



## Teaching technical words for medical purposes in Afghanistan

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### Abstract

Over the last decades researches have been conducted on different disciplines and in teaching English for specific purposes in different contexts, but teaching technical words for doctors in the context of Afghanistan is the newest subject. The aim of this article is to explore the needs of doctors and prepare them a course to learn English. In Afghanistan, English is used as a foreign language and it is not the medium of instruction in the class because the national languages play the key role in instruction. It is really important for the doctors to learn English in order to learn new information and should be aware about progress, especially in medical. At the same time, most of the names of drugs have been written based on English and it is necessary for them to know English in their own discipline. This paper is written based on quantitative research and Questionnaire was the tool for data collection and it was sent to doctors who were in Afghanistan, particularly. In this research, there were 50 participants and out of them 25 subjects were female. In learning English language for doctors, they wanted to memorize technical words that are very important in their daily works. They wanted to improve four skills of English language as well because they need to communicate with their colleagues. This paper ends with significance of technical words for doctors in the context of Afghanistan.

**Keywords:** Context; technical words; disciplines; medical; instruction and improving language skills

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## 1. Introduction

### *1.1. Introduce the problem*

English language is used as a foreign language in the context of Afghanistan. People use it only in academic place, especially in the situation in which it is taught. It has been used in the foreign offices as well because the system of mailing of such offices is based on English language and the employees need to communicate based on English language. In today's world, English language has its own influence and in every discipline and it is very important for the people of Afghanistan, especially for the learners to learn English language wherever it is taught. In higher education, it plays a different role in different disciplines at universities in Afghanistan. In English Department, there are many core courses that are taught in the class in order to meet the needs of learners. These courses are reading, writing, literature, translation, grammar and so on.

The instruction in most cases in terms of English language. For example, in reading the learners read the text, then they have to start talking in English language. At the same time, teaching English language for specific purposes in different disciplines play a deferent role. Teaching English for medical students, they need specific knowledge in English that has to deal with their needs. In such class, the instruction is based grammar translation method. Teaching English for specific purposes in the context of Afghanistan is very important because doctors need specialized words in their own discipline. In such discipline, the course will offer to enhance their knowledge of English language in a specific field. This course is based on their needs. Therefore, providing teaching material including texts which deal only medicine and disease and so on. In addition, providing technical words for the learners which are very useful in their daily life. These technical words should be provided in the context, especially if there is conversation or debate among the doctors who are going to go class. According to Jezo (2014) English for medical purpose in Poland is a compulsory course at university and the medical students have to use in the target context. Such course is based on the needs of learners and it will develop their English competence. In both contexts, ESL and EFL learning English language seems complicated than L1 context. A number of studies have sought to determine the academic reading and writing challenges faced by L2 students by comparing their circumstances with those of L1 students (Ferris, 2005). Another research shows the students at all postsecondary levels are expected to engage in a range of common academic reading/writing tasks (Hale et al., 1996). According to Yu (2008) studied English summary writing among 157 Chinese university students studying English as a foreign language (EFL) and found that students' summarizing abilities were significantly related to their reading proficiency levels. As Baba stated (2009) studied 68 Japanese

university students and found that students' English summarizing abilities were related to their reading comprehension skills and also to their vocabulary knowledge.

Teaching English for specific purposes in the context of Afghanistan is very important because doctors need specialized words in their own discipline. In such discipline, the course will offer to enhance their knowledge of English language in own specific field. This course is based on their needs. Therefore, providing teaching material including texts which deal only medicine and disease and so. In addition, providing technical words for the learners which are very useful in their daily life. These technical words should be provided in the context, especially if there is conversation or debate among the doctors who are going to going the class. So, they have to do a better job in the future. The syllabus includes the following points:

1. Reading scientific papers.
2. Verbal communication with patients and medical staff.
3. Writing medical communication
4. Presentation at international conference.

