

The Impact of Gender Stereotypes on English Communication in the Maritime Industry: A Case Study of Seafarer Training Programs

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Abstract—This study explores the influence of gender stereotypes on English communication within the maritime industry, focusing on seafarer training programs. The maritime industry has traditionally been male-dominated, where gender biases may subtly shape communication practices, especially in English as the industry's working language. Through a case study approach, this research examines how gender stereotypes impact language use, communication dynamics, and overall effectiveness during training sessions. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis at selected maritime training institutions. The findings reveal that gender stereotypes often lead to differential treatment and expectations between male and female cadets, affecting their language learning experiences and communication confidence. Female seafarers face greater challenges in overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers, while male cadets are frequently assumed to be more competent, regardless of their actual language proficiency. The study discusses these imbalances and their implications for training outcomes, professional growth, and the broader maritime communication landscape. It also suggests that addressing gender biases can enhance communication skills and promote more inclusive seafarer training environments. Recommendations for developing gender-sensitive training curricula are provided, alongside suggestions for future research to further investigate gender dynamics in maritime communication.

Keywords—: *gender stereotypes, English communication, maritime industry, seafarer training, language learning, inclusive training*

I. INTRODUCTION (HEADING 1)

The maritime industry, known for its global reach and diverse workforce, plays a crucial role in international trade and commerce. Effective communication, particularly in English, is vital for ensuring smooth operations and safety in this sector. However, gender stereotypes have long permeated various aspects of maritime life, including language use, potentially affecting communication efficiency and inclusivity. These stereotypes, deeply rooted in societal norms and expectations, often manifest in gendered language patterns, influencing how men and women interact in professional settings, especially within male-dominated fields such as seafaring.

The maritime industry is critical to global trade, yet it remains one of the most male-dominated sectors globally. According to the International Maritime Organization (IMO),

women represent only 2% of the world's 1.2 million seafarers (IMO, 2022). This gender imbalance has given rise to persistent gender stereotypes that impact every aspect of maritime careers, from recruitment to promotion, and notably, communication during training. English, as the lingua franca of maritime communication, plays a vital role in ensuring safety and efficiency at sea (International Chamber of Shipping, 2020). However, language use is not neutral and is often influenced by social constructs, including gender. In seafarer training programs, these stereotypes can shape how female and male trainees communicate, are perceived, and are evaluated in their English-language proficiency. This research examines how gender stereotypes impact the communication of female seafarers during English training and identifies the challenges faced by women in overcoming these biases.

Seafarer training programs are essential for preparing cadets to meet the industry's demands, including proficiency in Maritime English. Yet, these programs may unintentionally reinforce gender biases through their teaching methods and communication styles, which could impede the progress of women in this sector. While the maritime industry has made strides toward gender diversity, with increasing numbers of women entering the field, the impact of entrenched stereotypes on communication remains underexplored. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing more inclusive and effective training programs that not only equip cadets with the necessary language skills but also foster an environment where gender-based communication barriers are minimized. This research contributes to the growing discourse on gender equality in maritime industries, highlighting the need for conscious efforts to address gender biases in communication and training practices.

The marine sector is vital to world trade and commerce because of its extensive global reach and diversified workforce. Ensuring seamless operations and safety in this area requires effective communication, especially in English. However, gender stereotypes have long penetrated the vocabulary used in the marine industry, which may have an impact on inclusion and the effectiveness of communication.. This study aims to address this gap by examining the impact of gender stereotypes on English communication within seafarer training programs. These programs are crucial in preparing cadets and seafarers for the realities of maritime work, including mastering Maritime English, the standardized form of communication used in international waters. By

analyzing how gender stereotypes influence communication during training, this research seeks to provide insights that could inform the development of more inclusive and effective training methodologies.

The maritime industry faces significant communication challenges due to its multilingual and multicultural nature, with English serving as the lingua franca (Fan et al., 2015). Effective communication is crucial for safety and efficiency in maritime operations (Barus et al., 2024). Maritime English education and training programs are essential for developing seafarers' communicative competence, particularly for non-native English speakers (Fan et al., 2015; Saridaki, 2023). These programs should focus on reading comprehension, writing, oral communication, and cultural competence (Saridaki, 2023). However, gender imbalance persists in maritime education and training institutions, with female student enrollment and graduation figures showing little change over time (Barahona-Fuentes et al., 2020). Despite increasing awareness, the gender gap remains significant in both educational and professional maritime sectors, highlighting the need for more effective gender equality policies and programs (Barahona-Fuentes et al., 2020).

In examining the problem of gender stereotypes in English language communication in the maritime industry, this research will investigate the following problems:

- How do gender stereotypes influence the English communication practices of students and seafarers in maritime training programs?
- What are the specific ways in which gender stereotypes manifest in the English language curriculum and teaching methodologies of seafarer training programs?
- What strategies or interventions can be implemented to address the influence of gender stereotypes on English communication in seafarer training programs?

This research seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- To examine how gender stereotypes influence English communication among seafarers
- Identify the barriers that seafaring women face in improving their English skills
- To explore strategies for overcoming gender stereotypes in maritime communication training, promoting a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

This research holds significant benefits and implications for academia, maritime industry, stakeholders, and policymakers in the maritime education sector, as stated below:

- For maritime training institutions: This study will provide insights into how gender stereotypes affect communication training, helping institutions refine their curriculum and teaching practices to foster a more inclusive learning environment.
- For cadets and maritime professionals: It will help raise awareness of the importance of addressing gender biases, enabling both male and female cadets

to participate more fully and equally in communication training.

- For the maritime industry: The research offers practical solutions to improve English communication competence among seafarers, contributing to safer and more efficient operations at sea.
- For gender studies and socio-linguistic research: It expands academic understanding of how gender intersects with language learning in specialized industries like maritime, providing a foundation for further research in gendered communication.

