

Assessing the English Language Needs of Nursing Students: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

Previous studies that conducted needs analyses on English for nursing students only concentrated on the target needs at a particular university. This study investigated nursing students' English language needs through a systematic review in order to improve methods of teaching and curriculum development. 14 studies published between 2015 and 2024 were reviewed to highlight the critical role of English proficiency in nursing education and professional practice. This review identified some themes, such as the importance of English for academic and career purposes, the need for developing core language skills, a preference for interactive and practical learning methods, and the requirement for support in online learning environments. The findings suggest the necessity of designing English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Nursing Purposes (ENP) courses tailored to the needs of nursing students. To increase professional and healthcare quality, evidence-based recommendations for curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers are needed to improve the English language training of nursing students.

1. Introduction

The demand for the use of English in the workplace is increasing in the globalization era (Cahyadin, 2023). Learning English is a must to be able to communicate with foreigners. A nurse is one of the professions that requires English for health services. English proficiency is needed for nurses as the primary language for medical literature and international communication within healthcare settings, underscoring its crucial role in training and professional development (Houghton, 2021). Proficiency in English can help nursing students complete academic requirements, access the latest medical research, and communicate effectively with patients and health professionals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Hyland & Wong, 2021). Consequently,

preparing nursing students to deal with a good career in the future and fulfill these needs is needed.

Despite the fact that English language proficiency is important for nursing students, numerous studies have revealed that in the clinical setting, communication between nursing students and colleagues, patients, and their families can be challenging, particularly for ESL nurses. (Boughton et al., 2010; Jeong et al., 2011; Crawford & Candlin, 2013). Nursing students can meet their English language competence requirements during the study process. The students and their needs determine the learning process and direction, so that the achievement of teaching goals can be effective and efficient.

Previous studies have explored the English language needs of nursing students. For instance Marleni et al., (2023) and Bae, (2017) discussed designing syllabuses and curriculum analyses that focus on material teaching in specific departments but don't cover material teaching in several institutes or universities. Similarly, Susandi & Krishnawati, (2016); Riza & Ratmanida (2023); Pongsapan (2015) analysed nursing students' English language requirements; however, her research was university-specific. Therefore, this study formulates the need for a systematic review to synthesize existing findings and provide a detailed understanding of the language skills required in nursing education for several institutions or universities in Indonesia.

This study's main objective was to conduct a systematic review in order to assess nursing students' English language demands. This review aims to identify common themes and specific language skills required. By synthesizing existing research, this study provides evidence-based recommendations for developing targeted English curricula for nursing students, thereby improving their academic performance and professional effectiveness.

Comprehending the English language needs of nursing students is critical to improving teaching strategies and ensuring that the nursing students are prepared to face the demands of the students' carrier. This research overcome a significant gap in the literature, offering valuable insights that can inform the educators, curriculum designers, and policy makers, to develop curriculum based on the findings.

2. Methods

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) criteria are followed in this study's systematic review approach. This approach ensures a comprehensive and transparent synthesis of existing research on the English language needs of nursing students.

Scholar was used to conduct a systematic search of recent and widely-read literature. Keywords and search terms will include "English language needs," "nursing students," and "needs analysis.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Studies published in peer-reviewed journals within the last three years.
- Articles are written in English.
- Research focused on the English language needs of nursing students.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Studies not directly related to the English language needs of nursing students.
- Articles not available in full text.
- Publications in languages other than English.
- Articles published outside the range of 2015-2024

