

**A Proposed Program Based upon English For Specific
Purpose (ESP) for Reducing Oral Communication
Apprehension among Students in the Applied Institutes
In Kuwait**

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A Proposed Program Based upon English For Specific Purpose (ESP) for Reducing Oral Communication Apprehension among Students in the Applied Institutes In Kuwait

Dr. Aljazi Obied Al Rashidi*

Abstract

This study aims at examining the effectiveness a proposed program based upon English for Specific Purpose (ESP) for developing communication skills among students in the applied institutes in Kuwait. The participants in this study comprised fifty third level nursing students, who were randomly selected from the applied linguistics in Kuwait in the school year 2020-2021. The study employed a quasi-experimental design in which two groups were assigned- an experimental group (n=25) and a control one (n=25). Instruments of the study were composed of a needs analysis questionnaire of the communication skills, a pre-post communication skills test, and a scoring rubric. The results of the study indicated that the experimental group students scored significantly higher than those in the control group on the oral communication skills test, and the proposed program based upon English for specific purpose (ESP) had a considerable effect on reducing the experimental group students' English oral communication apprehension. Consequently, task- based activities following the learning-centered approach is truly effective to reducing students' English oral communication apprehension for nursing students if properly implemented.

Keywords: Proposed Program Based upon English For Specific Purpose, Oral Communication Skills

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Introduction

With a fast-changing world and the new trend of globalization, English language has become of inestimable value to education and economic exchange. This fact motivates learning the language and refining communication skills required to address the new challenges, primarily multilingualism and market exchange. Based on the increased need to get a lucrative career or promotion and perform efficaciously in the sphere of business, leading experts in the domain of linguistics have generated the introduction of a new linguistic branch called English for Specific Purposes (ESP) designed to fulfill the specific needs of communication in numerous domains.

Broadly defined, Hermayawati (2019) stated that English for specific purposes is a branch of language learning concept requiring specific terms and needs of communication, primarily English for law, business, medicine, agriculture, pharmacy, engineering, and nursing. Furthermore, a panel of prominent researchers in the field of English for specific purposes (ESP), such as Inkaew and Thumawongsa (2018), Wette (2018), Lin (2018), Mulleneaux (2017), Rautenbach, Mann, and Van Ryneveld (2017), Saliu and Haijrullai (2016), Johns and Salmani (2015), Widolo (2015), and Starfield (2013) illustrated that ESP is one of language teaching approaches in which the content, goals, methodology and restricted activities taken from specific professions are determined by specific needs of a certain group of learners to assist those students in conducting particular roles for a brief interval.

Taking in to account the pressing needs to develop the level of proficiency of nurses to be ideally suited to job-market requirements, several significant educationalists put forward a fundamental proposition concerning making substantial improvements in the discipline of nursing. In actuality, Indah (2018), Hou (2017), and Mohamed and Putech (2012) argued that English for Nursing Purposes (ENP) is one of the sub-branches of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) designed to aid student nurses needing career-specific language to refine their skills and competency level beyond that of general English. They also added that English for specific purposes for the students of nursing can enable them

to be knowledgeable about scientific texts and sources and the requisite expressions with regard to nursing, foster their understanding of nursing concepts, and employ scientific books and research journals published on nursing.

In Kuwait, there is an increased gap between the ESP curriculum offered to nursing students at the Applied Institutes and the actual requirements of work market; furthermore, a review of literature has shown a lack of ESP- based programs, substantially in the domain of communication skills development for these students. Thus, this study attempts to investigate the efficacy of a proposed program based on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) for fostering the development of communication skills among students in the Applied Institutes in Kuwait.

Context of the problem

The problem of this study arises primarily from the applied institutes students' inability to communicate effectively inside the ESL classroom. When they are asked to speak fluently to communicate their ideas efficaciously, they experience intense anxiety and hesitation since they do not demonstrate appropriate levels of proficiency in English to speak well.

Evidence of the problem was identified through the following:

1- The researcher's own experience

Working as a teaching assistant of English language at Nursing Applied Institute in Kuwait, the researcher observed that the current situation of teaching communication skills in the Kuwaiti applied institutes does not assist nursing students to make significant improvements concerning oral communication skills. One explanation of this can be largely attributable to the fact that most teachers of English language do not provide their students with ample periods of time to practice these skills effectively and meaningfully since those teachers expend most of their time talking and performing activities while many students are sitting passively. Furthermore, nursing students have insufficiently oral tasks and assignments to communicate with patients, nurses, and doctors in English at the clinical settings realistically because their teachers of English language do not address these tasks appropriately. Therefore, those students feel anxious and hesitant when

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they engage in real-life speaking activities and assignments. In this study, the researcher attempts to address the above-mentioned problems through a suggested ESP program based on employing task-based activities following the learning-centered approach to develop the orally communicative skills for nursing students at the applied institutes in Kuwait.

