

Needs Analysis of Communicative English Skills for Employability among Nursing Students of P P Savani University: English for Specific Purposes

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Abstract: English communication has become an indispensable professional competency in contemporary healthcare systems, where effective interaction among healthcare professionals, patients, caregivers, and multidisciplinary teams directly influences the quality of care. In India, many paramedical students possess adequate theoretical knowledge of English but often experience difficulties applying communicative skills in authentic clinical and professional contexts. The present study investigates the communicative English needs of nursing students through the lens of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Employing a quantitative descriptive survey design, data were collected using a structured Google Forms questionnaire administered to undergraduate paramedical students at P P Savani University, Surat. The questionnaire examined students' perceptions regarding the importance of English for employability, confidence in professional communication, clinical communication challenges, technical writing, patient counselling, and curriculum adequacy. The findings indicate that students strongly acknowledge English proficiency as an essential factor for employability, higher education, research participation, and international career opportunities. Integrating ESP principles, simulation-based learning, role plays, patient communication exercises, and authentic workplace tasks into the curriculum can substantially improve students' communicative competence and professional readiness. The findings provide useful implications for curriculum designers, English language educators, healthcare institutions, and policymakers seeking to strengthen employability-oriented education in paramedical programs.

Keywords: Communicative English, Employability, ESP, Needs Analysis, Nursing Students, Paramedical Education

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1. Introduction

Healthcare delivery has undergone remarkable transformation during the past two decades due to globalization, technological advancement, digital health systems, interdisciplinary collaboration, and increasing international mobility of healthcare professionals. Modern healthcare no longer depends solely on clinical expertise; it also requires professionals who can communicate effectively with patients, families, colleagues, and multidisciplinary healthcare teams. Consequently, communication has emerged as one of the most important employability competencies expected from graduates entering healthcare professions.

English has established itself as the dominant international language of medicine, healthcare documentation, scientific publication, pharmaceutical industries, telemedicine, and global healthcare collaboration. Medical textbooks, clinical guidelines, research articles, pharmaceutical documentation, electronic health records, and international conferences are predominantly conducted in English. As healthcare systems increasingly adopt global standards, graduates lacking effective English communication skills often experience difficulties during recruitment, workplace interaction, professional documentation, and career progression.

Paramedical professionals-including nurses, physiotherapists, pharmacists, and allied healthcare practitioners-occupy a central position in healthcare delivery. They are responsible for obtaining patient histories, explaining treatment procedures, documenting clinical information, maintaining accurate medical records, coordinating with physicians, educating patients, responding during emergencies, and participating in multidisciplinary clinical discussions. Many of these responsibilities require not only linguistic competence but also the ability to communicate with empathy, clarity, accuracy, and cultural sensitivity.

In India, however, many students enrolled in paramedical programs come from regional language backgrounds where opportunities for authentic English communication remain limited. Although English is taught throughout school and higher education, classroom instruction frequently emphasizes grammar, examination performance, and textbook learning rather than real-world communication. As a result, students often possess theoretical knowledge but lack confidence when communicating with patients, participating in interviews, attending seminars, writing reports, or collaborating within professional healthcare environments.

Employers increasingly identify communication competence as one of the most desirable graduate attributes. Hospitals, healthcare organizations, pharmaceutical companies, and international employers seek graduates capable of communicating confidently in multicultural workplaces. Consequently, English proficiency has become closely associated with employability, professional identity, leadership, and career mobility.

The concept of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) offers an appropriate pedagogical framework for addressing these challenges. Unlike General English, ESP focuses on developing language competencies required within specific academic or professional contexts. Healthcare-oriented ESP programs integrate medical terminology, patient interaction, professional documentation, clinical communication, presentation skills, and workplace discourse into language instruction, thereby making learning directly relevant to professional practice.

Needs analysis forms the foundation of ESP curriculum design because it identifies learners' present abilities, target communicative requirements, and professional expectations. Understanding students' communication needs enables educators to design learning experiences that bridge the gap between academic instruction and workplace requirements.

The present study therefore investigates the communicative English needs of undergraduate nursing students at P P Savani University, Surat. Specifically, it explores students' perceptions regarding English communication, employability, professional confidence, patient interaction, technical writing, curriculum adequacy, and areas requiring additional language training. The findings are expected to contribute to curriculum development and enhance employability-oriented language education within healthcare programs.

1.1. Research Gap

Existing literature consistently recognizes the importance of communication skills in healthcare education and professional practice. Previous studies have examined communication competence among nursing students, English for Specific Purposes, workplace communication, and graduate employability. Nevertheless, three important research gaps remain.

