

Prescribing English, producing silence: How English classes in the medical vocational school systemically undermine communicative competence

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ABSTRACT

While English for medical purposes (EMP) is indispensable for the advancement of global healthcare, empirical investigations into its application within Indonesian medical vocational schools (MVS), which serve as a pivotal contributor to the national labor force, remain limited. In order to address this gap, the present study explores EMP within a strategically selected MVS in the Riau Islands through a mixed-methods research design. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with both administrative personnel (n=2) and educators (n=3), in addition to a perception survey administered to students (n=111). The findings indicate a pronounced disjunction between policy and practice. Despite the institutional strategy emphasizing English as a tool for enhancing employability, operational deficiencies are evident, including an absence of proficiency-based student categorization and an excessive focus on passive, assessment-centered learning. The survey findings further substantiate this observation: while students indicate a degree of skill enhancement, the domain of speaking is perceived as the weakest, which corresponds with classroom observations that predominantly feature monologic presentations rather than interactive dialogues. The study concludes that without a pedagogical transition toward fostering active communication, the strategic objective of cultivating globally competent graduates is risked. Limitations of this research include its reliance on a single-institution sample. Practical implications suggest the necessity for curricular reform that emphasizes authentic, interactive tasks and the establishment of internal proficiency standards. Future research endeavors should investigate the longitudinal effects of such reforms across various MVS environments.

Keywords: EMP; communicative competence; language policy; language skills

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INTRODUCTION

This research aims to investigate the implementation of English for medical purposes (EMP) in a state medical vocational school (MVS) located in the Riau Islands of Indonesia. This inquiry serves as a preliminary study to pave the way for more extensive research concerning the design and implementation of EMP within the MVSs in Indonesia. The Riau Islands is selected because it

represents a prominent region in Indonesia that shares direct borders with Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand, thereby creating a heightened partiality for interaction among health and medical professionals, which consequently facilitates the potential for the recruitment of health practitioners from various nations within this region. In this regard, MVSS are essential in training healthcare professionals and enhancing the healthcare system in Indonesia (Yasdin & Muksins, 2024).

MVSS provide specialized programs in nursing, public health, and midwifery, integrating theoretical knowledge with practical training to meet global workforce demands in healthcare. Health professionals today encounter a complex and rapidly evolving landscape that requires a wide range of skills, resources, and support to effectively tackle global health issues in the 21st century (Nguyen et al., 2022). Working across different countries and cultures requires an understanding of foreign language skills, local customs, and social norms. Language training equips healthcare providers to deliver respectful and effective care in various contexts, while English, often the most widely spoken language in multicultural environments (Huang et al., 2022), serves as a key medium for international communication (Tweedie & Johnson, 2022). Therefore, the significance of English in the healthcare sector is immense, as it facilitates essential communication among healthcare professionals, patients, and the global medical community.

To address the need for international communication in English, MVSS develop (Onder-Ozdemir & Pun, 2020) and implement (Choi, 2021) a strategic learning plan that empowers their graduates to pursue global career opportunities. The suitable form of English learning for vocational school is English for specific purposes (ESP) (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). ESP in health education involves tailoring English language training to the specific needs of healthcare professionals and students, often referred to as EMP (Cao et al., 2022). EMP is a specialized branch of ESP, tailored to healthcare professionals. As ESP has expanded, it now encompasses various disciplines and professions, with EMP focusing on the linguistic needs of medical practitioners to ensure accurate and confident communication (Karimkhanlooie et al., 2022). EMP is further categorized into subfields such as English for doctors, nurses, and midwives, each with distinct yet overlapping competencies, particularly in areas like physical examinations. This specialization enhances clarity and safety in medical practice (Kohanová et al., 2023).

The EMP curriculum is designed around crucial areas necessary for medical practice. It starts with medical terminology (Al-Wadi & Alkhabbaz, 2019) and vocabulary (Reynolds et al., 2023), which helps students understand and utilize complex terms related to health, medicine, and pharmacy. In addition to vocabulary, EMP focuses on grammar and syntax (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998) to ensure clear documentation, such as patient records and research papers. Patient interaction (Liu et al., 2023) also stands out in EMP, where students learn to perform interviews, explain diagnoses, and offer services clearly and compassionately, in which role-playing (Gutiérrez-Huancayo, 2022) exercises mimic real clinical situations, allowing students to practice active listening and culturally aware communication. Medical writing (Ramazani, 2024) is also a significant focus, encompassing formats like case reports, research articles, and clinical guidelines. EMP also improves reading comprehension of medical literature (García-Ostbye & Martínez-Sáez, 2023), teaching students to analyze journal articles, interpret statistical data, and evaluate evidence-based research (Hyland & Jiang, 2021), which is essential for keeping up with medical developments.

Research on EMP has revealed various significant issues (Shomoossi et al., 2019) in implementation, needs analysis, target analysis, teaching methods, material development, and overall development. These trends highlight the growing importance of English proficiency in response to global challenges (Zainuddin et al., 2019). In responding to global challenges, EMP accentuates the necessity of tailored English courses that meet the specific needs of medical professionals and healthcare providers. Research in EMP indicates that needs analysis is crucial, as it informs course design and content as in Pharmacy students (Basri et al., 2020), medical doctors (Willey et al., 2020), students' perception on English language needs (Alrashed & Latif, 2024), learning purpose and pragmatic needs (Choi, 2021), teaching and learning needs (Sujana et al., 2020), understanding medical discourse (Hidayati & Meisani, 2023), frequency and the importance of language skills (Farea & Singh, 2024), fulfilment of

English learning (Mohamed et al., 2024), the use augmented reality in EMP (Teo et al., 2022) and sustainability of English communication course (Huang et al., 2022).

