



การพัฒนาความสามารถด้านการพูดภาษาอังกฤษทางคลินิกของนักศึกษาพยาบาล Enhancing Nursing Students' Clinical English Speaking Ability

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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ (1) พัฒนาชุดการพูดภาษาอังกฤษทางคลินิกสำหรับนักศึกษาพยาบาล (2) พัฒนาความสามารถด้านการพูดภาษาอังกฤษทางคลินิกของนักศึกษาพยาบาล และ (3) สำรวจทัศนคติของนักศึกษาพยาบาลต่อการพูดภาษาอังกฤษโดยใช้ชุดการพูดภาษาอังกฤษทางคลินิกสำหรับนักศึกษาพยาบาล

กลุ่มตัวอย่างทั้งหมดมีจำนวน 86 คนแบ่งสองกลุ่มคือ (1) พยาบาลวิชาชีพโรงพยาบาลเลยจำนวน 56 คนที่ให้สัมภาษณ์ในการศึกษาเบื้องต้นเพื่อหาความต้องการการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับพยาบาล และ (2) นักศึกษาชั้นปีที่ 3 คณะพยาบาลศาสตร์มหาวิทยาลัยขอนแก่นซึ่งสมัครใจเข้าร่วมในการทดลองในปีการศึกษา 2553 จำนวน 30 คน

เครื่องมือในการวิจัย ประกอบด้วย การสัมภาษณ์แบบมีเค้าโครงที่สร้างขึ้นเพื่อหาความต้องการการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับพยาบาล ชุดการสอนการพูดภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการสื่อสารสำหรับนักศึกษาพยาบาล (The conversational package for nurses: CPN) ที่สร้างขึ้นในการพัฒนาความสามารถด้านการพูดแบบทดสอบก่อนและหลัง และแบบสอบถามก่อนและหลังการใช้เครื่องมือ

ผลการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลแสดงให้เห็นว่า (1) แบบฝึกทักษะการพูดภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการสื่อสารสำหรับนักศึกษาพยาบาลโดยใช้บทบาทสมมุติที่พัฒนาขึ้นมีประสิทธิภาพต่อนักศึกษาพยาบาล โดยมีค่าประสิทธิภาพสูงกว่าเกณฑ์มาตรฐาน 80 และ มีค่าดัชนีประสิทธิผลสูงกว่าเกณฑ์มาตรฐาน 0.05 (2) นักศึกษาพยาบาล พูดภาษาอังกฤษดีขึ้นโดยคะแนนสอบพูดหลังเรียนสูงกว่าคะแนนสอบก่อนเรียนอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ ที่ระดับ 0.05 และ (3) นักศึกษาพยาบาลมีทัศนคติที่ดีต่อการฝึกพูดภาษาอังกฤษโดยใช้แบบฝึกทักษะการพูดภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการสื่อสารสำหรับนักศึกษาพยาบาล

Abstract

The purposes of the study were to: (1) develop the English clinical conversational package for nursing students; (2) enhance English oral clinical communication of nursing students; and (3) investigate the nursing students' attitudes towards learning English speaking through the use of the English clinical conversational package.

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There were 86 participants in this study, including 56 in-service nurses who had been interviewed in a prior study for their language functions needs for nurses in Loei Hospital and 30 third-year students at the Faculty of Nursing, KhonKaen University who volunteered to participate in the experiment in the first semester of the academic year 2010.

The research instruments were comprised of a structured interview form for the prior study for language functions needed for nurses in Loei Hospital, a conversational package for nurses (CPN) developed for the study to enhance students' speaking abilities, pre- and post-speaking tests and questionnaires for students to answer before and after the experiment.

Results from data analyses revealed that (1) the CPN effectively improved nursing students' speaking abilities. The effectiveness and the effectiveness index of the CPN were higher than the standard criteria of 80 and 0.05. (2) The students' post-test scores were significantly higher than the pre-test scores, at the 0.05 level (3) The students demonstrated positive attitudes towards the practicing using the CPN.