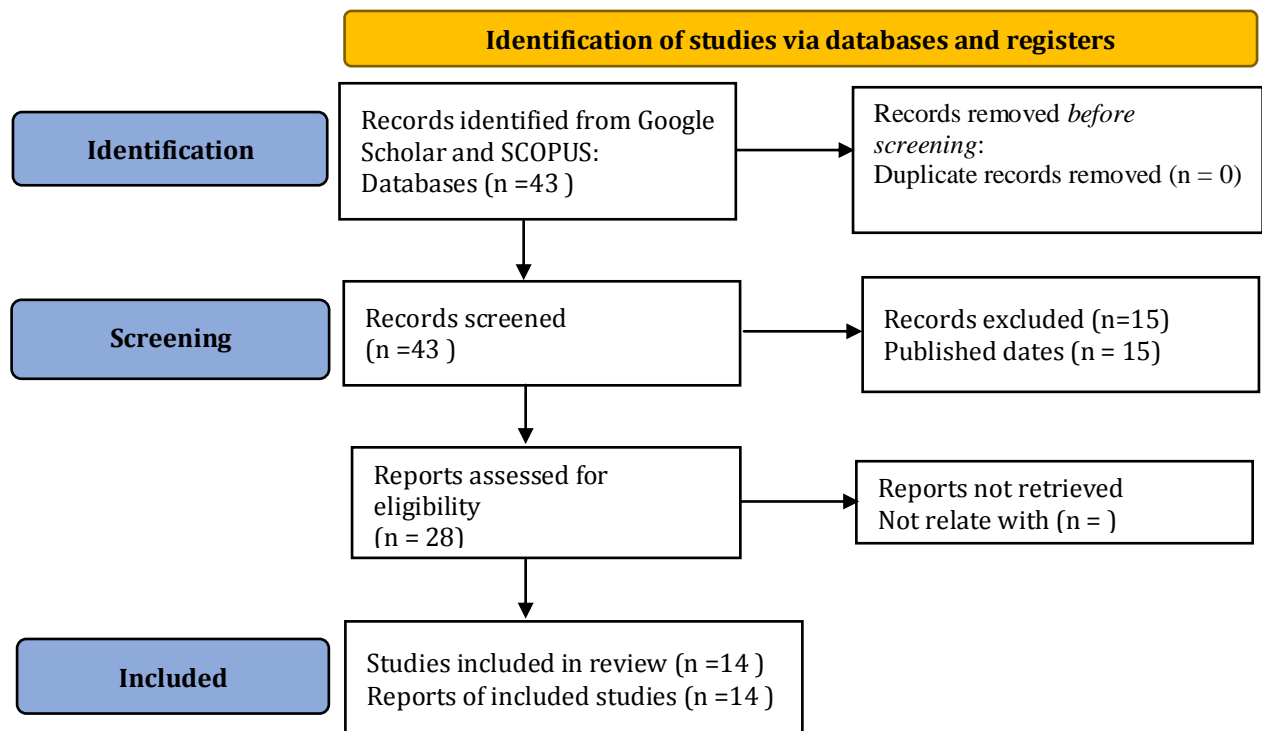


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow

Collecting the data was done using a standardized form, capturing the following information: study design and methodology; sample size and characteristics; Key findings related to English language needs and recommendations for curriculum development.

3. Result

From the databases Google Scholar and Scopus, 43 research articles were found based on the keywords “English Language Needs of Nursing Students” and “Need Analysis of Nursing Students in Learning English.” The 28 research articles belonging to the exclusion criteria were dismissed, and the 14 research articles belonging to the inclusion criteria were used as the data for this study. Findings based on the research questions are presented below.

A. Study 1: Analysis of English Language Needs in Nursing Students of Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University (Riwasanti et al., 2021)

- Study Design: Descriptive
- Sample: Nursing students at Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University

- Key Findings: English is crucial taught as a general course, but students anticipate learning topics that are relevant to their assignments in the workplace
- Recommendations: establishment of a syllabus, based on the specific workplace-related needs.

B. Study 2: Needs Analysis of Nursing Students in English Online Learning
(Sofyan & Wati, 2022)

- Study Design: descriptive analysis method
- Sample: Nursing bachelor program at STIKes YPIB Majalengka
- Key Findings: More assistance is required for students to use online learning tools and the internet. They require development in vocabulary, grammar, and the four basic language skills. Assistance is needed to identify online learning styles and motivations. Students also desire more varied and interesting online learning methods.
- Recommendations: Further research to gather more in-depth and holistic data.

Sample size and characteristics: nursing bachelor program at STIKes YPIB Majalengka.

Recommendations for curriculum development and the next researcher: create further aspects to collect in-depth data.

C. Study 3: Learning Needs of Nursing Students to Study English for Nursing Purposes (ENP)(Cahyadin, 2023)

- Study Design: Descriptive research
- Sample: Nursing students at Health Polytechnic Kendari
- Key Findings: Students prefer learning in groups and engaging in activities like role play, discussions, and problem-solving. They favor learning content through listening, speaking, reading, and translating English-written nursing materials.
- Recommendations: Create a more learning-needs-aware ENP course.

D. Study 4: Needs Analysis in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) for Nursing Students (Yuriatson Jubhari et al., 2022)

- Study Design: Quantitative
- Sample: Nursing students at Politeknik Sandi Karsa
- Key Findings: Key sub-skills identified include reading (understanding work schedules and contracts), listening (understanding instructions and media), speaking (pronouncing new vocabulary and explaining procedures), and writing (report writing).
- Recommendations: Design syllabi and materials to meet these specific sub-skill needs.