2- Literature Review

It has been argued that the actual practice of teaching English to nursing students at applied institutes in Kuwait does not contribute to developing oral communication skills of those students. Several studies indicated that the skills of oral communication should be given priority over other skills for tertiary students because of their paramount importance in job-market requirements; nevertheless, to the best knowledge of the researcher, there is a scarce body of empirical research conducted to refine oral communication skills among students of applied institutes, predominantly those of nursing sciences, in Kuwait employing ESP programs. For instance, Mohamed (2017), Al Rowayeh (2016) Hamouda (2016), Abedeen (2015), Mahmud (2014), Al Otaibi, Al Diahani and Al Rabah (2014) claimed that apparent Kuwaiti students' weakness in oral communication skills at college constitutions could be ascribed to the negligence of communicative activities in the classes at these places; lack of appropriate approaches to aid Kuwaiti students to enrich their skills of speaking; students' anxiety and fright of making mistakes while engaging in orally communicative activities; and using assessment types that did not address these problems. Thus, this study seeks to investigate the efficacy of a suggested ESP program based on task-based activities following the learning-centered approach to develop the oral communication skills of nursing students in applied institutes in Kuwait.

Mc Clenny (2010) claimed that language anxiety was considered the main source of difficulty hindering the language learning process. Concerning speaking skills, speaking anxiety is viewed as one of the problems facing EFL learners that makes them avoid participation in speaking tasks since they do not want to be evaluated. In reality, Mak (

2011) defined speaking anxiety as a feeling of nervousness and tension which is closely related to a foreign language speaking task. In fact, Abdullah and Rahman (2010) illustrated that there are some decisive factors that could contribute to the students' speaking anxiety. They stated that these factors could be largely due to fear of failure inside the classroom; negative attitudes towards the English classroom; gender and acculturation to foreign languages; and speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation.

Thus, this study seeks to investigate the efficacy of a suggested ESP program to develop the oral communication skills of nursing students and reduce oral communication apprehension among those students in applied institutes in Kuwait.

Statement of the problem

The research problem can be identified in the students' poor mastery of the communicative oral skills and their high degree of speaking anxiety among nursing students in applied institutes in Kuwait; thus, this study attempted to develop the foregoing communication skills of nursing students and reduce their speaking anxiety in applied institutes through executing a suggested ESP program.

The Study Questions

This study attempted to answer the following main question:

What is the effect of a suggested ESP program in developing communication skills among nursing students in applied institutes in Kuwait?

To answer the aforementioned question, the following sub-questions will be formulated:

- 1- What are the features of proposed ESP program designed for developing communication skills?
- 2- What is the effect of the proposed program based upon English for Specific Purpose (ESP) for developing communication skills among students in the applied institutes in Kuwait?
- 3- What is the effect of the proposed program based upon English for Specific Purpose (ESP) for reducing oral communication apprehension among students in the applied institutes in Kuwait?

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Hypotheses of the Study

- 1- There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre- and post-tests in EFL overall oral communication skills in favor of the post-test scores.
- 2- There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre- and post-tests in EFL oral communication sub-skills in favor of the post-test scores.
- 3- There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group students on the pre-post administrations of the oral communication apprehension questionnaire.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study could lie in the fact that:

- 1- It is an attempt to overcome the current shortcomings in teaching the communication skills for nursing students in the applied institutes in Kuwait.
- 2- It is likely to assist curriculum designers at applied institutes to execute this proposed ESP program to make significant improvement in communications skills for nursing students at these establishments.
- 3- It may aid faculty members to investigate the impact of using this suggested ESP program to develop communication skills for other majors in the applied institutes in Kuwait.
- 4- It can help other researchers to conduct more research to determine the effectiveness of ESP programs in enhancing communication skills for students at different educational levels.

Method

Participants:

Divided into two groups (twenty five students for each group), the participants in this study comprised fifty third level nursing students, who were randomly selected from nursing department in the applied department in the academic year 2020-2021. The experimental group, who encompassed ten males and fifteen females, studied the proposed program taught by the researcher during the second semester of the

aforementioned academic year. The control group, who constituted eight males and seventeen females, studied the regular program taught to third level nursing students, which was taught by the researcher too. The researcher considered the educational level and proper age to ascertain that the students in the experimental group and their peers in the control group have been learning English as a foreign language for approximately fourteen years and their age group ranged from twenty to twenty one years old.

Instruments of the Study:

To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher prepared the following instruments:

- 1-A needs analysis questionnaire (see Appendix B).
- 2-A pre-post communicative oral test (see Appendix C).
- 3-A scoring rubric. (see Appendix D).
- 4- An oral communication apprehension questionnaire. (see Appendix E)

1-A needs analysis questionnaire

The main form of the questionnaire was designed in light of the following items:

- 1- Reviewing the student's textbook "Cambridge English for Nursing", mainly the well-identified scope and sequence list and contents of the reference section to identify the topics of communicative oral skills in this textbook.
- 2- Reviewing the previous literature and related studies concerned with developing the communicative oral skills in nursing contexts.

