Bulletin of the *Transilvania* University of Braşov
Series IV: Philology and Cultural Studies • Vol. 12 (61) No. 1 – 2019
https://doi.org/10.31926/but.pcs.2019.61.12.3

Representations of people in foreign language textbooks

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In recent years, English has further strengthened its dominant position in the field of foreign languages (FL); on the other hand, countries all over Europe are facing pluri-cultural and pluri-linguistic challenges. Therefore, the recognition of the value of FL has become more precious, and the FL textbook market is growing. FL textbooks are not only tools for learning, but they (need to) reflect cultural aspects, attitudes and social dynamics. The purpose of this study is to analyse several FL textbooks in terms of the representation of non-white people, as transmitted by their visual presence, aiming to reveal how images of 'non-whites' are integrated into the selected textbooks, pursuing (a) whether principles of choice are different in the chosen three different linguistic areas, (b) if there seems to be any awareness developed, and (c) if the findings might reveal that some series are biased in terms of 'non-whites' representation.

Keywords: *textbooks for foreign languages, depictions of persons, races, representation*

1. Introduction

"I've just returned from Italy, from my six-month Erasmus exchange, it was a great experience, but ... so many black-skinned people, I really didn't expect that there're so many living in Italy, they're everywhere, you know I've learned my Italian and got to know Italy mainly from textbooks..." was a recent comment by one of my students which triggered this analysis, adding a decisive moment to my own experiences and reflections over the last decade.

Investigating foreign language (FL) learning materials and textbooks, aside from in-depth research about their primary function to develop the four skills in the target FL, has yielded a need for theoretical and empirical analyses from

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various sociological points of view, stemming from the combination of language and communication as a social function. On the one hand, Europe with its diversity of languages and cultures, has been intensely sensitive to pluri- and multi-lingual and cultural issues for over a decade, seeking to support tolerance.

On the other hand, in recent years English has strengthened its dominant position in the field of FL, in numerous non-English-speaking countries, becoming the world *lingua franca* (Kramsch 2014; Risager 2016; Xu 2013). However, due to job market and immigrant flows to European countries, European societies are increasingly faced with pluri-cultural and pluri-linguistic, increasingly more globalized challenges (Kramsch 2014) at work, in schools, in everyday life. Therefore, on the one hand, the value of the *lingua franc*a has increased, on the other, the conscious recognition of the value of languages and cultures other than English has become more important, as reflected in the increased EU efforts in the field of education policy, such as specific FL language policy projects aimed at tolerance, appreciation and recognition of language and cultural diversity have been developed and put into practice in schools (LEA 2007; FREPA 2013; CEFR 2018).

Stemming from traditions dating back to several decades (also centuries, in the case of some languages), major European languages continue to be taught at various school levels, as FL or L2, often chosen by education authorities on the basis of economic needs and out of geopolitical (neighborhood) as well as other reasons. Thereafter, questions about FL textbooks arise: which to choose for the benefit of learners, so that they do not only learn a target FL, but also get some related broader education, such as awareness about many societal 'diversities' (Azimova and Johnson 2012; De Costa 2018).

The present study aims to reveal if and how images of 'foreigners' are integrated into the selected textbooks, as opposed to the visual representations of all other persons (children, teenagers, young and older people). Among the question the study will attempt to answer are: What seems to be a principle of choice by editors or authors? Are the principles similar in the three different cultural-linguistic areas of the three groups of FL textbooks analysed? Can the findings reveal that (some) textbooks are biased in terms of 'foreigners' representation, regarding their societal statuses, equality and equity?

2. Literature review

It is already an axiom in foreign language teaching that there is a relationship between the forms of language and how they are used to express meanings and intentions in appropriate ways, which refer to culturally specific pragmatics in

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different cultural contexts, so the FL teaching has also fully endorsed the aspect of educating students regarding the target FL culture (Byram 2014). However, the interpretation of 'culture' differs from person to person, not less or even especially if considering their relationship to the FL teaching material, be it textbook author, publisher, teacher, or learner (Canale 2016).

