

# Integrating Environmental Education into Maritime English Curriculum for Vocational Learners: Challenges and Opportunities

Irma Rasita Gloria Barus<sup>1\*</sup> Marudut Bernadtua Simanjuntak<sup>2,3,4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer, Vocational School, 16151 IPB University - Bogor, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Student of Doctoral Program, Postgraduate Degree, 13950 State University of Jakarta, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Junior Researcher, STTIJ Jakarta, Indonesia

<sup>4</sup>Junior Researcher, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pelayaran- Jakarta, Indonesia

**Abstract.** This research delves into the vital intersection of Vocational Education, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and English as a Second Language (ESL) within the domain of Maritime English. The specific subtheme of the research is "English Maritime - Integrating Environmental Education into Maritime Curriculum: Challenges and Opportunities." The primary objective is to conduct a descriptive qualitative research analysis of existing literature to support the teaching and guidance of Maritime English, particularly for vocational learners. This research is conducted within the educational setting of the Vocational School at IPB University. In a world where maritime industries play a pivotal role in global trade and environmental consciousness is on the rise, the role of language acquisition, particularly in maritime contexts, is paramount. The integration of environmental education into the Maritime English curriculum presents a unique opportunity to address linguistic complexity, resource development, instructor competence, and time constraints. Simultaneously, it offers enhanced communication skills, global relevance, environmental responsibility, and alignment with industry trends. These findings have substantial implications for curriculum development, instructor training, flexibility, and industry engagement, contributing to more responsible maritime practices.

## 1 Introduction

The global maritime industry stands as a cornerstone of international trade and commerce, facilitating the movement of goods, resources, and people across the world's oceans [1]. As this industry continues to expand and evolve, the importance of equipping its workforce with the necessary skills and knowledge becomes increasingly evident. One such critical skill is proficiency in the English language, specifically tailored to the unique needs and demands of maritime professionals [2,3]. This specialised form of language instruction, known as Maritime English, serves as a bridge of communication in an industry where safety, efficiency, and environmental responsibility are paramount. The necessity for English language proficiency in maritime contexts, often referred to as English for Specific Purposes (ESP), is well-established [4]. However, in an era of growing environmental awareness and concern, the maritime industry is also facing mounting pressure to adopt sustainable practices and instil environmental responsibility in its workforce. In this intersection of language education and environmental education lies a compelling opportunity: the integration of environmental education into the Maritime English curriculum [5].

This research paper delves into this pressing juncture, focusing on the challenges and opportunities inherent in integrating environmental education into the Maritime English curriculum, with a particular emphasis on vocational learners. The paper seeks to address the gaps in the existing literature regarding the amalgamation of these two crucial dimensions - language acquisition and environmental stewardship. This research is conducted within the context of the Vocational School at IPB University, where the interface between Maritime English and environmental education is gaining increasing importance.

Vocational education, or Vocational Education and Training (VET), plays a pivotal role in preparing individuals for specific careers [6]. In the maritime industry, vocational education is particularly significant as it equips individuals with the practical skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the complexities of seafaring, ship maintenance, and related professions. One key component of maritime vocational education is proficiency in Maritime English, which stands as a fundamental requirement for clear communication, safety at sea, and the execution of maritime operations. Maritime English, often considered a subfield of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), encompasses the specialised language skills and knowledge needed within the maritime domain [7]. It addresses the unique linguistic requirements of maritime

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\* Corresponding author: [irmabarus@apps.ipb.ac.id](mailto:irmabarus@apps.ipb.ac.id)

professionals, including mariners, port operators, and shipbuilders. Proficiency in Maritime English is critical for these professionals, as it aids in the prevention of accidents, the swift response to emergencies, and the effective communication with port authorities and other vessels.

Simultaneously, the maritime industry is undergoing a significant transformation due to the growing global awareness of environmental concerns and the urgent need to adopt sustainable practices. The shipping industry, in particular, has come under scrutiny for its environmental impact, including carbon emissions, oil spills, and the disposal of waste into the world's oceans [1]. This has led to international regulations and industry initiatives aimed at reducing the industry's ecological footprint. In response to these challenges, maritime education and training institutions are being called upon to incorporate environmental education into their curricula [8]. The incorporation of environmental knowledge and awareness is seen as essential for creating a more ecologically responsible maritime workforce. As such, it is increasingly important to investigate how environmental education can be effectively integrated into the Maritime English curriculum. The interface of Maritime English and environmental education offers a unique opportunity to address both linguistic and environmental needs within the maritime industry.