Having reviewed the objectives in the Ministry of Education document in Applied Institutes in Kuwait and the related literature on refining nursing students' communicative skills, the researcher made the checklist by herself to suit the most appropriate communicative oral skills to suit third level nursing students at applied institutes in Kuwait. The questionnaire is comprised of twenty sub-skills classified under four categories: communicative situations between nurses and nurses, doctors and nurses, and patients and nurses as well as patients' relatives and nurses. A two-point rating scale ranging from important to not important to be incorporated into the questionnaire. (see appendix B).

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Validity of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was submitted to a panel of jury specialized in the domain of curriculum and instruction (TEFL) to determine the degree of importance of each sub-skill and its appropriateness for third level nursing students at applied institutes in Kuwait (see appendix B). The jury members illustrated that the skills incorporated into the checklist were largely adequate and appropriate to its purpose. Similarly, the jury members excluded some other irrelevant oral communicative skills between nurses and patients, doctors and nurses, and patient's relatives and nurses along with nurses and nurses.

2-The Communicative Oral Test

Objectives of the Test

The researcher constructed and administered a pre-post communicative oral test, which can be used prior to the program implementation to ascertain that the students in the experimental group are comparable to their counterparts in the control group in their communicative oral levels before establishing the beginning of the experiment. The progress achieved by the experimental group would be therefore attributed to the suggested program of the Task-Based Instruction approach to develop the communicative oral skills of nursing students to master the communicative oral skills of this group.

Description of the Test:

The pre-post test encompassed certain questions which were suitable for student's level and background knowledge (see appendix D). The test aimed at measuring students' oral communication skills as regards diverse communicative situations whereby nurses could use to communicate with other persons effectively. It is comprised of four parts: communicative situations between patients and nurses, patients' families and nurses, doctors and nurses, and ward staff and nurses.

Validity of the Test:

To establish the validity of the EFL communicative oral skills test, it was given to a number of specialized jury members in the domain of curriculum and instruction to voice their opinions regarding the clarity of test instructions, the suitability of the topics to the level of third level

nursing students, and the clarity of the questions. The jury members confirmed that the test proved to be valid (see appendix D).

Test Reliability:

To establish the reliability of the oral communicative skills test, the method of calculating the consistency of the ratings provided by the three raters who scored the test was employed for practical considerations to get inter-rater reliability. Assessed through correlation coefficients, Cronbach Alpha, in fact, the degree of inter-rater reliability was established by correlating the scores obtained by students from rater "A" with those from rater " B" along with those from rater " C". The following table illustrates the correlation coefficients among the individual raters of the pre-post tests.

Table (1) Summary of the correlation coefficients among the individual raters

Test	Raters		
	I,II	I,III	II,III
Pre-test	0,81	0,86	0,87
Post-test	0,86	0,87	0,90

It was apparent from the above-mentioned table that the estimated correlation coefficients were statistically significant at 0,01 level; thus, it shows reliability of scoring.

Piloting the test:

The test was piloted on a group of twenty students at the nursing department at applied institutes in Kuwait to determine the difficulty of test items, the suitability of time for the writing test, and the appropriateness of the task selected to extract the expected skills. Results revealed that the majority of students obtained low marks; furthermore, those students reported that oral communication test was so challenging that they could not perform this task appropriately since the questions of the oral communication test required them to speak for a lengthy period of time. To clarify these results, those students were commonly used to speaking for short periods of time and giving answers to easy questions in restricted communicative situations.. Moreover, it was estimated that a duration of fifteen minutes would provide sufficient time to complete the test. This time was estimated in the following way:

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Total time of all students		
Number of students	= 15 minutes	$\frac{375}{25}$

3- The Rubric for Scoring Communicative Oral Skills:

Having reviewed numerous oral communication rubrics and considering the distinctive features of oral communication skills pertaining to nursing students, the researcher carefully selected an oral communication rubric by (Saragih, 2014) in that it proved useful in possessing the defining characteristics of this form of oral communication skills appropriately.

Description of the Rubric:

The oral communication rubric, in reality, encompassed four rating scales- (4) for mastering, (3) for achieving, (2) for developing, and (1) for beginning. Students' oral communication skills were scored out of forty points as follows: content development 12 points, organization 8 points, language and grammar 12 points, verbal and nonverbal delivery 8 points.

Validity of the Rubric:

The rubric was submitted to a panel of jury specialized in the domain of curriculum and instruction (TEFL) to determine the degree of importance and appropriateness for third level nursing students in Kuwait. The jury members asserted that the oral communication skills rubric proved to be valid (see appendix C).

