

DEVELOPING INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS ON ENGLISH ORAL COMMUNICATION FOR NURSING SCHOOLS

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Abstract: The needs survey shows that English communication skill of the students in nursing school speaking classes is not well developed. Consequently, the speaking instructional materials used in the classes need to be advanced. Yalden's (1987) Language Program Development covering Needs Analysis, Syllabus and Materials Development, Expert Validation, and Try-out is used to produce a speaking syllabus and textbook for nursing students preparing to work at hospitals abroad with the following characteristics: (1) the topics are based on the activities of nurses in hospitals; (2) the vocabulary exercises are based on the nurses' needs in understanding the nursing context; (3) the speaking activities are based on the needs to communicate in nursing settings using the principles of CTL; (4) the language functions are explained to support the nursing students to form their own sentences in their speaking practice. The product is found acceptable for nursing students.

Key words: material development, speaking skill, contextual teaching and learning (CTL).

The number of graduates from nursing schools multiplies every year, which causes a serious problem in the job market. The Government cannot hire all of

them in the country. In this case, sending those 'surplus' nurses abroad would be a good alternative solution.

Suwandono (2005) states that there are 770 nursing academies and health polytechnics for nurses in Indonesia, with the total number of approximately 23,000 graduates in 2004 and 25,000 graduates in 2005. The total absorptive capacity of the public health sectors within the five years of health development period is approximately 2,000-3,000 nurses per year, while the total absorptive capacity by the private health sectors varies with approximately 1000-2000 nurses per year.

The Government has taken steps to solve this problem by sending those 'surplus' nurses abroad as there is high demand of nurses in neighboring countries. Unfortunately, since 1996, the passing rate of Indonesian nurses has been approximately 25% of the total applicants. One of their weaknesses in the test requirement is their mastery of English.

The result of needs analysis shows that one of the requirements to get a job in international hospitals for graduates of nursing schools is the ability to communicate orally in English. However, most nursing schools teach reading rather than speaking. Besides, existing English textbooks in the market for nursing student focus on the reading skill. The available speaking materials by Oxford University Press intended for native English students are not appropriate for Indonesian students. The language is too difficult for students of nursing schools. Considering those reasons, both lecturers and students of nursing schools need better teaching materials for speaking. Five nursing institutions in East Java agree and support the idea of developing speaking instructional materials to meet the students' needs.

This study develops a textbook for speaking is based on the principles of ESP and CTL learning theory and is empirically verified. The textbook can be used as one of the sources of teaching materials for intermediate-to-advanced speaking classes and graduates wishing to apply for jobs abroad.

Communicative syllabus is considered appropriate to be applied in speaking classes for nursing students. Piepho (1991) suggests that the instructional objectives of a communicative syllabus for a particular course would reflect specific aspects of communicative competence to the learner's proficiency level and communicative needs. The syllabus consists of the subject matter for one semester, the ways to teach that subject matter, and specific aspects of

communicative competence according to the learner's proficiency level and communicative needs.

The communicative syllabus in this study emphasizes functional syllabus with the following characteristics: (1) Language is a system for the expression of meaning; (2) The primary function of language is for interaction and communication; (3) The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses; (4) The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse (Halliday & Cooke, 1983).

The materials developed in this study also incorporate the principles of 'learner-centeredness', which relates to psychological aspects the learners hold that might be brought to the instructional context (Nunan, 1991: 178); and is associated with skills and knowledge as learning expectations on the parts on the learners (Widdowson, 1998: 21). which need to be addressed for the purpose of teaching-learning (Kaplan & Knutson, 1993). Students' language learning strategies as conceptualized by Oxford (1990) or learners' learning needs will serve an informative basis for several activities; in designing the course (Morrison, Rose, & Kemp, 2001; Smith & Ragan, 1993), the syllabus (Krahnke, 1987), the instructional materials (Nunan, 1988), and in selecting appropriate language teaching methodology (Nunan, 1991).

Furthermore, this material development is based on Nunan's (1988: 1) suggestions that good materials should (1) be clearly linked to the curriculum they serve; (2) be authentic in terms of text and task; (3) stimulate interaction; (4) allow learners to focus on formal aspect of the language; (5) encourage learners to develop skills in learning-how-to-learn; (6) encourage learners to apply their developing language skills to the world beyond the classroom. The materials development is also based on Crawford's (2002: 83) suggestions that good textbooks should be critically evaluated, viewing both their constraints and their promises.

