

Communication with Foreign Patients Based on Medical English Textbooks

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ABSTRACT

Medical English is included in the curriculum of medical schools (vocational schools, junior colleges, and universities) for medical professionals. Medical English is mostly about learning medical terminology in English, and it can be useful for medical professionals to work abroad and read foreign papers. But what is the purpose of learning medical English and what is the goal?

Keywords: Foreign patients; English language; Medical english textbooks.

INTRODUCTION

As of June 2020, the number of foreign residents in Japan has exceeded 2.5 million, and the number of foreign residents is expected to increase further. Of the 2.5 million foreign residents, approximately 730,000 are Chinese, 450,000 are Korean, 260,000 are Filipino, 260,000 are Vietnamese, and 190,000 are Brazilian (Immigration Bureau, Ministry of Justice, 2020). According to the current statistics of foreign residents, the number of foreign residents whose mother tongue is English is small.

Therefore, it can be said that the number of foreign patients whose native language is English is also small. Not all foreign patients can speak English, and even those who can speak English are not likely to be able to understand the medical terminology used in medical English conversation.

The number of foreign patients from non-English speaking countries in medical institutions is increasing, and the demand for medical interpreters is rising.

Medical professionals working in medical institutions can now communicate with foreign patients through medical interpreters (both in person and over the phone) and translation machines. In the future, it is expected that medical institutions in urban areas and areas with a large population of foreigners will have more opportunities to communicate with foreign patients through translation machines and medical interpreters. However, in Japan, there is no legal requirement for medical interpreters

to be assigned to medical institutions, and the number of people who can serve as medical interpreters is currently filled by volunteers and acquaintances. In Japan, however, there is no legal framework for the assignment of medical interpreters to medical institutions, and those who can serve as medical interpreters are often volunteers or acquaintances. There are only a few medical institutions that have trained interpreters who can fulfill the role of medical interpreters [1].

Many medical universities, colleges, and vocational schools have medical English classes and curriculums for learning medical English. Being able to speak English, which is said to be the universal language, does not mean that medical treatment can be carried out smoothly.

What would be the purpose of learning medical English, even though the medical English classes at school alone would not enable one to smoothly converse with foreign patients in English? It is necessary for medical professionals to continue learning medical English vocabulary and English for research purposes. However, looking at the current development of the languages of foreigners living in Japan and translation machines, it would be better to learn not only medical English conversation, but also the culture of foreign patients and their attitudes toward illness.

Medical professionals have to keep studying outside of their busy working hours in order to acquire ever evolving medical knowledge and skills, while they are busy with their daily work. Who would like to see medical professionals continue to study

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not only medical knowledge but also English and become able to converse with foreign patients in English? Not only the foreign patients whose mother tongue is not English, but also the medical interpreters. Even those who use the same language cannot understand medical jargon when they are suffering from illness.

Dealing with foreign patients when it is painful to even talk about their symptoms in their mother tongue may be similar to dealing with infants or mute people. In order for foreign patients to be able to receive medical care at medical institutions without anxiety, medical professionals may need to know more about communication skills themselves and cultural backgrounds than they need to learn English.

The purpose of this study was to compare and analyze medical English conversation and to examine future issues regarding communication with foreign patients.

Research objective

To compare and analyze medical English conversation textbooks published for nurses and nursing students in Japan, and to discuss communication with foreign patients.

Research method

Book search method: For the purpose of comparing medical English conversation texts published in Japan, Amazon was used. "Medical" and "English conversation" were entered into the search field of Amazon books, and the search was conducted (May 7, 2021).

Eligibility criteria and selection method of books

From the 243 books in the search results, only those books that [2] were written in Japanese, [3] were published or reprinted in 2000 or later for the year of first edition or revised edition, [4] included nurses or nursing students as the target audience, [5] were not dictionaries or lexicons, and [6] were available for purchase from Amazon were considered.

Even if the first edition was published before 2000, those that were updated in 2000 or later were included. The reason for choosing the year of reprint and the year of publication as 2000 or later is that the system for accepting foreigners in Japan has changed since the latter half of the 1990's, many foreigners have come to live in Japan, and the number of foreign patients has increased significantly. In addition, books that are not related to medical care, those compiled as books or dictionaries for English papers or international conferences, and books for learning medical English were excluded.

Books for nurses and nursing students to use in English conversation with foreign patients were included in this study.

Analysis method

The contents of English conversation texts were categorized into the following items for comparative analysis: "Year of publication," "Author," "Author's thoughts," "Why in English," "Reception," "Telephone," "Examination," "Hospitalization," "Discharge,"

"Accounting," "Medicine," "Disaster," and "Others."

