance of English language proficiency in relation to safety at Sea (Oktarin & Maisarah, 2022).

In addition, there is a link between maritime safety and proficiency in English. The lack of English communicative competence can cause accidents at sea. Accidents can result from misunderstandings and a lack of cooperation in analyzing failures and reporting disaster impacts. Communication difficulties between crew members from ship to ship and ship to shore are often due to differences in the English level or native language of the speaker and listener (Nicolas & Fauziningrum, 2018a). In some cases, transportation safety may be at risk. According to Raluca and Alina (2016, p. 454), human factors are the main cause of maritime accidents, with language barriers being the most common cause of accidents, among other factors. Therefore, in preparing for students' future, they need to learn communication skills and cross-cultural understanding because it can affect teamwork at sea. Additionally, knowledge of the English language is required as students will need to read and understand navigation-related books, magazines, and publications that are commonly published in English. Those competence and knowledge can be prepared through the teaching and learning process.

There have been several attempts conducted to design suitable English learning topics for nautical students. However, the main problem found is quite similar between

one research to another. As stated by (Ahmed et al., 2020) the existence of specific learning materials for nautical students is rare and adjustments required to make it suitable with the learning needs. Moreover, (Aminah & Refnaldi, 2020) goes on line stating that sustainable ESP course design must be done to face challenges in the work market. In fact, as the nature of ESP, the development of learning topics must be different from one major to another. Even one school may need different developments considering their graduate profiles and learning goals. Previous study found that gamification is required in a form of mobile application to enhance students' vocabulary based on their needs' analysis (Prastiwi & Saktiono, 2023). However, another study states that grammar and genres are imperative for the design of ESP materials (Aeni et al., 2018). In this case, it can be concluded that ESP depends the most on the condition of students in the field. Therefore, needs' analysis is the key to developing suitable and effective ESP learning topics and materials.

In the meantime, the teaching and learning content being implemented is still inadequate in terms of information sources, learning topics and teaching materials. For example, the available authentic material is limited, especially for listening skill. It is difficult to find an audio or video that is very authentic such as a sailing situation which must be very crowded, windy, etc. It can give difficulties for students to listen and comprehend English words in that situation. Another example is inappropriate learning material such as asking and giving opinions. That topic is too general for students majoring in Nautica. Therefore, the learning topics and authentic learning material to practice their listening skill is really needed. In addition, Aeni et al. (2018) mentioned that limited and irrelevant GME (General Maritime English) material in Indonesia is an obstacle in the teaching and learning process to meet the goals of the IMO). Because of that, when developing a standard curriculum for cadets, the process of learning and teaching both General and Marine English should be considered. Moreover, to achieve those purposes, need analysis has to be carried out to analyze learner needs for English for oral and written communication of maritime students.

Several studies have been conducted in analyzing nautical students' needs to find out what materials should be included and emphasized. de Castro (2021) carried out the research on third-year marine engineering students. He found that several micro functions and linguistic forms in the communicative activity that must be taught in the class such as (1) instructing/commanding, (2) acknowledging, (3) reporting, (4) informing, (5) asking, (6) answering, (7) repeating, (8) requesting, and (9) permitting. Moreover, Nicolas and Fauziningrum (2018) and Aeni et al. (2018) focus on the skills that need to be mastered by nautical students. Based on the student perspectives, the research revealed that speaking, listening, and writing skills as the main language skills required for cadets (Nicolas & Fauziningrum, 2018b). However, Aeni et al., (2018) stated that writing and speaking are the most prioritized productive skills to be learned by students. They must be able to communicate well with other crew members as they complete training on board. For postgraduate students of naval engineers with the purpose to upgrade their professional diploma, they need to be able to read and understand the engine manuals and produce the required documentation. They also want significant changes, including more group activities and tasks to practice terminology.

