

# A Content-based ERP (English for Rehabilitation Purposes) Textbook

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## 抄 録

文部科学省による1994年の大学設置基準改正や2003年度公表の『英語が使える日本人』育成のための行動計画を契機として、各大学においては様々な英語カリキュラム改革が行われている。グローバル化の進む中、仕事で英語が使える人材育成を目的とするESP (English for Specific Purpose) が次第に浸透しつつあるが、カリキュラム、指導法、教科書などには様々な課題が残されている。昨年度、健康科学大学では英語を含む総合基礎科目教員、専門科目教員、事務職員、学生が協力しリハビリテーション分野では初めての英語教科書を作成した。2007年前期(4月)より1年生は本教科書を使い理学療法、作業療法、福祉心理に関連する英語を学んでいる。学生の英語力を伸ばすには何が必要なのかが専門分野、基礎科学そして英語教員の間で検討され教科書の改良、授業の向上のための努力が常になされていかなければならない。本稿ではESPの必要性についての論考、教科書の紹介、学生対象のアンケート結果の報告をする。

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## Organization of this paper

This paper is organized as follows: First, a statement of the problem and significance of this project will be stated in the Introduction. Then a literature review and definition of terms will be provided. The following section will present the overview of our content-based ERP textbook. A needs analysis and discussion based on the results of our survey will follow. Our study will conclude with a discussion of the implications for further improvement of our textbook project.

## Introduction

The surge of globalization along with the development of Information Technology (IT) has increased public awareness of the necessity of English skills in a rapid changing society. Responding to such a growing notion, an “Action Plan to Cultivate Japanese with English Abilities” by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, Sports and Technology (MEXT) was introduced to promote students’ communication skills and to raise their motivation to learn English.<sup>1)</sup> At the university level, the goal of MEXT’s action is to instill in graduates the ability to use English in their professions. Although English is a required course for the majority of universities in Japan, students are often reported as having poor English skills and low motivation toward learning English. To break such a dilemma, many universities started restructuring their English curriculum in order to better meet students’ needs and abilities. Implementing English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has become one popular strategy for reform. The ESP approach intends to promote both the students’ communication skills and specialized English in their field, while simultaneously increasing motivation by taking into account students’ needs and interests.

However, adopting an ESP approach involves some issues concerning textbooks and instructors. It is claimed that few appropriate ESP textbooks are available. Moreover, many English teachers are trained for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and have linguistic knowledge, while their knowledge of a particular discourse community is often limited. Such problems should be addressed in order to provide effective ESP instruction.

## Significance of this project

Although various ESP textbooks are available in the fields of business, law and medicine, few in the fields of rehabilitation, targeting physical therapists, occupational therapists, and social or psychiatric social workers, are available. Textbooks, which help these students build basic communication skills, improve specific language skills needed

in the field, and develop knowledge of terms, phrases, and expressions in basic medicine and rehabilitation, are needed. In designing such a textbook, needs analysis plays a key role; what the students' current and future needs are, and what skills and knowledge are needed in the field of rehabilitation should be taken into account. Such needs analysis helps to set sound objectives, decide appropriate materials, deliver effective instruction, and evaluate curriculums for further improvement. Therefore, collaboration between English instructors and professionals in the field appears to be indispensable. Our textbook was created based on such assumptions.

### **Definition of terms and literature review of ESP and ERP**

The fundamental concept of ESP is to facilitate English instruction based on the goals of the learners. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), ESP is an approach to language teaching which is directed by specific and apparent reasons for learning (p.19)<sup>2)</sup>. Dudley-Evans and ST. John (1998) further defined ESP, modifying Strevens' definition (1988) by stating ESP as having four absolute characteristics and two variable characteristics.<sup>3)4)</sup> These absolute characteristics are, 1) ESP is designed to meet the specific needs of the learners; 2) ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the disciplines that it serves; 3) ESP is concerned with the language appropriate to these activities in terms of grammar, lexis, register, study skills, discourse and genre; and 4) ESP is in contrast with General English (GE). Two variable characteristics are, 1) ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines; and 2) ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of GE. Terauchi (2000) defines ESP based on the concept of the discourse community.<sup>5)</sup> He claims that ESP is a study or education of language, having a clear and specific purpose of using English in or outside the discourse community. He continues that such a community is formed to achieve purpose in the professional field and distinguished by the particular needs of academic background and occupation.

