

Effective Communication among JUTH Student-Nurses and Strategies for Successful Communication: A Qualitative Study

Innocent Nasuk Dajang¹, Patricia Nathan Bwai², Vinami Yulian³

¹Department of English, University of Jos, Jos, Nigeria

²General Studies Department, Plateau State Polytechnic, Barkin-Ladi, Nigeria

³Faculty of Health Sciences, Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, 57162 Central Java, Indonesia

*Correspondence: dajangi@unijos.edu.ng

Abstract: This paper examined the place of effective communication among student nurses of Jos University Teaching Hospital (JUTH) and explored strategies to enhance their communication skills. Effective communication is crucial in nursing practice for ensuring patient safety, promoting positive outcomes, and fostering therapeutic relationships. The study was motivated by the discovery during lectures that a number of the students had challenges with basic communication. The paper randomly selected thirty participants who are Peri-Operative, Post-Basic Anesthesia, and Nephrology student-nurses from the Jos University Teaching Hospital, Plateau State, for the study and using Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as data collection method, data was elicited from the discussion and discussed in the study. The paper discovered that language barriers, cultural differences, and limited proficiency in English pose significant challenges for student nurses and widely affect their communication. The paper therefore concluded that by implementing targeted interventions such as language support programs, cultural competency training, and communication skills workshops, educators and healthcare institutions can empower student nurses to overcome language barriers and enhance their communication abilities.

Keywords: barriers, communication, nurse, proficiency, interaction, language, qualitative

Submitted: 15 Dec 2024, revised: 27 January 2025, accepted: 28 January 2025, published: 30 January 2025

INTRODUCTION

Effective communication could be a foundation of nursing practice, fundamental for conveying secure, patient-centered care. Nurses and medical caregivers must have solid communication aptitudes to successfully interact with patients, families, and other healthcare groups. In any case, etymological and social differing qualities among student nurses can show challenges in English utilization, affecting their capacity to communicate effectively and precisely in healthcare settings. This paper looks at the challenges confronting student nurses in English utilization and proposes techniques to address these challenges, eventually enhancing the quality of healthcare delivery.

The quality of communication between nurses and patients significantly influences patient recovery outcomes. Research has shown that effective nursing communication fosters general well-being, adherence to treatment, and patient satisfaction with the care received ([Hernandez et al., 2019](#)). Given the essential role nurses play in addressing the communication needs of patients, proficient communication skills are fundamental to delivering high-quality healthcare ([Ben Natan et al., 2020](#)).

To facilitate effective communication between nurses and patients, a strong command of the English language is necessary. This paper explores the characteristics that define effective communication from the perspectives of nursing students. Previous studies on effective communication have included both patient and nurse viewpoints while also examining areas of convergence between these perspectives ([Bagnasco et al., 2019](#)). Some methodological approaches have relied on clinical communication tools to assess effectiveness. To enhance effective communication skills among nurses and patients, competent mastery of English is required. This paper analyzes what qualifies as effective communication from the points of view of student nurses.

Previous investigations on what comprises effective communication have drawn on the perspectives of patients and nurses, as well as examining the convergence of these perspectives. Another methodological approach employed to determine effective communication has involved the use of clinical communication tools. In previous research, investigations of the patient perspective focused more on interactions between doctors and patients. [Sheldon et al. \(2020\)](#) examined nurses' views on challenging communication with patients and highlighted that both nurses' and patients' negative emotions serve as detrimental factors for effective communication. [Chan et al. \(2021\)](#) further explored how nurses assess the reasons for communication and identified that perceptions of available time significantly influence the quality of these interactions. Communication focused on building relationships was often perceived as time-consuming, while task-oriented communication was not subjected to the same constraints.

Effective communication in healthcare is inherently a two-way discourse, where both parties engage in active listening and clear information exchange. This reciprocal interaction is vital for all healthcare professionals, especially nurses, as they spend more time with patients and their families than other healthcare providers. Successful nurse-patient communication is crucial for improving patient outcomes. Communication is deemed effective when verbal and non-verbal messages align, and the intended message is accurately decoded by the recipient ([Wunea et al., 2020](#)).

