Discourse Analysis Study of Clarification Requests in selected medical Dialogues

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Abstract

The ability to communicate effectively and efficiently is one of the most vital skills in a work-related context, and if you want to reduce miscommunication, your communication has to be accurate and concise. This study investigates clarification requests within English for Specific Purposes (ESP) health communication as a lens on how learners manage understanding and collaboratively fix misunderstanding while developing their professional linguistic competence. Utilizing discourse analysis as the methodological framework, the study focuses on the analysis of authentic data of clarification requests used in role-plays and case discussions by Iraqi undergraduate students enrolled in an ESP healthcare program. The study results show students employ multiple functions of the discourse markers "so" and "you mean" to request a repeat, clarification, or explanation. This study extends our understanding of clarification request use for developing the students' medical vocabulary within an expanded and professional discourse. Similarly, this study also extends our understanding of the function of interactional adjustments to maintain coherence and develop fluency in the discourse, such as paraphrase or repetition. The results of the study suggest the pedagogical significance of teaching clarification request strategies in ESP classes for providing students with the tools to effectively navigate professional healthcare interaction.

Keywords: *Discourse Analysis, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Clarification Request, linguistic Competency, Iraqi Students*

دراسة في تحليل الخطاب لطلبات الاستيضاح في حوارات طبية مختارة

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الملخص

تُعَدّ القدرة على التواصل بفعالية وكفاءة من أهم المهارات في بيئات العمل، إذ إنّ تقليل سوء الفهم يعتمد على أن يكون التواصل دقيقًا وموجزًا. تتناول هذه الدراسة طلبات الإيضاح في سياق التواصل الطبي ضمن إطار اللغة الإنجليزية للأغراض الخاصة ، بوصفها منظورًا لتحليل كيفية إدارة المتعلمين للفهم وتصحيح سوء الفهم بشكلٍ تعاوني أثناء تطوير كفاءتهم اللغوية المهنية. واعتمدت الدراسة على منهجية تحليل الخطاب لتحليل بيانات واقعية تتعلق بطلبات الإيضاح التي استخدمها طلبة جامعيون عراقيون في مرحلة البكالوريوس خلال أداء تمثيلياتٍ حوارية ومناقشاتٍ حالة ضمن برنامج في المجال الصحي. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أنّ الطلبة يوظّفون وظائف متعددة لعلامات الخطاب مثل "so" و "you mean"لطلب التكرار أو التوضيح أو الشرح. وتسهم هذه الدراسة في توسيع فهمنا لاستخدام طلبات الإيضاح كوسيلة لتطوير المفردات الطبية لدى الطلبة ضمن خطابٍ مهني متكامل. كما تُعمّق فهمنا لوظيفة التعديلات التفاعلية في الحفاظ على التماسك وتطوير الطلاقة في الخطاب، مثل إعادة الصياغة أو التكرار. وتشير نتائج الدراسة إلى الأهمية التربوية لتدريس استراتيجيات طلب الإيضاح في صفوف اللغة الإنجليزية للأغراض الخاصة، بما يزوّد الطلبة بالأدوات اللازمة للتفاعل بفاعلية في بيئات التواصل المهني في المجال الصحي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تحليل الخطاب، اللغة الإنجليزية للأغراض الخاصة (ESP)، طلب الإيضاح، الكفاءة اللغوية، الطلبة العراقيون.

1. Introduction

For decades, negotiation of meaning has been a prominent area of interest in the field of Applied Linguistics (AL). The concept stems from the research of task-based interaction (Doughty & Pica, 1986) in which researchers suggested that the interlocutors negotiate for clarification of utterances that are unclear or problematic, and it is during this type of interaction that the interlocutors have more comprehensible input and elicit responses that are easier to interpret. Furthermore, meaning negotiation is especially important in business communication contexts in which clarity and precision are critical, and interlocutors quickly negotiate meaning around their understanding.

