

Indonesian and Malaysian Nurses in English for Specific Purposes Course: A Multicultural Perspective

Setya Putri Rahayu, Miftahush Shalihah

setyaputri20@unisayogya.ac.id¹, miftadialaula@unisayogya.ac.id²

Universitas 'Aisyiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia^{1,2}

Abstract: Specific English vocabulary and expressions are required for healthcare professionals, including nurses. In order to master them, English for Specific Purposes is one of the options used for nursing students including those in Indonesia and Malaysia. The study aims to analyze the perspectives of Indonesian and Malaysian nurses in English for Nurses course. The study employed phenomenology study using in-depth-interview to obtain data from 4 Malaysian nurses and 7 Indonesian nurses in different levels of health services (community health centers and hospitals). The criteria for the respondents was that they had worked in their institution for more than 2 years. The results of the interview showed that most respondents had similar opinions regarding the importance of ESP when applied in their professional setting. The respondents argued that the most useful materials that they received from the university were the vocabulary related to the health field. Nurses from Malaysia and Indonesia did not have significantly different opinions regarding ESP.

Keywords : ESP, Malaysian Nurses, Indonesian Nurses, Perception

1 Introduction

English as an International language has been widely used in both academic settings and professional settings almost all over the world including Southeast Asia. Although English has been widely known as an International language by people in ASEAN, historically the spread of English varied among countries. As an example, the spread of English in Indonesia is a force due to globalization. English is used a foreign language after Bahasa Indonesia as the National Language and local-spoken-language in most areas in Indonesia. The spread of English in Indonesia is different from that in Malaysia. In Malaysia, English was brought about by British colonization [1]. Although the spread of English is different, both countries use English as a foreign language not as a lingua franca. English is more widely used in some places where there are people from many countries such as in the airports. In other public facilities such as health centers and public service offices, the use of English is not common. However, people working in these facilities need to consider that they also need to be ready to use English anytime for any international visitors who come to these public facilities.

Indonesia and Malaysia share many similarities in terms of geographical position and cultural roots. Both countries are located in Southeast Asia, and Malaysia is adjacent to Indonesia; even on the island of Kalimantan (Borneo), Malaysia and Indonesia have no land borders and are separated only by pillars, monuments and doors [2]. This similar location has resulted in a similar ethnicity in both countries. Most of the native people in Indonesia and Malaysia are Malays. Moreover, the national languages used by both countries come from the same root; the national languages spoken in both countries have many similarities in all linguistic aspects covering the phonology, syntax, pragmatics, and semantics although the language spoken in both Indonesia and Malaysia has very distinctive dialects.

Both countries have certain similarities in terms of teaching English as a foreign language. Although Malaysia has attempted to use English as a medium of instruction from primary school onwards, this has not been successful for a variety of reasons. There is a severe shortage of suitably trained and effective English teachers, and the main problem is that English plays little or no part in children's lives outside school. Meanwhile, Indonesia is the only ASEAN country that has not made English a compulsory part of the primary school curriculum, despite the fact that many institutions labeled as world-class schools use English as the language of instruction [1]. Although English is widely used in higher education, people in both countries mostly use their national language as a means of communication in both academic and professional settings.

As a result, English is rarely spoken and used in people's daily lives or in professional settings. English is rarely used in the health sector, both in primary health centers and in hospitals. However, if a foreign patient comes to a hospital or primary health center in need of medical assistance, the nurses must be prepared to provide them with the best possible service. In this case, English is used as a means of communication between nurses and foreign patients in medical settings, considering that English is an international language. On the other hand, with the increasing globalization of the workforce and tourism, many countries and regions now have an international patient base, hence the need for English in nursing services cannot be neglected [3].

Given the need for specific English vocabulary and expressions in health care settings, it is debatable whether the use of ESP is relevant for prospective nurses. The teaching and study of English as a second or foreign language for the purpose of using English in a particular academic, professional or vocational context is referred to as ESP. It focuses on the particular needs of the students [4]. ESP aims to help language learners to cope with the linguistic aspects or to develop the competencies needed to function in a discipline, profession or workplace for which they wish to master English [5]. However, the use of general English has provided a foundation and development of four language skills [6]. General English can continue to serve its function as long as nurses have good self-efficacy in using their English in their professional settings.

Previous studies have discussed similar topics related to ESP in language teaching. Need analysis in English for Specific Purposes for Nursing Students have been widely conducted [7] [8] [9] [10] [11] [3] [12] [13]. Most previous researchers analyzed the aspects of English for Nurses through pre-services nurses (students) of the nursing program [9] [10] [11] [8] [14] [15] [13]. Several studies have investigated nurses' perceptions of their English [16] [17], but the most recent authors only included nurses working in a large-scale hospital. This study becomes very distinctive among previous studies related to English used for nurses because this study deeply analyzes nurses'

perceptions of the importance of English in all levels of medical center starting from primary health center to large-scale hospital. In addition, the study also compares the perception of nurses in Indonesia and nurses in Malaysia on the use of English in their professional setting.