It also should be mentioned that ESP is an umbrella term covering English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English for Business Purposes (EBP), English for Science and Technology (EST) and ERP. For the present study, the term ERP, is created as one of such terms covered by ESP.

### **ESP and content-based instruction**

According to Brinton et al. (1989), content-based instruction is the integration of content learning with language teaching aims (p.2)<sup>6)</sup>. It integrates particular content with the goal to develop use-oriented second or foreign language skills. They suggest there are two models of content-based instruction. One is to teach the academic subject

while building students' language skills. The other, which is the focus of the present study, is a theme based model in which selected topics or themes provide the content for students to learn. In fact, Brinton et al. (1989) states that Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) is the best known and most documented of the content-based language models (p.6 and p.7)<sup>6)</sup>. Our ERP instruction brings together the themes from the field of rehabilitation, care and support as well as from students' daily lives.

### **Rational for using content-based instruction**

The effectiveness of content-based English instruction can be supported theoretically and pedagogically. According to Krashen (1985), the only path to second language acquisition is through comprehensive input, not conscious grammar learning based on the forms of English<sup>7)</sup>. He emphasizes the importance of meaningful interaction in the target language for language acquisition. Therefore, natural communication facilitated in content-based instruction is believed to help learners acquire language skills. Students can also learn useful language that is embedded within a relevant discourse context rather than as isolated language fragments (Grave W. and Stoller F. 1997)<sup>8)</sup>.

Secondly, since content-based instruction involves authentic materials, it is believed to promote learners' motivation. Language learners recognize that their learning is relevant to their field and useful for their future success, which promotes their interests.

Finally, content-based instruction provides materials in which learners can make a connection to their lives and current study in their particular fields. As Anderson (1999) states, content that has a greater number of connections to related information promotes better learning<sup>9)</sup>. Moreover, in content-based instruction where familiar themes are introduced, students can use their previous experience or background knowledge of subject matter for new learning; it provides students opportunities to build upon their existing skills and knowledge.

As described above, use of a content-based ESP approach is beneficial for students. It offers opportunities for students to promote their language skills while sustaining their motivation to learn.

### **Current conditions at Japanese universities**

Along with their 'Action Plan to Cultivate Japanese with English Abilities,' the MEXT decision in 1994 to hand over control of university curriculums to individual universities had a great impact on university English curriculum. The question of how university English can 'Cultivate Japanese with an English ability' brought two main perspectives among practitioners.

Some claim that the college English curriculum should focus primarily on academic

skills, developing student's basic language skills, their ability to work across cultures, read and write research papers, and present materials in international conferences, all of which are considered to be EAP, rather than skills emphasized in ESP courses (Tajino, 2004; Uchida et al., 2002)<sup>10(11)</sup>. Others believe introducing ESP is desirable since it considers needs, determining what language skills and knowledge are needed for learners in order to professionally succeed in a particular field. Some survey studies found a growing interest among universities to use ESP (Yokoyama, 2005)<sup>12)</sup>. Students also feel that ESP fulfills the needs of their future (Langham, 2003)<sup>13)</sup>.

Although such survey results indicate the current trend in ESP, Sasajima, et al. (2003) claim that ESP research in Japan is still in its infancy, and has not established its position despite the increasing awareness of its necessity.<sup>14)</sup> In such a situation, practitioners are urged to carefully examine available studies, and explore the nature of ESP, including the advantages and shortcomings of current practices. Based on such a comprehensive examination, practical and effective English approaches, in which the learners are willing to make a commitment to acquire English skills, can be implemented.