Introduction

The principal objective of studying language is communication (Byrne, 1984). English is a language that is internationally used as a means of communication. In Thailand, English is well known for its importance. Although English is taught in schools and universities, however, there are still a lot of problems in using English especially for speaking. Moreover, English communication is required in higher education level, technology advancement and many workplaces, especially in technical fields, where it is used to convey the technical knowledge to non-technical people for better understanding (Huck and Olsen, 1983). Nursing is among those areas in which English is used for communication. Communication is described as information transferred between a speaker and a listener (citation). In nursing, communication is a sharing of health-related information between a patient and a nurse and highly dependent on accurate verbal communication as it uses a lot of medical terminology. The technical terminology of nursing requires development of a second language in itself rather than word-for-word translation (Kiang, 1992). Effective communication can create a good rapport among nurses, patients and health teams. On the other hand, ineffective communication may cause tragic results in health teams as well as reducing professional credibility and caring efficiency. Communication is vital to nurses and health teams particularly in international working environments (Ruben & Stewart, 1998). Studies revealed problems of oral clinical communication in the nursing area. Nurses were unable to notice, or were not confident to deal with patients' anxiety. They misunderstood some parts of the conversation (Hadley, 1991). Hussin (1991) conducted a study in nursing students, the results found that they were not taking initiative in communicating with staff, nodding and smiling rather than responding verbally when responding to the instructions. They were not giving explanations and reassurance to patients when providing nursing care. The students' productive



communication was often unclear and an end of shift verbal report given was often difficult to understand. From the studies above, ineffectiveness in oral clinical communication of nurses and nursing students affects the quality of nursing care in complex healthcare situations.

The problems discussed in the previous section are a major impetus for developing an English learning package to improve nursing students' speaking ability needed for their future career. In preparing nursing students to be effective nurses and gain more opportunities to practice their English communication, a task that supports learning in the classroom together with the use of role-play is chosen for this study to improve their speaking skills. Classroom tasks are important to develop students' English speaking competence. Tasks may also be called activities, and an activity can consist of various kinds of things that the teacher assigns students to do (Nunan, 1996). Focusing on speaking, speaking tasks are activities that concern speakers in using language for the purpose of success in an important goal or objective in a speaking situation. Role-play is suitable for this study following Paulston's (1979) suggestion in that role-play is one of the basic types of communicative interaction activities for developing communicative competence and role-play is not only perhaps the most flexible technique but also dynamic and challenging. This study would give advantages and implications on teaching communication skills in medical science and could lead to be guidelines, not only for nursing students but also in service training for health care facilities.

Purposes of the study

1. To develop a conversational package for nursing students.
2. To enhance oral clinical English communication skills of nursing students.
3. To investigate the nursing students' attitudes towards learning English through the use of the English conversational package.

Research questions

1. What English language patterns are to be included in the conversational package for nursing students?
2. To what extent does the conversational package enhance nursing students' oral clinical communication skills?
3. Does the English conversational package affect the nursing students' attitudes towards learning English?

Research Methodology

The population of this study was 172 third-year nursing students in the first semester of the 2010 academic year at KhonKaen University, Thailand. The participants volunteered to take part in this present study. They were divided into two groups as (a) 56 nurses in Loei hospital which were participants in a prior study and also (b) 30 nursing students at KKU studying in their third year, who enrolled in a compulsory English subject, 411124; Technical English for



Nursing, in the first semester of academic year 2010.

The present study was designed as a one-group pre test and post test experimental design. In this design, the experiment group firstly completed a pre test (O_1). Later, they participated in a treatment (X). Then they completed a post test (O_2) after they finished the treatment.

The research instruments comprised of a structured interview form for the prior study for language functions needed for nurses in Loei Hospital, a conversational package for nurses (CPN) developed for the study to enhance students' speaking abilities, pre- and post-speaking tests and questionnaires for students to answer before and after the experiment.

Research Procedure

The research procedure in this present study is presented following these sequences.