Meanwhile, target analysis in EMP covers on the specific language skills required in medical contexts (Ho, 2024), communication needs with patients (Huang & Yu, 2023), and clinical communication (Liu et al., 2023). Innovative teaching methods, including multimedia tools, have been shown to enhance engagement and learning outcomes among medical students, significantly improving their language skills (An & Shan, 2023). Methods of delivery have been revealed in (Barnau, 2023), teaching strategies (Reynolds et al., 2023). Material development covers the evaluation of the textbook (Sadeghi & Baharvand, 2014), and integration of technology in learning EMP (Saidi & Afshari, 2021). Learner feedback is also one of the interests in EMP as research indicates a shift towards integrating technology in teaching materials to better align with learners' needs (Nasiri & Khojasteh, 2024).

Geographically, research concentrated in countries like China (Liang et al., 2025; Xu et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2023), Korea (Choi, 2021; Kim et al., 2020), Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) (Jawhar et al., 2021), and Iran (Maniati et al., 2022), focusing on tertiary education levels, which underscores the regional emphasis on improving medical English proficiency in higher education settings. Meanwhile, some notable research on EMP in Indonesia is on the need analysis (Hidayati & Meisani, 2023), learning strategies (Noprival & Alfian, 2024), translanguaging practice in EMP (Sipayung et al., 2025). In contrast, while there is a strong focus on EMP internationally, there remains a notable lack of studies addressing EMP in the Indonesian context, especially a whole though implementation of EMP in MVS, which indicates an area ripe for further exploration and development in EMP research. Despite much study into EMP in MVSs, there is still a significant lack of empirical data, specifically on the implementation of EMP in specific MVSs in Indonesia. This research aims to fill this gap and open a wider perspective of EMP implementation in MVS in Indonesia. This research should strive to remedy this gap by looking into evidence-based implementation that caters to nursing students' specific needs in learning and applying medical English effectively in an academic setting.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The field of English language teaching (ELT) has undergone a noteworthy and advancing transformation, shifting primary focus from a general proficiency model towards a more specialized approach known as ESP, which is essentially a learner-centered methodology crafted specifically to address and fulfill the distinct linguistic and communicative requirements in particular professional or academic disciplines (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Hyland, 2022). At its core, ESP is fundamentally founded upon the principle of needs analysis (Pirmoradian et al., 2024), which acts as the foundational cornerstone for the development of curricula (Flowerdew, 2012), thereby ensuring that the instructional content delivered is directly pertinent and relevant to the specific contexts in which learners will be applying their language skills. This concentrated focus on specificity inherently poses challenges to the design of broad, generalized language programs that adopt a “one-ring-to-rule-them-all” approach, thereby positioning ESP as a pragmatic and necessary response to the evolving demands posed by globalization and the specialized requirements of contemporary labor markets.

The process of implementing ESP, however, is intricately and inseparably influenced by macro-level language policy (Vidaković et al., 2022) and planning frameworks that govern educational systems. Language policies established at the national or institutional level frequently determine the status, functional role, and educational objectives associated with the teaching of English within a given educational framework (Kaplan et al., 2011). A policy that mandates the use of English as a medium of instruction or positions it as an essential instrument for economic development generates a top-down push that compels significant reform in curriculum design (Deng, 2021). The critical challenge that emerges lies in achieving alignment between these high-level policy directives and their practical enactment at the level of curriculum design in educational settings. Policies may place a higher priority on certain skills (Nguyen et al., 2022), for instance, reading for research purposes, or on the requirements of standardized testing, which can inadvertently constrain the localized and flexible

needs analysis that is essential for the effective development of ESP curricula, potentially resulting in a significant gap between the pretentious expressions of policy and the actual realities encountered within the classroom environment.

In the context of MVS, student perceptions of ESP instruction reflect a complex relationship between perceived utility and pedagogical practice. Research shows (Hidayati & Meisani, 2023; Rinawati et al., 2022; Willey et al., 2020) that students recognize the vital role of English proficiency for their academic and professional futures, considering it essential for engaging with specialized literature and global scientific discourse. Their views are significantly influenced by the ESP curriculum's effectiveness in integrating the four core language skills within discipline-specific contexts. Generally, students prioritize receptive skills (Chetsadanuwat, 2024; Khalili & Tahririan, 2020), such as reading technical journals and listening to medical lectures, for immediate knowledge acquisition.

However, perceptions regarding productive skills are more complex. While students acknowledge the need for writing research abstracts and patient case notes, they often experience anxiety (Deng et al., 2022; Farea & Singh, 2024) and perceive a disconnect between instruction and the precision required in real-world contexts. Furthermore, speaking skills, essential for professional communication and case presentations, are often perceived as insufficiently practiced in classroom environments (Ly & Nguyen, 2024). Overall, student satisfaction is closely tied to the degree to which ESP instruction exceeds decontextualized grammar exercises, providing immersive, skill-integrated tasks (Huang & Yu, 2023) that reflect authentic communicative and academic practices in their field, thus connecting language learning with professional application. Thus, to achieve the research objectives, the following are the research questions:

1. How do institutions design, develop, and assess English for medical purposes (EMP) curricula, including the foundational principles, instructional materials, and standards for learning outcomes?
2. How do students perceive English language teaching in the MVS?

METHOD

This research utilized a two-phased, mixed-methods framework to thoroughly examine the implementation of the ESP. Initially, policy and curriculum-level information was acquired through comprehensive, semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted in August 2024 with two senior management officials (n=2) and three English language educators (n=3), subsequently recorded, transcribed, and translated for the purpose of thematic analysis. Subsequently, to elucidate learner perspectives, an online survey was administered from August to September 2025 to a cohort of 111 qualified MVS students (n=111). Drawing upon established measurement tools, the survey assessed perceptions regarding skill enhancement and practical application. Quantitative data were subjected to descriptive statistical analysis, whereas qualitative responses were thematically categorized. This triangulation of information from administrators, educators, and students provided a comprehensive perspective on the policies, practices, and learner experiences that shape the EMI framework at the institution.