How to represent any aspect of culture in FL teaching materials (Risager 2014) is part of language ideology, expressed in a given context through or about language, the latter being inevitably combined with visual elements. Singular language ideology is latent and always present, irrespective of an author's or editor's intent, whether with explicit or implicit representations that construe the intersection of language and human beings, such as positive vs. pejorative connotations and ethnic stereotypes (Săftoiu 2017), so linguistic notions in FL textbooks are rarely only about language. For FL curriculum developers, publishers and textbook authors the awareness about it is essential (Canale 2016), as FL learners will have their cultural values shaped explicitly if, for example, the target FL culture makes the subject of class analysis, *and* implicitly by just using FL textbooks. For both aspects they need to be themselves investigated regarding ideologies, due to their powerful influence on learners.

Despite the fact that FL textbooks, widely used within formal educational encounters (school lessons), are 'limited' artefacts that reflect social practices in a certain (historical) time lapse (Kramsch 2013; Kramsch and Vinall 2015), learners do not necessarily take them as such and "[...] are likely to treat the textbooks as carriers of truth" (Weninger and Kiss 2015, 54). Moreover, they typically represent FL learners' first (and not last) exposure to the target language and culture: here a question arises if FL learners are aware that textbooks are "static and observable [...] time capsules [...] that present an insight into language pedagogy at some point in time" (Weninger and Kiss 2015, 50).

In this light, it is surprising that many researchers report lack of study in this field asking themselves whether it is due to market- and profit-related constraints, often concluding that the research on FL textbooks' power would require more scholarly attention. For example, Azimova and Johnston (2012, 337) observe that "in light of the central importance of the textbook in language teaching, it is surprising that until recently, relatively little research attention was paid to textbooks or to a critical examination of the representations they offer". This is however less the case of FL textbooks for English where the research largely outweighs that of other FL (Weninger and Kiss 2013; De Costa 2016).

Representation of (inter)cultural issues in FL teaching/learning is a topic that has been dealt with in Europe in numerous theoretical and analytic works, getting constant echo also in further studies and arriving to trans-cultural views above

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single cultures and their encounters (Risager 2014; Risager 2016). Debates have arisen regarding also the nature of the cultural element to be used, with more attention given to the one belonging to the FL taught, as well as real examples have been provided, like in the case of Romanian as a FL, distributed on language strata: from segmental and suprasegmental units, passing though lexicology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics (Nechifor and Borca 2016). The 'main' voice from the USA (Kramsch 2013; Kramsch 2014) approached the topic from various points of view, bearing in mind FL teachers as learners' educators at various stages.

The most encountered phenomenon by prominent authors (for example Byram 2014; Kramsch 2013) is that the representation of (inter)cultural issues in FL textbooks offer rather stereotyped images of their own and of other culture(s), from various points of view (Kiss and Weninger 2017; Tajeddin and Teimournezhad 2015; Tajeddin and Bahrebar 2017). For instance, gender studies on FL textbooks, as one of (inter)cultural issues, seem to prevailingly conclude that there are stereotyped images of women as weak, passive, dependent bread-takers and/or men's pleasure objects (Tajeddin and Janebi Enayat 2010). Research of FL textbooks and teaching practices has shown that FL textbooks have a role that might be strong, as well as problematic.

The majority of learners access a chosen FL by means of textbooks and related learning materials (not yet mostly in an online or e-modality) which are still profitable market objects. These, from the point of view of a society where a language is embedded as an FL (which, however is less and less the case of English as *lingua franca*) are supposed to reflect also cultural aspects and attitudes, as well as social dynamics in today's European societies, particularly in the target and in one's own country. However, whoever has ever used an FL textbook and compared it to the recent reality in the target FL country must have been taken over by a reasonable doubt about textbooks: do they indeed reflect the society/-ies of the related country/-ies? If the answer is 'yes': is it relevant how they do it? And if the answer is 'no': is it appropriate that they do not?

In the variety of published articles about FL textbook analyses, many aspects are dealt with from 'more' linguistic ones (grammar structures, analyses of task typology, development of receptive vs. productive communication, etc.) to 'less' linguistic ones (analyses of visual aids, gender and age representation, socio-economic status of depicted persons, etc.). Despite an increasingly changing European society, a preliminary analysis showed that, so far, very limited attention has been given to the representation of a 'foreigner', of a 'stranger' or of a 'different race' in FL textbooks, as a learner of a certain FL or a member of the target FL society.