Negotiation of meaning is defined as a turn-taking change by interlocutors to repair linguistic or communicative failures. To support this, Ellis (2015) argues that, because failures occur in real time, interactional repair becomes a crucial device to ensure discourse is coherent. Long (1980) describes three strategies for jointly achieving meaning: comprehension-checks, confirmation-checks, and requests for clarification. Of these three, requests for clarification, are particularly salient in workplace contexts due to their ability to allow interlocutors to renegotiate meaning, avoid misunderstandings, and communicate effectively to achieve objectives.

Varonis and Gass (1985) present a four-stage model of negotiation of meaning, which explains how speakers work together to fix a communication problem. It starts with a trigger, an aspect of the utterance, which causes a breakdown in understanding or confusion. This is followed by a signal, where the listener indicates that they are having difficulty understanding. The repair is stage three, where the speaker revises or adds to the difficult part of the utterance to express their intended meaning more clearly. The final stage is

confirmation or follow-up, when the listener either agrees with the speakers explanation, or asks for more explanation if he or she is still unsure.

The systematic process guides us to understand interactivity in meaningful negotiation and an acceptance of responsibility of the interacting parties involved and their constructions of meaning through effective communication. The arrangement illustrates the interactive, collaborative and communicative nature of professional communication, where interlocutors must carefully monitor each other's contributions and adapt their next and subsequent contributions to ensure an ongoing construction of shared meanings (Foster, 1998; Foster & Snyder-Ohta, 2005). As Oliver (2002) states, modifications in this form using face-to-face interaction provide moments for meaning negotiation in real time. Business, legal and medical professional discourse requires a considerable amount of communicative adaptability since speakers typically have to define ambiguities, qualify central ideas, or check their mutual understanding to instigate cooperative action.

Additionally, Kaur (2010) contends that effective mutual understanding requires interlocutors to be capable of listening to conversational cues and repairing breakdowns in real time. Smith (2003) refers to negotiation for meaning as a type of feedback that identifies trouble areas in the discourse and can elicit interlocutors to modify their speech and respond with negotiation work. From a learning perspective, van Lier (2000) argues that negotiation for meaning presents an opportunity for learners to develop language because it prioritizes engagement in meaning-focused interaction. Long (1996) also states that negotiation work, especially if it produces interactional changes, ultimately supports language acquisition by linking input, selective attention, and output meanings.

Although the educational benefit of negotiation for meaning is well documented, the way in which speakers use clarification requests is dependent on context, role relationship

and the aim of their interaction. In professional contexts, clarification requests can serve a strategic purpose beyond just the conventions of language use. They can provide precision, affirm mutual goals, and promote accountability in talk.

This study argues that learners, those who are taking professional communication preparation, must be provided with explicit exposure to and practice in the use of clarification requests to strengthen their spoken communication ability. Classical language instruction tends to favor grammatical correctness and lexis acquisition at the expense of strategic management of discourse, rendering learners incapable of negotiating meaning in the workplace (Walsh, 2012). Through a consideration of how speakers employ clarification requests as a collaborative approach, this study aims to contribute findings that will be of use for informing pedagogic materials and communicative training courses so that learners are able to acquire the interactional competence to accomplish professional discourse.

Placing clarity of professional communication as a socially distributed cognitive process means that attaining it is more than a task of individual thinking. Rather, attaining it relies on collective action. Effective interaction relies on detection of conversational breakdown, deployment of clarification strategies, and responding appropriately to repair sequences. Observing that Jenks (2009) finds detection of when and how to command the conversational floor as highly problematic for language learners. In consequence, engagement with a set of clarification strategies can facilitate them to have professional conversation with increased confidence and communicative accuracy. Through an investigation of the forms, roles, and effects of clarification requests in professional conversation, this study aims to contribute in two ways: both to discourse analytic scholarship and pedagogical application, making actionable recommendations for enhancing work-place communicative competence.

