

Use of Discipline-Based Authentic Materials: The Role of ESP Practitioner to Enhance Nurses' Effective Language Skills Acquisition

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Abstract

English language learning text books are important media in providing base to acquire practical language skills. It was broadly noticed that the text books and the work books designed to be taught in B.Sc. nursing are not catering to the needs of the language learners as they fail to motivate the nurses to acquire the language because of the very content. The content of the text books and workbooks used in some institutes are of General English. As the role of ESP playing an important role, lot of researches have been undertaken to design and adapt the methods or the approaches of teaching and learning that are ESP related. Text book analysis was carried out to study the reason behind the ineffectiveness of the language text books used in two different nursing institutes. It was noted that there are number of reasons how the content of the text books couldn't be motivating and sufficient enough to acquire the language skills. Text book analysis helped the researchers that inclusion of discipline- based texts to teach reading skills, discipline-based listening scripts to teach listening skills, discipline-based topics and genres of writing to practice writing skills and discipline-based situational speaking contexts to enhance speaking skills which will probably reap the learning objectives of the course in successfully acquiring practical language skills.

Key words: discipline-based learning; skills-based language teaching; ESP; use of authentic materials; discipline-based text book contents

1. Introduction

The need for efficient communication skills among all professional course learners is becoming more evident in the present scenario. This study presents the relevance of English text books prescribed for the nursing students. The objectives of this study is to establish the point that text books prescribed for English should be disciplined based in order to enhance communication skills of students belonging to specific professional course. It also focuses on the need of efficient communication skills to be acquired by nursing students as they too will have to interact with doctors, technicians, patients, relatives and other professionals in the medical field. This study used quantitative and qualitative approaches to cross validate, corroborate the findings and to complement the weakness and strengths of the two methods (Creswell, 2009). The quantitative section was a questionnaire developed based on instruments used by Basturkmen (2010), O' Neil (2011) and Wang et al. (2008) and supplemented exploratory interviews with nursing students. A questionnaire has been prepared with two parts A & B each consisting of 10 questions which has been distributed to 56 nurses from two different hospitals. The responses have been collected and analyzed using Likert scale method. In the qualitative section, semi-structured interviews on self-evaluation, problems faced, and recommendations have been

conducted. A total of 56 nurses in two different hospitals have been selected for this study. The interview included a few teachers who teach English at nursing institutions. The analysis carried out is based on various factors obtained from the quantitative data which has then developed into thematic analysis. The results of the first research question revealed that the majority of the students faced problems in understanding spoken English and had difficulty speaking in English.

2. Significance of the Study

The text books and workbooks are the back bones in teaching learning process. The contents in the prescribed textbooks become all the more crucial in the context of ESP (English for Specific Purposes). If it has been structured on the needs of the learners, it would have certainly motivated as ESP is gaining its popularity in English language teaching. In this context, the role of discipline based text books contents are very important as it would be better to be completely based on the discipline they pursue. There have been attempts made by a few authors such as Selva Rose and V.Bernice Ebenezer. The analysis of these text books gave the researchers a lot of input. To some extent, the text books do have contents related to medical profession but the outcome of the learning the language through those text books are having severe negative impact. Though both the text books have been based on the syllabus of Indian Nursing Council, including all possible types of questions chapter wise, based on the guidelines framed by the council, the outcome that is the impact that the texts had in making the learners fluent in speaking in English, writing without much serious errors and comprehension of both listening and reading are not clearly evident. The gap has paved the way for further study and discipline based approach. The idea is to make it simple. Therefore, including discipline-based texts, simplification of tasks, timely intervention of the teacher and individual attention could possibly bring the needed outcome.

