

Discipline-Specific Culture: A Purpose-Based Investigation

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Abstract : English is gaining an international identity as it affects every academic and professional field in the world. Without increasing their cultural understanding, it would obviously be difficult to completely educate learners for communication in a globalised environment. The concept of culture is intricate and needs to be elucidated, especially in an English language teaching (ELT) context. The study focuses on the investigation of the cultural studies integrated into the different types of English for specific purposes (ESP) materials, as opposed to English for general purposes (EGP) textbooks. A qualitative methodology based on a triangulation of techniques was conducted through materials analysis of five textbooks in both advanced EGP and three types of ESP. In addition to a semi-structured interview conducted with Algerian ESP practitioners, data analysis results revealed that culture in ESP textbooks is not overtly isolated into chapters and that cultural studies are predominantly present in business and economics materials, namely English for hotel and catering staff, tourism, and flight attendants. However, implicit cultural instruction is signalled in the social sciences and is negligible in science and technology sources. In terms of content, cultural studies in EGP are more related to generic topics, whereas, in some ESP materials, the topics are rather oriented to the specific field they belong to. Furthermore, the respondents' answers showed an unawareness of the importance of culture in ESP teaching, besides some disregard for culture teaching per se in ESP contexts.

Keywords : ESP, EGP, cultural studies, textbooks, teaching, materials

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