

A STUDY ON STUDENTS' NEEDS IN LEARNING ENGLISH FOR PHARMACY (A STARTING POINT TO DESIGN INNOVATIVE SYLLABUS)

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Abstract: This study aims to discover the needs of pharmacy students as an input to design an ESP syllabus. The needs analyses were conducted by distributing questionnaires to and interviewing the respondents. The responses were analyzed based on a comprehensive concept of need analysis proposed by Dudley-Evans and St. John. The findings showed that most students consider themselves poor in vocabulary and weak in speaking, listening, writing, and pronunciation. Hence, it is crucial to improve their skills to enable them from communicating effectively with foreign patients and avoiding misunderstanding which may happen when interacting with foreign patients. Therefore, developing an appropriate ESP syllabus for pharmacy course could be possibly developed based on these findings and the theory of material development.

Keywords: *needs analysis; pharmacy students; ESP; syllabus design*

INTRODUCTION

English has been evolving as the working language in Asian context (Kirkpatrick, 2012). The specified learning foci of English in workplace context is under the umbrella of English for specific purposes (ESP). ESP is getting more popular since more English language programs are intended for the individuals who might want to learn English, which is applicable to their occupations (Renandya & Widodo, 2016). One of such occupations is pharmacy.

English mastery is badly needed to cope with the global change of the healthcare system. In this case, pharmaceutical science instruction should always be adjusted with the recent condition in society. As with the global Covid-19 pandemic, pharmacists belong to the front line to fight against the virus, and they are doing their best to support the patients despite their backgrounds and origins (Wang & Tang, 2020). Lack of English mastery will seriously affect their ability to provide service to their patients. Given the situation above, an area of specialized English learning should be well-arranged for pharmacy students.

Robinson stated three differences between general English and ESP. Those are (1) objective-oriented learning activity, the students learn English is not because the language itself but also for specific goals in an academic and professional field, (2) the course content is designed and developed based on students' need analysis, and (3) it is especially proposed to adult learners (Sari, Kuncoro, Erlangga, 2019, p.30).

Besides, ESP is an effort or program which facilitates learners' needs in English to run a specific role. The examples are English for engineering, English for pharmacy, English for the nurse, English for midwifery, English for management, English for tourism, English or accounting, and other related English subjects. It does need appropriate and much-related content to a particular field (Richard & Rodger (2011) as cited in Agustina (2014, p.38)).

Based on the author's experience, the teaching of English for pharmacy as one of the English for Specific Course presents some challenges. Not only do the teachers have to deal with an extensive area of content knowledge, but it also deals with students' lack of English ability since

typical classes consisted of mixed-abilities students. Another challenge is related to the course syllabus. Not many schools have provided the teachers with a complete syllabus with learning material and evaluation criteria. Several schools even left it for the teachers to arrange all the syllabus, methods, and evaluation. This practice will eventually present some problems since the schools cannot measure the expected learning outcomes for the students. In this view, the course evaluation should be conducted.

The primary goal of ESP classes is to provide targeted language instruction fulfill the students' real communicative needs in various professional situations. (Chovancová, 2014), in this case, teacher's task to assist students to engage with their professional communities by providing the linguistic needs and they can be such as valuable feedbacks for syllabus design and improvements. Research investigating about this roles are many, for example (Cabinda, 2013; Chostelidou, 2010; Hu, 2017; Menggo, Suastra, Budiarsa, & Padmadewi, 2019; Moslemi, Moinzadeh, & Dabaghi, 2011; Seargeant, Erling, Solly, & Chowdhury, 2017)

The innovation was implemented in order to improve the current syllabus and more effectively to accomplish the goals of English language teaching in this Institute. Although the current syllabus is relatively sufficient, according to the lecturers involved, it is not entirely practical in terms of topic arrangement and is apparently difficult to implement in classroom teaching. It is, therefore, essential for improvements on the syllabus to be made, so that a lack of suitability between the learner's needs and the items taught can be avoided, and both teachers and learners can work together towards mutual goals.