According to DeCarrico (2001) vocabulary knowledge is central to language acquisition whether the language is first, second or foreign. He says, vocabulary knowledge is the first step to speak any language. For example, if someone want to speak English language as the second or foreign, he or she use have the vocabulary knowledge. Then, they will be able to communicate successfully. Learning is remembering, therefore, students don't only need to learn a lot of words, but also they have to remember them. Memory plays an important role in memorizing words. There are two types of memories, short term and long term memories. Short term memory, which holds items of information for a few second, whereas long terms memory, which holds unlimited items of information for unlimited time. Their function in learning of vocabulary is expressed by Nattinger (1988) in the following ways: Research is memory suggests that words are stored and remembered in a network of associations. These associations can be many types and link in a number of meaning, form and sound. According to Carter (1988) if the students have the vocabulary knowledge more than 20000, they will be able to solve their problems more than 80% in a specific field. For example, the doctors who are going to speak English language, they have to memorize more 20000 words in medical, then they will be able to speak English language. Sometimes, it is possible to read any types of texts in medical discipline. Avant ( 1987) defined ESP in terms of absolute and variable characteristics. Absolute characteristics meet specific needs of learners. Variable characteristics designed for specific discipline. According to Orr (2002, cited by Micic), "that ESP is an exciting movement in English language education that is opening up rich opportunities for English teachers and researchers in new domain". According to Spencer (2003 sited by Ramani), teaching in the clinical environment is defined as teaching and learning focused on and usually directly involving, patient and their problems. Kang

(2004 cited by Canadian Center of Science and Education), remarked that learning English is essential for medical professionals because all medical information for medical professional as available in English language. According to Molhim ( 2011 cited by Popa), more than two-third of the world's professionals and scientists read in English language and about 80% of online information is based on English language and about 40 million users of interest is based on English language as well.

English language plays different role in different contexts. Aside from general English, there is English for other purposes as well. English for business purposes, the trade people have to learn English language that should meet only their problems only in business. Teaching English for specific purposes, especially for doctors in the context of Afghanistan is very important because doctors need specialized words in their own discipline. In such discipline, the course will offer to enhance their knowledge of English language in a specific field. Such technical words have to meet their needs. Therefore, providing teaching material including texts which deal only medicine and disease and so on. In addition, providing technical words for the learners which are very useful in their daily life. These technical words should be provided in the context.

The main focus of this paper is to fill and improve the needs of doctors in technical words and makes them more capable in four skills too. When they are able to use the technical words in communication, they will be able to speak English language. In most cases, they will write prescriptions for patients and they need to speak English for their own purposes. It is important to find the answer to this questions: Do the doctors need only technical words? This is the time to find its answer in any logical way.

In this paper, there are some questions to be answered through the scientific research.

- What are the expectations of the doctors from the course?
- What are the needs of the doctors when they want to learn English language?
- Does it help if the focus of the course is on teaching technical words?
- Will it be the best choice if the course is designed on teaching only technical words for the doctors?

## **2. Method**

Research methodology is the core part of research and gives information about the research how it has been done. In this part, research is used to discuss how the data was collected and what the tool for data collection was. This research focuses on technical words, especially for doctors in the context of Afghanistan.

### *2.1. Subjects*

The participants who responded the questions had bi/multilingual doctors. They were all from Afghanistan. These doctors are using English language as a foreign

language in different areas of Afghanistan. There were 50 participants. Twenty five of them were males and twenty five of them were female. These doctors wanted to learn English that should play a very important role in situation in which they work. They need English language to communicate successful with their colleagues and as well as the foreigners who visit their organizations.

## *2.2. Research Tools*

The way in which the data was collected was based on questionnaire. It had four sections questions. The first part addressed only personal information about participants. Second part, there were five yes / no questions which participants answered in terms of their experience in the field of using English in their own context. Third part, there were five multiple choice questions and the fourth section, there were six Why-questions. Participants had the choice to answer each of them based on their own experience and understanding in the field of medical.

## *2.3. Research Procedure*

I sent the questionnaires to participants who spoke their native language in most cases and Persian was the medium of instruction in Afghanistan; in addition, it was their native language. They had more than one-week time to respond to the questions in terms of their experience and understanding because they were in their own context and knew what their needs were in English language, especially using English language for medical purposes.

## **3. Results**

Learning English language is very important for doctors in the context of Afghanistan. Doctors need to write email for their boss and they should have the knowledge of English language. In today's world, the significance of English language is obvious for everyone, especially for doctors. When they want to participate in any meeting or conference outside of Afghanistan, they must have the knowledge of English language in order to communicate with the people who take part in such conference.

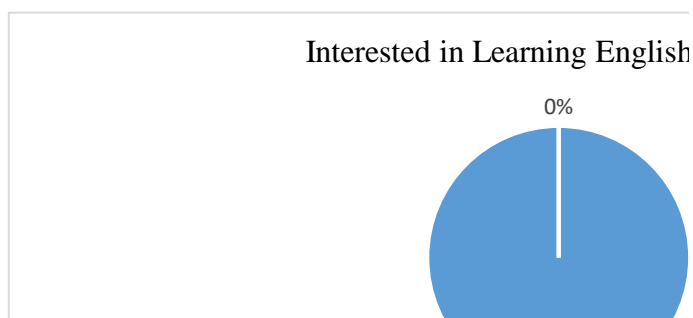


Figure 1. Interested in learning English

Among these participants, all of them are very interested in English language and it is very important and necessary in their field. Therefore, most of them accepted that they are very keen to learn English language.

