ASI Asia Social Issues ASIA SOCIAL ISSUES 2027; 20(1): 26
https://doi.org/10.48048/asi.2027.26 ACADEMIC ARTICLE

Promoting English Communication Skills for Nursing Students in the Eastern Economic Corridor

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Received: 17 January 2026, Revised: 5 June 2026, Accepted: 25 June 2026, Published: 5 October 2026

Abstract

The objective of this study was to investigate the nursing students' satisfaction towards the use of an academic service program aiming to transfer knowledge of English communication skills for nursing students in the Eastern Economic Corridor area, Thailand. It offered students opportunities to learn essential vocabulary, sentence structures, and conversational dialogues commonly used in nursing operations and healthcare services. The learning topics covered various aspects of nursing tasks, including patient registration, injection administration, and patient care. This knowledge aimed to support students in pursuing higher levels of English studies in nursing and future careers in nursing-specific professions. The participants in this program are 51 nursing students. As this is a survey, the data was collected using a questionnaire to investigate the participants' satisfaction with the academic service. The data was then analyzed by using the jamovi computer program for mean scores and standard deviations, and the content analysis was applied to qualitative data. The results indicated that nursing students significantly improved their knowledge and confidence in English communication following participation in the program. The program enhanced students' exposure to a wide range of essential vocabulary, expressions, and sentence structures relevant to nursing practice. Consequently, students reported enhanced confidence and perceived readiness to apply this knowledge in academic contexts and in anticipated future nursing interactions with foreign patients.

Keywords: Eastern economic corridor, English communication, English language development, Nursing

Introduction

English is a global language used for communication among people worldwide, including in Thai society, which is surrounded by foreigners, particularly in the eastern economic corridor (EEC). Therefore, Thai people in these areas should learn English to communicate with foreigners and prepare themselves for future career opportunities. This requirement is especially important for students studying nursing, as they are likely to encounter foreign patients in hospitals. According to the recent data, Thailand is currently among the top three countries in the world where patients from other countries go for medical care (The Nation, 2026). Thus, English is essential for nursing students to learn to communicate effectively with foreigners. Since communication is a crucial skill for both life and careers, students can achieve effective communication if they possess both English linguistic knowledge and English communication skills (Thuratham, 2024). Additionally, mastering the language can enhance their confidence and competence in providing care, and proficiency in English can open doors to international job prospects and collaborations as well as growth in career (Gaikwad, 2021; Jabeen et al., 2025), especially in the healthcare field.

However, previous studies found that nursing students in Thailand have faced difficulties in English communication skills (Boonkarn, 2022; Yomyao, 2018). Most Thai nursing students had problems with listening and speaking skills which were affected by

various factors in linguistics, such as grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary (Boonkarn, 2022) and internal factors, such as lack of confidence and opportunities to practise their skills (Jeanagool et al., 2022; Khamwong et al., 2020). Therefore, developing English communication skills for nursing is necessary and vital for learners who are about to graduate, as it enhances their job application opportunities, work performance, and future career prospects. This preparation equips learners with knowledge and skills in English communication for nursing, including learning vocabulary, sentences, and conversations essential for nursing practice and services, such as patient registration, injection administration, and patient care. This is consistent with Strategy 3: Human Development for All Ages and Creating a Learning Society under the National Education Plan B.E. 2560-2579 (2017-2036) (Office of the Education Council, 2017), as well as the university's strategic issue of providing academic services to the community and society to promote self-reliance in a sustainable manner. Hence, the ENP training program has been organized for nursing students and other interested individuals. This program enables participants to apply the acquired knowledge to further their studies at higher education levels and to pursue careers in specialized fields in the future.

Literature review

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in nursing education

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is an approach for studying English that is customized to students' needs or focuses on student-centered instruction Hutchinson and Waters (1993, as cited in Phothongsunan, 2022). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) divided ESP needs into two types: learning needs and target needs. In other words, learning needs refer to the factors that affect how effectively students learn in an ESP course, such as reasons for taking the course, available learning resources, and learning environment. Meanwhile, target needs are the things that students require, lack, and desire (Saengsrichan et al., 2024). In nursing education, communication is acknowledged as an essential medical skill that is required to be deliberately instructed, developed, and practiced in order to avoid misconceptions and guarantee patient safety (Arroyyani & Setianingsih, 2025). Additionally, having sufficient ability to communicate in English is a very crucial skill for professional tasks because nurses must communicate with patients to offer higher-quality treatment, as well as physicians and other medical professionals in medical environments (Lu et al., 2023).

