

A Needs Analysis of Listening Instruction for Nursing Students at Universitas Bunda Thamrin

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Abstract

Listening comprehension is a critical component of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), particularly for nursing students who must process spoken information accurately in academic and professional healthcare contexts. Despite its importance, listening instruction in many nursing programs remains insufficiently aligned with learners' actual communicative needs. This study aims to investigate the target listening needs of nursing students at Universitas Bunda Thamrin in relation to their academic studies and future professional responsibilities, as well as to identify the listening difficulties they currently experience in learning English. Adopting a descriptive needs analysis design, the study employs a convergent mixed-methods approach that integrates quantitative data from questionnaires and qualitative data from semi-structured interviews. The needs analysis framework combines Target Situation Analysis (TSA) and Present Situation Analysis (PSA) to examine the gap between students' current listening competence and the demands of academic and clinical nursing contexts. The findings reveal that nursing students prioritize professional listening needs, such as understanding patient complaints and medical instructions, over general academic listening tasks. Additionally, students experience significant listening difficulties related to limited medical vocabulary, fast speech rate, unfamiliar accents, and listening anxiety. These findings highlight the necessity of designing ESP listening instruction that is context-specific, learner-centered, and grounded in empirical needs analysis. The study contributes to ESP pedagogy by providing evidence-based insights for improving listening curricula in nursing education.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes; Listening Needs Analysis; Nursing Students; Listening Difficulties; ESP Curriculum Design

Introduction

Listening comprehension is a fundamental aspect of second language acquisition, serving as the principal source of linguistic input for learners. Listening is widely recognised as one of the most complex and challenging skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts because it requires processing spoken language in real time, dealing with different accents, speech rates, and unfamiliar vocabulary, and figuring out what something means in a certain context (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Cognitively, listening involves both bottom-up and top-down processes. Learners have to decode language signals while also using what they already know to make sense of what they hear (Field, 2008). As a result, poor listening instruction could seriously slow down the overall language development of students

In higher education, English instruction is progressively anticipated to correspond with students' academic and vocational requirements. This expectation is especially important in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), where language lessons are meant to help students meet the needs of their target situations and fields of study. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) stress that ESP courses ought to be founded on the specific needs of learners rather than on generalised language content. In this context, needs analysis is regarded as an essential element in the design of ESP courses, as it delineates learners' target needs, learning requirements, and current deficiencies (West, 1994). A lot of studies that have been published in Scopus-indexed journals have shown that needs-based instruction leads to more relevant materials, higher learner motivation, and better learning outcomes (Basturkmen, 2010; Long, 2015).

Listening skills are very important for nursing students. Nurses must be able to understand spoken medical instructions, patient complaints, shift handovers, and professional conversations, often when time is short and the stakes are high. Not understanding spoken information in healthcare settings can lead to communication problems and put patients at risk. International research has consistently underscored that listening and speaking are the paramount English skills for nursing professionals (O'Neill, 2015; Choi, 2020). Nonetheless, these studies also demonstrate that nursing students often perceive themselves as inadequately equipped to handle authentic spoken English in clinical and academic settings.

In Indonesia, a number of SINTA-indexed studies have looked into the English needs of nursing students and ESP learners. Studies indicate that nursing students regard English as essential for their future professions, especially for communication and comprehension of

medical information (Sari & Putri, 2019; Yundayani et al., 2021). Other studies have indicated that current English courses frequently utilise general English materials that inadequately align with students' disciplinary requirements (Rahman & Hamzah, 2020). Even with these findings, most Indonesian ESP studies focus on general language skills or put more emphasis on speaking and reading. The students don't pay much attention to teaching listening as a separate part of the curriculum.