However, the mentioned previous research was done through specific needs' analysis conducted to specific school and learning objectives. Each school has different needs and expectations for their graduates. Therefore, further inquiry for an ESP design is compulsory. Moreover, as stated earlier, the world is evolving and the work market can change. Previous study underscores the significance of ESP, particularly English, in the work market, and the need for tailored language education and training to meet the demands of the globalized economy (Soon et al., 2021). Moreover, ESP learning topics for maritime studies is very limited and this causes problems for the teachers who teach ESP. In this case, development of ESP topics should be sustainable through research. As the response for the current situation, the present study aims to investigate teachers' and students' preferences in teaching and learning of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and elaborate the learning needs of students in nautical study programs. Therefore, the research questions that guide this study are: 1) What language skills do the Nautical students wish to improve? and 2) What learning topics do the students need to support their language competence? The outcome of this study is expected to make substantial contributions to the field of Maritime Education and Training. The outcome of this study is expected to make contributions to the field of Maritime Education and Training. This study can be a significant resource for enhancing the syllabus, learning topics and teaching materials of the ESP course for Nautical students, particularly in the Indonesian environment where English is regarded as a non-native language.

Method

This research implemented a mix-method research approach, i.e. using quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and analyses, as we want to have the need analysis in the early years of the college, this research involved first-year nautical students from three offerings. Our main data is 53 responses from nautical students from different offerings and perspectives from an English lecturer at a maritime polytechnic located in East Java. To collect data about the nautical students' needs, we conducted a survey to the students. According to Basturkmen (2010) targets of need analysis are objective needs, wants, needs, learning needs, and what learners want from the course. Therefore, we design the survey based on those frameworks on target of needs analysis. The list of questions in the survey was adapted from Dapodi (2012). It was customized based on the students' major, nautical engineering, and the students' learning topics. The questions used Indonesian to avoid misunderstanding among the students. After that process, the questionnaire was validated by an ESP lecturer. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. The first section is personal information of the participants including their English proficiency level (beginner, intermediate, and advanced) in four language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). The second section is feedback on the given learning topics. The participants give their perception of the given topics. It is divided into three categories (very useful, useful, and not useful). The next section is language prioritization. It collected the purpose and priority skills in having ESP courses such as being fluent in speaking, comprehending contextual spoken English, improving vocabulary, etc. This is classified into very important, important, and not important. The last section asks the students about some learning topics and activities that can support them in improving their English proficiency. Like the previ-

ous section, it shared three points about whether the learning topics and learning activities were important or not for the students. The survey was distributed through Google Forms.

We also conducted a semi-structured interview with the English teacher to know her perspective on the students' needs and the improvement of the syllabus. The interview was carried out based on the interview guide. It was used to help us conduct effective and efficient interview sessions. In addition, we created an interview guide that contains a list of questions. There were twelve questions that were asked to the lecturer. The questions are related to the questionnaire, it is about the students' English proficiency level, important learning topics that might be needed by students, and the syllabus used by the lecturer. Before conducting the interview session, it was also validated by an ESP lecturer. The interview was carried out virtually through Zoom.

In answering the research question, the result of the questionnaire was analyzed by using simple statistics. We analyzed using the frequency and percentage of each category. The highest frequency and percentage from the options of the questionnaire determine the students' necessities, lacks, and wants in English for nautical students. The data were calculated using the following formula:

$$P (\%): f / N (100)$$

Where:

P: percentage

N: total respondents

f: frequency

The result of the interview was transcribed based on the interview recording. When writing the transcript of the interview, we repeated the recording multiple times and wrote the interview by reading keynotes made by the researcher during the interview. After transcribing information from the recorded conversations, we classify the information into applicable information categories. It was synthesized and classified the responses into three themes: (1) students' current level of English competence, (2) skills priorities, and (3) learning topics needs. Then, calculate the results for all data collected from respondents to each question submitted, and give a description of the results according to the research objectives described based on both students' and teacher's responses. Finally, the result of the interview was compared and combined with the result of the questionnaire.

Results

The results of the questionnaire and interview were divided into three points. The points are students' current level of English competency, skills priorities, and learning topics needs.