To answer the research questions, the authors used surveys and interviews. To find out the policies related to language, the writers used interview techniques to collect data. The questions posed to the interviewees were based on research questions about the policy, standard, assessment, and curriculum development of EMP in the MVS. The interview was conducted in a semi-structured interview where participants could elaborate on their answers, and the interviewers can pursue clarification for detailed information. There are two participants (n=2) that researchers interviewed to find out the policies that oversee English language learning at MVS in Riau Islands, namely the top management officers (P1 and P2). The interview was conducted on August 26th, 2024, using the Indonesian language to ensure clarity of messages and expression.

The study employed systematic procedures for both qualitative and quantitative data collection. For the first research question, researchers conducted interviews with key implementers of English

language learning at the MVS in Riau Islands on August 27th, 2025. The participants included three English language teachers (n=3) and program organizers (P3, P4, and P5). These interviews focused on technical aspects of English learning, including determining learning outcomes, preparing a curriculum or syllabus, and developing learning materials.

For the second research question, researchers administered an online survey to students from August 27th to September 2025. The survey, adapted from [Hidayati and Meisani \(2023\)](#), examined two aspects: improvement of students' language skills and using language skills in the learning process. The inclusion criteria required participants to be MVS students who had taken an English course. A total of 111 students (n=111) qualified and responded, with all participants briefed about the research and willing to participate anonymously.

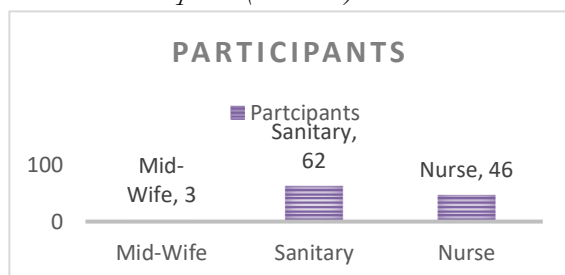
All interviews were audio-recorded after obtaining participants' agreement, then manually transcribed. For research purposes, the transcripts were translated from Bahasa Indonesia to English. After transcription, researchers coded and categorized related topics, then observed common themes emerging from the data. For the survey, data aggregation began with compiling all 111 anonymous students' responses. Data integrity was ensured through cleaning procedures before analysis commenced.

Several measures were taken to ensure data reliability. For qualitative data, systematic coding and thematic analysis ensured interpretations were grounded in the actual data. Researchers carefully identified recurring themes and patterns across interview responses. For quantitative data, descriptive statistical analysis was applied to discern prevailing trends and patterns in student perceptions. The survey itself was adapted from a validated instrument ([Hidayati & Meisani, 2023](#)), strengthening its credibility.

Methodological triangulation was achieved by collecting data from multiple sources: interviews with implementers and surveys with students. This allowed comparison between institutional perspectives and learner experiences. Additionally, qualitative data from open-ended survey questions were thematically coded to complement the quantitative findings. Results were compared across specified dimensions, and findings were interpreted to highlight significant alignments or discrepancies in perceptions, ensuring conclusions were firmly connected to the research objectives.

Figure 1

Research Participants (Students)



The nursing department emerges as the predominant cohort within this study, constituting a remarkable majority that quantitatively amounts to 56% of the total participants, thereby underscoring the significance of this particular group in the context of the research findings. Following closely behind, the group of sanitary students constitutes the second largest demographic segment, representing a substantial 41% of the overall participant pool, which indicates a noteworthy presence in the research landscape. Conversely, the smallest segment of this distribution, which is notably minimal at a mere 3%, is exclusively comprised of midwifery students, highlighting the relatively lesser representation of this particular group within the context of the study.

FINDINGS

Based on interviews conducted with the senior management of the MVS (P1), it has been determined that proficiency in English communicative competence is perceived as a vital skill that significantly augments graduates' preparedness for professional positions and their employability on an international level, especially within health-related domains such as nursing, midwifery, and sanitation. The institution recognizes that mastery of English communication is imperative not only for academic success but also for promoting effective interactions among graduates in global and cross-cultural healthcare environments. As articulated by the senior officer in academic affairs,

"In my estimation, communication holds paramount importance. For if their fundamental communication skills are proficient, they are capable of acquiring any knowledge presented to them. Should they excel in communication, they will comprehend all information, including written documentation."

This perspective indicates that the focus of English education at the MVS is predominantly directed towards practical and functional communication, rather than merely on theoretical linguistic expertise.

From an institutional viewpoint, the English language is esteemed as a crucial element of the core competence framework that underpins the curriculum. It is mandated as a requisite subject, governed by directives from both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health, in conjunction with professional organizations such as the Indonesian Nurse Association and Indonesian National Medical Vocational Schools Association. These organizations ensure that the instruction of the English language is aligned with national qualifications and health education standards. P2 noted:

"The development of the language curriculum is guided by standards set forth by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health. Furthermore, accreditation bodies and consortiums for analogous study programs provide foundational frameworks and have endorsed the inclusion of English language learning within their program requirements."

Furthermore, the learning outcome also accommodates the MVS objectives based on the institutional vision as explicated by P3:

"The first is undoubtedly present in the curriculum. The curriculum encompasses English as a subject. Secondly, there are instructions from the Director concerning the outcomes, including TOEFL prerequisites for lecturers and students from Internationalization Program."

