

What Makes Nurse Students Learn English and What Are the Inhibitors? A Case Study at Nursing Department Unika Santu Paulus Ruteng, Indonesia

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Abstract. Learning English is very important for nursing students. One of the fundamental reasons is that English is the most commonly used language in medicine and healthcare worldwide. This study explores the factors that attract and hinder nursing students from learning English. The research was conducted qualitatively using a case study approach to nursing students at the Universitas Katolik Indonesian Santu Paulus Ruteng, Flores, Indonesia. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and FGDs with informants. The informants were taken purposively using predetermined criteria. There were 14 informants in this study, consisting of 12 students and two English lecturers. The study results show that work orientation after study, acquisition of new knowledge, and the notion of having English skills as a prestige are considered triggers for students to be interested in learning English. Meanwhile, the lack of English Vocabulary Mastery, lack of self-confidence, a less supportive learning environment, lack of class accommodation, and lack of facilitation are considered to be the obstacles to students learning English. The study indicated that internal stakeholders, including English lecturers, heads of departments, and policymakers, identify and implement appropriate strategies to minimize obstacles and maximize factors that attract students' interest in improving their English proficiency.

Keywords: challenges, exploring, tourist village management

1. Introduction

For several reasons, English is an important language for nursing students in Indonesia. Firstly, English is the most commonly used language in medicine and healthcare worldwide, and proficiency in English is essential for effective communication between healthcare professionals, patients, and their families [1], [2]. Secondly, most nursing textbooks and research articles are written in English, and reading and understanding them is crucial for nursing students to keep up with the latest developments and best practices in their field [3], [4]. Thirdly, as nursing is a global profession, proficiency in English is necessary for nurses to participate in international conferences, workshops, and training programs, which can enhance their knowledge, skills, and career opportunities [5].

Moreover, learning English can also give nursing students important cultural and interpersonal skills essential to providing patient-centered care. For instance, communicating with patients from different cultural backgrounds can help nurses understand and respect their

beliefs, values, and practices, leading to better healthcare outcomes [6]. Additionally, as the nursing workforce in Indonesia becomes more diverse, proficiency in English can facilitate teamwork and collaboration among nurses from different regions and ethnic groups, improving patient safety and quality of care [6]. English is a vital language for nursing students in Indonesia, as it can enhance their professional skills, knowledge, and cultural competence. To promote English proficiency among nursing students, educational institutions should integrate English language courses into their nursing curricula and provide opportunities for students to practice their English skills in clinical settings. Furthermore, the government and healthcare organizations should invest in language training programs for nurses and promote cultural diversity and inclusion in the nursing workforce.

English is considered a global language and is crucial in international communication, including healthcare [6]. English proficiency is essential for nursing students in Indonesia, as most academic resources and professional communication are in English. However, studies show that nursing students need help learning English due to various factors, such as lack of exposure and resources, low motivation, and ineffective teaching methods.

This study aims to investigate the factors contributing to nurse students' English learning and identify the inhibitors hindering their progress in learning English. The study focuses on the nursing department of Unika Santu Paulus Ruteng, Flores, Indonesia, to provide insights into the specific context of nursing education in Indonesia.

Several studies have investigated the factors that affect English language learning among nursing students worldwide. A study by [7] revealed that nursing students' motivation, attitude, and self-efficacy positively influence their English language learning. Another study conducted by [8] found that English language proficiency is an important factor in determining nursing students' academic and licensure success. Nursing schools must ensure that approaches to improving students' English language proficiency must be well integrated into the undergraduate nursing program. Similarly, [9] studied learning styles as predictors of academic performance in the nursing department. The study revealed that it is important for the teacher to recognize students' varying learning styles.

A few studies have investigated English language learning among nursing students in Indonesia. A study conducted by [10] showed that nursing students faced difficulties in learning English due to inadequate English proficiency, limited exposure to the language, and ineffective teaching methods. Another study by [11] revealed that nursing students perceived English language learning as essential for their professional development but faced difficulties applying it in clinical practice. Similarly, a study suggested that more English proficiency among nursing students could have helped them communicate with international patients and healthcare professionals [12]. These studies highlight the complexity of English language learning among nursing students in Indonesia and the need to identify effective strategies to enhance their language proficiency.

The importance of English proficiency among nursing students in Indonesia is further emphasized by the Indonesian government's efforts to improve the quality of healthcare services through international collaborations and partnerships. The Ministry of Health's regulation No. 14 of 2021 mandates that healthcare professionals, including nurses, must have a minimum level of English proficiency to work in international settings. This regulation underscores the urgency of improving English language learning among nursing students to ensure their employability and competitiveness in the global healthcare market.