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

24 English conversation textbooks were selected from 243 search results according to the eligibility criteria. The breakdown of the 24 textbooks is as follows:

1. English Conversation Handbook for Medical Staff [5]
2. English Conversation for Hospital Staff [4]
3. English Conversation for Staff from the University of Tokyo Hospital [7]
4. English conversation for hospital staff [8]
5. English for Nursing and Medical Staff [9]
6. English and Conversation for Nursing [10]
7. English Conversation for Nurses [11]
8. Hospital English Conversation for Nurses [6]
9. Everyday English for International Nurses Practical English for Nurses [12].
10. Essential English for Nurses Standard Textbook of Nursing English Conversation, Student Edition [13].
11. Practical English Conversation for Nurses and Medical Secretaries [14].
12. Practical English Conversation for Nurses, Student Edition [13].
13. 3rd Edition Practical English Conversation for Nurses Introduction to Nursing English Conversation, 3rd Edition
14. Step Up English Conversation for Nurses
15. Practical Medical English Conversation for Nurses
16. Level up Nursing Eikaiwa by Christine
17. English Conversation for Nurses 1000
18. English Conversation for Nurses in Hospitals and In addition to the above, there are also a number of other books on the subject. English Conversation [15].
19. Nursing English Conversation [16]
20. 1000 English Conversations for Nurses [17].
21. English Conversation Phrases for Nurses [18].
22. Nursing English Conversation for Nurses with CD [19].
23. English Conversation Handbook for Nurses [2].
24. Practical Medical English Conversation [20].

Year of publication of the text

10 of the 24 textbooks had their first printing by 2009. 12 textbooks were published between 2010 and 2021. The first editions of the remaining two books were published before 2000, but the revised and updated editions were published after 2010.

Before 1985, the number of foreigners living in Japan and the number of foreigners visiting Japan for travel, work, training, or study were small [21]. As a result, the number of foreign visitors to Japan increased rapidly, and the number of foreign patients visiting medical institutions also increased. Furthermore, when

Table 1 shows the results and discussion of the classification of the 24 textbooks into "year of publication," "author," "author's thoughts," "reception," "telephone," "examination," "hospitalization," "discharge," "accounting," "medicine," "disaster," and "other."

Title	Year of publication	Author	Author's thoughts	Why Medical									Other
				Professionals Need to Speak English	Reception	Phone	Examination	Hospitalization	Discharge from hospital	Accounting	Medicine	Disaster	
English Conversation Handbook for Medical Staff	2007 First edition 2015 Revised edition	"Japanese-American physician, linguist Dr. Luther Link Kurt Link Tadashi Murase"	Necessity of informed consent to communicate Japanese medical style to patients for cultural and customary differences.	Some patients are non-native English speakers. The majority of patients are English speakers.	x	x	o	x	x	x	o	x	Only doctor-patient conversations
St. Luke's Style English Conversation for Hospital Staff	2nd edition 2016	Medical Staff St. Luke's International University	They are under the guidance of American doctors and nurses. So that anxious foreign patients can receive medical care with peace of mind.	Support for hospital staff to learn English, toward internationalization of medicine.	o	o	o	o	x	o	o	o	Rehabilitation, Ophthalmology, Dental surgery, Nutrition department, Medical social work department, Children's medical support room
English Conversation for Medical Staff from Todai Hospital	"2016 first edition 2019 8th brush"	Medical Staff Project Team	We want to save the English language support in the medical field throughout Japan. Project members excluding doctors.	We have created an environment where we can communicate in English.	o	o	o	o	x	o	o	o	Touching on the need to identify differences in religion or customs at points
Situational English for Hospital Staff	1st edition 2017	Shinobu Hattori; English, Medical Interpreter	Resolute in dealing with foreign patients. It leads to cross-cultural understanding.	To understand languages other than Japanese.	o	o	o	o	x	o	o	o	About vegetarianism, religion and food habits in the column
Immediately useful in the field! English for Nursing and Medical Staff	2008 first edition 2019 7th brush	Margaret Yamanaka; English Instructor	You can communicate with patients more smoothly than with fluent English. From the perspective of a foreign patient.	The need for English education is increasing.	o	x	o	o	x	o	o	x	Questions about religion and examples of patient answers, Infant