2. Literature Review

A clarification request is a communicative strategy employed when interlocutors are not perfectly comprehending one another and require additional information. Through this strategy, one can request repetition, confirmation, or more explanation in order to make the message intelligible (Cicognani & Zani, 1988). In natural conversation, people use clarification requests all the time, whether they did not catch what someone said, found something ambiguous, or simply want to confirm their understanding.

The utilization of requests for clarification is of even greater significance in second language acquisition. When a second language learner either produces an unclear utterance or utters something that is ungrammatical, a request for clarification will prompt students to rephrase, explain or self-correct what they said. The act of doing this will improve linguistic accuracy, and it will require deeper processing of the grammatical structure and meaning of the utterance (Panova & Lyster, 2002). In the case of students with lower proficiency, requests for clarification facilitate opportunities for self-correction and increased language engagement, rather than only memorizing vocabulary or phrases.

the ability to know when your listener does not understand and respond to that is An important communication skill The moment a speaker knows that his or her original message was not fully received, she or he will adjust her or his message, recycle information, or make meaning explicit in order to be understood. This aspect of conversational repair is necessary for successful communication and which is also particularly important for language learning (Brinton et al., 1986). Language learners do not just receive input passively, but instead adjust their speech based on feedback they receive, and thus communication is more interactive and meaningful.

The request for clarification can be achieved both verbally and non-verbally. Rather, non-verbal request for clarification involves either an appropriate facial expression or a gesture to identify or show confusion-such as raised eyebrow, tilted head, or quizzical look (Cherry, 1979). These very subtle behaviors will often result in the speaker repeating or explaining their intended message without the request for a verbatim statement.

In verbal clarification requests, the listener directly requests clarification through different mechanisms such as inflection, by the use of `huh', or through partial or complete repeat of the unclear statement, or even by rewording the statement to check for comprehension (Brown, 1968; Cherry, 1979; Corsaro, 1977; Langford, 1981; Robinson, 1984).

Another identifiable category is interpretation in which the listener attempts to verify or confirm what they think they heard, (for example, "Did you mean ....") (Moerk, 1977). In some cases, speakers will state explicitly "I didn't understand" (Robinson, 1984; Cicognani & Zani, 1988) indicating they need the speaker to rephrase or expand on something.

While these types of clarification requests would occur naturally in informal or everyday conversation to promote understanding and advance communication, they become even more necessary during workplace communication because misunderstanding something a speaker said could have serious consequences. Further, in second language learning, using clarification requests in practice will assist learners develop self-assurance and accuracy, transition from passive to interactive engagement, and participate in conversations instead of simply receive or passively take in information.

In conclusion, requests for clarification are not simply a way of sorting out misunderstandings; rather, they are a normative and critical element of the way humans communicate, develop knowledge, and engage with each other. In everyday conversation, in

a business context, and in educational contexts, clarification requests permit speakers to clarify and revise their message, work more collaboratively, and develop more trustful communication behaviours over time.

This study investigates the role of clarification questions in medical communication in ESP, specifically how second-language learners use clarification questions to clarify meaning, correct errors, and improve their professional language. Although studies in second-language acquisition focus on meaning negotiation, understanding clarification requests to improve (i.e., negotiate) the language use of ESP learners, particularly in medical ESP contexts, remains limited. Using discourse analytic methodologies, this study explores clarification initiated by both the doctor and patient in role-played medical consultations and medical case discussions by Iraqi undergraduate students enrolled in a medically-relevant ESP course. The study offers a clearer understanding of how learners use (or respond to) clarification, and learners' communicative competence in professional medical communication where accuracy and clarity are critical. Thus, the present study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How do Iraqi undergraduate ESP healthcare students use clarification requests in simulated medical interactions?

2. What linguistic and interactional strategies do learners employ when requesting and responding to clarification?

3. How do clarification requests facilitate language development, particularly in acquiring medical vocabulary and improving communicative competence?

