

## INTEGRATING CONSTRUCTIVISM AND ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES FOR DEVELOPING ENGLISH TEXTBOOK BASED ON FOLKLORE

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### Abstract

This study explores the integration of Constructivism and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) as theoretical foundations for developing English language textbooks based on folklore. Employing a qualitative research design through a literature review, the study analyzes relevant theories, empirical findings, and pedagogical frameworks related to Constructivist learning, ESP principles, and the use of cultural materials in language education. The data were obtained from scholarly journal articles, books, and prior studies published within the last decade. The analysis focused on identifying conceptual intersections between Constructivism and ESP that support learner-centered, context-based, and culturally responsive material development. The findings reveal that Constructivist pedagogy encourages active knowledge construction through authentic and meaningful learning experiences, while ESP emphasizes the functional use of language tailored to learners' specific needs and contexts. Integrating these two paradigms in textbook development allows the creation of instructional materials that are contextual, communicative, and culturally rooted through the inclusion of local folklore as thematic content. The study concludes that folklore-based English textbooks grounded in Constructivist and ESP principles can effectively promote linguistic competence, cultural appreciation, and learner autonomy. This research provides a conceptual framework for future empirical studies on culturally responsive English material development.

**Keywords:** *Constructivism, English for Specific Purposes, Folklore, Literature Review, Textbook*

### INTRODUCTION

The global status of English as a lingua franca has transformed the dynamics of language education worldwide, creating an imperative for teaching materials that are communicative, relevant, and responsive to learners' diverse needs (Paschal & Gougou, 2022). In the 21st century, English is no longer merely a foreign language but a global medium for academic exchange, technology, and intercultural communication. Consequently, effective English instruction must go beyond grammar and vocabulary mastery to include the development of

communicative competence, critical thinking, and intercultural awareness (Asnur et al., 2024). Learners should be equipped to use English authentically within real-world contexts that reflect their academic or professional goals (Barron, 2003). Therefore, curriculum designers and educators are increasingly emphasizing learner-centered approaches that integrate authentic materials, contextualized content, and tasks that promote meaningful interaction and self-directed learning (Farrell & Jacobs, 2010).

However, in many non-native contexts, English language instruction remains heavily dominated by decontextualized, form-focused methods that fail to reflect learners' socio-cultural realities (Abdullah et al., 2024; Yusuf Budi Prasetya Santosa et al., 2023). Textbooks and classroom practices often adopt Western-centric content, overlooking the local values, traditions, and communicative practices of the learners. This lack of cultural and contextual grounding can lead to disengagement, superficial learning, and limited ability to apply language skills in authentic situations (Kaufman, 2004). Moreover, when learners cannot relate to the cultural references or communicative situations presented in learning materials, they may experience reduced motivation and a sense of alienation. Thus, to achieve communicative and sustainable learning outcomes, English education must adopt a more localized and culturally inclusive perspective that recognizes the importance of contextual relevance in material development and pedagogical design (Libman, 2010).

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is designed to meet learners' communicative needs within specific professional, vocational, or academic contexts, emphasizing the practical use of language in real-world situations (Tineh et al., 2023). However, one of the persistent challenges in ESP material development lies in balancing linguistic specificity with contextual and cultural relevance (Yulianeta et al., 2022). Many ESP textbooks are produced based on generalized global frameworks that insufficiently address local professional discourse, sociocultural realities, or learners' background knowledge. As a result, learners often encounter materials that are linguistically appropriate but culturally detached, reducing engagement and limiting their ability to apply language skills authentically in local contexts (Anthony, 2018; Basturkmen, 2010). The lack of integration between linguistic objectives and socio-cultural dimensions undermines the holistic development of communicative competence, which includes not only linguistic accuracy but also pragmatic and intercultural skills (Hyland, 2019).

Furthermore, ESP materials often fail to fully adopt learner-centered principles that emphasize active participation, collaboration, and self-directed learning (Fouze & Amit, 2018). Traditional ESP instruction tends to prioritize content transmission over knowledge construction, leading to a passive learning environment that contradicts modern pedagogical paradigms such as Constructivism (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). This issue is particularly evident in contexts where ESP courses rely on imported materials developed for different professional cultures or educational systems. Without adaptation to local learners' needs, professional practices, and cultural nuances, ESP instruction risks becoming irrelevant and ineffective (Rahman, 2015). Therefore, the development of ESP materials should not only focus on disciplinary specificity but also integrate cultural content, contextual authenticity, and learner autonomy to foster deeper, more meaningful learning experiences (Tsou et al., 2006).

