

Overcoming English Language Apprehension in Nursing Education

Sudusinghe, W.S¹ & Kumara, W.G.C²

¹*Department of Languages, Faculty of Management, Humanities and Social Sciences, KDU, Sri Lanka*

²*Department of Nursing & Midwifery, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, KDU, Sri Lanka*

Apprehension of Learning English

Apprehension of learning English remains one of the most frequently reported fears experienced by many undergraduates that has directly impacted their careers. This apprehension naturally continues to their professional life and has the potential to become a strong barrier for them to seek new knowledge and pursue higher education (Hashemi, 2011).

As the world moves with the wings of globalization, learning English has become a mandatory need. Moreover, achieving competency in English language plays a vital role in every individual (Rao, 2019). However, at the same time, learning English language is associated with negative experiences by learners in some contexts. They tend to experience an uncomfortable emotional state when using the English language. It makes them feel stressed and powerless (Krishnamoorthy, 2019). It is widely accepted that individuals may feel physiological arousal while using a second language due to the constant fear of being judged and assessed by outsiders (Khawaj et al., 2018). It is observed that apprehension of learning English language is a result of the personal beliefs of the learner, the teacher and the society at large (Krishnamoorthy, 2019).

Apprehension for English Language and Nursing Education

To confront the new challenges in the healthcare setting, employers worldwide are looking for competent nurses in dealing with international standards. Hence, the need to improve English language proficiency and take appropriate steps to minimize apprehension for learning the language among nursing students. Further, many studies conducted worldwide have proven that apprehension for learning English remains one of the most dominant anxieties even at undergraduate levels of study (Palaleo & Srikrajang, 2018). A research study conducted among nursing students in an Iranian university tested for apprehension using an Anxiety Scale (Amiri & Ghonsooly, 2015). The results revealed that apprehension for English language remained at the topmost

fears among nursing students, and it seemed to have a tremendous impact on their academic performance). Another study conducted among eight nursing students at a Taiwanese university revealed that apprehension for English language remained a massive problem among all the nursing students interviewed and it had become a significant barrier for their professional growth (Wang, 2009).

Improving English Language Proficiency among Nursing Students

It is observed that nurses with better linguistic competency are given priority in the international context. Therefore, it has become essential for nursing students to improve their language proficiency. It will make them potential beneficiaries while applying for foreign job opportunities. On the contrary, lack of such competency has the potential to become a primary cause for potential health risks for patients due to issues related to miscommunications and social misunderstandings. Hence, improving language proficiency will potentially benefit the well-being of both the patient and the nurses. With globalization, a commendable level of English language proficiency is a must to maintain standards of professionalism. As English is the primary medium of communication among people in the international context, English language proficiency of nursing students is a significant concern. Hence, it is essential to assess apprehension for learning English language among nursing students and provide them with the necessary motivation and training to overcome their apprehension. It will facilitate them to follow higher education and seek advancement in their career with great ease. This would, in turn, lead to better quality of service provided for the patients.

Moreover acquiring new knowledge and providing internationally standardized healthcare for patients. However, when it comes to the Sri Lankan context, strategies implemented to enhance knowledge of and

competencies in English language among nursing students are very few. Therefore, apprehension for learning English Language among nursing students in the Sri Lankan context remains an unaddressed issue, and this has become a considerable barrier to evidence-based nursing practice. Furthermore, although several studies have been conducted to explore the phenomenon of apprehension for learning English Language among nursing students worldwide, there is a dearth of similar studies conducted in the Sri Lankan context. Therefore, it is necessary to examine apprehension for learning English language among nursing students in Sri Lanka along with associated factors. Findings of such studies can be utilized for policy planning and initiating well-designed programmes to improve English language competency of nursing students in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, it will also empower and increase the nursing students' self-confidence as it will open the doors for internationalism to pursue further studies and explore more knowledge.

Conclusion

Improving English language proficiency of nursing students will serve as a valuable investment for their future. It will definitely help them to overcome their apprehension for learning the language. This can sustain a greater interest in nursing professionals to conduct research and pursue opportunities for higher education both locally and internationally. Moreover, it has the potential to become a strength in achieving higher standards in the quality of nursing education in Sri Lanka.

Being a Daughter of Nightingale

When I open my eyes
I cannot see the world
with the tears on their eyes...
I always see the world
with their screams and sighs...
I used to pray to God
to heal all the pain in their souls...
Even if I cannot go to them
with Her bright lamp,
At any time I will be there in the painful nights...
I sacrifice my young hopes and dreams
for the benefit of the sick and the feeble...
Every day and night
I'm so happy to see their smiles...
Even though my loved ones might miss me a lot
they always welcome me at any time...
Always I smile with the happiness of
being a daughter of Nightingale...

References

- Amiri, M., & Ghonsooly, B. (2015). The relationship between English learning anxiety and the students' achievement on examinations. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 6(4), 855. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0604.20>
- Hashemi, M. (2011). Language stress and anxiety among the English language learners. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 30, 1811–1816. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.10.349>
- Khawaj, N. G., Chan, S., & Stein, G. (2018). The relationship between second language anxiety and international nursing students' Stress. *Journal of International Students*, 7(3), 601–620. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v7i3.290>
- Krishnamoorthy, R. (2019). *Apprehension in Learning English*.
- Palaleo, J. J. P., & Srikrajang, J. (2018). English Anxiety Among Thai Nursing Students of Boromarajonani College of Nursing, Nakhon Lampang, Thailand1. *Asian Journal for Public Opinion Research*, 5(3), 250–265. <https://doi.org/10.15206/ajpor.2018.5.3.250>
- Rao, P. (2019). The importance of English in the modern era. *Asian Journal of Multidimensional Research (AJMR)*, 8, 7. <https://doi.org/10.5958/2278-4853.2019.00001.6>
- Wang, Y.-C. (n.d.). *Anxiety in English language learning: A case study of Taiwanese university students on a study abroad programme*. 282.

So never lose an opportunity of
urging a practical beginning,
however small, for it is
wonderful how often in such
matters the mustard-seed
germinates and roots itself.

Florence Nightingale