Consequently, English instruction at the MVS is intricately integrated into the institutional curriculum framework rather than being regarded as an independent initiative. According to the findings of interviews with institutional leaders, the curriculum and learning outcomes were developed in accordance with national standards and associations or groups of institutions. There were no specific studies or policies discovered that addressed graduate learning outcomes in terms of English communication competence. Institutional leaders recognize the value of English language skills for students and graduates in terms of learning quality and job readiness. The head of the academic field communicated the same message. There is no formal study to standardize English language skills among institution graduates.

Despite the esteemed value placed on English communicative competence, the criteria for evaluating students remain informal and lack the necessary standardization. At present, the institution does not impose any internationally recognized language certifications such as TOEFL, TOEIC, or IELTS upon its students. Rather, the assessment of educational outcomes is predicated on course performance, internal examinations, and the competencies delineated in the learning outcomes (LO) or graduate learning outcomes. As P4 articulated:

"Well, we do not have any stipulations for college, but for graduation, there are... predicated on the subject score, for the midterm assessment and final examination, based on the syllabus."

These evaluations, grounded in LO, seek to guarantee that students achieve communicative competence relevant to their respective domains, albeit they do not sufficiently evaluate proficiency on an international scale. It was also discovered that there are estimates for the dispersal of healthcare personnel abroad, with Asian destinations including Japan and the Middle East, as well as Europe. As a result, the university stands at the forefront of international nursing education. In the international pilot class, learning will be oriented to use English as the medium of instruction (EMI), which means that instructional materials and classroom interactions will be in English. The college makes numerous attempts at internationalization, including setting a minimum TOEFL ITP score for teachers. In addition, the school works with other partners to improve instructors' communication abilities through public speaking training. The institution has instituted more explicit criteria for its lecturers. English instructors are mandated to attain a specific minimum score on the standardized English Test that corresponds with the institution's efforts to promote international programs and collaborations. P1 articulated,

*"For lecturers, it's set at 475 (TOEFL score). This is based on Key Performance Indicator (KPI):
"... the lecturers must first reach 475 before the students. This is usually for international classes."*

This suggests that the institution is systematically implementing a standardized benchmark, beginning with the teaching faculty as part of a holistic approach to enhance the quality of English education especially in preparing graduates to compete globally. Thus, the MVS concerns on graduate English proficiency as noted by P1:

"No language policy applied in the Polytechnique. For the language itself, especially foreign languages, we do not apply standards. But we hope that graduates have the ability to speak at least in English."

To achieve this goal, steps in planning english learning is very crucial and involves various units as mentioned by P1:

"My opinion is primarily strategic and policy-oriented; therefore, all initiatives must first undergo a structured review process through the departments of educational development and quality assurance before being implemented by the study programs and language development units."

Moreover, the interviews indicated that although the institution acknowledges the significance of fostering English communicative competence, it still encounters obstacles related to resources and teaching capacity. Presently, there is only one officially qualified English lecturer at the MVS, while other instructors from various departments contribute to the delivery of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses that are customized to their respective fields. As one P2 explained:

"We need to improvise. So, Mrs. W is helping the study programs with the syllabus and curriculum development, as well as teaching methods."

This collaborative strategy enables English instruction to be integrated within healthcare and sanitation subjects, thereby aligning language acquisition with the professional requirements of students. As P1 said:

"No, not as of yet. For the instruction of English, our suggestion remains Mrs. W. Given her expertise in the English language. For the others, it is merely adjusted by the academic programs as required. However, we do not possess any particular regulations at this time. There are no distinct regulations for educators either."

This research also finds that there is no leveling in English class by means, language proficiency is not well observed and be put into consideration for making up class. All students were grouped basically administratively based on each student's ID. P2 explained this clearly:

"As far as I know, for regular admissions, no (there's no pretest). But for scholarship or achievement pathways, perhaps, because English is one of the criteria in those pathways... When placing them in

classes, there's no levelling according to their English proficiency. The statement highlights the implementation of EMP in the MVS.

The institution is also pursuing strategic partnerships to enhance language competency, specifically through a collaboration with another university. This cooperation focuses on leveraging high-level expertise in English and other languages: "Furthermore, for international programs, the institution has established a dedicated partnership with a provider in the United Kingdom to ensure the delivery of authentic English language education." This particular assertion delineates a comprehensive and well-structured language policy for the ESP program, which strategically utilizes the expertise of external entities in order to effectively address and mitigate the limitations posed by internal resources that may not be sufficient. By forming collaborative partnerships with a specialized domestic university that possesses a strong reputation in this field, as well as a reputable provider based in the United Kingdom, the policy is designed to guarantee that participants have access to authentic and high-quality language instruction that meets rigorous academic standards.

Based on the survey results, students share positive perceptions of their English class benefits. Data shows significant language skill improvement, especially in writing, at 65%. Understanding core subjects and reading improvement closely follow at 63%. Listening (61%) and speaking (58%) skills, while slightly lower, still reflect enhanced competencies for a majority of students. Overall, the chart indicates an effective English curriculum. The balanced percentages from 58% to 65% suggest a comprehensive educational impact. Students acknowledge individual language skill development and recognize English's value for understanding other academic subjects. This highlights the perceived importance of English proficiency for overall academic success.