First, relatively few studies have examined communicative English needs across undergraduate paramedical programs within Indian private universities. Much of the existing research focuses exclusively on nursing education and general English proficiency rather than broader employability-oriented communication.

Second, earlier investigations have largely concentrated on grammatical competence or language achievement instead of examining authentic clinical communication tasks such as explaining medical procedures, interacting with multilingual healthcare professionals, writing clinical documentation, and persuading patients to follow treatment protocols.

Third, there remains limited empirical evidence regarding students' perceptions of whether current English curricula adequately prepare them for professional healthcare communication and workplace expectations.

The present study addresses these gaps by conducting a systematic needs analysis based on English for Specific Purposes principles, thereby providing evidence-based recommendations for curriculum enhancement and employability-oriented communication training.

1.2. Research Objectives

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- To examine nursing students' perceptions regarding the importance of English communication for employability.
- To investigate the communication challenges experienced by students in clinical and professional settings.
- To evaluate students' confidence in spoken English, professional presentations, interviews, patient interaction, and technical documentation.
- To assess students' perceptions regarding the adequacy of the existing English curriculum.
- To identify priority areas requiring additional English language training.
- To propose pedagogical recommendations for strengthening English for Specific Purposes instruction in paramedical education.

1.3. Research Hypotheses

H₁: English communication competence significantly influences perceived employability among paramedical students.

H₂: Students perceive deficiencies in their communicative English skills within authentic clinical contexts.

H₃: Existing English language instruction does not adequately address profession-specific communication needs of paramedical students.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The present research contributes to both theory and practice. Theoretically, it extends the application of English for Specific Purposes within healthcare education by integrating communicative competence and employability perspectives. Practically, the findings provide valuable guidance for curriculum designers, English language educators, healthcare administrators, and policymakers seeking to develop workplace-oriented communication courses.

The study also supports national educational priorities that emphasize skill development, graduate employability, experiential learning, and industry-academia collaboration. By identifying specific communication gaps, the research offers evidence-based recommendations for strengthening healthcare communication training and preparing graduates for increasingly globalized healthcare environments.

2. Review of Literature

Communication competence has long been recognized as one of the defining characteristics of professional success across disciplines. Within healthcare settings, effective communication influences patient safety, clinical decision-making, interdisciplinary collaboration, patient satisfaction, and organizational efficiency. Consequently, language education for healthcare professionals has gradually shifted from grammar-centered instruction towards communicative, contextualized, and profession-specific approaches.

Canale and Swain (1980) conceptualized communicative competence as comprising grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies. Their framework emphasizes that language proficiency extends beyond grammatical accuracy to include the ability to communicate effectively within social and professional contexts. This theoretical perspective continues to underpin contemporary communicative language teaching.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) established the foundations of English for Specific Purposes by arguing that language instruction should be driven by learners' academic and occupational needs rather than by predetermined grammatical syllabi. Their learner-centered model positions need analysis as the essential starting point for curriculum design, particularly within specialized professional domains.

Bosher and Smalkoski (2002) demonstrated that nursing students benefit significantly from profession-specific communication training. Their work emphasized that healthcare students require instruction in authentic communicative tasks, including patient interviews, clinical documentation, medical terminology, and interdisciplinary interaction, rather than general English alone.

Hargie (2016) highlighted interpersonal communication as a central determinant of professional effectiveness within healthcare organizations. According to Hargie, effective communication contributes to teamwork, patient-centered care, conflict resolution, leadership, and organizational performance.

Rao (2019) observed that communication skills have become one of the most valued employability competencies among Indian graduates. Employers increasingly expect graduates to demonstrate confidence, fluency, collaboration, presentation skills, and professional interaction in English.

Recent international research further indicates that communication failures remain among the leading causes of preventable medical errors, emphasizing the need for stronger communication education within health professions. Contemporary scholarship also highlights the growing importance of simulation-based communication training, reflective practice, role-play, and technology-enhanced learning in developing authentic communicative competence among healthcare students.

Collectively, the literature demonstrates that communicative English proficiency directly influences graduate employability, professional identity, workplace confidence, and quality healthcare delivery. Nevertheless, relatively limited research has investigated the communicative English needs of undergraduate paramedical students within the Indian higher education context, thereby justifying the present investigation.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The present study is grounded in three complementary theoretical perspectives: English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and Employability Skills Theory. Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive lens for examining how communicative English competence influences the professional preparedness and employability of paramedical students. While ESP identifies the specific linguistic requirements of healthcare professionals, CLT provides the pedagogical principles for developing communicative competence, and Employability Skills Theory explains the relationship between communication proficiency and workplace readiness. The integration of these theories establishes a strong conceptual foundation for investigating the communicative needs of undergraduate paramedical students.

