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## **Teaching Culture and Language for Specific Purposes: An Approach for Teachers and Students of Translation**

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### **Abstract**

In this article we shall describe the problems and issues found in teaching a language for specific professional purposes, namely English for future professional translators. While our students gain reading and writing literacy, many of them remain culturally illiterate because they do not receive adequate cultural training. Yet a contradiction can be observed if we browse through the most recent theoretical approaches, according to which translation is above all an act of communication and, as such, a cultural act. Indeed, culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only partially determines who talks to whom, about what, and how the act of communication proceeds, but also helps to dictate how people encode messages, the meanings they assign for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted. After presenting a definition of what we believe culture to be and what we think teachers of languages for specific purposes should do to provide information and input about a culture given the professional goals of their students, we shall suggest the most relevant approaches for teaching aspects of culture to students of translation faculties in Spain, showing examples of classroom activities we have developed to emphasize the cultural knowledge that would be of specific use to these future translators. This research provided us with a major step to integrate culture into language classes: to encourage comparison between the target culture and one's own cultural background.

**Key words:** language teaching, English for specific purposes, culture, interculturality