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Therefore, to shed light on this gap, the purpose of this study is to analyse several FL textbooks for three different languages published in the last years, in terms of the represented image of a 'foreigner', as transmitted by their visual presence (for the purposes of this study, any person different than the white speaker will be considered a 'foreigner'). The intention of this study is to analyse the presence and images of 'clearly visible, perceivable foreigners', i.e. other races than the race of white-skinned Caucasian speakers (= Ws) and of other users of the target FL language (object of instruction), as transmitted by their visual characteristics, in other words: non-Caucasian races or non-white-skinned persons (= non-Ws). The rationale for the research is motivated by strong immigration flows to European countries in the last decades, and by various phenomena, in particular intolerance and social non-equality (De Costa 2018) which seems to be increasingly strengthening. The study is aimed at revealing if, how and how often the images of non-Ws are integrated into textbooks, as opposed to representations of Ws.

2.1. Research questions

Considering the related literature and attempting to shed light on some unclear areas regarding the more or less implicit, or even masked ideology about race representations(s) in FL textbooks, this study addressed the following three questions:

1. How often do FL textbook authors and edition series for English, German and Italian choose to include images of 'visible foreigners', i.e. how frequent is the presence of non-Ws?
2. Are the (presumed) principles of choice different in the three different FL cultural-linguistic areas, i.e. can different societal statuses among Ws and non-Ws be observed?
3. Can the findings about frequency and modality of depictions reveal that textbooks are biased in terms of non-Ws 'foreigners' representation, so equality and equity are dubious?

3. Methodology

3.1. Sampling of the FL Textbook Corpus

The framework of the analysis process is partly the diachronic approach, as the textbooks are analysed for a period of ten years, as well as the comparative approach, as three languages as FLs and the respective cultures are put into

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perspective comparatively. The data were collected through the page-to-page analyses of the whole corpus: 12 foreign language textbooks for English, German, Italian, four for each language. All textbooks series were prepared for teaching FL (for general purposes), i.e. by English, German, and Italian publishing houses, respectively; workbooks and teacher guides were excluded from the analysis. The age groups to whom the chosen textbooks are aimed at were (a) younger teenagers (12-14 years) and (b) older teenagers (15-18 years). Elementary levels (A1-A2, according to CEFR 2018) were chosen for German and Italian, and intermediate levels (B1-B2, according to CEFR 2018) for English.

The sampling included two key criteria: 1) all textbooks involved are produced in the land of origin, i.e. respectively, by English, German, and Italian publishing houses; 2) prior to their use in public schools, they were approved by the Slovene Ministry of Education, either for the last triennial of the 9-year primary schools (for younger teenagers), or for the lower and upper grades of the 4-year secondary schools (older teenagers), corresponding to the process from zero to approximately A1-B1 levels for German and Italian as FLs, and from approximately A2 to B2 levels for English as a foreign language (see Table 1).

The sampling for all choices bears in mind the fact that these FL textbooks are present in young peoples' lives during their adolescence from the very beginning. It is in this period that the maturity for the rational development of awareness about stereotypes and prejudices starts to develop, and develops significantly. All have been used extensively in Slovenian public schools over the last decade.

two textbook series for younger teenagers:	**German and Italian** for levels A1-A2, **English** for A2-B1
two textbook series for older teenagers:	**German and Italian** for levels A1-A2-B1, **English** for B1-B2

Table 1. Levels of 12 textbooks series, for three different FL

3.2. Image Analysis

Critical image analyses consisted of answering the question whether and how many non-Ws are depicted in FL textbooks, compared to the frequency of Ws persons, in order to establish the quantity of their presence in FL textbooks. Thereafter, some qualitative aspects were observed and analysed, such as which general or specific characteristics of non-Ws persons there are in the depictions. The quantitative procedure led towards some insights about how often Ws vs. non-Ws persons are

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included in the visual equipment of textbooks; the content-related monitoring of images was used to determine whether there are any stereotyping or prejudices regarding non-Ws depicted.