Much research on needs analysis have been devoted on the area of healthcare workers (Mazdayasna & Tahririan, 2008), science students (A. Ali & Nasr, 2015), aviation English (Aiguo, 2007), public and environment health (Ibrahim, 2016), nurses (Lu, 2018) airground staffs (Cutting, 2012), and tourism industry (Ibrahim, 2016; Yasmin, Sarkar, & Sohail, 2016; Zahedpisheh, B Abu bakar, & Saffari, 2017)

In Indonesian context, needs analyses were used to investigate the language needs in travel agencies (Suprina & Rahayu, 2018), maritime education (Dirgayasa, 2014), vocational college students (Paniya, 2008). In addition, some concerns on ESP teaching in Indonesia were reflected in some research such as challenges in ESP in Indonesia (Marwan, 2009; Poedjiastutie,

2017), ESP teacher education model (Ali,S.U 2015), issues and prospects of ESP(Kusni, 2013), and ESP material development (Paniya, 2008), and teacher identity in ESP material development (Widodo, 2017)

Despite the various research on needs analysis in ESP and the crucial roles of healthcare professional in terms on pandemic, little attention has been given on needs analysis for English for Pharmacy. A study on this area is essential as it provides empirical data on students' English competence, topics, and preferred learning activities. The data serve as the basic consideration for designing effective syllabus which can guarantee the achievable learning outcomes.

This study aims to investigate the students' need analysis on English for the Pharmacy course, covering their personal information, current strength and weakness of English proficiency, the degree of importance of pharmacy skills/activities, and identification of topics that would interest them.

In terms of investigating students' need analysis on English for pharmacy course, the followings are research questions proposed:

- a. How are the students' current strengths and weaknesses of English proficiency?
- b. How is the degree of importance of pharmacy skills/activities?
- c. How is the identification of topics that would interest pharmacy students?

English at pharmacy school

The study was conducted at one of Pharmacy Schools in Tasikmalaya. It is in 117 out of 2100 non-vocational colleges in Indonesia. There are four study programs. Those are pharmacy, health analyst, optical refraction, and nurse. In this research, the respondents are only from the pharmacy department.

The vision of this school is to manifest qualified national education, to create an academic culture which supports the adequate graduations in the health field with high morality, to have competent graduations as needed by the community, to produce research which contributes to the national development, to get contributive cooperation on developing knowledge in health field globally. This institution provides an English course in the even semester with two credits. This is a general basic course served to complete students' English skills, which emphasizes recognizing pharmaceutical terms. During the class, language aspects are

integrated comprehensively due to the improvement of students' skills. The aspects are vocabulary, grammar, listening, reading, writing, and speaking.

The learning objectives of this class are (1) students are able to enrich their knowledge in the pharmaceutical field, (2) students are able to improve their English skills by integrating language aspects completely, (3) students are able to implement their English skills for daily life.

English for Specific Purpose

Dudley Evans (1998), as cited in (Donesch, 2012, p.2), stated that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is defined to fulfill the specific needs of students. It uses both methodology and activities which underlie a particular field of study. It is also centralized to language activities such as lexis, grammar, passage, and genre. ESP for adults commonly has Basic English skills, and they are learning to communicate in relation to professional and career demands (Hutauruk, 2012). The characteristic of ESP is to fulfill specific learning needs (Javid, Choudhary Zahid, 2013, p.140). Besides, ESP teaching methodology is appropriate with another language teaching model. In other words, ESP shapes input, motivates students' desire in learning, manages learning strategy, and promotes its practices and uses (Strevens, 1988) as cited in (Eddine & Chams, 2016).

ESP is defined as "an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning" (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). ESP has a long history in the field of language teaching, in which it was started in the 1960s when the general English course could not meet the needs of language learners. There are three common to the emergence of ESP courses: the demands of Brave New World, a revolution in linguistics, and focus on the learner (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987).

Celce-Murcia (2001) claimed that ESP is a movement based on the proposition that all language teachings should be tailored to the specific learning and language use needs for an identified group of learners and also sensitive to the socio-cultural context in which these learners will use English. ESP is generally known as a learner-centered approach, since it meets the needs of (mostly) adult learners who need to learn a foreign language use in their specific fields, such as nursing, pharmacy, science, technology, hospitality, academic learning, and other fields.

Basturkmen (2006) stated that the most prominent feature in ESP course design is that the syllabus based on an analysis of the students' needs because, in ESP, language is learned to equip the learners to enter a more specific linguistic environment.

Due to the above description, English for pharmacy is designed to provide students' knowledge of the pharmacy field. It is in line with the syllabus arranged by the lecturer. It covers English skills, such as speaking, reading, writing, and listening. However, it is not limited to them, because the learning activity is formulated also to improve their critical thinking and vocabulary mastery.