At the same time, concerns about ESP textbooks have been discussed in various studies. Jones (1990) addresses the unavailability of ESP textbooks<sup>15)</sup>, while Noguchi (1998) claims that the level of current ESP textbooks for university students is too high<sup>16)</sup>. To solve such issues Sasajima (2003) suggests collaboration between English teachers and teachers in the field in textbook design while emphasizing the importance of authenticity of ESP materials. Jones suggests creating a resource bank, where various materials could be available for ESL instructors. Gatehouse (2001) recommends ESL teachers to familiarize themselves with useful instructional materials, and search for resources for their own professional growth<sup>17)</sup>. Dudley-Evans (1998) also suggests collaboration, encouraging dialogues among professionals, which helps ESP practitioners to understand the genres in a particular discourse community and to implement specific activities<sup>18)</sup>. How HSU addressed this unavailability of appropriate content-based textbooks by utilizing rehabilitation professionals to develop English learning materials for its students is discussed in the next section.

## First-Year Textbook Project : English for Rehabilitation, Care and Support

### **Aims**

A team of teachers of English, basic science, and rehabilitation professionals from HSU formed the English Project Working Group (EPWG) in 2006 in order to revise the English curriculum to coincide with the university's 5<sup>th</sup> year of operation. The aim of the

EPWG was to create a content-based curriculum focusing on rehabilitation English. Upon investigation of available and authentic commercial materials in this area, several textbooks designed to teach medical and nursing English to Japanese students were found which were too difficult, and only marginally related to rehabilitation science. It was finally determined that no appropriate commercial ERP materials existed, so the EPWG set out to develop its own. In order to accomplish this goal, the EPWG would have to expand into a network which included professionals in the areas of physical therapy (PT), occupational therapy (OT) and social welfare and psychology (SW/P) who work at HSU. Regular collaboration between the material writers and these rehabilitation specialists took place to determine authentic topics and select appropriate language for ERP materials. Using such professional support, our aim was to devise a series of ERP textbooks for the first two years of required English for all students at HSU: one textbook for first-year students integrating content from the departments of PT, OT and SW/P and three textbooks for second-year students, each text focusing on the content area of one of the three university faculties.

### **Target population**

The first-year textbook, titled English for Rehabilitation, Care and Support Part I, is used in English I with students from all three departments at HSU, and is general enough so that the content applies to the areas of the three departments. Students from all three departments share an English class. As a result, one book that all first-year students could use regardless of their majors was needed. We wanted to emphasize the interrelatedness of PT, OT and SW/P, both in the university curriculums and out in the professional world through the sharing of learning materials. Students sharing a class and a textbook with classmates from other departments learn about the interdisciplinary nature of the three fields. From the 2008 academic year, second-year English will incorporate three textbooks- one text for the students of each of the three departments of the university. The purpose of three separate textbooks for second-year English was to create an opportunity for the students to focus more deeply on the topics and language associated with their individual majors.

### **Textbook development**

Although all English teachers in the EPWG have had experience with scientific English, to assure the accuracy of the textbook content, as mentioned above, specialists from the departments of OT, SW/P and PT, as well as basic science, were recruited to provide up-to-date and relevant materials for the highly content-based sections of the textbook. These HSU professionals provided content from Anatomy (the

musculoskeletal system), Physiology (cardiovascular system and hematology), SW/P (alcoholism), OT (geriatrics) and PT (orthopedics). The texts were predominantly submitted in Japanese and translated by bilingual members of the EPWG. The materials were then edited and converted into a format suitable for a beginning level content-based English textbook, focusing on rehabilitation English. Additional content was culled and adapted from numerous commercial materials, especially English for Doctors. Materials that were to be included in the listening component of the textbook, including conversation scripts, were recorded onto a CD by members of the EPWG, their families and the students themselves. The recordings were digitally mastered using on-campus equipment, and one CD for each textbook was produced and included as part of the textbook package.

