リハビリテーション医療従事者のためのESP

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要約　ESPとはEnglish for Specific Purposesの略であり、特定の目的のための英語教育のことである。一般的な英語教育（EGP）と異なり実用的な英語能力向上を目的とし実践力をある人材育成を目指す。このため特に専門技術・資格取得を目指す高等教育機関や専門職に従事する人々の注目を集めている。しかし効果的なESPを提供するためには、「特定の目的」に必要な英語の明確化が不可欠となる。リハビリテーション医療はその特殊な専門性のため他分野と異なる英語能力が求められる。そこで言語能力の各構成要素をESPの観点から分析し、リハビリテーション医療従事者に求められる英語能力を考察した。リハビリテーション医療従事者は言語4技能全てを網羅した英語カリキュラムが有意義であることが考察結果として挙げられる。また社会言語学及びコーパス言語学的観点からその特異性を認識する必要があると考えられる。

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ESP for Allied Health Professionals

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Many Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) and students who are studying to be AHPs question the importance of English education for their careers. In fact, for the therapists who have no intention to learn cutting edge therapy theories and techniques, improving their English proficiency level might not be a high priority in their career development plans. Also some professionals who work at rehabilitation hospitals and clinics in Japan may never have encountered a time when they had to use English.

However, the objectives of higher education should not be teaching students so that they will be satisfied with the status quo. Higher education must do more than merely preparing students for managing routine work. Colleges should be fostering students capable of effectively coping with fast social changes, studying up-to-date with the rapid progress of medical technology, and becoming future leaders in their career fields. For these purposes, English education in the universities offering the rehabilitation science courses must also provide English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

Providing ESP courses designed specifically for the students’ field of study, in this case rehabilitation science, helps students increase their motivation more than English for General Purposes (EGP) courses (Tsao, 2011). For students majoring in a specific field, English in a meaningful context stimulates their desire to learn. In this paper, an effective ESP education for college students studying to become AHPs is analyzed by answering the following question.

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In general, linguistic skills are divided into four: listening, reading, writing and speaking. Unlike EGP courses, ESP courses must be built on the needs which each specific field requires. Instructors do not need to cover all skills if they are not relevant in the field.

Speaking and Listening Abilities

What is a pragmatic English education for people who are in the rehabilitation field? For most Japanese people, English education starts in junior high schools where EGP is taught. Many colleges require their students to take compulsorily English classes. Although some conversation classes are provided in junior high schools and high schools, English education has mainly concentrated on grammar, reading and translation. The ineffectuality of Japanese English education has long been a controversial topic. The country’s conventional approach to English language education has been blamed as the primary cause of the problem. The key criticism of the approach is that English speaking and listening skills of Japanese people are insufficient. Although the effectiveness of English classes emphasizing listening and speaking skills is still doubted by many educators, an increasing enthusiasm for speaking and listening based English education is listed in the nation’s education guidelines below.

THE COUSE OF STUDY FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGES

I. Overall Objectives

To develop students’ basic practical communication abilities such as listening and speaking, deepening the understanding of language and culture, and fostering a positive attitude toward communication through foreign languages.

(Curriculum guideline of the MEXT 2003)

Moreover, communicative language teaching (CLT) is currently one of the most well known teaching methods in the English as a foreign language (EFL) field. In CLT classrooms, teachers make lesson plans so that students learn the target language through communicative interactions. According to Ellis (1999, 1), the interaction is “the social behavior that occurs when one person communicates with another.” This communicative interaction has been widely recognized as an effective language classroom activity since the importance of conversation for language acquisition was introduced (Hatch, 1978; Long, 1996).

Japanese AHPs have much less opportunity to work abroad if they do not have efficient English speaking and listening skills. In addition, to participate in international internship programs and study abroad programs, English speaking and listening skills are often required. Internships and studying abroad programs with on-site experience at overseas institutions would offer irreplaceable experiences. At many of the
overseas work places, AHPs must explain important matters to their patients, instruct their patients, and comprehend what their patients want to say in English.

Moreover, the number of foreigners in Japan is rapidly increasing. According to the results of statistics conducted by Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, over two million foreign residents were legally registered in 2010. In addition, a large number of hospitals have started to see the possibilities of medical tourism. Because of such demographic changes and future business possibilities, there are increasing demands for Japanese medical institutions to be more foreigner friendly.

The situations in which physical therapists need English speaking and listening abilities are not only overseas working places. Many conferences for AHOs bring together individuals from different nations to discuss current issues and share the latest information. The conferences are places where highly motivated AHPs meet and interact. Through the interactions with professionals from other countries, Japanese AHPs are able to broaden their views and increase their knowledge. High speaking and listening proficiency levels and a deep knowledge of academic terminology are essential for giving presentations and participating in discussions in international academic and professional conferences.