This indicates a substantial research deficiency. Although the significance of needs analysis in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and the essential role of listening skills for nursing students are well established, empirical studies specifically examining the requirements for listening instruction for nursing students are limited, especially within Indonesian higher education settings. Furthermore, current research seldom examines the correlation between students' listening needs and instructional elements, including listening materials, task types, delivery methods, and assessment practices. Consequently, listening courses are frequently structured according to institutional assumptions rather than empirical evidence of learners' genuine requirements. So, it is both timely and necessary to do a needs analysis of listening instruction for nursing students at Universitas Bunda Thamrin.

Universitas Bunda Thamrin was selected as the object of this study for several pedagogical and contextual reasons. First, the Nursing Study Program at Universitas Bunda Thamrin includes English as a compulsory subject; however, listening instruction has not been systematically designed based on learners' specific academic and professional needs. Preliminary observations and informal discussions with students and lecturers indicated that listening materials were still dominated by General English content, with limited exposure to nursing-specific spoken discourse such as patient interactions, clinical instructions, and medical explanations.

Second, nursing students at Universitas Bunda Thamrin are being prepared for professional healthcare environments in which accurate listening comprehension is critical for patient safety and effective communication. Despite this reality, there had been no prior empirical needs analysis focusing specifically on listening skills within this institutional context. Therefore, the university represents a relevant and under-researched ESP context, making it a suitable site for investigating nursing students' listening needs.

Third, the accessibility of participants and institutional support enabled systematic data collection through questionnaires and interviews, allowing the researcher to obtain both broad quantitative patterns and in-depth qualitative insights. Consequently, Universitas Bunda Thamrin provided an appropriate and representative setting for examining listening needs within Indonesian nursing education. This kind of study is needed right away to make sure that listening instruction meets the needs of students in school and in the future when they work in healthcare settings. This research aims to identify students' target listening needs, perceived challenges, and learning preferences, thereby offering empirical foundations for enhancing syllabus design, instructional materials, and teaching strategies. The ultimate goal of this study is to connect ESP theory with what happens in the classroom. This will help make listening instruction for nursing education more effective and responsive to the needs of the students.

This study is designed to investigate the listening needs of nursing students within the framework of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). In particular, it seeks to address two central issues related to listening instruction in higher education. First, it aims to identify the target listening needs of nursing students at Universitas Bunda Thamrin in relation to their academic activities and future professional responsibilities. Second, it examines the listening difficulties currently experienced by nursing students in learning English. These two concerns are closely interconnected, as understanding students' future listening requirements must be accompanied by an examination of their present abilities and challenges.

Accordingly, the objectives of this study are twofold. The first objective is to identify the target listening needs required by nursing students to successfully perform academic tasks and professional communication in healthcare settings. The second objective is to explore the specific difficulties encountered by nursing students in comprehending spoken English, which may hinder their learning progress and readiness for future nursing practice. Through these objectives, the study seeks to provide an empirical foundation for improving listening instruction in nursing education.

Method

This study adopts a descriptive needs analysis approach grounded in the principles of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). This study adopts a descriptive needs analysis approach grounded in the principles of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) because the primary aim is not to test an intervention, but to describe and identify learners' actual listening needs and

difficulties. In ESP, needs analysis is considered the cornerstone of course design, as it focuses on what learners need to do with language in their target academic and professional contexts. In ESP research, needs analysis is considered a fundamental procedure for identifying learners' communicative requirements and aligning instructional content with real academic and professional demands. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) argue that ESP course design should be based on learners' reasons for learning rather than on generalized language content. Therefore, investigating nursing students' listening needs requires a systematic analysis of both the skills demanded in target situations and the difficulties learners currently experience.

To achieve this purpose, the study employs a mixed-methods research design, which integrates quantitative and qualitative data within a single investigation. Mixed-methods research is defined as an approach that combines quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of a research problem than either approach alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In the context of needs analysis, this design is particularly appropriate because learners' needs involve both measurable aspects such as the frequency and importance of specific listening tasks and experiential aspects such as learners' perceptions and explanations of their listening difficulties (Long, 2005; Basturkmen, 2010).

