Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

5.0. General

The language register arises mostly due to the language use in a particular environment and for a purpose. The register is a type of the total repertoire that the learners have in their cognition. When the discipline gets divided into sub-disciplines like English for nurses, English for paramedics etc, the variety becomes more complex. The sub-registers have a portion of the main discipline’s features as well as the sub-registers’ features. It is quite interesting to see that a register’s form and function is entirely different from other registers; each one is unique like a language.

There are several reasons as to why the registers are to be analysed. Analysing the subject specific literacy will be used to understand the specific linguistic forms and functions of that the curriculum which could be developed into subject-specific one, instead of teaching and learning the general rules and regulations for general communicative purposes. As the fields of students, they are expected to do their field related activities effectively in their professional settings.

5.1. Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

The nurses’ reports, the transfer of responsibility for patient care between nurses at the end of their work shift, are a potential source of linguistic forms and functions in the clinical setting. This study of nurses' reports has focused primarily in identifying the functions and meaning of the reports to nurses. The study includes:
(a) nursing education and acculturation
(b) discourse patterns of grammatical and lexical cohesion
(c) acquisition of subject-specific literacy
(d) nursing procedures
(e) patient information transmission.

There are relatively few studies in the literature which examine the language form and function used by the nurses to accomplish the transmission of patient information during their clinical training. The primary aim of this study is to describe the language used by the nursing students.

For the purpose of this study, the reports, considered for a language discourse, are defined as “a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes”. Discourse analysis theory proposes that these communicative events comprise of both language and the context within which it is used. The analysis focused on describing the language component of the reports of the nursing students in order to identify the structure and language patterns used for their communicative purposes. The relationship between language and context in the reports is interactive.

This chapter presents the findings from this descriptive study of nurses' language use in relation to each of the research questions asked:

a. What are the grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion used by the students in the reports?

b. What are the distinctive structural forms and functions used in the reports?
c. How do the students acquire the subject-specific language, English for nursing purposes?

5.1.1. Research Question 1

*What are the grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion used by the students in the reports?*

Two grammatical cohesive markers and one lexical cohesive marker were identified. Demonstrative reference *the* and *exophoric ellipsis* of grammatical cohesive devices and lexical *repetition* were the specific discursive forms used in the reports. The significance of *the* was always a signal, showing the criteria for asking "which" patient is to be recovered from the preceding text. This is what provided the 'texture'. For reasons of economy, emphasis and style, a part of the structure had been omitted, which was recoverable from a scrutiny of the situational contexts and textual context and the elided parts of the sentences were unambiguous. In the reports, ellipsis was used as linguistic mechanism which helped to express the specific linguistic structures economically, at the same time maintaining their clarity and comprehensiveness. The most direct form of lexical cohesion, repetition, was found in the reports. The use of collocation analysis was to examine the association of lexical items in the context within which they were used to reveal the patterns of lexical information in the reports. Imperatives and modal forms that relay instruction to the oncoming nurses to do the nursing procedures (e.g. *watch the patient*, *I/O chart to be maintained*, *the patient should be isolated*, etc) appeared in the written reports with relatively low frequency.
5.1.2. Research Question 2

What are the distinctive structural forms and functions used in the reports?

The discourse analysis revealed an identifiable structure forms used by the nursing students to communicate information about patients. The structure contained mostly exophoric ellipsis, nominalisation and imperative used by them to achieve the clinical information, which showed the responsibility for patient care. A five-move structure was found in the overall textual organisation of the reports: Move 1- Patient information (optional), which served to introduce the patient to the oncoming nurse. Move 2- Patient’s general condition, Move 3- Treatment administration, Move 4- Patient’s condition after treatment and Move 5- Things to do in next shift. The move analysis supports the findings of previous research that the nursing hand-off genre is focused on task completion (Ekman & Segesten, 1995; Keenan et al., 2006; Lally, 1999; Liukkonen, 1993; Manias & Street, 2000; Payne et al., 2000) and is highly retrospective (Ekman & Segesten; Lally). While there is a structure to the reports in this sample, they can hardly be called standardized. The moves occurred with some regularity in the reports, but there was wide variation in the use of strategies to accomplish the moves. There was no move that addressed overall goals for the patient’s care. One of the potential gaps in information identified that was the reports focused on tasks rather than on patient outcomes (Pillow, 2007) and the structure of the reports in this sample perpetuated the potential gap. While there was a strategy specifically focused on sharing interventions, those interventions were not clearly linked to an outcome of the perfect texture.
5.1.3. Research Question 3

How do the students acquire the subject-specific language, English for nursing purposes?