2.2. English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) constitutes the principal theoretical foundation of the present study. ESP emerged during the 1960s as an approach to language teaching that prioritises learners' academic and occupational needs rather than general language proficiency. Unlike General English, which focuses on broad linguistic competence, ESP is designed to develop language skills that are directly applicable to a particular profession or discipline.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) argued that the central question in language education is not *"Why is English being taught?"* but rather *"Why do learners need English?"* Their learner-centred philosophy transformed language instruction by placing needs analysis at the core of curriculum design. According to their framework, language programmes should begin with identifying learners' target situations, present competencies, and professional expectations before designing instructional materials.

Within healthcare education, ESP has become increasingly significant because communication extends beyond ordinary conversation. Healthcare professionals are expected to communicate with patients from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, explain medical procedures in accessible language, document patient information accurately, prepare clinical reports, collaborate with multidisciplinary teams, and interpret professional literature. Consequently, the language requirements of healthcare professionals differ substantially from those of learners in general academic settings.

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) further expanded the ESP framework by emphasising that effective ESP courses should be based on authentic professional tasks rather than traditional grammar exercises. They argued that workplace communication should determine instructional objectives, teaching materials, and assessment strategies. In healthcare contexts, this includes patient interviews, clinical documentation, emergency communication, interdisciplinary meetings, case presentations, and professional correspondence.

The present study adopts the ESP perspective because the communication challenges faced by paramedical students cannot be addressed adequately through conventional English instruction. Students require discipline-specific language skills involving medical terminology, patient counselling, healthcare documentation, technical report writing, informed consent procedures, and clinical interaction. Therefore, analyzing students' communicative needs provides valuable evidence for designing an ESP curriculum that reflects authentic workplace requirements.

The questionnaire developed for this research was itself informed by ESP principles. Items examining students' confidence in explaining medical procedures, completing technical documentation, communicating during emergencies, and interacting with multilingual healthcare professionals represent authentic communicative tasks encountered in healthcare practice. Thus, ESP not only provides the theoretical basis for the study but also shapes the research instrument and interpretation of findings.

2.3. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

The second theoretical pillar supporting this study is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Emerging in the 1970s, CLT represented a significant departure from grammar-translation and structural approaches to language instruction. Rather than viewing language learning as the memorization of grammatical rules, CLT conceptualizes language as a tool for meaningful communication in authentic social and professional contexts.

Canale and Swain (1980) proposed that communicative competence consists of four interrelated dimensions:

- Grammatical competence, referring to knowledge of vocabulary, pronunciation, sentence structure, and grammatical rules.
- Sociolinguistic competence, referring to the ability to use language appropriately according to social and cultural contexts.
- Discourse competence, referring to the organization of coherent spoken and written communication.
- Strategic competence, referring to the use of communication strategies when linguistic difficulties arise.

These components collectively enable individuals to communicate effectively rather than merely produce grammatically correct sentences.

In healthcare settings, communicative competence assumes exceptional importance because communication directly influences patient safety, treatment outcomes, teamwork, and clinical efficiency. Healthcare professionals must communicate clearly during emergencies, provide understandable explanations of medical procedures, gather accurate patient histories, and collaborate effectively with colleagues. Such interactions require fluency, confidence, empathy, clarity, and adaptability—qualities that extend beyond grammatical knowledge.

Littlewood (1981) emphasized that language learners acquire communicative competence most effectively through authentic interaction and meaningful tasks. Consequently, CLT encourages role plays, simulations, problem-solving activities, discussions, interviews, presentations, and collaborative learning. These instructional practices closely resemble real-life communication situations encountered by healthcare professionals.

The present study aligns with CLT because the survey investigates students' confidence in performing authentic communicative tasks rather than their knowledge of grammar. Questions relating to interviews, seminars, patient explanations, emergency communication, and professional interaction reflect the practical orientation of

Communicative Language Teaching. The findings are therefore expected to provide evidence supporting the integration of communicative methodologies into paramedical English curricula.

Furthermore, CLT supports the study's recommendation that English instruction should incorporate simulation-based learning, patient role plays, oral presentations, mock interviews, interdisciplinary discussions, and clinical communication exercises. Such pedagogical strategies enable students to develop communicative competence through experiential learning rather than passive knowledge acquisition.