Specifically, this study applies a convergent mixed-methods design, in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected during the same phase of the research, analyzed separately, and then integrated at the interpretation stage (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This design allows the researcher to examine nursing students' listening needs and difficulties from multiple perspectives and to corroborate findings through data triangulation.

Within the framework of needs analysis, the study integrates Target Situation Analysis (TSA) and Present Situation Analysis (PSA). Target Situation Analysis is used to identify the listening competencies required in nursing students' academic and future professional contexts, such as understanding lectures, clinical explanations, patient complaints, and medical instructions. Present Situation Analysis focuses on examining students' current listening abilities and the difficulties they encounter when processing spoken English. The integration of TSA and PSA enables the researcher to identify the gap between students' present listening competence and the demands of their target academic and professional situations, which is a central concern in ESP-based needs analysis (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Basturkmen, 2010).

The participants of this study are undergraduate nursing students at Universitas Bunda Thamrin who are enrolled in English or listening-related courses. Purposive sampling is employed to ensure that the participants are directly relevant to the research objectives, as they are actively engaged in developing listening skills for academic study and future nursing practice. To enhance the credibility of the findings, English lecturers and nursing lecturers are also included as supporting informants, providing expert perspectives on curriculum expectations and professional listening demands in healthcare contexts.

Data collection is carried out using a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, which reflect the mixed-methods design of the study. The questionnaire serves as the quantitative instrument and is designed to collect numerical data on students' target listening needs and listening difficulties. It includes Likert-scale and multiple-choice items addressing the importance of various listening tasks in academic and professional nursing contexts, as well as common listening problems such as unfamiliar vocabulary, fast speech rate, accent variation, and difficulty understanding authentic spoken English. Questionnaires are widely used in needs analysis research because they allow researchers to identify patterns and priorities across a large group of learners efficiently (Long, 2005).

In parallel, semi-structured interviews are conducted as the qualitative component of the study. Interviews enable the researcher to explore learners' experiences and perceptions in greater depth, allowing participants to explain why certain listening tasks are challenging and how existing listening instruction meets or fails to meet their needs. The use of interviews in needs analysis is strongly recommended in ESP research, as it provides contextual insights that cannot be fully captured through quantitative data alone (Basturkmen, 2010).

The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire are analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, to identify dominant trends in nursing students' listening needs and difficulties. Meanwhile, the qualitative data from interviews are analyzed thematically through systematic coding and categorization to identify recurring themes related to target listening needs and listening challenges. Following separate analyses, the quantitative and qualitative findings are integrated during the interpretation stage. This integration allows the researcher to compare, confirm, and elaborate the results, thereby producing a more comprehensive and trustworthy account of nursing students' listening needs. Throughout the research process, ethical considerations are carefully observed. All participants

are informed about the purpose of the study, their participation is voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity are strictly maintained.

Findings

The findings of this study address two central issues: the target listening needs of nursing students at Universitas Bunda Thamrin in relation to their academic and future professional contexts, and the listening difficulties they currently experience in learning English

Regarding target listening needs, the findings reveal that nursing students require listening skills that are closely aligned with both academic and professional nursing contexts. Academically, students indicate a strong need to understand English lectures, nursing-related explanations, audiovisual learning materials, and spoken instructions delivered in classroom settings. Professionally, the most dominant listening needs involve understanding patient complaints, comprehending medical instructions from doctors or supervisors, and following spoken communication during clinical procedures and healthcare interactions. Notably, professional listening needs are perceived as more urgent than academic ones, as students associate listening competence with patient safety and effective workplace communication, as shown below:

Respondent	Understanding English Lectures	Understanding Nursing Explanations	Understanding Videos/Audios
R1	4	5	4
R2	3	4	4
R3	4	5	5
R4	3	4	3
R5	4	5	4
R6	4	4	4
R7	3	4	3
R8	4	5	4
R9	4	5	5
R10	3	4	4
R11	4	5	4
R12	4	5	5
R13	3	4	3
R14	4	5	4
R15	4	5	4
R16	3	4	3
R17	4	5	4
R18	4	4	4
R19	3	4	3
R20	4	5	4
R21	4	5	4
R22	3	4	3
R23	4	5	4
R24	4	5	5
R25	3	4	3
R26	4	5	4
R27	4	5	4
R28	3	4	3
R29	4	5	4

R30	4	5	5
R31	3	4	3
R32	4	5	4
R33	4	5	4
R34	3	4	3
R35	4	5	4
R36	4	5	5
R37	3	4	3
R38	4	5	4
R39	4	5	4
R40	4	5	4

Table 1. Target Listening Needs (Academic Context)

In terms of listening difficulties, the findings show that nursing students face substantial challenges in comprehending spoken English. The most frequently reported difficulties include limited vocabulary knowledge, particularly medical terminology, difficulty understanding fast speech, unfamiliar accents, and problems identifying main ideas in spoken texts. In addition to linguistic and cognitive difficulties, students also experience affective challenges such as anxiety and low confidence when listening to authentic English materials. These difficulties suggest a clear gap between students' current listening competence and the demands of academic and professional nursing communication.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a clear pattern in nursing students' listening needs and difficulties, which align with the current research trends in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and listening comprehension literature. The findings of this study provide compelling empirical evidence that listening instruction for nursing students must be reconceptualized from a general academic orientation toward a profession-driven ESP framework. The dominance of professional listening needs particularly understanding patient complaints and medical instructions indicates that listening competence is perceived by students not merely as a

language skill, but as a core professional competency linked to patient safety and clinical effectiveness. This perception reflects a shift from viewing English as an academic requirement to understanding it as an operational tool in healthcare practice.

A critical implication of this finding is that current listening instruction does not adequately mirror the communicative realities of nursing work. When students prioritize professional listening tasks over academic ones, it suggests that they are already engaging in a form of informal target situation analysis, intuitively recognizing the communicative risks associated with miscomprehension in clinical settings. This strengthens the argument that ESP course design should not be based on institutional assumptions, but on learners' experiential awareness of workplace demands.

Furthermore, the prominence of medical vocabulary limitations as the primary listening difficulty highlights a structural weakness in existing instruction. Vocabulary is not merely a lexical issue; in spoken medical discourse, it functions as a gatekeeper to meaning. Without sufficient exposure to discipline-specific spoken input, students are forced to rely on fragmented comprehension strategies, which increases cognitive load and listening anxiety. This explains why linguistic difficulties (e.g., fast speech and unfamiliar accents) and affective barriers (e.g., anxiety and low confidence) emerge simultaneously rather than independently.

The findings also reveal an important pedagogical contradiction. While nursing students are expected to process fast-paced, accent-varied spoken English in real clinical environments, their classroom exposure remains largely simplified and generalized. This mismatch contributes to listening anxiety, as students are unprepared for the complexity of authentic spoken discourse. From a theoretical perspective, this supports contemporary views of listening as an interactive process influenced by linguistic knowledge, processing speed, and emotional readiness. Therefore, improving listening outcomes requires not only better materials, but also systematic scaffolding and gradual exposure to authentic nursing-related speech.

Another significant contribution of this study lies in its validation of mixed-methods needs analysis. The convergence between questionnaire data and interview responses strengthens the credibility of the findings and demonstrates that students' reported difficulties are not isolated perceptions, but consistent patterns across data sources. This triangulation

reinforces the argument that needs analysis should be an ongoing, evidence-based practice rather than a one-time administrative procedure in ESP curriculum design.

Overall, the findings argue strongly against the continued use of generic listening materials for nursing students. They demonstrate that effective listening instruction in nursing education must be context-specific, vocabulary-driven, and psychologically supportive, addressing both cognitive processing demands and affective constraints. By empirically identifying the gap between present listening competence and target professional requirements, this study substantiates the central ESP principle that relevance is the key determinant of instructional effectiveness.