By integrating environmental education into the Maritime English curriculum, vocational learners can simultaneously develop the language skills required for their profession and acquire a comprehensive understanding of the environmental challenges and responsibilities that come with it. This integration not only enhances their ability to communicate effectively in maritime settings but also equips them with the knowledge and mindset to contribute to a more sustainable and responsible maritime industry [9]. It is centred on the belief that such integration holds the potential to transform vocational education in the maritime field, ultimately leading to more informed and environmentally responsible maritime professionals. The thematic focus of this research is aligned with the educational goals of IPB University's Vocational School, which recognises the importance of preparing students not only for successful careers but also for their roles as responsible global citizens.

## 1.1 Literature review

The integration of environmental education into the Maritime English curriculum stands at the intersection of language learning and environmental responsibility, offering a unique opportunity to prepare vocational learners for maritime careers while cultivating a sense of stewardship for the marine environment. This literature review explores the existing body of knowledge, examining the challenges and opportunities presented by this integration, and provides valuable insights into the existing discourse.

### 1.1.1 Challenges in Integrating Environmental Education into Maritime English Curriculum

**Linguistic Complexity and Specialisation:** One of the foremost challenges in integrating environmental education into Maritime English is the linguistic complexity inherent in both domains. Maritime English requires a specific vocabulary and communication style tailored to the maritime industry [10]. Integrating environmental terminology and concepts can add a layer of complexity that may overwhelm vocational learners, particularly those for whom English is a second language. This challenge underscores the need for well-structured curricula that balance linguistic demands with environmental content.

**Resource and Material Development:** Effective integration of environmental education into Maritime English necessitates the development of appropriate resources and materials. Creating course materials that are relevant to the maritime industry, up to date with environmental regulations, and engaging for learners is a resource-intensive endeavour [11]. Educators and institutions may find it challenging to source or develop materials that align with the dynamic nature of environmental issues in maritime contexts.

**Instructor Competence:** The successful integration of environmental education relies heavily on instructors' competence in both Maritime English and environmental knowledge [12]. In many cases, Maritime English instructors may not possess the expertise to teach environmental content, and environmental educators may lack the necessary understanding of maritime contexts. Bridging this competence gap is vital to ensure that the integration is meaningful and effective.

**Time Constraints:** The vocational nature of maritime education often means that learners have limited time for language acquisition and additional subjects like environmental education [8]. Balancing the demands of language proficiency and environmental awareness within the curriculum is a logistical challenge that institutions must address.

### 1.1.2 Opportunities in Integrating Environmental Education into Maritime English Curriculum

**Enhanced Communication Skills:** Integrating environmental education into the Maritime English curriculum can significantly enhance learners' communication skills. As maritime professionals need to interact with diverse stakeholders, including port authorities, colleagues, and international organisations, an expanded vocabulary and understanding of environmental issues equips them to articulate their ideas and concerns more effectively.

**Global Relevance:** The maritime industry operates on a global scale, and environmental regulations and concerns have worldwide implications. Integrating environmental education prepares vocational learners to work in diverse international contexts, where knowledge of environmental regulations and best practices is indispensable.

**Environmental Responsibility:** The integration of environmental education fosters a sense of environmental responsibility among vocational learners. By instilling an understanding of the environmental consequences of maritime operations, it encourages individuals to make sustainable choices in their professional practices.

**Alignment with Industry Trends:** As the maritime industry increasingly focuses on sustainability, integrating environmental education into Maritime English aligns with industry trends and future workforce needs. This alignment can make graduates more attractive to employers and contribute to the industry's efforts to reduce its environmental impact [9,13].

### 1.1.3 Emerging Trends and Recommendations

In recent years, there has been a noticeable shift towards recognising the importance of environmental education in maritime curricula. Educational institutions and maritime organisations are working to address the challenges associated with integration by developing tailored resources and providing professional development for instructors. To address challenges effectively, there is a need for a standardised framework for integrating environmental education into Maritime English [14]. Such a framework would help institutions and educators ensure that vocational learners receive a balanced and effective education that prepares them for their maritime careers while nurturing environmental stewardship.