The frequency and therefore the ratio between the Ws and non-Ws is shown (a) from the percentage of photos or illustrations (of all persons) against the total number of pages, and (b) from the share (in %) of visuals (photos or illustrations) of non-Ws vs. Ws persons against the total number of persons depicted. Regarding the non-Ws, it should be pointed out that at this stage differences in their race, as well as the size and type of depictions (photos or illustrations) were not considered. However, it was taken into account when the same photo or illustration of the same non-Ws person appeared more than once.

In order to secure anonymity, the FL textbooks for Italian, German and English are denominated according to their principal characteristics: language and target age group (younger teenagers vs. older teenagers); for example, for Italian IT-1-younger, IT-2-younger, IT-3-older, IT-4-older, and in an analogous way for German with GE-1, etc., and for English with EN-1, etc. In the case of all textbooks involved, the publishing houses are different (three different ones for four Italian and four German textbooks, and all different for English); the last (in some cases renewed) versions were published in the last decade, FL textbooks for Italian dating from 2013 to 2015, for German from 2004 to 2015, and for the English from 2009 to 2016.

The percentage of photos and illustrations with persons of any race in relation to the total page range of textbooks is given in approximate values without decimals and rounded up to tens (see Tables 2, 4 and 6), in order to give a size class approximation. What is given as exact data is the frequency of illustrations and photos depicting non-Ws, given in the third column of Tables 2, 4 and 6, and the total of textbook pages (given in the second column).

4. Results

4.1. Results about FL Textbooks for Italian

All four FL textbooks combine photos and illustrations (see Table 2), on pages from 120 (IT-2) to 158 (IT-3b), the share of pages with depictions of persons is from 33% (IT-4a) to 80% (IT-1b and IT-2), on average every second page portraying (also) a person. Despite such high percentage, the share of depicted non-Ws is very low, from 0% (IT-3a) to 17% (IT-2), in other words, there are two FL textbooks for Italian with none or *one* depiction of a non-Ws person (IT-3a, IT-3b).

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The textbook IT-2 contains 20 depicted non-Ws (16 illustrations vs. 4 photos) from a total of 120 pages or one fifth of 100 pages with persons. As it can be seen from Table 2, non-Ws are rarely depicted as photos in all four FL textbook series for Italian; there are more illustrations, and, altogether, still without encompassing more than 7-8% of pages, on average.

Code[2], year of the last (renewed) version	**no. of pages, in total**	**SHARE in % of images of any race and of Ws persons only**	**SHARE in % of images of non-Ws (photos or illustrations)**
IT-1a, IT-1b 2013	1 – 127 pp. 2 – 127 pp.	approx. 70 %, Ws: 59 % approx. 80 %, Ws: 74 %	**4 photos, 16 illust. = 11 %** **4 photos, 4 illust. = 6 %**
IT-2 2015	120 pp.	approx. 80 %, Ws: 63 %	**4 photos, 16 illust. = 17 %**
IT-3a, IT-3b 2014	1 – 144 pp. 2 – 158 pp.	approx. 50 %, Ws: 50 % approx. 60 %, Ws: 59.5 %	**0 depictions = 0 %** **1 photo = 0.5 %**
IT-4a, IT-4b 2014	1 – 132 pp. 2 – 144 pp.	approx. 33 %, Ws: 29 % approx. 50 %, Ws: 48 %	**5 photos = 4 %** **3 photos = 2 %**
FL textbooks for Italian publ. years: 2013 to 2015	**range of pages:** from 120 to 158	**range of all persons** from 33 % to 80 % **range of Ws:** from 29 % to 74 %	**range of non-Ws:** from 0 % to 17 %

Table 2. FL textbooks for Italian. Frequency (share in % from the total of pages) of Ws and non-Ws in a single textbook

The ethnic origin of non-Ws depicted is African, Asian and South-American (see some typical examples in Table 3); in the case of all illustrations, the status seems not to be recognisable, but in the photos it is possible to recognize that persons are mainly young (the impression is that they belong to middle-higher class which cannot be accurately deduced from a picture; however, the non-Ws depicted appear not to be taken from realistic environments as in the textbooks for English and German, but from nicely prepared advertisements: see examples 3, 4 and 6). Predominantly, they are represented individually (examples 2, 3, 4, 6), and very rarely as group members (example 1).