3. Methodology

3.1. Design

From a discourse analytic point of view, this paper investigates the function of clarifying requests in professional communication. The researchers investigate in real-time encounters how communication failures are managed using a qualitative approach. The emphasis is on spontaneously occurring spoken communication, with an eye toward how speakers use clarity-promoting clarifying techniques. Under the primary analytical technique of Conversation Analysis (CA), the research emphasizes how organized clarifying requests are in conversations and their function in controlling speech. Based on studies, CA is considered as both a theory and a way of analysing the data.

3.2. Participants

The participants were 50 Iraqi undergraduate students (28 females and 22 males) from the College of Pharmacy at the University of Al-Qadisiyah, aged 18–24 years, all enrolled in an ESP course designed for healthcare students. Participants were purposively chosen for completion of at least two general English courses, as well as demonstrating placement test-based intermediate-level proficiency to facilitate meaningful participation in simulated medical encounters.

Specifically selected as both groups were preparing to communicate effectively in real-world healthcare contexts where precision and negotiation of meaning are fundamental to the realization of objectives. As future pharmacists, the group also contributed authentic exposure to specialist terminology and professional contexts, which is particularly relevant to the focus of the study on clarification involving disciplinary-specific concepts in an ESP setting. Furthermore, in order to retain the authenticity of the nature of professional

engagement, two healthcare professionals (one medical doctor and one clinical educator) were also recruited to monitor the sessions.

3.3. Instruments

The current research utilized audio recordings of participants' spoken interactions in their ESP course in order to look at clarifying questions use in professional healthcare exchanges. These recordings reflect authentic communicative issues in healthcare contexts and capture real-time communicates in enactments of medical consultations, case discussions, and peer-to-peer interactions. Various clarification requests were coded and their role in professional communication was examined using a prior discourse analytic coding protocol (e.g., Long, 1980; Varonis & Gass, 1985).

3.4. Data Collection

Once this formal permission was granted, I filmed the face-to-face interactions of the participants in the ESP classroom for 10 weeks of lessons. 15 hours of interaction were filmed in professional relationships, such as patient consultations, case discussions, and team problem-solving. The video was beneficial in regard to observing how participants negotiated meaning, asked questions, and concluded talking in a hospital environment. The classroom was chosen in order to ensure the findings accurately represent language use in real professional contexts.

3.5. Data Analysis

The researchers followed Ten Have's (2007) transcription conventions in developing the verbatim transcription of the recorded interactions that considered aspects of interaction including pauses, overlapping speech, and intonational contour. The researchers undertook an analysis of type and placement in conversations and the meaning negotiating functions of the

identified and classified requests for clarification. Patterns drawn from observations through a format of current discourse analytic research will show the ways clarification requests serve to maximize effective communication in professional health contexts. The findings help illustrate for us the ways ESP learners develop interactional competence and further support instructional approaches to teach communication competencies within a targeted professional context. While the use of role-plays and simulated consultation will never capture the full complexity of authentic clinical interactions, these were selected as a controlled yet authentic space in which participants could practice professional communication behaviours with an element of safety.

To strengthen the reliability of qualitative coding, a second trained analyst completed an independent review of a random sample of the interviews to examine consistency of coding, resolving minor disagreements by discussion. While the analysis remained primarily descriptive and qualitative, triangulation was partly achieved through the use of multiple data sources (consultations, case discussions, and peer interactions), providing complementary perspectives on learners' use of clarification strategies.

4. Results

4.1. Clarification Requests in ESP Healthcare Communication

Before the interaction in this extract, two Iraqi students of an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course in healthcare conduct a role-played patient consultation. In this interaction, one student acts as the doctor (S01), while the other acts as the patient (S02), explaining their symptoms. In the following extract, the most important point is where the student acting as the doctor asks for clarification of the patient's explanation of their illness.

