

DEVELOPING LEARNER-ORIENTED ENGLISH FOR NURSING SYLLABUS

Jacqueline Sandra Sembel¹

Faculty Staff, Faculty of Nursing, Universitas Pelita Harapan
Jl. Jenderal Sudirman Boulevard, No. 15, Lippo Karawaci,
Tangerang 15811, Indonesia
Email: sandra.sembel@uph.edu

ABSTRACT

Background: English has become an inseparable part of Nursing career in non-English speaking countries, including Indonesia. At Universitas Pelita Harapan, student nurses need to take English for Nursing class to prepare them to communicate in English with overseas patients during their internship year. **Goal:** To identify these basic communication needs to use English at the hospital setting, Faculty of Nursing at Universitas Pelita Harapan developed mapping for English for Nursing syllabus and materials for the internship students. **Methodology:** A simplified research and development study was conducted to identify needs and to design and develop the appropriate English for Nursing Syllabus and materials. The study involved 33 nurses and 72 student nurses, covering needs analysis stage to syllabus mapping. **Results:** The result suggested that the course cover 10 communication topics from patient admittance to patient discharge over 16 sessions.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, English for Occupational Purposes, English for Nursing, Syllabus Design, Needs Analysis

BACKGROUND

English has become an inseparable part of Nursing career in non-English speaking countries, including Indonesia. At Universitas Pelita Harapan (UPH), student nurses in the final year are assigned to do their internship in big hospitals throughout Indonesia. At these hospitals, the students who are assigned to assist and observe their seniors in the hospital wards frequently meet patients from a variety of cultural backgrounds and countries. Even though these student nurses work under strict guidance and observation of their mentors and seniors in the hospital, there are some occasions where they have to communicate with the patients from overseas. Therefore, to prepare the students to communicate in English with overseas patients during their

internship year, Faculty of Nursing at Universitas Pelita Harapan developed syllabus to prepare them to perform basic conversations in English at the hospital setting.

Before the study was conducted, student nurses had to take two English Courses: General English and Academic English course in their first and second year. However, these courses didn't seem to meet the specific communication needs of student nurses to perform their tasks in the hospital setting. From the students' feedback at the end of the semester, and also from the observation in the clinical setting, the faculty saw the need to add English to support their activities in the hospital setting. Kennedy & Bolitho (1984)

define this type of English as English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). As a result, the development and design of mapping of the syllabus and materials English for Nursing course were initiated.

The English for Nursing is offered as the final subject that student nurses have to take in the stream of three English Courses. Before students can take this course, they have to pass General English and Academic English courses in the first and second year of study. The 2-credit-semester course is offered in the third year and in 16 sessions. The team of faculty staff in the English department of the faculty of nursing were given the opportunity to design and develop the syllabus and contents of this course. To do this, a Research and Development study was conducted. This article covers the stage of Needs Analysis up to Syllabus Development and content mapping.

LITERATURE REVIEW

English language learning is increasingly moving towards English to support specific needs of students. The General English courses that are generally offered to the first and second year students in the university level do not seem to fit the career-specific communication needs of the student. When university students (who are non-native

speakers of English) start their internship year, they face problems communicating with their clients in English. Thus, there is the need for more job-specific English to support specific purposes (English for Specific Purposes).

English for Specific Purposes

According to Widdowson (1983) English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is an English language training given as an intensive training course based on specific group needs. Anthony (2008) defines ESP as the teaching of English for academic purposes or the teaching of English for vocational or professional purposes. Another definition is given by Robinson (2004) who states that ESP is a means for achieving the necessary competence, but not an end in itself. The definitions offered by these three language experts have one thing in common: Teaching English that is geared to meet specific group needs (academic or job-related needs).

However, with the fast development information technology and global movement of people in the work place, the needs of English language learning in the English for Foreign Language learning (EFL) have also become more and more converging to specific job needs. Therefore,

ESP is then subdivided into two: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). The concern of the study is more on the EOP.

English for Occupational Purposes

Kennedy and Bolitho (1984) briefly explained two divisions of ESP. EAP is taught in academic context and a disciplined based English language learning. Whereas, EOP is taught in a professional setting based on the job-related needs. EOP can be offered before students start their profession or as a pre-experience. EOP can also be given to support professionals at work.