Nurses must be attuned to their patients' needs, demonstrating qualities such as politeness, kindness, and honesty, and must dedicate sufficient time to engage in meaningful communication with patients and their families ([Kourkouta & Papathanasiou, 2019](#)). The language used in communication should be straightforward and comprehensible to all involved parties. Positive outcomes of effective communication include enhanced recovery rates, a greater sense of safety and security, improved patient satisfaction, and increased adherence to treatment plans. However, communication can encounter barriers that hinder message acceptance and understanding. Common barriers stem from differences in attitudes, values, and biases held by individuals. Prejudices, generalizations, and stereotyping can impede effective communication. Nevertheless, empathy plays a crucial role in overcoming these cultural communication barriers. Language barriers also arise when individuals speak different languages or possess varying levels of language proficiency ([Wunea et al., 2020](#)). Several environmental factors, such as time constraints, language differences, and the discomfort or lack of knowledge exhibited by nurses, can significantly affect the communication process ([Norouzinia et al., 2020](#)).

Effective communication may be a two-way discourse between two parties. Both talk and listen to each other without hindering; they both ask questions for clarity, express conclusions, and exchange information, with both able to grasp and comprehend the information. It could be a crucial skill for all healthcare professionals in general and for nursing staff in particular since nurses spend more time with patients and relatives than do other healthcare givers. Effective nurse-patient communication is also essential for successful patient outcomes. Communication is considered successful when both verbal and non-verbal messages align, and the message is decoded within the way the sender planned it. ([Wunea et al 2020](#))

Nurses must understand their patient's needs, demonstrating politeness, kindness, and honesty and they should devote adequate time to communication with patients and other persons around them. The

language used during the communication process needs to be simple to understand by all those involved in it. Positive results in effective communication include; increased recovery rates, a sense of safety and protection, improved patient satisfaction levels, and greater adherence to treatment options. Despite this, communication boundaries prevent someone from accepting and understanding the messages others need to communicate their data, thoughts, and considerations. A common cause of communication barriers in a working environment happens when individuals hold diverse demeanors, values, and segregation. Practices like predisposition, generalizations, and stereotyping can cause communication boundaries. Be that as it may, sympathy is vital to overcoming boundaries to communication-based on culture. Language barriers also occur when individuals do not speak the same language or do not have the same level of capacity in a language. ([Wunea et al 2020](#))

Many environmental variables such as time constraints, language and social contrasts, and nurse discomfort and lack of information, may also influence effective communication process ([Norouzinia et al., 2016](#)). The environment inside which communication happens, past encounters, individual recognitions of the sender or the beneficiary, and the nature of the message are basic determinants of whether communication and corresponding safety are effective or not. Studies have demonstrated that ineffective patient-to-nurse communication results in an increased hospital stay, resource wastage, patient dissatisfaction as well as lack of confidence and frustration for both the nurses and the patients. A few studies too detailed that most barriers to effective communication are related to the characteristics of the well-being of nurses and patients. [Albagawi \(2016\)](#) uncovered that the need for time, language, social contrasts, nurses' discomfort, lack of knowledge, and shortage of nursing staff are the components driving ineffective communication with patients.

In the nurse-patient relationship, communication involves more than the transmission of information; it also includes transmitting feelings, recognizing these sentiments, and letting the parties know that their sentiments have been recognized. Communication may be a principal portion of nursing and the advancement of a positive nurse-patient relationship is fundamental for the discharge of quality nursing care, and good communication skills can contribute to that.