Students' current level of English competency

The results from the questionnaires described the students' perceptions of their current levels of English proficiency. Most students thought that they were at the intermediate level. It could be seen from the percentage numbers which showed that most of them perceived that they were at the intermediate levels in every skill including listening (49.1%), reading (67.9%), speaking (54.7%), and writing (58.5%). However, the students thought that their listening skills were at the beginner level (58.8%). Some

students stated that they were at the advanced level of English proficiency, especially in listening (1.9%), reading (7.5%), and writing (5.7%). None of the students felt that they were at an advanced level of speaking skills. The result of the questionnaire was confirmed by the lecturer. In the interview session, the lecturer stated that students' English proficiency was at the intermediate levels, except for listening skills. Their listening proficiencies were at the beginner level. The percentage of each level for every skill can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Students' level of English competency

No	Skills	Beginner	Intermediate	Advance
1.	Listening	58.8%	49.1%	1.9%
2.	Reading	28.3%	67.9%	7.5%
3.	Speaking	47.2%	54.7%	0%
4.	Writing	41.5%	58.5%	5.7%

Skill priorities

In collecting the data about what skills students wanted to prioritize for their future careers, we asked them what they wanted to learn more about in their ESP course. These questionnaires could help lecturers identify student's needs and focus more on skills they need to improve. There were eight points about English skills that they needed to learn and improve in the ESP course including speaking English fluently, comprehending spoken English contextually, improving general English vocabulary, improving English maritime vocabulary, enhancing listening skills, improving English pronunciation, developing reading ability, and improving writing skills. Based on the questionnaires, most students stated that all those points were very important to them as it was described in Table 2.

Table 2. Students' wants of ESP course

No	Purposes	Very important	Important	Not important
1.	Speak English fluently	67.9%	41.5%	0%
2.	Comprehend spoken English contextually	62.3%	37.7%	0%
3.	Improve general English vocabulary	73.6%	28.3%	0%
4.	Improve English maritime vocabulary	71.7%	30.2%	0%
5.	Enhance listening skill	67.9%	32.1%	0%
6.	Improve English pronunciation	71.7%	28.3%	0%
7.	Develop reading ability	62.3%	37.7%	0%
8.	Improve writing skill	67.9%	32.1%	0%

Based on the table above, it was shown that most students stated that improving their general English vocabulary was very important (73.6%). Additionally, they thought that it was very important to improve their English maritime vocabulary (71.7%), improve their English pronunciation (71.7%), enhance their listening skill (67.9%), improve their writing skill (67.9%), speak English fluently (67.9%), comprehend spoken English contextually (62.3%), and develop their reading ability (62.3%). In addition, we integrated the results of the questionnaires with the lecturer's interview. The results showed differently. Lecturers mentioned that,

"Listening skill is the most imperative skill that needs to be taught to the students and learned by them. Then speaking skills because they will speak more in their real work-life. The third is reading as they need to read some information in English and the last is writing because they need to write in some context"

The lecturer believed that all skills were important for them, however, they needed to provide students with more listening input, speaking practice, reading practice, and writing practice to prepare them for their future jobs. However, the students had other perceptions. They thought that all skills were important to learn, yet, they expected

that the lecturers could provide them with more general English and English maritime vocabulary as it was very important for them. Then they needed to learn and improve their listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills.

