Full Length Review Article

THE TEXT BOOK AND THE ENGLISH TEACHING AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN BRAZIL

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ABSTRACT

This text has as its goal analyzing the cultural aspects in a series of four textbooks. These books have been used in Brazil since 2004. It is believed, in this research, that the textbooks have been a source of great importance to the studies and to the research in the recent field of History of School Subjects. It is possible to obtain, through the content of a textbook, activities and exercises proposed, information that can be used to determine the context of its usage as well as its role in the teaching processes. The analysis of the textbook was the methodological tool used. Based on it, the language teaching methods were presented and the book organization was analyzed. The analytical categories of Kazumi Munakata (1997), André Chervel (1990), Roger Chartier (2002), Norbert Elias (1994) were used as theoretical basis to the development this research.

INTRODUCTION

Textbooks played and still play a role of feasible and effective implementation of education reforms. Thus, they also are an important tool for the dissemination of educational ideas, taking into account, in the process, the development of the teacher and the student. The importance of textbooks and reading is the "[...] training habits, and the word printed a 'power' to transform reality, since, as previously thought, reading alone would guarantee the internalization of ideas" Faria Filho, 2005, p. 64). In the emerging field of School Subjects History, textbooks have been a source of great importance as it is possible to obtain, through its contents, proposed activities and exercises, information that can be used to determine their language concepts and their purposes, the context of its use and its role in teaching-learning processes.

[...] the textbook is not to be read as one reads a scientific theses - posture adopted by many critics of textbooks content. A textbook is to be used; be taken to school; be opened; be scrawled [...]; be folded; be read aloud in some places and in others, in silence; be copied [...]; be transported back home; be opened again; be 'studied' (MUNAKATA, 1997, p . 204)

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Taking into consideration the complexity arouse from the wide range of stakeholders in the design and production of textbooks, such as authors, editors, political authorities, technicians, religious people, booksellers, teachers and many others, as well as the context in which it is used, it is necessary to carry out a careful interpretation when they are used as research source. In this regard, several studies have been conducted aiming to realize school practices through the actions of teachers and students in the classroom every day. Therefore, sources of various kinds have been used in more recent studies, especially in the field of School Subjects History in order to clarify the participation of all of the creators of this knowledge. These sources - school legislation, curricula and other normative texts - enable the understanding of the historical process in conjunction with broader, cultural contexts. In the analysis of the methods, the adequacy profile of the student and their rates of learning, the textbook is especially important, because it is the basic teaching tool used at all levels, especially in development countries where technology is not at hand for everybody. Studied under the perspective of School Subjects History, it is a significant source for researching the purposes of a school subject. In addition, "the school subjects are these cultural modes of transmission that address students" (Chervel, 1990, p. 186). It has to be mentioned that the researcher should avoid reducing school subjects to their methodologies or pedagogical ideas.

However, he or she must seek to investigate their goals in programmatic official texts and curricula, so that it is possible to find out about their purposes in the classroom, where they can be observed in terms of not only the use, but also the practices of the textbook. It is understood, in this research, a book is

[…] a material object, usually made of paper, on which letters and other ink drawing pictures can be found, according to a known printing technique, whose invention is known to be from the fifteenth century; this object is produced according to a well-defined work process and appears primarily as good, even if the intentions of its creators are of a different order than the market (Munakata, 1997, p. 84). It is in this context in which the textbooks used for teaching English fit in. The book analyzed here is part of a collection of four books to be used in intermediate level classes to teach English as a second language. It has been used since 2004 in Brazil and the book activities were designed based on the Communicative Approach. In order to reach the objective of this paper, the methods used so far in English language teaching will be presented. Cultural aspects to be analyzed here are in the first unit of this book, specifically in the section entitled Make Your Point. It is important to mention that all the units in the book have the same proposal, working with different language items. The analysis in question will be made based on the analysis of the textbook methodology.