### **Textbook content**

Deciding the content for a single first-year textbook that would appeal to the needs of a student body of three related but individual departments at HSU created a considerable challenge. Of particular concern was including content which was neither too general nor specific. In other words, we wanted materials specific enough to be relevant to all PT students, but also not so specific that they would alienate students from the departments of SW/P or OT. In line with our philosophy promoting content-based curricula, we wanted the first-year students to study subject matter that had direct importance to their lives both in and outside of the classroom. Thus the textbook is divided into five sections, or units: Introduction, Our Body, Basic Medicine, In the Doctor's Office and Rehabilitation, Care and Support. The content and level of English are graded from general to specific and from beginning to advanced, respectively. All units generally have the following progression of skill areas: pre-listening activities which include brainstorming ideas about the topic and vocabulary, listening comprehension which includes both global and local listening activities, speaking practice, grammar and fieldwork.

The introductory unit deals with language associated with exchanging personal information: hometown, occupation, major, and university life, as well as explaining what it is that physical therapists, occupational therapists and social workers do in their jobs. Figure 1-Example 1 shows how vocabulary throughout the text is taught using both English-English cognitive exercises, and English-Japanese translation.

Unit 2, Our Body, presents the most common parts of the body used in general conversation, as well as everyday health problems and remedies. The grammar component, in this case, modal auxiliaries of advice, is introduced to the students inductively in Figure 1-Example 2.

Figure 1. Activities from the text English for Rehabilitation, Care and Support

Example 1: Vocabulary From Context And English-Japanese Translation

We have to assess the students' English skills to know their language level. Then we can begin the lesson.

Assess is \_\_\_\_\_. [ a. to test, b. to teach]

(Note) fine motor skills : 指や手の筋肉を使った細かい動きや作業  
gross motor skills : 粗大運動技能, 腕・足等の大きな筋肉の協応運動

Example 2: Health Advice

Read the sentences. Notice the italicized words. Answer the questions below.

You *should* lose weight.  
You *shouldn't* talk a lot.  
You *ought to* go home and rest.  
You *had better* take some cold medicine.  
*Why don't you* see a doctor?

1. What are the verbs in each sentence?
2. What form is the verb in each sentence?
3. What does *should* mean? What does *shouldn't* mean?
4. What does *ought to* mean?
5. What does *had better* mean?
6. What does *why don't you* mean?

Example 3: Fieldwork

Research one of the muscles below. Go to the library or look on the Internet.

Trapezius      Triceps      Gluteus maximus      Deltoids

Find out :

- The location of the muscle
- The function of the muscle (what it does)
- What kind of exercise is good to tone up this muscle
- What kind of sport usually injures this muscle

Example 4: Role Play

Target Expressions Social History

1. What do you do?
2. What kind of job is it?
3. Is it a stressful job?
4. How much do you smoke?
5. How long have you been smoking?
6. Do you drink?
7. Do you smoke?
8. Where do you live?

Example 5: Pre-reading

Social Workers Support for Alcoholism

Preview

Exercise Please discuss the following three questions in group.

1. What does "addiction" mean?
2. What kinds of addiction can you think of ?
3. Do you think you have an addiction?



The Basic Medicine unit covers vocabulary, disorders and functions associated with basic anatomy and physiology, including the musculoskeletal system and blood, with special emphasis on how they relate to issues of rehabilitation care. We incorporated the theme of muscle training at a fitness club into the teaching of the location, function and rehabilitation of some of the major muscle groups. Figure 1-Example 3 shows the fieldwork section of the text in which the students research a muscle and give an oral presentation to the class. The basic medicine unit continues with a lesson on blood and introduces some basic physiological concepts such as composition and functions of blood and its connection to the rehabilitative disorders of stroke, aphasia and hemiplegia resulting from the stoppage of blood flow to the brain.

Unit 4, *In The Doctor's Office*, returns to an oral-based approach to teach communication skills between health care providers and their clients. There are four lessons in the unit: taking medical, family and social histories of the client, and discussing pain. At the end of each lesson, the students are expected to have internalized the target language of the health care providers and use it in a role play as a final speaking activity, thus emulating real life situations, as shown in Figure 1-Example 4.