Needs analysis

Needs analysis is generally considered the cornerstone of ESP course design (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). It is the basis of language learning programs, which leads to a focused language learning course and aid the development and improvement of the programs. Takaaki (2006) viewed needs analysis as a systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information that meets the language learning requirements of learners within the context of particular institutions involved in the learning situations. A needs analysis includes all the activities used to collect information about the students, learning needs, wants, etc. However, an issue in the students' needs analysis is that sometimes the students do not know what they actually need. Kavaliauskiene and Uzpalience (2003) pointed out that students often find it difficult to distinguish between the needs (the skills seen as being relevant to himself/herself) and wants (the desired competence). One of the ways to find the students' needs is by taking a survey or interviewing the lecturers involved, as the lecturers are more experienced than the students, and they also know better what the students' needs in order to be a professional English-speaking pharmacist. The process of needs analysis may also involve looking at the expectations and requirements of other interested parties such as administrators, patients, employers, and other people who may be impacted by the language program. Moreover, having an expert in ESP area as a consultant would also be very helpful to decide which the best is for the students. The information gained from a needs analysis can be used to help the curriculum or syllabus developer to define program goals. These goals can then be stated as

specific teaching objectives, which in turn will function as the foundation to develop lesson plans, materials, tests, assignments, and activities. Basically, a needs analysis serves as an aid to clarify the purposes of a language program. The syllabus, which is designed based on the students' needs, will have high relevance to what the students studied.

METHOD

Design

This research is aimed to investigate students' needs in English for the pharmacy course. Thus a survey method was taken in this research. Check & Schutt (2012), as cited in (Ponto, p.168), stated that a survey is collecting information from individual sampling through the response on questions. Besides, this method is used to answer the proposed questions to assess needs and to decide objectives. (Isaac & Michael; 1997) as cited in (Glasow, Priscilla, 2005).

Kerlinger (1973), as cited in (Mathiyazhagan & Deoki, 2010: 39) classified data collection method into a personal interview, questionnaire, a phone call, and observation. Thus, in this research, the data was taken from questionnaires and interviews. Both data collections proposed the same instruments. The interview was done through a phone call. Nevertheless, the respondents had an opportunity to convey their opinions toward the response.

Data collection

Sample

The participants of this study were forty pharmacy students selected randomly over 160 in Tasikmalaya. All students are native speakers of Bahasa Indonesia and have been learning English since junior high school for at least six years.

Instrumentation

In this study, there is one set of a questionnaire used and distributed to all respondents. The questionnaire was divided into four sections: (a) personal information of respondents; (b) identification of current strength and weakness of their English proficiency; (c) identification of the degree of importance of nursing skills/activities; and (d) identification of topics that would interest the respondents. Their responses on the section about their English proficiency were measured by the five-point scale, ranging from "very weak" to

"very good"; and on the section about the importance of pharmacy activities, their responses were also measured by five-point scale ranging from "little important" to "highly important." In the section about the topics that interesting to them, their responses were measured by a three-point scale ranging from "It is not helpful" to "It is important, and it is interesting to learn more about it." To eliminate any possible misunderstandings, the questionnaire was distributed in Bahasa Indonesia. The questionnaires used a modified version of the needs analysis questionnaire proposed by Susandi & Krishnawati (2016) as they are already validated and published.

Data collection procedure

1. The researcher arranged the questionnaire in the google form.
2. The questionnaire was written in Bahasa Indonesia to convince that the respondents understand each meaning of the statements in the questionnaire on May 14, 2020. Through the WhatsApp group, the link was spread and should be filled no more than May 18, 2020.
3. There were only thirty-seven students who filled the questionnaire through a google form.
4. The researcher interviewed three respondents who did not fill the questionnaire online.
5. Analyze the transcribed data.
6. Report the research result.

Data analysis

Since the questionnaire was distributed through a google form, the result was automatically calculated and provided in the form of a percentage. The highest percentage is 100%. The calculation will be from the total number of choices divided by the total number of respondents and times 100.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data presentation to answer research questions and interpretation of the findings (Needs Analysis)

The following section outlines the results of the questionnaire, which is divided into four parts. The 1st presents the participants' personal information, the 2nd presents their English, the 3rd describes the pharmacy skills, and the last describes topics needed and wanted by pharmacy students to be included in the ESP course.