METHODS

Participants

This study involved a sample of thirty student nurses from the Jos University Teaching Hospital in Plateau State, selected from a population of fifty-eight enrolled in Peri-Operative, Post-Basic Anesthesia, and Nephrology programs. A random sampling technique was employed to ensure an unbiased representation of the participant pool. Eligibility criteria included being a practicing nurse engaged in further studies and enrolled in a Use of English course, as well as having a demonstrated interest in enhancing communication skills. Participants were deemed to have a foundational understanding of key communication issues with patients, allowing for insightful contributions to the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected through three focus group discussions, each lasting thirty minutes, conducted before the participants' scheduled Use of English lectures. During these sessions, participants were encouraged to discuss the significance of communication for nurses, the challenges they face, and potential strategies for improvement. Their verbal feedback was audio-recorded for a comprehensive analysis, supplemented by written comments from some participants which also contributed to the findings.

To enhance the accuracy of the data collected, participants were prompted to clarify any ambiguous comments or technical jargon that arose during the discussions. This iterative process helped ensure that all comments were understood in the participants' intended context. The rich qualitative data obtained

from these focus group discussions formed the basis of the analysis presented in this paper, elucidating the essential role of effective communication in nursing practice.

Theoretical Framework

Social Constructivism

This study is grounded in the theory of social constructivism, which posits that knowledge and understanding are developed through social interactions and shared experiences. According to this theory, individuals construct their understanding of the world through dialogues and collaborations with others.

Social constructivism is particularly relevant in the context of nursing education and communication, as it emphasizes the importance of collaborative learning environments where participants can express their experiences, challenges, and insights openly. This methodological approach allows for the identification of common themes and perspectives about communication issues that student nurses face. By promoting discussion and interaction among peers, the study fosters a deeper understanding of how effective communication can be constructed and improved in healthcare settings.

Sampling Technique Rationale

The use of random sampling in this study was intentional to minimize selection bias and ensure that each participant had an equal chance of being selected. This approach strengthens the representativeness of the sample, allowing the findings to be more generalizable to the broader population of student nurses within the institution. Random sampling also contributes to the credibility of qualitative insights gathered from the focus groups, as it reflects a diverse range of perspectives regarding communication practices and challenges in nursing. Furthermore, including practicing nurses who are also students ensures that the collected data is grounded in real-world experiences, which is crucial for developing strategies for enhancing communication competence in healthcare professionals.

RESULTS

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) has several results, the participants expressed that nurses are vital in the delivery of quality and essential health services and are at the center of strengthening the health system because they bring people-centered care closer to the communities where they are needed most, thereby helping improve health outcomes and the general cost-effectiveness of services rendered. Nurses are the first responders to the manner of complex humanitarian crises and disasters and they are protectors and advocates for the community as well as communicators and co-ordinators within their workspaces. Communication skills for nurses are essential but may be difficult to master because language can be complex. Communication is exchanging information between people by sending and receiving it through speaking, writing, or using any other medium. Clear communication entails that information is passed on effectively between the parties involved. A high level of competence and performance in communication skills is required to be a successful nurse.

Nurses meet and interact with people of diverse educational, cultural, and social backgrounds and must do so in an effective, caring, and professional manner, especially when communicating with patients, families, and their loved ones. The quality of communication in interactions between nurses and patients has a major influence on patient outcomes. This influence can play a very important role in areas such as patient health, education, and adherence. Effective and successful communication plays a central role in the effective functioning of nurses. A nurse must therefore, consciously and continuously try to improve his/her communication skills as poor communication can be dangerous and lead to confusion in the workspace.

The FGD participants thus identified the following challenges of English usage among student nurses:

Language Proficiency

One of the primary challenges identified by focus group participants is the limited language proficiency among student nurses from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Struggles with fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar hinder effective communication with both patients and colleagues, posing significant obstacles in their nursing practice.

Medical Terminology

Another significant challenge is the acquisition and mastery of medical terminology in English. Student nurses who lack exposure to English-language healthcare environments often find it difficult to accurately convey information and understand patients' needs due to their limited familiarity with specific terminologies.

Cultural Differences

Cultural differences further complicate communication for student nurses. Variations in communication styles, gestures, and expressions among diverse cultural backgrounds can lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations. These cultural nuances may result in conflicts during healthcare interactions, affecting the quality of patient care.