1. The objectives, the research procedures and the details of the present study were explained to nursing students.

2. A questionnaire was conducted to explore their attitudes towards the use of CPN before the packages were employed.

3. Prior to performing the pre-speaking test, the students were notified about general information of role-play and the criteria of assessing their speaking ability in class.

4. The nursing students were given the pre-speaking test using role-play cards under topics of registering a new patient, assessing a new patient and nursing examination for measuring their speaking ability.

5. They were paired and informed to construct their own dialogues in relation to for the content they had studied for five minutes. Then they were asked to display and express their thoughts freely for approximately five minutes.

6. Their performances were video recorded and scored by two raters individually afterward. A speaking proficiency checklist was used to check the students' language performances. A scoring rubric was used in assessing the students' effective use of specific criteria set for the course.

7. After that, the content of introduction and the content in unit 1 about the topic of *Registering a new patient* were taught (see Table 1 for topics in the booklet).

**Table 1** Language Patterns in the CPN Booklet

Unit	Topics	Language Patterns
1	Registering a new patient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have you been to this hospital before? ● May I have your name, please? ● Would you mind telling me your age? ● Would you mind telling me your address? ● Would you mind telling me your occupation? ● Are you allergic to any medication? ● Do you have any relatives in Thailand? ● Do you have health insurance?
2	Assessing a new patient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What brings you here today? ● How long have you been feeling like this? ● Have you had any serious/ major illness (in the past)? ● Have you ever had any surgeries/ operations before? ● Do you have a family history of any medical diseases? ● Do you smoke? How many cigarettes a day? ● Where do you come from originally? ● What is your religion? ● Do you drink? How much? ● How many glasses do you have per/ a day?



3	Nursing examination	<p>The instructions during a nursing examination</p> <p>-Expression 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Could you please + verb (Could you please tell me your occupation?) <p>patterns politely used to tell a patient to follow</p> <p>-Expression 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May I + verb..., please? (May I check your blood pressure, please?) <p>patterns used to ask for permission to perform physical examinations from a patient during nursing examination. A nurse's instruction during nursing examinations.</p>
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8. Then, nursing students had a chance to do out-of-class exercises and self-study for three hours.

9. Subsequently, they were assigned to take a role-play quiz at the end of unit 1 using the same steps and criteria as in the pre-speaking test.

10. After completing all the steps mentioned above, unit 2 on the topic of *Assessing a new patient* was taught. Then the students were assigned to do similar activities as in unit 1 for unit 2 and 3 as presented in Figure 1.

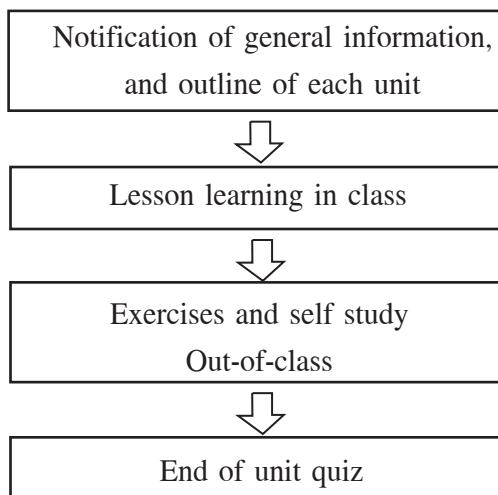


Figure 1 Activities Cycle for the CPN Booklet



11. The nursing students were given the post-speaking test using role-play cards under topics of registering a new patient, assessing a new patient and nursing examination for measuring their speaking ability after finishing the course. The same steps and criteria were used as in the pre-speaking test.

12. Another questionnaire was administered to explore the students' attitudes towards English language learning using a conversational package.

13. To evaluate the students' improvement, the results from pre-rating and post-rating scores were compared statistically using pair t-test then interpreted.