The integration of environmental education into the Maritime English curriculum holds great promise in preparing vocational learners for the maritime industry's future while instilling environmental responsibility. While challenges exist, emerging trends and a growing recognition of the importance of this integration indicate a positive trajectory towards more sustainable and informed maritime practices [15]. This literature review sets the stage for further exploration of this intersection and the potential it holds for the future of maritime education and environmental conservation.

## 2 Methods

Qualitative descriptive research is a methodological approach characterised by its focus on providing a comprehensive and detailed account of a particular phenomenon or topic [16,17]. It is particularly well-suited for exploring the intricacies of complex subjects and gaining a deep understanding of the experiences and perspectives of individuals involved. In the context of this research on integrating environmental education into the Maritime English curriculum, qualitative descriptive research is an appropriate and valuable methodology. The qualitative descriptive research method chosen for this study is well-suited for comprehensively examining the integration of environmental education into the Maritime English curriculum [12]. It enables the research to delve deeply into the subject, explore various perspectives, and provide valuable insights to a broad range of stakeholders. This methodology aligns with the research's aim to inform and guide vocational education institutions, policymakers, and educators in their efforts to prepare vocational learners for maritime careers while nurturing environmental responsibility.

### 2.1 Findings

The research on integrating environmental education into the Maritime English curriculum has revealed a complex and multifaceted landscape. The findings provide insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with this integration, shedding light on the potential for creating more informed and environmentally responsible maritime professionals.

#### 2.1.1 Challenges in Integrating Environmental Education

**Linguistic Complexity:** One of the key challenges identified in the research is the linguistic complexity inherent in both Maritime English and environmental terminology. The integration of environmental education can potentially overwhelm vocational learners, especially those for whom English is a second language [4,18]. The research underscores the need for carefully designed curricula that balance linguistic demands with environmental content.

**Resource and Material Development:** Creating relevant and engaging course materials for the integrated curriculum emerged as a significant challenge. The research found that the development of materials that align with the dynamic nature of environmental issues in maritime contexts requires substantial resources. Instructors and institutions may struggle to source or develop materials that meet the educational goals of the integration.

**Instructor Competence:** The competence of instructors in both Maritime English and environmental knowledge was highlighted as a critical challenge. The research revealed that Maritime English instructors may not always possess the expertise to teach environmental content, and environmental educators may lack an understanding of maritime contexts. Bridging this competence gap is vital to ensure that the integration is meaningful and effective.

**Time Constraints:** The vocational nature of maritime education often results in learners having limited time for language acquisition and additional subjects like environmental education. Balancing the demands of language proficiency and environmental awareness within the curriculum emerged as a logistical challenge. Vocational learners are often under time constraints to acquire the necessary skills for their maritime careers.

### 2.1.2 Opportunities in Integrating Environmental Education

**Enhanced Communication Skills:** The research findings indicate that the integration of environmental education into the Maritime English curriculum significantly enhances learners' communication skills. Vocational learners, equipped with an expanded vocabulary and an understanding of environmental issues, are better prepared to articulate their ideas and concerns more effectively in maritime contexts.

**Global Relevance:** Maritime professionals operate in a global industry, and environmental regulations and concerns have worldwide implications. The research highlights how the integrated curriculum prepares vocational learners to work in diverse international contexts, where knowledge of environmental regulations and best practices is indispensable.

**Environmental Responsibility:** The research findings underscore the importance of instilling a sense of environmental responsibility among vocational learners. By integrating environmental education, learners gain a deeper understanding of the environmental consequences of maritime operations, leading to a greater propensity to make sustainable choices in their professional practices.

**Alignment with Industry Trends:** The research findings align with the growing trend within the maritime industry towards sustainability and environmental responsibility. Graduates who have undergone the integrated curriculum are better prepared to meet industry demands and contribute to reducing the environmental impact of maritime operations.

### 2.1.3 Emerging Themes and Recommendations

The research identified several emerging themes and made recommendations based on the challenges and opportunities revealed in the integration of environmental education into the Maritime English curriculum:

**Standardised Framework:** To address the challenges effectively, there is a need for a standardised framework for integrating environmental education into Maritime English. This framework should provide guidelines and best practices for institutions and educators to ensure a balanced and effective education that prepares vocational learners for their maritime careers while nurturing environmental stewardship.

**Professional Development:** Instructors must receive ongoing professional development to bridge the competence gap. The research recommends that institutions invest in training and support for instructors to ensure they are well-equipped to teach both Maritime English and environmental content effectively [19,20].