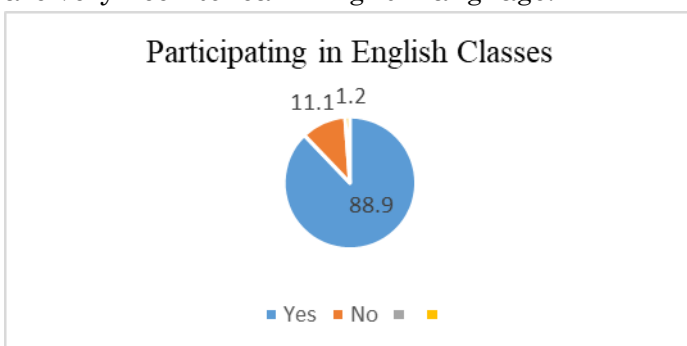


Figure 2 . Participating in English classes

More than 80 % of these participants participated in the classes where English language was taught as a foreign language, but only 11.1 % of the participants did not participate in the class where English language was taught. It shows that all doctor are very interested in learning English language in order to communicate successfully in the context, especially in today's world it is very important for them.

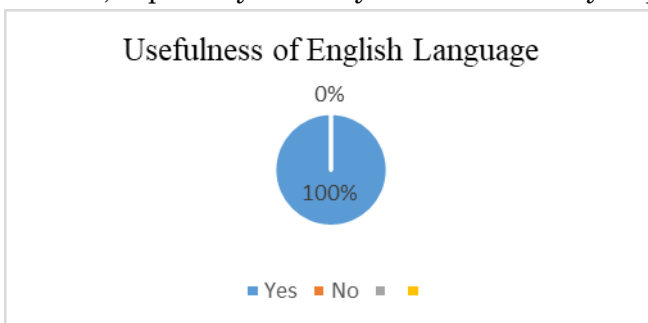


Figure 3. Usefulness of English

All these participants that English language is very useful because in the organization where they worked and that they used English language for the medical purposes; therefore, they accepted that the usefulness of English language and the percentage of usefulness was 100%.

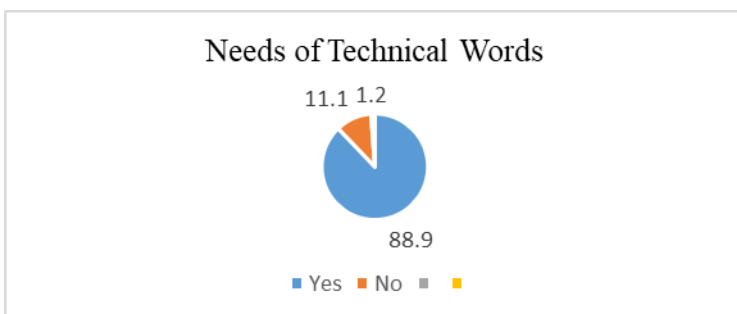


Figure 4. Needs for technical words

The need of technical words for doctor are very important and most of them wanted that they have to know to technical words in order to communicate successfully with their colleagues as well. They need technical words for communication and for medical purposes. More than 88% accepted that they need technical words in organization in which they worked.

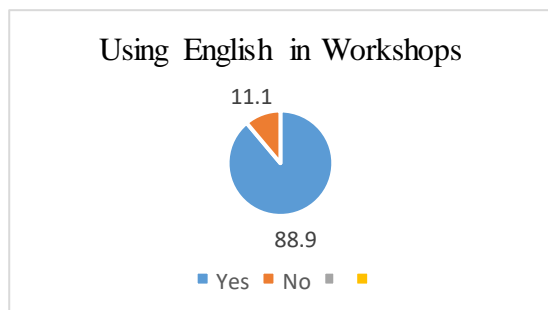


Figure 5. Use of English in workshops

Even in the context of Afghanistan, in most workshops that were held for doctors. Their agenda was based on English language. For example, every participant started presenting their presentation based on English language; at the same time, many questions were raised as well upon English language. Therefore, it is necessary for all doctors to speak and learn English language. More than 88% of participants that participated in workshops said that English language played a very important role.