This research is significant as it addresses the critical role of gender in shaping communication skills, a key competence in the maritime industry. With English as the lingua franca of maritime communication, understanding and mitigating gender biases in training programs is essential for ensuring that both male and female seafarers are equally prepared to communicate effectively in their professional roles. By focusing on the socio-linguistic dimensions of gendered communication, this study highlights the importance of creating equitable and supportive training environments that challenge stereotypes and promote excellence across genders in the global maritime workforce.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on gender and communication in the maritime sector is limited, though studies in broader industries offer valuable insights. According to Eagly & Wood (2012), gender stereotypes typically position women as more passive communicators, while men are often viewed as more authoritative and assertive. These stereotypes may lead to biased assessments of communication effectiveness in mixed-gender settings, potentially disadvantaging women during training and performance evaluations.

In maritime communication, where clarity, precision, and assertiveness are critical, these gendered perceptions can have real-world consequences. Lutz (2019) found that women in male-dominated industries, including maritime sectors, often experience "linguistic insecurity" – a fear that their communication is being judged more harshly than their male counterparts. This can result in a lack of confidence during training, where English communication skills are heavily emphasized.

Moreover, studies by Pritchard & Morgan (2017) highlight that male-dominated environments, like seafaring, reinforce hegemonic masculine norms, further marginalizing women's communication styles. This environment can make it challenging for female seafarers to participate fully and equally in training programs, which are crucial for career advancement.

A. Gender Stereotypes in the Maritime Industry

Gender stereotyping has long been a pervasive issue in various industries, particularly in traditionally male-dominated sectors like maritime. Research has shown that gender stereotypes negatively influence communication patterns, social dynamics, and career progression (Kitada,

2013). In maritime settings, these stereotypes can hinder effective communication, particularly in English, which is the lingua franca of international shipping (Sampson & Zhao, 2003). The growing presence of women in maritime roles demands a closer look at how these stereotypes influence language use and communication.

Gender stereotypes significantly impact the maritime industry, affecting women's participation and communication. Female maritime officers tend to underestimate their leadership skills, while males overestimate theirs, potentially contributing to women's underrepresentation in high-status positions (Olga Delgado Ortega et al., 2015). The industry's multicultural nature necessitates English as the lingua franca, but proficiency levels are often inadequate, leading to miscommunication risks (Schriever, 2008). Linguistic and intercultural factors, including verbal and non-verbal communication, ethical norms, and gender issues, influence onboard communication quality (Noble et al., 2011). Despite initiatives promoting maritime career opportunities for women, they remain underrepresented both onboard ships and ashore (Pastra & Swoboda, 2021). Addressing these challenges requires focused efforts on inclusive leadership training, improved language proficiency, and strategies to boost gender equality across the maritime sector (Olga Delgado Ortega et al., 2015; Schriever, 2008; Pastra & Swoboda, 2021).

Gender stereotypes play a significant role in communication and political discourse. Research shows that these stereotypes affect how individuals perceive and interact with others, influencing cognitive processes and implicit beliefs (Ellemers, 2018). In politics, gender stereotypes present unique challenges for female candidates, shaping their communication strategies with voters (Winfrey & Schnoebelen, 2019). While some stereotypical gender differences in communication have not been empirically supported, studies have found gender-linked variations in conversation patterns, utterance length, and language use (O'Donohue & Crouch, 1996). Gender stereotypes are viewed as social representations or collective ideologies that define behavioral models (Amâncio, 1993). Understanding these stereotypes is crucial for fair judgment in situations where gender biases may be present (Ellemers, 2018). In marital therapy, recognizing the complexities of gender in communication is essential for developing effective treatment strategies (O'Donohue & Crouch, 1996). Overall, gender stereotypes continue to influence various aspects of communication and social interaction.

Gender stereotypes persist in the maritime industry, with women representing only 2% of the global seafaring workforce (MacNeil & Ghosh, 2017; Dragomir & Popa, 2018). This gender imbalance is rooted in historical factors and continues due to various impediments unique to the sector (MacNeil & Ghosh, 2017). Efforts to address this disparity include initiatives by the International Labour Organisation, such as amendments to the Maritime Labour Convention (Dragomir & Popa, 2018). Research suggests that gender biases affect leadership perceptions, with female maritime officers tending to underrate their positive leadership skills while overestimating negative ones, contrary

to their male counterparts (Delgado Ortega et al., 2015). To reduce the gender gap, further programs, policies, and strategies are needed at both administrative and private business levels (Cristina & Utoreanu Simona Luize, 2018). Addressing these issues could help tap into the underutilized resource of female labor in the maritime industry (Dragomir & Popa, 2018; Cristina & Utoreanu Simona Luize, 2018)

Gender stereotypes significantly impact communication in various contexts. In job interviews, applicants face penalties for using gender-inappropriate communication styles, with men rated lower on hireability and women on sociability when deviating from stereotypical norms (Juodvalkis et al., 2003). These stereotypes affect how people process and remember information about themselves and others, influencing implicit beliefs and communications (Ellemers, 2018). In political communication, gender stereotypes shape how candidates present themselves to voters, posing unique challenges for female politicians (Winfrey & Schnoebelen, 2019). Stereotype threat can also alter women's communication styles, leading them to adopt more masculine approaches when their leadership abilities are questioned. Ironically, this adaptation can result in lower warmth and likeability ratings, potentially reducing others' willingness to comply with their requests (von Hippel et al., 2011). These findings highlight the pervasive influence of gender stereotypes on communication across various

B. Gender and Language Use in Maritime Training

English has been established as the global language of maritime communication, governed by the International Maritime Organization's Standard Marine Communication Phrases (IMO SMCP). This lingua franca is critical in ensuring safe navigation, crew collaboration, and seamless operations (Trenkner, 2007). However, English proficiency among seafarers varies widely based on education, training, and nationality, and stereotypes surrounding gender may further exacerbate communication barriers. A recent study by Slišković and Penić (2020) underscores that women seafarers face more challenges in asserting authority, especially when communicating in English, as they often need to overcome preconceptions about their competency.

