MANAGING “ENGLISH FOR NURSING” (EFN) COURSE IN HIGHER EDUCATION WITH CONSTRUCTIVISM

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Abstract

The English skills for the nursing students in Indonesian Higher Education need to be prepared to be able to increase the English communication skills and to avoid miscommunication and malpractice. English in Indonesia is regarded as Foreign Language, so it is not surprising if many nurses still have low English skills. Managing “English for Nursing” (EfN) course in higher education should be constructed with effective approaches one of which is constructivism. Constructivism in EfN is better conducted with some techniques including the use of technology, flash cards /situation cards, real medical tools, and forms. Hence, the students will understand the contextual situation and can construct the appropriate expressions. The implementation of the constructivist uses in EfN classes must be adjusted with the students’ level to achieve the purpose.

Keywords: English, Nursing, Constructivism

INTRODUCTION

In the realization of Economic Community in ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), the services suppliers in ASEAN are not restricted in establishing companies across national borders and the free flow of trade especially in services becomes important. In facilitating their free flow, ASEAN has been trying to develop their core qualifications and competencies one of which is healthcare services as formulated in the blueprint of ASEAN Economic Community.

Healthcare sector in ASEAN supports the increasing ability of nurses to provide services across border in ASEAN even in Global and nurse profession is one of the largest categories of health workers as stated by World Health Organization (WHO). A huge need of nurses in
The world is seen from the data illustrating that more than 50 percent of the health workforce in every country in the world are nurses, and Indonesian nurses are much needed overseas. WHO states that because of the pandemic COVID-19, more than six millions of nurses are needed to gain the targets of the global health. Even, in countries which are categorized as lower-middle income countries, they really suffer the nurses shortages (Moulds, 2020).

The wide job opportunity abroad for Indonesian nurses is competitive with other nurses from other countries, and the low English competence as the most challenge. The readiness of nursing students in the aspect of knowledge only reaches upon sufficient level (Werdani, 2017). The characteristics of healthcare around the world are caring, communicative, sensitive, and respectful between the patient and the medical practitioner. So, only professionals and qualified nurses can stand in preferable working places as approved by the Authority of Nursing Regulation or an appropriate agency of the original country.

In communication, Indonesian health professionals including nurses according to Rosanda, Zehner, and Pensuskan (2018) need to be qualified. They should communicate in English since the lack of English skills can expose patients to risks. Indonesian nurses have to compete with other nurses overseas in their competence and personality, but the lack of English skills probably hinder them from developing their careers overseas.

Nurses essentially, work for health promotion, prevent, help as well as cope patients with illness. They spend more time with a patient than doctors. They must be particularly skilled at interacting with patients. Hence, the basic knowledge of the language is very helpful when the nurses give cares to the patients with non-English speaking and interact with their colleagues like doctors and staffs. Polt (2015) states that it is important for the nurses to at least learn country’s language expressions for conversation and a list of general medical terms. The hospital sometimes provides language classes and translators to help the nurses and patients in communication, but they should try to learn the country’s language previously and during their time overseas to show appreciation of personal and professional experience. Their knowledge of the language is important. It is because because language elicits authority and power in communicating and educating with patients.

English in Indonesia is regarded as Foreign Language (FL) in which there is neither any native tradition of English speaking, nor
institutional use of English, but it is learned as a foreign language, for trade, travel, etc. (Barber, 2000). Indonesia is considered as a country in expanding circle. The expanding circle means that the regions where people learning English as a foreign language (EFL) use the performance varieties of the language in EFL contexts. Typically, Kirkpatrick (2007) states that EFL occurs in countries where English is not actually used or spoken very much in the normal use course of daily life. In Indonesia, English is typically learned at school, but learners have little opportunity to use English outside the classroom and therefore they have little motivation to learn English.