3. Review Of Related Studies

The nursing students are supposed to have English proficiency and speaking skill is the main target for the students in learning English. As the researcher knows that active skill is demanded to support their professionalism and for the academic needs. It is because speaking skill is very important for communication. Speaking skill is used in many different purposes and different situations. As seen in Richards & Renandya (2002), they state that most of the world's language learners study English in order to develop their speaking proficiency. It is a very complex task both in foreign and second language. To begin with, speaking is used for many different purposes, and each purpose involves different skills like may be to make social contact with people, to engage with friends or relatives, to seek or express opinions, to persuade someone about something, or to clarify information. Sometimes English is used to get things, to describe things, to complain about people's behavior, to make polite requests.

The English language for nursing program is an English for Specific Purpose (ESP) which is used for particular domain. Carter & Nunan (2001) add that ESP may be designed for specific disciplines or professions that ESP lecturer needs to be responsible for the specific subject knowledge, which leads to classroom interaction and teaching method that can be quite different from general English. Evans (1998) also states that students in certain program need English to support their educational and

professional needs like to understand textbooks or articles which were written in English, to write case reports, or to participate in group discussion. Boshier (2006) as cited in Paltridge and Tarfield (2013) states that one part in English for Specific Purpose (ESP) field is English for Nursing. It focuses on the way nurses use English both in professional setting as well as in nursing education. In nursing program, the students are demanded to be able to communicate using international language, make a report of nursing treatment, understand the report and the nursing treatment, and also do a presentation. Richards (2008) adds the mastery of speaking skills in English is a priority for both second or foreign language learners. Brown (2000) states that based on the communicative and pragmatic views of the language classroom, listening and speaking skills are closely intertwined. In this study, the researchers wanted to observe the students need of learning media which is appropriate with them.

The ESP teachers or practitioners usually start with this question: "Why do these learners need to learn English?" (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987, p.53). The origin of ESP and its development is closely linked with learners' interests in various specific disciplines and various genres connected with them e.g. insurance English, English for Tourist Management, and English for Engineers etc. The answer to the question why do the nurses need to learn English will clearly pave way on how an appropriate text book which is discipline-based need to be designed with an innovative approach to enhance nurses effective language skills acquisition. The Learners' motivation enables teacher to meet students' needs and expectations easier. So, the ESP teachers' work involves much more than teaching. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) prefer the term - ESP practitioner - instead of ESP teacher as this definition seems to be more clear and complete. They distinguish the following key roles of ESP practitioner: teacher; course-designer and materials provider, collaborator; researcher and evaluator.

A three procedure based needs analysis has been carried out by a group of first year nursing students with the initiative of a few researchers in Jordan in the year 2010-2011. (Frehit S. & Al-Makhzhoimi K. April 2012) The study is limited to only twenty participants who have been just first year students of nursing. The study is also limited in the sense that it confined to find out the areas where English language is used. Based on the findings of the needs analysis, the researchers developed a language course to respond to the areas of greatest difficulty. The simplification of tasks is based on Ellis (2003) and Van den Branden (2006) ideas of TBLT which implies that tasks should be psychologically motivating, engaging and result in the use of language. They insisted that tasks are not products but processes and are at the centre of each rich language learning activity and they are generally structured in three stages: Pre-task, in-task and post-task.

The content in the text books of ESP and the tasks should be related to the knowledge of register/genre differences (Biber & Conrad). This awareness gives rise to the general field of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), which puts into the focus the English-language skills for selecting and using the appropriate registers/genres. Elena Sokolova and Elena Yurieva state that the development of Science, technology, education, and business, in their turn, has led to the worldwide demand of English for Specific Purposes(ESP) emphasizing the description of the language used in various registers and genres from a particular profession or academic discipline (such as biochemistry or physics) and especially the specialists who are able to teach ESP courses.

The first role is synonymous with that of the 'General English' teacher, EFL methodology changes as teaching becomes more specific. The ultimate goal of education process nowadays is developing instructional materials that contribute to students learning the particular language patterns that are typical for the different situations and different kinds of text in specific fields. (Elena Sokolova and Elena Yurieva, 2019). Hussain Hassan Ibrahim makes it clear that the teacher's role is to build up appropriate opportunities for learning and teaching processes. Also, he/she should make use of authentic materials to increase learners' motivation as well as to apply proper teaching methodology that suits learners' needs.

