

## THE RELEVANCE OF NAUTICAL STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS TOWARDS MARITIME ENGLISH II COURSE TO THE SOCIAL SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

*Before carrying out the Maritime English II course, it is essential to investigate students' expectations of the course materials. According to the social semiotic perspective, the English materials that the students should learn must be relevant to their needs based on their future workplace. This research is qualitative. The data were gained by administering open-ended questionnaires to 67 semesters of two nautical department students in one of the maritime polytechnics in Semarang, Indonesia. The result shows that 83.58% of the students have relevant expectations towards the Maritime English II course, seen from the social semiotic perspective. Most of them have expectations to be able to learn English materials related to their future job as seafarers. Most students said they expect to learn materials about either 'ship or vessel,' 'maritime English,' or 'seafarer' in their answers. Hopefully, this research can bring insight into the field of Maritime English II course and its curriculum.*

**Keywords:** English, Maritime English Course, and Social Semiotic Perspective.

### INTRODUCTION

Communicating well in English is one of the competencies people should master in this era, especially in the maritime domain. Communication is also intended as the primary skill which requires all prospective seafarers to be able to use English as a means of communication in their future workplace. In maritime polytechnics or academies, there is usually an English course like Maritime English. Maritime English course is one of the essential subjects which must be given in maritime vocational institutions as amended on IMO Model course 3.17 curriculum. Moreover, Maritime English is also the primary tool for communication at sea, onshore, or in the ports (Haryani et al., 2022). However, mistakes in communication can have fatal consequences. For example, if the officers or subordinates misinterpret the command and instruction from the Master, it can endanger the safety of the entire crew and all cargo or passengers (Febrianto et al., 2019). To avoid these potential problems, the

knowledge of skill in the form of English is available in Maritime English courses one, two, three, and four. Those are also based on each institution's policy to give the name in their course. In the nautical department, especially in semester two, Maritime English II is a compulsory subject in Politeknik Bumi Akpelni.

Before starting the Maritime English II course, the lecturer should do a needs analysis. Needs analysis must be done so that the course will meet the student's needs. Meeting the needs of the students will make the teaching and learning process effective. In addition, the goal of teaching and learning can be straightforward. The researchers need to know the student's expectations of the course through a needs analysis. The data needed are based on the student's expectations of the Maritime English II course and their expectations of the lecturers. Having similar expectations would make a meaningful teaching and learning process. In the field of English, language is considered a social

semiotic. It means that English serves as one of the tools for making meaning. Society makes meaning in everyday life, including in the workplace. Regarding this, students' expectations towards the English class, including the Maritime English II course, should align with the social semiotic perspective. Therefore, this study aims to explain the relevance of semester two nautical students' expectations towards the Maritime English II course based on the social semiotic perspective.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is derived from the understanding of language as a social semiotic. This perspective is a perspective that views language as a means of communication used by a human being. The 'human being' becomes one group of 'people.' However, 'people,' in turn, consist of 'persons.' Language is an essential part of this process. It determines the status of the individuals and shapes them as persons (Halliday, 1994). Many factors determine the language used by each person. One of them is the context of the language being used.

In the context of the maritime world workplace, many technical terms will be used by the people working there. The people or crew working on ships will have a particular language for communication. For example, they must follow the Standard Marine Communication Phrases determined by the International Maritime Organization. The phrases the crew or officers use on board must be standardized so that communication between all vessels worldwide can be effective. It is to avoid misunderstanding. Students who are projected to work on ships must study those standard phrases.

Therefore, the materials provided for the students should cover the language used for effective communication when working on board/ships/vessels in the context of Maritime English class. Since the English in Maritime

English is different from daily English or general English, this class's teaching and learning process should consider the theories and principles of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). ESP has been popular and widely implemented in classes that provide specific English language in English classrooms all over the world.

According to Woodrow (2018:23), the explanation of ESP is explained below.

ESP may be considered an approach to course design and teaching that targets learners with a common goal or purpose in learning English. This may be an educational or occupational focus. The single most defining feature of ESP courses is that they are based on learner needs analysis.

There are three types of ESP courses related to the work or study experience of the learners.

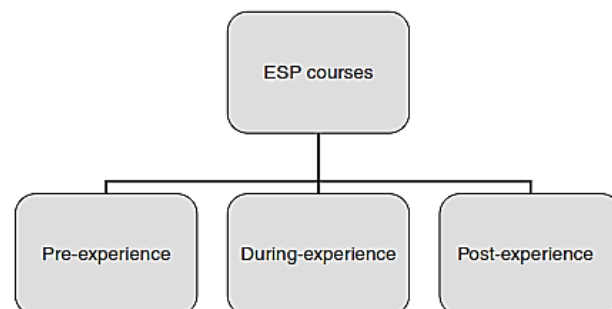


Figure 1. ESP Course Timing in Relation to Work or Study Experience of Learners (Basturkmen, 2010)

In Figure 1, the three types of ESP courses related to the work or study experience of the learners are 1) pre-experience courses, 2) during-experience courses, and 3) post-experience courses. In Politeknik Bumi Akpelni, the Maritime English course is included as a pre-experience course. Therefore, this course prepares students to have the competence to use maritime English well so that they can work well in the future.

