



Popular Media to Spot English Medical Terminology in *House* the American Series

Salim MENACEUR¹, Faiza BOUABDALLAH-HADDAM²

¹Tlemcen University, LLC Lab, Algeria, salim.menaceur@univ-tlemcen.dz

²Tlemcen University, Algeria, fhaddam@gmail.com

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Abstract ;

This research aims to examine the educational potential of the American TV series "House" for medical students who want to improve their English proficiency. The show's medical content and dialogues make it a valuable resource for students who want to learn specific medical vocabulary. The study analysed twelve episodes from the first season to assess the range and depth of vocabulary that could be acquired. The research questions focused on the vocabulary terms that medical students can learn from "House" and how they perceive the show as a tool for enhancing their mastery of medical vocabulary. This exploration contributes to the understanding of using popular media in English for Medical Purposes (EMP) courses, focusing on "House." The findings may provide insights into innovative teaching methodologies that can improve the learning experience for medical students.

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1. Introduction

Throughout the last few decades, the English language has become a prominent means of communication in many professional industries worldwide, including medicine (Crystal, 2012). Achieving fluency in English, specifically in specialised areas like medical English, can be challenging and require significant time and resources. To make this process more engaging and compelling, educators and learners have been exploring creative techniques and resources (Cook, 2016). One successful method that has gained popularity is utilising popular media, particularly American TV shows, for language learning.

One television series particularly useful for learning medical English is "House" due to its medical theme and use of realistic terminology. However, some experts criticise this method for its lack of explicit pedagogical design. Despite this, many educators and researchers support using media resources like this for language learning, as it can increase student motivation, improve communication skills, and enhance cultural awareness for a more authentic learning experience.

2. ESP and Medical Discourse

2.1 ESP: Definitions and Perspectives

ESP is an acronym that stands for English for Specific Purposes. According to Widdowson (1983: 6), the purpose refers to the eventual practical use of the language to achieve occupational and academic aims. "It is generally understood to be about preparing learners to use English in college, technical or job environments" (Basturkmen, 2006, p. 17). It is an enterprise focused on three pillars of knowledge: "language, pedagogy and a special area of interest for students/participants" (Robinson, 1991, p. 1). From the early 1960s (Dudley- Evans and St John, 1998; Mackay & Mountford, 1978), subsequent debates have taken place throughout different ESP conferences to come up with a clear idea of ESP's character and its associated problems. Over the years, the changing definitions of ESP reflect the relationship between the three pillars of knowledge mentioned above. When we look at ESP literature, several reports describe ESP, and, to some extent, several definitions are to be found and worth noting.

2.2 ESP: Origin and Conceptions of ESP

Indeed, a lot could be written about the origins of the ESP. In fact, there are three specific explanations for the rise of all ESPs: the demands of the Brave New World, the revolution in linguistics, and the emphasis on the learner (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987:20) note that two main historical periods have given life to the ESP. First, the end of the Second World War brought with it an " ... age of enormous and unprecedented expansion in scientific, technical and economic activity on an international scale for various reasons, most notably the economic power of the United States in the post-war world, the role [of international language] fell to English". Second, the oil crisis of the early 1970s culminated in Western capital and expertise flowing to oil-rich countries. The language of this knowledge has been English. The overall result of all this growth was to put pressure on the language teaching profession to provide the goods required. Whereas English had previously determined its own fate, it has now been subject to the desires, expectations and demands of people other than language teachers.

The second key reason cited as having a tremendous impact on the emergence of the ESP was the linguistic revolution. While traditional linguists set out to explain the features of the language, modern linguists have started to concentrate on the ways in which language is used in real communication. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) point out that one significant discovery was how spoken and written English vary. In other words, given the particular context in which English is used, the variant of English will change. This idea was taken one step further. If the language in different situations varies, tailoring language instruction to meet the needs of learners in specific contexts is also possible. Hence, in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, there were many attempts to describe English for Science and Technology (EST). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) identify Ewer, Latorre, Swales, Selinker and Trimble as prominent descriptive EST pioneers.