English teaching methods

Several authors have studied and divided the methods[1] used, over the decades to teach a foreign language[2]. They will be addressed here, in a concise way, until the emergence of Communicative Approach. The first method based on the study of Greek and Latin in antiquity was the Grammar Translation Method that had as basic principle the study of classical texts and grammatical rules to learn a language. After suffering much criticism, this method gives rise to the so-called Direct Method, which advocated the development of language skills of the learner through direct exposure to the studied language, with no use of the student's native language. Grammar was taught inductively and the teacher was forbidden to translate the linguistic items during class. This method, which emerged in the mid-nineteenth century in Belgium, France and Germany, arrived in Brazil in 1932, being implemented in Pedro II School at that time. According to Leffa (1988), the Direct Method has been criticized by the Americans who have adopted, in the 30s, the Reading Method. This method also received mixed reviews to be replaced during the Second World War by the Audio Lingual Method, which featured a different proposal for the foreign language teaching. Besides being a reaction to the criticized Reading Method, that one was implemented to teach foreign languages to troops of allied countries during the war. During the classes, students were exposed to recorded dialogues and were encouraged to repeat the sentence until the linguistic structures were internalized. Emphasis was given to pronunciation and

grammar also appeared in the induced form. That method was based on the behaviorism of Skinner who advocated that learning occurs when there is an adequate reinforcement of desirable behavior. In the 60s, there were criticisms of the foreign language learning through this method and the new psychological theories as humanism and cognitivism made that method also go into decline. It happened then a transition period in which linguists and grammarians faced a deadlock as the creation of a new effective methodology for teaching foreign languages. Finally, in the 70s, many thinkers have created theoretical assumptions for the development of a new approach to language teaching.

As semantic and sociolinguistic studies developed in Europe, the language came to be considered not as an isolated source, but as a set of statements produced by different speakers placed in different communicative contexts. European linguists together with the American Chomsky School, then, created the Communicative Approach. In it, the linguistic exponent is nothing more than the way the communicative function will take place within the context, in other words, the linguistic items to be selected by the speaker to express it. The appropriate selection of the linguistic items is determined by the communicative competence of the speaker. The emphasis of learning in Communicative Approach is in communication, so the materials used should be authentic, dialogue must represent characters in real communication situations, including noise, noisy environments etc. Written texts should cover all printed forms (newspapers, magazines, advertisements, subtitles, ranked etc.), giving the learner the opportunity to observe how it manifests itself every genre within the communicative sphere in which the target language is used (AMORIM, 2007, p. 8).

There is no order of preference for the use of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) and is allowed to use the mother tongue, especially early in the course in order to create a context for the use and learning of Language 2 (L2). The Language 1 (L1), the native one, can also be used to clarify the instructions of a proposed communicative activity, if the student cannot understand what to do during the requested task. According to Brun (1998), the affective aspect is also of great importance for learning a foreign language and in the Communicative Approach it should be no different. When the interaction between teacher and student is healthy, taking into account the human factor of the relationship, learning happens more easily. The author states that when there is this affective space, there may be learning disabilities, Work on learning strategies is an excellent means of creating a space in which learners can express their ideas in a systematic way and their learning practices. This privileged space and a serene and favorable teaching atmosphere seem essential in the disarmament of many problems of emotional order, which may hinder learning the language (BRUN, 1998, p. 111). The development of communicative competence is important so that the foreign language learner can communicate making use of the target language. From that point on, the student will be able to make the right choices when it comes to communicate their ideas and feelings regarding to the social situation in which it appears, the appropriate degree of formality of the situation. Besides he or she will be able to choose the appropriate responses to certain questions, the use of strategies (mime, gestures, watching pictures and drawings) and grammatically acceptable statements of production.

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[1] We will use here the term method just as the distinction between the different methods / approaches that some theorists have agreed to call communicative "approach".

[2] Leffa (1988) makes a distinction between the terms second language and foreign language. In the second language study, students have contact with the language studied in the community in which he lives, outside the classroom; in the foreign language study, the community does not use the language studied in the classroom.

According to Savignon (1983), for the development of the four communication skills (grammatical, discursive, sociolinguistic and strategic), it is necessary the effective communication of the speaker in various communicative contexts. After using these four skills, the speaker will be considered able to perform the language in a proficient way.

The four components of communicative competence […] are grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. [...] Together, these four components suggest a model of communicative competence as a basis for curriculum design and classroom practice (SAVIGNON, 1983, p. 35).

