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„Themen 1 aktuell“ - Kommunikation von Anfang an

Ulla WOLF

Einleitung

Es gibt eine Vielzahl von Deutschlehrwerken. Sie alle verfolgen das Ziel, Deutsch als Fremdsprache zu vermitteln. Dabei versuchen sie, die Vorstellungen und Prinzipien von Lehrmethoden so zu präzisieren und zu konkretisieren, dass ein ganz bestimmtes Unterrichtskonzept entsteht.

Welcher Methode ein Lehrwerk folgt, lässt sich an folgenden Kriterien erkennen:

1. **Texte in einer Lektion:** sind sie authentisch, d.h. kommen sie im Sprachgebrauch des Ziellandes vor? Oder sind sie für den Unterricht geschrieben, um ein bestimmtes sprachliches Phänomen einzuführen (Grammatik, Wortschatz etc.)
2. **Grammatikdarstellung:** werden Grammatikregeln formuliert (in der Muttersprache? In der Fremdsprache?)? Wird die Grammatik über Beispiele eingeführt? Wird zuerst die Regel und dann das Beispiel eingeführt – oder umgekehrt? Werden visuelle Hilfen gegeben?
3. **Übungen und Übungssequenzen:** jede Methode bevorzugt ganz bestimmte Arten von Übungen, um ihre Lernziele zu erreichen.
4. **Lektionsaufbau:** in jeder Methode ist auch eine bestimmte Abfolge der Unterrichtsphasen und – schritte ausgeprägt, je nachdem wie eine Lektion beginnt: steht am Beginn die Einführung der Grammatik? Oder wird ein Text gelesen und ausgewertet? Oder ein Bild (eine Bildsequenz) gezeigt und dazu ein Text gehört?

5. Lernprogression: der Aufbau des Lernprogramms: jede Methode hebt ganz bestimmte Lernziele und -stoffe hervor und kombiniert sie, außerdem weist jede Methode einem ganz bestimmten Aspekt eine Führungsrolle zu bei der Anlage der Lernstoffprogression.

I. Themen aktuell –Kommunikation von Anfang an:

Ausgehend von der skizzierten These, dass ein Lehrwerk eine bestimmte Methode spiegelt, soll Themen aktuell betrachtet werden. Themen (Themen neu, Themen aktuell) ist eines der bekanntesten Lehrwerke der kommunikativen Methode, die sich seit der ersten Hälfte der 70iger Jahre des 20. Jahrhunderts entwickelte, als immer mehr Menschen den Wunsch hatten, eine Fremdsprache zu lernen, weil sie entweder in einer sich immer mehr vernetzenden Welt darin berufliche Vorteile sahen, oder weil sie sich auf ihren Urlaubsreisen in der Sprache des Ziellandes verständigen wollten. Aus dieser Zielsetzung ergibt sich, dass es nicht darum ging, fehlerlos übersetzen oder das grammatische System der gelernten Sprache wiedergeben zu können, sondern darum, zu verstehen und verstanden zu werden. Der Unterricht war also von der ersten Stunde an auf Kommunikation angelegt, v.a. auf das Sprechen und Verstehen. Konsequenterweise stehen kommunikative Übungen (v.a. Dialogübungen) im Mittelpunkt, ausgehend von Alltagssituationen. Lese- und Hörtexte sind authentisch, d.h. sie entsprechen in Diktion und Wortschatz der Alltagssprache des Ziellandes. Die Progression wird nicht von der Grammatik bestimmt, sondern von den Sprechanlässen - grammatische Strukturen werden eingeführt, wenn bestimmte Sprechintentionen es erfordern.

Lassen Sie uns am Beispiel von **Themen 1 aktuell** das Gesagte demonstrieren. Ich zeige Ihnen Beispiele aus den ersten drei Lektionen, d.h. aus den ersten 50 Unterrichtseinheiten eines Anfängerkurses.

1. **Inhaltsverzeichnis:** Themen aus dem Alltag
2. **Texte einer Lektion:**

Lesetexte: Kap. 1, S. 14 und 15

Hörtexte: Kap. 1, S. 10

Kap. 2, S. 30

3. Übungen:

Dialogübungen im Kursbuch (mit Hilfe von Vorlagen auf OHP-Folien) Wortschatzübungen im Arbeitsbuch/ Schreibübungen im Arbeitsbuch

4. Grammatik:

Einführung neuer Grammatikstrukturen am Beispiel des Akkusativs/ grammatische Übungen in Kap. 3 /Arbeitsbuch

5. Lektionsaufbau:

Einstiegsseite: Präsentation des Themas (Beispiel: Kap. 3)

Aspekte des Themas:

Was essen die Personen? Mögen /Nichtmögen

Im Restaurant: bestellen und bezahlen; Schmeckt das Essen?