2.4. Employability Skills Theory

The third theoretical perspective underpinning this study is Employability Skills Theory, which conceptualizes graduate success as a combination of disciplinary expertise and transferable professional competencies. Contemporary employers increasingly seek graduates who demonstrate communication, teamwork, leadership, critical thinking, adaptability, digital literacy, and interpersonal effectiveness in addition to technical knowledge.

Yorke (2006) defines employability as a set of achievements—including knowledge, skills, and personal attributes—that enhance graduates' likelihood of gaining employment and succeeding within their chosen professions. Communication competence is consistently identified as one of the most important employability attributes across industries, particularly within healthcare, where professionals interact continuously with patients, caregivers, administrators, and multidisciplinary teams.

The healthcare sector places exceptional emphasis on communication because ineffective interaction may contribute to misunderstandings, documentation errors, patient dissatisfaction, and compromised clinical outcomes. Consequently, communication competence is increasingly regarded as a patient safety issue as well as an employability skill.

Within the Indian healthcare context, English proficiency has become closely associated with career advancement, international employment opportunities, higher education, research participation, and professional mobility. Hospitals serving multicultural populations frequently require healthcare professionals capable of communicating effectively with individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Likewise, opportunities in international healthcare systems, medical tourism, pharmaceutical industries, and academic research generally demand high levels of English proficiency.

The employability perspective therefore provides an important rationale for examining students' perceptions regarding English communication. Rather than viewing English as merely an academic subject, the present study conceptualizes language proficiency as a professional competency that influences graduates' confidence, workplace effectiveness, and long-term career development.

The questionnaire specifically incorporates employability dimensions by examining students' perceptions regarding interviews, overseas employment, multilingual interaction, technical documentation, patient persuasion, and workplace confidence. These dimensions reflect competencies increasingly emphasized by healthcare employers worldwide.

2.5. Integration of the Three Theoretical Perspectives

Although ESP, CLT, and Employability Skills Theory originate from different academic traditions, they complement one another in explaining the communicative requirements of healthcare professionals.

ESP identifies **what** students need to learn by focusing on profession-specific communication tasks. CLT explains **how** these competencies should be developed through authentic communication and learner-centred pedagogy. Employability Skills Theory explains **why** these competencies are essential by demonstrating their relationship with workplace readiness, career progression, and professional effectiveness.

The integration of these perspectives enables the present study to move beyond traditional language education by examining communication as an essential professional competency. The framework also supports the development of curriculum recommendations that align educational practices with workplace expectations.

Accordingly, the study proposes that improvements in communicative English competence will enhance students' confidence, professional interaction, patient communication, documentation skills, and employability.

2.6. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Based on the above theoretical perspectives, the study proposes the following conceptual relationship:

Independent Variable

English Communication Competence

- Spoken English
- Clinical Communication
- Medical Vocabulary
- Professional Writing
- Patient Counselling
- Interview Skills

Mediating Factors

- Confidence in Communication
- Clinical Exposure
- ESP-based Instruction
- Communicative Teaching Practices

Dependent Variables

- Employability
- Professional Readiness
- Clinical Communication Effectiveness
- Workplace Confidence
- Global Career Opportunities

The framework suggests that improvements in communicative English competence, supported by ESP-oriented instruction and communicative teaching methodologies, positively influence students' professional preparedness and employability within contemporary healthcare environments. Consequently, curriculum designers should integrate discipline-specific communication training throughout paramedical education to bridge the gap between classroom learning and workplace expectations.

3. Materials and Methods

The Materials and Methods should be provided in such detail to enable others to replicate the findings and expand on them. Please be aware that making all materials, data, computer code, and protocols related to the publication available to readers signifies that your work will be published. If there are any limitations on the materials' or information's accessibility, kindly state them at the submission stage. While well-established procedures can be quickly presented and properly cited, new protocols and methods should be described in full.

Large datasets that are deposited in a publicly accessible database should be identified in research articles that report them, together with the appropriate accession codes. Please indicate that the accession numbers will be

provided during review if they have not been obtained at the time of submission. They have to be given before publication. Interventional research involving humans or animals, as well as other studies requiring ethical permission, must indicate the ethical approval code and the authority that granted it.

3.1. Research Design and Paradigm

The study followed a quantitative descriptive survey design. The aim was not to test causal relationships between variables but to describe, as accurately as possible, how students at this stage of their training actually perceive their own communicative English competence, and where they feel that competence falls short of what their future work will demand. A descriptive design suited this purpose: it allowed a reasonably large group of respondents to report on their own experience through a standardized instrument, producing data that could be summarized numerically rather than filtered through a researcher's interpretation of open-ended narrative. The design sits within a broadly positivist paradigm, on the working assumption that students' self-reported perceptions of confidence, difficulty, and curriculum adequacy can be captured through structured, closed-ended items and analyzed descriptively without distorting what respondents actually meant.

