

Images and Values in Foreign Language Textbooks (1)

- An Exploration of Example Problems -

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ABSTRACT

All foreign language textbooks contain images and values, yet few language educators spend time examining these. Textbook images and values, however, can either promote learner self-esteem or damage it, can either create stereotypes or break them down, can either encourage social concern or attitudes of selfishness, and can foster global awareness or obstruct it.

This paper sets out to explore the role of images and values in foreign language textbooks through an examination of six case studies taken from actual language teaching textbooks. These case studies cover the teaching of vocabulary, grammar and dialogues. They look at problematic textbook portrayals of women, materialistic values, commercial advertising, foreign cultures and world geography. They also raise issues of bias and discrimination, professional ethics and international understanding.

INTRODUCTION

Almost all language teachers and learners use textbooks. Yet few stop to think deeply about and discuss the kinds of values and images that foreign language textbooks contain. This lack of awareness has been described by Beattie (1986 p. 109) who notes "teachers of modern languages in British schools talk quite frequently about methods, but rarely about values..."

Among educators who have addressed this topic are a number of foreign language teachers involved in global education. Starkey (1990 p. 239), for example, points out what he sees as the tourist-consumer flavor of many language textbooks and asserts "foreign language textbooks are amongst the most fertile grounds for discovering bias, racism and stereotype".

Mark (1990 p. 11-16), meanwhile, has discussed the topic of hidden values in textbooks, which he illustrates through analysis of a textbook lesson on the structure "have got". This uses sentences such as "Life's great! I've got a fur coat and swimming pool" to imply that happiness is related to what we own.

Perhaps the most extensive treatment of this topic has been undertaken by Littlejohn and Windeatt (1989 p. 155-175). They identify six areas of what they call non-linguistic learning in foreign language textbooks. These areas include:

- 1 The content of the textbook
- 2 The textbook's view of knowledge
- 3 The textbook's view of language learning
- 4 The textbook's view of teacher-student roles
- 5 Opportunities for the development of thinking skills
- 6 Values and attitudes presented in textbooks

In this paper, I would like to focus on #1 and #6 above - the content of textbooks as well as the values and attitudes they portray. Some discussion will also be given to #5 - the development of thinking skills.

A short paper such as this can do no more than explore a few typical problems concerning images and values in foreign language texts. The example problems I will examine all come from actual language textbooks now in use. The textbook items deal with such areas as vocabulary, grammar and textbook dialogues. The problems we will discuss concern discrimination, materialism and commercialism, stereotypes of foreign peoples and images of the world.

Finally, it should be noted that the aim of this paper is not to criticize particular textbooks, but to raise general issues of textbook design which I feel need to be discussed. No narrow puritanism, "political correctness" or censorship is intended. Rather, I hope to create the opportunity to discuss with others in the foreign language teaching profession certain issues of professional ethics, international understanding, global awareness and the portrayal of foreign peoples and cultures.

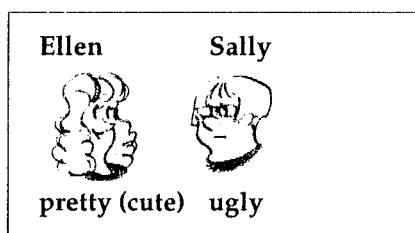
I IMAGES AND VALUES IN TEXTBOOK VOCABULARY

Gairns and Redman (1986: p. 73-76) classify traditional approaches and techniques used in the presentation of new vocabulary items into three types:

- (1) visual techniques (showing pictures, mime and gesture)
- (2) verbal techniques (giving examples, definitions, synonyms, opposites)
- (3) translation (giving the native language equivalent)

Though foreign language textbooks make use of most of these techniques, many textbooks, especially for lower levels, utilize pictures to promote efficient learning of basic vocabulary. However, the choice of image that textbooks make can promote values that either encourage personal growth or damage student self-esteem.

Figure 1 shows an example of this kind of problem from a recent conversational English



Is Ellen pretty or ugly?

Figure 1 Images and Values in Textbook Vocabulary

From McLean, P. (1993) *Talking Together: Conversational Activities for Japan*. Tokyo: Macmillan Language House.

textbook written for Japanese learners (McLean 1993 p. 20). This item is taken from a chapter on "Description" which uses pictures to teach paired sets of vocabulary items such as "tall-short" and "young-old". The example shown is an attempt to teach the vocabulary items "pretty" and "ugly". Pictures of two young women are presented. One is labelled "pretty" and the other is labelled "ugly".

First, let us consider the effect of these pictures on individual learners. Suppose you have a young woman student in your class who resembles "Sally", the woman labelled "ugly" in the picture. What would she think doing this lesson? How would she feel being officially labelled "ugly" by her English textbook? How would this affect her self-esteem? her relations with her classmates? her trust in her English teacher? her interest in the textbook? her motivation to learn? her attitude to English itself?

Suppose you have a student in your class who resembles "Ellen", the woman labelled "pretty" in the picture. How would she feel about this lesson? While it may be true that some women students would feel good about being called "pretty" by their textbooks, this can also have a negative impact. Your student may be a young woman who is intelligent and curious

about the world, involved with sports and music, interested in history and politics, and active in community affairs. Yet, because of this textbook, your student and other young women who look like this will tend to be labelled “pretty” with their other qualities likely to be relegated to secondary importance.

Unfortunately, we live in a world where women’s interests and abilities are often downplayed in favour of an excessive focus on their physical appearance. Should language teaching textbooks be reinforcing female learners’ self-consciousness about their appearance? Should language textbooks present images which rate women on a scale of beauty?