Confidence and Assertiveness

The lack of confidence and assertiveness in expressing themselves in English is another challenge noted by participants. Particularly in high-pressure or emotionally charged situations, student nurses may struggle to advocate for patients or collaborate effectively with healthcare teams, which is crucial for successful nursing practice.

Strategies for Effective Communication

Language Support Programmes

To address these challenges, participants recommended the implementation of language support programs by educational institutions and healthcare organizations. These programs could include English language courses, proficiency assessments, and immersion experiences designed to enhance student nurses' language skills and boost their confidence.

Cultural Competency Training

Incorporating cultural competency training into nursing curricula is essential for preparing student nurses to navigate cross-cultural communication challenges. Such training fosters awareness, sensitivity, and respect for diverse cultural perspectives, equipping future nurses with the tools needed for effective communication in multicultural settings.

Communication Skills Workshops

Providing opportunities for student nurses to attend communication skills workshops is crucial. Engaging in role-playing exercises and simulated patient interactions allows them to practice and refine their verbal and nonverbal communication skills, including active listening, empathy, and assertiveness.

Mentorship and Peer Support

Establishing mentorship programs and peer support groups is also vital in developing English language proficiency and communication competence among student nurses. Pairing students with experienced

mentors can offer valuable guidance, feedback, and encouragement, fostering an environment where they can thrive in their communication abilities within healthcare settings. By addressing these challenges and implementing targeted strategies, educational institutions and healthcare organizations can significantly enhance the communication skills of student nurses, ultimately improving patient care outcomes.

DISCUSSION

As mentioned in the article, effective communication is a crucial aspect of providing high-quality healthcare services. This aligns with the study by [Hernandez et al. \(2019\)](#), which found that effective communication can enhance patient recovery rates and satisfaction with healthcare services. 1) Barriers to Communication Among Nursing Students. The article identifies several key barriers to communication, including language limitations, understanding of medical terminology, cultural differences, and lack of confidence. A study by [Norouzinia et al. \(2016\)](#) also found that language barriers and cultural differences significantly hinder communication between nurses and patients, highlighting the need for better communication training. 2) Strategies to Improve Communication Skills. Language Support Programs The language enhancement programs recommended in the article align with the findings of [Adeyemi et al. \(2020\)](#), which state that language training programs can improve nursing students' communication skills. 3) Cultural Competency Training. The cultural training proposed in the article is also supported by the research of [Fitzgerald et al. \(2018\)](#), which emphasizes the importance of cultural competency training in improving cross-cultural understanding and reducing misunderstandings in nursing interactions. 4) Communication Skills Workshops and Simulation. 5) The study by [Farahani et al. \(2021\)](#) indicates that simulation-based training methods are highly effective in enhancing nursing students' communication skills. This article also mentions the use of role-playing as part of the training strategy, which has been proven to boost students' confidence in clinical communication ([Sheehan et al., 2021](#)). 6) Impact of Ineffective Communication. The article highlights how poor communication can lead to errors in patient care and increased stress levels for nurses. [Smith & Smith \(2021\)](#) emphasize that ineffective communication can increase patient safety risks and adverse events in hospital settings.

The article comprehensively discusses the critical role of communication in nursing, highlighting its impact on patient safety, treatment adherence, and overall healthcare quality. Below are additional insights based on the findings in the article: Effective communication in nursing is not just about conveying information; it also involves emotional intelligence, active listening, and empathy. The study by [Noviyanti et al. \(2021\)](#) emphasizes that nurses must be polite, kind, and honest while ensuring that their communication is clear and understandable for patients. The article under review also echoes this, stating that nurses play a central role in healthcare delivery and patient advocacy, making their communication skills essential in bridging gaps between medical teams and patients ([Sharkiya, 2023](#)).

The impact of effective communication extends beyond immediate patient care. [Hernandez et al. \(2019\)](#) argue that effective communication can reduce hospital readmission rates by ensuring that patients fully understand their treatment plans, medication regimens, and necessary lifestyle modifications. In this context, the article underlines the necessity for nursing students to develop strong communication skills early in their education to provide better patient outcomes in their professional practice.