English and Conversation for Nursing	1st edition 2003 1 brush 1st edition 2005 2 brush	Mamiko Kawai; General physician, translator, English instructor Marie Kawai; sister of the author	Language barrier issues, requiring extra time and effort from the medical side.	I want you to break the language barrier without fear of failure, even if your English is poor.	○	×	○	○	○	○	×	×	×	Contacting family in a foreign country, Childbirth, Pediatrics
English for Nurses	2011 first edition 2018 5th brush	E.H.Jego; English medical interpreter, linguistic research	To practice nursing care for patients with different cultures.	Because it was edited based on corpus linguistics.	○	×	○	○	○	○	○	○	×	A few words about caring for patients, restrictions due to religion or beliefs in columns, "take care", embassy list
Hospital for Nurses	English 2013 1st brush 2016 3rd brush	Koeko Noda; Doctor of linguistics, English teacher	To provide foreign patients with a safe and comfortable experience of Japanese medical care.	It can be useful when communicating in English.	○	×	○	○	×	○	×	×	×	T e a c h i n g Diabetics in the Hospital, Caring for Paraplegics, Assisting Patients with Broken Bones, Dealing with Pediatric Patients,
Everyday for Nurses English Practical English for Nursing	2013 1st brush 2004 First Published in the UK	Joy Parkinson; Translator Tsukihito Nishimura; Applied Linguistics Kiyoko Hirai; English Education Yoshihiro Wajimoto; Translator	Learn about the nature of holistic care in nursing.	To understand the nature of healthcare in the UK.	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	[Cases] Dyspnea, stroke, medication guidance, constipation, daily living, dementia, pain. Questions needed for nursing planning based on the Activities of Living Model of Nursing (Roper, 1996).
Essential English for Nurses Standard Textbook of Nursing English Conversation, Student Edition	" 1996 1st edition 1 brush 2018 5th edition 1 brush"	Paul F. Zito & Masako Hayano ZITO; translator	For doctors and nurses working in institutions that have to deal with patients from culturally or linguistically different backgrounds.	For medical professionals working overseas in medical institutions where English is the primary language.	○	×	○	○	○	○	×	×	×	Schematic drawings of the human body, skeletons, vocabulary, and a scale conversion chart.
Practical English for Nurses and Medical Secretaries	2010 1st brush 2014 5th brush	Naginatsu Yamada; Nurse Sadako Kuroda; English Conversation Instructor	To make it easier, more polite, easier to remember, and easier to reach the hearts of others.	By learning a foreign language, students develop the ability to accept differences.	○	○	○	×	×	○	○	×	×	Author's one-point explanation for easier understanding

Practical English Conversation for Nurses	2010First Edition 1 brush	Hisae Niki; English Instructor, Yuko Morishima; M.D. Flaminia Miyamastu; Medical English Instructor	The book was compiled as a practical version of "5,000 Hospital English Expressions for Use as-is" (Igaku Shoin).	To learn the rhythm and intonation of English.	○	×	○	○	×	○	○	×	Vaccinations, medical terminology vs. common words. The names of the tests are given as words in the flow of conversation.
3rd Edition Practical English Conversation for Nurses Introduction to Nursing English Conversation, 3rd Edition	1981 1st edition 1 brush 20113rd edition 10 brush	"Takeshi Ueki; Anthropologist Doreal Toun; Nurse, translator of medical articles "	I incorporated realistic conversations. The focus is on nurses. Due to the increase in the number of nurses working in nursing homes, lessons on nursing care have been added.	American Standard English with a focus on medical terminology	○	×	○	○	○	○	×	×	the text is intended for nurses, there are chapters on nursing techniques, home care, day services, elderly care, and special care.
Step Up English Conversation for Nurses	1 brush of the first edition in 2006	Minoru Makita; Interpreter, English teacher	I want you to be proactive in dealing with foreigners and have smooth communication with them.	Because the number of foreign patients is expected to increase more and more in the future.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	×	Overseas travel chapter
Practical Medical English Conversation for Nurses	2008 first edition	Akihiro Ito; Doctor Keari Ito; Nurse (native English speaker)	To understand the role of medical professionals in different countries with different medical systems.	For those who are serious about learning medical English for research or clinical study abroad.	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	The main character is a nursing student, and the story is about going to various departments in rotations with a resident doctor.
Level Up Nursing Eikaiwa by Christine	2001 1st edition 1st brush 2014 1st edition 13th brush	Chinen Christine Lee; English teacher, Kazuko Sako; English literature scholar, translator, English teacher	Because I had a hard time communicating with the nurses.	There are English-speaking doctors, but it helps patients if the nurses who are closest to them 24 hours a day can speak English.	×	×	○	○	×	×	×	×	Explanation of mental health care, culture and religion of different countries, cultural and religious differences, and vaccinations. Crosswords, games