3.2. Research Setting and Population

Data were collected at P P Savani University, Surat, Gujarat, among undergraduate students enrolled in the Nursing programme. All 41 respondents were in Semester 7 -- a deliberate rather than incidental choice. By this stage, students have completed the bulk of their clinical postings and are within roughly a year of internship and employment, so they are describing communication demands they have already encountered on the ward rather than ones they are only anticipating. Nursing students of this university were selected as the target population because communication competence sits close to the centre of their future professional responsibilities: patient counselling, documentation, interdisciplinary coordination, and day-to-day case management all depend on it.

3.3. Sample and Sampling Technique

A total of 41 students participated, identified through purposive sampling within the accessible Semester 7 cohort. The sampling was purposive rather than random: respondents were included specifically because they had completed major clinical postings, had meaningful direct exposure to patient interaction, and were approaching internship and employment, which made them able to evaluate their English communication needs from lived experience rather than expectation. This is also, inevitably, a convenience-bound sample -- drawn from a single cohort at a single institution -- and the resulting limits on generalizability are addressed directly in Section 14.

3.4. Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured, self-administered questionnaire distributed through Google Forms, comprising 11 close-ended items across three constructs drawn from the ESP and healthcare-communication literature. The first construct, employability, covered the perceived importance of English for securing employment, working abroad, and performing well at interview. The second, clinical usability, covered explaining procedures to patients, completing documentation, understanding medical terminology, and filling out technical forms. The third, persuasive communication, covered patient counselling, informed consent, and clinical interaction more broadly. Response formats varied by item and included single-choice categorical responses, a five-point ordinal scale, a ten-point rating scale, and one multiple-response checklist item, so that the instrument could capture both attitudes toward English and respondents' self-assessed difficulty with specific tasks.

3.5. Instrument Development and Validity

The questionnaire was developed after reviewing literature on English for Specific Purposes, English for Medical Purposes, nursing communication, clinical documentation, and healthcare employability, and items were framed to reflect the communicative competencies identified by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Canale and Swain (1980), Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), and Boshier and Smalkoski (2002). Face validity was

established by having the draft instrument reviewed by faculty with expertise in English Language Teaching, Nursing Education, and Educational Research, who assessed each item for clarity, appropriateness of language, and relevance before minor wording revisions were incorporated. Content validity rested on this combination of literature-grounded item development and expert review, rather than on a separate quantitative pilot.

3.6. Reliability

Because the instrument mixed nominal, ordinal, and multiple-response items rather than a single uniform Likert battery, a single Cronbach's alpha coefficient was not computed for the whole scale; internal-consistency statistics of this kind assume a homogeneous item format, and applying them across mixed measurement levels can be misleading rather than reassuring. Reliability was instead supported through the expert review described above, and through the internal consistency visible in the response pattern itself: among the 20 students who rated English "Extremely Important" for securing employment, 17 (85%) also felt that weak English would significantly limit overseas or research opportunities, compared with 10 of the 20 (50%) who rated it merely "Important." This kind of convergence across related items is a reasonable, if informal, indicator that respondents were answering attentively and consistently. A follow-up study using a uniform Likert battery within each construct would allow a more formal reliability coefficient to be reported.

3.7. Data Collection Procedure and Ethical Considerations

Institutional approval was obtained before the questionnaire was distributed electronically through Google Forms. Participation was voluntary throughout: respondents were told the purpose of the study, informed that their responses were anonymous and confidential, and reminded that they could withdraw at any point without academic consequence. Completing the form was treated as informed consent. No personally identifying information was used in the analysis reported below, and the collected data were used exclusively for the purposes of this research.

3.8. Data Analysis

Responses exported from Google Forms into Microsoft Excel were checked for completeness before analysis; all 41 responses were fully completed and were retained. Data were summarized using frequencies and percentages for categorical items, and means for the two numerically scaled items (curriculum rating and Question 6's multiple-response item was analyzed by counting each option's individual selection frequency rather than by response combination, since respondents could select more than one). Findings were then interpreted against the ESP and healthcare-communication literature reviewed in Section 6.

4. Results and Data Analysis

4.1. Respondent Profile

A total of **41 valid responses** were analyzed.