Importance of English communication skills in nursing

Communication skills refer to students' ability to use English effectively and appropriately in academic and social situations through listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with a focus on verbal communication and interaction. This concept is closely related to communicative competence as defined by Canale and Swain (1980) within the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, which encompasses not only grammatical competence but also the ability to use language effectively in real communication and to employ strategies for overcoming communication breakdowns (Thuratham, 2022a). Thus, English communication skills are fundamental in nursing. In other words, if nursing students have effective communication skills, the skills will not only foster better relationships between nurses and patients but also promote trust and understanding. As a result, it encourages patients to engage more actively in their care, which leads to improved health outcomes and the quality of healthcare services (Noviyanti et al., 2021). Additionally, people with effective English communication abilities have more employability, stability, and advancement and are given favor by multinational and international companies (Gaikwad, 2021). Also, fluency in English has been found to be a major advantage in terms of knowledge, social status, and international communication, as well as a prerequisite for a better career (Jabeen et al., 2025). However, miscommunication can result in errors, lower patient satisfaction and compromise the quality of healthcare delivery and patient safety (Al Shamsi et al., 2020), but it can be improved if nurses can navigate their language obstacles effectively (Gerchow et al., 2021). In Thailand, the rise of medical tourism and the increasing presence of international patients indicate a requirement for nurses to possess strong English proficiency, particularly in speaking and listening (Yenprasert, 2023). By equipping future nurses with these essential skills, they will be better prepared to

provide services to multicultural healthcare environments.

Communication problems of nursing students

Despite its importance, nursing students encountered difficulties with English communication, as found in various research in Thailand (Boonkarn, 2022; Yomyao, 2018). This challenge not only hindered their academic performance but also affected their confidence when interacting with patients. Comparing the four skills of English communication, it was found that professional nurses had problems with listening and speaking the most, but speaking is the most required skill (Yomyao, 2018). By improving both listening and speaking abilities, nurses can provide better patient care and foster more effective communication with their patients. Regarding speaking skills, the obstacles were derived from various factors, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and emotional factors (Boonkarn, 2022). The difficulties also refer to their lack of confidence, insufficient support, and limited opportunities to practise their skills (Jeanagool et al., 2022; Khamwong et al., 2020). If students lacked these communicative abilities, it would be difficult for them to develop their skills and achieve language acquisition. To address these issues, nursing programs should incorporate more interactive and practical language training that focuses on real-world scenarios. By creating a supportive environment where students can practise their communication skills as well as employing a balanced integration of strategies (Ahmad et al., 2024), their confidence and competence in their ability would be developed completely.

Methods

This study employed a survey using a questionnaire to investigate nursing students' satisfaction towards an academic service program aiming to transfer knowledge of English communication skills for nursing students in the Eastern Economic Corridor area, Mueang District, Chonburi Province, Thailand. The objective of this program is to enable participants to apply the acquired knowledge in their further studies at higher education levels, as well as in their future nursing careers.

Participants

The total participants in this study are 51 students. They willingly participated in the program, and they were selected by using a purposive sampling. In other words, all students who registered to participate in the program had passed the study of the subject, entitled "English for Academic Purposes" which promoted the use of English communication skills in academic and professional contexts in semester 1, academic year 2024. This study is a short-term service-oriented training program with an English for Nursing Purposes (ENP) focus. However, students who joined in the program, but they did not complete the questionnaire were excluded from the study.

Instruments

The study used a questionnaire to gather information about the satisfaction towards the academic service program from nursing students. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section was closed-ended questions, which surveyed about 1) knowledge and understanding of English communication in nursing, 2) the students' knowledge application, 3) the speakers' knowledge transfer, and the program organization. As for the open-ended questions, students shared their opinions about what they had gained from this program and their needs of learning English communication skills for their professional development in the future.

Data collection and analysis

The questionnaire was employed in this study to investigate the nursing students' satisfaction towards the academic service program. It was distributed to 51 nursing students who participated in the program. After the students completed the questionnaire, the data were collected and then analyzed by using the jamovi computer program (The jamovi project, 2022). A 5-point Likert scale was used to rate the students' responses: strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). To interpret students' satisfaction with the program, the range of scores in the table below was used Suebwongsuwan and Nomnian (2020 as cited in Thuratham, 2024). Then, the mean scores were used to describe the results of students' satisfaction.

