# The Necessity of Teaching ESP in the Nursing Career at PUCE Esmeraldas

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#### **Abstract**

With the objective of assessing the necessity of teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the career of Nursing at PUCE Esmeraldas, a pedagogical investigation was carried out in the first semester of 2018, with the qualitative paradigm, the sample was formed by 10 students from the sixth level of Nursing, who were part of a group of 25 of the same level. They were taught ESP during three units of the syllabus, with thirty hours in the whole semester. The descriptive and the inductive method were applied, with an unstructured interview and the technique of observation. The results showed that at the beginning of the semester students were not able to speak in English using the communicative functions and vocabulary related to ESP, but when they were taught each of the units which were connected to English for Specific Purposes, they were able to communicate with some fluency and accuracy, they talked about Emergencies in Pediatrics, such as burns, convulsions, poisoning by any substance, epilepsy, an acute asthma attack, vomiting and diarrhoea, hypothermia and hyperthermia and a forearm fracture, they also talked about the importance of physical exercises to rehabilitate injured patients applying the nursing care plan for each disease, for example an ankle sprains, any kind of fracture, a patient after a myocardial infarction, a cerebro vascular accident, an operation and so one. It can be concluded that in the teaching-learning process of ESP to Nursing students it is very relevant and significant to use some strategies as cooperative learning strategies, discussions, task-based language emphasizing on the necessary abilities and content they need, to have them use the accurate vocabulary and the necessary linguistic-professional abilities in the practice of their future profession.

**Keywords**: English for Specific Purposes, Nursing career, communicative functions, emergencies in Pediatrics

### Resumen

Con el objetivo de evaluar la necesidad de enseñar inglés con fines específicos (ESP) en la carrera de Enfermería en PUCE Esmeraldas, se realizó una investigación pedagógica en el primer semestre de 2018, con el paradigma cualitativo, la muestra estuvo conformada por 10 estudiantes del sexto nivel de enfermería, que formaban parte de un grupo de 25 del mismo nivel. Se les enseñó ESP durante tres unidades del plan de estudios, con treinta horas en todo el semestre. Se aplicó el método descriptivo y el inductivo, con una entrevista no estructurada y la técnica de observación. Los resultados mostraron que al comienzo del semestre los estudiantes no podían hablar en inglés utilizando las funciones comunicativas y el vocabulario relacionado con ESP, pero cuando se les enseñó cada una de las unidades que estaban conectadas al inglés para fines específicos, pudieron se comunican con cierta fluidez y precisión, hablaron sobre emergencias en pediatría, como quemaduras, convulsiones, envenenamiento por cualquier sustancia, epilepsia, un ataque de asma agudo, vómitos y diarrea, hipotermia e hipertermia y fractura de antebrazo, también hablaron sobre la importancia de ejercicios físicos para rehabilitar a pacientes lesionados aplicando el plan de cuidados de enfermería para cada enfermedad, por ejemplo, un esguince de tobillo, cualquier tipo de fractura, un paciente después de una infarto de miocardio, un accidente cerebrovascular, una operación, etc. Se puede concluir que en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de ESP para estudiantes de enfermería, es muy relevante y significativo usar algunas estrategias como estrategias de aprendizaje cooperativo, discusiones, lenguaje

basado en tareas, enfatizando las habilidades y el contenido necesarios que necesitan, para tenerlos usar el vocabulario preciso y las habilidades lingüísticas-profesionales necesarias en la práctica de su futura profesión.

**Palabras clave**: inglés para fines específicos, carrera de Enfermería, funciones comunicativas, emergencias en pediatría

#### Introduction

From the decade of 60's ESP has raised to be an important area of the English Teaching Foreign language. There are many universities all over the World, which provide students with different courses in this issue.

Teaching ESP in the Nursing career in the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador in Esmeraldas has had a great importance these days, since it has led students improve the use of the communicative functions and specific terms, in the English language which will be necessary for the development of their future profession.

Students from the 6th levels of the Nursing career have been taught during five semesters General English, which is only related to general things related to culture. According to the Encyclopedia.com Dictionary it is a term in language teaching for a broadly based, usually long-term EFL(English Foreign Language) or ESL(English Second Language) course, in contrast to *English for Specific Purposes* (Business English, English for Medical Purposes).