Table1. *Personal information*

	Frequency	Percentage
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1	Gender	Female	22	55%
		Male	18	45%
2	Age	19 – 21	40	100%
		22 – 24	-	-
3	Studied English (English for pharmacy) previously	Yes	35	87.5%
		No	5	12.5%
4	Make efforts to improve English	Yes	30	75%
		No	10	25%
5	Frequency of practicing English outside of campus/week	Not at all	5	12,5%
		1 – 2 hours	15	37,5%
		3 – 5 hours	15	37,5%
		More than 5 hours	5	12,5%

Table 1 provides the personal information of students. Most of them are female (55%), ranging from 19-21 years old. Most of them have studied English for pharmacy previously (87.5%) because they were graduated from pharmacy vocational school. Only a few of them graduated from senior

high school, which did not specifically study English for pharmacy. Only 75% who make efforts to improve their English. The majority also stated that they practice English outside campus (87.5%), ranging from one to more than 5 hours per week.

Table 2. *The students' current strength and weakness of English proficiency*

	Very weak	Weak	Fair	Good	Very good
Grammar	20%	12,5%	27,5%	37,5%	2,5%
Vocabulary	12,5%	12,5%	30%	45%	0%
Pronunciation	15%	25%	50%	7,5%	2,5%
Speaking	10%	20%	60%	10%	0%
Listening	10%	17,5%	22,5%	50%	0%
Reading	2,5%	7,5%	12,5%	75%	2,5%
Writing	12,5%	15%	37,5%	35%	0%

The data provided in table 2 describes that majority of students identifying their ability in speaking and listening, mastering grammar, vocabularies, pronunciation, and writing needs to

be improved. The students feel confident with their English only on the Reading skill, in which 75% identifies themselves as "good" in reading.

Table 3. *The degree of importance of pharmacy skills/activities*

Activities/skills	Percentage
Social skills	87,5%
Interaction with patients	75%
Administering medication	80%
Giving advice	87,5%
Cultural differences	50%
Interpreting medical terminologies / abbreviations	75%
Interaction with fellow co-workers	80%
Report writing	75%
Presentation skills	75%
Giving instruction effectively	87,5%
Inquiring skills	50%
Reading and interpreting reports, prescription charts, etc.	62,5%

Table 3 reveals that skills related to communication are the skills that the students think as more important compared to others. Social skills, giving advice, and giving instruction effectively are those on the top of the list. The above percentage was taken from two perceptions, including important and highly

important. In addition to speaking skills, administering medication and Interaction with co-workers are also considered to be very important by students. On the other hand, inquiring skills and cultural differences are considered to be not highly important, according to the students.

Table 4. *The identification of topics that would interest the pharmacy students*

No	Topics	Percentage
1	Giving directions	62,5%
2	Explaining medication to patients	87,5%
3	Hospital departments	75%
4	Hospital equipment	70%
5	A pharmacy	62,5%
6	Pharmacist	70%
7	Pharmacist's job description	75%
8	Prescription & Over-the-Counter (OTC) Drugs	95%
9	Intelligence pills	80%
10	Medical prescription	87,5%
11	Confirming measurements	87,5%
12	Administering medication	82,5%
13	Describing the frequency of administering medication	82,5%
14	Pharmaceutical company	70%
15	Laboratory	75%
16	Measurements	75%
17	Jobs in the pharmaceutical industry	70%
18	Non-production pharmaceutical professions	62,5%
19	Pharmaceutical documentation	55%
20	Quality assurance and auditing	32,5%
21	Substance discovery and product development	42,5%
22	Symptoms and indication	50%
23	Prime questions	50%
24	Warning, precaution, patient education	67,5%
25	Rough situation	62,5%

There are twenty-three topics among twenty-five topics that are considered to be interesting and wanted by most students to be included in the ESP course (50% and above). It was only taken from important topics based on students' perception. Topics that seemed to be less attractive to the students are quality assurance and auditing, as well as substance discovery and product development. Further investigation is needed to elicit the reason behind this opinion; however, there is a possibility that students have had enough knowledge on these topics and poses relatively good English for these topics, thus learning these topics becomes less attractive to them.

Designing the innovative syllabus

The learning-centered approach was adopted to present the planning stage of designing the innovative syllabus. The approach was also used to collaborate with the core of an ESP module which focuses on the specific needs learners require in the learning process. The evaluation will be an important aspect as learners' performances which can be obtained through performance-based tests and

feedback will be required to give a more qualitative perspective on the effectiveness of the curriculum once it is implemented.

Material Development for the ESP Syllabus Material development in teaching ESP is very essential; it shows the creativity and the awareness of the teacher towards the subject. Materials can be defined as anything or any source that can be used to assist the student in the process of language learning. It can be textbooks, workbooks, audio video, photocopied handouts, paper cutting or anything that informs the language being learned (Tomlinson, 2008). Material too can also be in the form of instructional, experiential, elucidative or exploratory (Tomlinson, 2008).