Despite the growing body of literature on English language learning among nursing students, only some studies have investigated this topic in the specific context of nursing education at the Nursing Department Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus Ruteng,

Indonesia. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by exploring the factors that facilitate and inhibit English language learning among nursing students at the nursing department of Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus Ruteng, Flores, Indonesia. It also explores how students and English teachers cope with inhibiting factors to improve learning objectives.

2. Method

This study explores the driving and inhibiting factors in learning English experienced by nursing students at the Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus Ruteng on the island of Flores, Indonesia. It is also necessary to know how students and English teachers cope with the inhibiting factors to optimize the learning objectives. Thus, according to the researchers, these data can be obtained through qualitative study with a case study design. Researchers used qualitative methods through interviews and FGDs as the main research method. This research was conducted at the Nursing Department Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus Ruteng in Flores, Indonesia. The research was conducted from September to November 2022.

There were 14 participants in this study, consisting of 12 nursing students and two English lecturers. These participants became informants in interviews and FGDs to obtain data about driving factors, inhibiting factors, and the strategy the teachers and students applied to with the inhibiting factors to obtain learning objectives. The participants were determined purposively based on established criteria. There were three main components to be asked: (1) factors driving learning English; (2) Obstacles that hinder the improvement of speaking ability; (3) Strategies to cope with obstacles. The data from interviews and FGDs were then analyzed qualitatively using an interactive model [13] consisting of data collection, reduction, display, verification, and conclusion. Data validity testing is carried out through confirmability testing.

3. Findings and Discussion

The data on students' learning experiences in the English language learning process is divided into three parts: aspects that engage students in learning, obstacles encountered in efforts to improve speaking skills, and strategies implemented by students and English language lecturers to minimize barriers and promote the enhancement of students' speaking skills.

3.1 Factors That Captivate Students' Interest in Studying English

The interview findings indicate some factors that captivate students' interests in studying English in nursing, as follows:

a. Career orientation after graduation

Students aspiring to work abroad are an important factor to encourage them to learn English. They believe that communication skills in English are fundamental to interacting with patients overseas. Proficiency in English allows them to work internationally or in international hospitals in Indonesia. Healthcare practitioners must utilize the English language for purposes such as comprehending professional literature, participating in global conferences, engaging with colleagues from abroad, and providing medical care to English-speaking patients [10]. In this study, the student's interest in learning English is supported by the campus policy and strategies on Flores Island, specifically at the Santu Paulus Ruteng

Catholic University, which establishes partnerships with institutions abroad that can channel nursing professionals to countries like Japan, Australia, and Taiwan. Apart from career orientation, English proficiency also enables them to connect with people from other cultures and build harmonious relationships.

b. Acquiring new knowledge

The informants mentioned that learning English within the nursing program differs from English learning in high school. English in the nursing program is more geared towards specialized learning. Students are introduced to terminologies specific to nursing that they had not encountered before [14]. This newfound knowledge sparks students' interest in learning English. The awareness of using English speaking skills aligned with their future profession becomes crucial in stimulating nursing students' interest in learning English. They are more driven as they encounter many medical terminologies in English during hospital fieldwork, which they can only understand through English language learning. The necessity of English, especially in critical sectors like healthcare, becomes unavoidable during this period of globalization [15].

c. Perception of having English proficiency as a prestige

Informants (students) expressed that English speakers appear "cool" and different from others. Everyone desires something that looks "cool." English proficiency is considered an indicator of a better future opening up, and everyone aspires to that. Moreover, with English proficiency, foreign visitors can be introduced to local culture. Exploring culture can be done more profoundly using English, thus benefiting the local community economically [16], [17]. This Perception is supported by several programs to encourage students' participation in getting accustomed to using English, such as English competitions held during the Faculty's anniversary. Students are motivated to learn English because they have a clear vision of connecting with foreign tourists in their region, which has economic implications.

During classroom learning activities, the students mentioned that one aspect that motivates them to learn English is the competition among peers during lessons. Students feel embarrassed if their proficiency level is lower than their classmates'. Another factor that drives their interest is the assignment requests for courses requiring English-language journals as references. To comprehend the content of articles from English journals, students need to delve deeper into English.