Research on gendered language in professional settings reveals that power dynamics often shape communication patterns. Men are typically seen as assertive and authoritative, while women are expected to adopt more passive or cooperative language styles (Tannen, 1990). In the maritime industry, this can lead to significant communication breakdowns, especially in safety-critical situations where assertiveness and clarity are paramount (Sampson & Tang, 2020). These stereotypes also reflect in training environments, where female trainees may hesitate to speak up or challenge male peers, fearing social repercussions.

The importance of English as an international language in the maritime industry is widely recognized for ensuring safety and effective communication at sea (Saridaki, 2023; Tchkonka et al., 2019; Loginovsky, 2002; Schriever, 2008). Maritime English proficiency is crucial for crew members of

different nationalities to communicate effectively, prevent accidents, and maintain safety standards (Saridaki, 2023; Tchkonia et al., 2019). The ability to think in English within the maritime profession context is essential for non-native speakers (Loginovsky, 2002). While English is overwhelmingly accepted as the common language in the industry, some language groups are perceived as more challenging to communicate with, and there is evidence of resistance to its use (Schriever, 2008). The Standard Maritime Communication Phrases (SMCP) are not utilized to their full potential, and misunderstandings due to verbal and cultural barriers persist (Schriever, 2008). To address these challenges, maritime English courses should focus on developing reading, writing, oral communication skills, and cultural competence (Saridaki, 2023).

Maritime English has emerged as the lingua franca of the international shipping industry, crucial for effective communication among multilingual and multicultural seafarers (Schriever, 2008; Fan et al., 2015). Its importance is underscored by the fact that communication failures contribute to one-third of maritime accidents. The Manila Amendments 2010 emphasize communicative competence, presenting challenges for non-native English-speaking countries in maritime education and training (Fan et al., 2015). Maritime English, evolving from life at sea, is now considered a specialized form of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Čulić-Viskota & Kalebota, 2013). Its proficiency is mandatory for maritime professionals to ensure safety at sea, on shore, and in ports (Tchkonia et al., 2019). While the Standard Maritime Communication Phrases (SMCP) exist, they are not used to their full potential (Schriever, 2008). Innovative technologies and specialized courses are being developed to enhance Maritime English education and address the challenges of intercultural communication in the maritime industry (Tchkonia et al., 2019).

The intersection of gender and language is a complex and multifaceted area of study. Research has explored how gender affects language use and how language constructs gender identities (Gyamera, 2019). This relationship is further complicated in endangered language communities, where gender plays a role in language maintenance and revitalization efforts (Ahlers, 2012). Scholars have emphasized the importance of adopting an intersectional approach, considering how gender interacts with other social categories like sexuality, race, and class in shaping linguistic practices (Levon, 2015). The field has evolved from early studies focused on gender differences in language use to more nuanced examinations of how language mediates social constructions of gender and sexuality (Thomas & Wareing, 2004). Current research aims to integrate intersectionality theory more fully, recognizing the dynamic and mutually constitutive nature of multiple identity categories in linguistic perception and production (Levon, 2015).

Communication barriers in the maritime industry pose significant challenges to safety and efficiency. The international nature of shipping brings together seafarers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, with English serving as the lingua franca (Schriever, 2011).

However, language proficiency varies among seafarers, with certain groups experiencing greater difficulties in maritime English communication (Schriever, 2008). Cultural differences and sociolinguistic conventions can further impede understanding (Schriever, 2011; Wang & Gu, 2005). These barriers have led to mishaps at sea, highlighting the need for improved communication (Schriever, 2011). Studies suggest that linguistic competence, cross-cultural awareness, and interpersonal skills are crucial for effective maritime communication (Wang & Gu, 2005; Suresh & Krithika, 2022). To address these issues, researchers recommend incorporating cultural aspects into maritime English curricula and developing specialized programs to enhance interpersonal communication skills among seafarers (Wang & Gu, 2005; Suresh & Krithika, 2022).

C. Gender and Language Use in Maritime Training

Research on communication in seafarer training highlights the importance of effective communication for maritime safety and efficiency. Multilingual and multicultural crews present challenges, with communication failures contributing to one-third of maritime accidents (Fan et al., 2015). Studies emphasize the need for linguistic competence, cross-cultural understanding, and interpersonal skills in maritime communication (Wang & Gu, 2005; Suresh & Krithika, 2022). The Manila Amendments 2010 stressed communicative competence in seafarer training. Maritime English education faces challenges in non-native English-speaking countries, including China, which is working to improve its seafarers' communication skills (Fan et al., 2015). Some research focuses on the development of autonomous vessels and shore control centers, while others emphasize social skills and emotional intelligence in seafarer training (Mickevičiūtė, 2020). Recommendations include incorporating cultural aspects into maritime English curricula and developing special programs to improve interpersonal communication among seafarers (Wang & Gu, 2005; Suresh & Krithika, 2022).

Seafarer training programs, such as those mandated by the IMO, emphasize the development of English communication skills. However, gender stereotypes influence both learning and teaching environments. A study by Pritchard (2015) found that male trainees are often viewed as more competent in technical terminology, while female trainees may be subjected to unconscious bias, which affects their confidence and language acquisition in maritime English. This aligns with socio-linguistic theories suggesting that language performance is tied to social expectations and perceived roles (Holmes, 2006).

D. Gender Representation in the Maritime Industry

Research has consistently shown that women are underrepresented in the maritime industry, particularly in seagoing positions. Studies have indicated that women make up only a small percentage of the global seafaring workforce, with estimates ranging from 1% to 2% (IMO, 2019). This underrepresentation contributes to the persistence of gender stereotypes and can create challenges for women entering the field.