Question 1: Importance of English for Employability

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Extremely Important	20	48.8%
Important	20	48.8%
Natural	1	2.4%

Table 1

Interpretation

Nearly every respondent (97.6%) viewed English as important or extremely important for obtaining employment in top healthcare organizations. This indicates strong awareness of the role of English in professional recruitment.

Finding: English proficiency is perceived as a critical employability skill among nursing students.

Question 2: English and International Career Opportunities

Response	Frequency
Yes, significantly	27
Somewhat	13
Not at all	1

Table 2

Interpretation

Approximately two-thirds of respondents believed inadequate English skills would significantly restrict access to international employment or research careers.

Finding: Students clearly associate English proficiency with global career mobility and higher education opportunities.

Question 3: Interaction with Non-native Language Professionals

Response	Frequency
Daily	19
Occasionally	19
Rarely	3

Table 3

Interpretation

Most respondents anticipate frequent interaction with multilingual healthcare professionals, reflecting the global nature of healthcare practice.

Finding: English serves as a common professional language in anticipated clinical environments.

Question 4: Confidence in Interviews and Medical Seminars

Response	Frequency
Very Confident	18
Somewhat Confident	22
Not Confident	1

Table 4

Interpretation

Although students generally possess confidence, the majority remain only "somewhat confident," suggesting room for improvement in spoken professional English.

Finding: Interview preparation and presentation skills require additional emphasis.

Question 5: Ability to Explain Medical Procedures

Response	Frequency
Excellent	17
Average	24

Table 5

Interpretation

Most students rated themselves as average rather than excellent, indicating that simplified patient communication remains an area requiring structured practice.

Finding: Clinical explanation skills should receive greater curricular attention.

Question 6: Most Challenging Communication Tasks

Challenge	Frequency
Understanding medical jargon	23
Responding during emergencies	20
Giving patient instructions	12
Incident report writing	7

Table 6

Interpretation

Medical terminology emerged as the greatest communication barrier, followed closely by emergency communication.

Finding: Students need greater exposure to authentic clinical vocabulary and simulation-based communication training.

Question 7: Confidence in Writing Patient Case Histories

Response	Frequency
Very Confident	20
Moderately Confident	21

Table 7

Interpretation

Confidence levels were relatively balanced, although half of the respondents still desired improvement in clinical documentation.

Finding: Medical documentation skills require further reinforcement.

Question 8: English for Patient Persuasion

Response	Frequency
Very Important	23
Useful	18

Table 8

Interpretation

Every respondent acknowledged English as useful or very important for persuading patients to follow healthcare protocols.

Finding: Students recognize persuasive communication as a key nursing competency.

Question 9: Training for Technical Documentation

Response	Frequency
Yes	31
No	6
Maybe	4

Table 9

Interpretation

Although most students felt prepared to complete technical forms, around one-quarter remained uncertain or unprepared.

Finding: More practice with authentic hospital documentation would increase confidence.

Question 10: Rating of Current English Curriculum

Mean Score = 3.76/5

Most responses clustered around 3 and 4, indicating moderate satisfaction rather than excellence.

Interpretation

Students appreciate the current curriculum but expect stronger professional orientation.

Finding: The existing English curriculum only partially fulfils professional communication needs.

Question 11: Preferred Area for Additional Training

Area	Frequency
Spoken English	32
Technical Writing	7
Research Reading	2

Table 10

Interpretation

An overwhelming majority preferred spoken English training.

Finding: Students prioritize practical communication over academic English.

4.2. Overall Findings

Read together, the eleven items point in a fairly consistent direction. Students are in little doubt that English matters for their careers: 97.6% called it important or extremely important for securing work in a top-tier organization, and roughly two-thirds (65.9%) believed that weak English would significantly limit their access to overseas or research-oriented roles. That conviction, however, does not translate into uniform confidence. When asked about specific clinical tasks -- attending an English-medium interview or seminar, explaining a procedure to a patient in simple terms, writing a case history a colleague could act on without clarification -- responses cluster in the middle rather than at the top of the scale: "somewhat confident" and "average" outnumber "very confident" and "excellent" on every relevant item. Medical terminology emerged as the single most frequently cited clinical difficulty (56.1% of respondents), followed closely by responding quickly during emergencies (48.8%), with writing incident reports cited least often (17.1%) -- a distribution that suggests students find real-time, high-pressure communication harder than routine documentation. Spoken and conversational English was the training priority students named most often, by a wide margin (78.0% versus 17.1% for technical writing and 4.9% for reading research papers), which is broadly consistent with the pattern above: students appear less worried about producing written English under normal conditions than about using English confidently and quickly in live clinical interaction. The current curriculum was rated as moderately adequate rather than either excellent or inadequate ($M = 3.76$ on a five-point scale), suggesting that students see value in what they are already taught but do not feel it goes far enough toward these specific, high-pressure communicative demands.