Based on the description above, the study on nurses' perceptions of ESP is important to be conducted to answer the following research questions:

- How do Malaysian and Indonesian nurses perceive English for Specific Purposes?
- What facets of ESP for Nurses are important to use in the real setting?
- Do Indonesian and Malaysian nurses have different perspectives on English for Specific Purposes for Nurses in the professional setting?

2 Method

The study employed a qualitative research method with phenomenological approach as the data analysis. The phenomenological approach was applied to analyze nurses' experiences in using English in their professional setting. It is important to analyze their experiences because through their experience of using English in the real professional setting, English teachers, especially those who teach English for nursing students, can develop the most appropriate strategies in teaching English to the students [18]. Data analysis is actually a dynamic process weaving together the recognition of emerging themes, the identification of key ideas or units of meaning, and material acquired from the literature. Data analysis starts when all data have been collected and prepared. As the data analysis continues these patterns begin to develop into a number of thematic descriptive categories. Each transcript is then closely examined for phrases, sentences or paragraphs [19].

The study was conducted in Indonesia and Malaysia and data were collected through in-depth-interview. The in-depth interview with Indonesian nurses was conducted offline, and the interview with Malaysian nurses was conducted online. In-depth-interview was used to get a more complete and deeper analysis related to the subject studied. The respondents of the study were nurses in Indonesia and Malaysia; there were 7 Indonesian nurses and 4 Malaysian nurses participated as the respondents of the study. The inclusion criterion was that the respondents had been working for at least 2 years. Nurses within the inclusion criterion were selected to participate as the respondents of the study because their experience becomes a significant insight as a data source of the phenomenological approach.

3 Results and Discussions

Characteristics of the Respondents

The respondents of the study are Indonesian and Malaysian nurses consisting of 4 Malaysian nurses and 8 Indonesian nurses. The characteristics of the respondents can be seen from the table below.

Table 1. Respondents' Characteristics

Malaysian Nurses		
Characteristics	N	%
Sex		
- Male	-	-
- Female	4	100
Education background		
- Diploma 3	3	75
- Bachelor/Diploma 4	1	25
- Master program		
Workplace		
- Tertiary/Referral Hospital	1	25
- Specialized District Hospital	3	75
- Non-Specialized District Hospital		
- Community Health Center		
- Independent Medical Practice		
Age		
- 20 – 25 years old		
- 26 – 30 years old	1	25
- 31 – 35 years old	2	50
- 36 – 40 years old	1	25
- 41 – 45 years old		

- > 45 years old		
Working duration		
- 2-5 years		
- 6-10 years	2	50
- 11-15 years	2	50
- 16-20 years		
- > 20 years		

Indonesian Nurses

Characteristics	N	%
Sex		
- Male	1	14.3
- Female	6	85.7
Education background		
- Diploma 3	4	57.1
- Bachelor/Diploma 4	3	42.9
- Master program		
Workplace		
- Type A Hospital	1	14.3
- Type B Hospital	4	57.1
- Type C Hospital		
- Type D Hospital		
- Community Health Center	1	14.3
- Primary Clinic	1	14.3

- Independent Practice	Medical		
Age			
- 20 – 25 years old			
- 26 – 30 years old			
- 31 – 35 years old	1		14.3
- 36 – 40 years old	4		57.1
- 41 – 45 years old	2		28.6
- > 45 years old			
Working duration			
- 2-5 years	1		14.3
- 6-10 years	2		28.6
- 11-15 years	2		28.6
- 16-20 years	3		42.9
- > 20 years			

From Table 1 above, it can be seen that the majority of respondents were female (90.1%). The age ranged from 26 to 45 years old; with the most dominant age group being 36 to 40 years old (45.5%), followed by age 31 – 35 years old (27.3%), 41 – 45 years old (18.2%), and 26 – 30 years old (0.9%) respectively. Most of the respondents were graduates with a Diploma 3 degree (63.6%), and the others with a Diploma 4 or Bachelor degree (36.4%). Most respondents worked in regional hospitals (63.6%); some in referral hospitals (18.2%) and community health centers (18.2%). They had experience of working in health centers for at least 2 years (0.9%); 6 – 10 years (36.4%), 11 – 15 years (36.4%), and 16 – 20 years (27.3%). This means that all of the respondents met the inclusion criterion. In this study the researchers referred to nurses from Malaysia as respondents 1 – 4 and nurses from Indonesia as respondents 5 – 11.