In the case of pharmacy students, the materials used for these students are materials integrated with the real-world situation, their working situation as a pharmacist in a hospital or other health centers. However, with the limited amount of time in each meeting, designing an appropriate material and syllabus for the proposed time frame are relatively complicated. The findings of this study revealed that it is necessary to improve

the students' English proficiency (see Table 2). The first English proficiency that needs to be improved is pronunciation and speaking skills. Students identified both skills are not good enough; mostly answered that their ability is very weak, weak, and fair (90%). Further, it was also found that the essential pharmacy skills, according to the students, are those who require communication as social skills, giving advice, and giving instruction effectively (see table 3). Thus, it is evident that students need to improve their speaking skills in order to be able to interact with their future patients.

Another English proficiency which needed to be improved was listening. Since without having an adequate listening skill, communication could not happen. This is very essential. Indonesia was very familiar to the accent of both American and British, but they were hard to understand the accents themselves. To fulfill the needs of students, a wide range of collection for audio and video is significantly needed. A way to solve this obstacle was by arranging a specific task. Students were assigned to have virtual friend whose second language is English and bring them to the classroom activity. The most common applications used for having video call were WhatsApp, Google meet, zoom, etc. In their live communication, they could play a role between pharmacist and patient, for example, talking about certain topic. Students then took some notes to the words or phrases they could not get or hear. This task could also aid students in practicing correct pronunciation. Integrating the pronunciation practice with speaking and listening practice through a role play is a good scenario. Students can directly know whether or not they have pronounce the words correctly when the foreigner cannot understand them. The foreigner will be the indicator in assessing the pronunciation of the student.

Further, the third English proficiency that needs to be improved is the writing skill. Based on the result describes on table 2, majority of students identifying their ability in mastering grammar and writing is not good enough. 20% students reported that their

grammar knowledge is very weak and 12.5% students said that their writing skill is very weak. In the real working world, pharmacist had less opportunity in writing instead of another activity. They simply wrote some important information related to medication. It covered patient identity, type of the medicine, how to administer it, and a simple information related to the symptoms. The rest activity done by the pharmacist was through oral communication.

Assessment

A discrete point test and performance test were two types of assessment. The discrete-point test has a constructed response format, and is conducted in order to assess several components of English knowledge, such as reading comprehension and listening (McNamara, 2000). On the other hand, the performance test demonstrates real language performance in writing and speaking skills. The writing test could be conducted by giving the students a particular task, such as writing a brief medication report. The speaking test could be set as a role-play test held in a pharmacy laboratory, in order to create a real-world pharmacy situation, as well as to give the opportunity for the students to perform and communicate while performing typical pharmacy procedures.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this research were (1) most of the students had already studied English for pharmacy since they graduated from pharmacy vocational school. However, following their English skills, they made some efforts to improve them, such as watching YouTube videos, reading English articles, and using English application to have autonomous learning. (2) Pronunciation and speaking skills seemed to be very weak among all. Based on these findings, it can be inferred that the expected curriculum to suit the students' lack should focus more on how to improve their speaking skills. The suitable methods which can boost students' speaking is communicative methods where students utilize the language in a real context which is

adjusted based on their expected future jobs. Regarding students' weaknesses in pronunciation, there should be specific section in the textbook/module about pronunciation drills. This can be integrated in the content and syllabus where students need to be able to speak with Received Pronunciation. (3) Communication activity looked to be very interesting for them to master. It was based on the rank of activities that they considered very important. It was actually in line with the previous finding. Since the most challenging English skill and students' activity was speaking and communication, again the appropriate method to implement was communicative approach. Sometimes the activity was not only by practicing dialog or conversation in pairs; it was possible to use some speaking applications on their smartphone to practice. Thus, the real and virtual situations could possibly assist and improve their communication activity. (4) There were twenty-three topics ranging from 50% and above as students need and want to be included in the English course syllabus. Since a semester only had 14 meetings, the lecturer should determine the order of the topics. It could be taken from the highest rank to the lowest as seen in table 4.

English teacher/lecturer could use these findings as a starting point to develop the innovative syllabus. It matched with students' needs and their expectation toward the learning process. To perfect this study, the researcher also recommended further observation on another perspective from the teachers' side and professional pharmacist. After getting multiple perspectives on this needs analysis, the basis for developing an innovative syllabus will be excellent.

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