Thus, the author of this investigation has tried some important exercises which have been carried out in teaching ESP, where the practice of activities related to Emergencies in Pediatrics, and the relevance of physical exercises to rehabilitate patients were used, applying the Nursing care plans for these ailments, in them the students developed discussions, presentations, and so one, and they were able to communicate with some accuracy and fluency, using medical terms, that are in connection to the necessity of ESP which according to Dudley-Evans, (1997) is defined to meet specific needs of the learners.

These mentioned students have never being taught ESP, for the reason it was not explicit in the syllabus, so for teachers it is not compulsory to teach ESP, but for those who have some experience in trying this matter with significant results, it is really very relevant, that is the case of the author of this article who taught it during 30 years at a Medical University in Cuba, where she realized Nursing students have had many difficulties in communicating in the English language, so the problem of this investigation is: why is teaching ESP to 6th -level Nursing student so important at PUCE Esmeraldas 2018 I?

This question permitted to stablish the general objective of this investigation which is: to assess the necessity of teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the career of Nursing at PUCE Esmeraldas. To fulfill it the coming specific objectives were to evaluate the 6th -level Nursing students' Learning needs concerning ESP and to determine the pedagogical strategies to teach it.

#### What is the definition of ESP?

Hutchinson et al. (1987:19) states that ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning.

Streven (1988) states ESP consists of English language teaching which is: designed to meet specified needs of the learner -related in content to particular disciplines, occupations and activities -centered on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, and analysis of this discourse - in contrast with "General English"

According to Dudley-Evans, (1997) ESP is centered on the language appropriate to these activities in terms of grammar, lexis, register, study skills, discourse, and genre.

The three authors agreed that ESP is the kind of language which is taught to students taking into consideration specific content, vocabulary, and communicative functions in favour of the learners' need.

### Differences between ESP and General English

Hutchinson et al. (1987:53) gave an answer to it, "in theory nothing, in practice a great deal"

Characteristics of ESP:

- -It is all based on the learner's requirement. Inspiration related to job.
- -It has particular use of vocabulary.
- -It is taught with the help of presentation and negotiation.
- -It uses different strategies to accomplish its target.
- -It is all about learner need goal-oriented.
- -It is often used for e-commerce or business, medical communication purposes.

Characteristics of General English:

- -It is a free time task.
- -It has more freedom as compared to the ESP Course.
- -It offers a peaceful environment.
- -It uses literary texts to produce effectual skills in students.
- -It permits learners to acquire and improve general writing skills.

# **Needs Analysis in ESP**

#### **Definitions**

Hutchinson and Waters (1987 p.54,) make a distinction between "target needs" and "learning needs" The first regards to what the learner needs to do in the target situation and the second is connected to what the learner needs to do to learn.

According to Nunan, (1988, p.75) Need analysis is" ... A family of procedures for gathering information about learners and about communication tasks..."

Brown (1995, p.36) states it is a: ... "systematic collection and analysis of all subjective and objective information necessary to define and validate defensible curriculum processes that satisfy the language learning requirements of students within the context of particular institutions that influence the learning and teaching situation."

All the previously mentioned authors are in harmony that it is the necessity of ESP's learners to please the essential demands of a given curriculum, in a particular situation or context where ESP is taught.

# **Approaches for teaching ESP**

Lexical Approach

According to Lewis (1993) Lexical Approach is a unique way of lexis -based teaching.

He also states the following principles:

- 1.-Language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalised grammar.
- 2.-The grammar / vocabulary dichotomy is invalid; much language consists of multi-word 'chunks'.
- 3.-Language is recognized as a personal resource, not an abstract idealization.
- 4.-Successful language is a wider concept than accurate language.
- 5.-The central metaphor of language is holistic an organism; not atomistic a machine.
- 6.-Task and process, rather than exercise and product, are emphasized.
- 7.-The Present-Practice-Produce paradigm is rejected, in favour of a paradigm based on the Observe-Hypothesise-Experiment cycle.

That is to say, lexis is central in creating meaning, grammar plays a secondary governing role. If so vocabulary may play a more important function while teaching ESP, for all this it can be inferred that it could

be more significant to students to acquire much more phrases and words and put them into practice than to learn grammar rules

# The Task Based Approach

The Task Based Approach (TBA) regards language as a tool of communication and makes the latter a top priority in language teaching and learning, Nouar (2015). In the Task Based Approach Ellis (2003), language is a means of communication rather than a subject for study or manipulation.