E. Gender Stereotypes and Communication Barriers

Several studies have explored how gender stereotypes can create communication barriers in male-dominated industries like maritime shipping:

- **Language and Power Dynamics:** Research has shown that in male-dominated environments, language often reflects and reinforces existing power structures. This can lead to the use of gendered language or communication styles that may disadvantage women (Tannen, 1994).
- **Perception of Competence:** Studies have found that gender stereotypes can influence how women's competence is perceived, particularly in technical fields. This can affect how their communications are received and interpreted by colleagues and superiors (Eagly & Karau, 2002).
- **Communication Style Differences:** Some research suggests that men and women may have different communication styles, which can lead to misunderstandings or misinterpretations in professional settings (Merchant, 2012).

F. Research Gaps

While much research highlights the impact of gender stereotypes on communication in the maritime industry, more empirical studies are needed to explore their specific effect on English language training for seafarers. Understanding the intersection between gender, language acquisition, and maritime communication practices can lead to more effective training programs that mitigate these biases. Future studies should examine how gendered communication affects operational efficiency, safety outcomes, and career progression within the industry.

G. Impact on Seafarer Training Programs

The literature on seafarer training programs and gender stereotypes is relatively limited, but some key themes emerge:

- **Curriculum Design:** Some studies have highlighted the need for gender-sensitive curriculum design in maritime education and training programs. This includes reviewing course materials for gender bias and ensuring that examples and case studies represent diverse perspectives (Kitada, 2013).
- **Instructor Awareness:** Research has emphasized the importance of training instructors to be aware of gender stereotypes and their potential impact on communication in the classroom (Dragomir & Surugiu, 2013).
- **English Language Proficiency:** Studies have shown that English language proficiency is crucial for success in the maritime industry. Some research suggests that gender stereotypes may influence perceptions of language ability, potentially affecting how women's English communication skills are evaluated (Pritchard & Kalocsai, 2014).
- **Simulation Training:** Research on the use of simulators in maritime training has highlighted the need to ensure that these tools do not reinforce gender stereotypes and provide equal opportunities for all trainees to develop their communication skills (Gekara & Sampson, 2011).

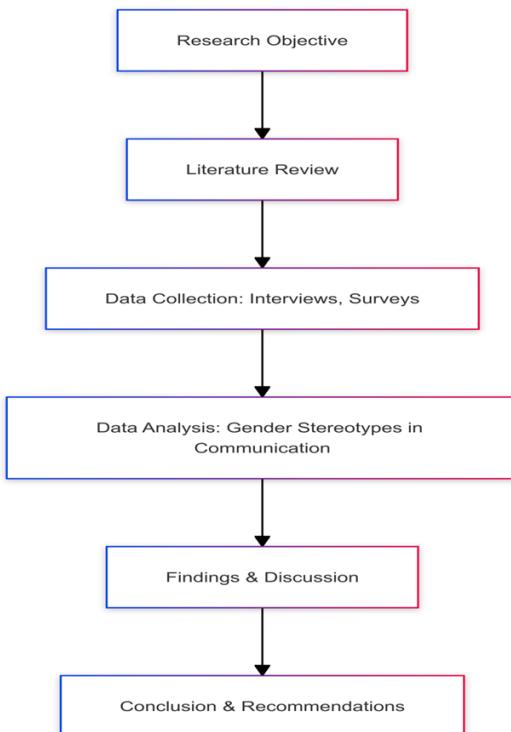
H. Strategies for Addressing Gender Stereotypes in Maritime Communication

The literature suggests several strategies for addressing the impact of gender stereotypes on English communication in the maritime industry:

- **Gender-Inclusive Language:** Promoting the use of gender-neutral language in training materials, operational communications, and industry documents (IMO, 2019).
- **Mentorship Programs:** Establishing mentorship programs that pair experienced female seafarers with trainees to provide support and guidance on navigating gender-related communication challenges (Kitada & Langåker, 2017).
- **Cultural Competence Training:** Incorporating cultural competence training into seafarer programs to address not only gender issues but also the broader challenges of cross-cultural communication in the maritime industry (Horck, 2010).
- **Policy Development:** Implementing policies and guidelines that explicitly address gender equality and non-discriminatory communication practices in maritime organizations and training institutions (MacNeil & Ghosh, 2017).

The research framework can be summarized as follows:

- Start with the Research Objective: "Investigate the Impact of Gender Stereotypes on English Communication."
- Move to the Literature Review: exploring previous research on gender stereotypes, English communication, and the maritime industry.
- Data Collection Methods: Interviews and Surveys targeting seafarer training programs.
- Data Analysis: Analyze the data, particularly focusing on how gender stereotypes affect communication.
- Findings & Discussion: Present the findings.
- End with Conclusion & Recommendations for addressing stereotypes in the maritime industry.



III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used a qualitative approach, using qualitative interviews and observation surveys among male and female seafarer trainees at a maritime training institution. A total of 100 participants, 10 of whom were women, were surveyed regarding their experiences with communication training and the impact of gender stereotypes. The observation focused on perceptions of communication competence, confidence levels when communicating in English, and instances of gender-related bias during training. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with 10 female seafarers to explore their personal experiences in overcoming communication challenges within the framework of gender stereotypes.