Learning topics

The third questionnaire item focused on asking students about the learning topics they needed to learn. We enquired about the students' feedback on the given topic in the first semester to know whether the topics were still relevant to their needs and useful for them or not. The results were described in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Feedback on given topics

No	Topics	Very useful	Useful	Not useful
1.	The Seafarers: Giving Self-introduction and Personal Information.	60.4%	41.5%	0%
2.	The Seafarers: Describing Country and Nationalities	54.7%	49.1%	0%
3.	The Seafarers: Delivering Information about Your Country	45.3%	49.1%	9.4%
4.	The Job: Describing Job Position on Board	56.6%	45.3%	3.8%
5.	The Job: Cardinal and Ordinal Numbers (ex: the 4th deck) Measurements (ex: a kg of sugar, a sack of wheat), and Money.	43.4%	60.4%	0%
6.	The Job: Describing Routines Activities on Board Chronologically.	49.1%	54.7%	0%
7.	The Vessel: Identifying types of vessels and cargo	62.3%	41.5%	0%
8.	The Vessel: Telling the Location of Places on Board	58.5%	45.3%	0%
9.	The Vessel: Identifying Safety Equipment on Board and Their Function	58.5%	43.4%	1.9%
10.	The Vessel: Comprehending News about Vessel	45.3%	60.4%	0%
11.	Free Time: Asking and Giving Information about Interest	49.1%	54.7%	1.9%
12.	Free Time: Telling about on-Going Activities	47.2%	56.6%	3.8%

There were twelve topics evaluated. Six topics achieved positive feedback from the students. All students (100%) agreed that these six topics were very useful for them. These topics were: The Vessel: Identifying types of vessels and cargo (62.3%), The Seafarers: Giving Self-introduction and Personal Information (60.4%), The Vessel: Telling the Location of Places on Board (58.5%), The Vessel: Identifying Safety Equipment on Board and Their Function (58.5%), The Job: Describing Job Position on Board (56.6%), and The Seafarers: Describing Country and Nationalities (54.7%). However, some students argued that some topics were not useful for them such as The Seafarers: Delivering Information about Your Country (9.4%), The Job: Describing Job Position on Board (3.8%), Free Time: Telling about Going Activities (3.8%), The Vessel: Identifying Safety Equipment on Board and Their Function (1.9%), and Free Time: Asking and Giving Information about Interest (1.9%). The six topics that got positive feedback from students focused on maritime English which they thought would be useful for their future careers.

The topics that achieved positive feedback from the students could be implemented in the next ESP course. Moreover, we also analyzed students' targeted ability for each skill as it can be a guide to creating or developing an ESP syllabus for the nautical major. There were various students' target abilities in listening, including listening to lectures, listening to electronic devices (TV, Radio, and YouTube), listening to instructions, and listening to presentations. Almost all of the students (99%) agreed that those abilities were important and were their priority. Moreover, for speaking skills, their target was to speak to foreign visitors, speak to foreign colleagues, speak on the phone, take part in meetings, give presentations, give instructions, and have small talks. They also agreed on some reading target abilities such as reading manuals, reading instructions, reading product specifications, reading legal documents, and reading contracts.

Lastly, at the end of the ESP course, they expected that they would be able to write application letters and emails, memos, notes, and reports.

The data from the questionnaire were in line with the lecturer's statements that the topic in the previous semester needed to be evaluated before it was implemented in the classroom. Besides, those topics could help students achieve their target ability for every skill. The students' target ability was also the expected learning outcome from the university. However, the topics mentioned still need to be added to some significant topics for nautical students to achieve highly communicative competence. According to the lecturer, job interviews and some authentic material needed to be added to the syllabus.

Discussion

The finding of this research relies on some points which are students' level of English competency, skills needed, and learning topics needed. Based on the finding most of the students' English competency are still at a low-intermediate level. It is still not fulfilling the expected competence that seafarers should have. Havifah & Khosiyono (2021) mentioned that the expected level of proficiency in Maritime English (ME) according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) varies for different ranks of seafarers serving as deck officers. The Master should possess a C1 level or advanced proficiency, the Chief Officer should have a B2 level or upper intermediate proficiency, the Second and Third Officers should have a B1 level or intermediate proficiency, and Deck Cadets should have a B1 level or intermediate proficiency. In enhancing the students' English competence, therefore, it is necessary to design various learning materials for each skill to help the students enhance their communicative competencies.