Figure 2

Students' Perception on English Teaching in the MVS

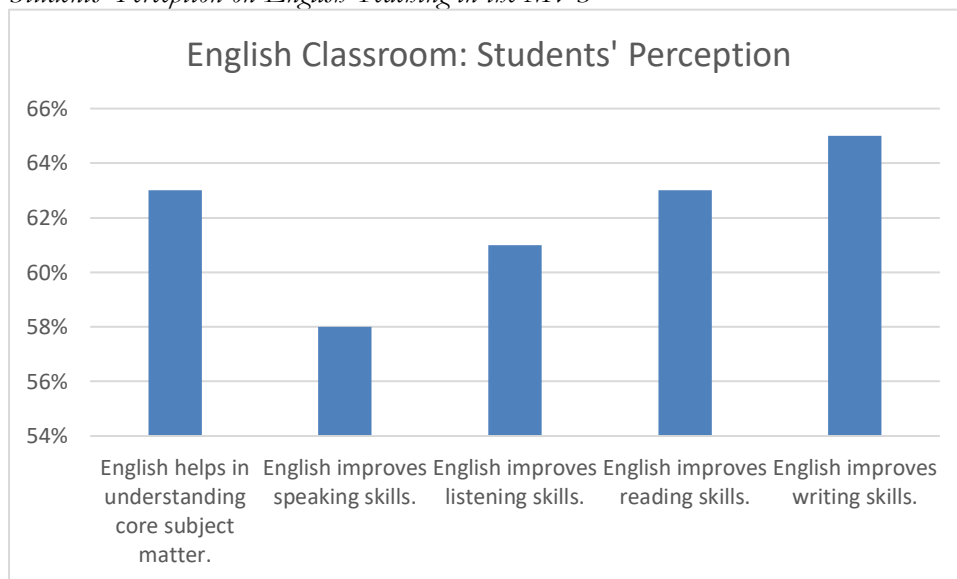
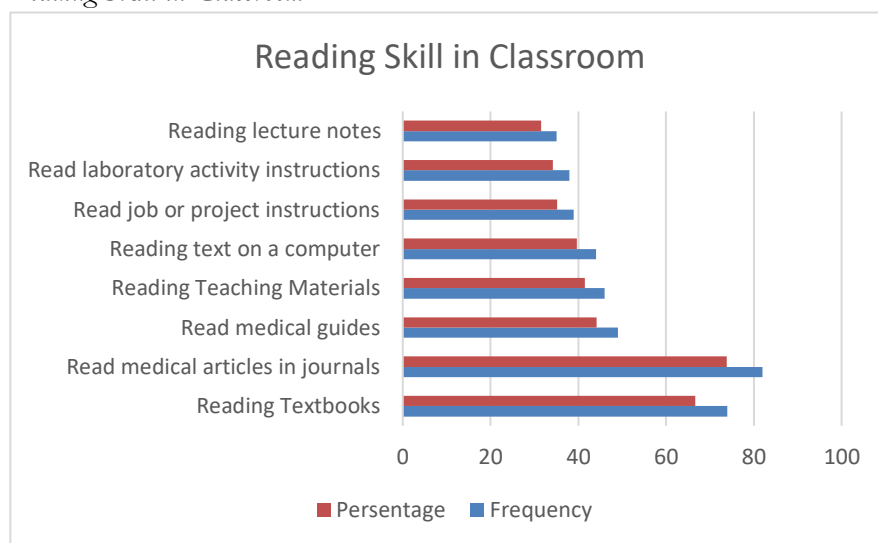


Figure 2 reveals that the primary perceived benefit is enhanced writing skills, noted with high frequency. This indicates a strong student association between English classes and progress in written communication. The enhancement of reading skills is also recognized as a vital outcome. Moreover, the chart illustrates that students acknowledge the comprehensive value of English instruction. The summary of language skill development indicates awareness of overall linguistic advancement. In addition to language acquisition, students perceive broader academic benefits, suggesting English proficiency aids comprehension in other subjects. The students' perceptions underscore the English classroom's effectiveness in fostering practical language skills, with a notable focus on writing.

Based on a survey of 111 students who could select multiple activities, this data elucidates the utilization of English reading skills among students. The predominant reported activity is reading medical articles in journals, with 74% of participants (82 students). This is closely succeeded by reading textbooks at 67% (74 students), reflecting a pronounced emphasis on essential and specialized academic literature. A moderate range of activities, between 34% and 44%, encompasses practical and procedural tasks. These include reading medical guides (44%), reading teaching materials (41%), reading text on a computer (40%), reading task or project instructions (35%), and reading laboratory activity instructions (34%). The least frequently reported activity was reading lecture notes at 32% (35 students). Figure 3 illustrates the reading skill used in classroom.

Figure 3

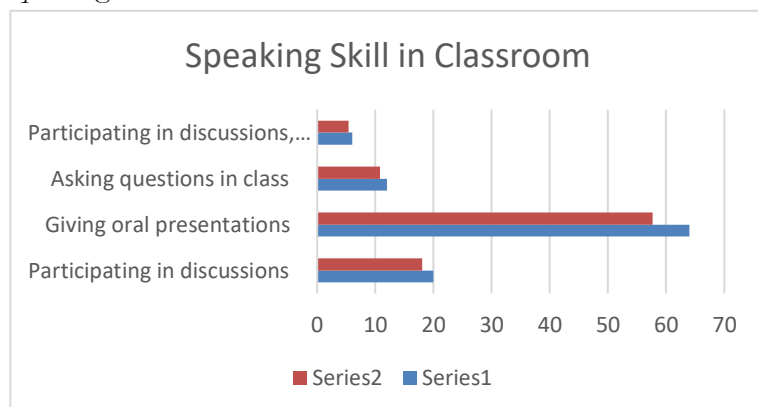
Reading Skill in Classroom



As illustrated in Figure 4, the predominant classroom speaking activity identified is delivering oral presentations, which was indicated by 58% of the respondents, equating to a total of 64 individuals. The subsequent most prevalent selection was participation in discussions, although this occurred at a markedly lower rate of 18% (20 individuals). The activity of posing questions in class emerged as the least frequently reported single activity, being selected by merely 11% (12 individuals). A minor proportion, accounting for 5% (6 individuals), indicated involvement in both discussions and presentations. This distribution underscores a pronounced preference or heightened frequency for formal presentation skills in comparison to other modalities of oral engagement within this specific educational setting.