Extract 1

1   S02:   I feel (.) uh:: (.) a sharp pai::n in my, uh↓, chest and it is like (0.4) burning↑

2   S01:   So, you mean it feels like (1.0) acid reflux o↑r more like pressure in the chest?

3   S02:   Uh, I mean it (.) it comes and goes, like u::m (0.6) not all time.

4   S01:   Oh, I see↑ So, it happens sometimes, not continuously?-

5   S02:   -Yes, yes! Like, when I eat (0.3) or drink something cold.

6   S01:   Alright↓ I understand.

In this conversation, S01 uses clarification requests to restrict the interpretation of S02's symptom description. Discourse marker "so" at line 2 serves as an introduction to a clarification and alerts the S01 to start questioning for more information (Bolden, 2009). "You mean" question frames the request directly and invites the patient to either agree or elaborate on his description. This is in accordance with Varonis and Gass' (1985) negotiation for meaning model where the speaker recognizes a trigger (information ambiguity), provides a signal (request for clarification), receives a repair (patient repeating the symptom again), and achieves confirmation (doctor paraphrasing patient's repeat).

In line 4, the S01 reformulates the S02's statement into a more simplified version, demonstrating a successful interactional adjustment (Foster, 1998). The S02's response in line 5 signifies that the speaker understands the statement and, additionally, elaborates their reasoning. By the last turn there is understanding achieved between the participants in the interaction, and this exemplifies how clarification requests promote accurate meaning-making when discussing professional matters, and especially when the meaning can have significance in a medical context; as miscommunication or misunderstanding can impact care outcomes.

4.2. Managing Misunderstandings in Case Discussions

Both participants in the second extract are again relaying a patient's history; the student acting as the doctor (S01) is attempting to synthesize the patient's health history for the colleague (S02), but uncertainty about the timeline provokes a call for clarification.

Extract 2

1   S01:   The patient has had this cough for (.) uh (0.5) two months?

2   S02:   Do you mean continuously↑ or only sometimes?

3   S01:   Uh, no, I mean (.) like (0.4) sometimes worse, sometimes better.

4   S02:   So↑, it is intermittent, not chronic?

5   S01:   Yes, <intermittent> yes.

In this extract, the call for clarification found in line 2 is posed as a question "Do you mean...?", which suggests that the S02 prompts specification of the S01's statement. This aligns with Long's (1996) claim that negotiation for meaning facilitates learning by encouraging interlocutors to interact with language more complexly. The restating and rephrasing of the content also (lines 3-5) demonstrate how meaning is constructed collaboratively during dialogue, and illustrate how professional discourse requires revising and refining meaning (Kaur, 2010). The explicit request for clarification displayed on line 2 requires the speaker to revise the response, which demonstrates how requests for clarification serve two functions: to clarify an ambiguous response but also include an invitation to respond with more precision. The final turn demonstrated in line 5 was effectively negotiated meaning, since the S01 deployed a more precise medical term "intermittent", which demonstrates how sequences of clarify requests can lead to precision in language and demonstrate professionalism in healthcare ESP contexts.

4.3. Clarification Requests and Interactional Modifications

In this last extract, the two students are discussing to each other about how to care for patients. One student has trouble describing a medical term, which starts a series of clarifications.

Extract 3

1 S01: The patient should (0.6) take (.) um, *medications* (.) you know, for blood

2   pressure… uh… (0.5) the ones that make it lower?

3 S02: You mean (1.0) antihypertensive drugs?-

4 S01: -Yes, yes, *anti-hyper…* (0.3) antihypertensive, yeah.

5 S02: Oh, I see↓

Here, S01 opens the discussion but cannot remember the exact term, and uses hesitation markers ("um" and "uh") and a vague descriptor ("the ones that make it lower"). S02's request for clarification in line 2 is not only a confirmation check, but provides S01 with the correct term as a form of linguistic scaffolding (Smith, 2003). By using the word in line 3, first in partial repetition form ("anti-hyper...") and then in the utterance, S01 demonstrates one instance of second language learning (van Lier, 2000). S02's last turn, "Oh, I see," indicates that they have concluded the negotiation of meaning and have now jointly reached an understanding.