Target Listening Needs (Academic and Professional)

The prominence of professional listening needs among nursing students confirms that their English language requirements extend beyond general academic listening. This aligns with previous ESP studies in healthcare contexts that highlight the importance of aligning language instruction with actual communicative tasks required in professional practice. For example, research on ESP for nursing students found that listening skills especially for understanding spoken communication in clinical contexts are among the most needed language competencies to ensure effective patient care and workplace interaction. Wulandari et al. (2019) found that nursing students reported a high need for listening tasks such as face-to-face conversations and understanding announcements, which are essential components of nursing communication in real-world settings

Furthermore, lecturers' perspectives in related studies emphasize that mastery of medical vocabulary and communicative competence in nursing settings directly affects students' ability to interact with patients and other healthcare professionals, reinforcing the urgency of contextualized listening instruction. These findings support the essential tenets of ESP, which advocate curriculum design grounded in Target Situation Analysis (TSA), where tasks are drawn from the real communicative functions learners will encounter in their professional roles.

Listening Difficulties Experienced by Students

The listening difficulties identified in this study such as limited vocabulary, rapid speech rate, unfamiliar accents, and challenges identifying main ideas which are strongly

supported by broader research on listening comprehension in EFL contexts. Recent studies highlight that EFL learners commonly perceive unfamiliar vocabulary and fast speech delivery as primary barriers to listening comprehension, as these factors increase cognitive processing demands and hinder meaning construction (e.g., Tran & Dan, 2025)

Similarly, research has shown that EFL learners' limited exposure to a diversity of spoken English materials contributes to comprehension problems, especially when listening tasks involve authentic speech with variable accents and complex lexical items. The importance of authentic listening exposure is emphasized in the literature, which suggests that students' limited interaction with real-world spoken English exacerbates listening difficulties and reduces comprehension accuracy

In addition to cognitive and linguistic factors, affective variables such as anxiety and lack of confidence emerge as significant barriers, consistent with findings from Indonesian EFL research that identify psychological factors as common constraints on listening performance (e.g., lack of vocabulary plus affective barriers)

Students' own reports of anxiety when facing authentic English listening tasks reflect a broader pattern observed in other EFL contexts where performance anxiety negatively impacts listening comprehension, especially in high-stakes or unfamiliar subject areas.

ESP Implications for Curriculum and Instruction

Taken together, these insights underscore a central concern of ESP pedagogy: the need to design courses that are learner-centered and contextually grounded. The mismatch between current listening competencies and target professional needs indicates that general listening instruction is insufficient for nursing students, a conclusion that resonates with several ESP needs analysis studies which call for material and task development based on the linguistic requirements of specific disciplines

For example, the expectations for nursing students to understand professional discourse and clinical instructions align with the broader literature on ESP and nursing communication needs, which describes English instruction for nurses as a specialized sub-branch of ESP that must integrate occupational language functions within materials and tasks. Expert discussions on ESP emphasize that needs analysis should drive the development of course content, so that

students are equipped with the listening skills necessary to perform effectively in discipline-specific contexts.

Conclusion

This study examines the target listening needs and listening difficulties of nursing students at Universitas Bunda Thamrin in academic and professional contexts. The findings indicate that students' listening needs are primarily driven by professional demands, particularly clinical communication, patient interaction, and understanding spoken medical instructions, while academic listening tasks remain important but secondary. The study also identifies major listening challenges, including limited medical vocabulary, fast speech, unfamiliar accents, and difficulty identifying main ideas, revealing a gap between students' current listening competence and target communicative demands. This gap supports ESP research emphasizing the inadequacy of general English instruction for specialized disciplines (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Overall, the findings highlight the essential role of needs analysis in ESP course design and reinforce the view of listening as a complex linguistic, cognitive, and affective process (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012).

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