The integration of local culture into English language teaching materials has become increasingly recognized as a crucial strategy for enhancing contextual relevance and learner engagement. In particular, embedding cultural elements such as folklore enables the creation of meaningful and identity-affirming learning experiences (Dooly & Masats, 2015). When learners encounter familiar cultural narratives, they are more likely to connect cognitively and emotionally with the content, thereby facilitating deeper comprehension and retention (Kramsch, 1998; Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). Culturally embedded materials not only promote linguistic competence but also develop intercultural communicative awareness, allowing learners to negotiate meaning across cultural boundaries while maintaining their own cultural identity. For ESP learners, contextualizing language within their socio-cultural environment provides authentic communicative contexts aligned with their professional or academic needs. This approach also aligns with the principles of Constructivism, where learners actively construct meaning based on prior knowledge and experiences rooted in their cultural background (Vygotsky, 1978).

Folklore, as a representation of collective memory and local wisdom, serves as an invaluable cultural and linguistic resource for English language education. It encapsulates moral values, social norms, and worldviews that reflect the identity of a community, thus offering rich, authentic contexts for language use and discourse analysis (Bascom, 1965; Danandjaja, 1984). When incorporated into ESP materials, folklore can foster critical thinking, moral reasoning, and communicative competence by engaging learners in discussions that bridge traditional narratives with contemporary professional or academic themes. Moreover, the use of folklore supports the decolonization of English teaching by positioning local culture as a legitimate source of knowledge rather than merely an exotic illustration (Canagarajah, 2005). Consequently, integrating folklore-based content into ESP instruction not only enhances language proficiency but also empowers learners to use English as a medium of cultural expression and identity negotiation within global communication frameworks.

The integration of Constructivism and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in developing English textbooks based on folklore represents a strategic pedagogical approach that harmonizes global linguistic competence with local cultural identity (Amalia et al., 2025). Constructivism emphasizes the learner's active role in constructing knowledge through experience, reflection, and social interaction (Piaget, 1973; Vygotsky, 1978). When aligned with ESP, which focuses on teaching language for specific communicative purposes, this framework enables the creation of materials that are both contextually meaningful and functionally oriented. Folklore, as an embodiment of local wisdom and cultural values, provides an authentic medium through which learners can engage with language in ways that are personally and socially relevant. By embedding folklore in ESP-oriented materials, educators can create learning environments where linguistic structures and vocabulary are not learned in isolation but are contextualized within culturally familiar narratives. This synthesis ensures that learners develop not only communicative competence but also a sense of cultural continuity and identity within the global use of English (Hyland, 2019; Littlewood, 2011).

Moreover, the integration of Constructivism and ESP through folklore-based materials constitutes a form of pedagogical innovation that transforms traditional language instruction into an interactive, reflective, and critical learning experience. Constructivist pedagogy

promotes learner autonomy, collaboration, and higher-order thinking—elements that directly support the development of critical and communicative skills essential for ESP learners (Jonassen, 1999; Fosnot & Perry, 2005). When learners engage with folklore texts, they are invited to interpret meanings, analyze cultural messages, and communicate their understanding through creative and contextual language use (Jaleniauskienė, 2016). This process fosters cognitive engagement and encourages the transfer of linguistic skills to real-world academic or professional contexts. Thus, integrating Constructivist principles within ESP through folklore not only bridges global and local dimensions of learning but also cultivates learners who are linguistically competent, culturally grounded, and intellectually independent—qualities that are vital in the era of global communication and cultural diversity (Richards, 2015).

According to Jonassen (1999) and Fosnot & Perry (2005), Constructivist-based learning encourages students to actively construct meaning through exploration, collaboration, and contextual experience, rather than passively receiving information. Empirical studies in EFL and ESP contexts (e.g., Aljohani, 2017; Otilia, 2015) have shown that when learners engage in problem-solving and reflective activities grounded in real-world situations, their communicative competence and motivation significantly improve. Furthermore, Nunan (2013) emphasized that constructivist-oriented instructional design fosters meaningful interaction and language use, aligning well with task-based learning models in ESP education. These findings highlight that a Constructivist approach provides a robust theoretical foundation for designing learner-centered and contextually relevant English textbooks, particularly when linked to specific professional or academic domains (Paschal & Gougou, 2022).