Although there is no rigidity about the order of use of those four skills in Communicative Approach (LEFFA, 1988), it is important to note that they are worked into it in a balanced way and that approach is fundamental to the preparation of proficient speakers.

The textbook and its cultural aspects

Textbooks have always been a very important tool for teachers because they converge a range of knowledge, structures, principles, ideas etc. They undoubtedly facilitate the work of teachers and, consequently, student's learning process as he or she is able to return to the classroom content through textbooks anytime they wish to do so. The book also identifies its reader or even speaks for him or her. You can identify the type of student the person is by the book he or she carries. It is for these and many other considerations that this object of desire and disgust that inspires, guides and teaches has been the focus of studies. As for the textbook that is object of this research, it is divided into 5 units, each one with 5 sessions with various activities. The first session is called Language in Context and, among other activities, has one that is a listening practice in which students listen, via CD, a conversation between husband and wife over household chores like washing the dishes, studying with the children, taking them to school etc. Students listen and have to answer questions related to the dialogue. The purpose of this session is to contextualize the topic of the unit, and the activities to be worked and the discussions will relate to it and, in the case of the 1st one, it is entitled Changing Roles. The second session is called Communicative Goals. Students have the opportunity to, in different activities, discuss the differences between men and women, expressing an opinion, agreeing and disagreeing politely. The teacher has the task of being a facilitator of the language acquisition process, presenting the expressions they are supposed to use in order to perform each task. In the session called Language Work, students practice the use of the passive voice, of someone/anyone/no one, of looking forward to/have difficulty in (or with), the Could/shouldn't have + past participle. With these linguistic items, they are prepared to talk about something that, although it was possible to perform, actually did not happen; express regret; say that someone has done something wrong and had the opportunity to do something but did not. In Lexical Fields, it is announced the kind of vocabulary being presented in the unit, in that case, unit 1, words and expressions related to tasks performed at home, as well as the use of make and do in different situations. Finally, there is the Make your Point session that aims to bring to the student the opportunity to discuss topics related to the theme of unit: differences between men and women, the responsibilities and roles of men and women. They are supposed to check and discuss if those roles are changing, if there are benefits in them and if the woman should be solely responsible for taking care of the children, expressing their points of view about the topic.

It is important to mention that the use of textbooks as a source of research is justified by being able to extract that support values and representations that were intended to be broadcasted at a particular time and society, configured as an education tool. Therefore, the authors built and / or perpetuated a reality not only based on pedagogical concepts but also in values and ideals of society. Further, "object to be used, textbook does not imply a direct and immediate relationship between the student and the teacher as content, this Platonic world of intelligible forms, but rather activities, practices and actions, an effective teaching and learning situation" (MUNAKATA, 1997, p. 100).

It is believed then that the study of another foreign language helps students to expand the cultural horizons of an individual by extending their linguistic universe. For PCN – *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais*, the language is "[...] a cultural and collective heritage [...]" (BRAZIL, 2002). Therefore, it is significant to note as the next session activity of Make your Point leads to the discussion about another society: the Japanese one. Students read a text that shows this society changes have not happened as quickly as in others, such as the American. They learn that religion has a strong influence on society and consequently on the role of individuals within it. So, the woman is still placed in a subordinate position to men. However, other countries have seen the benefits of those changes as much for men as for women, and, among others, the fact that both obtain a better income and have more opportunities to gain access to success demonstrate that there is something different in their society. This rule is indeed for both, that is, both the woman and the man, because the research mentioned in the text states that in the last thirty years a greater number of women have entered the labor market as men have taken on more responsibilities related to home activities as well.

As for such cultural aspects, it is worth remembering that culture is also built, politically and ideologically, and textbooks contribute to such a construction. Besides,

[...] It is through culture that we can know each other, know each other and interpret the world in which we live. We can say that culture is ubiquitous in human actions. It is reflected in language, symbols, in people's thinking by locating them by checking their identities and, like all interactive processes, altering the marks (TAVARES, 2002, p. 17-18).