Finally, we must also consider the influence of these images on the class as a whole. What values or messages is this vocabulary item giving to other students in the classroom? Possible messages might be:

- (1) that people can be labelled positively or negatively by terms such as “pretty” and “ugly”;
- (2) that there are universal standards of beauty set by authorities (such as textbooks) that can be imposed on students;
- (3) that only women need be ranked on their appearance (no similar vocabulary pictures are given of men to teach the words “handsome” or “ugly”).

It could be argued, then, that this particular textbook image could:

- * hurt the self-esteem and self-confidence of women language learners
- * damage student interpersonal relations in the classroom
- * lead to labelling, name-calling and bullying of “ugly” women students
- * reinforce student stereotypes about personal appearance

In his famous “I Have a Dream” speech, Martin Luther King talked about building a world where people would be judged on the content of their character, not on the colour of their skin. The same ideal should apply for this issue of “beauty”. How can we as teachers try to promote respect for all human beings if our textbooks are teaching our students to judge others positively or negatively by their appearance? How can we as teachers help learners see that all people are beautiful when our textbooks tell them “people who look like this are pretty” and “people who look like that are ugly”? How can we build a classroom atmosphere of mutual trust among self-confident language learners when our textbooks may be damaging our

students' self-esteem and possibly encouraging name-calling and bullying in class?

Though less well-known than prejudice based on sex, race or religion, prejudice due to appearance is a very real problem. Byrnes (1987 p. 28-34), in her book on prejudice and discrimination in the classroom, devotes a whole chapter to it and even proposes a name: "Aesthetic Discrimination Against Persons (ADAP)". As she points out, people young and old are judged by the way they look. Studies in this area have found that:

- * children judged unattractive are less likely to be chosen as playmates and are characterized with more negative social behaviour by other children
- * the media reinforce attractiveness stereotypes by equating beauty with goodness and ugliness with evil. TV shows, movies and even children's fairy tales ("Cinderella", "Hansel and Gretel", "Snow White") tend to portray the hero or heroine as handsome or beautiful and the villain as ugly or homely.
- * "attractive" children are perceived by teachers as being more likely to succeed academically and socially than "unattractive" children.

For language educators, eliminating harmful textbook images such as these is not only important for students' personal development. It is also important for ensuring effective language learning. Brown (1987 p. 102), for example, calls self-esteem "an important variable in second language acquisition" and cites studies which show that promoting students' emotional well-being in class is a key factor in improved language proficiency. Similar studies cited in Canfield & Wells (1976 p.3) have shown that self-esteem is actually a better predictor of reading success in children than IQ. Educators such as Moskowitz (1978) have also helped to raise awareness of this dimension through directing greater attention to affective aspects of language learning.

Textbook vocabulary items, then, have the potential to promote or damage student self-esteem, to perpetuate or eliminate sexism, to create or destroy a good classroom atmosphere and to promote or interfere with language learning. Teachers, as Byrne points out, are in an excellent position to encourage children to accept others regardless of outside appearance. Books such as those by Byrnes (1987) and Evans & Thomas (1986) which provide class activities for overcoming such discrimination can be useful aids. Language textbook images should help teachers, not hinder them, in this job.

II IMAGES AND VALUES IN TEXTBOOK GRAMMAR

It is hard to imagine grammar being a powerful source of values. Somehow linguistic structures seem on the surface scientific, objective and value-free. Yet, to be properly taught, all grammar requires what Littlejohn and Windeatt (1989: p. 157) call "carrier content" - the sample topics used as the basis of language work to illustrate the language structure or point in question.

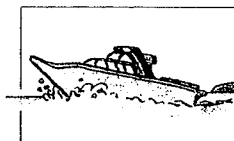
If students are to understand the difference between subjects, verbs and objects, for example, it is not enough to discuss these in abstract theoretical terms. Rather, some concrete example sentences are needed to present and analyze. This carrier content can range from sentences like "The dog bit the cat" to sentences like "Newton saw the apple". Though the teaching focus is on the grammar of subjects, verbs and objects, we must not forget that this grammar is being learned through some specific content, whether dogs and cats or apples and philosophers.

Figure 2 gives an example of a grammar practice exercise which is brimming with hidden values. The grammar point being studied is the conditional with a focus on the phrase "If I were... I would..." The sequencing of the grammar lesson is a fairly traditional three-part procedure:

Study:

If I were rich, I would build a new home.

Model:



A: What would you do if you were rich?
 B: If I were rich, I'd take a cruise.
 And you?
 A: I'd buy an island.

Practice:

1. buy a yacht/ fly to Brazil
2. travel the Silk Road/ give my parents a new car
3. buy a swimming pool/ do nothing
4. stop working/ own a restaurant

Figure 2 Images and Values in Textbook Grammar

From McLean, P. (1993) *Talking Together: Conversational Activities for Japan*. Tokyo: Macmillan Language House.

- (1) STUDY – presentation of an example sentence to illustrate the structure
- (2) MODEL – a mini-dialogue to situate the grammar structure in context and to prepare students for oral pair practice
- (3) PRACTICE – a set of cue phrases for learners to plug into the model for oral practice

The exercise is also taken from McLean (1993 p. 114), the English textbook which featured the “pretty-ugly” vocabulary item discussed above.

What kind of topic does this grammar exercise deal with? As can be seen, the carrier content which students are handed is the phrase “If I were rich...”. The topic thus concerns the question of how to use money and has students, in the context of a grammar lesson, talking about what they would do if they were wealthy.