Sometimes they are represented as 'ethnological objects', not as subjects belonging to the Italian society (example 5). However, when represented as subjects, they appear as FL learners of Italian or tourists visiting Italy (examples 2

[2] Some codes are twofold, however referring to the same textbook series consisting of textbook 1 and textbook 2, corresponding to two consequent levels, for instance to A1 and A2, or to B1 and B2. In order to secure anonymity, titles and publishing houses are omitted.

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and 3). Only in the case of one textbook series (for younger adolescents), which in fact is an Italian version of an international, Anglo-Saxon series, there are more photos of non-Ws, represented as members of the society, i.e. school pupils integrated into schools (examples 4 and 6).

example 1



example 2

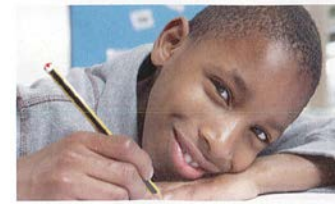


... e quest___ è Aidha, _____ ragazz___ marocchin___ .

example 3



example 4



example 5



example 6



Table 3. FL textbooks for Italian. Some examples of representation of non-Ws

However, the statistical data about official migration rates to Italy (Eurostat, data from 2016) reports 0.5% of the population to be Ws and non-Ws immigrants, which is (surprisingly) low compared to the vivid impression about the reality in many Italian cities. Anyone who spends some time in Italy will get the impression that, in the last decade, in some areas of Italy the non-W persons, legal or supposedly illegal immigrants, are highly present, sometimes this being perceived as outnumbering the local inhabitants in some neighbourhoods.

Generally, except in one textbook series (IT-3), the share of depicted non-Ws in textbooks is higher than in contemporary Italian society. Evidently higher percentages of them are present in textbooks for younger adolescents (IT-1, IT-2) than for both groups of older adolescents (IT-3, IT-4). Hence, the younger teenagers as learners of

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Italian as an FL seem to be exposed, by means of the textbooks, more intensely to the 'reality' of the Italian society. However, from FL textbooks it seems that in Italy there are *some* non-Ws of different races: pupils, students, young adults learning Italian as a foreign language, non-Ws tourists visiting Italy.

Depictions of non-Ws children, teenagers and adults in textbooks expose potential learners of Italian as an FL to the impression that they and their next of kin are not part of and are not contributing to the contemporary Italian society. In particular, older teenagers as FL learners of Italian are, at least via the textbooks here analysed, even less exposed to both previous impressions, misleading them even more about the dynamics of changes in the Italian society in recent years.

4.2. Results about FL textbooks for German

As in the case of Italian, all four FL textbooks for German combine photos and illustrations (see Table 6); the total page range of textbooks is from 103 (GE-2a) to 245 (GE-4b), the share of pages with depictions of persons is from 33% (GE-3a) to 85% (GE-1), on average almost 60% of pages include depictions of persons, more than every second page. Also in the case of the four German textbook series, despite such a high percentage of persons depicted, the percentage of non-Ws is again relatively low, ranging from 2% (in three of the textbooks analysed) to 17% (GE-4); however, in FL textbooks for German the photos of non-Ws are more dominant than the illustrations (see Table 6).

Code, year of the last (renewed) version	**no. of pages, in total**	**SHARE in % of images of any race and of Ws persons only**	**SHARE in % of images of non-Ws (photos or illustrations)**
GE-1 2013	184 pp.	approx. 85 %, Ws: 83 %	**4 photos = 2 %**
GE-2a, GE-2b 2004	1 – 103 pp. 2 – 119 pp.	approx. 40 %, Ws: 33 % approx. 50 %, Ws: 48 %	**7 illustrations = 7 %** **1 photo, 2 illustr. = 2 %**
GE-3a, GE-3b 2011	1 – 111 pp. 2 – 138 pp.	approx. 33 %, Ws: 31 % approx. 40 %, Ws: 36 %	**1 photo, 1 illustr. = 2 %** **6 photos, 1 illustr. = 4 %**
GE-4 2015	245 pp.	approx. 75 %, Ws: 58 %	**14 photos = 17 %**
FL textbooks for German, publ. years: 2004 to 2015	**range of pages:** from 103 to 245	**range of all persons** from 33 % to 85 % **range of Ws:** from 31 % to 83 %	**range of non-Ws:** from 2 % to 17 %