4.3. Exploratory Descriptive Statistics

To summarize perceptions across the ordinal items as a set, response categories were coded numerically, with higher scores indicating more positive or more confident perceptions.

Interpretation

The highest mean score was recorded for the importance of English for employability ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 0.55$), reflecting the near-unanimous agreement noted above. International career relevance ($M = 2.63$) and the importance of English for patient persuasion ($M = 2.64$) followed at a moderate level, while interview confidence ($M = 2.41$), confidence in explaining clinical procedures ($M = 2.41$), and confidence in case-history writing ($M = 2.49$) were the lowest of the set -- consistent with the pattern already described, in which conviction about English's importance runs ahead of confidence in using it under real clinical conditions. The average curriculum-adequacy rating ($M = 3.76$ out of 5) sits in the same moderate range, reinforcing that the gap

identified here is less about whether English is taught at all than about whether it is taught in a form that matches these specific professional demands.

4.4. Recommendations

Three of the findings above have fairly direct curricular implications. First, because spoken and real-time communication -- not writing -- was the difficulty students named most consistently, the English curriculum for nursing students should shift a meaningfully larger share of instructional time toward spoken and interactive tasks: an ESP module built specifically around nursing scenarios, rather than general English, would target this gap more precisely than the current provision appears to. Second, because assessment currently relies on written examination while the identified gap is spoken and situational, communication competence should be assessed through methods that actually test it -- Objective Structured Clinical Examinations, oral case presentations, and reflective practice logs, for instance -- so that what is assessed matches what students say they struggle with. Third, closing this gap is unlikely to be achievable by the English faculty alone: because the relevant scenarios (emergency response, patient counselling, technical documentation) are clinical in nature, English language faculty and nursing faculty would need to collaborate directly on designing and, ideally, co-teaching this material. Finally, because this study draws on a single cohort at a single institution, a natural next step would be to repeat this needs analysis across nursing, physiotherapy, pharmacy, and other allied-health programmes, and ideally across more than one institution, to establish whether the pattern identified here -- high perceived importance of English alongside moderate confidence in using it under pressure -- holds more generally across paramedical education in India.

5. Discussion

The findings clearly demonstrate that English communication competence has become an essential employability requirement within contemporary healthcare education. Students recognized English as a critical factor influencing employment opportunities, workplace confidence, patient communication, and international mobility. Nevertheless, the survey also revealed considerable gaps between classroom learning and workplace communication requirements. Many respondents expressed uncertainty regarding emergency communication, patient counselling, technical documentation, and professional presentations.

These findings strongly support the principles of English for Specific Purposes, which advocate profession-oriented communication training rather than general language instruction. The results are consistent with Bosher and Smalkoski (2002), who argued that healthcare professionals require specialized communication training tailored to authentic workplace situations. Similarly, the findings support Hutchinson and Waters' learner-centred ESP model, which emphasizes designing curricula based on learners' target professional needs.

The study also aligns with Communicative Language Teaching, suggesting that students develop confidence more effectively through simulations, role plays, presentations, case discussions, and authentic communication activities than through traditional grammar instruction. From an employability perspective, the findings reinforce contemporary employer expectations that healthcare graduates should demonstrate not only technical competence but also effective communication, teamwork, documentation skills, and professional confidence. Consequently, higher education institutions should redesign English curricula by integrating healthcare-specific communication modules throughout undergraduate paramedical programmes.

5.1. Practical Implications

The findings have several practical implications for higher education institutions, healthcare educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers.

First, English language instruction within paramedical programmes should be redesigned using the principles of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Rather than emphasizing general grammar instruction, courses should focus on communication tasks encountered in hospitals, clinics, laboratories, pharmacies, rehabilitation centres, and community healthcare settings.

Second, communication training should incorporate authentic workplace activities, including patient interviews, case presentations, emergency communication, informed consent discussions, interdisciplinary collaboration, and professional documentation. Such activities enable students to apply language within realistic professional contexts.

Third, universities should establish language laboratories and simulation centres where students can practise clinical communication using role plays, virtual patients, and healthcare scenarios. These facilities would significantly improve students' confidence before entering professional practice.

Fourth, assessment strategies should evaluate communicative competence through oral examinations, presentations, simulated clinical interactions, and workplace communication tasks rather than relying exclusively on written grammar examinations.