E. Study 5: Needs Analysis of English Learning on Nursing Students at Stikes Notokusumo Yogyakarta (Agus Wibowo, 2021)

- Study Design: Qualitative descriptive

- Sample: Nursing students at STIKES NOTOKUSUMO
 - Key Findings: Emphasis on speaking, grammar, and vocabulary is necessary to improve English language skills.
 - Recommendations: None provided.
- F. Study 6: Analysis of English Needs in Students of Nursing Study Program Stikes Ngudian Husada Madura (2022)** (Irianto & Nurniati, 2022)
- Study Design: Qualitative descriptive
 - Sample: Diploma Nursing Study Program at STIKes Ngudia Husada Madura
 - Key Findings: English needs are diverse, serving both current educational purposes and future professional careers. Students need English proficiency to support their nursing education and career advancement.
 - Recommendations: Conduct regular needs analysis and accommodate changing needs of students.
- G. Study 7: What Do Nursing Students Need in Learning English?** (Pradana et al., 2022)
- Study Design: Mixed-method
 - Sample: Nursing students at Dehasen University of Bengkulu
 - Key Findings: English materials tend to be general rather than specific to nursing. Students learn English primarily for job-seeking purposes. Most needed skills include vocabulary mastery, speaking, and Listening. Materials related to nursing activities are crucial.
 - Recommendations: Curriculum designers should create English materials specific to nursing students' needs and develop new textbooks.
- H. Study 8: Needs Analysis of Instructional Materials for English Speaking Skills for Nursing Students at Stikes Toraja** (Pongsapan, 2015)
- Study Design: Quantitative and qualitative
 - Sample: Nursing students at Stikes Toraja
 - Key Findings: Real needs include ESP practice and relevant instructional materials. Lecturers' viewpoints on ESP instruction and descriptions of ESP for nurses in English-speaking countries are considered.
 - Recommendations: Develop nursing English textbooks based on needs analysis.
- I. Study 9: A Need Analysis of English for Specific Purpose Teaching Material for Nursing Students at STIKES Mercubakti jaya Padang** (Riza & Ratmanida, 2023)
- Study Design: Questionnaire
 - Sample: Nursing students at STIKES Mercu bakti jaya Padang
 - Key Findings: Speaking is the most important skill, but current materials do not fully meet student needs.
 - Recommendations: Create ESP courses specifically for nursing students, considering these elements.
- J. Study 10: Exploring ESP Needs of Undergraduate Nursing Students in a**

University in Semarang (Nurakhir & Palupi, 2018)

- Study Design: Descriptive qualitative
- Sample: Nursing students in Semarang
- Key Findings: For students, English is crucial for both their academic work and future professional careers. For several reasons, including that it is the most crucial skill to acquire, English language proficiency should be stressed in the course. Poor grammar and a limited vocabulary were the two issues that students rated as most important in their study.
- Recommendations: Reconsider teaching practices to align with student needs.

K. Study 11: Needs Analysis: ESP Syllabus Design for Indonesian EFL Nursing Students (Susandi & Krishnawati, 2016)

- Study Design: Questionnaires and interviews
- Sample: Bachelor and Diploma programs at STIKES Bali
- Key Findings: Students consider themselves weak in vocabulary, speaking, listening, writing, and pronunciation.
- Recommendations: None provided.

L. Study 12: Language Skills Needed by Nurses Aiming to Work Abroad: A Need Analysis of English for Nursing (Barn, 2016)

- Study Design: Literature review and interview
- Sample: Indonesian nurse working in New Zealand
- **Key Findings: Communication skills are vital for nurses working abroad,** including small talk, oral and written reports.
- Recommendations: None provided.

M. Study 13: English for Nursing Purposes (ENP): Investigating the Students, Academicians, and Administrators' Language Needs at Mandala Waluya Health Institution (Nurindah et al., 2019)

- Study Design: Mixed-method
- Sample: Department of Nursing at Mandala Waluya Health Institution
- Key Findings: All four language skills are important. There are currently no English Nurse Purpose courses offered, despite the fact that English is necessary for many nursing that related the nursing activities
- Recommendations: Future research should include documentary analysis of current syllabi.

N. Sample 14: Designing an English Syllabus for Nursing Students based on Need Analysis in Indonesia (Bae, 2017)

- Study design and methodology: Descriptive quantitative method
- Sample size and characteristics: Nursing students of Stikes Mega BuanaPalopo and graduate students working at Hospital SawerigadingPalopo
- Key findings: Preferences for learning in pairs or small groups, practical and interactive teaching techniques, and the importance of English in the workplace.
- Recommendations: Evaluate and create a new syllabus based on these needs.

4. Discussion

The systematic review of the English language needs of nursing students reveals several key themes and considerations for curriculum development. These findings are supported by various studies that have analyzed the specific needs and preferences of nursing students in different educational contexts.

1. Relevance to Career and Education

A recurring theme across the studies is the recognition of English as crucial for both academic and professional purposes. Nursing students acknowledge the importance of English in their future careers, particularly in contexts where they may need to interact with international patients, access medical literature, and communicate within diverse healthcare teams. Sample 1 from Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University highlights the expectation of students for English to be taught in a manner that is directly relevant to their workplace assignments. The results of Sample 6 from Stikes Ngudia Husada Madura, which show that nursing students require English for both their present education and future professional jobs, are consistent with this.