4- Oral Communication Anxiety Questionnaire

This questionnaire was based on the model of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which was designed by Horwitz et al. (1986). Only 20 statements out of 33 which are relevant to speaking anxiety and English classroom anxiety were adapted from the original version.

Results

The researcher organized, analyzed, and tabulated data obtained through using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), utilizing t-test to analyze these data. After applying the post test of Oral Communication Skills for the two groups and correcting the students’ answers in light of the correction keys, the students’ scores were recorded in lists representing the scores of the pre-test and the post test scores for both groups. The findings of this study are presented in the light of the hypotheses of the research and stated as follows:

1- First Hypothesis:

The first hypothesis states that "There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and those of the control group in the overall oral communication skills in favor of the experimental group."

To verify the validity of this hypothesis, T-test was used for two independent samples to reveal the significance of differences between the experimental and the control group in overall oral communication skills as shown in Table (2):

Table (2)Significance of Differences between the experimental and control group in overall Oral Communication Skills

Oral Communication Skills	Group	No.	Mean	Std. Division	(t) Value	P-value	Significance level
Overall Oral Communication Skills	Control	25	14.32	2.212	29.613	.000	significant
	Experimental	25	29.84	1.405			
t-value calculator at a degree of freedom (48) and a level of significance (0.05) equal (2.01)							

Table (2) shows that the arithmetic mean of the experimental group post-test in Overall Oral Communication Skills Measurement was (29.84), the arithmetic mean in the test of the control group was equal to (14.32). The value of calculated (t) was equal to (29.613), which is a statistically significant value at the level of significance (0.05). Hence, the first hypothesis is confirmed, and this shows the effectiveness of the program.

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Second Hypothesis

2- "There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and those of the control group in the oral communication sub-skills in favor of the experimental group."

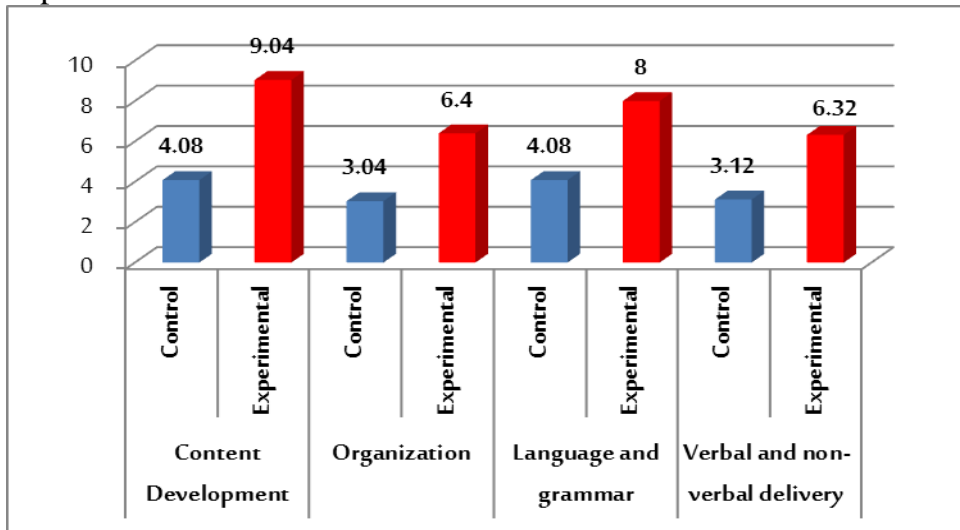
To verify the validity of this hypothesis, T-test was used for two independent samples to reveal the significance of differences between the experimental and control group in oral communication sub-skills as shown in Table (3):

Table (3)Significance of Differences between the experimental and control groups in the Sub-Skills of Oral Communication

Oral Communication Skills	Group	No.	Mean	Std. Division	(t) Value	P-value	Significance level
Content Development	Control	25	4.08	0.702	20.028	.000	significant
	Experimental	25	9.04	1.019			
Organization	Control	25	3.04	1.019	12.860	.000	significant
	Experimental	25	6.40	0.817			
Language and grammar	Control	25	4.08	0.702	21.557	.000	significant
	Experimental	25	8.00	0.577			
Verbal and non-verbal delivery	Control	25	3.12	1.013	12.702	.000	significant
	Experimental	25	6.32	0.748			
t-value calculator at a degree of freedom (48) and a level of significance (0.05) equal (2.01)							

Table (3) shows that the experimental group is significantly better than their counterparts in the control group regarding EFL oral communication sub-skills where "t" value is (20,028) for EFL content development, (12.860) for EFL organization skills, (21.557) for EFL language and grammar skills, and (12.702) for EFL verbal and non-verbal delivery skills, which is significant at the level of significance. Thus, the second hypothesis is supported, and this demonstrates the efficacy of the program. Figure (1) represents the mean scores between the control and the experimental group in the post-test of the EFL oral communication sub-skills.