Frequency of Using English in Professional (Medical) Settings

As English is an international language and not a lingua franca in both Indonesia and Malaysia, it is rarely used in everyday communication. Therefore, nurses rarely use English in their daily work. Only nurses working in international hospitals probably use English more often because foreigners (students and tourists) prefer to visit international hospitals (Respondents 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11).

Considering this fact, nurses working in international hospitals are forced to use their English in a professional environment.

Extract 1

I don't really speak English in my workplace because we rarely get any patients who speak English. Sometimes I just speak English with my colleagues, but it is only for fun. We never discuss anything related to jobs in English because I have to think so hard about it hehe... (Respondent 10).

However, it is also possible for those working in other health facilities to receive some international patients, as sometimes people in a hurry and in urgent need go to the nearest health facility from where they live. Based on the interview with the respondents, some respondents stated that they did not really serve international patients in their workplace (Respondent 1, 5, 7).

Extract 2

I've worked in a primary health center for 5 years, before, I worked in a private hospital. I got a patient who spoke English when I worked here. The patient had an accident close to the health center, that's why he came to the closest health center (Respondent 7).

Therefore, although nurses do not work in large hospitals, they have to be ready to use their English whenever needed (Respondents 1, 3, 5, 9).

Extract 3

Well, multicultural in Malaysia becomes our consideration (nurses) to master English because here in Malaysia there are three dominant ethnicities (Malay, Chinese, Indian). We sometimes prefer to speak English when there are Chinese and Indian patients, but we tend to speak Malay with Malay patients (Respondent 1). I know that health facilities should be accessible to all people regardless where they are from. We don't know when any international patients come to health centers, that's why English can be used anytime (Respondent 5).

One of the keys to increasing English capability is to practice a lot in any circumstances both in academic settings and in professional settings because mastering English is a matter of practice [20]. The more people use that language, the more fluently they speak the language.

From the respondents' explanation, it can be inferred that English is not often used in health care settings, especially in Indonesia. Indonesian nurses use English only when there are foreign patients visiting the health facilities, although some of them speak English in their work environment just for fun. On the other hand, Malaysian nurses may use English more often because of the multiculturalism due to the multi-national communities in Malaysia.

ESP in Medical Settings

English for Specific Purposes is indeed very useful for nurses because it offers more specific vocabulary and expressions that they use in their daily work. Out of the 11 respondents, 8 of them studied English for Nursing when they were in college. All the nurses from both Malaysia and Indonesia stated that the biggest benefit of having ESP in college was that they could learn more specific vocabulary that might not be taught in General English classes. Vocabulary related to things in hospitals, places in hospitals, and people in hospitals become a distinguishing factor in ESP [7]. They could also practice more on the topics related to their work in their professional settings.

Extract 4

In my opinion, vocabularies related to medical settings become the most essential material in English for Nurses that I might not get in general English (Respondent 2). Specific vocabularies become a crucial matter because the communication that we have in health settings uses specific vocabularies (Respondent 9).

Other material in ESP that can help nurses who use English in professional settings is that the conversation they learn in ESP is more specifically related to the expressions they use in their daily use (Respondents 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11). In ESP, students will learn some materials related to daily conversation that they can use in real professional settings [16].

Extract 5

In ESP, I can understand the expression that we use during patients' anamnesis (Respondent 3). I can also know some expressions to ask permission and to suggest something to the patients (Respondent 11).

In addition, listening materials adapted to the language use that nurses use in their daily communication also help the respondents to improve their English fluency especially in their professional setting (Respondents 2, 4, 5, 10).

Extract 6

By getting English for nurses when I studied in the university, I could practice important and specific vocabularies and expressions used in medical settings by getting listening materials that helped me understand the real context (Respondent 10). Listening to English in several dialects such as Chinese and Indian dialects helps me to apply it in my workplace (Respondent 2).

On the other hand, 2 respondents (Indonesian nurses) stated that General English had been enough for them to practice their English in a professional setting.

Extract 7

I think general English is enough for me. I can learn English words in other subjects of study. For example in anatomy, I can learn body parts in English because English is also used as the synonym in other subjects (Respondent 6). Once you can speak English well, English without ESP has been enough for us. I

think the most important one is our basic understanding and practice (Respondent 8).

Some nurses argue that ESP for Nurses can be beneficial to them in terms of vocabulary enrichment and English pronunciation through listening materials. Speaking also plays a significant aspect in enriching their English skills by practicing daily conversations that may occur in their workplace. Nevertheless, some think that General English has been able to meet their English needs in their professional environment. as basic understanding and practice can become fundamental ways of using English in their working environment.