3.2 Factors hindering students in their efforts to improve speaking skills

Based on interviews with several informants (students, English language lecturers, nursing lecturers, and policymakers; the Head of the Nursing Study Program and the Dean of the Health Faculty), there are several obstacles encountered by nursing students in their endeavor to enhance their speaking skills, as follows:

1) Vocabulary Mastery

The interview data indicates that both nursing students and English instructors have identified a significant hindrance to improving the speaking skills of nursing students in Flores Island, which is the need for more vocabulary possessed by the students. According to their accounts, the vocabulary deficit is a fundamental and primary issue leading to students' passivity during the learning process. The scarcity of vocabulary can be attributed to several factors, such as students' reluctance to engage in independent learning, the misconception that English speaking abilities are exclusive to students majoring in English, difficulties in

pronunciation, which sometimes differs from the written form, as well as feelings of apathy and boredom toward the English language [18]. These study findings align with research conducted by [19] on Arabic-speaking ESL learners, which revealed that learners generally face challenges with English vowel pronunciation. Moreover, [18] further emphasized that vocabulary learning is crucial for various fields of study and not only for learning a first or second language. They pointed out that vocabulary knowledge is essential for comprehending a language.

Furthermore, another interviewee acknowledged that the extended gap in English language learning between high school and university compounds the vocabulary deficit issue. Students revisit the study of English one year after completing their high school education (in the third semester). The substantial time lapse results in the loss of much of the previously acquired vocabulary. Students with good memory retention skills do not encounter significant obstacles, whereas those with weaker memory retention skills struggle and may even become averse to learning English. The lack of vocabulary mastery results in losing confidence in speaking English [20]. According to this researcher, it is difficult to speak in English due to feelings of embarrassment and fear of becoming the subject of ridicule if they make mistakes while speaking [21].

Conversely, confident students speak fluently even if they make errors. The lack of self-confidence directly impacts the limited opportunities for students to practice both independently outside the classroom and during in-class speaking exercises. Instead, they tend to adopt a passive stance by remaining silent. Moreover, [22] discovered a similar phenomenon, where low self-confidence is a hindrance experienced by nearly all students. This is because students primarily focus on acquiring essential nursing skills and neglect vocabulary mastery, leading to a lack of confidence in speaking English.

2) English is perceived to be difficult

One of the informants (a student) mentioned that students have a negative attitude towards English. They believe that English is a difficult subject. The difficulties are related to various vocabulary and pronunciation issues. They can understand the message conveyed when people speak to them in English, but specific vocabulary is hard to grasp due to differences in how it is written and pronounced. This belief leads to other consequences, such as laziness and apathy towards English. Sometimes, they even need to be more active in attending English language courses. They only study English to meet the administrative requirements for course grades [23], [24]. Another informant (a student) stated that the Perception of the difficulty in learning English is also due to the lack of willingness and motivation from the students themselves. Some students are enthusiastic and diligent in learning English because they have good intentions and motivation. However, this motivation and intention fade or disappear due to an unsupportive learning environment. Sometimes, their friends make statements or remarks that degrade their learning enthusiasm [25].

3) A Less Supportive Learning Environment

A less supportive learning environment stands out as one of the problems or barriers to enhancing the speaking skills of nursing students in Flores Island. Several interviewees, including both students and English instructors, have highlighted several realities that underscore this issue. Firstly, English instructors rarely, if ever, use English within the campus environment. The instructors cannot serve as role models for students to practice speaking English. Secondly, a significant portion of the students exhibit apathy towards English and consider it less important. This negative attitude is indirectly transmitted to others, leading to a

loss of motivation to learn English. Some students are diligent in independent learning by seeking a more supportive environment outside the campus, involving reading books, watching videos, or TikTok content that provides English language knowledge. This aligns with the findings of the study by [7], where medical school students found "Teacher characteristics & teaching material," "Immigration & personal aspirations," and "Instrumental motivation" to be motivating, while "Intrinsic/integrative motivation" and "Learning environment" were motivating for nursing school students.

Thirdly, there is a dominance of the use of the local language within the campus environment, particularly the Manggarai language, which serves as the everyday means of communication in informal situations. The habit of using the local language in informal settings naturally extends to formal environments. Students prefer speaking the local language, especially Manggarai when communicating with their peers in and outside the classroom. They need to show more interest in using English. Within the classroom, they need to be more interested in English, even if instructors make efforts to make the learning process engaging, such as through the use of videos or music. This dominance of the local language limits students' opportunities to practice English within and outside the classroom. Although some students may want to practice speaking English, their desire could be improved by the absence of willing conversation partners, feelings of embarrassment, and concerns about potential gossip and ridicule when using English in an environment dominated by the local language. This finding aligns with the study of [26], indicating that ESL nursing students face challenges in academic integration due to their diverse cultural and language backgrounds. Another study by [27] found that most nursing students experience difficulties understanding and learning a second language and feel embarrassed to speak in English. As a result, Alharbi and Yakout (2018) recommend that faculty administrators should establish concrete plans for improving and monitoring students' English language proficiency throughout their enrollment.