Figure (1) Arithmetic Means between the experimental and control groups in the Sub-Skills of Oral Communication



In summary, the aforementioned findings demonstrate that the students in the experimental group have produced a considerable improvement in all four aspects of their oral communication skills after participating in the task-based activities following the learning-centered approach program. The findings, however, show that certain aspects have improved considerably better than others. The categories that students have improved the most were language and grammar, followed by content development, then organization, whilst the aspect that they made a least improvement was verbal and non-verbal delivery. This could be attributed to the fact that the suggested program provided those students with the necessarily linguistic features of clinical content that encouraged those students to become well-informed about the nursing vocabulary and related clinical information to enthusiastically participate in meaningful oral conversations. Nevertheless, t-tests showed all of these differences to be statistically significant. This can be ascribed to the distinctive features of the task-based activities following the learning-centered approach that enabled nursing students to have ample amounts of time to engage their interest in participating in orally communicative situations with patients, doctors, nursing staff, and patient's relatives. Moreover, the meticulously planned and executed stages of the task-

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based activities following the learning-centered learning seem to make significant contributions to refining the skills of language and grammar, content development, organization, and verbal and non-verbal delivery respectively.

Third Hypothesis

3- "There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre- and post-tests in the overall oral communication skills in favor of the post-test scores."

To verify the validity of this hypothesis, T-test was used for two independent samples to reveal the significance of the differences in the pre and post-test of the experimental group in the overall oral communication skills, and Table (4) shows that:

Table (4)Significance of the Differences in the pre and post-test of the experimental group in the overall Oral Communication Skills

Oral Communication Skills	Experimental Group	No.	Mean	St. Division	(t) Value	P-value	Significance level
Overall Oral Communication Skills	Pre-test	25	14.48	1.759	34.119	.000	significant
	Post-test	25	29.84	1.405			
t-value calculator at a degree of freedom (48) and a level of significance (0.05) equal (2.01)							

Table (4) shows that the arithmetic mean in the experimental group pre-test in the overall Oral Communication Skills Measurement was (14.48), the arithmetic mean in the test of the experimental group in the post test was equal to (29.84). The value of calculated (t) was equal to (34.119), which is a statistically significant value at the level of significance (0.05). Hence, the third hypothesis is confirmed, and this shows the effectiveness of the program.

Fourth Hypothesis

4- "There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre- and post-tests in the oral communication sub-skills in favor of the post-test scores."

To verify the validity of this hypothesis, T-test was used for two independent samples to reveal the significance of the differences in the

pre and post-test of the experimental group in the Sub-Skills of Oral Communication, and Table (5) shows that:

Table (5) Significance of Differences in the Pre and Post-Test of Experimental Group in Oral Communication Sub-Skills

Oral Communication Skills	Experimental Group	No.	Mean	Std. Division	(t) Value	P-value	Significance level
Content Development	Pre-test	25	4.24	0.879	17.823	.000	Significant
	Post-test	25	9.04	1.019			
Organization	Pre-test	25	3.04	1.019	12.860	.000	Significant
	Post-test	25	6.40	0.817			
Language and grammar	Pre-test	25	4.16	0.554	24.00	.000	Significant
	Post-test	25	8.00	0.577			
Verbal and non-verbal delivery	Pre-test	25	3.04	1.019	12.965	.000	Significant
	Post-test	25	6.32	0.748			

t-value calculator at a degree of freedom (48) and a level of significance (0.05) equal (2.01)

Figure (2) Arithmetic Mean of the Pre and Post-Test of Experimental Group in Oral Communication Sub-Skills

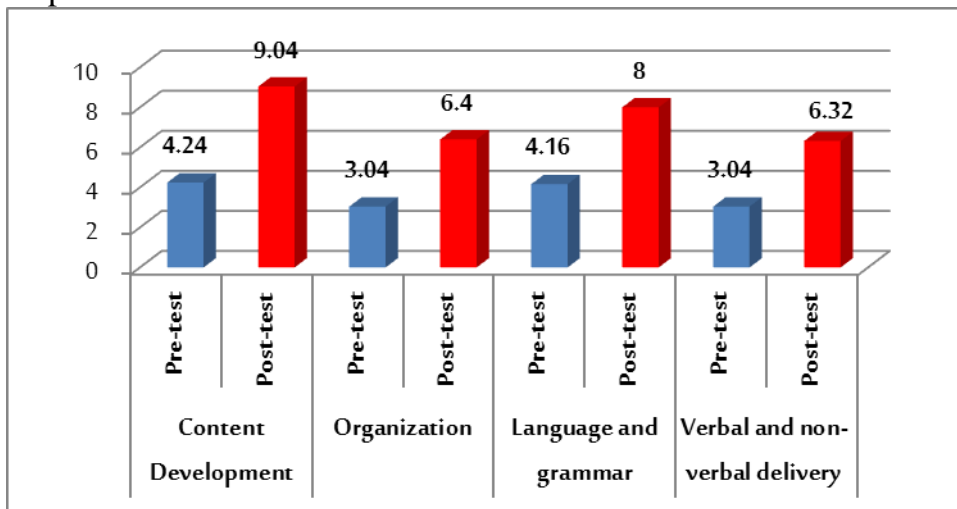


Table (5) shows that the experimental group is significantly better than their counterparts in the control group regarding EFL oral communication sub-skills where "t" value is (17.823) for EFL content development, (12.860) for EFL organization skills, (24.00) for EFL language and grammar skills, and (12.965) for EFL verbal and non-verbal delivery skills, which is significant at the level of significance. Thus, the second hypothesis is