Table 4. Foreign language textbooks for German. Frequency (share in % from the total of pages) of Ws and non-Ws in a single textbook

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The ethnic origin of the non-Ws depicted is African, Asian and South-American (see some typical examples in Table 5); a more frequent, and somehow striking difference when comparing the depictions in FL textbooks for Italian, is that the status of the non-Ws depicted is *mainly* equal to Ws persons (with the exception of, perhaps, example 3), non-Ws seem to be integrated into social groups as equal.

example 1



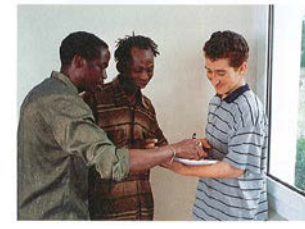
example 2



example 3



example 4



example 5



example 6

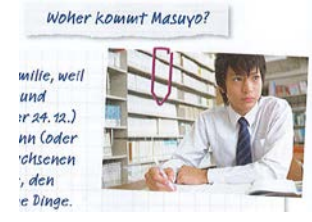


Table 5. FL textbooks for German. Some examples of representations of non-Ws

This is the case in photos and illustrations, representing non-Ws from lower, middle and higher social classes; mainly they are represented as members of the German society (in all six examples) and, importantly, they are not represented as 'exotic' or 'ethnological' objects.

In particular, in the GE-4 textbook it seems that in every photo (examples 4 and 5) the persons depicted are represented as equal members of the German society. An impression is created that the authors or editors want to increasingly address the 'audience', i.e. potential learners of German of very different races from all over the world, as well as to present these people as already well integrated members into the German society. There are depictions of non-Ws

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children, teenagers and adults, so potential learners of German FL are exposed to the impression that non-Ws, perhaps also potential immigrants and their next of kin, can become well integrated members of the German speaking countries.

Regarding FL textbooks for German, one may say that, generally, the share of non-Ws depicted in all textbooks analysed is higher than in the contemporary German society (as an illustrative comparison, the immigration rates: 0.5% in Italy vs. 1.25% in Germany). However, there are evidently lower shares of non-Ws in textbooks for younger adolescents compared to those for older adolescents. In the textbook GE-4 the share is 17%, as in the Italian textbook IT-2, which, on the other hand, was addressed to older teenagers. Therefore, by means of FL textbook depictions, the younger teenagers (as learners of German as an FL) are going to be less exposed to the reality of German society than older learners. What both textbooks with higher frequency of non-Ws depicted have in common is that both are the most recently published ones, a sign perhaps of higher awareness of authors and editors, from several aspects.

In the other three textbook series, it results that (potential) learners of German as an FL will have only scarce opportunities to encounter speakers of German of different races, non-Ws included. In fact, only the depictions of non-Ws children, teenagers, and adults in the textbook GE-4 clearly expose learners to the fact that non-Ws (as former or future immigrants) are well integrated members of the German society, contributing to it as equal citizens. If learners are less exposed to such images, it might result in their becoming less aware of features of the current target FL society.

4.3. Results about FL Textbooks for English

The FL textbooks for English combine photos and illustrations (see Table 6); the photos are far more prevalent than in the German and Italian textbooks. In fact, three textbooks (EN-1, EN-3, EN-4) use only photos, with the exception of combined photos and illustrations in EN-2. The share of pages with depictions of persons is high compared to both previous FL textbook groups, ranging from 30% to 80%. In case of all four FL textbook series for English, the percentage of non-Ws depicted is high (see Table 6), ranging from an average of 4% (in EN-3) to an average of 20% (EN-2).