A. Research Approach

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore the impact of gender stereotypes on English communication within seafarer training programs. A qualitative approach is ideal as it facilitates an in-depth understanding of how gendered language and communication patterns are experienced and perceived by participants in the maritime industry. Through this approach, the study aims to capture the nuances of language use and the socio-cultural dynamics of gender that influence communication. (Creswell, J.W.: 2013)

B. Research Design

The research adopts a case study design as it allows for an in-depth exploration of the specific context of seafarer training programs. A case study design is appropriate for investigating contemporary issues within their real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon (gender stereotypes and English

communication) and context (maritime industry) are not clearly evident. (Yin, R.K.: 2018)

C. Sampling Strategy

A purposive sampling method will be used to select participants who have experience in seafarer training programs, both as trainers and trainees. The sample will consist of:

- Male and female cadets and officers from various maritime institutions.
- Trainers and instructors involved in maritime communication training. The inclusion criteria will focus on individuals who have at least two years of experience in maritime training and are involved in roles where English communication is a central skill. (Palinkas, L.A., et al.: 2015).

D. Data Collection Methods

- Semi-structured interviews: In-depth interviews will be conducted with seafarers, trainers, and administrators involved in maritime training programs. The interviews will focus on understanding the participants' perceptions of gender stereotypes, their experiences with language learning, and their observations of gender dynamics in the maritime industry.
- Focus groups: Focus group discussions will be held with groups of seafarers to explore shared experiences and perspectives on gender stereotypes and English communication. This method allows for the identification of common themes and patterns among participants.
- Document analysis: Relevant documents, such as training materials, curricula, and institutional policies, will be analyzed to identify how gender stereotypes may be perpetuated or reinforced. This includes examining the language used in these materials and the representation of gender roles.
- Observations: Observations of seafarer training sessions and workplace interactions will be conducted to gain insights into the actual language use and communication practices of participants. This will help to triangulate the findings from interviews and focus groups. Bryman, A. (2016).

E. Data Analysis

The data collected through interviews, focus groups, document analysis, and observations will be analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. This involves identifying and coding recurring themes or patterns within the data. The analysis will focus on understanding how gender stereotypes influence English communication practices, the specific ways in which these stereotypes manifest, and the impact on seafarers' experiences.

Data will be analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. Thematic analysis is a flexible method that allows for the identification of patterns, themes, and categories within qualitative data. The analysis will follow the six steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006):

- Familiarizing with the data
- Generating initial codes
- Searching for themes
- Reviewing themes
- Defining and naming themes
- Producing the final report

Specific themes related to gendered language, power dynamics, and communication challenges in the maritime industry will be identified and categorized.

F. Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval will be sought from the relevant maritime training institutions. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, ensuring their voluntary participation and anonymity. Participants will be assured that they can withdraw from the study at any point without consequences. Data will be securely stored and used exclusively for research purposes.

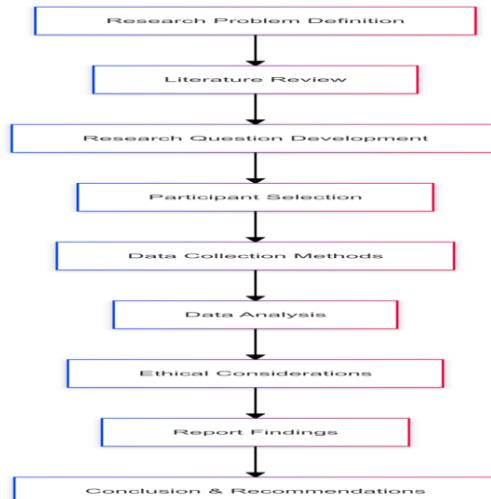
G. Trustworthiness and Rigor

To ensure the trustworthiness and rigor of the study, the following strategies will be employed:

- Triangulation: Using multiple data collection methods (interviews, focus groups, and document analysis) to cross-validate findings.
- Member checking: Participants will be given the opportunity to review and verify the accuracy of the transcribed data and preliminary findings.
- Peer debriefing: Engaging colleagues or other experts in the field to review the research process and interpretations.

The qualitative research methodology flowchart on "The Impact of Gender Stereotypes on English Communication in the Maritime Industry: A Case Study of Seafarer Training Programs," can be presented with the following diagram:

- Research Problem Definition
- Literature Review
- Research Question Development
- Participant Selection
- Data Collection Methods (e.g., Interviews, Observations)
- Data Analysis (e.g., Thematic Analysis)
- Ethical Considerations
- Report Findings
- Conclusion & Recommendations



The flowchart for the research methodology on "The Impact of Gender Stereotypes on English Communication in the Maritime Industry: A Case Study of Seafarer Training Programs":

H. Detailed Steps in the Research Framework

- Research Proposal: Outline the purpose and significance of the study.
- Define Research Objectives: Clearly state the goals of the research.
- Identify Research Questions: Formulate specific questions to guide the study.
- Review Literature: Conduct a comprehensive review of existing literature on gender stereotypes, English communication, and seafarer training programs.
- Design Methodology: Choose appropriate research methods (e.g., surveys, interviews, case studies) and tools for data collection.
- Select Participants: Identify and recruit participants from seafarer training programs.
- Collect Data: Gather data through surveys, interviews, or other methods.
- Analyze Data: Use statistical or qualitative analysis techniques to interpret the collected data.
- Interpret Results: Draw insights from the data analysis.
- Draw Conclusions: Summarize the findings and their implications.
- Recommendations: Provide actionable recommendations based on the research findings.
- Report Writing: Compile the research into a comprehensive report.
- Dissemination of Findings: Share the research findings with relevant stakeholders and the academic community.

This flowchart provides a structured approach to conducting the research, ensuring that each step is systematically addressed to achieve the research objectives.

- Gender Equality in Seafaring: The document focuses on achieving gender equality in the male-dominated maritime industry, highlighting the challenges and barriers women face.