The materials development in this study is also supported by Sears' (2002: 2) Contextual Teaching Learning (CTL) assumptions that: (1) teaching and learning essentially involves an interaction between students and any sources potential for their learning; (2) students need to establish a need to learn something and to employ all their 'attention, intellectual, and emotional' capacities for the learning purposes; (3) no teaching takes place without learn-

ing on the part of the students; and (4) learning occurs step by step along the line of the development of the students, and this occurs throughout one's life.

Brinton, Snow, and Wesche's (2005: 3) suggests that the use of relevant information content which will increase students' motivation and promote more effective learning is also applied in this materials development. The content based approach employs the principle that any teaching conduct should build on the previous experience of the learner, as they take into account the learners' existing knowledge of the subject matter and the academic environment as well as their second language knowledge. Therefore, language in the developed materials is to be taught through a focus on contextualized use, and there is a need to set up a condition for successful language acquisition.

Constructivist teaching employed in this materials development is based on constructivist learning theory that learning always builds upon knowledge that a student already knows: a schema. As suggested by Jonassen (1999: 26), the materials are designed to lead the students through questions and activities to discover, discuss, appreciate and verbalize the new knowledge.

According to Bain (2004: 35), one of the primary goals of using constructivist teaching is that students learn how to learn by giving them the training to take initiative for their own learning experiences.

METHOD

The research model used in this study is based on Yalden's (1987) model, Language Program Development (LPD) which consists of Needs Analysis, Development, Validation and Revision, Try-out, and Revision to produce Final Product.

Needs analysis was done in Indonesia and Wellington-New Zealand, by interviewing and sending questionnaires to alumni, students, lecturers, stakeholders, and decision makers, by examining nursing journals, and by visiting hospitals.

The first needs analysis was completed by visiting five nursing schools in Malang, Pare, Kediri, and Nganjuk. This survey was conducted to find out: (1) the English skills needed by the students of nursing school to be prepared for the global job market; (2) the students' opinion, interest and activities in a specific speaking class; (3) the availability of 'speaking materials'; (4) the im-

portance of developing materials; (5) the existing materials, and (6) the time allotment for a speaking class.

The second needs analysis was completed by: (1) visiting three hospitals in New Zealand where English is spoken for daily working hours; (2) interviewing nurses from the Philippines, New Zealand, Australia, and Indonesia who were working in New Zealand; (3) sending emails to Indonesian nurses who were working in a Kuwait hospital; (4) analyzing the nursing journals; and (5) existing teaching materials in Victoria University, Wellington.

The subjects for the needs analysis consist of several groups. The first group is nursing schools alumni who were working in environments where English is used for communication. A questionnaire and interview were used to find out the English skills they needed in a working environment, the kinds of expressions or typical English often used in their daily conversations in nursing settings, nurses' duties, and the time allotment for 'speaking lessons' to prepare the graduates in the global job market. The second group consists of students of nursing schools from five different institutions to find out their opinion and interest in speaking lessons, teaching learning activities, and their opinion on the needs of 'speaking materials'. The questionnaire was used to find out the conditions of the target group, representing the needs that the students expect in the work place, and in the teaching and learning environment especially in relation to communication skills. In addition to this, a space is provided in the questionnaires for the subjects to give their verbal data in the form of notes, comments, criticism, suggestions, ideas, and language corrections. The third group includes English lecturers to find out the students' interest in speaking, the availability of speaking materials, the needs of development on speaking materials, the content of speaking materials, activities, and the problem in teaching speaking. The fourth group includes stakeholders who hire the graduates of nursing schools to find out the English skill required by the applicants to work in their hospitals. The fifth group is the decision makers, the head of nursing schools, who understand the importance of English for nursing to find out their expectation to the program, policy for facilities and time allotment for speaking and also the documents related to the curriculum, syllabus, and materials used. The sixth group is nursing journals related to this research in order to find out the target needs, language competence, and language functions used by nurses in hospitals wards.

Based on the results of the needs analysis, materials development was accomplished following these five stages: (1) description of purpose; (2) selection of syllabus type; (3) production of a proto-syllabus; (4) production of a pedagogical syllabus; and (5) production of the teaching materials.

A communicative syllabus, specifically a functional one was chosen to address the needs of the learners. A proto syllabus was designed by considering the early stages of development of the functional syllabus in this study. The objectives of the functional syllabus were stated primarily in terms of communicative functions and were used to determine the functions, which in turns were used to determine the selection and sequencing of grammatical materials.

A pedagogical syllabus was developed to provide guidelines of how teachers teach and what strategies they use in their work. The production of a pedagogical syllabus contains the main teaching-learning activities based on CTL approach and the real context of nursing settings in daily working hours in hospitals.