What kind of values does this grammar exercise promote? A look over the model sentences and practice phrases immediately makes it clear that the lesson serves to promote values of materialism, consumerism and selfishness. The 11 ideas offered in the exercise to the question “What would you do if you were rich?” comprise such answers as:

| | | |
|------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| build a new home | fly to Brazil | do nothing |
| take a cruise | travel the Silk Road | stop working |
| buy an island | give my parents a new car | own a restaurant |
| buy a yacht | buy a swimming pool | |

Learners are basically given the choice of either (1) buying things for themselves or their families (homes, islands, yachts, swimming pools, cars) or (2) spending money to enjoy themselves in expensive ways (cruises, overseas travel, owning restaurants). Nowhere is there any hint that money can be used in other ways – to help others, to alleviate poverty, to clean up the environment, to promote literacy, to help the homeless, to end hunger, to tackle AIDS or to support worthwhile charities or social causes.

There are several points to note here:

- (1) Imposed Topic – the conditional is introduced and practiced using the topic “if I were rich”. This topic automatically focusses students’ attention on money, wealth and luxury. Yet this is just one of many possible topics for practicing the conditional. By choosing other topics to carry the grammar, very different themes can be addressed which bring into prominence very different values. Consider examples such as these:

| | GRAMMAR STEM | TOPIC |
|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| If I were... | a refugee | refugee issues |
| | homeless | homelessness |
| | a political prisoner | human rights |
| | HIV positive | AIDS |
| | poor | poverty |
| | an African elephant | endangered species |
| | chair of the Nobel Peace Prize | peace |
| | UN Secretary General | world issues |

Each of these topics can be used to introduce and practice the conditional just as well as our example "if I were rich". Yet, instead of producing a mind-set of money, luxury and selfishness, these examples highlight topics such as refugees, human rights and world peace as well as attitudes such as empathy for others (the homeless, AIDS patients), social awareness and empowerment (what would *you* do to solve world problems if you were UN Secretary General?).

- (2) Imposed Values - in this exercise, students are made to practice sentences which manifest self-centred, consumer values, regardless of their real opinions. The exercise is 100% controlled, all answers are provided ready-made and no student input is allowed. The drill nature of the exercise ensures that students must repeat these values sentence after sentence as they internalize the grammar...and perhaps the values as well.
- (3) Imposed Options - in addition to being made to repeat individual value statements, learners are also shown only a restricted range of options. When students are given a complete exercise like this where all answers focus on the idea "If I were rich, I would buy —— (for myself)" or "I would do ——(for myself)", then it is hard to avoid falling into the mindset that money is there to spend only on oneself. With no alternative offered, it is difficult to imagine non-selfish, non-materialistic uses of money.
- (4) Opportunity for Discussion - once the exercise is finished, no opportunity is given in the textbook for students to discuss this topic or to give their own opinions. What do they think of these values? Do they agree or disagree with them? What would they really do if they were rich?

How could this textbook grammar exercise be done differently, then? One way would be to offer students a wider variety of topics and value choices in the language samples to help them go beyond the materialistic topic and selfish mindset offered here. Another way would be to encourage students to present their own ideas and values while practicing the grammar. A third way would be to arrange class discussion time for critical thinking about these textbook values.

There is nothing wrong with choosing a topic such as "how to use money" to teach and practice the conditional. Indeed, this particular carrier content contains great potential for a meaningful discussion in the foreign language of wealth, poverty and the uses to which money can be put. What is wrong is to impose self-centred values on young people through grammar practice, to exclude ideals such as community service and altruism, and to prevent sharing and discussion of personal values.

To summarize, then, all grammar must be taught through some content. Yet the carrier content we use to teach and practice language may also hold hidden values. If one of our goals as teachers is to educate people for active citizenship and positive participation in building a better local and global community, we should become more aware of values in textbook grammar exercises and see how they contribute to this goal.

III COMMERCIAL IMAGES IN TEXTBOOK DIALOGUES

For language learners in many countries around the world, language study takes place within a highly competitive, commercial social context. As the American pop singer Madonna sings in one of her songs, "we are living in a material world" in which buying and selling, market shares and advertising, money and consumer goods play a very important part. Though some people see this as a positive trend linked to a healthy economy, others see commercialization as a negative influence. A number of people in North America, for example, complain how traditional holidays like Christmas have lost their true spirit through becoming too commercialized and focussed on money.

Language learning takes place within a global marketplace. In a world economy of giant corporations searching after profits, competition is often intense. Companies approach selling with a military mentality - eager to "battle" for larger shares of the market against their competitors. Part of this commercial competition has meant that businesses have gone outside

traditional advertising areas such as TV commercials and magazine ads into other areas in an attempt to win more sales through new means of advertising. One example is the way cigarette and soft drink companies now sponsor sports events, regardless of how unhealthy their own products are.

Another example is the push of commercial interests into such areas as news and entertainment. In order to give their products more publicity, more and more companies are blurring the boundary between information and advertising. The result is "adformation" and "infomercials" - corporate-created information that looks on the surface like news but is actually aimed at mentioning a company's name or product.

Entertainment is also a key target of corporate business. Movies, in particular, provide special advantages for subliminal advertising. When our favourite actress drives away at the end of the story or the movie's hero takes a plane to his next destination, these movie scenes are not just innocent parts of the script. Rather, they are hidden advertisements. The type of car the actress drives or the airline which our hero takes are not decided by chance. Instead, these are unique advertising opportunities which automobile and airline companies pay vast amounts of money to buy from movie producers. So great is the investment in this kind of movie advertising that some corporations have even sued movie directors when the scene with their product gets cut during the editing process.

If news and entertainment have become this commercialized, what about education? On the surface, this may be hard to imagine. Education, after all, is concerned with knowledge, learning and personal development while commercialization is concerned with sales, products and profits. Yet new developments like American school television which features educational programs with TV commercials in the classroom make one wonder. Does any of this intense competition for product advertising have any effect on foreign language teaching? Have images in foreign language textbooks become commercialized to any extent? To my knowledge, commercialization as an issue has never been discussed within the foreign language profession. Yet commercial advertising in language textbooks certainly seems to exist.