The final unit of the textbook deals with content related specifically to each of the three majors of HSU: alcoholism for SW/P, geriatrics for OT and orthopedics for PT. It is expected that the students will have already had some exposure to the above concepts in their major classes. Illustrated in Figure 1-Example 5 is a pre-reading brainstorming exercise utilizing the students' background knowledge of the topic.

### **Further development**

As of this writing, the first-year English textbook, *English for Rehabilitation, Care and Support*, is halfway through its pilot test year. To the best of our knowledge, this is the only English textbook focusing on rehabilitation science being used in Japan. We attempted to create engaging English materials that were dictated more by the nature of the subject matter than by language forms and sequences, at an appropriate level for our students at HSU. A collaboration of rehabilitation professionals, scientists, and language experts across various disciplines contributed their expertise to the creation of this textbook. The EPWG, in conjunction with rehabilitation care specialists, are already revising the text for the second edition in terms of level of language, amount of content, and types of exercises and is also creating materials for three second-year textbooks.

The content of these materials and future revisions, however, must not only be determined by English teachers and professionals in the discourse community, but also

through a process of analysis of the students needs: their opinions towards English, and how it relates to their education, careers, and personal lives. Needs analysis is considered an important step in systematic curriculum development (Brown, 1995)<sup>19)</sup>. Especially in ESP curriculum development, it is paramount to focus on the students' needs<sup>1)</sup>. Needs analysis involves collecting information to be utilized for developing a curriculum that meets the pedagogical needs of a given group of learners.

The section below describes the results of a survey conducted to assess the students' attitudes towards and needs for English learning.

## Report on student survey

### Overview

At the beginning of the first semester, 2007, a questionnaire was administered to the new students enrolling in the first-year English class in order to identify their needs for as well as attitudes toward learning English. The present study, which is our ongoing project, was conducted to analyze the students' needs so that the results could be used to assist us in developing a more sound and effective curriculum and textbooks for HSU students studying health and rehabilitation-related sciences.

### Method

**Subjects:** The participants of this study were 236 predominantly first-year students from all three departments enrolled in English I-1 at HSU. English I is a first-year student core requirement course and all first-year students were enrolled in this course in 9 separate classes taught by three instructors. The participants included 2 second-year students who were retaking the course. One hundred four PT majors (102 first-year students and 2 second-year students) out of 105 registered students, 88 OT majors out of 90 registered, and 44 SW/P majors out of 48 registered completed the questionnaire.

**Procedure:** A 3-page Japanese questionnaire consisting of mostly multiple choice close-response questions with a few open-ended questions was administered to the participants. The students who attended the class sessions on the day of the survey administration were asked to respond to the questionnaire during class. The questionnaire included self-assessment/evaluation of three areas: the students' own English skills, attitudes toward English and English learning, and their specific needs for learning English. The purposes of the questionnaire were explained and the students were told to respond frankly to help the English instructors organize and improve English classes to meet their needs. (Note: A copy of the questionnaire can be requested/obtained from the authors.)

## Results

Although there were three areas of the questionnaire, only the results from the area with questions relevant to the purpose of the present study, namely students' needs analysis, are reported here.

As shown in Figure 2, an overwhelming number of the students, 96% in total, felt a need for English language skills in general to one degree or another. Approximately 12% of the students believed that English was absolutely necessary; 42% fairly necessary; and 42% somewhat necessary. The mean score of the rated degree of necessity was 2.6 ( $SD = 0.7$ ) on the 4-point scale with 1: Not Necessary; 2: Somewhat Necessary; 3: Fairly Necessary; 4: Absolutely Necessary. There was no significant statistical difference found among the three majors.