The proposed functional syllabus on speaking for nursing students is taken as the main basis to develop the 'speaking materials' in this study. Therefore, the textbook is developed to reflect their language needs within their prospective professions as nurses in hospitals. The materials development is initiated by choosing the topics and mapping the materials to be developed. The topics selection stage was continued by formulating the general objectives, stating the specific objectives, and developing topics into tasks.

Following the needs analysis and materials development is expert validation, which involved experts in materials development, doctors, nurses, and English lecturers, whose competence and experience have contributed to the refinement of the developed materials. The validation covers evaluation of the content, language, and the style of delivery in teaching learning process. The doctors and nurses validated the content of the product related to their field and knowledge while the expert of materials development validated the language and the style of delivery in teaching learning process. The English lecturers evaluated the textbook and their corresponding indicators, which have seven main aspects under interest, namely: content, exercises, communication, culture, connections, communities, and general elements.

Following expert validation is limited try-out conducted to get feedback on the developed materials, to eliminate the weaknesses so that the developed

materials can meet the intended quality. The subjects of the try out were 40 students of nursing school of University of Muhammadiyah Malang. The try out involved the implementation, observation, reflection, and revision. Three topics were used to teach the students in the speaking class of the nursing school. The students were encouraged to learn and practice according to the tasks given in each topic. Their performance was guided, monitored and evaluated by their lecturer and the researcher. The students' activities in the classroom were observed. Their interactions with their classmates and the lecturer and their individual performance were observed to see how much the developed materials are applicable to be used in the classroom. Some notes on the problems encountered by the students were taken in the observation sheet. The students were interviewed after the class. Some important information, such as, problems encountered by the students was noted down and analyzed. If the developed materials meet the criteria of 'success' then the developed materials are to be considered appropriate for the speaking class of nursing school.

To gain more information of the lecturer and students' opinions for the developed materials, they were given another form of evaluation with certain aspects and criteria. This evaluation is useful for a general impression about a particular aspect. The acceptability of each aspect of the materials is measured based on the criteria that if the number of responses under a particular aspect gets lower than 50 %, the aspect under evaluation is interpreted as being not satisfactory and, therefore, needs to be revised.

The results of the try-out were used as the basis for final revision of the product, which consists of a syllabus, teachers' book, students' book, and audio CD for nursing students.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The final products of this development are a syllabus and speaking textbook materials for nursing students, presented in students book, teachers book and audio CD. The materials have the characteristics of the CTL approach appropriate to help the students in mastering good speaking skill. These charac-

teristics are reflected in particular contexts with the elements of effective learning: constructivism, inquiry, questioning, learning community, modeling, reflection, and authentic assessment.

In the developed materials, the teachers could facilitate the students' knowledge construction, as they are required to practice and discuss the topics especially selected from their workplace. When the students are working together, in discussion, pair work, or role-play, they can give and get other information and enrich their nursing knowledge from their partners. Besides, the topics are presented in a series of tasks requiring the students to use the language, which has about the right level of difficulty for them, so that the language is still within their ability to use. In giving an explanation to the patients about the procedure of preparing the operation, for instance, the students are only required to use imperatives. As senior high school graduates, the students are supposed to have learned such patterns. Now, they only need to activate this knowledge. The difficult thing for the students, in this case, may be the vocabulary they have to use in their instructions, yet, they can work together with their partner to recall as well as to enrich the vocabulary they have learned previously.

The expert of syllabus and English for Specific Purpose materials design argued that the products were generally good and eligible to be used as the syllabus and 'speaking textbook' for nursing students. However, some suggestions were given to revise some points. Generally the contents, the language, and the steps of delivery in the *Hand Book of Speaking for Nursing* were considered good. The use of color pictures in every unit and the use of native speakers' voice in giving the model of dialogues gave good impression. It is good for students to see the real nursing settings as they can see the nurses' duties and the real problem in nursing activities that should be communicated. However, it was suggested that the book should provide diagrams and charts in color pictures because a nurse should learn how to read and report something based on diagrams or charts.

The expert also suggested revision on the course overview, especially those related to course identity, course objectives, topics and subtopics, and the scheme of the topics. Furthermore, she recommended that the draft be completed with preface and table of contents.

On the basis of the experts and lecturer's comments and suggestions, the drafts of the materials were revised. The revision was done mostly on language rather than on content. The word *to understand* in the general objective of the functional syllabus, for example, was changed to *produce*, the word *to gain confidence* was omitted. In Unit 1, the word *carting* was changed into *charting*. In Unit 2, *asking the intensity and degree of pain* was changed into *asking and recording the intensity and degree of pain*. In Unit 3, *reading a prescription charts* was changed into *reading a prescription chart* and *expressing* was changed into *expression*.