Writing and Reading Abilities

However, in order to foster the AHPs who can internationally play an active part in their field, an English education emphasizing just speaking and listening is insufficient. To learn the state of the art technology and latest research, a high English reading proficiency level is definitely required because almost all internationally recognized journals are written in English. University researchers and medical professionals search for opportunities to publish their work in academic journals written in English because such journals have an international readership.

Grammar

Teachers who are applying the CLT method would normally not make their students do conventional language learning activities, for example drilling, and they place little emphasis on teaching grammar. However, an antipathy to teaching grammar would not lead students to be successful learners. The goal of having total language competence would not be achieved through the continuous effort to develop only listening and speaking abilities. According to Canale and Swain (1980) “… second language learning will proceed more effectively when grammatical usage is not abstracted from meaningful context” (p. 24) “… and that facilitating the integration of various competencies should be the primary goal of language teaching in communicative approach,” (p. 27)

Language competence consists of not only the two abilities. The following illustration shows how language competence is composed. Without improving learners’ grammatical competence, their language competence will be incomplete.
From the ESP point of view, since AHPs deal with their patients’ physical problems, communication with inaccurate grammar might result in an irreparable mistake. Also accuracy in language is vital to obtain respect from other researchers in international conferences and to publish a research in international journals.

Vocabulary

Promoting vocabulary development is essential because vocabulary comprehension plays a crucial role in acquiring all of the four language skills, speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The instructors in an ESP program for AHPs need to select words which correspond to the needs of the learners.

At the work place, therapists are involved every day in various communicative tasks: explaining treatments and examinations to their patients, and giving suggestions and advice on patients’ lifestyles. In all cases, they must remember their communication counterparts are patients who are having health problems and are often facing enormous psychological stress. Using plain English and avoiding medical jargon and complex grammar will help patients’ comprehension and reduce their physical and psychological stress. Moreover, it can prevent any medical practitioners from unnecessary blame caused by misunderstandings. Some researchers (Miyamoto, Miyamoto, Takuma, Inoue, Takebayashi, Okabe & Takimoto, 2007) who collected 300 words to create the English corpus for physical therapy education, suggest that English education for the physical therapists should be more focused on basic English. The results of their work indicate a large percent of the collected words belong to basic vocabulary; among the 300 words, 257 words are categorized as technical words, and more than 190 words are considered basic vocabulary. The reason that the sum of the two categories is more than their collected words is that some basic words are classified as both terminological vocabulary and basic vocabulary.

Another important issue that instructors must remind themselves of when they make the list of
vocabulary is the unique characteristics of Japanese language — its abundance of ideophones, or mimetic words, which constitute a major lexical category in Japanese (Hamano, 1998; Iijima, 2004). In Japanese, ideophonic words are registered in different forms, adverbs, adjectives, verbs, and nouns. Such a difference between the English and the Japanese language must be taken into account when English language instructors develop curriculum for their courses and select vocabulary to be taught. In many medical situations, a large number of mimetic words are used to explain the physical and psychological conditions, for example, explaining types of pain, nausea, and itchiness. Japanese people often use mimetic words to express complex states of mind and situations clearly and simply. Therefore, students who are studying English to be AHPs need to learn English non-idephonic words, for instance, ‘kirikiri’ means having a piercing pain, ‘hirihiri’ means having a stinging pain, and ‘zokuzoku’ is shivering with a cold.

Sociolinguistic Competence

Another aspect of English that should be taught for the future AHPs is social registers. Linguistic forms, including words choices, syntax, and grammar, can alter depending on the purpose of the communication, audience and social settings. In Backman’s language competences (Figure 1), the ability to handle social register is included within the sociolinguistic competence. Modern English has a large variety of registers, but not many studies have been conducted to categorize the variety (Biber, 1995). Textbooks and handouts written in academic style help students to be exposed to one aspect of register. However, activities using such teaching materials would not provide students with opportunities to learn how to maneuver among different linguistic forms in a variety of occasions. One of the effective teaching methods is providing various types of case studies to students and assigning students to do role plays related to the case studies to the classroom.

Conclusion

Effective ESP classes must meet the needs of AHPs and provide support for their career development; for that purpose, this paper clarifies the English competences they need to improve. However, acknowledging the essential competencies is only the first step of creating effective ESP classes. Teaching all competencies listed in this paper is not an easy task. To complete the task, other aspects of ESP for AHPs must be analyzed. Questions that should be considered by ESP course designers include the following:

- Taking into consideration the differences in student levels, how can an effective curriculum that addresses all of the necessary skills be developed?
- What kinds of teaching methods are appropriate?

Future plans for study include research into answers to the above questions. The answers must take into account the English competencies which the students studying rehabilitation science need to improve.
References