The final reason Hutchinson and Waters (1987) cite as having influenced the emergence of ESP has less to do with linguistics and everything to do with psychology. Rather than simply focusing on the language delivery method, more attention was given to the ways in which learners acquire language

and the differences in how language is acquired. Learners were seen to employ different learning strategies, use different skills, enter different learning schemata, and be motivated by different needs and interests. Therefore, focus on the learners' needs became equally paramount as the methods employed to disseminate linguistic knowledge. Designing specific courses to better meet these individual needs was a natural extension of this thinking.

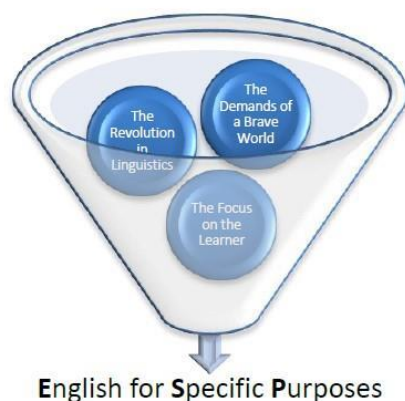


Figure 1.1 The Common Reasons for the Emergence of ESP According to Hutchinson & Waters (1987)

Five conceptions are considered ESP's foundations, essential features or basic principles. Swales (1990) uses the term 'enduring conceptions' to refer to them. These five conceptions are authenticity, research base, language/text, need and learning/ methodology. These five conceptions come from the real world (the 'target situation' of the ESP) and ESP pedagogy. It is, therefore, crucial to discuss each of them in an attempt to survey the development and directions of ESP. As a matter of fact, each of the conceptions will identify a focus-based approach to ESP and contribute to the concept of ESP itself.

2.3 Different types of ESP

As it has been said, English is a sub-field of ELT. The latter has its proper sub-sections, too. David Carter (1983) identifies three types of ESP:

2.3.1 English as a restricted language

Languages used by air traffic controllers or waiters are examples of English as a restricted language. Mackay and Mountford (1987:27) clearly explain the disparity between the restricted language and the language with the following statement:

“The language of international air-traffic control could be regarded as ‘special’, in the sense that the repertoire required by the controller is strictly limited and can be accurately determined situationally, as might be the linguistic needs of a dining-room waiter or air-hostess. However, such restricted repertoires are not languages, just as a tourist phrase book is grammar. Knowing a restricted 'language' would not allow the speaker to communicate effectively in novel situations or in contexts outside the vocational environment.”

2.3.2 English for Academic and Occupational Purposes

EOP refers to English which is either used or learned to fulfil occupational purposes. Kennedy et al. (1993:28) write: "EOP is taught in a situation in which learners need to use English as part of their work professions."

A more recent definition which Dudley et al. (2002:29) assert that: "the term EOP refers to English that is not for academic purposes, it includes professional purposes in administration, medicine, law and vocational for non-professional in work or pre-study work."

The following figure summarises all these divisions.

