

NURSING STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE NECESSITY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE FOR NURSING CAREER AND HUMAN AID PARTICIPATION

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ABSTRACT: English proficiency is increasingly essential for nursing students, particularly in global healthcare and international humanitarian work. This study explores nursing students' perceptions of the role of English in their future careers and its significance in humanitarian settings. A qualitative survey was conducted among nursing students at various academic levels, focusing on their attitudes toward English learning, perceived importance in professional settings, and challenges in acquiring proficiency. The findings indicate that most students recognize English as a critical skill for career advancement, effective communication with international colleagues, and access to global medical research. Additionally, students acknowledge that English proficiency enhances their ability to participate in humanitarian missions, improving healthcare delivery in multilingual environments. However, they also report difficulties in mastering medical terminology and confidence in spoken English, highlighting the need for more integrated language training in nursing curricula. The study suggested that incorporating targeted English language programs in nursing education could better prepare students for international career opportunities and humanitarian work. Strengthening English proficiency among nursing students is crucial in fostering global healthcare collaboration and improving patient outcomes in diverse settings.

Keywords: English for specific purpose, Global healthcare, Human aid participation, Learning English, Nursing students' perceptions

INTRODUCTION

In the age of globalization, understanding the English language is vital because of the tremendous rise in the transportation and information sectors, enabling seamless interaction across time, distance, and location (Muslem et al., 2019). English has become the dominant language in medical research, healthcare communication, and international nursing practice. As nursing students, preparing for their careers, understanding the necessity of English is vital for their professional development.

In global humanitarian aid, medical workers also have crucial roles. They must work in a diverse environment where English is the primary medium of communication.

Many international organizations deliver their volunteer who work in the medical work environment. Organizations such as the Red Cross and other humanitarian aid foundations use English as their communication language, which means that to join international medical professionals as a nurse also requires English as the very first ticket.

Since COVID-19, medical work has reached its peak in challenge and tension. During COVID-19, the number of patients who died was not only from patients but also from the medical team. Then, people continued to see the war in Ukraine recently, and the medical team could not hold for what happened in Gaza, Palestine. Whenever a bomb strikes a human, it means there must be a strong medical team behind it. What

happened in Palestine in the worst human disaster and crisis has been reported in the news. The worst part is the medical team, such as doctors and nurses, were also killed in the war.

The medical team has been faced with the fact that they must regenerate in this critical situation. Being a medical worker in such a condition does affirm the skill, persistence, accuracy, and sensibility in every decision they make and beyond all of those is a strong motivation. With a such situation, being a medical worker is a challenge. Nursing students need to be encouraged to learn and take experience wherever the opportunity comes. To be a nurse means to forge the boundaries of every little chance of life and they must realize how important their role is specifically in a crisis.

To be a nurse, it requires them to have effective communication, and understanding the medical terminology so that they can avoid mistakes. In humanitarian, conflict, post-conflict, early recovery, and protracted refugee situations, communication is crucial for coordinating relief efforts and providing essential services such as water, sanitation, health, protection, food security, and education during emergencies, both in crisis-affected nations and in those hosting forcibly displaced individuals (Moser-Mercer, 2021).

Good communication will help a nurse to interact with doctors and other medical professionals. Good communication skill also builds patients' trust and makes them feel safe while being under care. This means that they already know what path they take to see their future career. They can explore nursing education earlier and get the opportunity to study nursing courses better in higher education. They can easily pursue the scholarship because they are better candidates. The academic leader also needs to initiate programs that aim to develop nursing skills to gain higher competencies, which include language competencies

that can be their communication skill enhancement (Jogerst et al., 2015).

To fulfill all the skills of a nurse, mastering an international language is necessary. Language functions as a tool for communication which is always used by humans, including nurses (Husna & Hajar, 2024). As an international language, English has met these criteria. Therefore, studying English has been an obligatory subject in Indonesia for every major in school. Students have been learning English even longer than they realize they need it. However, the implementation of English has been very few to see an active language skill. It is needed to shape the purpose of learning and the use of the language can be impacted in the course they are focusing on. Therefore, this study aims to assess the perception of nursing students regarding the importance of English in their future careers, identifying awareness, motivation, and potential struggle in learning the language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Effective communication skills must be attached to a profession, especially in the medical world because they have a collaborative work system. Communication is crucial, whether working as a private nurse or a registered nurse in the hospital. A patient in pre-hospital condition and the nurse need to be able to report the patient's condition to the doctor or healthcare team so that medical work can be based on good collaboration. Healthcare needs every element of medical professionals to serve a good consultation to improve patient health progress (Holleran, 1994).