**Collaboration:** Collaboration between maritime and environmental education departments and instructors is crucial. By working together, these departments can develop integrated curricula and share resources to alleviate the challenges related to resource and material development.

**Flexibility and Adaptability:** To address the time constraints, curricula should be flexible and adaptable to meet the diverse needs of vocational learners. This may include offering options for accelerated learning, online resources, and recognition of prior learning.

**Industry Engagement:** Collaboration with the maritime industry and relevant organisations is key to aligning the curriculum with industry trends and demands. The research recommends that educational institutions maintain close ties with industry stakeholders to ensure that the integrated curriculum remains relevant and responsive to evolving industry needs.

The research findings underscore the intricate nature of integrating environmental education into the Maritime English curriculum. While challenges exist, the opportunities and benefits of this integration are significant. The integration enhances communication skills, instils environmental responsibility, and aligns with global industry trends. The research has identified the need for a standardised framework, professional development, collaboration, flexibility, and industry engagement to overcome the challenges [1,21]. The findings presented in this research paper contribute to the broader discourse on vocational education, language acquisition, and environmental stewardship. By addressing the challenges and opportunities associated with the integration of environmental education into the Maritime English curriculum, this research offers valuable insights for educational institutions, policymakers, and educators. It is hoped that these findings will serve as a valuable resource for institutions striving to prepare vocational learners for maritime careers while nurturing a sense of responsibility for the marine environment. The integration of environmental education in Maritime English has the potential to transform the maritime industry by producing professionals who are not only linguistically proficient but also environmentally responsible, contributing to a more sustainable and responsible maritime sector.

### 3 Discussion and Implication

The integration of environmental education into the Maritime English curriculum, as explored in this research, presents a nuanced and evolving landscape. The findings of this study, which revealed both challenges and opportunities associated with this integration, provoke a discussion that extends to the broader realm of vocational education, maritime training, and environmental stewardship.

#### 3.1 Discussion

##### 3.1.1 *Enhancing Linguistic Proficiency while Nurturing Environmental Responsibility*

One of the central themes that emerges from the research findings is the balancing act required when integrating environmental education into Maritime English. The challenges, such as linguistic complexity and time constraints, highlight the need for a carefully designed curriculum that provides vocational learners with the linguistic proficiency needed for their maritime careers while nurturing their sense of environmental responsibility.

This discussion encapsulates the essence of the integration - it is not about compromising linguistic development for environmental awareness or vice versa. Instead, it underscores the potential for creating holistic maritime professionals who can communicate effectively in the industry while understanding and addressing its environmental challenges.

##### 3.1.2 *The Role of Instructors in Bridging Competence Gaps*

The challenge of instructor competence highlighted in the research findings reflects a critical point in the discussion. It underscores the importance of instructors who can bridge the gap between Maritime English and environmental knowledge. Instructors need to be equipped with not only pedagogical skills but also interdisciplinary expertise.

This challenge indicates the need for targeted professional development programmes and collaborative efforts between maritime and environmental education departments. Instructors who possess this dual expertise can be instrumental in guiding vocational learners through the integrated curriculum and ensuring its effectiveness.

##### 3.1.3 *Flexible Curricula and the Importance of Collaboration*

The findings concerning time constraints reveal the practical challenges of implementing an integrated curriculum in a vocational education setting. Here, the discussion revolves around the need for flexible curricula that can adapt to the diverse needs and time constraints of vocational learners.

Moreover, the research findings highlight the importance of collaboration between various stakeholders, including maritime and environmental education departments, instructors, industry partners, and policymakers. Collaboration can lead to the development of adaptable curricula and the sharing of resources, mitigating the challenges associated with the integration of environmental education.

#### 3.2 Implications

The research findings hold significant implications for vocational education, maritime training, and environmental stewardship. These implications extend to the following areas:

**Curriculum Development and Standardised Frameworks:** Educational institutions are encouraged to develop curricula that offer a balance between linguistic proficiency and environmental awareness. The creation of standardised frameworks for the integration of environmental education into Maritime English can guide institutions in developing effective curricula that meet industry and environmental standards.

**Professional Development for Instructors:** Institutions should invest in continuous professional development for instructors. Instructors need to be well-prepared to teach both Maritime English and environmental content. Training programmes can help them acquire the necessary knowledge and teaching skills.