Because English in Indonesia is regarded as Foreign Language, it is not surprising if many nurses still have low English skills. At this point, nurses should have prepared themselves to improve their skills in English. English for Nursing in the cope of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) could be a solution to prepare the better nurses with English skills but they can still deepen their nursing competencies in their study. ESP could be designed to meet the need of nursing students in improving their English skills before taking a nurse profession. The design of ESP to meet the nursing students’ needs is in the form of English for Nursing (EfN).

An English for Nursing (EfN) course is better implemented using constructivism approach. Shi (2013) suggests constructivist-based learning and teaching in English because it provides task-based and learner-centered activities. With constructivism, the students can build their own knowledge inductively with minds-on and hands-on activities requiring communication and exchanging ideas. Moreover, constructivism develops students’ critical thinking and scaffolding so that the students feel more motivated in the course as well. Youcefbeghoul & Chelghoum (2020) add that this approach is reliable because the students can take active participation in the course through interaction with collaborative and comfortable environment as well as friendly atmosphere.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**English for Nursing**

From the early 1960’s, ESP has developed to be one of the most prominent areas of English as Foreign Language (EFL) teaching nowadays. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a branch of EFL or
English as Second Language (ESL) as the main branches of English Language Teaching (ELT) (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). They illustrate the connection of ESP, EFL/ESL, and ELT in a form of a tree. The tree has its root and branches. ESP takes place in one branch of the tree with the root of Communication and Learning.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) illustrates the tree of ELT which shows that learning and communication become the reason of any language teaching including English. Communication and learning nourish the branches of the tree. English is used as Foreign Language in Indonesia. According to Kirkpatrick (2007), EFL exists in the countries in which English is not regularly used in daily life. In those countries, English is studied at school, but the students have less opportunity in using English outside the class. Therefore, they have less motivation in learning English. Referring back to the tree of ELT, English for Specific Purposes is a branch of EFL other than General English (GE). EFL in the tree of ELT is the stepping stone of ESP.

![Figure 1: The tree of ELT (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987)](image-url)
English for Specific Purposes is taught to students with a specific level of English proficiency in the situation where the language needs to be targeted. Because it provides materials and methods including instructional objectives which are developed and based on the potential interests and the needs of the students, ESP has developed into one of the most notable fields of English as Foreign language (Agustina, 2014).

The definition of ESP varies among the experts. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) defines ESP not as a product but as an approach to language learning. It is not a kind of language or methodology, but it consists of teaching materials directed by some specific reasons for studying or learning. Popescu (2010) states that ESP is a course in the broader professional framework of the ELT in which its implications are for syllabus and material designs, its presentation, as well as its evaluation.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Dudley-Evans (1997) and Strevens in Popescu (1988) describe ESP by its absolute characteristics as well. The main characteristic of ESP is to meet learners’ specific or needs not what they want. It is related to particular disciplines, and centered on languages suitable for the activities in terms of grammar, register, lexis, semantics, discourse, study skills, and genre. Day and Krzanowski (2011) add that the language and skills that the learners need are for specific purposes. In ESP, the P always means professional purposes.

Dudley-Evans (1997) reminds us that there is a final point that remains to be clarified. If a subject is taught in English, it is content teaching not this is not ESP teaching in itself. ESP has to involve the language and skills teaching associated with various disciplines. The materials are created based on appropriate terms, words, or genres used in the disciplines. The main purpose of the ESP is not teaching the content, providing the learners with language awareness, rhetorics, and study skills to enable them to learn the content of the subjects.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) explain that the course of ESP should have three basic factors affecting ESP course. Those are language descriptions, learning theory, and need analysis. Language description
means the way in which the system of language is described for the learning purposes. The terms like functional, structural, and notional belong to this area. The second is learning theory. Learning theory describes the theoretical basis of methodology. It will help to understand how people learn. In this case, we should consider behaviorism, cognitive, and affective. And the last is need analysis. Because ESP course should be created based on learners’ needs, the starting point for an ESP course or program is to decide the learners’ needs. A needs analysis should be a fundamental principle on which the ESP approach itself is based (Dudley-Evans, 1997) and it determines the language skills which are needed and useful for them to fulfill specific professional tasks (Popescu, 2010).