Nurses, as the people who spend the most time intensively with patients, need to fully understand that the tasks assigned to them are their responsibility and are expected to be carried out well. In collaborative work, a nurse needs to be adaptable in every situation and condition and respect the team. Having good communication and interpersonal

relations will optimize teamwork (Hegner & Caldwell 1992).

A patient relies on a nurse after the doctor. A nurse must be a person who knows the patient's situation well so they can decide what the proper way to handle the situation is. The key for the nurse to solve a problem based on a real situation is experience. The experience would be the record of their nurse journal when they come back for academic aspiration, and then that can be others' solution when facing the same situation or problem (Rideout, 2001).

Collaboration will require good communication skills, which is why language takes place in the front row. To enhance the language skills also takes motivation and effort. To support language learning, it is essential to have a look at the situation in formal or non-formal learning institutions. This will reflect the language ability and students need to improve their language ability based on their major education (Suramto et al., 2021).

METHOD

This research employed a quantitative survey methodology. Creswell (2009) articulated that a survey design offers a quantitative or numerical depiction of trends, attitudes, or opinions within a population by examining a sample of that population. The researcher extrapolates or asserts conclusions regarding the population based on sample results. This method was employed to elicit nursing students' perception of the necessity of the English language for nursing careers and human aid participation.

The study involved 103 students enrolled in nursing programs at STIKES Darussalam Lhokseumawe, Indonesia. They were selected randomly from a batch of students with 1 to 4 years of study. Data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of 20 questions about students' interest in language ability and the motivation to pursue a

career overseas. The questionnaire also assesses students' perceptions, motivation, and challenges in using English for their jobs. The questionnaire was distributed to the students by visiting their class in their spare time after class. The data collected from the questionnaire were then analyzed through quantitative calculation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Students' Perception of English in Nursing

The findings of this study suggest that most students recognize the importance of English but may not fully grasp its role in professional practice. Some students view English as merely an academic requirement rather than a critical skill for patient care, medical terms, and career advancement.

Table 1 shows that most students realize that they need English for their nursing future career. There is no hesitation in them that English is the language that will support their future career in nursing. It is 85% agreed that English will help them in communication with the patient. There were 85% strongly agree that English will help them to understand medical literature resources which indicates they want to access more knowledge sources.

The finding supports Suramto et al., (2021) who found that students recognize that both listening and speaking skills are essential requirements for nursing students. Similar findings were also reported by Mi-Young et al., (2024) who found that reading skills and exam preparation were top priorities related to language skills, with practical and real-world course content. The students also perceive that English is essential for working in the international community and will open job opportunities in the nursing field.

Table 1. English for Nursing Career

No	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
1	Learning English is important for my nursing career.	5 %	85 %	-	10%
2	English proficiency is essential for effective communication with patients.	5 %	85 %	-	10%
3	Understanding medical literature and research in English is important.	85%	10%	-	5%
4	English language skills are essential for working in international healthcare settings.	90%	5%	-	5%
5	I believe learning English enhances my job opportunities in the nursing field.	95 %	5%	-	-

Students' responses in Table 1 indicate that they have the certainty that learning English opens wide future opportunities for them. They understand that mastering English will allow them to have more access to the larger medical environment. This will be a good number for the English lecturer to do more encouragement on the language learning process and to give progress in the learning.

English for Nursing Career Overseas

There are various motivations for students to attend nursing classes rather than other majors in the medical field. Professional career and potential higher payment are reasons among those students. Table 2 will display the motivation.

Table 2. English for Nursing Career Overseas

No	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
1	I am interested in pursuing a nursing career overseas	5 %	80 %	-	15%
2	I believe a nursing career overseas offers higher salaries.	85 %	15 %	-	-
3	Working as a nurse abroad would provide better career opportunities.	5%	75%	-	15%
4	I would consider a nursing job overseas to gain international experience.	-	70%	-	30%
5	Cultural differences would be a challenge when working abroad as a nurse	85 %	15%	-	-

Table 2 demonstrates that the dominant result number is 80% of respondents who are interested in pursuing a career overseas, followed by 85% strongly agreeing that they will have a higher payment overseas. However, they still found the cultural issue challenging, which may restrain

them from the intention of working abroad. The percentage of these two issues is the same total number. This can be reflected in the balance between the possibility and the obstacle. This number could be parsed if the respondents could see their purpose

priority and see the culture issue solution.

Students' responses indicate that they need to have a cross-cultural understanding, which can be achieved through a seminar or visiting countries if possible, or the lecturer could do a discussion session, or the very easiest one is to search independently formal or non-formal resources. As a member of humanitarian organizations, nurses need to comprehend many interpretations of humanitarian principles, which will aid in formulating a strategic approach to public communication (Dijkzeul & Moke, 2005).