Table 1 The interpretation of the 5-point likert scale

Scale	Degrees of agreement	Score range	Interpretation
5	Strongly agree	4.21-5.00	Very high
4	agree	3.41-4.20	High
3	neutral	2.61-3.40	Moderate
2	disagree	1.81-2.60	Low
1	Strongly disagree	1.00-1.80	Very low

As for the open-ended questions, the content analysis was used to examine student responses. By this method, similar data were summarized into the same group to reflect the students' satisfaction.

The procedure of the academic service program

The program is divided into three phases as follows:

Pre-operation phase

Coordination was made with Boromarajonani College of Nursing, Chonburi, in Mueang District, Chonburi Province, to publicize the ENP training program among nursing professionals, students, and interested participants. The content of the training was developed by studying and analyzing English language materials from books and various media. The key topics essential for nursing communication were compiled and designed into PowerPoint presentations to deliver knowledge to the participants, based on academic principles and the program's objectives.

Operation phase

The two lecturers from a public university in eastern Thailand were speakers in the academic service program on English communication skills for nursing purposes. The lectures were conducted in Thai. The program was organized to take place in one day, consisting 6 instructional hours divided into 6 sessions. Thus, this program was conducted by dividing the content into three main topics:

 Topic 1: English Communication Skills for Initial Patient Screening. This topic covers the use of English for patient screening, including assessing the patient's condition, obtaining medical history, inquiring about symptoms, and communicating with patients seeking medical attention.

 Topic 2: English Communication Skills for Basic Procedures. This topic involves English communication during basic medical procedures such as wound dressing, suturing, injection administration, and minor surgery.

 Topic 3: English Communication Skills for Patient Post-Care Instructions. This topic focuses on providing post-care instructions, including medication management and follow-up appointments.

All topics were delivered through lectures combined with practical learning activities. The lessons were designed to promote student engagement through conversation writing activities, English-speaking practice, and role-playing simulations between patients and nurses in various realistic scenarios. These activities encouraged students to learn essential vocabulary, English sentence structures, and gain hands-on experience in English conversation. This method helped students improve their skills and build confidence in communicating in English.

Post-operation phase

After the program completion, participants were asked to complete open-ended and closed-ended satisfaction questionnaires via Google Forms to gather feedback and summarize the program outcomes. The data was analyzed by using the jamovi computer program. Meanwhile, the results were presented in mean scores of satisfactions in various aspects, along with content analysis to provide an overall summary of the program's effectiveness. In other words, the data was kept in Microsoft Word and organized into comparable language groups. Subsequently, the overall findings were displayed (Thuratham, 2024).

Findings

In this study, it aimed to investigate the nursing students' satisfaction towards the use of an academic service program designed to enhance their knowledge and strengthen their English communication skills in the Eastern Economic Corridor area, Thailand. The program was conducted through a combination of explicit instruction and practical activities. Various teaching activities were employed, including lectures, group discussions, role-playing, and hands-on practice. Additionally, interactive activities and situational simulations were used to provide participants with real-life practice in using English for nursing communication.

The results of the students' satisfaction towards the academic service were summarized into two sections as follows.

Table 2 Satisfaction in knowledge and understanding of english communication in nursing

Items	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
1. Knowledge and understanding of English communication in nursing before the training	4.35	0.798	Very high
2. Knowledge and understanding of English communication in nursing after the training	4.61	0.495	Very high

Satisfaction in various aspects

Satisfaction in knowledge and understanding

According to Table 2, the results revealed that the participants' knowledge and understanding of English communication in nursing before the training had a mean score of 4.35 (*S.D.* = 0.798). After the training, the participants' knowledge and understanding had a modest increase with a mean score of 4.61 (*S.D.* = 0.495). Obviously, item 2 had a lower standard deviation (*S.D.* = 0.495) than item 1 (*S.D.* = 0.798), indicating that respondents were more strongly in agreement with it. These findings indicate that nursing students gained more knowledge and understanding of English communication related to medical topics after participating in the ENP training program.

Satisfaction in knowledge application

From Table 3, the results showed that participants could apply the acquired knowledge in their work practices with a mean score of 4.71 (*S.D.* = 0.461). They were able to disseminate or transfer the acquired knowledge with a mean score of 4.61 (*S.D.* = 0.558). The overall satisfaction in knowledge application had a mean score of 4.71(*S.D.* = 0.461), with all items rated at the highest satisfaction level, indicating a very high or satisfied response. Comparing these three items, it can be clearly seen that the mean score and standard deviation of item 1 were equal to those of item 3. Thus, it can be concluded that nursing students could apply their acquired knowledge in the ENP training program in their work practices overall.