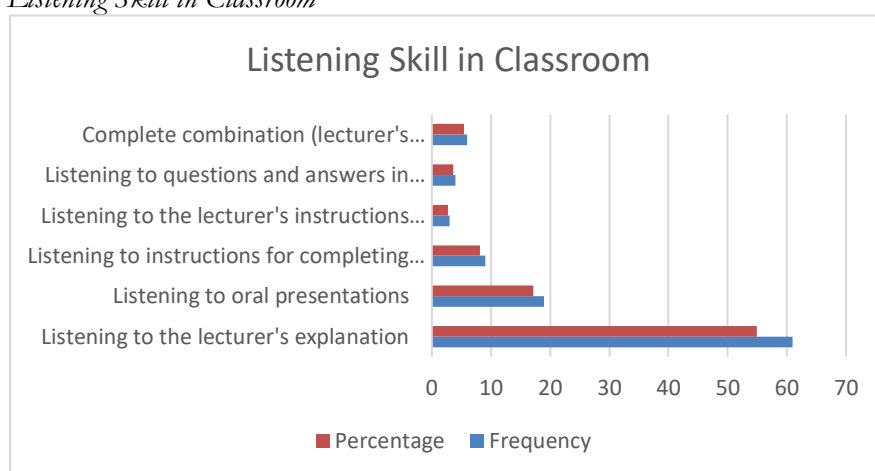
Figure 4

Speaking Skill in Classroom



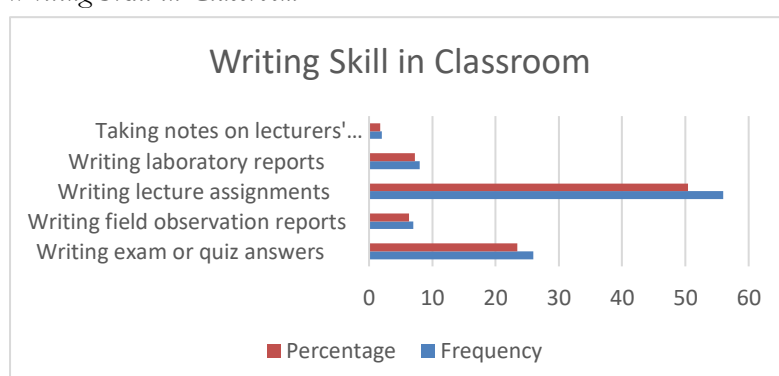
The data demonstrates a pronounced inclination towards acquiring knowledge through auditory engagement with the lecturer's discourse, which represents the preeminent method, favoured by 55% (61 participants) of the surveyed individuals. This preference significantly eclipses other particular activities, such as attending oral presentations (17%) or receiving instructions pertaining to assignments (8%). The markedly lower prevalence of the remaining discrete categories implies that, although they hold some degree of value, they serve as subordinate modalities of auditory learning. A modest yet significant subgroup, constituting 5% (6 individuals), advocates for a holistic approach, opting for the complete combination of all enumerated listening activities. This observation suggests that for the majority, the conventional lecture persists as the foundational element of auditory knowledge acquisition within this framework. Figure 5 illustrates the use of listening skills in the classroom.

Figure 5
Listening Skill in Classroom



The data distinctly indicates that "Writing lecture assignments" represents the preeminent activity, comprising half (50%) of the total writing tasks, with a frequency of 56 occurrences. This figure surpasses that of the subsequent most prevalent activity, "Writing exam or quiz answers," which constitutes 23% (26 instances). Other writing forms, including reports for the field (6%) or laboratory (7%), occur with markedly lower frequency. It is particularly noteworthy that "Taking notes on lecturers' explanations" emerges as the least frequent activity, accounting for merely 2% of the total responses. This distribution implies that the academic writing workload is predominantly oriented towards formal assignments and evaluations, with a negligible focus on note-taking as a documented writing endeavour. Figure 6 provides a visual representation of the types of writing activities conducted in the classroom setting.

Figure 6
Writing Skill in Classroom



DISCUSSION

The deduction derived from the perspectives of senior management distinctly illuminates a significant and pronounced institutional discrepancy that can be appropriately characterized as a profound disconnect between strategic vision and practical implementation. On a strategic dimension, there exists an overwhelmingly robust and unified consent among leadership that English communicative competence transcends the confines of being merely an academic subject; rather, it is fundamentally recognized as a foundational and enabling skill that is absolutely critical for achieving global employability and facilitating effective practice within the healthcare sector. As explicitly articulated by the MVS's top management, the mastery of communication skills is strategically framed as the primary and essential conduit through which all other forms of professional knowledge are acquired, thereby justifying its pivotal and central role within the core curriculum of the institution. This determined vision is effectively operationalized through a series of top-down mandates that are disseminated from national ministries and professional associations, ensuring that curriculum integration occurs seamlessly while remaining aligned with comprehensive and broad educational standards that govern the field. This finding aligns with some research on the importance of the English language in the medical profession ([Huang et al., 2022](#); [Zainuddin et al., 2019](#)).

The institution's strategic allocations towards faculty standards and internationalization signify a considerable and multifaceted opportunity to transition English instruction from a discrete subject to a comprehensive and immersive educational experience. By instituting a TOEFL ITP benchmark for educators, this initiative directly enhances the caliber of instruction; educators possessing certified proficiency are optimally prepared to deliver precise and coherent language input, exemplify effective communication, and utilize English with confidence as the medium for conveying their respective disciplines. This foundational enhancement in pedagogical capacity is imperative for establishing a dependable and effective learning environment similar to what [Liu et.al \(2023\)](#) found in nursing undergraduate program.