From the statistical data (Eurostat, data from 2016) about migration rates in Great Britain, it appears that 0.9% of the population are immigrants, Ws and non-Ws. However, in three of the four analysed FL textbooks for English the share of non-Ws depicted is *far* higher than in the textbooks for the other two FL analysed so far, and, as an illustration, they are far higher than in the contemporary

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British society. Clearly lower shares of non-Ws in one textbook series for older adolescents (EN-3) with 'only' 4% compared to the other three (see Table 6) can be ascribed to a general characteristic of that textbook series which contains *per se* considerably fewer images of persons (30-40% of total pages) than in the other three (where where the percentage ranges from 50 to 80%).

Code, year of the last (renewed) version	**no. of pages, in total**	**SHARE in % of images of any race and of Ws persons only**	**SHARE in % of images of non-Ws (photos or illustrations)**
EN-1a, EN-1b 2009	1 - 133 pp. 2 - 115 pp.	approx. 65 %, Ws: 58 % approx. 75 %, Ws: 61 %	**11 photos = 7 %** **16 photos = 14 %**
EN-2a, EN-2b 2013	1 - 87 pp. 2 - 87 pp.	approx. 80 %, Ws: 60 % approx. 80 %, Ws: 60 %	**18 (photos, illustr.) = 20 %** **18 (photos, illustr.) = 20 %**
EN-3a, EN-3b 2014	1 - 140 pp. 2 - 140 pp.	approx. 40 %, Ws: 36 % approx. 30 %, Ws: 26 %	**6 photos = 4 %** **6 photos = 4 %**
EN-4a, EN-4b 2016	1 - 107 pp. 2 - 123 pp.	approx. 70 %, Ws: 59 % approx. 50 %, Ws: 42 %	**12 photos = 11 %** **10 photos = 8 %**
FL textbooks for English, publ. year: 2009 to 2016	**range of pages:** from 87 to 140	**range of all persons** from 30 % to 80 % **range of Ws:** from 26 % to 59 %	**range of non-Ws:** from 4 % to 20 %

Table 6. Foreign language textbooks for English: frequency (share in % from the total of pages) of Ws and non-Ws in a single textbook

The ethnical origin of the non-Ws depicted is African, Asian, South-American, Australian and from Arctic regions; their status seems to be equal to that of the Ws persons, both in illustrations and photos, where persons from lower and middle social classes appear (in the EFL textbooks there were no images detected which would remind us of higher classes). In some rare photos, non-Ws are presented as 'ethnological' objects, in much more numerous ones all the rest of non-Ws appear as integrated citizens or other subjects of the 'English-speaking' British society (see the examples in Table 7, except example 1).

It appears quite clear that authors and editors are aware who the potential, 'targeted' EFL learners are: members of various races from all over the world are depicted as capable of becoming an integrated member of an English-speaking society (however, more probably of English as a *lingua franca*).

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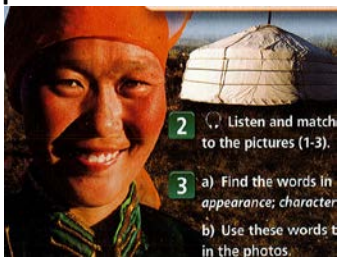
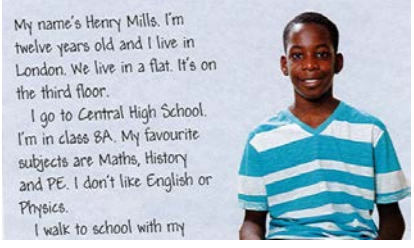
example 1



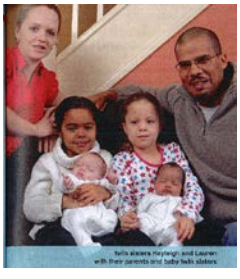
example 2



example 3



example 4



example 5



example 6



Table 7. FL textbooks for English. Some examples of representation of non-Ws

If the examples of non-Ws are observed more closely, they typically represent such persons as average and/or exceptional individuals (examples 3 and 4), as members of mixed groups (examples 2 and 5), similarly to FL textbooks for German their role is 'static/passive' or 'dynamic'; however there's an impression that in the analysed EFL textbooks, the non-Ws tend to be represented as more passive or static than the Ws persons (see examples 2 and 5, where Ws show something or help the injured, while the non-Ws, on the other hand, just listen or are 'patient'). However, it is only in the English textbooks where it is shown that both Ws and non-Ws procreate.