EOP takes into consideration the communication settings in the workplace. It is also designed and delivered to support learners' needs to communicate with their clients, with other professionals at work.

This study focuses more on adopting EOP which is based on learners' needs to support their job-specific communication needs in the hospital setting.

METHODOLOGY

This study applied a Research and Development (R&D) cycle from Borg and Gall (1983) to develop and design learner-

oriented syllabus and materials. The R&D cycle of Borg and Gall (2003: 775) consists of 10 stages from data collecting to dissemination and implementation: (1) Research and information collecting, (2) Planning, (3) Development of an initial product, (4) Preliminary field testing, (5) Preliminary product revision, (6) Primary field testing, (7) Operational revision of the product, (8) operational field testing, (9) Final product revision, and (10) Dissemination and implementation.

However, due to time and resources considerations, the researcher was able to conduct and report the first three steps of the R & D model in this article. The study was conducted at the faculty of nursing, Universitas Pelita Harapan in Lippo Karawaci, Tangerang, Indonesia, involving 60 students and 30 nurses for identifying learning needs and goals.

The first stage of information collection was conducted in the forms of review of literature. Information was also collected by distribution of Needs Analysis questionnaires to target students (72 second year and third year UPH nursing students), and nurses (33 Indonesian nurses with more than 2 years of experience in the hospital settings). The instrument for student nurses

was uploaded on to online social media--academic group of UPH Faculty of Nursing students. Students were invited to take part in the survey. The instrument for nurses were uploaded on to mobile phone-based social media application group of nurses.

The second stage is the planning stage, the researcher identified proposed topics for materials development. In this stage, the researcher also examined the current syllabus and conducting comparative analysis of other English for Nursing syllabus to identify goals and objectives. The result of this stage is a design document for the syllabus and learning materials.

The third stage is developing the syllabus by detailing abilities and goals, and evaluation scheme. In this stage, teaching materials in the form of model dialogs and teaching plans are developed (Borg and Gall, 2003: 781).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The first stage of the R&D study resulted in a literature review (summarized in the previous part of this paper), and the following profile of target learners' English language competence and summary of needs analysis.

The brief profiles of respondents of the two instruments are presented in Table 1 and Table 2 below. Table 1 highlights the Brief demographic and Needs Analysis profile of 72 student nurses, the target learners of English for Nursing. Table 2 summarizes the brief profile of 33 experienced nurses in hospital setting. Table 3 provides information about the suggested topics by experience nurses to be included in the English for Nursing materials. Finally, Table 3 describes the course and the course objective.

Table 1. Brief Profile Of Student Nurses

Characteristics	Frequency	%
Gender:		
Male	15	20.8%
Female	57	79.2%
Cohort (Batch)		
2016	18	25%
2017	54	75%
Needs Analysis		
General English	65	90%
Academic English	72	100%
English for Nursing	56	77.8%

Table 1 shows that most of the respondents are female (79.2%) and from batch/cohort 2017 (75%). When asked about the need to learn different types of English, all of them (100%) think that Academic English is critical for their study success. This is probably in line with their needs to read and understand nursing journals and textbooks. As Kennedy & Bolitho (1984) point out that English for Academic Purposes is taught in an academic context to support

disciplined based needs. They also think that their ability to talk about general issues is important (90%). Nursing students in UPH are diverse. They come from different parts of Indonesia, even from remote areas of Indonesia. These students feel the urgent need to learn English in General context as they are placed in the UPH global campus with faculty staff from various backgrounds, some of whom are from overseas. English for Nursing needs come in third with 56 people holding the opinion of the need to learn English in nursing context (77.8%). Nursing students know that they will spend time doing internship in internationally accredited hospitals. Thus, many of them also feel the urgency to learn English in nursing context.