This excerpt shows how requests for clarification can act as learning experiences, especially in ESP contexts, where learners have to learn the terminology of their profession. The process of negotiating meaning, and changing the language used at the same time is analogous to the way professionals in healthcare practice collaborate to negotiate meaning.

5. Discussion

The study exhibits the significance of clarification requests in ESP professional health communication, particularly in ESP situations. As analyzed in simulated medical consultations between two Iraqi learners of English for specific purposes, it finds clarification requests beneficial for clarified misunderstanding, more precise meaning, and development of a professional ownership of the professional use of the language.   The findings study are similar to the studies of negotiation for meaning (Varonis and Gass, 1985, Long, 1996), they do offer some new perspectives about clarification requests in communication-specific in health care. Overall, the current study does enlighten how ESP students are using clarification in the medical setting to confirm their exchanges are accurate and efficient and also provide more depth to the field beyond the previous studies confirming their findings.

The intentional use of discourse markers (such as, "so" and, "you mean") is an interesting characteristic of the data in particular that encapsulates the requests for clarification made with those markers. They were brief but powerful phrases that occurred in numerous work transactions, that redirected the trajectory of conversation, helped to preserve order of talk, and had the other party expand, or clarify their meaning. Extract 1 illustrates this clearly when the student in the doctor role made their request for clarification using the marker "so." This effectively signaled that they were about to make an utterance that called for more information in some fashion. This also helped assure that both parties were in alignment about the patient symptoms and allowed the talk to continue easily. These findings correlate with Bolden's (2009) qualitatively that, "'So' was a resource that facilitated accountability for the request or recommendation." Further, it located talk and created flow in the conversation.

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A perplexing feature in the data was that the occasions where clarification was sought tended to precede instances of paraphrasing or reformulating. An example of this can be seen in Extract 2 where a student paraphrased another student's utterance to get at the full intended meaning. This modality corroborates Foster (1998), and Kaur (2010) who stated that negotiation of meaning is not merely clarifying misunderstanding but also facilitates the reorganization of simplified information in order to clarify. In the healthcare professional context, the use of plain and concise language is important; and restating or paraphrasing the information was, thus, important in getting messages passed as accurately as possible. When healthcare workers are able to sharpen and narrow their vocabulary, they help reduce the potential for misunderstanding in communication; which is important, since even minor communication problems could lead to significant negative consequences.

This study also indicates that requests for clarification aid ESP students in developing medical specific lexical knowledge. This is clearly evidenced here in Extract 3, when one student is trying to recall "antihypertensive drugs," and rather than allowing the exchange to falter, their partner provides a request for clarification rather than just the missing medical jargon. The request for clarification helped the student access the appropriate medical term. This exchange can be connected to Smith's (2003) concept of linguistic scaffolding, whereby a more proficient or confident speakers of the language in question helps out the other student with their language by providing the correct language when they need it. Collaborative language support is beneficial in ESP contexts because the students have to memorize the technical jargon and then have to produce this jargon naturally during their field discourse.

Furthermore, the study finds that requesting clarification enables a more orderly conversation. When speakers make clarification requests, they are actively disarming their ideas into smaller pieces of information, which can then be negotiated and carried forward in

the conversation forgivingly and competence. A clarification request allows speakers to continue to be engaged and to assure each other that they fully understand, rather than getting "stuck" on vague or ambiguous utterances. In Extract 2, the clarification request asked for the more nuanced and precise use of temporal duration of symptoms, resulting in not only improved clarity of communication but enhanced workflow. These findings align with Ellis et al. (2001) who suggest that successfully transitioning from one meaning negotiation to the next encourages speakers to more fully engage with the language structures, and ultimately supports improved fluency.