Consistent with their general belief, a large number of the students perceived English as an important part of the university curriculum (see Figure 3). Only 3% thought English was of no importance. The mean score of the rated importance was 2.4 ( $SD = 0.6$ ) on the 4-point scale with 1: Not Important; 2: Somewhat Important; 3: Fairly Important, 4: Extremely Important. There was no significant statistical difference found among the three majors; the students in all three majors equally regarded

Figure 2. Necessity of English in General

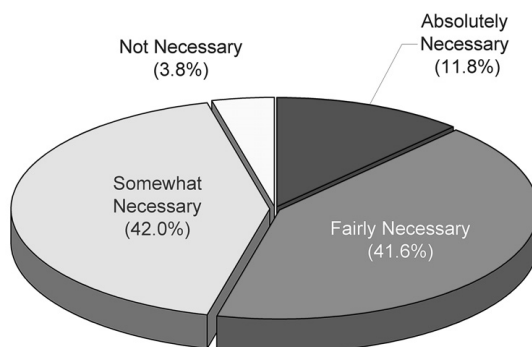


Figure 3. Importance of English Courses in the University Curriculum

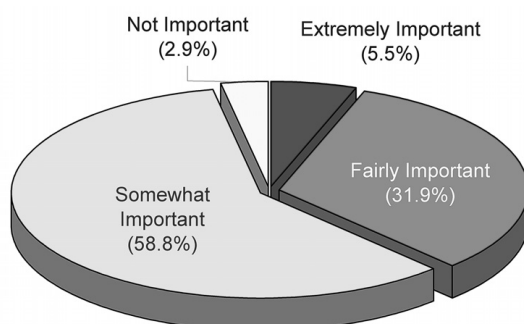
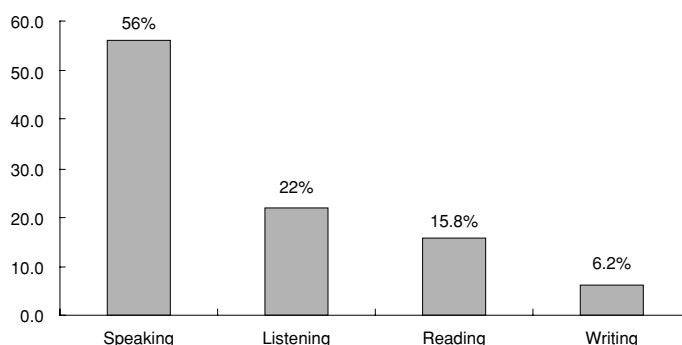


Figure 4. Necessary English Skills



English as important in the entire curriculum.

In terms of the areas of English language skills, 78% of the students felt verbal communication skills would be required in the fields where they would be working in the future (speaking: 56%; listening: 22%-see Figure 4). On the other hand, less than a quarter of the students expected that reading would be necessary. Only 6.2% of the students believed that they would need writing skills in the future, which was consistent with their responses to the question asking about the likelihood of writing papers and reports in English in the future; a significant number of the students (73%) thought they would never or probably not need to do so.

It is also evident from the results of the survey that the students appear to foresee the impact of internationalization on their future working environment. As can be seen in Figure 5, 86% of the students felt English skills would be necessary to communicate with patients/clients and colleagues from other countries while working in Japan, and more than 50% felt that going overseas for career-related purposes would require