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supported, and this demonstrates the efficacy of the program. Figure (2) represents the mean scores between the control and the experimental group in the post-test of the EFL oral communication sub-skills.

In conclusion, the aforementioned findings demonstrate that the students in the experimental group have produced a considerable improvement in all four aspects of their oral communication skills after participating in the task-based activities following the learning-centered approach program. The findings, however, show that certain aspects have improved considerably better than others. The categories that students have improved the most were language and grammar, followed by content development, then organization, whilst the aspect that they made a least improvement was verbal and non-verbal delivery. This could be attributed to the fact that the suggested program provided those students with the necessarily linguistic features of clinical content that encouraged those students to become well-informed about the nursing vocabulary and related clinical information to enthusiastically participate in meaningful oral conversations. Nevertheless, t-tests showed all of these differences to be statistically significant. This can be ascribed to the distinctive features of the task-based activities following the learning-centered approach that enabled nursing students to have ample amounts of time to engage their interest in participating in orally communicative situations with patients, doctors, nursing staff, and patient's relatives. Moreover, the meticulously planned and executed stages of the task-based activities following the learning-centered learning seem to make significant contributions to refining the skills of language and grammar, content development, organization, and verbal and non-verbal delivery respectively.

Interpretation of results

In the light of the previously presented statistical analysis, it can be concluded that the mean scores of the experimental group on the post-administration was considerably significant at (0,05) level of significance. Thus, the participants in the experimental group who practiced the task- based activities outperformed their peers in the control group on the post-administration of the EFL oral communication test.

The data analysis indicated that the proposed program based upon English for specific purpose proved to be statistically and educationally significant in developing communication skills among nursing students in the applied institutes in Kuwait. This is proved by calculating the effect size of using the suggested program on students' oral communication skills through using measurement of ETA squared formula ($\eta^2 = 0.64$).

Effect size values were obtained through comparing the experimental group students' mean scores in the pre- and post- administrations of the EFL oral communication skills test. Thus, the experimental students' marked improvement in oral communication skills and sub-skills can be significantly attributed to the proposed program of task-based activities following the learning-centered approach. These results revealed the significant effect of the task-based activities following the learning-centered approach program for improving nursing students' oral communication skills and this is consistent with the results of Rachayon and Soontornwipast (2019), Graham and Beardsley (2018), Gultekin, Ozdemir, and Budak (2018), Al Rebish and Taha (2017), Badrov and Jurkovic (2017), Febrijanto, Kurniajati, and Kediri (2017), Gusels, Richardson, and Higginson (2004).

The findings of the study demonstrated a considerable correlation between the participants in the proposed program and developing their oral communication skills, mainly those of content development, organization, language and grammar, and verbal and non verbal delivery. Those participants produced a substantial improvement in the aforementioned skills of oral communication after implementing the numerous stages of task-based activities following the learning-centered approach with a steadily increasing level of involvement. In fact, the students in the experimental group became knowledgeable about the fruitful benefits of using task-based instruction approach to do the things which are strongly associated with their personal lives outside the classroom in the clinical settings. Moreover, those students were capable of enhancing their social skills, problem-solving, interpreting, and decision-making skills, which are increasingly important to nursing students (Van den Branden, 2016; Willis, 2007; Ellis, 2003).

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Having engaging actively in the multiple stages of task-based activities following the learning-centered approach, nursing students were able to reinforce content development skills. To clarify this point, those students were fully aware of communicating their central messages precisely and clearly and supporting these messages strongly. Furthermore, those students became familiar with employing an obvious organizational pattern by making the content of the communication cohesive. They also tended to become well-informed about using appropriately grammatical structures and lexical items, which are really necessary for nursing students to communicate with patients, doctors, ward nurses, and patients' families effectively. Moreover, they were acquainted with verbal and nonverbal techniques, such as postures, gestures, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness, to make their communication compelling and enable them to appear confident.