The findings further reveal students face certain challenges when seeking clarification. For example, as shown in Extract 3, some overlap speech occurred when one student interjected into their friend's speech when they were trying to retrieve a medical term. This overlap speech indicated membership in the interaction; however, it also indicated students will need to develop some skills associated with turn-taking to avoid unnecessarily interjecting into the flow of conversation. Jenks (2009) suggests that knowing when to contribute to conversation and when to listen actively is an important, foundational skill, especially in the workplace context where a person must speak in declarative and structured manner.

A significant contribution of this study is that the clarification requests used in professional contexts involve more than just clarifying the meanings of particular words. In informal settings, a lot less care and effort is needed to resolve misunderstandings. People are able to share and manage clarification request explanations. However, once we are in professional communication, a level of clarity and order is needed - an explicit way of clarifying and checking clarity. For example, see Extract 1, where the clarification request/lead to another detailed transaction of patient information that resulted in a full

understanding of the patient's symptoms or level of concern. This shows Walsh's (2012) point that effective discourse management in addition to vocabulary is also necessary tool for professional communication.

The findings of the study also indicate that ESP learners benefit from engaging in genuine professional discourse. Although grammar and lexis are both mostly singled out and highlighted in the language classroom, the study points to the need to show ESP learners the process of negotiating legitimate professional discourse. Model exchanges and practice tasks in ESP classes can help to promote students' comfort in using clarification strategies. This proposal aligns with Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis that states that language learning is a more productive process when learners are believed to be engaged in negotiation of meaning.

6. Conclusions

The findings of this study indicate that being driven by a quest for clarity propels a more engaged and participatory modality of communicating, compared to the common scenario of a classroom where students may display focused attention while the teacher communicates, but still do so passively. However, students who are actively trying to make sense of the information will become involved in discussions, taking responsibility for their own comprehension. This is particularly important in learning ESP, clinical contexts, where practitioners must collaborate to reach a diagnosis, discuss treatment, and manage questions that may arise. Integrating such interactive modalities of communication into ESP courses provides students with opportunities to develop their ability and confidence to successfully negotiate professional communication.

7. Pedagogical Implications

These outcomes have implications for teaching practice in ESP. While requests for clarification will regularly occur in the spoken domain, learners will not be aware of their own part in achieving successful communication. Explicit instruction on how to make requests for clarification or respond to requests can be part of ESP courses so that learners are learning functional tactics in resolving misunderstanding, and obtaining clear communication. This is supported by Kaur (2010) who noted that direct instruction on discourse strategies, enhances learners' ability to negotiate meaning successfully.

In addition to the reach of the findings in the classroom context, the implications of this study reach beyond the classroom context for professional language training. Medical communication is what professional do in order to negotiate difficult relationships and control language as best as possible to establish mutual understanding and finally use the correct language. Medical communication represents a high-stakes context and may warrant dire consequences. Medical practitioners are obligated to gain competencies in clarifying. This indicates the importance of ESP courses such as discourse-based training in order for language use needed for the situational context, to develop both linguistic repertoire and interactional ability.

To place these insights into practice, teachers can create short, scenarios-based lessons using authentic hospital conversations or a role-played case story of a patient that asks learners to identify and apply clarification strategies. Authentic materials might include annotated transcripts of the authentic dialogue with highlighted discourse markers like "so" and "you mean" followed by some collaborative guided practice tasks (Rakestraw, 2023). If applicable, assessment can be performance-based such as witnessing learners' performance in a simulated consultation as part of a rubric that measures clarity, turn-taking and use of clarification requests. Although it isn't always labelled as ESP, including this type of activity in the syllabus of courses labelled ESP, or perhaps the pre-requisite course, means students

develop not only linguistic accuracy but interactional competence and collaboration in professional communications.

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