As the level should be achieved by the seafarers from intermediate to advanced, it means that all the language skills should be on that level. However, based on the finding, the students' language competence of English skills are not balanced. Students' speaking ability is considerably good, since they realize the importance of the communicative ability to support their work. On the other hand, students' listening skills are quite poor. In fact, the speaking ability will not be achieved maximally without good listening ability. Students agree that speaking and listening are their main concerns in learning English. It is in line with Nicolas & Fauziningrum's (2018) research finding that listening and speaking are mostly needed skills by cadets. Moreover, speaking and listening skills are used the most. Listening and speaking skills were needed when the deck officers communicated (1) with other ships or docks, particularly, when the ship was sailing near the country's borders, and (2) with foreign passengers (Havifah & Khosiyono, 2021). In addition, the two literacy skills (Reading and Writing) are also considered important skills to be taught. It is because this skill is also important for the cadets to observe in document reading and report writing.

To support the improvement of the students' language competence, more developments for appropriate learning topics are needed. Six topics achieved positive feedback from the students. These topics were: The Vessel: Identifying types of vessels and cargo, The Seafarers: Giving Self-introduction and Personal Information, The Vessel: Telling the Location of Places on Board, The Vessel: Identifying Safety Equipment on Board

and Their Function, The Job: Describing Job Position on Board, and The Seafarers: Describing Country and Nationalities. The six topics that got positive feedback from students focused on maritime English which they thought would be useful for their future careers. It is in line with Sari & Sari's (2020) finding that to conduct safe and effective pilotage services, the seafarers need the following skill: giving advice and giving order, asking and giving information (exchanging information), and using the Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP).

For more specific topics, listening topics require more development since existing listening sources cannot achieve listening competency goals. It will be better if the students are familiar with authentic listening material. ESP teachers can use authentic videos that can be taken from some online platforms. Simbolon & Febrianti (2020) demonstrated a special feature of the semantic potential of videos used as teaching and learning materials for maritime English courses. The results also reveal the good features and shortcomings identified in the video. In addition, the use of role plays and simulations can also provide learners with meaningful experiences and thus, can make the teaching and learning activities more effective (Sari & Sari, 2020).

Moreover, speaking materials also need to be sufficiently provided and suitable for the students' needs, for example, a job interview. Job is not listed in the syllabus but it is essential to be taught. The job interview is one of the important topics that must be included in the ESP course. The purpose of having a job interview is to prepare the students with possible questions, especially when they apply for a job. Therefore, they can answer all the questions from the job recruiter fluently and professionally. Besides, all activities related to speaking are important. de Castro (2021) mentioned that several onboard communication tasks between deck and engine departments and between engineer officers and crews can be speaking practice activities to help update the learner course. Therefore, practices such as speaking to foreign colleagues, taking part in meetings, giving presentations, and giving instructions are needed by the students.

There are some reading topics or materials that are essential for students such as reading a report, memo, instruction, etc. Those kinds of texts are very close to cadets' work life. According to Nicolas and Fauziningrum (2018), reading operational instructions on the ship/vessel is the activity that students often do in the situation using English. By having familiarity with that kind of text students can improve their ability in comprehending Maritime English terminology. In addition, writing topics are required among cadets, especially to write memos, log books, application letters, and emails to support their work.

Conclusions

Needs analysis is crucial to the teaching and learning process, particularly when teaching English for Specific Purposes. In order to construct the instructional materials that are made available to cadets, instructors must first do a needs analysis to learn more about the needs of the cadets. In conclusion, the needs analysis identified a few crucial factors that proved to be extremely valuable in the course design. Based on the needs analysis, listening skills are considered as the weakness of the students. In addition, speaking remains a priority since students need to communicate a lot on board.

However, this skill must be integrated with listening. To support the students in improving their communicative competence, the syllabus requires several developments such as inserting more authentic listening materials due to the scarcity of learning sources. Several additions should also be made to speaking activities by including job interviews as one of the topics. The findings are unequivocal signals for language educators that they need to adopt new approaches to teaching English for specific purposes that are suitable for the cadets.

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