ESP is in contrast to EGP (English for General Purposes). English is considered as EGP if it is a second language taught with other subjects for the purposes of education as an important subject. There is no direct requirement for the learners to use English in their real communication. Conversely, if English is taught to specific learners with specific educational and vocational goals, this is called ESP (Ahmed, 2014).

Nursing covers a wide range of specializations and definitions that vary from one country to another and covers some other fields of medicine, including disease prevention, caring, monitoring and counseling of pregnant women, etc. (Crosta, 2014). The International Council of Nurses (2014) states that nursing provides autonomous or collaborative care for individuals at all ages and settings. Nursing promotes health, prevents disease, and cares for the sick, disabled and dying. They have key roles like conducting research, promoting safe environments, and participating in shaping health policy systems and patient management, and in education. Nursing gives caring shaped by the internal as well as external environment (Jarrin, 2007). These environments include a) their state of mind, the philosophy of personal nursing, and intention; b) their level of experience, skills, and training; c) the values, norms which are societal and professional, and worldview; and d) the practical environment, which is embedded in social, economic, and political systems or resources.
Based on the explanation above, there is a relationship between ESP and nursing profession. ESP is defined as an approach in which the learning and teaching process has to be appropriate with the learners’ needs for a professional purpose and involve the activities in terms of English grammar, register, lexis, semantics, discourse, study skills, and genre. Nursing means the field that covers medical care and promotes health for patients. Hence, English for Nursing (EfN) is an approach in which the learning and teaching process is appropriate with the nursing learners’ needs for professional purpose and involve the activities in terms of grammar, study skills, lexis, discourse, register, semantics, and genre.

Constructivism

Constructivism is a philosophy related to contextual learning assuming that humans shape knowledge and its meaning through interactions between their experiences and their ideas. Jean Piaget called it a schemata. In constructivists, knowledge is developed by humans step by step, and the results are expanded through context. According to constructivists, knowledge is not a collection of facts, concepts, or rules that are remembered, but a knowledge construct through real experiences. Piaget called it experiential learning or learning through experience. The constructivist view is based on Piaget’s theory of schema, assimilation, accommodation, and equilibration, Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) concept, Bruner’s theory of discovery learning, Ausubel’s theory of meaningful learning, and semiotic interactionism.

The facilities used can also come from the class or outside the classroom. As a mediator, he regulates a learning environment that is demonstrably based on learning so that students are able to solve problems and be able to work together using their own learning strategies. As a motivator, he always encourages students to achieve their learning goals. He listens more to information from students than provides information to them, periodically evaluating students not to know the competencies that have been obtained but to know the weaknesses and strengths of the learning process.
The principle of constructivism learning is based on a synthesis of the characteristics of various research results according to Jamaris (2013), which are:

1) Zone of proximal development which is implemented through scaffolding, namely the process of providing guidance to learners based on their knowledge and skills with what must be known.
2) Skills development by looking at what the learners have not, cannot, may be, and can be mastered.
3) The learning process is managed through a real environmental approach with a variety of real activities.
4) Materials and concepts are presented in various perspectives and contexts.
5) Learning objectives are determined jointly by students and educators.
6) Learning situations, environment, content, and learning tasks emphasize the principles of relevance, realistic, and authentic and represent the real world.
7) Mistakes are seen as opportunities to build new knowledge
8) Interaction and cooperation are considered important to solve problems.

The advantages of constructivism are that the students can be active because they understand better the concepts being taught and find these concepts themselves. They are actively involved in the problem solving and the demand of higher thinking skills. Their knowledge is based on schemata that students have so that learning is more meaningful. Students know the learning benefits because the problems solved are directly connected to their real life. It can increase their motivation and interest to the materials studied. Constructivism makes the students more independent and able to inspire and accept others’ opinions, and instill a positive social attitude among students.