Figure 5. Work-Related Situations where English would be Necessary

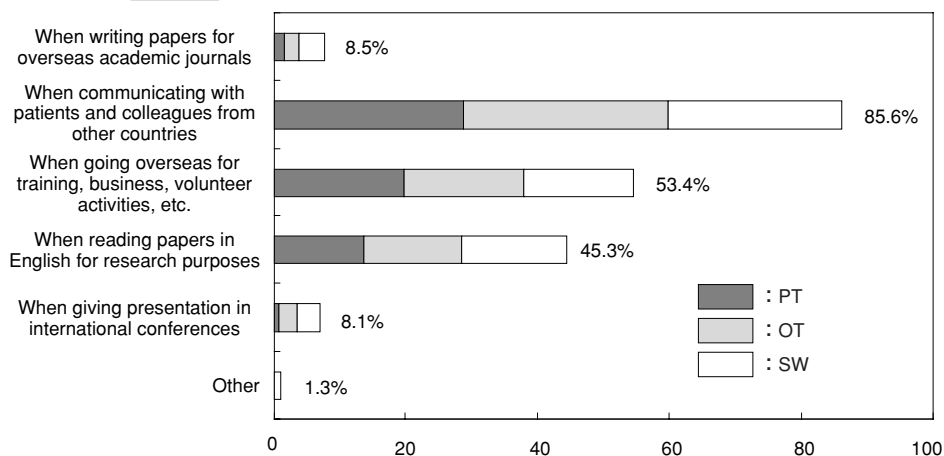
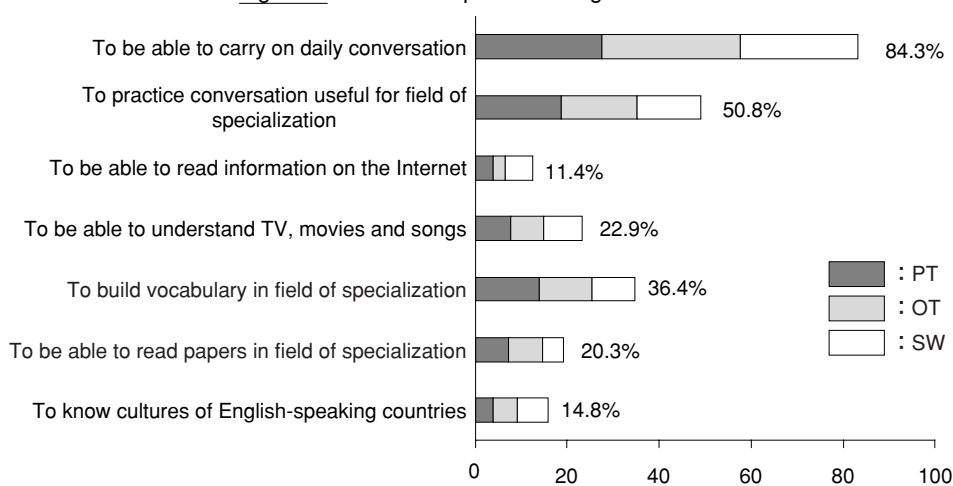


Figure 6. What You Expect from English Classes



English language skills.

Similar results were found in what the students expected from university English classes (see Figure 6). Eighty-four percent of the students expected university English classes to aim at improving every day oral communication skills. More than half said they would like to learn communication skills which would be particularly useful for their future career, and 36% felt building specialized vocabulary related to their fields would be needed. Noteworthy is that a large number of the students feel a need for learning “practical” or “functional” language skills that can be applied to both everyday life as well as whatever they will be engaged in their specialized fields after graduating from the university. The results of the close-response questions were further evidenced by those of the open-ended questions asking the students to respond freely to what they expect from university English classes. Approximately 40% of the students indicated that they would like to learn oral communication skills. Fifteen percent of the students specifically indicated in the open-ended question, in addition to the close-response questions, that they would especially like to study English that is related to their specialized fields.

Another striking fact revealed by the survey is that a majority of the students (84%) rated their own grammatical knowledge below average or low. The results of the above open-ended questions also show that reviewing English grammar and working on basic comprehension are thought necessary by a considerable number of students. These findings together imply that it is also necessary to review the fundamentals of English grammar in class to ensure basic understanding. Along with ERP and content-based approaches with an emphasis on oral communication skills, the importance of basic knowledge of grammar and syntax cannot be overlooked in oral communication skills

and listening, not to mention reading and writing. The first-year textbook includes grammar focus sections, which appear to be appreciated by the students according to the results of a second survey we administered in the first semester upon completion of Unit 1.