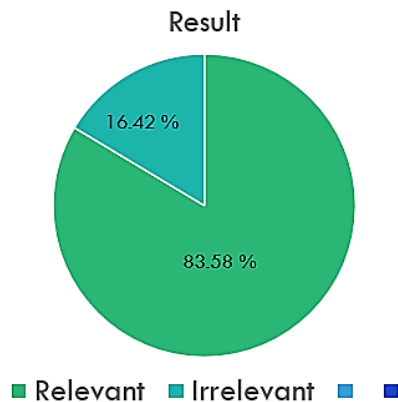
## RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this study is qualitative. It was done in February 2022 in Politeknik Bumi Akpelni, Semarang. There were 67 participants or respondents in this research. They are semester II students from the three classes in the nautical study program. Purposive sampling was used because the data should be specifically from these students.

The data were collected by administering open-ended questionnaires to the participants. The data were analyzed manually by determining whether the answers from the participants belonged to the relevant or irrelevant column.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data, it is found that most of the students' expectations towards the Maritime English II course are relevant to the social semiotic perspective. The students want to study materials that are in line with their future jobs as officers on the ship or as seafarers. The result shows that 83.58% (56) of the students have relevant expectations towards the Maritime English II course, seen from the social semiotic perspective. On the other hand, 16.42% of the students (11) had irrelevant expectations. The chart below shows the percentage of the relevance of students' expectations towards the Maritime English II course to the social semiotic perspective.



Most of the participants have expectations to be able to learn English materials related to their future job as seafarers. In their answers, most students wrote they expect to learn materials about 'ship,' 'vessel,' 'maritime English,' or 'seafarer.' Examples of the answers from the participants showing relevant results are discussed below.

Participant A1

Participant A1 wrote:

*"I want to learn things especially those related to ship because it can support me in the future to become a good reliable seafarer."*

Participant A1 explicitly stated that to be a reliable seafarer, he or she expects to study materials related to ship. This participant already has the understanding and awareness of the importance of learning English for his/her future job.

Participant A3

Participant A3 stated:

*"In maritime English class, I want to learn phrases that are used to communicate on board (SMCP). I want to learn about action that we need to take for certain situation on board."*

This participant is willing to learn the communication phrases for communicating on board. He or she is already aware of the existence of specific phrases that are usually used on board and need to be mastered.

Participant A8

Participant A8 answered:

*"I will fluent speak English, of course English used on vessel. Like a learning about part of vessel, maritime alphabet, and I would like to master it."*

This participant has the will to master the English used in vessel. He/she also understands that the English used in vessel is different from the English used in daily life.

Participant A9

Participant A9 stated:

*"I want to learn about how to communicate properly and correctly when on a ship and know the names of the parts of the ship."*

He or she is aware that he or she need to communicate properly with other people when she or she is working on the ship in the future. Based on the examples of the answers from the answers above, it is known that most of the participants are aware of what they should study in Maritime English II course.

On the other hand, some participants are not aware that the English they study in Maritime English 2 should be different from general English. Examples of the answers from the participants showing irrelevant results are discussed below.

Participant A4

Participant A4 wrote:

*“I want to be able to understand how to speak English fluently and be able to understand the meaning of what the other person is saying and be able to immediately answer it fluently.”*

This participant knows that he/she needs to speak English fluently. However, he/she did not write anything about the specific or technical terms in the maritime field.

Participant A14

Participant A14 stated:

*“In maritime English class, I want to learn more English and deepen my knowledge of English so that in the future I will be more fluent in pronouncing good and correct vocabulary.”*

This participant seems only to want to learn general English, general vocabulary, and pronunciation. He/she does not expect to learn English related to his/her future job as a seafarer.

Participant B16

Participant B16 had the opinion:

*“I want to anything. I like knowledge and attitude form. The both is very important. Especially in the future.”*

This participant did not mention anything about specific language that is needed when he/she work on board later on. He/she wants to learn anything. This answer is very general.

Participant C1

This participant wrote:

*“I want to be fluent speak English.”*

Again, this participant had a very general answer. He/she is not aware that technical terms related to vessels should be provided in Maritime English II course.

Participant C4

This participant stated:

*“I want to be confident speak English.”*

Participant C1 has a general answer and did not expect to study standard phrases or language used on board which he/she will deal with in the future as a seafarer.

Based on the examples of the answers from the participants, most of them (83.58%) has the right expectations for the Maritime English course.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the result of this study, it can be concluded that semester two nautical students' expectations towards the Maritime English Course are relevant to the social semiotic perspective. The students already understand what they need to study in this particular course. The students are aware of what to study in this course. This is positive because the lecturer can adjust the teaching and learning materials and processes based on the student's expectations. Hence, the course will be more effective. It is suggested that the relevance of other aspects of the Maritime English Course can be investigated. For example, the assessment aspect of the Maritime English Course is also worth investigating. Hopefully, this research can bring more insight into Maritime English.

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