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5. Conclusions and limitations

The first question of this study was aimed at finding out how often FL textbook authors in edition series for teaching English, German and Italian choose to include images of 'visible' foreigners, more precisely how frequent the presence of non-Ws is. The findings about the quantitative comparisons among the three groups of FL textbooks have shown that, generally, the share of the non-Ws depicted in textbooks is mainly relatively high, in particular if compared just for illustration to the demographic rates of immigrants in the contemporary societies of the three national states, related here to the three FL languages learned in school systems in Europe and elsewhere.

However, in some textbooks, pertaining to all three linguistic areas, there's at least one textbook series with extremely low representation of non-Ws, in most of the cases this can be attributed to the (older) edition year when the awareness was not yet so high as it presumably became after conscious efforts by the Council of Europe's linguistic policies in the last decade. All three FL textbook linguistic groups offer to potential learners of the target FL, to some extent, a possibility to be faced with the fact that in that target linguistic society also non-Ws are present.

The second question was related to the (presumed) different principles of choice regarding which races, in three different FL cultural-linguistic areas, would be represented, expecting different societal statuses among Ws and non-Ws. Principles of choice regarding what type of depiction to choose seem to be of two types: a) non-Ws are sometimes represented as 'ethnological objects', also with an impression of 'exotic and attractive decorative' subjects/objects; and b) non-Ws are, in vast majority, represented as subjects, often as equal members of social groups. In the case of FL textbooks for Italian, there's more often an impression of 'temporarily limited' status of non-Ws to the Italian society, whereas in the case of FL textbooks for German and English, the non-Ws are mainly represented as well integrated members of those respective societies.

The third question tackled the doubt whether some textbooks are biased in terms of the representation of non-Ws, on the basis of their frequency and modality of depictions. About this initial doubt, perhaps it may be said that in some rare cases this seems to be evident from some illustrations or photos. In some of the FL textbooks groups the bias is weakly, rather implicitly, evident in terms of 'absence' or very low presence of non-Ws in the visual equipment of the textbooks (in some cases neither the first nor the second being present). However, there are perceivable differences among all three 'linguistic-cultural' groups of the textbooks, in particular between German and English vs. the Italian ones: in the first, non-Ws

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are mainly represented as equal individuals or members of mixed groups, in the second, they seem to be present just 'temporarily limited' and/or 'exotic'.

However, there are several limitations to this study, and the topic itself has thus far received relatively little attention. Therefore, it is not easily (or at all) comparable to other analyses about gender, socio-economic status, stereotypes, narrower culture-related aspects, in recent FL textbooks series with regard to many facets of the globalized world (Kramsch 2014). Indubitably more research, quantitative and qualitative, is needed in order to render FL teachers, and through them their learners, more conscious about ideological and political biases (Kramsch and Vinall 2015) arising also from non-Ws' depictions in FL textbooks of a target language they have chosen to learn, and thus opening many unexplored areas.

Such research could tackle the impact of non-Ws vs. Ws persons' depictions rather on general education and value development about pluri- and multicultural aspects. Furthermore, perhaps equally relevant for European countries, there could be studies about demographic gaps between young(er) and old(er) members of societies, as well research on how explicit promoting 'immigrant and race' tolerance and collaboration, by means of FL textbooks, might have on learners.

Acknowledgement

My great appreciation and sincere thanks go to the anonymous reviewers. Their comments, corrections and patience on the earlier drafts of this paper helped me improve it essentially.

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List of textbooks as sources

FL textbooks for English (alphabetic order)
1. Focus 3, Focus 4
2. Messages 2, Messages 3
3. On Screen B1+, On Screen B2
4. Project 2, Project 3

FL textbooks for German (alphabetic order)
1. Alles stimmt 1, Alles stimmt 2
2. Beste Freunde 1, Beste Freunde 2
3. Studio (21)
4. Wir 1, Wir 2

FL textbooks for Italian (alphabetic order)
1. Amici d’Italia 1, Amici d’Italia 2
2. Espresso Ragazzi 1
3. Nuovo Contatto 1, Nuovo Contato 2
4. Nuovo Espresso 1

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