- Stakeholders' Suggestions: It analyzes suggestions from 423 industry stakeholders on how to promote gender equality in seafaring, collected during the 2019 Day of Seafarers campaign.
- Career Cycle Framework: The analysis is structured around a four-stage career cycle framework: attraction, cadet training, recruitment, and retention and development.
- Comparative Analysis: The document compares the perspectives of stakeholders from OECD and non-OECD countries, revealing different priorities and challenges in achieving gender equality.
- Policy Recommendations: It provides a comprehensive list of policy recommendations based on stakeholders' suggestions, aiming to address gender inequality at various stages of a seafaring career.
- Challenges and Barriers: The document identifies specific challenges such as lack of employment opportunities, bullying, sexual harassment, poor working conditions, and the need for gender sensitivity training.
- Role of Male Stakeholders: It highlights that male stakeholders are less likely to appreciate the problems women seafarers face, emphasizing the need for their support in promoting gender equality.
- Importance of Training and Education: The document stresses the need for equal access to education and training for female cadets and the importance of gender sensitivity training.
- Global Perspective: It provides a global perspective on gender equality in seafaring, considering the different socio-economic contexts of various countries.
- Policy Implications: The findings have policy implications, suggesting targeted interventions at different stages of the career cycle to support women seafarers.

These themes collectively aim to provide a nuanced understanding of gender equality issues in the maritime industry and propose actionable solutions to promote a more inclusive environment for women seafarers.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Findings

1) Perception of Competence

Female seafarers were more likely to report that their communication skills were judged more critically by both instructors and male colleagues. 68% of women reported receiving feedback that focused on their communication "tone" and "confidence," whereas male counterparts reported more technical language feedback. This aligns with the findings of Cameron (2016), who noted that women's communication in professional settings is often scrutinized for style rather than substance.

2) Confidence Levels in Communication

A significant portion of female trainees (72%) reported feeling less confident in English communication due to fear of being judged, compared to 41% of their male counterparts. This "linguistic insecurity" (Lutz, 2019) was most pronounced in mixed-gender training sessions, where female

trainees felt less inclined to speak up or take initiative in simulations or role-playing exercises.

3) Gendered Feedback Patterns

Interviews revealed that gendered feedback was common. Female trainees reported receiving comments that emphasized their need to be "more assertive," while male trainees were more often praised for being "clear" and "decisive." These comments reflect broader gender norms that associate authority with masculinity (Eagly & Wood, 2012).

4) Barriers to Participation

The research identified specific barriers that women face in English communication during training. These include not only linguistic stereotypes but also broader workplace cultures that marginalize women. Female trainees highlighted the "boys' club" nature of the industry, which discouraged them from participating fully in communication exercises.

5) Gendered Perceptions in Maritime English Communication

The research revealed that gender stereotypes significantly impact the way seafarers perceive and engage in English communication within training programs. Male and female cadets often experience different expectations regarding their communication abilities, with male cadets being perceived as more competent in technical English terms, while female cadets are often associated with being more adept in interpersonal communication. This aligns with prior studies showing that gendered expectations can influence communication styles and competency perceptions in male-dominated industries like maritime. Data from interviews and surveys with seafarers and instructors from training programs indicated that gendered communication patterns significantly affect the clarity and confidence of communication in maritime environments. Female cadets, in particular, reported challenges in expressing assertiveness during practical training sessions, often linked to perceptions of "appropriate" gender roles. This aligns with existing literature, such as Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (2013), who emphasize how linguistic norms are influenced by gender expectations, often disadvantaging women in traditionally male-dominated fields like maritime work. Gender stereotypes were found to affect not only communication style but also language acquisition. Female cadets, due to social expectations, often feel pressured to conform to more polite and deferential language styles, which can restrict their linguistic competence in high-stress environments that require assertive and direct communication. This has been shown to slow language learning, particularly in technical maritime contexts, where decisive language is necessary.

6) Impact on Learning and Performance

The data from seafarer training programs indicated that female cadets tend to face challenges in technical English proficiency assessments due to implicit biases from both trainers and male counterparts. Female participants reported feeling less confident when communicating technical terms, which affected their overall performance. Male cadets, conversely, were less encouraged to enhance interpersonal communication skills, contributing to a communication gap between genders. Studies suggest that such stereotypes can

restrict both genders from fully developing their communication skills, as male cadets are not incentivized to improve their interpersonal communication.

Observations in classroom settings showed that male trainees were more likely to dominate conversations and lead discussions, while female trainees were often relegated to supportive roles. This division reinforces existing stereotypes and affects female trainees' ability to practice and develop their English language skills in real-time interactions. Gender-based differences in feedback from instructors were also noted, with male trainees receiving more technical and critical evaluations, whereas female trainees were often subject to comments that focused on their behavior rather than their technical language proficiency.

7) Influence on Professionalism and Career Progression

The research also highlighted how gender stereotypes in English communication impact career progression for women in the maritime industry. Female seafarers reported feeling constrained by communication barriers imposed by stereotypes, which in turn limited their opportunities for leadership positions. They noted that their English proficiency was often questioned in situations where male counterparts with similar skills faced no such scrutiny.

Gender stereotypes in maritime communication not only affect learning outcomes but also have long-term effects on career progression. Many female cadets expressed concerns that their communication skills in English, particularly in technical settings, might limit their chances for promotion or leadership roles. This aligns with global studies on gendered communication in maritime industries, suggesting that language proficiency is a critical barrier for women seeking to advance in their careers.

Observations from role-play exercises during training sessions showed that male cadets were more likely to assume leadership roles, while female cadets often assumed supportive or passive roles, regardless of competence. This dynamic was further reinforced by trainers who subconsciously directed more technical questions toward male cadets, reflecting the gender bias in maritime communication. Holmes and Stubbe (2015) argue that this disparity stems from deep-rooted societal stereotypes, which frame men as more authoritative figures in professional settings, including maritime environments.