**Flexibility and Adaptability:** Curricula should be designed with flexibility and adaptability in mind, allowing vocational learners to progress at their own pace while meeting the demands of maritime education. Options for accelerated learning, online resources, and recognition of prior learning can provide learners with the flexibility they need to succeed.

**Industry Engagement:** Educational institutions should actively engage with the maritime industry and relevant organisations. Industry stakeholders can provide insights into current trends, regulations, and workforce demands, ensuring that the integrated curriculum remains relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of the maritime sector.

**Policy Implications:** Policymakers in the field of vocational education should consider the findings of this research when developing policies related to curriculum development and vocational training. Policymakers can support the integration of environmental education by providing incentives, funding, and guidance to educational institutions.

**Environmental Stewardship:** The integration of environmental education not only equips vocational learners with essential skills but also nurtures environmental responsibility. The implication here is a more environmentally responsible maritime workforce that can actively contribute to reducing the ecological footprint of the industry.

**Global Relevance:** Maritime professionals prepared through the integrated curriculum are better prepared to work in diverse international contexts. This has implications for the industry's ability to meet global environmental regulations and obligations.

**Future Research Directions:** The research findings also highlight areas for future research. These include the assessment of the long-term impact of the integrated curriculum on vocational learners, the development of best practices for curriculum design, and a more in-depth exploration of the role of industry partnerships in vocational education.

The integration of environmental education into the Maritime English curriculum, as explored in this research, presents both challenges and opportunities. The research findings indicate that a careful balance between linguistic proficiency and environmental responsibility is necessary to prepare vocational learners for their maritime careers. The implications of this research extend to the development of curriculum standards, instructor professional development, flexible curricula, and industry engagement. Policymakers, educational institutions, and industry stakeholders play vital roles in realising the full potential of this integration, not only for the benefit of vocational learners but also for the sustainability of the maritime industry. The integration of environmental education in Maritime English represents an essential step towards creating a workforce that is not only linguistically proficient but also environmentally responsible, contributing to a more sustainable and responsible maritime sector in the future.

## 4 Conclusion

The integration of environmental education into the Maritime English curriculum, as explored in this research, holds immense promise for shaping the future of maritime education and practice. The findings of this study, which uncovered a spectrum of challenges and opportunities, underscore the complex and dynamic nature of this integration. In conclusion, the research highlights the significance of creating a curriculum that empowers vocational learners to communicate effectively in the maritime industry while fostering their sense of environmental responsibility. The challenges identified, including linguistic complexity, resource development, instructor competence, and time constraints, serve as reminders of the intricacies involved in merging two distinct areas of knowledge and skill development. These challenges call for the development of standardised frameworks that guide institutions in crafting curricula that achieve a harmonious balance between linguistic proficiency and environmental awareness.

In addressing these challenges, this research points towards several crucial implications for vocational education, maritime training, and environmental stewardship. Educational institutions are encouraged to invest in instructor professional development, ensuring that educators possess the interdisciplinary expertise required for teaching Maritime English and environmental content effectively. Moreover, curriculum flexibility and adaptability are essential, allowing vocational learners to progress at their own pace within the constraints of their maritime education. The integration also necessitates a close collaboration between maritime and environmental education departments, industry partners, and policymakers. This collaborative approach can result in adaptable curricula that meet the demands of both industries and provide vocational learners with a holistic education that enhances their global relevance and environmental responsibility.

Furthermore, this research underscores the critical role of vocational education in nurturing environmental stewardship. By instilling an understanding of the environmental consequences of maritime operations, vocational learners can make informed and responsible decisions in their professional practice, contributing to a more sustainable and eco-conscious maritime industry. The integrated curriculum aligns with the growing global trend towards environmental responsibility within the maritime sector. It equips graduates to address environmental regulations and concerns on a worldwide scale. This further enhances the employability and competitiveness of vocational learners in the global maritime job market, as they are well-prepared to meet the international standards for environmental practices in the industry.

As the maritime industry continues to evolve, this research serves as a beacon of guidance for educational institutions, policymakers, and industry stakeholders. It is hoped that the findings of this study will encourage institutions to embrace a curriculum that not only imparts linguistic skills but also nurtures environmental responsibility. By doing so, they can contribute to a brighter and more responsible future for the maritime industry and the global environment it serves. The integration of environmental education into the Maritime English curriculum signifies a transformative approach to vocational education, one that prepares maritime professionals to excel in their careers while actively contributing to the preservation of our marine environment.

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