

Exploring Student Perceptions of Role-Play as an Effective Learning Method an Advanced English for Nurse Anesthesiology at TEKES Bali

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Abstract

English language proficiency has become an essential competency for healthcare professionals, particularly in specialized fields such as Nurse Anesthesia. Mastery of English is required to comprehend medical literature, establish effective communication with patients and multidisciplinary teams, and support patient safety. In the context of healthcare globalization, this skill has become increasingly critical (Fatonah, 2024). Several studies indicate that limited English proficiency can diminish the quality of care and increase the risk of medical errors. Alongside advancements in nursing education, instructional approaches have also undergone a transformation from conventional lecture methods toward active and participatory learning (Liansari et al., 2021). Methods such as simulation, case studies, and role-play are being widely implemented. Role-play is an interactive learning strategy that allows students to practice language skills within a simulated professional context. This method not only enhances speaking and listening skills but also fosters self-confidence and develops soft skills such as empathy, teamwork, and problem-solving. Furthermore, role-play has been proven to reduce anxiety and boost students' learning motivation. This study aims to explore the perceptions of Nurse Anesthesiology students at ITEKES Bali regarding the use of role-play in the Advanced English for Nurse Anesthesiologist course. This qualitative research was conducted using open-ended questionnaires distributed online. The questionnaires were designed to explore student experiences, perceived benefits, the impact on self-confidence, and contributions to soft skills development. Data were analyzed using a thematic approach through the stages of coding, theme categorization, and narrative-based conclusion drawing. The novelty of this study lies in its specific focus on nurse anesthesia, an area that remains under-researched within the context of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Distinct from previous studies which are generally quantitative and broad in nature, this study employs a qualitative approach to capture students' subjective meaning-making of role-play-based learning. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of a more contextual, applicable curriculum that aligns with the clinical needs of nursing students in the global era.

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1. INTRODUCTION

English language proficiency has become an essential competency for healthcare professionals, particularly within specialized fields such as Nurse Anesthesia. Mastery of English enables nurses to comprehend medical literature, communicate effectively with patients and multidisciplinary teams, and keep pace with global advancements in healthcare science and technology (Ummah, 2019; Fatonah, 2024). Given the global nature of healthcare, accurate communication is vital for patient safety, as limited English proficiency has been associated with diminished quality of care, an increased risk of medical errors, and barriers to multidisciplinary collaboration (Zannah & Hidayanti, 2024). Enhancing English competency among nursing students, especially in high-stakes fields such as anesthesia, is therefore an urgent and strategic imperative (Zulkarnain, 2023). In response to this

need, nursing education has undergone a shift from conventional lecture-based approaches toward active, participatory, and student-centered learning that emphasizes critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills (Maulina et al., 2022; Dunifa & Zamihu, 2023).

Within this context, instructional methods such as clinical simulations, case study discussions, and role-play are increasingly utilized because they integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains into the learning process (Indah Sari et al., 2023). Role-play, in particular, allows students to practice language skills within simulated professional environments that closely mirror real clinical situations, such as communicating with patients prior to anesthesia administration, explaining procedures, or collaborating within a surgical team (Olienpia et al., 2022; Anjani et al., 2024). Beyond enhancing speaking and listening skills, role-play also fosters self-confidence, reduces anxiety, and increases learning motivation (Muslem et al., 2022), while helping students develop soft skills such as empathy, teamwork, and problem-solving that are vital competencies for the high-pressure nurse anesthesia workforce.

While the use of role-play in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has been extensively researched, most studies focus on broader fields such as English for Medical Purposes or English for Nursing in general (Adelia et al., 2022), leaving its application within the specific context of nurse anesthesia under-researched. Nurse anesthesia possesses highly distinct communication patterns and vocabulary, including anesthesia administration instructions, intraoperative communication, and post-procedure documentation, that are not adequately captured by broader ESP research (Aryanti et al., 2024). Furthermore, understanding student perceptions of teaching methodologies is a crucial component of curriculum development, as learning effectiveness is strongly influenced by how well instructional methods align with students' learning approaches and workforce needs (Eni Suriyah & Mazulfah, 2022; Marsenda, 2025). Unlike previous studies, which are generally broad or quantitative in nature, this research qualitatively examines student perceptions to understand how they respond to, interpret, and experience the benefits of role-play in this specialized professional context, since a qualitative approach allows the affective, social, and cultural dimensions of learning to be captured in ways that quantitative data alone cannot achieve.