Table 2. Brief Profile Of Nurses

Characteristics	Frequency	%
Gender:		
Male	2	6.1%
Female	31	93%
Age		
Below 25	0	0%
25- 30 years old	14	42.4%
31 – 35 years old	8	24.2%
36 – 40 years old	2	6.1%
Above 40 years old	9	27.3%
Work Experience as a nurse		
5 years and below	9	28%
6 to 10 years	9	28%
10 – 15 years	4	12.5%
Above 15 years	10	31.3%

Types of hospital where they spend the longest working experience		
Private hospital (national standard)	18	56.3%
Private hospital (International standard)	11	34.4%
Government hospital	4	12.5%
Duration of using English at work		
Never	13	39%
1-2 hours/day	17	51.5%
3-5 hours/day	0	0%
More than 5 hours/day	3	9.1%
Most needed language skills at work		
Speaking	26	81.3%
Listening	3	9.4%
Reading	2	6.3%
Writing	1	3.1%
Strongest language skills		
Reading	12	38.7%
Listening	9	29%
Speaking	7	22.5%
Writing	3	9.7%

Data Table 2 reveals that 93% of respondents are female and 42.4% are between 25-30 years old. The number of nurses with 15 years of experience and above tops the profile of the respondents with 31.3%. Around half of them spend most of their nursing career in national standard private hospital (56.3%). Even though their work setting is mostly national standard hospital, around half of them (51.5%) need to use English at work for 1-2 hours/day. Approximately 81.3% think that

Speaking skill is the most important skill to support them at work. Their current language competence profile reveals that their strongest English language competence is reading (38.7%) and those who claim to be strong in Speaking only account for 22.5%. Thus, their weakest skills are the two productive language skills: Speaking and Writing. This data from Table 2 suggests the need to improve speaking and writing skills.

The second stage of the R&D study resulted in proposed topics to be covered in the *English for Nursing* course. These topics are the result of the suggestions from experienced nurses in the hospital settings.

Table 3. Proposed Topics

Topic	Frequency	%
Patient admission	26	76.5%
Telephone communication	26	76.5%
Taking vital signs	25	73.5%
Educating patients	29	85.3%
Drug administration	25	73.5%
Explaining lab result	25	73.5%
Wound care	19	55.9%
Bedside handover	22	64.7%
Pre-operative care	22	64.7%
Post-operative care	22	64.7%
Breaking bad news	24	70.6%
Patient discharge	27	79.4%
Other suggested topics		
Maternity	1	6.3%
Assessment	1	6.3%
Daily nursing care (Bathing, feeding, etc)	1	6.3%

Counseling	1	6.3%
Conversation with other health care professionals	1	6.3%
Perceptorship in English	1	6.3%

Data in Table 3 reveals four top topics that are considered most important to be included in the *English for Nursing* course: Educating patients, communication with patients during discharge, Communication with patients during admission and telephone communication. This is in line with two of the important roles of a nurse: providing guidance and health education and communicating effectively with patients and other health care professionals (Potter & Perry, 2009). Besides the listed topics, respondents were also given the chance to suggest important topics to be included in the learning materials. Around 14 respondents suggested their topics. The summary of their topics suggests health education and conversation with other health care professionals (e.g. doctors)

Finally, the third stage of the R&D study is summarized in a design document for *English for Nursing*.

From all the data collected (literature review, questionnaires from student nurses and from experienced nurses, a design document that will be used as the bases for

developing syllabus and materials for English for Nursing to aid English language communication needs of student nurses during their internship year.

The first part of the proposed Instructional Design Document is presented here. It covers the basic information of course description and course objectives.

Table 4. Course Description and Objectives

Course Description

This course is for student nurses who have early operational level of ability to communicate using basic English (who are beginning to use English to express themselves) and wish to improve their speaking mastery and confidence to operational level in general nursing context.

Course Terminal Objective

At the end of the course, students will be able to start communicating in English at basic operational level about 10 familiar topics in nursing context.

From the findings presented in the previous three tables, it can be concluded that *English for Nursing* should focus more on productive communication skills, especially speaking mastery and confidence. From the

topics suggested, the course can choose 10 most needed topics in nursing context which can be structured based on the flow of patient's care from patient admission to patient discharge.

The primary purpose of this stage of mini R&D study is to identify the urgent communication needs in nursing context, specifically the needs to communicate in basic English. Previously, it is believed that student nurses just need General English and English for Academic Purposes. However, this mini R&D study reveals the need to learn English in more specific nursing context. Traditionally, it is also believed that English for Nursing should just teach students to master the teaching medical term (Lee, 1998). This R&D study reveals that nurses also need the competence to communicate in English. Therefore, English for Nursing course should be more holistic in helping the student nurses to develop their communication skills in nursing context.

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