The weakness of constructivism is that educators find it difficult to provide concrete and realistic examples in the learning process. In this case, educators are required to have high creativity in conveying material. The learning process for this model also takes a long time. The constructivist learning process wants to make students active. This is sometimes constrained by their cognitive abilities and the burden on
educators is getting heavier. Unsupportive facilities can hinder constructive learning.

**METHOD**

This study aims to explain more about how English for Nursing course is managed with constructivism. It is limited to the course content of English for Nursing. A literature review is used as a method in this study to be able to gain the result of a course management of English for Nursing for Higher Education. Snyder (2019) states that literature review serves as the knowledge development basis and has a capacity to generate new ideas for a particular field. It also serves the grounds for future theory and research. There are three steps in conducting a literature review including designing the review, conducting the review, analysis, and writing the review.

Hopefully, it can provide some contributions and benefits theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the course content improves the explanation, prediction, and control concerning class management of English for Nursing in Higher Education. Certainly, the theory will contribute to the development of English for Nursing (EfN) as well. Practically, the class management of English for Nursing can improve the efficiency and productivity in learning and teaching practices with constructivism. The result of this study is expected to be a source and inspiration for further study especially for those who yearn for conducting a research on English for Nursing in Higher Education.

**DISCUSSION**

Nurses are people who have concerns in the implementation of nursing. Crosta (2014) states that nurses ensure achieving, maintaining, or restoring health and function optimally. Nurses have a duty to help individuals in carrying out activities contributing to health, cure, or restful death. Nurses also attempts to attain the best life quality for their patients with disability or illness. Nurses can plan, assess, implement, and evaluate their treatments independently and they support the patients with various condition. Nurses usually conduct and teach nursing, as well as carry out research in nursing (Kim et al., 2019).

Constructivism can be implemented in English for Nursing course. English for Nursing is English specifically designed in the context of
nursing science where the learning process must be in accordance with the needs of students for professional purposes and involve activities in terms of grammar, lexical, learning skills, discourse, semantics and language genres. EfN means learning English which includes the context of medical care and efforts to improve patient health by involving activities in terms of grammar, lexis, registers, learning skills, discourse, semantics, and the English genre.

Managing EfN course with constructivism can be implemented with three techniques or strategies:

**The use of technology**
When studying the required phrases, the lecturer or facilitator uses computer technology, LCD, and audio in presentation tool applications such as power point, video playback and recordings from native speakers. In addition, the use of flash cards in the form of English vocabulary and expressions related to patient admission, vital signs checking, history taking, and anamneses. With technology and cards, students are able to absorb new vocabulary and expressions with their experiences during patient admissions, checking vital signs, and taking anamnesis using Indonesian. Thus, students find it easier to produce these expressions in English and try to express them like a native speaker.

The technology use in learning strongly supports the achievement of constructive learning (Solvie, 2007). Technology adapted to the styles of learning has been used in engaging the students and supporting learning. Technological tools function through creating learning objects and extending learning by providing the experience of learning by doing or learning by seeing. According to Solvie, the technology tools used are constructivist, model, extend, scaffold, and clarify learning in his research including the use of video and audio clips and PowerPoint (presentation software).

Educators position themselves as a team with students so that students feel close to the educator and can be active in learning (Jamaris, 2013). Jamaris (2013) divides the role of educators into facilitators, mediators, and motivators. As a facilitator, he provides media, tools, and
teaching materials so that students are able to solve problems and carry out inquiry and discovery activities.

**The use of realia with medical devices**  
In the process of checking vital signs, students need checking equipment such as a stethoscope, sphygmomanometer, and thermometer. These tools are used as realia in learning English. Realia is a term for concrete objects or real things. Learning using realia affects the improvement of students’ speaking skills. The students are motivated to be active and centered because the main focus is that knowledge is constructed by individual identifiers (Akpan & Beard, 2016). Moreover, Bruner in Pritchard & Woollard (2013) states that learning must pay attention to experiences and contexts that make students willing and able to learn, learning must be structured so that it is easily understood by students, learning must be designed to facilitate extrapolate and / or fill in the blanks.