Accordingly, this study aims to explore the perceptions of Nurse Anesthesiology students at ITEKES Bali regarding the use of role-play in the Advanced English for Nurse Anesthesiologist course, assessing its contribution not only to language competency including vocabulary, communication skills, and self-confidence but also to the development of soft skills and clinical readiness. The novelty of this study lies in its specific focus on nurse anesthesia, bridging the contextualization of role-play implementation, a qualitative approach to student perceptions, and a holistic assessment of language and soft-skill outcomes. This review demonstrates that integrating interactive teaching methods like role-play into the ESP curriculum can yield a significantly positive impact on language mastery, professional readiness, and character development among nursing students in the era of healthcare globalization (Jimenez, 2018).

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach aimed at exploring student perceptions regarding the use of the role-play method in English language learning within the Advanced English for Nurse Anesthesiologist course at the Institute of Technology and Health (ITEKES) Bali. A qualitative approach was selected as it is well-suited for unearthing the views, experiences, and subjective interpretations of students regarding the instructional practices they underwent, particularly within a complex and professional context such as Nurse Anesthesia. This research will be conducted at the Nurse Anesthesiology Study Program, ITEKES Bali, which offers the Advanced English for Nurse Anesthesiologist course. The participants in this study are students who have completed the course and have been involved in role-play activities as part of their learning process.

Data are collected using open-ended questionnaires designed to explore student perspectives on the implementation of the role-play method in professional English education. A total of 50 respondents were selected using a purposive sampling technique, with the inclusion criteria being that participants were students of the Nurse Anesthesiology Study Program, ITEKES Bali, who had completed the Advanced English for Nurse Anesthesiologist course and had been actively involved in the role-play activities conducted during the course. This sampling strategy was applied to ensure that respondents possessed sufficient first-hand experience to provide information-rich and contextually relevant responses. The questionnaire consists of open-ended questions covering several aspects, including: (1) students' experiences during the role-play activities, (2) perceptions of the method's benefits in enhancing English language skills, (3) its impact on self-confidence, and (4) its contribution to the development of soft skills such as empathy, teamwork, and problem-solving. This question format allows students to express their responses freely and reflectively. The questionnaires will be distributed online via Google Forms to reach participants in a more practical and efficient manner. To strengthen the trustworthiness and validity of the data, several procedures were applied, including triangulation of responses across different questionnaire items, member checking to confirm that respondents' answers were interpreted accurately, and peer debriefing with fellow researchers to review the consistency of the emerging codes prior to the thematic analysis stage.

The data are analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis. The analytical stages comprise: (1) initial reading and familiarization with all questionnaire responses, (2) a coding process to identify significant meanings, (3) categorizing codes into main themes, (4) reviewing and defining the themes most relevant to the research focus, and (5) drafting a narrative of the analytical results based on the primary findings. This analysis aims to uncover general patterns in student perspectives regarding the effectiveness of role-play, as well as the challenges and impacts on their professional competence. To maintain quality and accuracy, the analysis process will be conducted systematically and transparently, incorporating peer checking to enhance the validity of the interpretations.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Research Results

This study involved students from the Nurse Anesthesiology Study Program at the Institute of Technology and Health (ITEKES) Bali who had completed the Advanced English for Nurse Anesthesiologist course. All participants had engaged in role-play activities systematically designed to replicate professional communication scenarios in nurse anesthesia clinical settings. These scenarios included providing pre-anesthesia procedural explanations to patients, coordinating with the medical team during surgical interventions, and delivering oral post-operative reports in English. The role-play activities were conducted in small groups with students assuming distinct roles such as the nurse anesthetist, the patient, or the attending physician thereby providing a realistic, collaborative, and practice-oriented learning experience. Data were collected through open-ended questionnaires distributed online via Google Forms, where fifty respondents provided reflective answers regarding their experiences. The qualitative data were analyzed using a thematic approach across the sequential stages of data familiarization, open coding, conceptual clustering, and theme identification, which ultimately yielded four distinct major themes.