Sample 10 from a university in Semarang reinforces this point, showing that English is perceived as very important for academic studies and future careers, with an emphasis on basic English language skills. According to Basturkmen (2010), ESP courses should be designed to meet the specific needs of the learners, particularly in professional and academic contexts.

Sample 13 from Mandala Waluya Health Institution confirms that all four language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) are important for both educational and career-related nursing activities. Hyland (2006) supports this by stating that ESP should focus on the specific language skills that are relevant to the learners' professional and academic needs.

These findings suggest that English language curricula for nursing students should be designed with a clear focus on practical, job-related language skills that will be directly applicable in their future roles as healthcare professionals.

2. Focus on Basic Language Skills

Mastering English skills is needed. There are several studies emphasizing the mastery of English skills for nursing students, such as speaking, listening, writing, and reading. These skills are very important so that nursing students can communicate effectively in the healthcare environment.

Sample 4 from Sandi Karsa Polytechnic prioritizes 4 English language mastery skills, such as reading skills to be able to understand work schedules, listening to English media, and writing reports.

Sample 5 from Stikes Notokusumo Yogyakarta emphasizes the importance of speaking, grammar, and vocabulary to improve English language skills. This is supported by Nation (2013), who highlights the importance of vocabulary and grammar in language proficiency.

Speaking is identified as the most crucial skill for nursing students in both Sample 10 and Sample 9 from STIKES Mercubaktijaya Padang. Significant barriers to speaking

include limited vocabulary and grammar. Speaking is emphasized as a crucial ability by Thornbury (2005). These abilities can support efficient communication and become the main focus of learning English.

In conclusion, the research states that nursing students must master basic English language skills. Therefore, students must be equipped with the knowledge to meet these demands.

3. Preference for Interactive and Practical Learning

Many nursing students prefer learning methods that are interactive and practical, allowing them to engage actively with the language and apply it in realistic scenarios.

Sample 3 from Health Polytechnic Kendari reveals that students prefer group learning, interactive activities such as role plays, discussions, and practical exercises like memorizing conversations and translating nursing materials.

Sample 7 from Dehasen University of Bengkulu and Sample 14 from Stikes Mega Buana Palopo both emphasize the preference for pair study, small group learning, and practical, engaging teaching techniques such as role play and fun activities.

These preferences indicate that curriculum developers should incorporate interactive and practical learning methods into English courses for nursing students, facilitating a more engaging and effective learning experience.

4. Support for Online Learning

In the context of online education, nursing students require additional support to effectively engage in English learning. This includes improved infrastructure, motivation, and varied learning methods.

Sample 2 from STIKes YPIB Majalengka highlights the need for better internet support and online learning devices, as well as assistance in finding effective online learning styles and motivations. Anderson (2008) argues that effective online learning environments require robust technological support and varied instructional methods to engage learners.

Students also express a need for more varied and interesting online learning methods to maintain engagement and motivation in an online classroom setting. Bates (2019) emphasizes the importance of diverse and interactive online learning strategies to enhance student engagement.

These findings suggest that institutions should invest in the necessary infrastructure and provide additional support to students in online learning environments, ensuring that they can fully participate in and benefit from English language courses.

5. ESP and ENP Course Development

The development of a curriculum must be based on a needs-based approach so that the syllabus design is in accordance with an effective and relevant curriculum. Therefore, the development and regular updating of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Nursing Purposes (ENP) courses is essential to meet the growing needs of nursing students.

Sample 4 suggests developing teaching material and a syllabus to meet the students needs. Sample 6 suggests that ESP courses should accommodate the diverse and

changing needs of nursing students through continuous needs analysis. Regarding Long (2005), which states that developing needs analysis is needed to cover students' needs, Sample 8 and Sample 14 recommend developing nursing English textbooks and syllabi based on a thorough needs analysis, combining student preferences and needs.

These recommendations emphasize the importance of regularly updating curricula to reflect the current and future needs of nursing students, ensuring that they receive relevant and effective English language training.

5. Conclusion

Based on a systematic literature review of 14 articles, assessing the English language needs of nursing students based on the systematic review found several key themes that are critical for the development of effective English language curricula.

The first point is related to English language proficiency, which was considered highly relevant to career and academic success, especially with foreign patients and accessing medical literature. The second point is that basic English skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing are important aspects of communicating effectively in a health care environment. The third point is that nursing students prefer interactive and practical learning methods that allow them to actively engage with the language and apply it in realistic scenarios. The last point is that additional support is needed in the online learning environment, including improved infrastructure and varied teaching methods. Finally, regular development and updating of ESP and ENP courses, based on thorough needs analysis, is critical to meeting the evolving needs of nursing students. To increase professional and healthcare quality, evidence-based recommendations for curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers are needed to improve the English language training of nursing students.

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