Figure 3 shows an example of such advertising from a recently published language textbook series on "English for International Communication" (Richards et al 1990 p. 37). The conversational dialogue shown is taken from a chapter on sports and leisure which focusses on describing daily routines and activities. The dialogue is meant to practise the language of routines along with the correct use of adverbs of frequency.

8 CONVERSATION

Listen and practice.

Cathy: What great muscles, Pedro! Do you work out in a gym?

Pedro: Yeah, I do.

Cathy: How often do you work out?

Pedro: Every day after work. You're in pretty good shape, too, Cathy.

Cathy: Thanks. I take an aerobics class twice a week.

Pedro: Good for you! Hey! Race you to McDonald's for a chocolate milkshake!

Cathy: OK!



Figure 3 Commercial Images in Textbook Dialogues

From Richards, J et al. (1990) *Interchange: English for International Communication*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

For language teachers used to seeing language textbooks as purely educational tools, this dialogue in a popular English language text by a major publisher may be slightly disturbing.

Imposed Advertising

This dialogue is supposed to help students improve their listening and speaking skills while practicing adverbs of frequency. Yet, whether they like it or not, students are also being made to listen to and practice sentences which promote McDonald's, a multinational commercial fastfood chain. The dialogue shown may not be as extreme as certain language drills one could imagine (e.g. Teacher to students: "Today class, we are going to practice the verb 'to like'. Please repeat after me: I like McDonald's, You like McDonald's, He likes McDonald's, She likes McDonald's..."). Yet, the language of the dialogue which students are forced to practice, "Race you to McDonald's for a chocolate milkshake!", is fairly blatant in putting across the advertising message "Let's go to McDonald's". To make sure students can properly identify McDonald's, a picture of a McDonald's restaurant with its trademark "golden arches" is carefully inserted into the textbook illustration.

Professional Ethics

In addition to this dialogue about McDonald's, other products and corporations such as Burger King, Coca Cola, Disney World and Seven-Eleven are all mentioned (or is it better to say "advertised"?) elsewhere in the same textbook. What are the ethics of featuring commercial products in educational textbooks? How can it possibly be considered ethical to embed the names of selected multinational corporations and their products into language teaching dialogues and exercises?

The question therefore comes up, why would the textbook writers and publishers include this mention of McDonald's in their textbook? No reason or explanation is given in the teachers' notes. Yet, there are three possible theories that can be considered to explain this.

(a) Teaching Culture

If we are being generous, we might say that the textbook producers had good pedagogical reasons for including this commercial "information" in their textbook. One possibility is that the textbook writers were "teaching culture" in an attempt to acquaint foreign English language learners with American life. This seems unlikely, though, considering the name of the textbook "Interchange - English for International Communication" or when we read the following phrase from the introduction in the teacher's book:

"The language used in Interchange is American English; however, Interchange reflects the fact that English is the world's major language of international communication and is not limited to any one country, region or culture."

If the text aims to teach English for international communication, why should so many American corporations be mentioned in the text? One could persuasively argue that McDonald's, Coca Cola and Seven-Eleven are part of international culture. To a certain extent, this is true. McDonald's restaurants do exist in Moscow, Madrid, Singapore and Sao Paolo. But rather than teaching about world cultures or foreign countries, isn't this really "teaching" students to recognize certain multinational corporations and about international Westernized consumer culture?

(b) Realism through Authentic Topics

Another possibility might be that the textbook writers were striving for “realism” by including names of products known to students in an attempt to increase learning motivation. This possibility is indicated by several phrases from the textbook’s introduction:

“Interchange teaches students to use English for everyday situations and purposes related to work, school, social life, and leisure... Throughout Interchange, students have the opportunity to... make use of their own life experiences and world knowledge... Interchange deals with contemporary topics that are of high interest and relevance to both students and teachers. Each unit includes real-world information on a variety of topics... Throughout the course, natural and useful language is presented that can be used in real-life situations” (p. ix-x).

Proponents of communicative language teaching methodology certainly advocate the use of “authentic, from-life” materials such as newspaper and magazine advertisements in the classroom (Richards & Rodgers 1986 p. 80). However, there is a distinct difference between including a page of advertisements from a newspaper for authentic reading practice and the deliberate insertion as here of a corporation or product into a language teaching dialogue or exercise which students are forced to practice.

(c) Paid Corporate Advertising in Textbooks

A further possible reason for the mention of McDonald’s in this dialogue exists. This is that McDonald’s and the other companies mentioned in this textbook paid the writers and publishers to insert their products in the textbook. This is a shocking possibility to consider, yet it would be naive to completely dismiss it. We talked earlier about the intense competition among large corporations to advertise their products. This competition has become so fierce that corporations now regularly pay huge amounts of money to movie directors and producers to have their cars, airlines or consumer goods appear in scenes of commercial movies, often without any awareness about this on the part of the audience. Given this intense competition, it is certainly not impossible that corporations might similarly begin paying textbook writers and publishers to have their cars, airlines or consumer goods appear in dialogues of commercial language textbooks without any awareness about this on the part of the language learners.

Again, it should be stressed that this is a shocking possibility to consider. Paying writers

or publishers to advertise commercial products in an educational textbook is immoral and unethical. If someone were to charge a textbook with bribery of this kind, it could result in lawsuits for libel. And yet, with no other explanation offered by the writers or publishers for the very blatant kind of commercial promotion seen in the McDonald's dialogue, this must remain a distinct possibility.

