

Why Nursing Students Struggle in Speaking English: Experience, Challenges, And Coping Strategies

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the implementation, challenges, and strategies of nursing students in improving speaking skills in the English for Nursing classroom. This research utilized descriptive qualitative methods using interviews as a data collection technique. This research addresses nursing students in their second semester at Private Health Universities in Central Java, Indonesia, who are currently enrolled in an English course this semester. The results found that the implementation of speaking activity in the English for nursing classroom was in the form of roleplay. Meanwhile, the topic applied in the activity mostly related to the nursing daily routine in the hospital. The challenges faced by nursing students are the limited English vocabulary and accent barriers that affect pronunciation in speaking English. Students utilize the Google Translate application feature and music as a strategy in overcoming the challenges of improving speaking skills. This study also revealed that the implementation used by lecturers and strategies owned by nursing students are considered to be able to overcome challenges in improving English speaking skills.

Keywords: *Implementation, Student's Challenges. Student's Strategy, Speaking Skill.*

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Introduction

English is an international language that should be learned by every individual. English is necessary for us to be able to communicate with various people from different countries. (Guthrie, 1988) state that many people in various countries use English as a means of communication in important international meetings. In countries that do not use English as a basic language, such as Indonesia, English as a foreign language is still often considered difficult to learn. Many students hesitate and often make long pauses when speaking (Fadilah & Fauziah

Habibah, 2021). Mastery of English is very important because almost all global information sources in various aspects of life use English. English is one of the oldest languages in the world. Because English is a global language, it is very important to learn English as a second language after Indonesian.

Speaking skills play an important role in mastering the English language. Speaking skill is one of the important communications in the world. Therefore, it can be concluded that speaking is considered as one of the most important skills that students need to acquire (Nashriyah, Syahabuddin & Suryadi, 2017) Including in the world of health, health students, especially nursing students, are considered necessary to master English, especially in English speaking skills to help communicate when dealing with foreign patients.

However, in achieving English output in accordance with the expectations of the teaching staff, the internal factors of the students themselves also need to be considered and become one of the supports of the form of teaching carried out by the teaching staff. One form of internal factor that can affect the effectiveness of learning is the teaching strategy.

This study focused on identifying nursing students' challenges and strategies in improving their speaking skills in the English for Nursing classroom. The nursing students who are the object of the study are nursing students in the 3rd semester at one of the private health Islamic universities in Surakarta, Indonesia. This research will use qualitative methods with interview techniques.

Method

This research is a qualitative research that uses a descriptive approach. The best approach for conducting research is the qualitative descriptive method (Nassaji, 2015). This qualitative research model using in-depth interview methods emphasizes very in-depth data and information, so there is no need for a sample size in this study. The nursing students selected in this study were second semester students. There were 5 students out of 35 students in the English for Nursing classroom who were willing to be interviewed. In-depth interviews were conducted through Zoom Meetings held online one by one. The duration of the interview was

30 minutes for each participant. The research instrument was carried out using several instruments, namely researchers as the main instrument in conducting research analysis, guides in conducting interviews, as well as interview support tools such as recorders and cameras.

Findings

This study comprises three components in its findings. The components encompass the execution of speaking activities, the challenges encountered by students during speaking, and the strategies employed by students to address these speaking difficulties. The interview conducted involved a thorough discussion of these results.

Implementation of Speaking Activity in English for Nursing Classroom

The results of interviews with nursing students that the implementation of speaking activities of the nursing students in English for Nursing classroom in the form of given conversation assignments such as roleplay group with nursing themes. Students are given preparation by lecturers to improve the speaking skills of nursing students with the aim that nursing students are ready when they get patients from abroad.

“Given a conversation assignment with a nursing theme. The course aims to prepare students for the field when they encounter foreign patients”- Jovian

The conversation task with the nursing theme is carried out in groups with the theme of activities carried out in the hospital. Nursing students make conversations in groups and then practice them in front of the class or through videos that are submitted to the lecturer through the platform.

“At that time, I was only given instructions for Video Roleplaying Conversations between Patients, Nurses and Doctors for the Speaking grade” - Nurul Kholifatul Hamidah

“The theme of the roleplay is about a conversation between a doctor patient and a nurse at the hospital” – Jovian

The roleplay theme given by the lecturer for the step in improving the speaking skills of nursing students is the theme of the roleplay scene in the hospital. Nursing students in groups act as patients, doctors, and nurses. This activity is considered effective for improving students' speaking skills because students can add a lot of English vocabulary and can be a medium for nursing students to practice English pronunciation.

However, out of 5 students, there are 2 students who have difficulty in speaking material in the English for Nursing classroom because speaking activities in the form of roleplay require students to memorize and read English sentences. This happens because students do not use English as a basic daily language and find it difficult to read English vocabulary.

“The lecture went well but you have to learn extra because it is not a personal basic that uses English”- Amyudha Purwo Laksonojati

“Speaking skill material is more memorization and it is difficult to read English vocabulary” - Elysa Rachmawati Pratiwi

The difficulties experienced by nursing students are common. Therefore, English for Nursing lecturers provide other speaking activities so that students can further improve their speaking skills.