In parallel, researchers have increasingly explored the role of local culture and folklore in English language teaching as a means to contextualize learning and strengthen cultural identity. Studies by Cortazzi and Jin (1999) and Kramsch (1998) revealed that incorporating cultural narratives into language instruction enhances learners' intercultural communicative competence and fosters deeper engagement with the material. More recent research by Choudhury (2014) and Nguyen (2017) demonstrated that folklore-based materials improve vocabulary acquisition, narrative skills, and cultural appreciation, particularly among learners in non-native English contexts. In ESP settings, local cultural content such as folklore provides authentic discourse patterns and communicative scenarios that mirror real-life professional interactions (Rahman, 2015). These studies collectively affirm that integrating Constructivism and ESP through folklore-based materials can create pedagogically innovative and culturally responsive textbooks that promote both linguistic proficiency and cultural literacy.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Constructivism**

Constructivism is a way of understanding how people learn. It tells us that knowledge is not something that can simply be handed from teacher to student. Instead, learning happens when people actively build their own understanding handed from teacher to student. Instead, learning happens when people actively build their own understanding through experience, reflection, and interaction. According to Jean Piaget (1973), students learn best when they explore, question, and discover ideas for themselves. Lev Vygotsky (1978) adds that learning

becomes even more meaningful when it happens through collaboration when learners share, discuss, and co-construct meaning together.

In a constructivist classroom, the teacher plays the role of a facilitator rather than a lecturer. Instead of focusing only on memorization, the learning process invites students to think critically, make connections, and apply what they learn in real situations. Jonassen (1999) and Fosnot & Perry (2005) emphasize that this type of environment encourages curiosity, creativity, and deeper understanding. It all essential qualities for lifelong learning. When applied to language learning, Constructivism makes the classroom come alive. Students are encouraged to use English as a tool for communication and self-expression, not just as a subject full of grammar rules. For example, learners might explore a local story or legend, discuss its meaning, and then describe it in English. Through this process, they not only learn the language but also connect emotionally to their cultural roots.

Dooly and Masats (2015) highlight that this kind of learning is powerful because it connects knowledge with personal experience, making it easier for students to remember and apply what they learn. Most importantly, Constructivism helps students take ownership of their learning. When they are given the chance to reflect to think about what they've learned and how they've learned it, they become more independent and confident. This mindset helps them become lifelong learners who are not afraid to ask questions or explore new ideas.

### **English for Specific Purposes (ESP)**

English for specific purposes (ESP) is a teaching approach that focuses on helping learners use English effectively for their particular goals whether for school, work, or their future careers. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), when learners see that what they are studying is relevant to their daily life or future job, they become more motivated and learn more effectively. Unlike general English classes that focus on broad language skills, ESP focuses on practical communication. For instance, students in a tourism or hospitality program might learn how to explain cultural sites, greet guests, or tell local stories in English. This makes English feel useful and preparing students to use English naturally and appropriately in specific contexts.

However, many English textbook are still heavily influenced by Western culture, which can feel distant from the realities of local learners (Anthony, 2018). When students cannot relate to the examples or topics in their books, they may lose interest or feel disconnected. To address this, experts like Tsou et.al (2006) and Rahman (2015) recommend localizing ESP materials, integrating local culture, traditions, and professional needs into English learning. For Indonesia learners, this means incorporating topics that reflect their community, such as local legends, customs, and cultural values. This approach not only improves their speaking and writing skills but also strengthens their identity and pride in local heritage. In this sense, ESP becomes more than language instruction, it becomes a bridge between communication, culture, and self-expression.

### **Folklore**

Folklore is one of the most valuable expressions of a community's culture. It includes myth, legends, folktales, and proverbs that have been passed down for generations. These stories hold the wisdom, beliefs, and moral lessons of a society. Bascom (1965) and Danandjaja (1984)

explain that folklore is more than just entertainment, it reflects the value, history, and collective identity of a people.

When folklore is used in education, it connects learning with the heart of a community. It helps students rediscover who they are while learning about the world around them. In language learning, folklore provides a natural and engaging context for communication. Kramsch (1998) says that learning a language is not about mastering words and grammar but also about understanding the culture behind them. Folklore gives students this opportunity, they can explore universal themes like courage, honesty, and kindness, all while practicing how to express those ideas in English.