Many language teaching textbooks use dialogues for language presentation and practice. For functional and situational texts aimed at teaching the language of daily life, it is impossible to ignore topics such as "Making a Purchase" or "At the Restaurant". Yet traditionally, such textbook lessons have strictly avoided mentioning brand names or actual companies. This has been done by either presenting neutral, generic situations ("Let's go to that restaurant", "I'll have the hamburger") or by using imaginary brand names ("Two bottles of Roxy Cola, please"). Given the appearance of commercial advertising in textbooks as shown by the McDonald's dialogue discussed here, it is high time for the language education profession to discuss in detail the ethical issues involved in using commercial images in textbooks. Otherwise, we leave ourselves open to charges of bribery, corruption and educational prostitution.

IV TEXTBOOK IMAGES OF FOREIGN PEOPLE: CULTURAL STEREOTYPES

Many foreign language textbooks take as one of their goals to introduce learners to the culture of the target language. Thus, French texts feature topics about France, British EFL texts focus on England and Japanese-as-a-foreign-language texts contain information on Japanese people and culture.

In addition to images about the target language culture, foreign language textbooks often include images and information about other peoples and cultures in the world. When accurate and properly done, these images can promote knowledge about foreign countries as well as curiosity and empathy towards the people who live there. When badly done, such images can lead to intercultural misunderstanding and to dangerous stereotypes.

Figure 4 shows one example of a language exercise dealing with images of several world cultures. This particular exercise is taken from a UK listening comprehension textbook designed for lower intermediate students of English (Todd 1981 p. 4). It is intended as a pre-listening introductory activity for a lesson about describing people.



Figure 4 Textbook Images of Foreign People: Cultural Stereotypes
 From Todd, F. (1981) *Focus Listening*. London: Macmillan.

What kinds of values are embedded in these images of people from different countries which we see here? Let us analyze each picture in turn.

MEXICAN The picture chosen by the textbook to represent Mexico shows a man dressed in a poncho and a sombrero hat sleeping under a cactus in the desert. On the basis of this picture, English students using this textbook might easily conclude that Mexicans are lazy, that they sleep a lot, that they typically wear traditional dress of ponchos and sombreros, and that they live in the desert. Anyone who has been to Mexico will realize that this image is both inaccurate and insulting, more suited to an American cowboy movie than the real Mexico of today.

FRENCH The picture chosen by the textbook to represent France shows a man wearing a beret carrying some French bread under his arm with the Eiffel Tower in the background. Do such people exist in France? Yes. Is this the way most Frenchmen look? Definitely, not. In 1987, I took part in an international summer course on French language teaching in Besancon, France. This course was attended by 250 French language teachers from all over the world. At one of the course sessions, the topic of "the image of French people shown in French textbooks overseas" came up. During this discussion, several senior French academics and education experts stood up to protest about the prevalence of this image of France in French textbooks around the world. The arguments made were that this image of the bread-carrying, beret-wearing Frenchman were outdated, insulting and unsuitable to represent the France of the 1980s and 1990s.

CHINESE The picture chosen by the textbook to represent China shows a pig-tailed man wearing a conical hat, long-sleeved jacket, long skirt and raised sandals with a pagoda visible off in the background. Anyone visiting China nowadays would have a very difficult time trying to find a Chinese person dressed like this! This is because the image shown here is of a Chinese Manchu official from the Ch'ing Period (1644-1911), which ended more than 80 years ago. The custom of men's pigtails along with the wearing of this kind of dress disappeared soon after China became a republic in 1912. As a symbol for China in a textbook for the 1980s, this is totally misleading. A number of Chinese foreign students at Tottori University who were interviewed informally about this picture unanimously felt the image was inappropriate to represent their country. Some even considered the picture as insulting or as a remnant of 19th century Western colonialism and imperialism.

KENYAN The picture chosen by the textbook to represent Kenya shows a sandal-clad woman dressed in blouse and colourful skirt carrying what seems to be a basket of bananas against a background of tropical plants. While it is true that there are rural women in Kenya who fit this picture, this image shows just one sub-culture of the variety of peoples who make up Kenya as a nation. A quick survey of various reference books (Hoffman 1988; Encyclopedia Britannica 1988), for example, reveals that Kenya has 41 different tribes and that the breakdown of the Kenyan labour force is 21% agricultural, 21% industrial/commercial, 13% services and 47% public sector. Why then should a rural Kenyan farming woman represent the country any

more than a Nairobi businessman, a rural teacher, a Masai cattle herder or a Muslim civil servant in Mombasa?

AMERICAN The picture chosen by the textbook to represent the United States shows a man with a Yale T-shirt and black pants sitting on a low bench. In contrast to the other pictures, this image is the most “culturally-neutral”. It has no identifying cultural markers showing at all – no background buildings such as towers or pagodas, no special headgear such as berets or sombreros, and no culturally significant objects such as French bread or banana baskets. Why are such objects absent? The artist could easily have added a Texan cowboy hat and Statue of Liberty in the background to add an “American” feel to the image. Yet, this picture comes across as “neutral” or, for a North American or European observer, “normal” compared with the exotic stereotypical images shown of China, Mexico, France and Kenya. If we step back for a moment from the stereotyped thinking promoted by this language learning exercise, however, it becomes clear that this T-shirt and jeans image is no longer particularly American but has become rather an international image for young people throughout the world. I personally have seen “Yale”, “Harvard” or “UCLA” T-shirts and jeans on ordinary young people in countries as diverse as Canada, Egypt, Russia, Singapore, France, Hungary, Mexico, Vietnam and Japan. Why should this image, then, represent the US rather than any other country in the world?