Data analysis

The data was analyzed by various methods. The data gained from research instruments and its statistical methods are described as table:

1. The data from the structured interview elicited information regarding nurses' language function needs. The first part of the structured interview was calculated using frequency distribution and presented in percentages. The second part of the structured interview was calculated for mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (S.D.).

2. The data from the pre and post-speaking tests were compared then statistically analyzed using a t-test. The results of the t-test showed the improvement of the students' speaking abilities.

3. The results from two sets of questionnaires administered to the participants of the study before and after the learning sessions were calculated for mean (\bar{x}), and standard deviation (S.D.). The data from open-ended questions were grouped and tallied as percentages.

Results and Discussion

The conclusion of the findings, discussion, limitations, and recommendations for further study is presented in this section.

1. Results of the structured interview

A structured interview was administered to find out nurses' needs to improve their speaking abilities. According to the results, they wanted to attend an oral clinical English communication course (66.1%) and the English communication skill they most wanted to improve was speaking (69.6%). Another further structured interview was conducted to find out the needs in language functions for the oral clinical English communication course. They ranked the top three language functions needed for the English oral clinical communication course as (1) language functions in Out Patient Department and gathering information, (2) greeting and leave taking, and (3) registering a new patient. A latter structured interview was conducted to find subtopics in each language functions. Only subtopics ranking as high were put in the CPN. These subtopics included history of present illness, past medical history, family history, giving instruction during a nursing examination, greeting clients, self-introducing, leaving clients and



the process of registration. The content of the whole package was validated and trialed.

In order to determine the effectiveness of Is this a lesson, a set of lessons, Course or curriculum other “packing” refer to a marketable product the data obtained were analyzed statistically to determine the effectiveness of a conversational package (E1/E2) and the effectiveness index (E.I.) After the CPN was developed, it was tested with nursing students by three methods: one to one testing (1:1); small group testing (1:10); and field group testing (1:100). The results of this try out were analyzed according to effectiveness and effectiveness index as follows.

Table 2 Results of the Effectiveness of the English Conversational Package

No	Method	Effectiveness	
		Process	Post-Test
1	One to one testing (1:1)	88.70	90.32
2	Small group testing (1:10)	92.11	89.06
3	Field group testing (1:100)	91.07	90.05

The information from table 2 illustrates that the result of package effectiveness analysis in one to one testing (1:1) was 88.70/ 90.32. The result of package effectiveness analysis in small group testing (1:10) was 92.11/ 89.06. The result of package effectiveness analysis in field group testing (1:100) was 91.07/ 90.05. All of them were above 80/80 criteria required. Therefore, it could be interpreted that the English conversational package was effective and can encourage students to gain knowledge with their studies. It was ready to be used with the target group of nursing students.

The results of the effectiveness index of the English Conversational Package in the three methods obtained as follows:

- 1) The effectiveness index on one to one testing (1:1) was 0.83
- 2) The effectiveness index on small group testing (1:10) was 0.81
- 3) The effectiveness index on field group testing (1:100) was 0.81

Table 3 Effectiveness Index of the English Conversational Package

Method	No. of Students	Effectiveness Index (0.5)
1. one to one testing	1	0.83
2. Small group testing	3	0.81
3. Field group testing	30	0.81



Table 3 shows that the effectiveness index of the English conversational package on three methods was higher than the criteria required (0.50). The results led to the conclusion that the English conversational package, including topics and subtopics chosen by nurses and put in the CPN, was suitable and effective for improving nursing students' speaking ability.

2. Results of the pre- and post-speaking tests

One finding of this study was that the CPN could help third-year nursing students in the first semester of the 2010 academic year at KhonKaen University improve their speaking abilities. The mean scores of the pre- and post-speaking test were calculated by applying the t-test to determine the difference between the mean scores in the students' abilities before and after implementing the oral clinical English communication package. The t-test score was found to be significant at the 0.05 level. This indicated that the nursing students' speaking abilities improved due to the learning of the English conversational package. Therefore, it can be concluded that the CPN could help nursing students improve their speaking abilities. The CPN encouraged nursing students to apply English conversation comprehensively and effectively.