4. Objectives of the Study

- To find out the reasons why the nurses who complete B.Sc. or B.Sc.post basic are not able to communicate effectively?
- To find out whether the English language text books' contents are with discipline-based authentic materials?
- To find out whether the content of the text books are motivating and enhancing to communicate effectively in their profession?

5. Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses have been set for validation:

- If the content of the text books and the workbooks used for B.Sc. nursing are designed discipline-based and possibly with authentic materials, will it have been motivating?
- If the text books are designed with teaching and learning materials directly related nursing profession, would it have enhanced nurses' professional communicative skills?

6. Population and Sample

The population includes prospective nurses of two different hospitals in Chennai, Tamilnadu, India. The investigators used simple random sampling technique and randomly selected 56 prospective nurses in two different hospitals in Chennai.

6.1. Statistical Techniques Used in the Present Study

In this study, the researchers have used documentary method. Documentary method is defined as a way to collect data by using books, literatures, or electronic media which are related to the topic of the study.

The prescribed text-books have been analyzed to find out whether the contents are discipline-based and authentic. The contents are based on grammar and other related activities which sound good but whether the contents fulfill those of English for Specific Purposes, especially nursing discipline-based are really questionable.

A questionnaire, consisting of Part A and Part B has been framed based on Likert scale after a

wide range of discussions on the content of two different text books used in different nursing institutes. The Part A consisted of seven statements whereas Part B consisted of five statements. The main objective of the closed-ended questionnaire was to find out the reflections of the nurses who have completed their degree. It has been administered among 56 nurses in two different hospitals via Google form.

The statements have been framed in the questionnaire to analyze the researchers' intention in bringing out the real time application of the prescribed English text books for B.Sc Nursing students. The researchers have selected nurses who have been working after completing their undergraduate degree. The aspect of English for Specific Purposes has been analyzed using the seven statements framed under Part A of the questionnaire. All the seven statements have been framed involving the English text books and its pivotal role in developing the four language skills – Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Though there are just seven statements framed but enough to check the text books role in the shaping of the nursing students into efficient communicators.

6.2. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1 Part A shows the level of agreeing in connection with the content of the text-book used when they were students. Part B shows whether their learning the language would have been better if the content of the text books would have been discipline-based.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Partially Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
PART – A						
English language text book in B.Sc. Nursing is based on ESP	0	0	8	35	13	1.91
The content in English language text book in B.Sc. Nursing is discipline-based	0	0	10	40	6	2.07
The English language text book used in B.Sc. Nursing is motivating	5	10	5	25	11	1.98
The content of the text books have speaking tasks related to your profession	0	2	10	40	4	2.17
The text books have reading texts that are directly related to the	0	0	0	50	6	1.89

nursing profession						
The prescribed text books provide opportunities to practice your professional-based listening skills	0	0	0	48	8	1.85
The English text books provide opportunities to practice writing skills	2	10	10	28	6	2.53
PART – B						
If the books have discipline-based contents, it would have been motivating	45	8	3	0	0	4.75
If the books have discipline-based listening contents, it would have enhance listening skills	50	6	0	0	0	4.89
If the books have discipline-based listening contents, it would have enhanced speaking skills	48	8	0	0	0	4.85
If the books have discipline-based listening contents, it will enhance reading skills	47	9	0	0	0	4.83
If the books have discipline-based listening contents, it will enhance writing skills	49	7	0	0	0	4.87

Interpretation of Table-1. Part A & Part B

It has been found out that the respondents think that they are not completely aware of the term 'ESP'. They have been unable to decide whether the content of their text books are discipline-based. For the next four statements which are related to text books having content and tasks directly related to listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, The respondents could not really even agree whether they are discipline-based as well as unaware whether those would have been helpful in enhancing needed language skills.

