

CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHING ESP (ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES) TO ECONOMICS STUDENTS

The ongoing globalization of economics education has created an urgent need for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) training that addresses both professional communication skills and cross-cultural competence. As future economists increasingly operate internationally, they must navigate discipline-specific terminology and culturally nuanced communication practices in settings ranging from trade negotiations to academic collaborations [1, p. 284]. This intersection of linguistic and cultural demands presents unique challenges for ESP instructors working with economics students.

The primary **objective** of this work is to examine how cultural factors influence the effectiveness of ESP instruction for economics students and to propose practical strategies for integrating cross-cultural competence into such courses. While existing research has extensively covered ESP methodologies [2] and intercultural communication theory [3, p.100], few studies have focused on their combined application in economics education, particularly in non-Anglophone contexts like Ukraine.

The central research question of the work is: *How can ESP instructors systematically integrate cross-cultural competence into economics-focused language courses?* To address this, we analyze case studies from Ukrainian and EU universities, survey data from ESP educators, and examples of culturally adapted teaching materials. Our findings aim to bridge the gap between theoretical frameworks of intercultural communication and the practical demands of ESP pedagogy for economics students preparing for global careers.

This investigation is particularly timely given the growing emphasis on transnational education partnerships and the mobility of economics students within the European Higher Education Area. By identifying best practices and

persistent challenges, the study contributes to the ongoing discourse on aligning ESP instruction with the realities of 21st-century economics professions [5].

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a learner-centered approach focusing on the linguistic needs of particular professional or academic fields [2, p. 58]. In economics education, ESP instruction is built upon three core principles:

- Needs Analysis – Identifying students' target communication scenarios (e.g., writing research papers, participating in international conferences, or drafting business proposals).
- Discipline-Specific Vocabulary – Mastering economics terminology (e.g., *market equilibrium*, *fiscal policy*) alongside collocations used in real-world contexts [4, p. 41].
- Authentic Materials – Utilizing genuine resources such as central bank reports, WTO agreements, or case studies from multinational corporations to bridge classroom learning and professional demands.

Effective ESP training for economists must incorporate cross-cultural communication frameworks to address discipline-specific interaction norms:

- Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions (e.g., Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance) explain variations in business communication styles. For instance, high-context cultures (e.g., Japan) rely on implicit negotiation tactics, while low-context cultures (e.g., Germany) prefer directness [2, p. 101].

- Hall's High- and Low-Context Theory clarifies differences in academic writing conventions, whereas Anglophone economics journals expect linear argumentation, whereas Eastern European scholars may prioritize contextual framing.

These theories help ESP instructors anticipate and teach culture-bound misunderstandings in economics discourse, such as interpreting indirect refusals in trade negotiations or hedging in financial risk assessments.

Intercultural competence, defined as the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in multicultural settings [2, p. 98], is critical for

economics students. In ESP contexts, this involves:

- **Cultural Metacognition:** Teaching students to reflect on how their own cultural biases (e.g., assumptions about “appropriate” leadership styles) influence professional communication.
- **Scenario-Based Learning:** Simulating cross-cultural interactions (e.g., a mock IMF negotiation where students role-play delegates from different countries) to practice adapting language and behavior.
- **Critical Analysis of Texts:** Comparing economic reports from different cultural contexts (e.g., EU austerity policy summaries vs. ASEAN development plans) to identify culturally embedded rhetorical patterns.

Integrating these theoretical pillars ensures ESP courses for economists transcend lexical training to cultivate professionals capable of navigating the cultural complexities of global economics.

A qualitative research approach has been applied to examine cross-cultural aspects of ESP instruction for economics students. The methodology centers on comparative case studies from three Ukrainian and two EU universities (Germany and Poland) selected for their established ESP programs in economics. Primary data was collected through 1) semi-structured interviews with 12 ESP instructors regarding their cultural adaptation strategies and 2) focus groups with 25 final-year economics students assessing their intercultural communication needs. The supplementary analysis included 15 ESP syllabi and 32 teaching materials evaluated for cultural content using intercultural competence framework. While providing in-depth insights, the study’s limitations include its focus on higher education only and sample size constraints. The tripartite data collection ensures methodological triangulation, enhancing the findings’ reliability.

There are three key dimensions of cross-cultural ESP instruction for economics students. Significant cultural barriers emerged in terminology interpretation, particularly with concepts like “market equity” (financial value) versus “cultural equity” (social capital), where 68% of students initially

conflated these meanings during case study analyses.

Successful pedagogical practices included:

- Comparative business communication exercises highlighting Western European directness versus Eastern European contextual framing in economic proposals;
- Authentic multicultural case studies, such as analyzing EU and ASEAN trade agreements, improved cultural awareness by 42% in post-course assessments.

Student feedback (from 25 participants) strongly favored interactive, culturally contextualized exercises, with 84% rating simulated international negotiations as the most valuable ESP activity. These findings align with intercultural competence model while providing economics-specific applications. The results suggest that ESP programs must move beyond lexical accuracy to cultivate metalinguistic awareness of cultural frameworks in economic discourse.

Conclusion. Research on ESP instruction for economics students in Ukrainian and EU universities demonstrates that incorporating cross-cultural elements significantly enhances learning outcomes. Key findings include: 68% of students initially misinterpreted culture-specific economic terminology; interactive multicultural exercises improved cultural competence by 42%; and 84% of participants favored simulation-based learning. The effective ESP training must combine language acquisition with cultural awareness, recommending discipline-specific multicultural materials, instructor intercultural training, and authentic assessment methods. Future studies should track long-term graduate performance across economic specializations.

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