The use of realia supports learning through a real environmental approach with a variety of real activities as stated by Jamaris (2013) so that the materials are presented contextually. It also represents a learning situation with the principle of realism and authenticism representing the real world. The learners have interaction as well as cooperation important to solve problems.

Realia is a kind or authentic material which allows students to interact with the actual language and content rather than the form because students feel that they are learning the target language used outside the classroom. It can be used to eliminate the gap between the competence and performance of students in language learning so that it requires language patterns that are practiced in real life situations (Kilickaya, 2004)

Role Plays with supporting forms and flash cards/situation cards  
In the role play, supporting learners with forms is important. The forms are help nursing students to fill in patient’s admission data that resemble the original form at the hospital. To fill out the form, students must pair up to have a conversation with the nurse and patient. In the conversation,
contextually students have their respective roles as nurses or patients. They must construct questions and answers according to the phrases that have been taught previously. Students who act as nurses are given a patient admission form, a vital sign checking result form, and an anamnesa result form.

Here, the students think, formulate concepts, and give meaning to things that are being studied, are given the opportunity to explore their experiences in learning. In this part, they gain knowledge formation as Jamaris (2013) mentions. With role play, they are adaptive learners and collaborators with educators. They develop their learning goals with educators, explore their knowledge, and find their own knowledge. The learners learn through experience, become active and responsible for what they have. According to Shen (2011), through role play, the learners can build interactive knowledge and are encouraged to variety responses. They can be actively involved in the learning process by collecting and summarizing knowledge then they can generate new speech knowledge in the future.

Students who act as patients are given flash cards in the form of complete patient data such as name, address, phone number, date of birth/age, ethnic/origin, religion, occupation, marital status, civil state, and the next of kin. In addition to flash cards in the form of patient data, patients also receive flash cards in the form of data on their vital signs (Respiratory Rate, Temperature, Blood Pressure, and Pulse). In addition to flash cards, patients are also given situational cards to answer questions in the anamneses process as shown below:

| Signs & Symptoms | Allergies | Medication | Past Med History | Last Oral Intake | Events leading to injury or illness | Immunization | Travelling |
|------------------|-----------|------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| A client with Malaria (35 YO) You are a client who is feverish, shivering, and getting painful joints. You also feel weak or fatigued. You sweat a lot lasting four to six hours. | No allergy | You have been given Quinine intravenously since this morning | You never have serious illness or injury | you couldn’t eat anything since yesterday because you felt like vomiting | You got a bite of a mosquito three days ago, and you thought it was simple influenza. But, the condition was worsening | Not asked | You travelled to New Guinea in Oceania last week |

Figure 2: Situation Card for Anamneses
The role-playing process is carried out with several exercises in class and is checked by the facilitator by playing a role in the laboratory with complete clinical equipment. By playing roles in practicing and being in the laboratory, students naturally experience a hospital-like situation which makes it easier for them to communicate naturally. There are two points in managing EfN classes with constructivism learning, namely technology in assisting the implementation of constructivism learning and naturalness in communication.

CONCLUSION

Constructivism in English for Nursing learning can be conducted with the role of technology, the use of real medical tools, flash cards/situation cards, and forms. With these materials, students find easier to understand the situation contextually and are able to construct the required expressions. However, the difference in speed in constructing or producing the required expressions occurs at different class levels. This proves that learning that constructivism needs to be adjusted to the level of student ability. With this study, it is recommended that there is a need for a more in-depth study of the process of how nursing students construct the expressions needed in learning English for Nursing and an in-depth study of the reasons or causes of slow or fast construction resulting from different levels.

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