Van Den Branden, K. (2006) states it is supported because it provides learners with functional tasks that invite them to use language for real-world purposes. It is an approach that advocates the primacy of meaning and communication over form and linguistic purposes.

Swan (2005) states some principals of TBA:

-Instructed language learning should primarily involve natural or naturalistic language use, and the activities are concerned with meaning rather than language.

- Instruction should favour learner-centeredness rather than teacher control.
- Since purely naturalistic learning does not normally lead to target-like accuracy, involvement is necessary to foster the acquisition of formal linguistic elements while keeping the perceived advantages of a natural approach.
- This can be done best by providing opportunities for focus on the form which will draw students 'attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose prime focus is on meaning or communication.
  - Communicative tasks are a particularly appropriate tool for such an approach.
- -More formal pre- or post-task language study may be useful, this may contribute to acquisition leading or increasing noticing of formal features during communication.
- Traditional approaches are ineffective and undesirable especially where they involve passive formal instruction and practice separated from communicative work. Cited by Nouar (2015)

# The Task Based Approach Methodology

The methodology of Task Based Approach is based mainly on the three stages: pre-task, task cycle, and language focus, they all pass from general to the specific tasks. The first is an introduction to the tasks, where students can find the main issue and the task, it can be called like warming up period of the whole task, the second is the time in which learning really takes place, and the last is about a kind of conclusion of what have been analysed till then.

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### **Communicative Language Teaching**

This approach comes from the decade of 60's, because of the many changes and findings in Applied Linguistics, mainly in Sociolinguistics. It is a termed as Functional-Notional Approach. In this some authors have stated their claims, Wilkins (1972) he based his investigations on the communicative meaning rather than language structures, Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) cited by Richards and Rodgers (1986), point the high importance of meaning as the communicative approaches focus on language functions and communicative proficiency, Nunan(1991)stated some principles of it:

- 1- An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
- 2- The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.
- 3- The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on the learning management process.
- 4- An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.
  - 5- An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom.

All the previous authors have some common elements: How important is learning meaning upon communicative efficiency, and the highlighting of learning for communication by interaction with others.

#### Method

This investigation used the qualitative paradigm, with the descriptive and inductive methods, and the techniques were an unstructured interview, and an observation.

The population consisted of 25 students from the 6th level of the Nursing career, the sample was 10 students. They were taught English for ten hours a week in the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador in Esmeraldas, Ecuador, as part of their curriculum.

The techniques were applied to the students, were an unstructured interview and an observation, the role of the teachers was also assessed. Eight observation sections were developed. The results obtained were written in the notes of the investigator.

The instruments used were an observation sheet, and the unstructured interview questionnaire for assessing knowledge of some communicative functions and vocabulary on ESP.

#### **Results**

The interview showed the students did not have neither abilities about the most important communicative functions on ESP, nor any knowledge in relation to the vocabulary to talk about the different diseases, and to use some lexis on how they may rehabilitate patients to be recovered from these illnesses, which are some important linguistic and professional abilities the must acquire to accomplish their future job in a context where the English language is necessary for communication.

The Eight sections of observation revealed that students at the beginning were not able to communicate intelligible about the different diseases for example burns, convulsions, poisoning, and so one,

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but when the teacher developed lessons in which Task Based Methodology and Cooperative Learning involved the Teaching -Learning process ,and communicative activities were used , the situation changed to a great extent, the students participated much more actively and were really motivated with the development of all the mentioned activities.

Some activities the teacher used for teaching ESP

- 1.- Some Reading comprehension worksheet based on extracts from Nursing *Practice were used*:
- a) Pain assessment
- b) Taking a patient's medication history
- c) Managing a patient's dietary needs
- d) Wound management
- e) Vital signs and monitoring

The class was divided into three groups

The teacher asked the students to develop a multi-level activity group discussion about the previous topics.

They will first read the passages, each group, of course had a different topic, then each leader of each group reported what was discussed

2.-The teacher presents the dialogue in which, a doctor and a nurse are discussing about a boy who came in with vomiting and diarrhoea. First the students are going to listen to the dialogue, and without reading it they answered general questions, after they will have a second listening and reading at the same time, the teacher explained all new words, and those related to the Nursing care. After that students will repeat some parts of the dialogue.