Another highlight from the findings is on the management of EMP classes. The lack of student grouping by English proficiency hinders effective learning. Diverse ability classrooms inhibit focused instruction, resulting in student disconnection and dissatisfaction due to the misalignment of materials ([Huong et al., 2024](#)). This uniform approach inadequately supports both underperforming and advanced students, thereby undermining educational effectiveness and outcomes. Consequently, adopting a levelling system is crucial for fostering an environment conducive to tailored instruction, sustained motivation, and meaningful student progress.

The disconnectedness between vision and implementation reveals a strategic prioritization that initiates with input (educational standards for instructors, integration of curriculum), yet it is deficient in systematic frameworks for quality output (standards of graduate proficiency). The more stringent criteria imposed on lecturers in contrast to those for students accentuates a hierarchical approach aimed at establishing foundational capabilities, while the dependence on external collaborations for high-stakes international initiatives highlights an acknowledgment of internal deficiencies. By means, local English teachers need to be fully trained to achieved standard of graduate proficiency as accentuated by [Uyen and Nhung \(2024\)](#). Essentially, the MVS has effectively institutionalized the notion of English as crucial; however, it has yet to forge a cohesive, adequately resourced ecosystem capable of consistently yielding graduates who personify that ideal. This disparity between aspirational policy and practical implementation constitutes the primary obstacle in converting institutional value into concrete graduate outcomes.

The findings from the survey serves to encapsulate and concisely summarize the perceptions of students regarding the extent to which the process of learning the English language enhances their fundamental language skills across various domains. The findings derived from this analysis reveal notable improvements across all four identified linguistic domains. Nevertheless, the data also presents a subtle yet fascinating gradient in the perceived effectiveness of English language instruction, which warrants further exploration. Students exhibit varied perceptions regarding the advantages of English instruction across the four fundamental language competencies, thereby delineating a distinct

hierarchy in their self-evaluated progress. The most articulated perceived enhancement is writing abilities, which students identify as the domain of the most significant advancement. Reading and listening competencies closely follow, with students also recognizing considerable growth in these receptive and interpretive areas. Nevertheless, a noticeable trend arises concerning speaking abilities, which, although still regarded positively by a majority, are persistently appraised as the skill with the least perceived enhancement. This observable disparity between the perceived improvements in writing compared to speaking posits two plausible interpretations. Speaking issues and abilities occur in several research ([Kaya, 2021](#); [Ly & Nguyen, 2024](#); [Maher & King, 2022](#)) and express similar findings.

These findings may signify an actual disproportion in pedagogical efficacy or opportunities for practice, whereby the curriculum and classroom activities more effectively cultivate written proficiency than oral fluency. It could also denote a divergence in learner confidence, wherein students exhibit greater assurance in their capacity to generate written text, which allows drafting and revision, than in their spontaneous oral production, which is frequently characterized by higher stakes and immediacy. This finding emphasizes a potential area necessitating curriculum evaluation, underscoring the imperative to scrutinize whether instructional methodologies extend equivalent support for the enhancement of oral communicative competence as they do for writing, and whether the educational atmosphere promotes the confidence requisite for students to engage in and recognize progress in speaking. The results derived from this study strongly corroborate the assertion that English language instruction is perceived as having a distinctly beneficial impact, with its most pronounced effects being felt in the realm of written communication, while its influence on oral production appears to be slightly less significant. These finding echoes what other researchers observed ([Alrashed & Latif, 2024](#); [Farea & Singh, 2024](#); [Li & Heron, 2021](#)).

The examination of students' English reading practices in a medical academic setting reveals a structured hierarchy influenced by the relevance of materials to professional and academic objectives. Students engage most with primary, authoritative sources foundational to their discipline. Textbooks are essential for theoretical frameworks, while medical journal articles are consulted for cutting-edge research. This focus on foundational and current literature indicates that students view English reading primarily as a tool for knowledge acquisition and staying informed about their field, linking their efforts to academic necessity. Reading engagement varies for applied purposes. Materials like medical guides, laboratory instructions, and project briefs are used moderately, typically as needed for specific tasks. This underscores English's role in fostering practical, procedural understanding. A notable finding is the low prioritization of reading lecture notes, suggesting that in a context rich with primary sources, students may undervalue condensed summaries, favoring direct engagement with original texts. Overall, the data reflect a strategic allocation of reading effort, with students investing time in critical sources for long-term competency and academic success while utilizing other texts for situational support. This can be enhanced with a group activity to encourage interaction and boost other language skills ([Teo et al., 2022](#)).

The empirical evidence elucidates a noticeable pedagogical disparity in oral engagement within the classroom setting, with the most salient observation being the predominant prevalence of formal, monologic presentations over interactive, dialogic communication forms such as discussions and the posing of inquiries. Such a trend implies a learning atmosphere that favors the execution of prepared, unidirectional speech rather than the spontaneous, collaborative interchange of ideas and critical examination. The notably infrequent occurrence of students initiating questions is particularly alarming, as it indicates a potential deficiency in a supportive ([Karimkhanlooei et al., 2022](#)), a low-stakes environment conducive to curiosity, may suggest that students are downgraded to the role of passive recipients of information instead of being active contributors to the construction of knowledge.

The fundamental issue resides in a curriculum and assessment framework that seemingly places excessive importance on polished, final-product speaking. This engenders a classroom culture wherein students are conditioned to perform rather than engage, debate, or exhibit spontaneous critical thinking. Speaking skill is essential for professional healthcare contexts that necessitate teamwork and

adaptable communication. To improve this situation, a comprehensive approach is imperative. Initially, assessments should be restructured to explicitly evaluate and prioritize the quality of contributions to discussions and the development of thoughtful explorations. Subsequently, educators ought to incorporate structured, low-pressure interactive modalities such as think-pair-share (Putri & Jalil, 2020), Socratic seminars (Stojković & Zerkin, 2023), and small-group problem-solving activities to normalize and scaffold participatory dialogue (Saenko & Nazarenko, 2021). Ultimately, cultivating a classroom environment characterized by psychological safety, where tentative inquiries are embraced, is crucial to redirecting the emphasis from producing solitary presenters to nurturing agile communicators adept in the dynamic exchanges that are central to both academic and professional achievement.