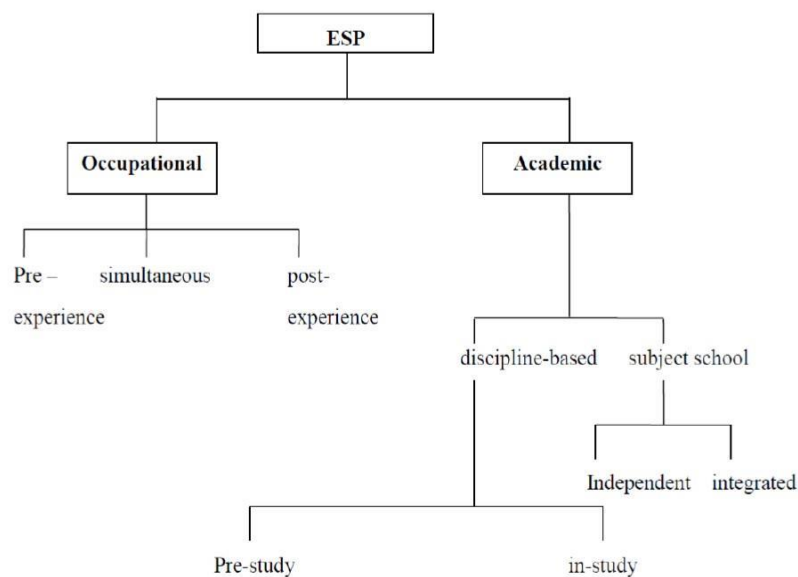
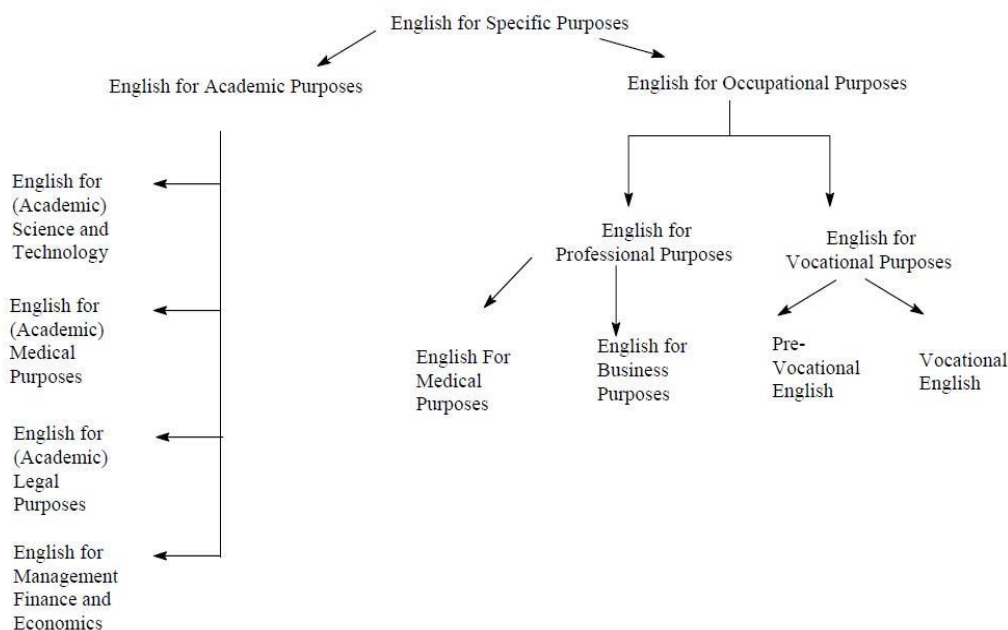


Figure 1.2 Types of ESP (Strevens, as cited in Kennedy & Bolitho, op. cit)

The typical tree diagram is shown in Figure 3 by Dudley-Evan and ST John (1987). Dudley-Evan and St. John (op. cit) continue to recognise EST as an EAP branch, along with English for Medical Purposes (EMP), English for Legal Purposes (ELP) and English for Administration, Finance and Economics. They call the other branch EOP and list two subdivisions under it: English for Professional Purposes (EPP), subdivided into another sub-division English for Vocational Purposes (EVP), including English for Vocational Purposes, and English for Pre-Vocational Purposes.



2.3.3 English for Occupational Purposes

English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) is a branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) that is often used interchangeably with English for Professional Purposes (EPP). EOP is focused on teaching and learning the English language required for specific professions, occupations, or jobs. EOP aims to assist non-native English speakers in acquiring the necessary communication skills to carry out their professional duties effectively. This may include mastering industry-specific vocabulary, comprehending workplace norms, enhancing the ability to write professional emails, reports, and documents, or improving spoken English for presentations, meetings, and negotiations. An essential characteristic of EOP is its need-based approach. This means that EOP courses are designed based on thoroughly analysing the learner's specific language requirements in their professional setting.

2.4 English for Medical Purposes

"English for Medical Purposes (EMP)" refers to teaching English specifically for medical professionals such as doctors, nurses, and other personnel. Medical English is a highly technical language that requires contextual knowledge. Medical professionals use technical and academic language alongside jargon and common language in the workplace. They may focus on proper sentence structure less. As a result, teaching medical English can be done differently than teaching fundamental English language. EMP learners are health professionals and health department students in universities or colleges. The goal of EMP learning is not to learn primary grammar and structure but rather to learn how to use language for social and career relations. (Niazi, 2012). When designing EMP courses, it is crucial to consider the needs and goals of the learners, particularly in the medical field. English language courses for EMP learners should focus on improving their communication skills using instructional methods like content-based and problem-based learning.

The use of technology in the classroom is also crucial for real-life communication. Medical terminology is another essential component of EMP courses. While traditional teaching methods such as grammar translation and vocabulary instruction have their place, they should be supplemented with more modern approaches. (Maher, 1986).