The first major theme identified was a significant improvement in communication skills and medical vocabulary mastery. The majority of students stated that role-play helped them comprehend and utilize medical vocabulary more accurately, particularly terminology related to anesthetic interventions, surgical procedures, and patient communication. Students assessed that direct practice within a simulated context made it easier to retain and apply medical terms that were previously only learned theoretically. Several students noted that this activity brought the language to life because they could connect vocabulary with real situations, such as explaining

the side effects of anesthesia or comforting an anxious patient. Furthermore, they learned to employ professional expressions relevant to nurse anesthesia practice, such as instructing a patient to take a deep breath or warning them that they might feel dizzy. For example, several respondents reported that phrases they had previously only memorized such as instructions to breathe deeply or reassurances about post-anesthesia dizziness became easier to recall and use naturally once they had rehearsed them in a realistic patient-communication scenario, indicating a shift from passive vocabulary recognition to confident, spontaneous use. This skill improvement encompassed not only fluency and accuracy but also the contextual appropriateness of professional and empathetic communication.

The second theme demonstrated that role-play activities substantially enhanced students' self-confidence when speaking English, particularly in academic and clinical situations. Most respondents admitted that prior to participating in the role-play, they felt nervous and worried about making grammatical or pronunciation errors. However, after repeatedly practicing within simulated scenarios, this awkwardness subsided. Students felt more prepared to speak spontaneously because they became accustomed to utilizing English in a meaningful context. One respondent highlighted that while they were initially afraid of saying the wrong thing, practicing a few times made them bolder and more confident explaining medical concepts in front of their peers. This indicates that role-play functions effectively as a bridge between linguistic learning and real-world professional communication readiness.

Beyond linguistic improvements, the third theme revealed that role-play contributed substantially to the development of soft skills highly relevant to the nurse anesthesia workforce. Throughout the role-play process, students learned to collaborate within teams, listen to peers' perspectives, and coordinate to accomplish shared tasks. This activity also prompted them to develop deep empathy toward patients by placing themselves in the position of individuals experiencing anxiety or discomfort prior to anesthesia administration. Several students mentioned learning to become more patient, communicative, and receptive to constructive criticism. These interpersonal skills such as teamwork, effective communication, and empathy are core components of a nurse anesthetist's professional competence that cannot be acquired solely through traditional theoretical instruction.

The fourth emerging theme focused on an increase in student motivation and enthusiasm toward English language learning. Students expressed that the role-play activities rendered the learning atmosphere more active, engaging, and far less monotonous than traditional lecture-based methods. By integrating simulations that mirror their future clinical environments, students perceived what they were learning as highly relevant and beneficial to their professional future. Consequently, they became more motivated to study medical English autonomously outside the classroom, leading to independent behaviors such as watching educational videos or reading international anesthesia journals in English. Several respondents also noted that role-play fostered an active sense of curiosity to further master clinical terminology and other professional expressions that would be useful in international hospital environments.

In addition to these positive outcomes, the findings also revealed several operational and linguistic challenges faced by the participants. A few students mentioned that time constraints prevented the role-play sessions from covering all clinical scenarios in deep detail, which limited their exposure to more complex medical situations. Furthermore, some participants struggled to construct grammatically correct sentences during spontaneous speech, experiencing a heavy cognitive load when trying to recall technical terms and assemble syntax simultaneously. Initial feelings of shyness and social awkwardness were also reported during the earliest sessions, particularly among individuals who were not accustomed to public performance or extensive peer interactions. Despite these obstacles, the overwhelming consensus among the students was that

the practical and communicative benefits of the role-play method far outweighed the difficulties encountered.

Discussion

In the academic discussion of these findings, the integration of role-play in the advanced English course is revealed to serve as a highly effective pedagogical bridge, translating abstract linguistic knowledge into contextualized clinical competence. This process can be robustly explained through David Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, which posits that knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. In traditional English classrooms, medical terminology remains passive and abstract. Through role-play, students navigate the complete experiential learning cycle by engaging in concrete experiences like acting out an intraoperative crisis, observing their peers, conceptualizing the correct structures, and actively experimenting in subsequent simulations. This cycle forces the shift of vocabulary from short-term working memory to long-term professional schema. This aligns perfectly with the core tenets of English for Specific Purposes, which states that language acquisition is optimized when learners recognize immediate communicative utility.