If our thoughts vary or change according to our needs, because culture and thinking are inextricably related, foreign language - one of the main ways in which culture is expressed - has the ability to shape and even restrict our thinking, because we will always be able to distinguish concepts that are not part of our vocabulary when this is meaningful. Because they are spontaneous and original creations of the school system is that the subjects deserve a particular interest throughout. It is because the school system holds an insufficiently valued creative power so far is that it plays a role in society which did not realized it was two-fold: in fact it forms not only individuals, but also a culture that in turn penetrates, shapes, changes the culture of global society (Chervel, 1990, p. 184).

In other words, understanding aspects of a new culture or one that is strange to us is basically a matter of negotiating distances between this culture and that which we are part. In addition, "The study of a foreign language allows us to reflect about language and culture as citizenship goods, and contribute to the elimination of stereotypes and prejudices" (Brazil, 2002). After reading and having a discussion in groups, the book suggests that the teacher splits the class into two and each group takes a different view: one must be totally against those changes and argues it does not see any advantage on them. Therefore, there is no reason to have changes, as the roles played by men and women are already set long ago. The other must take the position that those changes are extremely positive for both and those that are resistant to them should not live in today's society.

Conclusion

Based on what was presented before, it is possible to point that the textbook is able to make a connection between our culture and through other differences between them, for language not only expresses but also embodies and symbolizes a cultural reality. It is worth noting that the teaching of a foreign language can also convey a stereotyped cultural representation, which obscures the linguistic, ethnic, social varieties, including related to the issue of immigrants, blacks etc. As for the category of representation, Roger Chartier says:

It is from the credit granted (or refused) to the image that a community produces of itself, the way 'it is perceived', which depends on the affirmation (or denial) of their social being. The reason for the importance of the notion of representation, which allows reality to articulate three records: on the one hand, the collective representations that incorporate the individual divisions of the social world and organize the perception schemes from which they classify, judge and act; on the other, forms of displaying and styling an identity they wish to be recognized; finally, the delegation of representatives (private individuals, institutions, abstract instances) the consistency and stability of identity thus affirmed. The history of the construction of social identities is thereby transformed into a story of symbolic power relations (Chartier, 2002, p. 10-11).

In order to obtain a reasonable representation of a foreign language, we must understand the cultural context in which it was produced. In this sense, the teacher is seen as a facilitator of this process and as a builder of a kind of bridge through which the learner can understand a language with their cultural references, its linguistic forms and their worldview. Remember that teachers, students and the textbook are closely involved in the teaching-learning process. Therefore, it is necessary that the teacher be aware of the role played by language in building a culture, because that involves information related to the history of a people, their behavior and many other aspects that help in acquiring world knowledge (Telles, 2009). It is important to mention that teachers, theorists and students have an interdependent individual functions, namely, the acts of these distinguished individuals end up forming real uninterrupted link chain so that the actions of each fulfill their purpose. There is a bond uniting them towards a common goal: teaching and acquisition/learning[3] of the student.

Thus, each individual is really stuck; he or she is bound to live in permanent functional dependence of others; it is a link in the chain that links everyone. These strings are not visible and tangible, like iron shackles. They are more elastic more variable, more changeable, but no less strong. And it is this network functions that people perform in relation to each other, to it and nothing else, we call 'society' (Elias, 1994, p. 23). But seen as an active participant and main character in the process of learning a foreign language, the student has the right to learn, to perceive the relativity of reality, seeing different aspects of the culture studied, so he or she can then compare them and value their differences. However, the best way would be that the learner developed a worldview and culture that is not based on the principles of the target language culture, either guided by principles of their native language. It must take place for a 'third culture' or a 'cultural space between' that one developed over reflections on the cultures studied and discussed (Tavares, 2002, p. 23-24).

After these reflections about the textbook, we conclude that it had and plays an essential role in the development of young people and children and that is loaded with a speech that is intended to be reproduced and, at the same time, analyzed in its historical moment. In other words, textbooks were intended and intend to instruct people. The fact is that they constitute an important source of research and the sensitivity of the researcher's gaze appears to be extremely important in order to understand the research opportunities that are posed before him or her.

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[3] From the perspective of Krashen, acquisition "is an unconscious process as 'learning' is a conscious process. So 'acquire' means 'capture' a language,

know how to use it, while 'learning' means knowing the rules of a language and to speak about them" (OLIVEIRA, 2005, p. 129).

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