Second activity

After having analyzed the whole dialogue they will prepare a role play in which they will change some elements of it, like the diseases, and some Nursing care plan according to the disease. The teacher will monitor the activity and help them with some vocabulary and some communicative functions

Nurse Smith and Dr. Martin are talking in the Pediatric ward of a clinic. Listen to their conversation.

Dr: Good morning, nurse.

N: Good morning, Doctor. How are you?

Dr: A little tired. I've done the twelve hours on duty at the clinic. Any new in-patients today?

N: Yes, but there was only one admission yesterday afternoon. A 4 Year -old boy who was brought in by his mother because of vomiting and diarrhoea.

Dr: Are there more details about the child?

N: Well, hmm, the child was brought in at 8 p.m. At that moment he had had 5 or 6 bouts of greenish vomit. It was bilious and abundant in quantity.

Dr: And the diarrhoea?

N: Well, he had had four liquid and fetid depositions. When he arrived here he was awfully weak and dehydrated. He was given a saline

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solution 40g/min.

Dr: Has he had any other bout of vomiting or diarrhoea?

N: No, doctor. He has not. Dr: What did his mother say?

N: She reported that the child had eaten fish at the play school and that he had had a temperature of 38.5 0

C. His mother also reported

that she had given him Tylenol for his fever before bringing him to the hospital

Dr: Has he improved?

N: The patient is still dehydrated, but he is less thirsty. He has no cutaneous folds and he has no fever. He has also eliminated about 500ml of urine. An hour ago, he drank two ounces of water and he had no problems. He looks better and more active.

Dr: What about his IV infusion?

N: It's okay. We fixed the flow of the infusion. We've controlled his venipuncture and checked his hydro mineral balance and we have observed his state of consciousness.

Dr: Any other problem?

N: No

Dr: Well, let's examine the child. I think it is time to remove the catheter and start a bland diet with a spoon of oil.

3.- After these students will be discussing in groups some of the most important Emergencies in Pediatrics as: burns, convulsions, poisoning by any substance, epilepsy, an acute asthma attack, vomiting and diarrhoea, hypothermia and hyperthermia and a forearm fracture.

For this exercise there should be some preparation, because they are going to investigate on the different diseases selected by each group, it will be as a homework, then the next day they will be rehearing it for some minutes, and finally they will present what was rehearsed in front of the class

With these exercises, the students had the opportunity to work in pairs and in groups, dealing with cooperative learning

#### **Discussion**

The results obtained in this study coincided with those provided by Finch (2013) Saragih (2014) Mujtaba (2016) in relation to the importance of the necessity of teaching ESP to nursing students.

In the case of this investigation the interview revealed about the needs they had in relation to the learning of ESP, the vocabulary about the different diseases and Emergencies in Pediatrics, the importance of physical exercises to rehabilitate injured patients applying the nursing care plan for each disease, for example an ankle sprains, any kind of fracture, a patient after a myocardial infarction, a cerebro vascular accident, an operation, and the eight sections of observation demonstrated that when some combination of communicative approaches are used in relation to ESP, students can improve their abilities in communicating to others in their future practice.

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For teaching ESP to these students—some combination of different approaches were used, as: Task Based Approach Methodology, Lexical Approach and Communicative language Teaching, because some communicative and task based activities were proposed and the Lexical Approach was also used the for teaching the vocabulary of medical terms. Students were engaged to combine the four main skills of the language: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, pair and group work were used in many activities to promote Cooperative Learning.

### **Conclusions**

The English-language teaching-learning process of ESP requires inventions on the teachers' part in order to obtain meaningful results in favour of the improvement of students' learning.

The students were able to communicate with some accuracy and fluency when talking about Emergencies in Pediatrics, the importance of physical exercises to rehabilitate injured patients applying the nursing care plan for each disease, for example an ankle sprains, any kind of fracture, a patient after a myocardial infarction, a cerebro vascular accident, an operation.

The mentioned Teaching-learning process was developed by using a combination of different approaches as Task Based Approach Methodology, Lexical Approach and Communicative language teaching, where Cooperative Learning was greatly used

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