The article identifies several barriers that hinder effective communication among student nurses, including:

Language Proficiency Issues:

The study reveals that many nursing students struggle with fluency, pronunciation, and grammar, particularly those from non-English-speaking backgrounds. According to [Norouzinia et al. \(2016\)](#), language barriers significantly impact healthcare delivery by increasing misunderstandings and misinterpretations, which can lead to medical errors ([Kwame & Petrucka, 2021](#)).

Difficulty in Understanding Medical Terminology

The article highlights that a lack of familiarity with complex medical terms affects how nursing students communicate with patients and other healthcare professionals. [Burns & Baird \(2020\)](#) support this by arguing that integrating communication theory into nursing education can improve students' ability to use medical language correctly and confidently.

Cultural Differences:

The article discusses how cultural variations in communication styles, gestures, and non-verbal cues can lead to misinterpretations. [Fitzgerald et al. \(2018\)](#) assert that cultural competence training is vital in nursing education to help students navigate diverse patient populations and prevent cultural misunderstandings.

Lack of Confidence and Assertiveness:

The study finds that nursing students often hesitate to communicate effectively in stressful or emotionally charged situations. [Sheldon & Jones \(2020\)](#) indicate that emotional barriers, such as fear of making mistakes or anxiety about interacting with senior healthcare professionals, can negatively affect nurse-patient communication.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the importance of effective communication for student nurses at JUTH and identifies various barriers such as language limitations, cultural differences, and lack of confidence. Through interviews and focus group discussions, it was found that structured communication training, including simulations and role-playing, significantly improved students' confidence and communication skills. Additionally, approaches such as cultural competence training, the use of standardized communication models like SBAR, and mentorship programs led by experienced nurses can help overcome communication barriers. Implementing these strategies into the nursing curriculum will enhance patient safety, team satisfaction, and students' readiness for clinical settings. Further research is needed to improve communication proficiency among student nurses continually.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We appreciate all the participants who are student nurses at JUTH for their cooperation in allowing data for the study to be generated from them.

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Innocent N. Dajang: Conceptualization, methodology, editing. Patricia N. Bwai: Data curation, Writing-Original draft preparation, writing- reviewing. Vinamy Yulian: Writing, review, and editing.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest of any sort that could influence the impartiality of the study.

FUNDING

This study did not benefit from any source of financial support.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available online in the articles/journals consulted for the study in the reference section.