The materials of the try-out were limited to three topics (Unit 1, Unit 4, and Unit 11) based on the lecturer's suggestion. The try-out was conducted in three sessions in April to June 2010. The lecturer conducted the try-out, while the researcher served as an observer.

The implementation of the first try-out ran well. The materials were presented without encountering much difficulty. The lecturer seemed motivated in conducting the try-out. The atmosphere was quite conducive because the students were also eager to follow the try-out. The second try-out was conducted to find out more about the usability of the materials, particularly, to get more information on the process of how the teacher and the students could run the learning process using the materials developed.

Discussion

The syllabus and the materials for speaking classes of nurses have been developed following the CTL principles: constructivism, inquiry, questioning, learning community, modelling, reflection and authentic assessment. Inquiry is a cycling process that involves observing, questioning, investigating, analyzing, and theorizing. Hence, students' improved knowledge is expected to be the result of this process, and the teachers should set up the situation that enables this process to take place. The students may investigate the phenomena that appear as the consequence of the particular language they use. These phenomena can become the data that needs to be analyzed. The analysis, then, will result in a theory which may be in line with the models or the development of the models.

Questioning, facilitated in the developed materials, is a strategy for the lecturers to prompt, guide and assess the students' thinking. For the students, it is used in their inquiry to dig up the information, to confirm the already known information and to concentrate on the unknown information. Each topic is preceded by the lecturers' questions to activate the students' previous knowledge. The students' answers enable the lecturer to decide what they will do to guide the students towards the discussion of the rest of the tasks. The lecturer may encourage the students to share ideas with their friends, to use available dictionaries, reference books, manuals, etc. When the students have already been involved in the discussion process, the questions given to the students are intended to assess how well they are getting along in the learning process. For the students, the arrangement of the tasks in the material requires them to discuss in pairs or in groups to enable them to communicate with their lecturer as well as their friends.

Learning community, which is also reflected in the developed materials, is a technique of learning where a group of students share information in a mutual learning. The implication of this concept is that the result of the learning and teaching process will be achieved by cooperating with each other. The classes are divided into groups so that the students could help each other through group work and make questions and answers about the topics being discussed. They share their understanding about the topics with their friends in their groups.

Modeling refers to the activity of giving a model to be initiated during the learning and teaching process, which can be done by the lecturers, students, or other people from outside the classroom. In modeling, the teachers demonstrate how students should do something. The students can also be asked to demonstrate the skill they have mastered as a model of performance standard that should be imitated by their friends. Other people from outside the classroom, such as English native speakers, if available, can also be asked to demonstrate how native speakers speak English. Modeling is given in the developed materials. It can be seen at the beginning of the new part of each topic, where the lecturer gives a model of the questions that the students have to listen and answer orally.

Reflection refers to the evaluation towards the effectiveness of the learning and teaching activities that have already been done. It is intended to deter-

mine which parts of activities still need to be improved. By identifying such weaknesses, the lecturers can revise the activities, and the students can revise their strategy in doing the activities facilitated by the lecturers in their efforts to construct their knowledge.

The developed material provides opportunities to make a reflection. At the end of each meeting, the lecturer can ask students to apply the information they have got in class to the situation in the real life. The students may be asked to describe, for example, *the diabetic care* for their surroundings after the discussion about the topic has been completed. In this case, the result of the students' work can be used to evaluate whether the learning and teaching activities guided by the lecturers as well as the learning strategies used by the students are quite effective.

Authentic assessment is a process of gathering data, which can describe the development of the students' learning. This description is needed by the teachers to ensure whether the students have been going along the learning process well. Hence, the assessment should not only be carried out at the end of the learning and teaching process, but it should be integrated to the process of learning. It should be implemented to the real activities or tasks that the students do during the process of learning. This kind of assessment is already reflected in the material, since the material is equipped with the guidelines to assess the students' performance in the oral language as well as in the written language. To get information about the students' achievement levels and the progress the students make in their learning, the students can be asked to demonstrate their speaking skill by telling personal information, describing objects, giving instruction, describing sequential activities, etc. They can also be asked to demonstrate their skill for writing those topics.

The syllabus proposed for the school of nurses is the functional one. This syllabus was used as the mapping of the first draft of the materials. Its content is a description of language covered in the program. The syllabus consists of topics, sub topics, communication skill, language functions, activities, and time.

The topics were selected based on the priority of nurses' duties in the real world of working hours in a hospital. The materials were arranged as follows: Warming-up, Building -up Vocabulary, Exercises, Dialogue(s), Class Activity, and Language Focus.