“Impressed with the method given by the lecturer because it can be understood. Sometimes the lecturer provides videos via YouTube. The lecturer trains speaking skills in class so that it makes it easier for me to understand, if only explaining without training for me the material is less understandable” - Desi Puspaningrum

The implementation of speaking activities provided by lecturers such as providing videos through the YouTube platform is considered effective by students because it adds insight to nursing students in improving speaking skills and helps students prepare for field practice if one day they get a foreign patient. English for Nursing lecturers are not only focused on explaining speaking material but also training nursing students so that students can understand the speaking material provided by lecturers.

The next speaking activity that lecturers apply to nursing students in improving the speaking skills of nursing students is by interacting with students.

“For specific questions and answers, I don't think so, but when he explains the material, he sometimes uses English and we are asked occasionally about the meaning in Indonesian or in English, if we are discussing a problem, we are asked which answer is appropriate.” - Nurul Kholifatul Hamidah

Inviting students to interact is the implementation of speaking activities to provoke students to improve their speaking skills. Students can interact directly with lecturers in English in order to improve the speaking skills of nursing students.

Speaking's Challenges in English for Nursing Classroom

The challenges that nursing students often faced are such as limited English vocabulary and accent barriers. Based on the results of interviews that students experience challenges in mastering English vocabulary in improving speaking skills in English for Nursing. The challenges experienced by nursing students occur due to the limited of English language education background. Challenges experienced by students such as difficulty in reading English vocabulary and English sentences.

“It is difficult to read vocabulary, English sentences so that it is hampered in pronouncation” - Amyudha Purwo Laksonojati

“It is difficult to understand the meaning of English and how to read the correct vocabulary” - Elysa Rachmawati Pratiwi

The vocabulary that nursing students learn is English vocabulary around the world of health. This is a challenge for nursing students, especially in the English for Nursing classroom, in improving students' speaking skills.

“It's quite challenging, especially when studying anatomy in English” - Desi Puspaningrum

“Difficult vocabulary, especially health vocabulary in English” -Nurul Kholifatul Hamidah

Lack of vocabulary occurs when a person is less active in using English vocabulary as a means of communication in daily life and environmental factors that are less supportive of communicating using English. The challenge faced by nursing students in improving speaking skills is that nursing students are less familiar with English vocabulary. Students lack mastery of English vocabulary so that challenges such as difficulty reading English vocabulary and sentences and experiencing challenges in increasing vocabulary in the world of health.

Interview results also showed that nursing students have problems with English accents that are experienced as challenges in improving speaking skills. The accent barrier experienced affects the pronunciation of nursing students.

“Yes, I have a problem with pronunciation, especially in accents and dialects” - Amyudha Purwo Laksonojati

Barriers in accent fluency for English pronunciation affect nursing students in improving speaking skills. The lack of familiarizing using English in everyday life is a challenge for students when presenting forward.

“Yes, I experienced obstacles in the English accent, especially when the presentation went forward, I had to memorize the conversation so I was confused in pronunciation” – Jovian

Based on the interview results, nursing students are accustomed to using Javanese as their daily language, which affects their accent in English. So that students do not feel confident when communicating with English.

“I don't feel confident when communicating with English because it is difficult, and the basic language used daily is Javanese so it is difficult to accent English” Desi Puspaningrum

Namun berdasarkan hasil interview terdapat satu mahasiswa yang menyukai bahasa Inggris sehingga permasalahan diaksen bukan menjadi tantangan panjang.

“Yes, I have difficulty with the accent but because I like learning English it's a challenge in itself, I keep listening until I can do it.” – Nurul Kholifatul Hamidah

A person's background and the language used daily affect accents in communication so that accent barriers in language affect a person in pronouncing a language sentence. The challenge faced by nursing students in learning speaking is that students have difficulty in applying English accents so that it affects pronunciation in communicating using English. This happens because students are not accustomed to using English in their daily lives and use local languages or Indonesian in daily communication.

Learning Strategies to Improve Speaking Skill of Nursing Students

Limited English vocabulary and accent barriers. are challenges experienced by nursing students in improving speaking skills, so nursing students have a strategy so that students can practice speaking English properly and correctly.

Strategies used by nursing students based on the results of interviews in the form of utilizing conversation tasks given by lecturers in English for Nursing.

“My strategy is by utilizing the conversation tasks given by the lecturer so that it becomes a strategy to know English and become aware of English pronunciation” – Jovian

Utilizing conversation tasks given by lecturers requires additional applications to maximize in improving speaking skills. Students utilize the Google Translate translator application as a tool to support the fluency of speaking skills. Google Translate is considered by students to be helpful because the pronunciation feature in Google Translate can be a tool to correct mistakes.