2.5 Status of English in Medical Education

The Algerian medical students are typically taught in French due to the country's past colonial ties with France. Despite French being a primary subject in Algerian schools, the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Tayeb Bouzid, proposed in 2019 to introduce English as the primary language of instruction in Algerian universities. To achieve this goal, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research launched a policy in 2023 to study the introduction of English into the primary school curriculum. As part of this policy, teacher training will facilitate the transition to English as a medium of instruction in Algerian universities by September 2024. English will be introduced to medical schools in the following years.

The status of the English language in medicine has been highly mentioned in recent years since its importance and remarkable development. Accordingly, Pavel (2014) declares:

The English language has gained significant prominence in two fields, namely information technology and medicine. These fields are relatively new, and English has been the primary language used throughout their entire development, as stated on page 39. The medical industry is regarded as a relatively recent field, resulting in language heavily influenced by the prevalent language of the era. Furthermore, the extensive usage of the English language within the medical field has conferred greater significance and worth upon said language. Pavel (2014) asserts that the English language has gained widespread usage since the latter half of the 20th century, leading to a surge in the number of English language publications. This includes a significant increase in the number of English language journals, which now constitute 80% of all journals indexed in Scopus. This exemplifies the significance of the English language within the realm of medical education and scholarly inquiry. English is frequently selected as the official language for many medical studies and international conferences. English has become the official language for numerous international conferences and an increasing number of national journals. The Academic Emergency Medicine journal and countless other medical journals and official publications are disseminated in English.

1. Methodology

Apostolovski (2019) developed ESP teaching material tailored to a specific ESP course, emphasising the importance of context-appropriate resources in language learning. Hayugraha et al. (2019) focused on the American television series "The Good Doctor" to analyse speech acts within the film, demonstrating how popular media can serve as a language-learning resource. Kusumawati (2019) examined the use of subtitles in enhancing vocabulary comprehension, shedding light on the potential benefits of subtitled English movies in vocabulary acquisition.

In contrast to these studies, The present study analysed the 12 episodes from the first season to explore the utility of the American series "House" as a learning tool for medical students seeking to improve their English proficiency. The series, renowned for its medical content and dialogue, may be a valuable resource for students to acquire the specific vocabulary needed in their field.

Our research aims to answer the following questions:

"What vocabulary terms can medical students learn from "House"?"

"How do students perceive the series "House" as a tool for enhancing their mastery of medical vocabulary?"

The medical drama: House.

This series, created by David Shore, ran on the Fox network comprising a total of 177 episodes in eight seasons. The main character is Gregory House (played by Hugh Laurie), who chairs a diagnostic team in the fictional Princeton-Plainsboro Teaching Hospital in New Jersey. Inspired by Dr Lisa Sanders' New York Times Magazine column "Diagnosis", Paul Attanasio came up with a medical procedural drama idea, and Shore created the characters. The first season introduced other essential characters, including Dr Lisa Cuddy, the hospital administrator (played by Lisa Edelstein); Dr et al., an oncologist and House's friend (played by Robert Sean Leonard); and the members of House's unit: Dr Robert Chase (played by Jesse Spencer), Dr Allison Cameron (played by Jennifer Morrison), and Dr Eric Foreman (played by Omar Epps). The series achieved large audiences and critical acclaim.

"House," with its complex medical cases and dialogues, presents an opportunity to expose students to a broad range of medical terminology within contextually rich scenarios. It further offers a window into the communication patterns, speech acts, and discourse conventions prevalent in medical settings, potentially enhancing students' ability to navigate such contexts in English.

By analysing the vocabulary used in "House" and gathering students' perceptions of the series as a learning resource, this study hopes to contribute to our understanding of how popular media, specifically medical dramas, can be leveraged in EMP instruction to facilitate vocabulary acquisition and enhance overall language competence.

This approach differs from previous studies by focusing on the content analysis of English-language media and vocabulary comprehension and investigating students' perceptions of the usefulness of such media in their learning process. The findings of this study will likely provide valuable insights into the role of popular media in ESP courses, particularly in medicine.

3.1 The Findings

The findings of this proposed study on using "House" as a tool for teaching English for Medical Purposes (EMP)

"What vocabulary terms can medical students learn from "House"?"