3. Results of questionnaires

Regarding the participants' attitudes towards the importance of English in nursing, the data revealed that the students had a generally positive attitude towards the English conversational package at an overall mean score 4.35 out of 5 on the Likert scale, which was considered a high level. The students expressed opinions that the English conversational package encouraged them to speak English. They improved their speaking abilities and it also helped them gain more confidence in speaking English. The data from the open-ended questions revealed that the students liked to study in this course because it was useful for them in successfully applying this material in their future careers. They also wanted this course to extend and include more content in the nursing field. Moreover, they suggested that this course should be added to the curriculum in order to improve nursing students' speaking abilities and prepare them in applying for a job. From the results found in the present study, the English conversational package affected the nursing students' attitudes in a positive way.

Limitations of the Study

Although the results of this study were positive, showing that the English conversational package can be used to help students improve their English speaking ability, there were some obstacles that emerged and need to be acknowledged and addressed.

1. One problem the participants experienced was the allocation of time in learning the oral clinical English communication course. Nursing students generally study during working hours from Monday to Friday and occasionally practice in extra hours during the weekend. Therefore, this course was set outside of their regular hours, on weekdays between 5 pm to 8 pm. Due to their busy schedules, the students were often tired and could not fully concentrate on



the contents. This course should be conducted at a time when the students are not preoccupied with other projects or compulsory courses.

2. In addition to the limitation of time in this present study, there was a large amount of content in some units. Some students could not make great improvement, and had difficulty reaching a desired stage of language fluency and accuracy readily. To deal with this problem, the course should be extended to more than six weeks in order to give the students more opportunity to practice and gain more knowledge.

3. Teacher feedback was given to the students the week after their role- play quiz. Therefore, they did not have time to discuss their mistakes with their peers and teachers right away. To solve this problem, feedback should be given immediately after each role-play quiz so they could discuss and correct their mistakes and receive suggestions from teachers. Then they could use this knowledge to improve their performance in the next role-play quiz.

Implications of the study

The findings from this study suggest some implications for teaching and learning the oral clinical English communication course as follows:

1. The oral clinical English communication course should be divided into three levels; the essential level, the communicative level and the advanced level. The essential level may include the contents and the skills that nurses have to know in order to effectively perform nursing care. The contents and skills include understanding doctor's orders, abbreviations, medical terminology, and patient history. The communicative level may consist of conversation in OPD and nursing procedures. Finally, the advanced level may contain conversation on briefing nursing work and making nursing assessments.

2. The five language functions asking about needs in language functions for oral clinical English communication of nurses in Loei Hospital should be included in the course, especially for in-service nurses, because they are acquainted with English at an essential level.

3. There are a considerable number of foreigners in provinces that makeup the Northeastern Health Area and there is a central hub of hospitals around the Northeastern region. Therefore, demographics may significant increase the usefulness of an oral clinical English communication course in communicating with foreign patients.

Recommendations

1. This present study was conducted to investigate English speaking ability in only third-year nursing students. Replication of this study could be done with fourth-year nursing students so that they can apply their knowledge from the English oral clinical communication course in their future careers, after graduation from University.

2. Similar studies could be undertaken to develop an English conversational package using role-play in groups of students other than nursing students, such as engineering, associated



medical science students or public health students.

3. Further study should be conducted to compare students' improvement in speaking ability when using an English conversational package and when using conventional or other methods.

4. Further research could focus on how to effectively integrate the English conversational package into the classroom or curricula.

5. Replication of this study should be conducted to cover the whole semester so that the students have more opportunities to practice without time restraints and without interfering with their existing projects.

6. A variety of interesting topics other than the nursing field should be provided for the students to practice, especially the topics that are related to their real life situations.

7. The English conversational package is effective and useful in enhancing the nursing students speaking ability. Thus, it can be used as a supplemental material in English 411124 (Technical English for Nursing). Additionally, the designed conversational package can be used as guidelines for in-service training of health care teams.

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