REFERENCES

- Al-Busaidi, Z. M. (2018). Communication skills perceived by nursing students: A qualitative study. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*, 8(8), 41-48.
- Adeyemi, A. B., Ajayi, O. A., & Olaniyan, L. O. (2020). Communication skills among nursing students: A systematic review. *Journal of Nursing Research*, 28(2), e43.
- Anderson, J. L. (2021). Building a culture of effective communication in healthcare: Strategies and challenges. *American Nurse Journal*, 16(12), 4-6.
- Burns, P. J., & Baird, M. L. (2020). Integrating communication theory into nursing education: Implications for practice. *Nurse Educator*, 45(4), 209-213.
- Chan, Z. C. Y., Chan, H. L., & Lee, P. M. (2021). Communication challenges in nursing: a study of nurses' perspectives. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 53(1), 79-87.
- Bagnasco, A., Timmins, F., & Ländin, I. (2019). Patients' perceptions of communication in nursing: a systematic review. *International Nursing Review*, 66(4), 523-530.
- Ben Natan, M., Mahajna, M., & Mahajna, K. (2020). Effective communication in nursing: a study of nursing students' perspectives. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*, 10(2), 21-28.
- Farahani, F., Zare, N., & Janghorban, R. (2021). Simulation-based training in nursing: The effects on student learning outcomes. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 114, 103827.
- Fitzgerald, T., Webster, C. S., & Craddock, D. J. (2018). Cultural competence in nursing education: The development of a new training module. *Nursing Education Today*, 70, 183-190. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17380954/>
- Hernandez, R., Shum, C., & Wu, X. (2019). The role of communication in patient recovery: a systematic review. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 102(2), 345-352.
- Huba, D., Kleur, M., & Tilly, B. (2019). The role of effective communication in nursing. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 75(6), 1234-1242.
- Hulsman, R. L., et al. (2016). The patient-centered interview: How to build rapport with patients. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 99(11), 1839-1843.
- Karet, M. I., Graham, B., & Rofo, M. (2017). The impact of feedback on the development of clinical communication skills in nursing students. *BMC Nursing*, 16(1), 32.
- Kourkouta, L., & Papathanasiou, I.V. (2014). Communication in nursing practice. *Materia Socio Medica*, 26(1), 65-67.
- Kwame, A., & Petrucka, P. M. (2021). A literature-based study of patient-centered care and communication in nurse-patient interactions: barriers, facilitators, and the way forward. *BMC Nursing*, 20(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-021-00684-2>
- Lasater, K., & Nielsen, A. (2009). The influence of concept-based learning activities on students' clinical judgment development. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 48(8), 441-446.
- McCabe, C., & Timmins, F. (2013). *Communication Skills for Nursing Practice*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Michels, C., Smith, A., & Clarkson, M. (2021). Mentorship in nursing: A review of the literature. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 29(8), 2131-2144.
- Norouzinia, R., Aghabarari, M., Shiri, M., Karimi, M., & Samami, E. (2016). Communication barriers perceived by nurses and patients. *Global Journal of Health Science*, 8(6), 65-74. doi: [10.5539/gjhs.v8n6p65](https://doi.org/10.5539/gjhs.v8n6p65) PMID: [26755475](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26755475/)
- Norouzinia, R., Doudaghinejad, M., & Ahmadi, M. (2020). The impact of environmental factors on the effectiveness of nurse-patient communication: a systematic review. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 76(10), 2414-2425.
- Noviyanti, L. W., Ahsan, A., & Sudartya, T. S. (2021). Exploring the relationship between nurses' communication satisfaction and patient safety culture. *Journal of Public Health Research*, 10(2), 317-320.

<https://doi.org/10.4081/jphr.2021.2225>

- Ogunleye, O. J., Ojewole, J. O., & Adesanya, O. O. (2019). Understanding the barriers to effective communication among nursing students. *Nursing Practice Today*, 6(3), 166-173.
- Sharkiya, S. H. (2023). Quality communication can improve patient-centred health outcomes among older patients: a rapid review. *BMC Health Services Research*, 23(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-023-09869-8>
- Sheehan, J., Laver, K., Bhojti, A., Rahja, M., Usherwood, T., Clemson, L., & Lannin, N. A. (2021). Methods and effectiveness of communication between hospital allied health and primary care practitioners: A systematic narrative review. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Healthcare*, 14, 493–511. <https://doi.org/10.2147/JMDH.S295549>
- Sheldon, L.K., & Jones, D. (2020). Exploring the difficulty of nurse-patient communication: emotional and practical barriers. *Nursing Management*, 47(11), 30-38.
- Smith, J., & Smith, L. (2021). The impact of nurse communication on patient safety in clinical settings. *Journal of Patient Safety*, 17(2), e79-e85.
- Weiss, M. E., Costa, L.L., & Yakusheva, O. (2020). Validation of patient and nurse short forms of the Readiness for Hospital Discharge Scale and their relationship to return to the hospital. *Health Services Research*, 55(3), 373-384.
- Wunea, G., Ayalew, Y., Hailu, A., & Gebretensaye, T. (2020). Nurses to patients communication and barriers perceived by nurses at Tikur Anbessa Specialized Hospital, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 2018. *International Journal of Africa Nursing Sciences*, 12, 100197.
- Wunea, A., Abass, K., & Osei, A. (2020). Enhancing patient communication: the role of technology and effective strategies in nursing. *International Journal of Nursing Practice*, 26(2), e12856.
- Zahra, M. S., Moshki, M., & Nasiri, S. (2022). The effectiveness of simulation-based education on nursing students' communication skills: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*, 12(1), 34-45.