Conclusion

Although Malaysia and Indonesia have different backgrounds in terms of how English was first introduced into the country, nurses from both Indonesia and Malaysia shared almost similar opinions regarding the use of ESP in professional settings. They stated that by using ESP, they can gain more knowledge in vocabulary related to medical settings. Moreover, when it comes to conversation practice, they can adjust the language function according to the situation and theme. In addition, listening to a particular topic related to medical settings also helps the respondents to master English especially in their real practice.

However, the most obvious difference is the frequency of using English in the medical setting. Malaysian nurses have more opportunities to use their English than Indonesian nurses considering that there are three different ethnicities in Malaysia (Malay, Chinese, and Indian), and people from different ethnicities tend to use English more often than those within the same ethnicity.

It is suggested that nurses need to practice their English more often to improve their fluency especially for Indonesian nurses as they rarely use English in their professional setting.

References

- [1] E. L. Low and R. Ao, "The Spread of English in Asean: Policies and Issues," *RELC Journal* , pp. 49 (2), 131 - 148, 2018 .
- [2] A. Sunarya and Sudaryono, "The Strategic Issues of Economic Development of the Border Area of Indonesia - Malaysia," *Raharja*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 110 - 121, 2016.
- [3] Q. Huang and Q. J. Yu, "Towards a communication-focused ESP course for nursing students in building partnership with patients: A need analysis," *English for Specific Purposes* , vol. 70, pp. 57-69, 2023.
- [4] P. Galina, "The Essence of English for Specific Purposes," în *Conferința științifică internațională „Perspectivele și Problemele Integrării în Spațiul European, Cahul, Moldova* , 2016.
- [5] T. Agustina , "English for Specific Purposes (ESP): An Approach of English TEaching for Non-English Department Students," *Beta* , vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 37-63, 2014.
- [6] V. Cigan and L. Kordic, "The Role of ESP Courses in General English Proficiency," *Linguistica* , vol. 53, no. 2, pp. 153-172, 2013.
- [7] Y. Jubhari, Rosmiaty and Nurliah , "Needs Analysis in English for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) for Nursing Students," *Education, Language, and Culture (EDULEC)*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 80-86, 2022.

- [8] R. Z. Wulandari, M. K. Muchsin and T. Tambunan , "A Need Analysis of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) for Nursing Students at SMKS Kesehatan Kendari," *Journal of English Education and Teaching* , vol. 3, no. 4, pp. 429 - 437, 2019.
- [9] E. Saragih , "Designing ESP Materials for Nursing Students Based on Need Analysis," *International Journal of Linguistics* , vol. 6, no. 4, pp. 59-70, 2014.
- [10] B. Setiawati , "Need Analysis for Identifying ESP Materials for Medical Record Students in APIKES Citra Medika Surakarta," *Kajian Linguistik dan Sastra* , vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 61-73, 2016.
- [11] N. K. A. Susandi and N. L. P. Krishnawati , "Need Analysis: ESP Syllabus Design for Indonesian EFL Nursing Students," in *The Fourth International Seminar on English Language and Teaching* , Padang, Indonesia , 2016.
- [12] L. J. Choi, "Implementing English for Medical Purposes (EMP) in South Korea: Nursing students' ongoing needs analysis," *Nurse Education Today* , vol. 104, 2021.
- [13] N. A. Halim and A. Irfan, "Need Analysis of ESL Nursing Students at a Malaysian Higher Learning Institution in the Context of ESP," in *Language, Culture, and Education International Conference, Melaka Malaysia* , 2019 .
- [14] M. Muntasir and R. Nurviani , "Language Skills Needed by Nurses Aiming to Work Abroad: A Need Analysis of English for Nursing," *Accentia: Journal of English Language and Education* , vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 80-89, 2020.
- [15] A. N. Ilmi and S. Madya , "Developing English teaching and learning materials for nursing students of Universitas 'Aisyiyah Yogyakarta," *LingTera*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 130-142, 2019.
- [16] S. Boshier and J. Stocker , "Nurses' narratives on workplace English in Taiwan: Improving patient care and enhancing professionalism," *English for Specific Purposes* , vol. 38, pp. 109-120, 2015.
- [17] Y.-L. Lu, "What do nurses say about their English language needs for patient care and their ESP coursework: The case of Taiwanese nurses," *English for Specific Purposes*, vol. 50, pp. 116-129, 2018.
- [18] A. Pradana , W. Yunita and I. Diani, "What do nursing students need in learning English?," *JOALL (Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literature)*, pp. Vol. 7, No. 2, Pg. 321-344, 2022.
- [19] H. K. Mohajan, "Qualitative Research Methodology in Social Sciences and Related Subjects," *Journal of Economic Development, Environment, and People* , pp. Vol 7, Issue 1, Pg 23-48, 2018.
- [20] S. P. Rahayu , "Watching Videos to Improve Autonomous Learning Behavior for University Students as Generation Z," *saga*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 53-59, 2020.