The 'Warming Up' serves as an introduction to the unit. Unlike other sections, it is not meant to "teach" but rather to stimulate interest in the topic and motivate students to think briefly about their own and others' practices in regard to a particular nursing situation. Pictures are used to attract the students' attention and see the real situation of patients. Instructors generally pose short warm-ups; in some cases, not all questions need to be asked. In addition, instructors are encouraged to substitute questions with more suitable questions for their particular class.

'Building- up vocabulary' serves the students to think and add to their vocabulary or medical terms used in different medical situations, as the students are also encouraged to learn medical knowledge from the sentences. 'Exercises' were designed to train the students to match the dialogue, fill the blank of dialogues, and match the medical terms. The aim of the exercises is to help the students learn the written dialogues before they can use them in practicing the oral dialogues.

'Listen to the dialogue and answer the questions based on the dialogues by native speakers' are used to train the students' listening comprehension and used as the model of dialogues. These dialogues serve to introduce a specific nursing situation. The dialogues are meant to reflect as closely as possible a natural conversation between two speakers. Instructors may wish to vary this section by having students work in small groups to discuss the content of the dialogue and language function used.

'The class activity' is meant to be accomplished with the class under the instructor's supervision. The section may involve such activities as pair and small group activities. These activities include role-play, problem solving discussion, and simulations. Role-plays are meant to be discussed by the participants and then be practiced and presented to the group or the class. Instructors can assign all the role-plays or only those they find most beneficial to their particular class. The class activities done by the class as a whole are generally meant to be teacher-guided. In some of these activities, students are asked to correct inappropriate or incorrect expressions used. The instructor acts as a resource person or works with a particular group of students. If the class is small, all groups or group representatives may have the opportunity to present their work in class or, groups can take turns during the semester. Class discussion and comments from students are encouraged during this section. Teachers are

encouraged to substitute the role-plays in the text with others more suited to their particular class. Students may initially feel uncomfortable about presenting their role-play to the class. Peer and instructor feedback is to be carried out in a way that will encourage discussion rather than criticism.

The class and the instructor can call attention to useful strategies of nursing interaction that students have adopted and in some cases suggest more appropriate expressions. Instructors can point out language strategies themselves depending on similar circumstances. The class can also discuss ways in which cultural differences may cause misunderstanding and what the speakers did or could have done to remedy this. Instructors are welcome to custom tailor these role-plays to their particular class and use the picture as a cue card to develop variety of conversation. The number and types of role-plays assigned may depend on the enthusiasm of the students. If students feel role-plays are useful as well as fun, they will be more eager to participate in them. Feedback from the instructor as well as other students is therefore important. In addition, instructors can help students who are overly concerned with correcting grammar to focus more on the social functions of language.

'Language focus' summarizes the communication skill and language, which has been discussed in connection with the topic. These points are stated as rules of communication and are considered as generally useful in the particular situation being discussed. These rules serve only as a general guide, and the instructor may wish to expand or modify them for a particular situation. The instructor can present it in the form of lecture, or students can read the points and present them to the class. Students can also create their own points to remember and compare to those in the book.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The product of this study is a communicative syllabus of speaking and a handbook of speaking for nursing. This product is developed by using Yalden's model (LPD) that has been modified for the practical purpose of this study. It starts with gathering information on the needs and expectations of the students, teachers, nurses, and stake holders, and also the high demand of nurses by neighborhood countries that cannot be fulfilled because of the weaknesses of

nurses' speaking ability. Based on the needs and expectations, the general objectives of the speaking course are formulated.

The syllabus consists of unit, topic, sub-topic, communication skills, language functions, activity, and time allotment. The vocabulary exercise is completed with key answer to help the speaking teachers to prepare their teaching activities and check the answers of the exercises directly. The handbook is completed with the teacher's guide. This model of communication gives the strength to the materials, which allow students opportunities to practice actual English found in the real world of nursing settings. Therefore, it will be very good model and exposure to the students.

As the topics are arranged based on the nurses' duties in the real world of working hours in a hospital, there is no artificial grading of the language in the chapters. The language in one chapter is no more difficult than the language in the other chapters. The chapters can be picked out according to the needs of the students. Nevertheless, the order of the chapters as given has been decided so that instructors who want to follow the book sequentially can do so with confidence.

Further research needs to be done to investigate the effectiveness of the speaking materials using pre-experimental research design, comparing the pre-test scores administered before the students of nurses are taught using this speaking materials and post test scores administered at the end of the semester after the same students are taught speaking using this speaking materials.

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