Taken together, then, the pictures shown here give inaccurate images of foreign countries through an emphasis on the unusual, old-fashioned and exotic. Though probably intended as interesting textbook pictures meant to stimulate language learning motivation, these images prevent learners from understanding the truth about contemporary life and people in foreign countries. Such images also ignore the great variety of differences between people living in these countries – differences of age, of sex, of religion, of social class, of region, of sub-culture, of ethnic group, of urban or rural communities, etc. It could be argued, then, that the particular textbook images shown here:

- * encourage learners to accept distorted, insulting or out-dated images of specific countries such as France, Mexico or China
- * encourage learners to think of foreign cultures in general as exotic, old-fashioned and

bizarre (in contrast to “normal” cultures such as ours)

- * encourage learners to accept simple stereotyped images as representations of entire countries with diverse populations

Rather than contributing to international understanding, then, these images contribute to international misunderstanding. They work to prevent the student from acquiring one key aim of culture teaching which Seelye (1985 p.3) describes as “the intellectual and emotional appreciation of cultures other than his or her own... along with empathy towards their people”.

Language teaching textbooks, of course, are not alone in perpetuating these stereotypes. A UK report entitled “Images of Africa” (van der Gaag & Nash 1987), for example, found that school textbooks were one source of children’s stereotyped views of Africa as a continent of jungles, wild animals, starving people and primitive tribes. A study by Hicks (1980), described in his paper “Images of the World: An Introduction to Bias in Teaching Materials”, similarly claims that British textbooks are generally ethnocentric and perpetuate stereotypes.

This problem of textbook stereotypes has also been addressed by a number of North American educators. Seelye (1985 p.141), in his book on teaching culture, notes:

What immediately hits the student of a foreign culture is that things are done differently there. These exotic differences are two-edged swords. They provoke interest but they reinforce the ethnocentricity of the learner. (“Those Frenchmen are really crazy - the men kiss each other!” “Latin Americans are really lazy - they’re always taking siestas.”)

George Otero, meanwhile, in his book “Teaching About Perceptions: the Arabs” (1987), has this to say:

In many classrooms, students are exposed to information about different peoples and cultures. Confronted with names, dates, places and customs that are different, the students’ views of that group focus on those differences. When asked about the Arabs, for example, students’ views often consist of a strangely dressed man riding a camel to his many wives living in tents on the desert (pg 1). As presented in many school materials and in the media, Arab peoples are depicted as having certain common attributes which students often use to formulate stereo-

types...Arabs are commonly seen as Bedouin living in tents and sitting on billions of barrels of oil (pg iii).

Textbooks currently in use present information about the Arabs that increases the likelihood that students will formulate stereotyped images. The nomadic element of the Arab society is the most overemphasized. Absolutely all textbooks examined...mentioned the camels, the desert and the Bedouins even though the Bedouin element today represents less than six percent of the total population (pg 2). Therefore, a student's views of another culture are based on selected, often false, information (pg 1). Students should be exposed to diverse and accurate data about other cultures (pg 2).

V TEXTBOOK IMAGES OF FOREIGN PEOPLE: POLITICS AND THE COLD WAR

Foreign language textbooks not only deal with foreign peoples and cultures. They can also reflect current attitudes linked to international politics, foreign relations, patriotism and the government's view of "national interest".

Figure 5 shows one such example of politics in language teaching. This particular image is taken from a British communication skills text for students of English as a foreign language (Blundell 1984 p. 1). The cartoon images are part of a textbook comic strip story which is intended to introduce English grammar, vocabulary, functions and conversational expressions through "exciting, imaginative stories and topics".

These pictures refer of course to the Cold War, the years when the US and its Western allies were vying with the USSR and its Eastern allies for control of strategic regions of the world. It is obvious looking at the textbook that this cartoon story is a kind of parody of Cold War spy movies which were popular up through the 1980s. Though they aim at keeping student interest through a cartoon format featuring spies and secret weapons, these textbook images raise a number of important questions.

If one of the aims given by national Ministries of Education round the world for school language teaching and learning is to promote international understanding and world peace (UNESCO-FIPLV 1975), how can foreign language textbooks include images such as these that cast certain nationalities in the role of "the enemy"? Should textbooks reinforce ethnocentric notions that "we" are the good guys and "they" are the bad guys? Should textbook writers and language teachers allow themselves to be used for national propaganda?



Figure 5 Textbook Images of Foreign People: Politics and the Cold War
 From Blundell, J.. (1984) *English Visa: Student's Book 1*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

These points are all important. Too often in world history have educators bent under the pressure of the state to whip up patriotism for “our side” while stirring up hate for “the enemy” in their students. Keen (1986) gives the best overview of how peoples and governments use these kinds of images to dehumanize others.

In contrast, what language teachers should be striving for is the kind of ideal stated by Fox (1992):

The world is wracked by conflict within and between nations. Unfair, exploitative economic practices and materialistic values pit us against each other in battles in which we all lose. If we teach students to value cooperation and respect for others and for the environment, both locally and globally, we contribute to a brighter future for everyone on the planet. How wonderful it is for colleagues around the world to see other educators working against those forces in our governments and societies that encourage students from different nations to see each other as enemies.

VI TEXTBOOK IMAGES OF THE WORLD

Language textbooks not only include images and information about foreign peoples and cultures. They also include images of the world, usually in the form of maps. When accurate, these can promote knowledge about world geography and thus contribute to better global

awareness. When inaccurate, however, these can lead to engrained ignorance and geographic illiteracy.

Figure 6 shows one example of a world map used for language teaching. This particular map is taken from an American English language text produced by a UK publisher for adult and young adult English learners at false-beginner/intermediate level (Graves & Rein 1988 p. 3). The map is intended as a visual aid for yes/no question practice on the topic of countries, capital cities and languages.

5

Pronunciation

At the end of a *yes/no* question, your voice goes up: Do you speak French?

At the end of an information question, your voice goes down: Where's Brasilia?