The examination elucidates a pronounced dependence on passive, unidirectional listening, wherein students primarily interact with knowledge exclusively through the lecturer's discourse. This situation marginalizes other vital auditory engagements, including the acquisition of insights from peer presentations or the interpretation of procedural directives. The paramount issue lies in the development of a restricted and passive listening competency. Students are predominantly conditioned to absorb information from a singular, authoritative entity, rather than cultivating the active, critical listening skills necessary to assess peer arguments, discern intentions in diverse instructions, or integrate information from multiple oral sources, in which capabilities are indispensable for collaborative and intricate professional contexts.

This disparity arises from deeply rooted educational traditions and a curricular framework that emphasizes content coverage at the expense of skill diversification. To remedy this situation, educators can purposefully broaden auditory learning experiences. This can be accomplished by systematically incorporating and valuing alternative listening activities within the curriculum and evaluation processes, as in the four-phase method (Tananykhina et al., 2021). For example, students could be evaluated on their proficiency in summarizing a peer's presentation, critiquing an oral argument, or accurately executing a task based exclusively on verbal directives. Moreover, explicit instruction in active listening techniques such as note-taking for varied objectives and formulating clarifying inquiries can empower students to engage more profoundly across all auditory contexts. Transitioning from a passive reception paradigm to an active, multifaceted listening framework is essential for equipping students to meet the communicative demands of the real world.

The most salient discovery is the prominent favouritism of writing instruction towards high-stakes and summative assessments, specifically formal assignments and examinations. Meanwhile, process-oriented writing, particularly note-taking, is nearly nonexistent. This indicates a significant issue: the curriculum prioritizes writing primarily as a product for evaluation rather than as an instrument for cognitive development and educational growth. Students are conditioned to produce refined final drafts, yet they are not consistently provided with the necessary support to cultivate the foundational, immediate writing competencies crucial for knowledge retention, synthesis, and critical engagement during instructional sessions. This results in a deficiency wherein students are underprivileged of the disciplined practice required to capture and process information in real-time, a competency vital for both academic and professional achievement.

Addressing this issue necessitates a pedagogical transformation to reconceptualize writing as an ongoing, developmental endeavor. Initially, note-taking should be explicitly instructed, demonstrated, and esteemed (Chen, 2024). Educators can allocate time to teach structured methodologies and can incorporate concise, low-stakes writing activities that compel students to synthesize or interrogate lecture material directly from their notes. Furthermore, assessment standards ought to be recalibrated to acknowledge the writing process, rather than solely the final product (Chen, 2023). This may encompass evaluating the quality and effectiveness of notes, assigning reflective journals, or segmenting extensive reports into scaffolded drafts. By embedding more frequent, low-pressure writing assignments that underscore engagement with content, the curriculum can foster adaptable writers prepared for both formal composition and the routine cognitive tasks that support learning.

CONCLUSION

This research aimed to examine the design and implementation of EMP curricula while also elucidating student perceptions regarding English language instruction within MVS. The outcomes unveil a multifaceted relationship between institutional strategy and classroom dynamics, thereby providing nuanced responses to each research inquiry. In regards how institutions design, develop, and assess English for medical purposes (EMP) curricula, including the foundational principles, instructional materials, and standards for learning outcomes, the analysis illustrates that the design of the institutional EMP curriculum is primarily strategically oriented and compliant, emerging from a top-down directive that acknowledges English as an essential conduit for global employability and professional practice. The foundational principles are distinctly congruent with overarching educational standards, with instructional quality bolstered through strategic investments, such as the enforcement of English proficiency benchmarks for faculty members. Nonetheless, the frameworks for assessment and implementation expose considerable systemic deficiencies. A significant disconnect is evident between this strategic vision and its practical realization, marked by the absence of student proficiency grouping, an excessive dependence on external stakeholders for high-stakes outcomes, and a lack of systematic, internal criteria for evaluating graduate communicative competence. Consequently, the curriculum is effectively designed and mandated; however, its development and assessment at the operational level are inconsistent, engendering an ecosystem that prioritizes input and integration rather than assured, quantifiable output. Subsequently, students' perceptions furnish a vital, grassroots perspective on this implementation gap. Although students acknowledge the overall value and report enhancements, particularly in writing and reading, their experiences underscore pedagogical inconsistencies that correspond with institutional deficiencies. The perception of speaking as the least developed skill, together with observed classroom behaviors dominated by monologic presentation and passive listening, indicates a curriculum that insufficiently nurtures the interactive, spontaneous communication crucial for healthcare. Furthermore, students' strategically motivated engagement with reading materials, alongside the product-centric nature of writing instruction, emphasizes a learning environment that frequently prioritizes the completion of academic tasks over the comprehensive development of communicative competencies. In conclusion, the findings for both research questions are fundamentally interconnected with each other. Students' perceptions, which reflect uneven skill development and a formal, assessment-centric classroom culture, are a direct outcome of the identified institutional disjunction. The MVS has effectively institutionalized the significance of English. However, it has yet to establish a coherent, fully resourced pedagogical continuum that translates strategic mandates into consistent, student-focused learning experiences. Therefore, bridging the divide between aspirational policy and graduate outcomes necessitates dual emphasis: institutional reforms must implement systematic student-leveling and robust internal proficiency standards, while curricular practices must evolve towards a more balanced, interactive, and process-oriented approach that actively cultivates the confident, adaptable communicators requisite for the medical profession.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT:

The writers declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this research.

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