“There is a way to use the pronunciation feature in google translate for pronunciation correction” – Jovian

“Find out independently about words or sentences that have not been understood through google translate and evaluate through the Google Translate sound feature” - Desi Puspaningrum

“Read repeatedly and listen to the correct pronunciation through the Google Translate feature” - Elysa Rachmawati Pratiwi

Other supporting tools that become students' strategies in solving challenges in improving speaking skills are by listening to English music, and reading English books.

“By looking at the number of vocabulary that I learn through the vocabulary of English books that are read or listening to music in English, if there are many vocabulary words that are not understood then find out more” - Nurul Kholifatul Hamidah

Utilizing conversation tasks and utilizing supporting tools such as the Google translate translator application feature, reading English books and English music are nursing students' strategies in improving English speaking. This method is good to use because it will increase students' English vocabulary and students can learn more about English accents.

Discussions

The implementation of roleplay is an active teaching technique to provoke students to speak English. Learning activities in improving speaking skills through roleplay activities are considered by students to be effective in improving pronunciation and vocabulary mastery. This finding is similar to (Pinatih, 2021) which states that roleplay is one of suitable teaching methods that has several benefits, one of which is encouraging pupils to communicate. Therefore, the use of roleplay as an implementation of speaking activities for nursing students is the right thing to improve speaking skills so that students gain experience and are more confident to speak English.

English for Nursing lecturers have a way to help students improve their speaking skills by utilizing the YouTube Platform. In addition, lecturers also carry out activities to interact with students so that they help students improve their speaking skills and increase the vocabulary of nursing students so that students are more perfect in pronunciation. This findings is in line with Kristiani & Pradnyadewi (2021) that YouTube can help students to improve their language skills, especially in speaking. The use of YouTube as an implementation of speaking activities in English for Nursing classes is the right thing to improve the speaking skills of nursing students.

The first challenge experienced by nursing students in improving speaking skills is limited English vocabulary which occurs because nursing students do not have an English background. Limited English vocabulary is a challenge for students in speaking English with a lack of vocabulary mastery, so students experience inability to speak English. This is the same as the results of research (Khan et al.,

2016) data analysis in his research shows that both teachers and students indicate that lack of vocabulary is one of the main factors in students' inability to speak English.

Another challenge experienced by nursing students in improving speaking skills in English for Nursing classes is that students experience problems in accents that affect English pronunciation. Similar to (Zarin et al., 2016) this study shows that accent and native English pronunciation have an important role in the process of acquiring listening skills and motivation to learn. This happens because nursing students are not native English speakers and are not accustomed to using English in their daily lives and there are no interlocutors who can be spoken to in English when in the environment where students live, so when learning speaking, they have difficulty in pronouncing English vocabulary and sentences because the accents they use daily are Indonesian and Javanese accents so that they affect nursing students in English pronunciation.

These strategies include utilizing conversation tasks given by lecturers as well as tools such as utilizing the speaking feature on the Google Translate application. This feature also helps students to correct errors in English pronunciation. This is the same as (Khasanah et al., 2022) that students' perceptions of the use of Google Translate Application as a medium in learning pronunciation are positive, because students can learn practically and independently. Therefore, nursing students utilize Google Translate App as their media to improve their speaking skills. Nursing students can find out what they don't know such as how to read and the meaning of English vocabulary through Google Translate.

In addition, nursing students also utilize English music and English books as motivation to learn English and improve English vocabulary and correct pronunciation. This opinion is similar to (Akhmadullina et al., 2016) that the effectiveness of using music can be seen from different angles such as in terms of its impact on the psycho-emotional state of students, their motivation to learn the language. This is a student strategy to improve speaking skills in the form of increasing vocabulary and listening to correct pronunciation in English.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research demonstrates how speaking activities are imperative in enhancing English language skills of nursing students, specifically English for nursing purposes. According to the results, students participating in group-based roleplays conducted around nursing themes seemed to enjoy most, and were able to practice what they had learnt in the classroom in a more realistic way. Nevertheless, half of the students in the study had difficulty in remembering dialogues and pronouncing some English words properly. This difficulty arises due to non-usage of English in their everyday life and in the course of their education. Watching other activities than just the presenter's explanation, like learning through YouTube videos, and practicing in groups, seems to overcome such challenges and promote language use in socially oriented activities.

Furthermore, the research suggests that nursing students do have a wider problem as a group in terms of English vocabulary and pronunciation and this can be explained by limited exposure to the language as well as their accents. Such an average vocabulary can be explained by reading too little in English, since the learners seldom speak or learn it prior to the nursing program. Also, their accent and other environmental aspects contribute to their defective pronunciation as it is hard to grasp an English accent. In this context, it is essential for teachers to provide adequate assistance and resources aimed at closing the language gap and enhancing language ability in English for non-native speakers.

The nursing students' resort to language learning strategies such as engaging in conversation tasks, utilizing translation apps, and listening to English songs suggest an effort on their part to learn a foreign language outside the classroom. Thus, these strategies help students improve their language abilities by enlarging their vocabulary and pronouncing words after listening to and practically doing so repetitively. It is expected that this research can provide useful suggestions for the practitioners in developing favourable conditions for learning of the foreign language to meet both language and situational needs.

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