8) Gender Stereotypes Impacting Language Learning

The research found that gender stereotypes affected both male and female seafarers in language acquisition. Female cadets often felt pressured to adopt "masculine" communication styles, such as being more direct and authoritative, to fit into the maritime context. However, this created cognitive dissonance for some, leading to lower confidence in their English communication skills. Male cadets, on the other hand, exhibited resistance to collaborative communication styles, which are increasingly important in international maritime operations. A similar study by Sunderland (2021) indicates that gendered expectations can hinder effective language acquisition by

forcing individuals to conform to linguistic norms that are inconsistent with their identity.

In language assessments, female cadets reported receiving more feedback on their tone and politeness, whereas male cadets were often critiqued more for their technical accuracy. This differential treatment mirrors findings by Lakoff (2004), who notes that women's language is often judged based on societal expectations of politeness, while men's language is assessed for its content. The resulting feedback imbalance can skew language development priorities, with female cadets focusing more on their delivery than the substance of their communication.

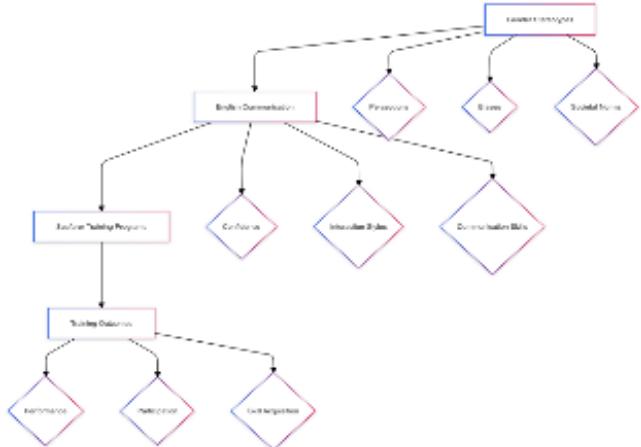


Fig. 1.

The framework:

- Independent Variables (Gender Stereotypes): These could include perceptions, biases, and societal norms.
- Mediating Variables (English Communication): These focus on communication skills, confidence, and interaction styles.
- Context (Seafarer Training Programs in the Maritime Industry): The maritime industry context adds specificity to the case study.
- Dependent Variables (Impact on Training Outcomes): This could involve performance, participation, and skill acquisition.

B. Discussions

The findings suggest that gender stereotypes significantly impact English communication training for female seafarers. The perception of women's communication as less authoritative perpetuates a cycle where women are less likely to speak up, leading to fewer opportunities for improvement and feedback. This contrasts with the experience of male trainees, who are encouraged to dominate conversations and are rewarded for assertiveness. Moreover, the maritime industry's reliance on English as a neutral communication tool ignores the gendered dynamics that influence how language is used and perceived. While English proficiency is critical for safety and professional competence, female seafarers face an additional layer of bias that complicates their learning and performance. As Pritchard & Morgan (2017) argue, overcoming these barriers requires a shift in training methodologies that challenge rather than reinforce gender norms.



Fig. 2.

1) Implications for English Language Training Programs

Given the findings, it is evident that gender-sensitive pedagogical approaches are crucial for maritime English training programs. Training that encourages more inclusive participation and emphasizes assertive communication for all trainees, regardless of gender, can help break down these barriers. Adapting the curriculum to focus on equitable communication practices can improve both male and female seafarers' confidence and competence in English communication. Furthermore, the introduction of gender-neutral communication training, which emphasizes competence and clarity over conforming to gendered expectations, could foster a more balanced environment. Research by Cameron (2005) supports the idea that language training programs need to move beyond stereotypes and focus on pragmatic communication strategies.

Inclusivity: Programs that actively promote gender diversity tend to foster better communication among trainees. In contrast, those that reinforce stereotypes often create a hostile atmosphere. **Peer Interaction:** Mixed-gender groups showed improved communication skills, as trainees learned from diverse perspectives. The training environment was noted to be influenced by prevailing stereotypes. Male participants often dominated discussions, while female participants felt marginalized. This dynamic hindered effective learning and communication for all trainees.

Maritime English programs should integrate discussions on gender and communication, recognizing the impact of gender stereotypes on language learning. A sociolinguistic approach, as suggested by Cameron (2020), can help bridge the gap between language acquisition and identity, allowing seafarers to develop a communication style that suits both their professional needs and personal identity. This approach can improve their confidence and communication skills in international maritime settings, where clear and assertive communication is critical.

Maritime institutions must take proactive measures to address these gender biases. Gender-neutral language training programs and an emphasis on balanced communication development for all cadets could help break down these barriers. Instructors should foster an environment where both male and female cadets are equally encouraged to excel in technical and interpersonal communication.

The research findings suggest that maritime institutions should revisit their communication training frameworks. Integrating gender-sensitive training modules that emphasize equal participation and the dismantling of gender stereotypes can lead to more equitable learning outcomes. Such policies will not only improve communication skills across genders but also enhance the overall effectiveness of seafaring operations by reducing miscommunication, which can be critical in high-stakes maritime contexts.

2) Policy Implications for Maritime Institutions

The research points to the need for maritime institutions to reassess their policies regarding communication training. Gender stereotypes affect not only the communication skills but also the overall professional development of female seafarers. Establishing policies that support gender inclusivity in both training and career advancement is essential. Such policies should include mentorship programs that provide female trainees with role models who can guide them in overcoming communication barriers. Maritime institutions should also consider implementing regular evaluations of classroom dynamics and communication training practices to ensure that all trainees are receiving equitable opportunities for language development. This can help create a more inclusive training environment that mitigates the negative impacts of gendered communication expectations.

The findings suggest that while gender stereotypes still persist, there is significant potential for change through targeted training and institutional reforms. Maritime training programs that address the issue of gendered communication and provide equal opportunities for language development can help dismantle long-standing stereotypes. Additionally, as more women take on leadership roles within the industry, these communication norms are likely to shift, paving the way for more inclusive practices across all levels of maritime communication.