Einkaufen von Lebensmitteln

Landeskunde (Bierlexikon) Grammatik: Akkusativ

6. Lernprogression:

Lernziel:

Kommunikation in Alltagssituationen, aktive Teilnahme an Gesprächen über allgemein interessierende Themen, sinnvoller Umgang mit einfachen literarischen und feuilletonistischen Texten sowie Sachtexten

Lernstoff:

Hör- und Lesetexte aus dem Alltag

hervorgehobener Aspekt:

Training der Kommunikationsfähigkeit

Don't wake up a sleeping learner: The Soporific Substance of the Textbook

Abdelghani NAIT BRAHIM

"A good lesson is a beautiful narration." (P. Freire)

"A mon sens, c'est donc la démarche d'ouverture au monde réel adoptée par l'enseignant qui doit faire naître le besoin: du désir de dire, on passe à la façon de dire et au dire lui-même, sans modèle de situation fabriqué de toutes pièces." (F. Poirier)

"The notions of text and context are inseparable: text is language operative in a context of situation and contexts are ultimately construed by the range of texts produced within a community ..." (M.A.K. Halliday and R. Hasan)

This paper is a tentative contribution to the evaluation of foreign language teaching textbooks in Algeria through the analysis of the content of one specimen. It is a formative evaluation, i.e. an evaluation conducted for the purpose of curriculum development whose primary goal is to improve a teaching/learning material, the textbook.

Although I am aware of the fact that such an evaluation relies more on the contribution of practitioners, i.e. the teachers who actually use the textbook under scrutiny, through their intuition, observation and trial (Littlewood 1999: 82), it is also, in my view, beneficial to involve other relevant language teaching professionals. It is noteworthy to state that I will be measuring the theoretical value, or the *construct validity* (Rea-Dickins and Germaine 1998), of a textbook. This evaluation provides then restricted data since it does not inform about how this textbook actually works in class, and thus need to be supplemented with an empirical evaluation in order to be

complete and useful for any possible innovation or change (see Figure 1, next page).

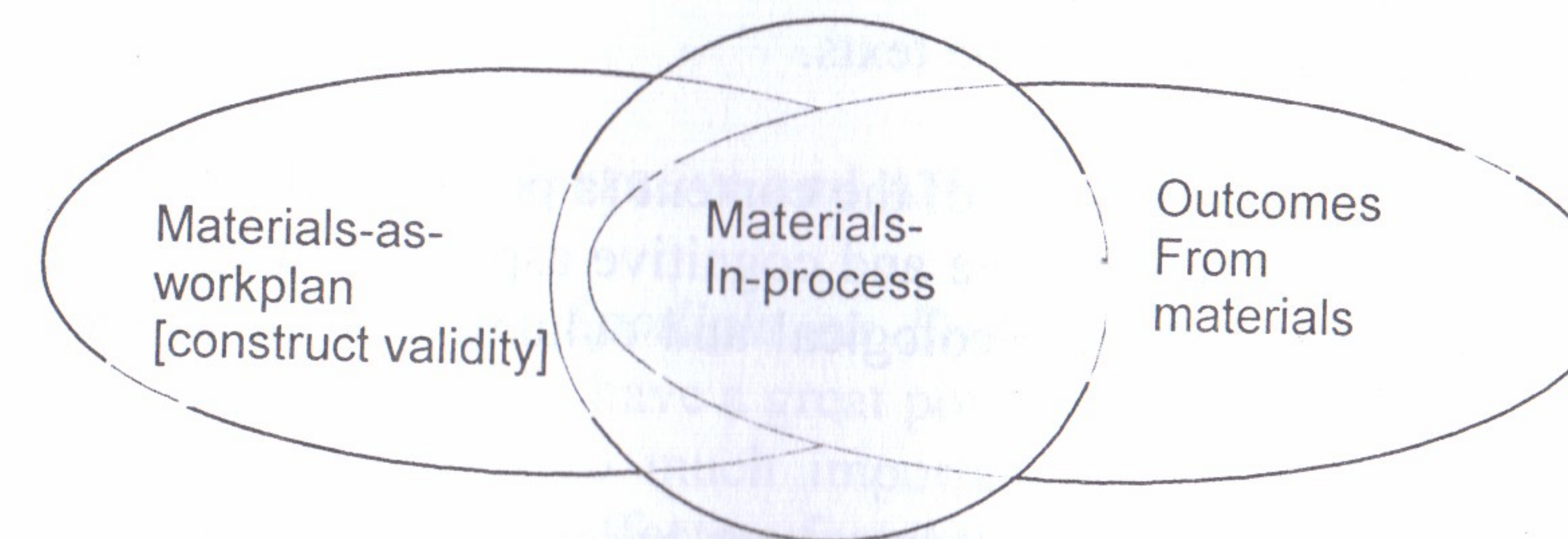


Figure 1: Three phases of materials evaluation (ibid.: 30).