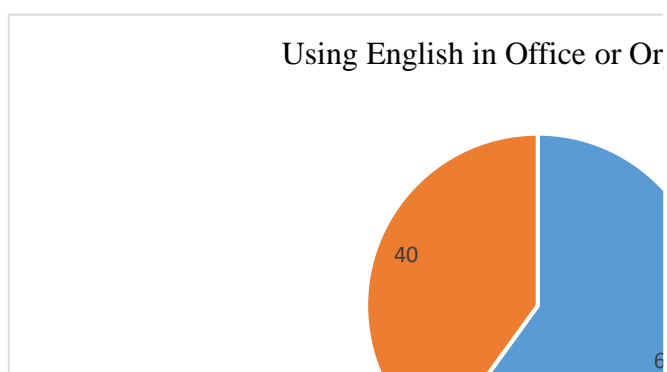


Figure 6. Use of English for occupational purposes

The doctors who are working in different organization use English language more than enough. They write their reports that should be upon English language. These reports include their daily works that they do in their offices. 60% of participants told that you used English language and it was more than enough, so they need English language to be in communication with their colleagues.



Figure 7. Use of English in meetings

English language plays a very important role in every meeting in which ever program was held for developing of the knowledge of the doctors upon English language. In such context, it is need for doctors to speak English language



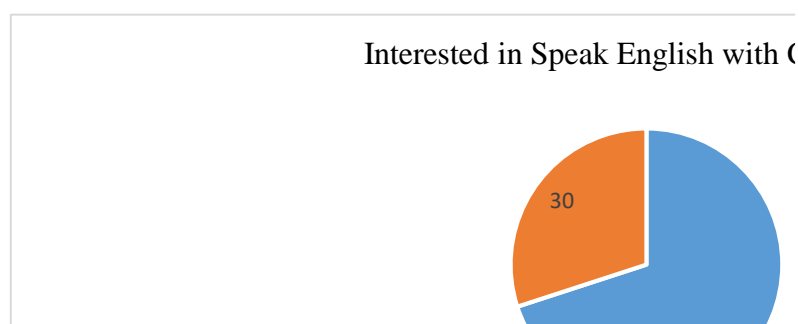


Figure 8. Use of English with colleagues

All these participants were very keen to speak English language with their colleagues in their office because all the reports that they wrote were based on English language.



Figure 9. Viewpoints on English for medical purposes

About 90% of the doctors who participated to answer the questions agreed that there should be any course, especially teaching English for medical purposes to solve their problems both in communication and written language.

#### 4. Discussion

From findings, there are some main points that the doctors want to learn English language for specific purposes. They need to communicate with their colleagues as well as other people outside their discipline. In any meeting, when the foreigners come to their organization, they have to speak English language in order to communicate successful. Having knowledge in four skills in English language is useful for them. When they want to write any report to their staff, they need to write a well-organized report in order to attract the attention of their colleagues. Technical words in medical play an important role for all doctors because when they write any prescription for the patients, they have to use technical words, especially the names of drugs that are available. Such technical did not translate into Persian language and the doctors have to only choice to improve their knowledge in English language.

In today's world, many tools regarding medical are invented on English language, so the doctors need to improve their knowledge in English language to use such tools appropriately. There are many machines which examine the disease that the people are

affected and they are available everywhere. There are two main issues which are very important for the doctors, especially in situation in which they want to learner English language for their own purposes. First, technical words are very useful for all doctors. When they want to learn English language, these technical words can solve their problems both in communication and written section as well. The doctors try to write prescriptions for the patients; they have to know English language in order to write meaningful prescriptions for them. In addition, they need to read texts and books based on English language. There are many types of books that are all about medicine and the doctors must read them to improve their knowledge of language in English. Using English language in communication is also a need for doctors. When they want to participate in any meeting in which the discussion is going to be based on English language, they have to speak and communicate with such people. In addition, in most cases, foreigners come to meeting and they will discuss any specific topic and doctors need to communicate with them base on English language.

## **5. Conclusion**

From discussion, there are some points to conclude. Technical vocabulary is necessary for each doctor because the patients are going to come to them, and they have to write prescription in terms of English language. At the same time, they have to know which medicine is useful that should reduce the illness of the patients. It is obvious that all medicines are made based on English language and doctors have to try their best to learn English language and can solve their problems. Learning of technical words in English language, especially in medical discipline will help them to be good communicators. Reading and writing, having the knowledge in these two skills for doctors is important as well. The more they read books and articles in medicines, the better and more knowledgeable they will be in English language. The doctors have to read new information about the diseases which are threatening the lives of people around the globe.

This paper ended with the significance of technical words, especially vocabulary for doctors in the context of Afghanistan. These doctors need to communicate, read, listen and write based on English language. Taking part in any meeting, there is need to speak English language. More research will be done about the needs of doctors in Afghanistan and about the importance of English for medical purposes in the future too.

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