Practice asking and answering questions like these:

A: Do you speak French? A: Where's Brasilia?
 B: Yes, I do. B: It's in Brazil.
 or No, I don't. or I don't know.

| Languages | Capital cities | Countries |
|------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Arabic | Brasilia | The United States |
| English | Cairo | Canada |
| French | Moscow | Egypt |
| Italian | Ottawa | France |
| Japanese | Paris | Italy |
| Portuguese | Rome | Japan |
| Russian | Tokyo | The Soviet Union |
| | Washington, D.C. | Brazil |
| | | |
| | | |

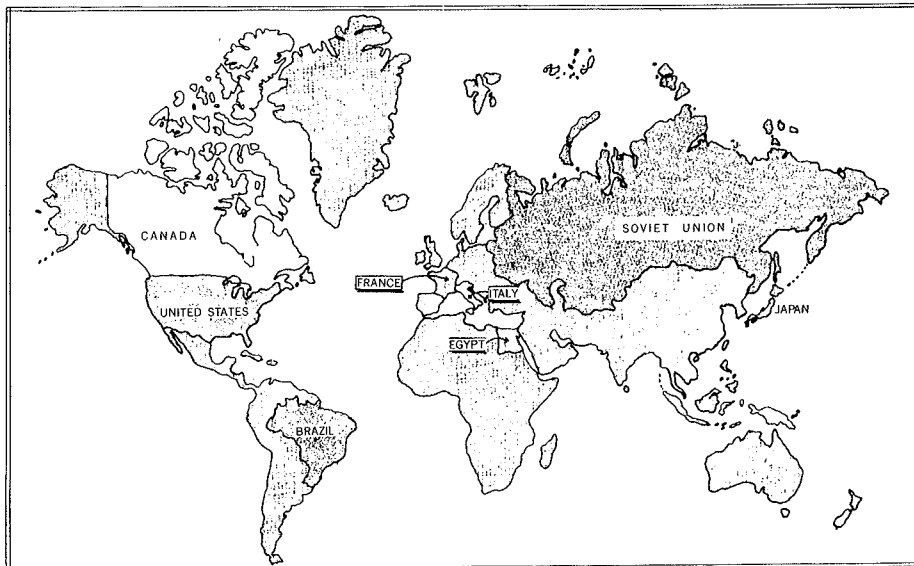
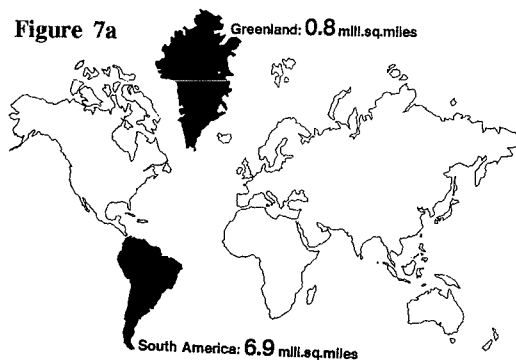


Figure 6 Textbook Images of the World
 From Graves, K. & Rein, D. (1988) *East-West 1: Teachers Book*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

At first glance, the inclusion of this world map seems praiseworthy from a global education perspective. While many traditional textbooks tend to focus on the geography only of the target culture (Britain and the US for English; France for French, etc.), this textbook is making an effort to include an international perspective in its language teaching curriculum. On the surface, then, it seems this textbook is promoting students' global awareness through language practice using a map of the world.

However, to see if this is really being achieved, we need to take a closer, more critical look at the map itself. The map used in this textbook is what is called a Mercator projection map, a traditional type of map design which has seen wide use in education and other areas. When we examine the Mercator map more closely, we soon notice a major problem (Fig 7a, 7b, 7c).

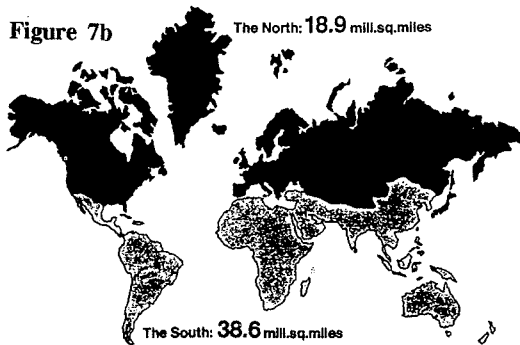
The Mercator map has one great problem. It seriously distorts area. On the textbook map (Figure 6), Greenland is shown as much larger than South America. Is this really true? The answer, of course, is no. In fact, the area of Greenland is only 0.8 million square miles while South America has an area of 6.9 million square miles (Fig 7a). In actuality, then, South America is six times larger than Greenland. Yet, the Mercator map shows Greenland as being significantly bigger.



The Mercator map was devised by Gerhard Kremer in 1569 in Germany. It places Germany in the middle. Greenland appears to be larger than South America, though South America is actually 6 times larger.

The same distortion appears with the rest of the map. The countries of the Northern hemisphere, for example, look much larger than the countries in the Southern hemisphere. In actual fact, the South, with an area of 38.6 million square miles, is really twice as large as the North, which has an area of only 18.9 million square miles (Fig 7b).

Instead of helping our learners get an accurate view of our planet, then, this textbook map is giving them a distorted picture of the actual size of the world's countries and continents. Why should this be? The answer lies in the history of the Mercator map.



The traditional map distorts the world to the advantage of European colonial powers. 'The North', in actual fact half as large as 'The South', appears on Mercator maps to be much larger.