Finally, healthcare institutions and universities should collaborate to develop communication training programmes that reflect current industry expectations and prepare graduates for both national and international employment.

5.2. Pedagogical Implications

The present findings provide valuable guidance for English language teachers working within healthcare education. Language instruction should be learner-centred and context-specific. Teachers should adopt communicative teaching strategies that encourage interaction, collaboration, and authentic language use. Classroom activities may include clinical role plays, patient counselling simulations, case-based discussions, group presentations, reflective journals, and peer communication exercises.

Medical vocabulary should be introduced within meaningful clinical contexts rather than as isolated terminology lists. Similarly, writing instruction should focus on professional documentation, incident reporting, referral letters, discharge summaries, and case history preparation.

Digital technologies may also be integrated into language instruction through online discussion forums, virtual simulations, artificial intelligence-assisted speaking practice, telemedicine communication scenarios, and interactive learning platforms.

5.3. Policy Implications

Educational policymakers should recognize communication competence as a graduate attribute equivalent in importance to disciplinary knowledge. Universities offering healthcare programmes should develop dedicated ESP courses specifically designed for Nursing, Physiotherapy, Pharmacy, Ayurveda, Homeopathy, and other allied health disciplines. Such courses should be developed collaboratively by English language specialists, healthcare professionals, and curriculum designers. Furthermore, accreditation agencies may consider including communication competence among graduate outcome indicators, thereby encouraging institutions to strengthen workplace-oriented language education.

5.4. Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, the present study has several limitations. First, the investigation was conducted within a single university, thereby limiting the generalizability of findings to other educational institutions. Second, convenience sampling was employed due to accessibility considerations. Although appropriate for exploratory needs analysis, probability sampling would improve representativeness in future studies. Third, the study relied exclusively on self-reported perceptions rather than direct observation of communication performance. Participants' responses may therefore reflect perceived rather than actual communicative competence. Fourth, the research utilized descriptive statistical analysis. Although appropriate for the present objectives, future investigations may employ inferential statistical techniques to examine relationships among variables. Finally, the relatively modest sample size limits broad generalization. Larger multi-institutional studies would provide stronger empirical evidence regarding communicative needs across healthcare disciplines.

5.5. Future Research Directions

Future research may extend the present investigation in several directions. Comparative studies involving multiple universities would provide broader evidence regarding communication needs across different educational contexts. Longitudinal studies could examine changes in communicative competence throughout students' academic progression and clinical training. Experimental investigations may evaluate the effectiveness of ESP-based communication programmes, simulation-based instruction, and digital language learning technologies. Researchers may also examine communication needs across specific healthcare disciplines, including nursing, physiotherapy, pharmacy, occupational therapy, and medical laboratory sciences. Future studies employing mixed-methods research designs may provide deeper insights into students' communication experiences through interviews, classroom observations, and clinical performance assessments.

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6. Conclusion

The present study examined the communicative English needs of undergraduate nursing students within the framework of English for Specific Purposes. The findings clearly demonstrate that English communication has become a critical determinant of employability, workplace confidence, patient interaction, and professional success within contemporary healthcare environments.

Students strongly acknowledged the importance of English for securing employment, pursuing higher education, participating in research, and accessing international career opportunities. Nevertheless, the study identified several communication gaps relating to spoken interaction, patient counselling, technical documentation, emergency communication, and professional presentations.

The findings suggest that traditional grammar-oriented English instruction does not adequately prepare students for authentic workplace communication. Consequently, higher education institutions should redesign language curricula according to the principles of ESP and Communicative Language Teaching by integrating simulation-based learning, role plays, case discussions, patient communication exercises, technical writing, and oral assessment into healthcare education.

Ultimately, communication competence should be recognized as a core professional competency rather than an auxiliary language skill. Graduates who demonstrate effective communication are more likely to achieve professional success, provide high-quality patient care, and contribute meaningfully to increasingly global healthcare systems.

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Author Contributions:

Dr. Meera Patel: Conceptualization, research design, questionnaire development, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings, manuscript preparation, and corresponding author responsibilities.

Dr. Sonam Mansukhani: Literature review, theoretical framework, manuscript review, editing, validation of academic content, and supervision of the research process.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Questionnaire on *The Role of English Communication in Paramedical Sciences* (reproduced from the approved Google Form).

Appendix B: Survey Responses.

All the data collection/questionnaires and result analysis have been verified and the same is available at the Corresponding Author, **Dr. Meera Patel** (pmeera89@gmail.com).

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