Furthermore, the surge in self-confidence and motivation strongly substantiates Stephen Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis. Krashen argues that emotional variables, such as anxiety and low motivation, can act as an invisible barrier that prevents input from reaching the language acquisition part of the brain. In traditional settings, the fear of making errors before an instructor raises this affective filter. The role-play design at ITEKES Bali addresses this by establishing a low-stakes, collaborative small-group environment where peer-to-peer simulation re-frames mistakes as natural iterations of clinical practice. As students repeatedly navigated these simulated realities, their linguistic anxiety diminished, effectively lowering their affective filter. The resultant boost in confidence also matches Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, where the collaborative nature of small groups allows peers to scaffold each other's learning, prompting spontaneous production that students could not easily achieve individually.

The development of soft skills also underscores that role-play transcends linguistic boundaries by fostering crucial interprofessional competence. In nurse anesthesia, technical execution is void without interpersonal skills. When students stepped into the shoes of an anxious patient preparing for an invasive procedure, they were forced to practice empathetic communication, discovering that linguistic fluency must be coupled with appropriate tone and non-verbal cues. Similarly, playing the role of a cooperating doctor or circulating nurse cultivated an early understanding of Crisis Resource Management and teamwork. In a real operating theater, miscommunication is a leading cause of preventable adverse events. By practicing structured clinical handovers and assertive communication in a safe environment, students developed the emotional intelligence required for high-stress medical environments.

Despite the positive perceptions, the identified challenges offer profound insights for future curriculum enhancement. The issues of time limitations and struggles with spontaneous grammar indicate a natural tension between fluency and accuracy during rapid language production. To mitigate these challenges and lower the cognitive load on students, curriculum designers should implement a blended pedagogical scaffolding framework. This framework should feature a comprehensive pre-simulation phase providing vocabulary toolkits and structural sentence frames to anchor linguistic foundations. This is followed by the simulation phase itself to expand fluency, and concludes with a structured post-simulation debriefing phase focused on targeted instructor feedback to resolve systemic grammatical errors. Additionally, the initial shyness reported by some students points to the necessity of building psychological safety within the classroom through graduated simulation complexity and early icebreaking activities. By addressing the linguistic, psychological, and social dimensions of medical practice, this integrated

methodology equips future anesthetists to be both technically competent and communicatively safe global practitioners.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that the integration of the role-play method into the Advanced English for Nurse Anesthesiologist course at ITEKES Bali serves as a highly effective pedagogical approach that bridges the gap between theoretical language learning and professional clinical practice. The qualitative findings indicate that simulated, peer-to-peer interactions significantly enhance students' clinical communication skills and medical vocabulary retention while simultaneously boosting their speaking confidence and learning motivation. By establishing a safe, low-stakes learning environment, this active learning strategy effectively lowers students' anxiety and reduces the cognitive load associated with spontaneous speech production. Furthermore, the role-play format transcends basic linguistic training by cultivating indispensable healthcare soft skills, such as empathy, collaboration, and situational awareness, which are vital for ensuring patient safety and effective multidisciplinary teamwork in high-pressure anesthetic settings.

To optimize the long-term impact of this instructional strategy, future curriculum development must systematically address the operational and linguistic challenges identified by the students, such as time constraints and spontaneous grammatical accuracy. Implementing a structured, three-phased pedagogical scaffolding framework incorporating pre-simulation vocabulary anchoring, active role-play execution, and rigorous post-simulation debriefing can effectively balance fluency and accuracy while minimizing cognitive overload. Additionally, introducing graduated scenario complexities can help build psychological safety for less confident students. Ultimately, this study underscores that contextualized, qualitative approaches to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) provide invaluable insights for creating adaptive, workforce-aligned nursing curricula that successfully equip future nurse anesthetists to become competent, empathetic, and communicatively safe global practitioners.

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