Students require more comprehension of working in the global community and how to deal with the differences in culture in different communities. Being a global nurse

professional means moving beyond traditional, localized nursing roles to take on responsibilities that address international health issues. Nurses are encouraged to think of themselves not just as caregivers, but as essential players in solving global health crises, from infectious diseases to health disparities in underserved regions.

Humanitarian Work

As an aspiring professional nurse, students need to understand that they would be in medical service for everyone and anywhere. Since the humanitarian issue keeps being in the headlines, the researcher tries to find out the students' views on contributing to humanitarian work. The responses are displayed in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Motivation in Humanitarian Work

No	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
1	I feel motivated to participate in humanitarian work	5 %	80 %	-	15%
2	I believe that humanitarian work can help me develop my nursing skills.	85 %	15 %	-	-
3	I think it is important for nursing students to get involved in humanitarian work.	5%	75%	-	15%
4	I would be willing to join humanitarian work if I received financial support.	-	70%	-	30%
5	I believe nursing students should receive more education on humanitarian work.	85 %	15%	-	-

Table 3 shows that 80% of respondents agree and want to contribute as nurses in the humanitarian service. As much as 85% strongly agree that humanitarian work will help them in developing the skill. There are 75% of students agree that they need humanitarian work to apply their skills. They might need to start by volunteering in the local community, or they can do it independently by helping others and applying their nursing skill.

Students' responses demonstrate that they believe that humanitarian work can develop their nursing skills. This belief will increase their enthusiasm for

working because nurses are more likely to contribute higher effort and passion when there is congruency between their principles, their professional identity, and their ability to perform these (Dawson et al., 2021). Working professionally can be different from social work. This is something that they need to understand. The aspiring nurse can join a humanitarian or volunteer organization before really deciding to work professionally overseas.

The Challenge in Learning English

Students face some obstacles in learning English, especially because

English is a foreign language for them. These obstacles can be seen in Table 4 below:

Table 4. Difficulties in Learning English

No	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
1	I feel nervous or anxious when speaking English in class.	25 %	55 %	5%	15%
2	I lack sufficient practice in English outside the classroom.	70 %	25 %	-	5%
3	I find it difficult to follow English lectures or presentations.	65%	15%	-	20%
4	I struggle to understand medical terms in English.	20%	55%	-	25%
5	I think there should be more English language support for nursing	70 %	25%	-	5%

Table 4 shows that the students are still facing difficulties in expressing the English language. The table shows that they need more practice to improve their four language skills. The common challenges include difficulties in understanding medical terms in English, lack of opportunities to practice spoken English, and fear of making mistakes when communicating with patients or colleagues. It supports Hajar et al., (2024) who found that students face some motivational problems as they do not get the proper input, model, and environment for language learning.

In addition, good communication will require a rich vocabulary, which is also a reason why students struggle with speaking skills. Speaking becomes a challenge as it consists of a complex cognitive processing task that is difficult for students to accomplish (Muslem et al., 2019). Speaking is a multifaceted ability that requires the use of several different talents at the same time, many of which develop at different speeds (Husna & Hajar, 2024).

To overcome these problems, this digital era provides social media or artificial intelligence support that can easily be used in English language learning because it is easily accessible. Since nursing is a medical education area, students may be reluctant to get

easy explanations or limited sources that can be learned without practice with a professional companion.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Nursing students recognize the importance of English for their career and humanitarian efforts but face challenges in proficiency and confidence. Addressing these barriers through curriculum enhancements and real-world practice opportunities can better prepare future nurses for global healthcare roles. The lecturer of this health major, specifically nursing, can try to accommodate a medical native speaker to become a good language nurse yet an aspiring professional future nurse.

To be a nursing student is a specific goal profession. Since the students have been chosen to decide on this aspiration profession earlier by attending nursing class, so it might need a better and specific learning treatment to launch a humane, professional, and fully skilled nurse. Joining humanitarian work will also create students to be more humanized workers rather than profit-oriented professionals.

From these findings, this study suggests integrating medical English into the curriculum. It is necessary to

introduce more English courses focused on nursing terminology and patient communication. This study also suggests simulated clinical scenarios while role-playing exercises in English can help build confidence. This study also perceives that an exchange program and online learning are needed to expose native English speakers to digital resources or exchange programs, which can enhance fluency. This study also suggests encouraging humanitarian engagement where the college can partner with NGOs to offer volunteer opportunities where students can practice English in a world situation.

The improvement of the nursing student in aiming to be part of the global profession community is not merely their work. It involved all the elements of the regulation tools. Education and health authorities are taking a big role in developing the progress. Indonesia as a developing countries need to make sure the competencies of the nurse and expand their priorities to gather what to advance both in academics and experience to contribute to the global health community.

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