In fact, one of the principal reasons for the suggested program based on English for specific purpose in improving Kuwaiti nursing students' oral communication skills can be attributed to the appropriately specifically designed materials. Considering the significant benefits of these materials, the researcher incorporated the highly required skills and communicative situations for nursing students into the proposed program after identifying these skills and situations in varied questionnaires and checklists. Thus, the researcher designed a suggested program for nursing students that is closely related to their needs and preferred communicative situations to enhance the oral communication skills of those students in the clinical environments effectively. The findings of this study are in connection with the results of the previous studies that confirmed the effectiveness of programs that selected appropriate materials linked with the needs and situations of nursing students, such as those of Braga (2018), Brahimi (2018), Nurakhir and Palupi (2018), Badrov and Jurkovic (2017), Jamshidi, Molazem, Sharif, Torabizadeh, and Kalyani (2016), Freihat and Al- Makhzoomi (2012), Al Fehaid (2011), Oliveira, Trovo, Risso, Medlin (2009), Mazdayasna and Tahririanl (2008).

Furthermore, the success of the proposed program based upon English for specific purpose in developing overall oral communication ability of the Kuwaiti nursing students could be largely due to the integration of task-based activities following the learning-centered approach, which provided those students with effectual learning opportunities to improve their English oral communication skills.

Firstly, one of the main crucial factors of this successful integration of task-based activities following the learning-centered approach is that it provided students with an effective learning opportunity to activate and develop background knowledge on the speaking topic before engaging in the speaking task. By spending some minutes in the beginning of every session to do preview activities, students were afforded the opportunity to develop and activate their background knowledge on the topic. Thus, students seemed to perform the speaking in-class activities and tasks much better since these specifically designed tasks and activities were prepared to enhance nursing students' oral communication skills, which are closely related to the forthcoming situations that nursing students may face in their future professional world. Before participating in this program, those students had very little experience of those situations that may limit their opportunities of engaging in meaningful communication with other people. Furthermore, taking time to assist students activate and develop their background knowledge before asking them to do a task seems to foster their self-confidence and increase the likelihood of their active participation in the speaking tasks. This is line with Macintyre et al. (1998), who stated that the knowledge of the topic played an important role in improving the person's morale to facilitate excellent communication with other individuals in a foreign language. Also, this study confirmed the findings of numerous studies (Matsuoka and Evans, 2005; Kang, 2005; Pattapong, 2010; Xie, 2011; and Zarrinabadi, 2014), which showed a positive effect of background knowledge and the familiarity with the topic on making the students feel confident and more inclined to communicate in a foreign language effectively.

Secondly, a salient feature of the success of the proposed program was the provision of some vitally important linguistic features (grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation) in the in-class time while

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performing the speaking communication. The study findings showed that nursing students got considerable benefits from doing beneficial activities related to grammatical, lexical, and phonetic practices in the multiple stages of task-based instruction. In fact, these activities aided those students to gain confidence and participate enthusiastically in the in-class speaking tasks. Additionally, the practice of providing students with fruitful grammatical, phonetic, and lexical activities enabled those students to lower the level of speaking anxiety and increased their involvement in the different speaking tasks. Several scholars, such as Bailey (2003), Goh (2007), and Burns (2016), illustrated that language learners should be provided with linguistic support before being asked to become engaged in a speaking task.

Thirdly, learning the language content through the task-based activities following the learning-centered approach could make a significant contribution to the success of the suggested program. In this study, nursing students were afforded the opportunity to study the materials through participating in communicative role play activities, listening to a wide variety of meaningful conversations between nurses and patients as well as doctors, and using visual aids to draw their attention to the content of the suggested program. To illustrate this point, the language input presented to those students was relevant, comprehensible, and engaging to enhance their abilities to convey their major messages to other persons clearly and communicatively. Moreover, the combination of the previous effective ways to present the content offered nursing students realistically enjoyable experiences that fostered their learning in acquiring useful language that can be used later in their future professional world.

Moreover, providing nursing students with unlimited scope to practice speaking English through performing the in-class task activities was another crucial factor in the success of this study. Take for example, the researcher adopted a wide range of techniques, like matching, guessing, role play, and search, to design the in-class speaking tasks and activities, thus improving their oral communication skills. In fact, participating in several tasks and activities, such as pair work, small

group, or whole group ones, encouraged those students to feel more confident and prepared for speaking English. Consequently, the results of this study are in agreement with those of Noom-ura (2008) that confirmed the effectiveness of using pair works to increase learners' readiness to communicate in L2. Moreover, it was observed that nursing students helped one another to the target structures in a large variety while doing the activities in pairs and in small groups. As an illustration, the students gave their peers assistance such as continuing their classmates' unfinished utterances or offering correct words and forms to their peers. The findings of this study correlate with the studies of Swain and Lapkin (1998) and Foster and Ohta (2005) that confirmed the facilitation of language learning process through the partners' assistance.

Additionally, the provision of the explicit form-focused instruction, in which the teacher gave feedback on the students' use of the targeted structure, significantly contributed to the tangible improvement in the students' oral communication skills, particularly those of lexical, grammatical, and phonological accuracy. This finding is strongly associated with that of Spada and Lightbown (2008) who illustrated that form-focus instruction is a great asset to EFL learners because it aids those learners to produce significant effect of their limited exposure to the sounds, words, and sentences of the language they are learning.