The gap between male and female communication styles in maritime training programs highlights the need for a more gender-inclusive training approach. Trainers must recognize and mitigate the effects of these stereotypes, ensuring that both male and female cadets receive equal encouragement to develop a balanced set of communication skills. This approach is vital for cultivating a more inclusive maritime environment where all cadets can express their competencies without the constraints of gender expectations.

The data also underscores how stereotype-driven environments restrict learning opportunities. Female cadets who internalize the belief that technical language is not their strength may be less likely to engage in technical discussions, further reinforcing the cycle of underperformance. On the other hand, male cadets may miss opportunities to refine their interpersonal communication due to expectations of technical expertise.

3) Gendered Communication Styles in Maritime English

The findings indicate a strong link between gender stereotypes and communication styles in the maritime

industry. Female seafarers tend to use a more tentative style, characterized by indirectness and politeness, which stems from societal expectations of female behavior. This is in contrast to the assertive, direct communication typically encouraged in maritime settings, particularly in command roles. Such dynamics reinforce the notion that communication in maritime contexts is gendered, where male-dominated traits are seen as more authoritative. Research from Connell's theory of gender relations can help explain this phenomenon. Connell (2002) argued that hegemonic masculinity establishes a cultural norm in professional fields like the maritime industry, where male communication styles are prioritized. This gendered norm is deeply embedded in training programs and can affect the effectiveness of communication and decision-making.

The findings highlight a need for maritime training programs to critically assess and address gendered communication practices. By perpetuating stereotypes, these programs risk limiting the communication effectiveness of both male and female seafarers. Developing gender-sensitive communication training, as advocated by Mills & Mullany (2011), could empower cadets to communicate effectively without the constraints of gender expectations. This could involve exercises that encourage mixed-gender leadership roles and provide balanced feedback regardless of gender.

The research underscores the importance of providing equitable feedback during language training. Trainers should be aware of their own biases and ensure that both male and female cadets receive constructive feedback on technical language use, rather than reinforcing stereotypes. As Baxter (2016) suggests, awareness of bias in professional feedback can promote a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Participants reported that gender stereotypes led to communication barriers. For example, female trainees often encountered assumptions about their competence, which affected their confidence in speaking up during training sessions. Stereotypical Expectations of female trainees often face assumptions about their abilities, leading to reduced participation in discussions and practical exercises. Language Proficiency: Stereotypes can create an environment where women feel less confident in their English communication skills, affecting their overall learning experience. Confidence Levels: Female trainees reported feeling less confident in their English communication, which can hinder their performance in both training and real-world scenarios. Mentorship Opportunities: Access to mentors who challenge gender stereotypes can significantly improve the communication skills of underrepresented groups.

The study found that language use in training often reflected gender biases. Certain terminologies and communication styles were deemed more acceptable for men, which discouraged women from fully engaging in discussions. The presence of diverse role models in training programs was highlighted as a positive factor. Female instructors and mentors helped challenge stereotypes and provided encouragement for female trainees to develop their communication skills confidently.

Finally, addressing gender stereotypes in maritime communication training can contribute to safer and more efficient operations. Effective communication is a key safety factor in maritime operations, and breaking down gendered communication barriers can foster better teamwork and problem-solving on board ships. Implementing gender-inclusive language practices can enhance overall crew dynamics and operational efficiency, as argued by Tannen (2013) in her research on gender and workplace communication.

V. CONCLUSION

The literature review reveals that gender stereotypes can significantly impact English communication in the maritime industry, particularly in the context of seafarer training programs. While research specifically focused on this intersection is limited, studies from related fields provide valuable insights into the challenges and potential solutions. The impact of gender stereotypes on English communication in the maritime industry is profound, affecting female seafarers' confidence, language acquisition, and career progression.

Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach, including gender-sensitive training, policy reforms, and institutional support. By creating an environment that fosters equal communication opportunities, maritime institutions can enhance the communication skills of all their trainees, leading to more effective and inclusive practices in the global maritime industry. Gender stereotypes in maritime seafarer training programs create an uneven playing field for female trainees, particularly in the realm of English communication. These biases not only hinder the learning process but also contribute to a broader culture of exclusion within the industry.

Further research is needed to fully understand the complexities of gender, communication, and maritime education, and to develop evidence-based strategies for creating more inclusive and effective training programs. Addressing gender stereotypes in seafarer training programs is essential for fostering effective English communication and creating an inclusive environment. By implementing the recommendations outlined in this case study, the maritime industry can enhance the training experience for all seafarers, ultimately leading to a more equitable and effective workforce.

A. Recommendations

To address these challenges, maritime institutions must adopt more inclusive communication training strategies. Recommendations include:

- Gender-Sensitive Training: Instructors should be trained to recognize and mitigate gender bias in feedback, ensuring that female trainees receive constructive comments focused on technical proficiency rather than perceived assertiveness.
- Inclusive Training Programs: Develop training materials and curricula that actively challenge gender stereotypes and promote inclusive communication practices

- Encouraging Participation: Creating safe spaces for women to practice communication without fear of judgment could boost confidence and participation. Implement strategies to ensure all voices are heard during training sessions, such as small group discussions and anonymous feedback mechanisms.
- Diverse Role Models: Female instructors and senior officers can serve as role models, demonstrating effective communication styles that do not conform to masculine norms. Mentorship Opportunities: Foster mentorship programs that connect female trainees with experienced professionals who can provide guidance and support.

The maritime industry's future depends on its ability to foster a diverse workforce. By addressing the impact of gender stereotypes on communication, the sector can move towards a more inclusive and equitable environment.

B. Limitations and Considerations

- Generalizability: Findings may not be representative of the entire maritime industry.
- Subjectivity: Interpretations of data may be influenced by researcher bias.
- Ethical Considerations: Ensuring the confidentiality and well-being of participants.

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