The Part B of the questionnaire helped them to realize whether their language learning in B.Sc. Nursing is purely ESP based and the content in the text books contained nursing professional related language skills. The respondents stated that it would have been both motivating and thus enhancing in a more professional way of language learning. Almost all of them are of the same opinion. Thus both the hypotheses stand validated.

The respondents' responses have brought out the failure of the contents which are efficient in building the basics but not fitting exactly for the specific or the special purposes. This is clearly evident with the responses as well as the mean values obtained for each statement.

The responses for almost all the statements have clearly stated the 'NIL' response for Strongly Agree and Agree scales. A total of five statements and four statements have scored zero under Strongly Agree and Agree scales respectively. The above mentioned responses themselves have clearly mentioned the stand alone status of the English text books prescribed for the students. Most of the respondents have chosen either Disagree or Strongly Disagree scales for almost all the statements. The Mean values arrived based on the responses for each of the statements distinctly proves the above mentioned: 1.91, 2.07, 1.98, 2.17, 1.89, 1.85 and 2.57 respectively. The values for four statements have fallen between the scales of 1 to 2 which denotes the scale of disagree, through which the following conclusion could be arrived: The prescribed English text book is not specific in its purpose, low motivation towards language learning, not directly related to specific reading and listening skills pertaining to medical field. The mean values for the other three statements are between 2 to 3 which denotes the scale of partially agreeing. This outfits the other two scales of agreeing and strongly agreeing with the statements. The prescribed English text books have served the purpose in improving writing skills as half of the respondents have agreed, strongly agreed or partially agreed with the last statement.

The responses for all the five statements in Part B are the reversal of Part A responses. As already mentioned, the respondents are not aware of ESP and the researchers have to make them understand the terminology. The respondents have chosen either Agree or Strongly Agree for all the statements. The Mean values – 4.75, 4.85, 4.89, 4.83 and 4.87 - fall between the scales of 4 to 5 denoting the scale of Strongly Agreeing. This also proves that the students would have benefitted if the text books have been structured with the contents for specific purpose. The researcher found it intricate to know that the respondents are unaware of ESP. The respondents became eager to know that ESP would have definitely enhanced all the four language skills as well as would have motivated and encouraged them to learn English in a better manner.

7. Recommendations

- The nursing English language text books should have simple, authentic, discipline-based contents and tasks that are motivating and enhancing language acquisition.
- Realistic listening tasks can be adapted that are purely discipline-based.
- Activities such as role-plays and group discussions for professional based speaking pertaining to nursing scenarios will directly be helpful.

- Authentic reading materials from medical contexts with different comprehension tasks and practice on medical based genres of writing such as reports and various letter writing or email writings can largely be helpful for effective communication and successful language acquisition.

Conclusion

The objectives of English subject in Nursing Program mainly focuses on enhancing speaking ability of the students. The speaking ability is aimed at doing conversation, writing a report on nursing education, listening comprehension, and also presentation or seminar. From the interview with the lecturer and the student from Nursing Program it can be assumed that there was appropriateness between the interview and the result of questionnaire. In the interview, the lecturer said that the main focus of English subject in Nursing Program is enhancing speaking ability of the nursing students. So, in the classroom, speaking practices such as conversation, seminar, discussion, and debate are to be the main focus of the lesson. Whereas from the interview with the nursing student, she also claimed that actually the students need more practices in speaking because they only have opportunity to speak English only in English class which was held once a week during the semester. They were too busy with other subjects. So, their ability in speaking English still needs to be improved. Some of the students were lack of confidence when they speak with others in English. Besides, the nursing students still need more practices related with pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and listening comprehension that actually those components of language should be integrated to support speaking skill. To conclude on the present study, the following points can be mentioned:

- The prescribed English text book is not specific in its purpose
- It provides low motivation towards language learning
- Not directly related to specific listening, speaking, reading and writing skills based on the profession

As ESP is gaining importance, it is better that ESP practitioners become course designers and materials providers. The key advantage of this practice will certainly be helpful in providing discipline-based course materials that will not only be motivating but also be enhancing in acquiring needed language skills.

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