Satisfaction in the speakers

From the above Table, the results indicated that participants were highly satisfied with the speakers' clarity in knowledge delivery, with a mean score of 4.74 (*S.D.* = 0.445). The ability to explain content received a mean score of 4.58 (*S.D.* = 0.620). The integration of content during the training received the highest mean score of 4.77 (*S.D.* = 0.425). The completeness of the training content was rated at 4.65 (*S.D.* = 0.551), and time management according to the schedule was rated at 4.71 (*S.D.* = 0.529). All items were rated at the highest satisfaction level, indicating that the participants had a very positive opinion of the speakers or were highly satisfied. In summary, nursing students were most satisfied with the speakers' content integration, followed by their knowledge clarity and time management. The following topics that contributed to satisfaction were the completeness of the training content and the speakers' ability to explain the material effectively.

Table 3 Satisfaction in knowledge application

Items	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
1. Ability to apply the acquired knowledge in work practices	4.71	0.461	Very high
2. Ability to disseminate or transfer the acquired knowledge	4.61	0.558	Very high
3. Overall knowledge application	4.71	0.461	Very high

Table 4 Satisfaction in the speakers

Items	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
1. Clarity of knowledge delivery by the speakers	4.74	0.445	Very high
2. Ability to explain content	4.58	0.620	Very high
3. Integration of content during the training	4.77	0.425	Very high
4. Completeness of training content	4.65	0.551	Very high
5. Time management according to the schedule	4.71	0.529	Very high

Table 5 Satisfaction in participation in the training program

Items	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
1. Cleanliness and suitability of the venue	4.55	0.568	Very high
2. Readiness of audiovisual equipment	4.68	0.475	Very high
3. Appropriateness of training duration	4.61	0.495	Very high
4. Appropriateness of the event date	4.39	0.761	Very high
5. Overall program management	4.71	0.461	Very high

Satisfaction in participation in the ENP training program

The results from Table 5 found that participants were highly satisfied with the cleanliness and suitability of the venue, with a mean score of 4.55 (*S.D.* = 0.568). The readiness of audiovisual equipment was rated at 4.68 (*S.D.* = 0.475). The appropriateness of the training duration received a mean score of 4.61 (*S.D.* = 0.495), while the appropriateness of the event date was rated at 4.39 (*S.D.* = 0.761). The overall program management was rated at 4.71 (*S.D.* = 0.461), with all items rated at the highest satisfaction level. This is consistent with other aspects, which were rated as very high or satisfied. Considering all items, it can be mentioned that nursing students were satisfied with the overall program management the most as this item had the highest mean score and the lowest standard deviation, which reflects greater consistency among participants' responses. This finding was followed by the readiness of audiovisual equipment, appropriateness of training duration, and the cleanliness and suitability of the venue. However, the appropriate event date ranked the lowest.

Additional suggestions

The results from the open-ended questions reveal the following overall suggestions from the respondents:

Participating in this ENP training program enabled learners to gain knowledge and practice English communication skills for nursing. It helped learners understand various medical terms, including specialized medical vocabulary and general vocabulary used in daily life communication.

"*I learned more medical terms*" (Student 1, Nursing year 2).

"*I learned new vocabulary that could be used for communication in real life when working in wards*" (Student 2, Nursing year 2).

Learners learned different expressions and sentence structures that could be practically applied in daily communication with patients receiving services at the hospital, such as expressions for making requests,

giving advice, and asking for patients' personal information. Additionally, after joining the program, learners had the opportunity to review their existing English communication knowledge and skills, as well as learn and develop new English communication skills for nursing that they had not learned before. This allowed learners to acquire new knowledge and strengthen their skills.

Content analysis clearly shows that this ENP training program was highly beneficial to the learners. Furthermore, learners expressed interest in learning additional English communication skills for nursing. They desired to improve their English skills in various aspects, such as medical conversations, daily life communication, formal communication, negotiating with patients' relatives, conversing with colleagues or general people, handling patients, English grammar, enhancing listening skills, and expanding on previous topics with more in-depth content and communication practice. One learner shared, "*I would like to learn how to effectively communicate with foreign patients during medical history taking*" (Student 3, Nursing year 2). Learners expressed a desire for the program to be organized continuously and suggested that everyone participate in front-of-class activities to boost confidence and further improve English communication skills in the future.