Furthermore, using folklore in English lessons helps develop what Cortazzi and Jin (1999) call intercultural competence, the ability to communicate and connect with people from other cultures while valuing one's own. When students retell local stories in English, they become storytellers and cultural ambassadors who share their heritage with pride. Research by Nguyen (2017) and Choudhury (2014) support this, showing that folklore-based learning boosts motivation, creativity, and language retention. For example, students might learn English by describing the legend of Situ Cipondoh, through this story they practice their writing skill and increase vocabulary related to culture. Folklore transforms English learning from something abstract into something personal and meaningful.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative research design using a literature review approach to explore the theoretical integration of Constructivism and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the development of English language textbooks based on folklore. The qualitative nature of this research allows for an in-depth understanding of concepts, theories, and pedagogical frameworks without direct empirical testing (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The literature review was conducted systematically by identifying, analyzing, and synthesizing scholarly works related to Constructivist learning theory, ESP principles, and the pedagogical use of folklore in language education. Sources included peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and conference proceedings published primarily between 2010 and 2024. This methodological design was chosen to develop a conceptual foundation and integrative framework that could inform the design of culturally grounded and pedagogically sound English learning materials. The data collected from the selected literature were analyzed using thematic content analysis, focusing on identifying key themes, theoretical intersections, and pedagogical implications relevant to the study. The analysis involved several stages: (1) data familiarization through intensive reading of the literature, (2) coding and categorization of emerging concepts related to Constructivism, ESP, and folklore, and (3) synthesis of findings to construct a comprehensive conceptual model for textbook development. Triangulation of sources was applied by comparing theoretical perspectives from multiple disciplines, including linguistics, educational psychology, and cultural studies, to strengthen the validity of interpretations (Bowen, 2009). The outcome of this methodological process is a theoretical framework that elucidates how the integration of Constructivism and ESP through folklore can enhance the communicative, cultural, and cognitive dimensions of English language learning. This approach not only contributes to the body of knowledge in material development but also

provides a reference for future empirical and design-based research in culturally responsive English education.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings Related to Constructivist Principles in Material Development**

The principle of learner-centered design in the development of folklore-based English textbooks shows that students have an active role in the process of knowledge construction. This textbook is designed to encourage students to build their own meaning through direct involvement in problem-based learning experiences and exploration of folklore. With this approach, students not only become recipients of information, but also creators of meanings that link between linguistic structures and local cultural values. The findings show that this constructivist approach has succeeded in increasing the sense of belonging to the learning process and fostering students' intrinsic motivation to actively participate in every learning activity (Youna Chatrine Bachtiar et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the implementation of project-based and collaborative learning activities showed a significant increase in social interaction and communication between students. Activities such as group storytelling, dramatization of folklore, and folklore-based presentations allow students to collaborate in designing meaningful language products (Utomo et al., 2023). These interactions foster social skills such as negotiation of meaning, listening skills, and empathy for different cultural perspectives. Based on the results of student observation and feedback, this strategy not only strengthens their understanding of the content of folklore but also increases their confidence in using English contextually and communicatively (Barron, 2003).

In the aspect of scaffolding and discovery learning, this study found that the provision of learning assistance is carried out in stages according to the level of students' ability. The teacher acts as a facilitator who provides initial guidance, examples, and feedback before students are directed to independently explore the language structure contained in the folklore text. This scaffolding approach has proven to be effective in helping students understand grammar and lexical meaning contextually, especially when integrated with narrative discourse analysis activities (Fouze & Amit, 2018). Thus, students not only memorize the form of language but also understand its communicative function in a cultural context. In addition, discovery-based learning allows students to actively discover the linguistic patterns and cultural meanings implied in the text. Through this process of discovery, students develop critical and reflective thinking skills, particularly in interpreting moral messages, social values, and cultural symbolism in folklore. The interview results showed that students felt more challenged and engaged when they had to find answers to interpretive questions on their own, compared to receiving explanations directly from the teacher. Thus, discovery learning serves as a catalyst for the increase of metacognitive awareness and learning independence (Dooly & Masats, 2015).

The principle of contextual learning is also an important finding in this study. The learning materials are contextualized with the students' real lives, especially in relation to the traditions, customs, and socio-cultural values of their environment. Activities such as

comparing local folklore with folklore from other countries, or rewriting folklore in a modern context, help students relate the language to everyday life experiences. This contextualization reinforces the relevance of learning materials and gives a deeper meaning to the use of English as a cross-cultural communication tool.

Finally, reflective activities such as learning journals, peer feedback, and cultural comparison tasks play an important role in strengthening students' cultural awareness. This activity allows students to evaluate their understanding of the moral values and cultural identities embodied in folklore. Reflection carried out individually and in groups results in an increase in dual cultural awareness: students are able to understand and appreciate local culture while developing sensitivity to global cultures. Thus, the combination of contextual and reflective learning makes this constructivism-based textbook an effective medium to form critical, independent, and culturally insightful learners.