Fourthly, the burden of coursework from other subjects poses a challenge. One interviewee (a student) mentioned that the numerous assignments from other subjects create a hurdle. Students allocate more attention to these assignments as they pertain to their field of expertise. As a result, students divide their focus and need to prioritize their English language coursework. This situation inevitably impacts students' opportunities and determination to attain proficiency in English speaking [28]–[30].

4) The use of Teaching Methods

One of the obstacles identified in this research pertains to the methods or approaches instructors employ when teaching English. Two interviewees (students) emphasized this issue. One interviewee stressed the uninteresting delivery of the course materials, which led to students experiencing boredom and disinterest during English language learning. This boredom and disinterest pose a more significant challenge for less proficient students. Another interviewee (student) mentioned that instructors predominantly use the English language to explain the materials and communicate with students. The prevalent use of English by instructors became problematic for the less proficient students because they needed help comprehending what was being conveyed due to vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar issues.

Consequently, they remained silent, bored, and disengaged [31], [32]. As [9] asserted in his research, there is an essential relationship between learning styles and performance. Therefore, teachers should be cognizant that greater efficacy in accommodating various learning styles will enable students to create an optimal learning environment.

Furthermore, teachers should implement engaging and enjoyable teaching methods, such as the use of role-play in the context of nursing services. The students perceived that role-play is crucial for their English language needs as nurses. It serves as an encouragement from teachers for students to use English and as a means to facilitate their communicative abilities in English [8], [33].

5) Insufficient Facilitation Process

As stated by [34], [35] asserted that students' attitudes play an influential role in various issues and activities teachers employ. In this study, students with a positive learning attitude and good motivation in learning English perceive the lack of practice through the practical use of English as an inhibiting factor in the environment, which hinders efforts to enhance the speaking skills of nursing students. Therefore, practice opportunities need to be facilitated. Based on interviews conducted with almost all informants (nursing students and lecturers), it was found that students need to be more facilitated to engage in familiarizing themselves with English outside the classroom. Their English language learning is confined within the classroom, limited to only a few semesters during their studies. The facilitation process is solely provided through the distribution of courses in the curriculum. The facilitation process outside class hours still needs to be more effective in encouraging efforts to improve the student's speaking skills. There are some programs initiated by both the Faculty and study programs to facilitate students, such as competitions involving English language presentations, English masses, and international seminars, but these programs have not been implemented regularly and consistently.

The insufficiency in the facilitation process is also evident in the limited opportunities given to students to speak and write in English. The Faculty previously introduced a program for lecturers and students to use English on specific days, yet this program needs to be implemented more effectively. One informant (a student) mentioned that her English speaking ability improved because she attended English language courses outside regular English class hours. According to her, classes were categorized from basic to intermediate levels in these regular courses, serving as motivation. Tests like TOEFL were given at the end of the course to measure English language proficiency. The progress in class levels became motivation. Therefore, there is a need for opportunities to practice speaking in the classroom. Lecturers act as facilitators, preparing specific topics for discussion or debate among students in English.

In addition to the insufficient facilitation process, an informant (student) also mentioned that the campus, Faculty, or study programs have not adequately provided facilities to improve nursing students' speaking skills, such as English books and dictionaries. Consequently, students resort to using Google technology to access English references or translate materials. These findings align with previous research [36], [37].

3.3 Strategy to Overcome Barriers

In response to these barriers, interviews with some informants (nursing students and English language lecturers) revealed several strategies adopted by students themselves and English language lecturers to minimize obstacles and enhance students' English speaking skills, as follows:

1) Student Strategies

Several strategies employed by students to minimize obstacles and enhance their speaking skills include:

a. Collaborative Learning Implementation

Some students mentioned implementing collaborative learning during tasks in the classroom. Students with slightly superior speaking abilities and vocabulary skills assisted those with less proficiency. One informant emphasized the significance of collaborative learning in knowledge sharing. According to [38], [39], students cannot learn a language just in the classroom. They should extend their learning outside of the classroom as well. The study found that beyond the classroom, students initiated collaborative learning with simple actions like exchanging greetings or conversations in English when passing by classmates. Similarly, they extended this practice outside the campus environment. One informant stated that she committed to communicating only in English with a roommate while at their dormitory.