The series covers a broad range of medical terminology from various disciplines, such as diagnostics, immunology, infectious diseases, neurology, oncology, and more. The vocabulary used includes basic and advanced medical terms that can help students understand and use them professionally. Additionally, the series provides context for these terms, helping students comprehend their application and significance in real-world medical scenarios. According to a study, medical students require English vocabulary related to drugs, diseases, body anatomy, and medical equipment.

Episodes	The vocabulary	The definition	The category
1	Neurocysticercosis	The presence of cysts in the parenchyma of the brain is often associated with seizures.	Disease
1	Echovirus	An RNA virus of the Enterovirus genus of the Picornaviridae family, found in the gastrointestinal tract.	Disease
1 to 12	Vicodin	the drug House is addicted to, which relieves pain and causes some euphoria. It is a combination of the pain medications hydrocodone and paracetamol. It is used to treat moderate to severe pain. It is taken by mouth. Recreational use is common in the United States. Common side effects include dizziness, sleepiness, constipation, and vomiting	Drug
2	Subacute sclerosing	An infrequent complication of measles occurs about once in	Infection

	panencephalitis	every 100,000 cases. In most patients, measles contracted at any age indefinitely results in immunity to the disease.	
3	Colchicine	used to prevent gout attacks (sudden, severe pain in one or more joints caused by abnormally high levels of a substance called uric acid in the blood)	Drug
4	Acyclovir	A commonly prescribed but relatively weak antiviral medication used to treat Herpes Simplex Viruses.	Drug
5	Ampicillin	A commonly prescribed antibiotic. If mixed with other drugs or administered to a patient with an allergy, it may result in reactions as minor as a rash and as severe as anaphylaxis.	Drug
6	Nephrology	The science that deals with the kidneys, especially their functions or diseases	Terminology
7	Paraneoplastic Syndrome	refers to symptoms or signs resulting from damage to organs or tissues that are remote from the site of a malignant neoplasm or its metastases.	Disease
8	Naphthalene	an organic compound with formula $C_{10}H_8$. It is the simplest polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon and is a white crystalline solid with a	Chemical compound

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		characteristic odour that is detectable at concentrations as low as 0.08 ppm by mass.	
9	Lung cancer	is a type of cancer that begins in the lungs. Your lungs are two spongy organs in your chest that take in oxygen when you inhale and release carbon dioxide when you exhale.	Disease
10	Ativan	A brand name for the muscle relaxant lorazepam, used to treat anxiety disorders, insomnia, and seizures.	Drug
11	Artificial heart valve	A device implanted in patients whose hearts do not usually send blood from one of the heart's four valves to the other.	Medical equipment
12	Serotonin syndrome	Serotonin is a chemical that the body produces naturally. It is needed for the nerve cells and brain to function.	Syndrome

"How do students perceive the series "House" as a tool for enhancing their mastery of medical vocabulary?"

Students perceive the TV series "House" as a highly engaging tool for enhancing their mastery of medical vocabulary and understanding of complex medical topics. A study found that medical students who participated in seminars featuring "House" found them well-received and an attractive way to learn more about rare diseases.

Compared to traditional English classes, most students reported higher learning effects, increased motivation, better concentration, and more enjoyment from the "House" Tv Show. Students also found these episodes more supportive of learning complex topics than traditional seminars. Interestingly, they also reported spending less time reviewing content from a "House" than they would for a standard class, indicating that the content was more memorable or easier to grasp.

4. Conclusion

Incorporating popular media, such as the American TV series "House," into the curriculum for learning English for Medical Purposes (EMP) presents several benefits. The series provides a rich resource for authentic medical language and discussions of complex medical topics, which can aid in developing language skills specific to the medical field, medical students watching "House" demonstrated increased motivation, concentration, and enjoyment in their learning process in Learning English. While traditional pedagogical methods remain essential, including popular media like "House" can serve as a valuable supplemental tool that can make learning more engaging and memorable. This approach also offers a unique opportunity for students to immerse themselves in medical English in a real-world context, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the language used in the medical field. Additionally, while medical dramas like "House" can be practical tools for learning, they should not replace conventional teaching methods. However, they should be integrated as complementary elements in an overall EMP curriculum.

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