Discussion

The objective of this study is to investigate the students' satisfaction with the use of the ENP training program, aiming to provide academic services to nursing students at Boromarajonani College of Nursing, Chon Buri to help them develop essential English communication skills for future interactions with patients or foreigners. As Chonburi is located in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), students are likely to encounter foreigners from around the world who come to Thailand for tourism or business purposes. This training provided students with valuable opportunities to practice their English communication skills, enhancing their ability to apply these skills effectively in their studies and professional practice. The program aligns with Thailand's National Education Plan (2017-2036), which emphasizes human development for all ages and the creation of a learning society (Strategy 3) Office of the Education Council (2017, as cited in Thuratham, 2022b). However, few studies in Thailand have focused on developing nursing students' English communication skills, particularly in the eastern region. Therefore, nursing students in the EEC should be equipped with effective communication skills to interact with foreigners seeking health services or care at hospitals.

Still, previous studies found that professional nurses struggled with English communication problems (Boonkarn, 2022; Yomyao, 2018). Professional nurses encountered problems in all skills at the highest level, with listening and speaking being the two most problematic areas. However, nurses required more improvement in their speaking skills than in their listening skills (Yomyao, 2018). Regarding speaking skills, most nurses faced challenges with vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and emotional factors (Boonkarn, 2022). Additionally, factors affecting nursing students' and health personnel's communicative competence include lack of confidence, insufficient support, and limited opportunities to practice their skills (Jeanagool et al., 2022; Khamwong et al., 2020). Therefore, integrated activities combining theory and practice, such as simulation or role-playing activities on various conversation topics, group discussions, and self-learning, are required (Jeanagool et al., 2022). It is also evident from the study led by Nonmeatawat et al. (2022), which revealed that using the cultural and experience exchange program considerably improved students' English communication skills and had positive effects on their confidence and attitudes. This aligns with this ENP training program, which provided nursing students with knowledge of English communication in nursing, along with opportunities to practice and apply their communication skills through English conversation practice and role-playing activities. This was also supported by the study of Juliana et al. (2026), which employed various English club activities, such as discussions, presentations, and roleplays, to support students' language learning beyond the classroom to improve their communicative abilities. As a result, the findings of this study show that nursing students were very satisfied with the training program in overall as they gained English knowledge and understanding of English communication related to medical topics, including vocabulary, sentence structures, and expressions to communicate with patients and people at hospitals in English. Moreover, nursing students could

use their knowledge from the training to apply it in their work practices in the future. Such improvements may be due to the outcomes from participating in the training. It is evident that English communication skills are essential and highly demanded by professional nurses, even among medical students (Srijan, 2019; Suwanrot et al., 2017). Thus, the results suggest that health personnel, such as nursing and medical students, should prioritize these skills for their future career paths. English communication skills are not only crucial for careers but also for daily life. Possessing these skills would offer significant advantages for students when seeking job opportunities in both private and public sectors.

Conclusion

Consequently, the results of this study indicate that participants perceived an increase in their knowledge of English communication skills for nursing purposes. They were able to use English correctly, applying technical terms, nursing-related vocabulary, and grammatical structures in various situations according to social contexts that may occur in the hospital. This improvement resulted from the knowledge, advice, suggestions, and valuable experiences provided by the speakers, as well as from practicing English communication skills through various communication activities in the ENP training program. The participants significantly enhanced their English communication skills, showed enthusiasm for continued learning, and expressed their desire for ongoing programs to further develop their English communication skills and other aspects of the English language. They were particularly interested in continuing to develop English communication skills on the same topics and wished to practice conversations related to other medical fields, including those with patients' relatives, colleagues, and the general public. Moreover, the participants could apply the knowledge and skills they gained to their studies, hospital work, and daily life. They were also able to transfer their knowledge to others and further improve their English skills independently in the future, which proved the success of this ENP training program.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to express her sincere gratitude to Rajamangala University of Technology Tawan-ok, for providing financial support for the English for Nursing Purposes (ENP) training program in the academic year 2024. Special thanks are also extended to Boromarajonani College of Nursing, Chonburi, and all participants for their kind cooperation in this program.

Declaration of generative AI in scientific writing

The author declared that generative AI tools were employed to improve the language clarity of this manuscript. The author reviewed and controlled these tools and remains fully responsible for the content of the manuscript.

CRediT author statement

Wadinlada Thuratham: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing- Original draft preparation, Writing- Reviewing and Editing

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