### **Survey summary**

The results of the survey have revealed the students' primary needs for improving their oral communication skills. Another noteworthy finding was that a significant number of students responded they would specifically like to learn the language skills involving their field of study, which would be useful for their future career. It is also evident that grammar is an area in which the students feel incompetent and needs to be strengthened. It can be concluded that overall, the students feel a need for practical or functional language skills, primarily oral communication and language relating to the their fields of study that can be used in work situations as well as every day life, which should be supplemented by reviewing basic grammar.

These results are in accordance with our current approach to provide the students with an ERP curriculum and to create content-based textbooks incorporating the areas of the students' specializations with an emphasis on oral communication skills. Likewise, the textbook developed specifically for the first-year HSU students also appears to be on the right track with its ERP content as well as general content that has relevance to their personal lives. The inclusion of grammar review sections also appears to have been sensible. Overall, the results of the present survey appear to confirm the direction and approach that we have chosen.

### **Follow-up survey**

Upon completion of the initial needs assessment, the students evaluated Unit 1 of the first-year textbook, English for Rehabilitation, Care and Support. The evaluation was given toward the end of the first semester. Before the end of the second semester, another questionnaire will be given to the students to get their opinions and evaluations on the 1-year English textbook as a whole. The results of these evaluations will be used to modify, revise and improve the quality of the textbook towards better serving the students pedagogical needs.

### **Discussion/implications : Process not product**

In the previous sections, we have argued the importance or need for an ERP curriculum for our students here at HSU. The first-year textbook, our first original ERP textbook, is by no means a finished product. Materials development, like second

language acquisition, is a process.

For further development of current curriculum and textbooks/materials, corrective processes through ongoing examinations and analysis of students' needs and professional needs are necessary. It is critical to get regular updated feedback from students and reflect those results on constant improvement of individual classes and the curriculum as a whole. Furthermore, it is equally or more important to unveil what language skills and vocabulary/expressions are actually required in the real world. Such needs analysis includes identifying what textbook contents would be best suited for effective language and skill acquisition.

As mentioned elsewhere, our first textbook was created through collaboration with other faculty members with various specialties and expertise in the three different departments here at HSU. These professionals provided us with their opinions and content materials to facilitate determining what content should be included in the textbook. We will continuously collaborate with our fellow faculty members to improve the existing textbook and develop second-year textbooks. Another important agenda for us is to go out in the field and survey practitioners, i.e., physical therapists, occupational therapists, social workers and psychiatric social workers in the field to identify the "real" practical needs. As the ongoing improvement of the HSU English curriculum continues, we will strive to amalgamate all available resources, including student feedback, rehabilitation professionals' input and English teachers' expertise. Through such collaboration, we hope to be able to prepare our students for the multi-lingual challenges they may face in the ever evolving world of rehabilitation, care and support.

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## Abstract

In 1994 the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, Sports and Technology (MEXT) of Japan handed over the control of curriculum to individual universities. Along with its “Action Plan to Cultivate Japanese with English Abilities,” this decision brought about a reform movement on university English curriculum. For such a reform, implementing English for Specific Purposes (ESP) became a popular strategy. Although the ESP approach is beneficial and useful, few, if any, appropriate ESP textbooks are available in rehabilitation fields. The present study introduces a textbook created through a collaboration of English teachers, subject teachers, office workers and students at Health Science University (HSU). It is a content-based English for Rehabilitation Purposes (ERP) textbook. It is currently used for English I, a required course for all first-year students. This paper also presents the results of a survey on 236 students who are enrolled in English I. Information was collected on their perceptions, needs, attitudes toward English education as well as self-assessments of their skills. The results indicate that the students’ primary needs were to improve their communication skills, while they also recognized their weakness in grammar. In addition, these students felt that they needed language skills related to their field of study for their future careers. Such results appear to support our use of current pedagogical approaches utilizing a content-based ERP textbook. Since needs analysis is believed to be an important step for systematic curriculum development, the comprehensive needs analysis will be continued for further improvement of our textbook.

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Key Words : ERP (English for Rehabilitation Purposes)

ESP (English for Specific Purposes)

Content-based curriculum

Needs analysis

Collaboration