It is noteworthy that some aspects have improved significantly better than others. The categories that students have improved the most were language and grammar, followed by content development, then organization, whilst the aspect that they produced a least improvement was verbal and non-verbal delivery. This could be largely attributed to the fact that nursing students were provided with numerous opportunities to participate actively in a wide variety of speaking task activities that enabled those students to decrease their level of speaking anxiety and improve their morale to speak somewhat confident. Additionally, the researcher provided those students with explicit form-focused instruction to enhance the oral sub-skills of oral communication- phonological, lexical and grammatical accuracy. Those students also gained considerable benefits from multiple activities and tasks during their active participation in role play and interview activities, and listening to a

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wide variety of meaningful conversations between nurses and patients and doctors in the clinical settings. Furthermore, spending some minutes in the beginning of every lesson to activate and develop students' background helped those students to gather countless nursing-related words, phrases, and sentences that lowered their worry to speak in the in-class activities and tasks confidently.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions can be made:

- This study gives scientific evidence of the effectiveness of the suggested program based on the task-based activities to develop the EFL oral communication skills and reduce oral communication apprehension for third level Kuwaiti nursing students in the applied institutes in Kuwait.
- The effectiveness of proposed ESP program based on task-based activities following the learning-centered approach can be ascribed to the numerous activities, tasks, guides, and steps the researcher presented to the students to help nursing students produce beneficial results.
- Accomplishing simple tasks and advancing to more complex tasks significantly contributed to improving students' morale and increasing their motivation and involvement in completing the required stages of the task-based instruction approach.
- Activating and developing students' background about the clinical topics makes a positive contribution to completing numerous speaking activities and tasks effectively.
- Heightening strong awareness among students that language exists on a social context and related to the social situations supposed by the activity can be considered a crucial step for students to foster a critical understanding of the context of a given interaction so as to fully comprehend the purpose of a task.
- Discussing and exploring the phonological aspects of the situation, its grammatical features, and choice of vocabulary in relation to the

situation's function in a particular context can enable students to use these structures and features when they speak successfully.

- Participating in varied speaking activities in different grouping assists students to demonstrate their deep knowledge of future related-work situations in the clinical environments.
- Participating in communicative role play activities, listening to a wide variety of meaningful conversations between nurses and patients as well as doctors helped students to become well-informed about the importance of discussion of the context, social purpose, and the textual features.
- Incorporating the highly required skills and communicative situations for nursing students into the proposed program encouraged students to participate actively in performing speaking activities and tasks enthusiastically.
- By the virtue of the active construction of knowledge by students, they should become active participants in language learning.

Recommendations

In the light of the results of this study, the following recommendations could be presented:

1. Considering the students' needs and types of motivation, the suggested ESP program based on task-based activities following the learning-centered approach can be applied in distinct educational majors, especially those of pharmacy and medicine majors.
2. Adequate classroom periods of time and practices pertaining to oral communication should be given to nursing students to develop their speaking skills and reduce their oral communication apprehension through exposing students to appropriately specifically designed training courses.
3. Teachers of English language should stress the importance of developing students' oral communication skills in the early educational stages to improve these skills in the following stages.
4. Upon designing English language courses, curriculum designers and faculty members should seek the considerable assistance of the implementation of task-based activities following the learning-centered approach to promote efficient speaking leaning.

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5. The teachers of English language can bring the productive results of task-based activities following the learning-centered approach into effect to reduce students' speaking anxiety and improve their morale.
6. Teachers are encouraged to identify both learning objectives and intended outcomes precisely to handle the issues of fostering the development of coherent, pleasurable, and purposeful lesson plans,
7. Scholars at applied institutes are urged to incorporate multiple roles into their teaching practices to grasp the distinctive characteristics of varied oral communication situations related to nursing students.
8. With the aim of strengthening performance-related situations and promoting students' cognitive development, educators should stress the importance of encouraging students to engage in meaningful situations related to their needs and work-related settings through exposing students to cooperatively designed speaking activities and tasks.
9. Teachers should place considerable stress on progressively speaking training sessions in and out the class to increase students' awareness of effective communication skills.

Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the findings of this study, the following implications for further research were suggested:

- Investigating the effectiveness of proposed programs based upon English for Specific Purposes for developing oral communication skills among other departments in the applied institutes.
- Investigating the effectiveness of task-based activities following the learning-centered approach in reducing students' speaking anxiety among other departments in the applied linguistics.
- Investigating the effect of the task-based activities following the learning-centered approach combined with flipped classroom and digital games on reducing students' speaking anxiety.
- Investigating the relationship between students' motivation and their work-related needs to enhance their oral communication in the clinical establishments.

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