### **Related to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Components**

The first finding is related to needs analysis outcomes which show that students need contextual English language skills that are relevant to real-world needs, especially in the realm of cross-cultural communication and tourism. Based on the results of interviews and questionnaires (Paschal & Gougou, 2022), the majority of students want material that not only focuses on grammar, but also supports their ability to communicate with tourists and introduce the local culture to the international world. In this context, folklore themes are considered very appropriate because they represent authentic local cultural identities and can be an effective medium for learning ESP oriented towards real-life communication (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Thus, needs analysis becomes a strong basis in designing textbooks that function not only as a language learning tool, but also as a means of cultural diplomacy for students.

The integration of folklore themes in the context of ESP has been proven to meet these learning needs because it contains cultural elements, moral values, and local narratives that are easy for students to understand. Folklore provides an authentic context that enriches students' learning experience, as they can relate English texts to stories and traditions that have been known in their own cultures. This is in line with the view of Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) that the authenticity of context in ESP learning can increase learning motivation and help students understand the function of language in real communication situations. Thus, folklore is not only a source of text, but also a transformative means that connect English language skills to students' cultural identities and professional needs (Oskoz & Elola, 2016).

In the aspect of language functions and vocabulary, this study found that the developed textbooks emphasized specific language functions that are in accordance with the context of cultural communication (Fouze & Amit, 2018). The learning materials are designed to train students in the skills of describing culture, narrating folklore, and presenting traditional values. Each function of the language is integrated with vocabulary related to regional culture, traditions, and tourism. This approach is in line with ESP theory which emphasizes the importance of conformity between language functions and the specific communication needs of language users (Basturkmen, 2010). Thus, students not only learn grammatical structures, but also understand how language is used pragmatically to convey messages in a particular sociocultural context.



The development of thematic vocabulary is also one of the significant results of this research. The vocabulary used is not general, but is adapted to the cultural and tourism domains such as mythical creatures, traditional ceremonies, cultural heritage, and local wisdom. Context-based vocabulary learning like this has been shown to be more effective in strengthening memory and language application in real-life situations (Nation & Webb, 2011). In addition, the compilation of cultural glossaries in textbooks helps students understand terms that have distinctive connotative or symbolic meanings in folklore. With this approach, students become more skilled in using English to explain their culture to an international audience.

In the findings regarding task design and authenticity, learning activities are focused on communicative tasks such as role play, story retelling, poster presentation, and folklore performance. These activities are designed to encourage the functional use of language in a realistic context. These findings are in line with the concept of task-based language teaching in ESP, which emphasizes the use of authentic assignments to improve professional communication skills (Ellis, 2003). Through simulations of cross-cultural interactions, students learn how to convey cultural narratives in language that is clear, engaging, and appropriate to the context of a global audience. This shows that communicative tasks in textbooks not only serve as language exercises, but also as a tool to internalize local cultural values in the use of English (Libman, 2010).

In addition, the use of authentic texts in the form of indigenous regional folklore has been proven to strengthen the context of culture-based ESP. Authentic materials allow students to learn the language as it is used in actual social and cultural contexts (Jaleniauskiene, 2016). According to Gilmore (2007), the authenticity of the material can improve students' pragmatic awareness and their ability to understand language variations in real-world contexts. In this study, folklore texts not only serve as reading materials, but also as a source of inspiration for various speaking and writing activities involving aspects of local culture. Thus, an ESP-based approach that utilizes authentic texts of local cultures has the potential to enrich learning experiences, enhance communicative competence, and strengthen bridges between languages and cultures (Barron, 2003).

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that the integration of Constructivism and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approaches in the development of folklore-based English textbooks provides significant innovations in contextual and meaningful language learning. The application of constructivist principles, such as learner-centered learning, scaffolding, and discovery learning, has been proven to increase students' active participation, critical thinking, and reflective ability to understand the structure of language and cultural values contained in folklore. Meanwhile, the ESP component that focuses on needs analysis, language-specific functions, and authentic tasks successfully connects English learning with professional needs and cross-cultural communication. The integration of the two creates a pedagogical synergy that not only develops linguistic skills, but also students' cultural awareness of their local identity.

Overall, this study confirms that Constructivism-ESP-based textbooks have the potential to be innovative learning models that are relevant to the demands of 21st century education. Folklore-based materials are able to combine cognitive, affective, and social dimensions in language learning, making the learning process more authentic, communicative, and meaningful. In addition to strengthening English language skills, students also learn to appreciate and promote local cultural values as part of global competencies. Therefore, the integration of constructivism and ESP in the context of local culture can be used as a foundation for the development of English curriculum and teaching materials that are more humanistic, contextual, and oriented towards the formation of global competencies based on local identity.

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