

CULTURE AND LANGUAGES FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES: Languages for specific purposes (LSP) have not usually been considered as areas in which culture is particularly relevant. Widdowson (1983) has argued against too narrow a view of what constitutes language in the LSP context, but cultural dimensions have still not been emphasized to a large degree. As a result, many syllabuses for LSP have not included much beyond a narrow description of the language structures and functions involved in the discipline (Munby 1978) and many discussions of LSP have not gone much beyond identifying specialist vocabulary (Fossat and Maurand 1976; Kocourek 1981, Phal 1971). The papers by Schmidt and Hanna and Cowley have each addressed the issue of the place of culture in LSP. Schmidt indicates the sorts of cultural knowledge needed by qualified nurses receiving language training in Germany and argues that the hospital is not a culturally neutral environment, but rather that nurses need information about German hospital culture in order to be able to function effectively in this environment. Hanna and Crowley emphasize the problematic nature of the multiple levels of culture in action in a French for Business classroom, indicating that aspects of the target language culture, of the business culture and of the classroom culture are all present and potentially competing.