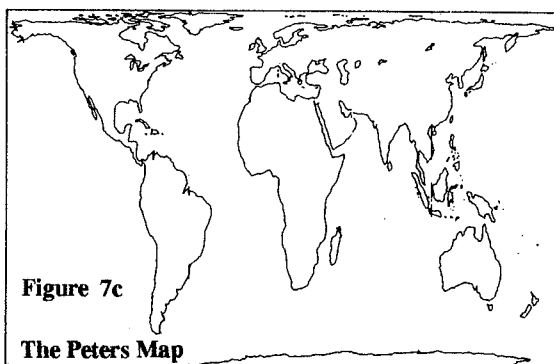
The Mercator projection was devised by a European mapmaker named Gerhard Kremer, whose name in Latin was "Mercator". Being German, Kremer put his country Germany in the centre, which explains the map's Eurocentric perspective. The map itself was devised in the year 1569, and is thus 400 years old. At the time it was made, the Mercator map was a breakthrough in cartography which greatly aided ship navigation in the

age of European exploration and colonialism. Yet, as a tool for giving an accurate picture of the world, it is greatly flawed.

A number of critics have even called the Mercator map a "racist" map. This is because the countries in the north, where most white people live (Europe, the USSR, North America), look much bigger than they really are while the countries in the south, where most non-whites live (Africa, South America, Asia), are shown much smaller than their real size.

To summarize, then, the use of this Mercator world map in an English language textbook seems at first glance to be a positive idea which will raise language learners' global awareness. Yet, after a bit of critical investigation, we find that that our modern English textbook, written for the 1990s in an age of "internationalization", is actually using a 400 year old map from the 16th century which gives a false picture of the world's area.

The use of this distorted Mercator map is not a problem of just one particular textbook. Rather, as Kaiser (1987 p.8) notes, the Mercator map still dominates the map market and remains highly influential in shaping people's views of the world. I know my own mental image of the world was shaped by the many Mercator maps used in my elementary and secondary school textbooks back in Canada. I accepted as fact that that was the way the world was and innocently believed that Greenland was much larger than South America. It was only after teaching for many years that I discovered how wrong my image was. Even now, I tend to feel angry at my teachers and textbooks for having "lied" to me about the real size of the world and its regions!



The Peters map was invented in 1974 by German historian Arno Peters. Because it shows each country according to its actual size, it is fair to all people and allows accurate comparisons to be made.

If the Mercator map so seriously distorts the areas of our Earth, what kind of map can we use in our textbooks to give students an accurate view of the world? One example is the new Peters Map, produced with the support of the United Nations Development Programme, which is shown in Figure 7c (Peters 1983). This map, invented in 1974 by the German

historian Arno Peters, is an "equal area" map. All countries on it are shown according to their actual size. Since each region is shown with its correct area, there is no bias like in the Mercator map. A person can see immediately, for example, that South America is actually six times larger than Greenland. By thus setting forth all countries in their true size and location, the Peters map ensures objectivity and fairness to all peoples. It thus constitutes the kind of textbook map that can promote an accurate view of the world and enable true international understanding

As more and more materials writers attempt to respond to the demands of our global age, more and more language textbooks are featuring maps and images of our world. Probably, no textbook would knowingly teach students untrue factual or linguistic information. It is hard to imagine a textbook which would include sentences such as "Paris is the capital of England", "Chinese is the language of Japan" or "'Wroten' is the past tense of the verb 'to write'". In the same way, we should ensure that the world maps we use in our textbooks avoid untrue representations of our planet and give students as accurate a view as possible of the world as it is.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we briefly discussed the role of images and values in foreign language textbooks. We noted that the teaching of language requires a carrier content to illustrate points of language structure and use. We also discussed how textbook images and language can

contain hidden values that learners and teachers are not always conscious of. We looked at a number of specific examples of problematic images and values taken from actual foreign language textbooks. These examples covered the teaching of vocabulary, grammar and dialogues and looked at problematic textbook portrayals of women, materialistic values, commercial advertising, foreign cultures and the world as a whole.

The problems we found occurred in specific textbooks. However, remarks by other language educators involved in textbook evaluation indicate that the kinds of problems discussed in this paper are representative of similar problems in many other texts. Beattie (1986 p. 124), for example, states:

There is ample evidence that language courses (many of them based on the formula of an anodyne middle-class family engaged in various stereotyped activities) are a repository of attitudes to sex, class and race which are now widely questioned. No doubt it will take many years before all language teachers become sensitive to such matters, and textbooks incorporating out-dated attitudes linger on in schools for many years after they first appear. Nonetheless, it should not in principle be difficult to rethink courses to take greater account of contemporary beliefs, by showing women at work outside the kitchen, by covering a wide range of social situations, by including material about immigrant labour in Europe, and about French- and Spanish-speaking areas in the Third World, etc.

Similar remarks are made by Littlejohn and Windeatt (1989 p. 172), who point out the many kinds of values and bias that textbooks may contain:

Sexism in language teaching materials is...just one of an infinite number of areas which one may look for (in language textbooks). Others might be ageism, racism, elitism, heterosexism, pro- or anti-smoking, pro- or anti-alcohol and so on, and it is not difficult to identify instances of each of these in LT materials...a recent course book, containing hundreds of colour photographs of people in various roles, shows only two black people and both of these fit the stereotype image: one is a muscular athlete and the other is a manual worker. Another very popular course book contains over thirty references to smoking or drinking in the first 25 pages, thereby, some would argue, legitimising and sanctioning such behaviour.

Our survey in this paper was exploratory, not comprehensive. It was meant to describe some of the kinds of problems presented by textbook images, not categorize all possible types of problems. One aim was to raise teachers' awareness of the kinds of non-linguistic messages their textbooks are giving to students. Another aim was to highlight problems such as social discrimination, educational values, professional ethics, international understanding and global awareness as they concern textbooks. I hope this paper will help all those involved in the language learning and teaching process to look more critically at their textbooks. I also hope this will encourage textbook writers and classroom teachers to strive for the educational ideals set out by the World Confederation of Organisations of the Teaching Profession:

to promote, for all peoples of the world, equality of opportunity, peace, justice and the protection and extension of human, social, economic and cultural rights and freedoms.
(WCOTP 1989 p.7)

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