b. Self-directed Learning Application

Some students pursued self-directed learning, adopting strategies like habitual reading and translating English articles. They utilized the internet or dictionaries for translation purposes. Another student mentioned recording her spoken exercises and searching on Google for correct pronunciations. Some students carried dictionaries to class. Apart from these strategies, they emphasized reading and self-practice in dialogues, such as self-introduction or sharing experiences with friends in English. Activities included listening to English songs, watching English movies or videos, and compiling vocabulary lists for memorization. A student even utilized TikTok to learn English by practicing pronunciation with friends. Technology is appropriate for students to engage with learning English nowadays. It's more accessible and can be found anywhere if the internet is available [40]–[42].

Effective self-directed learning hinges on students' inner commitment and intention to learn. Several informants engaged in self-directed learning because of their fondness for English. Their interest stemmed from clear aspirations after completing their nursing degree, envisioning opportunities to work in international hospitals or overseas. This is in line with the recommendations put forward by [43], [44] that students need to be guided and facilitated to apply self-directed learning to achieve their proficiency in English actively.

c. Consistency with Learning Objectives

A common challenge in learning English was the need for more confidence among some learners, causing hesitation to communicate in English. This fear stemmed from the dread of making mistakes while speaking. Some students ridiculed or mocked those who attempted to speak English, further eroding confidence.

Another reality encountered was that students trying to communicate in English were perceived as intellectually arrogant, although speaking practice is an essential part of the language learning process. An informant countered this challenge by remaining consistent and focused on their established English learning goals. They consciously avoided paying heed to friends' ridicule or laughter when making mistakes in English. By persistently learning, they gradually improved their English proficiency.

2) English Language Lecturer Strategies

According to the interviews with English language lecturers, strategies employed to minimize obstacles and enhance nursing students' speaking skills include:

a. Assigning Regular Tasks

Lecturers consistently assign tasks to students. One simple yet effective task involves preparing dialogue presentations, which are presented or practiced in Front of the class. Additionally, lecturers provide opportunities for students to engage in role-plays. Some lecturers incorporate technology, such as Kahoot, into their teaching methodologies. Kahoot is used for interactive question-answer sessions, aiming to engage students and instill a competitive spirit. Relevant features facilitate group work, enabling students to interact and discuss answers within the application.

The practice of assigning dialogue presentations aligns with the findings of [45], who emphasized the pedagogical benefits of student-centered activities involving oral presentations. Such exercises foster public speaking skills and encourage active participation and critical thinking among students. Moreover, incorporating role-plays in teaching methods corresponds to the outcomes of a study by [46], [47], which underscored the positive impact of role-playing activities on student comprehension and retention.

The integration of technology, exemplified by the use of Kahoot, aligns with the growing body of literature on integrating educational technology in classrooms. Kahoot, as an interactive platform, has been acknowledged for its effectiveness in fostering student engagement and collaborative learning. Its gamified approach captures students' attention and cultivates a competitive spirit, motivating active participation and knowledge retention.

b. Managing Diverse Student Backgrounds

Lecturers monitor students during discussions and inquire about their thoughts, especially targeting passive participants to encourage active engagement. Motivational words also reduce shyness and ignite enthusiasm among students to learn English. English language lecturers create smaller discussion groups to address challenges in large classes with numerous students, fostering more intensive discussions among peers.

Monitoring students during discussions and specifically targeting passive participants aligns with the findings of [48], who emphasized the significance of instructor intervention in stimulating student participation. Their research highlighted that active monitoring and intervention by educators significantly increased participation among initially passive students, enriching the discussion and fostering a more inclusive learning environment.

4. Conclusion

This study aims to provide insights into the factors that contribute to or inhibit English language learning among nursing students in the context of Unika Santu Paulus Ruteng, Flores, Indonesia. This study's findings will benefit English Language teachers appointed to teach nursing students, curriculum developers, and policymakers in Indonesia to develop effective strategies to enhance nursing students' English language proficiency and prepare them for the global healthcare market. Several strategies for overcoming learning barriers identified in this research can serve as recommendations for implementation in learning activities, both within the context of this research site and in similar contexts elsewhere.

This study has revealed nursing students' driving factors, the inhibiting factors in learning English, and also the strategies undertaken by the students and English teacher. However, this study was solely conducted in a very specific context at the English Department Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus Ruteng Flores. Thus, further study can be conducted in a wider context to gain more comprehensive results and perspectives.

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