English Conversation for Nurses 1000	2016 first edition 1st brush	Satomi Hayashi; Nurse, Ph. D. in nursing from the United States.	For foreigners in Japan to be able to receive medical and nursing care with peace of mind.	The minimum amount of English required to provide medical and nursing care as smoothly as possible.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	×	Foreign patients and medical insurance, Differences between Japan and foreign countries in columns.
English Conversation for Nurses in Hospitals	2003 first edition	Kyoko Iida; Interpreter, Doctor of Health Sciences. Editor: Katsuo Akagi; English-related book production	To be a force to be reckoned with in the international community.	To acquire English as a lingua franca in an increasingly globalized society.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	×	Interviews and questionnaires with active nurses for writing and production
Nursing English Conversation	2003	Hiroo Nakamura: Pedagogy, faculty member of nursing university.	Recently, many foreigners have been living in Japan, and I expect the number of foreigners visiting hospitals to increase.	I hope this will help you to speak a little English with your English-speaking patients.	○	○	○	○	×	×	×	×	×	Temperature taking, nursing assistance (toileting, whole-body wiping, meal assistance)
English Conversation for Nurses 1000	2001 1st brush 2005 5th brush	" Supervisor: Nobuo Ishiwata: Historian"	The anxiety of foreign patients is great. We hope that foreigners in Japan will be able to receive medical and nursing care with peace of mind.	To be able to provide smooth medical care to foreign patients when they come to the hospital.	○	×	○	○	○	○	○	○	×	The differences in common sense between Japan and other countries.
Useful from Today! English Conversation Phrases for Nurses	2009 1st edition 1st brush	Haruko Hishida; English teacher, Keiko Fukaya; English studies	To enable nurses to provide good nursing care to foreign patients.	We have collected phrases that can be said in English from nurses who have interacted with foreign patients in the field.	○	○	○	○	×	×	○	○	×	End of life, bereaved family, Restricted diet, Religious
Nursing English for Nurses with CD	2010 1st brush	Junko Yamamoto; English education	To ensure that my skills and sincerity as a nurse will be internationally accepted.	The nationalities of patients have become more diverse, forcing us to rely on English as a means of communication.	○	×	○	○	○	○	○	○	×	Expressions of sympathy, Visitors, dealing with patients' families

patients who do not speak their native language, but there are many who speak English," or "Learn English as a lingua franca," one can talk with people in the static load. Some textbooks were designed to be used as tools for cross cultural communication, such as "accepting differences by learning a foreign language," "changing the environment to accommodate foreigners," and "acquiring cross cultural understanding. In addition, there were texts that stated that "English" was necessary to improve one's skills and language proficiency. As Japan is an island nation, we do not realize how much we need English, a universal language, as a language tool. Because we rarely use English in our daily lives, Japanese people do not feel the need for it. We can see that the idea of using English in conversations with foreign patients has become the mainstream in Japan at the moment. Either for the sake of medical professionals or for the sake of foreign patients, the authors' thoughts on medical English conversation can be felt.

Items and contents

If the author compares the three a: Physician textbooks, all three books do not have items on telephone support, accounting, and disasters. The absence of these items can be attributed to the fact that doctors do not have experience with any of these items. However, in the section on reception, some texts include a section on reception even though the author is a doctor. Since the doctor in this text has experience as an English teacher and his sister, who co-authored the text, is not a medical professional, it is possible that the receptionist item was included based on other medical English texts.

Only three of the 24 books had a section on "disasters," two of which were written by medical staff and one by a medical interpreter. In the "Disaster" section of the report, the authors show in English how medical staff should respond to a disaster in a hospital. Japan is prone to natural disasters such as earthquakes and typhoons. I think it was the author's idea to include in the medical English textbook how to guide foreign patients to evacuate in such cases.

There were seven textbooks that touched on religious and cultural differences. 6 of the texts were written by authors who were not medical professionals. Many of them were not about religion or eating habits as an item, but rather as a column with information. In particular, there are huge differences between cultures in terms of where and when to pray in religion and what to eat in hospitals, so the books were full of useful information for medical professionals to know so as not to be a burden to patients. English instructors, interpreters, and translators have included columns on religious and cultural differences in medical English conversation textbooks to help foreign patients avoid problems in the medical field from the standpoint of foreign patients. Even if you speak English fluently, it is difficult to communicate with foreign patients in the medical field without knowledge of their cultural background. A medical professional who knows the cultural background of foreign patients will be able to communicate with them more smoothly than a medical professional who can only speak English fluently.

I included other things that are specific to the text. Some of the authors, who are nurses, included a section on nursing skills. Step-up English for Nurses, authored by an English teacher, included items that were not related to medical English conversation, such as an overseas travel section.

As shown in the table, the content of the texts differed depending on the background of the author. Medical staff members created the textbooks in the hope of preventing problems for hospital staff, so it can be said that the textbooks were designed for "medical staff. However, when the authors are medical interpreters or English instructors who are not medical staff, they include sections on the religion and eating habits of foreign patients, suggesting that they are more interested in foreign patients. It was found that the different purposes and positions of the authors of the medical English textbooks reflected their thoughts and feelings in the textbooks, which in turn influenced the content.

CONCLUSION

There was a difference in the content of the text depending on the occupation of the author. It is necessary to learn English as a global language. However, it is not enough for medical professionals to be able to use English conversation to communicate smoothly with foreign patients. Knowing the cultural background of the foreign patient, thinking from the foreign patient's point of view, and being close to the foreign patient will make communication smoother.

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