They learn the discipline specific linguistic form subconsciously. The results showed that the students did not know about the structures they used in the reports. They knew the meaning and function of those structures which were used for conveying their ideas to the other health-care professionals. For them, English language is for their communicative purposes rather than applying all grammatical rules and regulations. They acquired it seeing the textual regularities of texts as traces of typified social actions by which the students were experiencing the language in response to recurring situations. This provided them a useful means of leaning the nurse’s register without undergoing any bottlenecks which usually occur when learners learn English as a second language.

The students face the problems of learning English as a second language in their classroom environment where the students are expected to write the standard language with grammaticality. Though they have 12 years of English education at schools and been taught the Standard English, they still face problems in acquiring it. It is very interesting that the students write the clinical language easily than the language they do in the classroom.

The discipline-specific literacy, the student-nurse acquired the professional skills that a nurse needed to acquire regarding the practice of nursing community. It involved medical knowledge, dispositions in the clinical environment, linguistic skills and a good relationship between doctors, patients and peer groups. Learning the literacy involved not only engaging their medical knowledge but also applying the knowledge in the clinical environment.
5.2. Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The study is limited exclusively to the discourse analysis of the reports written by the nursing students of Coimbatore Medical College Hospital. It has also not considered other nursing colleges and their students were not considered for the study. Based on the results found in the analysis, it can be stated that, this functional method has to be employed in nursing English across the country. The data were collected from relatively homogenous setting from one Government hospital in Coimbatore district of Tamilnadu State. The study does not analyses the student’s other forms of discourses: nurse-patient conversation, nurse-doctor conversation and nursing student’s writings like assignments, medical essays and laboratory reports. No demographic data (e.g. age, race, gender, years of experience, education level and native speaker status) was collected about the nursing students involved in the reports and this prevented comparisons of language patterns by groups of nurses.

5.3. Implications for Health Care Policy

Current discussions surrounding the nurse’s register in patient health care focuses on the importance of effective communication in applying the features in the curriculum. A number of approaches for incorporating the specific features and standardising the nurses’ reports have been put forth by various agencies and health care organizations in foreign countries. But in India, there were no agencies and health-care institutions are coming forward to encourage the researches especially the language of nursing professionals. The Indian Nursing Council also should revise the English syllabus for the nursing programme and increase the duration of English language course. There should be a full time English specialist to be appointed in all government nursing institutions. Their presence would prevent and reduce the risks arising due to the various linguistic problems.
5.4. Proposal for Further Study

- A comparative rhetoric analysis can be made to compare the doctor’s case sheets and nurses’ reports and to find out the linguistic features of the medical reports.

- The various medical departments and casualty reports can be analysed for the sub-disciplinary variations. The study helps the nursing students to become expert in a particular medical department and future researchers in this field of discourse analysis could carry out the researches according to their specifications.

- The learning styles and strategies of nursing students and academic culture and disciplinary culture are to be studied.

- The Linguistic data are collected from the field and created machine-readable texts as corpus. The corpus may be used for the development of natural language processing software such applications as lexicography, speech recognition and machine translation.

- The nursing students’ needs in terms of present situation (proficiency) analysis and target situation analysis may be carried out to understand the complete language use and structure used in the nursing domain. This type of research will be helpful in designing the subject specific curriculum under English for Specific Purposes.

- The nursing students’ spoken language could be analysed applying conversation analysis theory. The students interact with doctors, patients and other duty nurses. These spoken data should be collected and analysed to find out the spoken discourse devices of the nursing professionals.
Using theories of social constructivism, the research could focus on the connection of language variation and gender in the nursing domain where most of the professionals are female. This investigation may bring out the connection between language and personhood, attitude and linguistic style.

The nursing students’ academic study skills like academic writing, academic reading, academic listening and academic speaking skills can be researched.

The terminology used in the nursing field might be examined and the way the students acquire the second language vocabulary can also be examined.

The various models of John Swales’ Genre Analysis can be applied in the field of nursing.

General comparative analysis would be done to compare the linguistic competence and performance between the students of private nursing institutions and the students of government nursing institutions.

Linguistic metaphors used in the nursing field could be analysed.

By Speech Act theories, the various communicative activities of nursing students could be explored.

Now-a-days the contribution of paramedics from the accident spot to the hospital has increased in number. The language form and function of the paramedics could be investigated.