It should be noted that the term 'textbook', here, is understood in its broadest sense of "an organised and pre-packaged set of teaching/learning materials" (Hutchinson and Hutchinson 1996: 322), used by teachers and students in the classroom context for the purpose of approaching a pre-designed syllabus. Aware of the fact that the textbook does by no means absolve the teacher of his/her responsibility, and that his/her role exceeds, by far, that of a class overseer, the textbook, when flawed, remains dangerous inasmuch as it misguides the teaching and learning processes.

My concern, here, is the English language textbook *Spotlight on English*, made for 1st year Algerian middle school pupils (1^{ère} année moyen), and the product of the new educational reform launched in 2003.¹ I will analyse three aspects in the book, which I think have lacked enough emphasis on the part of the authors:

- a. The affective aspect of the content through the absence of

¹ This book was released in 2003 under the supervision of Mrs L. Merazga.

- a story-line narrative in the texts used.
- b. The cognitive side to the content through the lack of contextualisation of the texts.
 - c. The social dimension of the content (a point which crosses over both the affective and cognitive aspects) through the attenuation of the ideological and cultural essence of the English language.

Spotlight on English contains a task-based content, organised along a structural/functional and notional/topical lines, and whose purpose is to bring the learners to engage in the acquisition of structures (e.g. how to form the present simple), functions (e.g. greeting, offering, asking permission), notions (e.g. time, cause, quantity) and topics (e.g. sport, family, travel) to develop their four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). It has also adopted a competency-based approach by allowing the learners to develop skills through the elaboration of individual or group projects at the end of each unit studied. It is interesting since it has abandoned the traditional presentation-based approach to ELT, or the 3Ps approach, i.e. presentation, practice, and production (Skehan 2000: 93), in which the focus is on a single point in grammar, which is first presented by the teacher, then practised by the learner, who is, after that, allowed some degree of autonomy to produce language more spontaneously.

Although this transacting-task-based instruction in the English language is more communicative, it seems, however, that it has a number of problematic characteristics:

- learning by drilling;
- activities are presumably real life-like;
- other people's meanings are regurgitated;
- specific structures are focused upon.

The main problem with this kind of tasks is that they are mechanical as too much focus is put on structures rather than meanings. Moreover, it displays some affective, cognitive and social deficiencies.

The Story-Line Narrative and Affect

The texts used in *Spotlight on English* are mechanical and dehumanised². They have a great potential to curb the learners' empathy which is so much important for the incitement of their motivation, an affective factor that is acknowledged to be essential in education.

Although affective factors in education were tackled by scholars like Dewey and Montessori in the early 20th century, it was until the 1960s, with the writings of Maslow (1968) and Rogers (1969) that affect gained importance with the development of the humanistic approach to education. G.I. Brown (1971) and G. Castillo (1973) innovated in their call for the need to consider affect as equally important as cognitive factors in education.

Defined as the "*aspects of emotion, feeling, mood or attitude which condition behaviour*" (Arnold 1999: 1), affect has been proved to be quite decisive in the learners' success or failure in foreign language learning. As Arnold writes:

As learners, they are influenced by their feelings and do not learn when anxious or stressed. Learning for them is most effective when it is personally relevant and when information is presented through different sensory modes. (*ibid*: 7)

² The book contains dialogues that display the practice of particular structures and functions. File 1 (entitled Hello!), for example, starts with the following dialogue:

What's your name? My name's Sally.

Studies (Asher 1977; McGroarty 1996; Stevick 1998) have shown that failure in foreign language learning is more often due to negative affective factors – anxiety, fear, stress, anger or depression (Arnold 1999: 2) – than to cognitive ones or to teaching methods and techniques per se. Conversely, positive affective variables, such as self-esteem, empathy or motivation proved to play a major role in enhancing and facilitating the learning process (Andrès 1999; Oxford 1999).

As far as our case study is concerned, empathy and motivation³ seem to have been neglected in the elaboration of this textbook. It is actually observed that some syllabus designers, writers of textbooks and teachers in Algeria focus more on the linguistic-functional performance of the syllabus, textbook or the lesson than on the ability of these products to arouse learners' positive affective reactions. Chomsky rightly admits that most of the teacher's work is his striving to get his students interested in the material he uses (1988: 181). Underhill asserts that professionals and practitioners "*who claim it is not their job to take these phenomena into account may miss out on some of the most essential ingredients in the management of successful learning.*" (1989: 252)

The ingredients to activate learners' empathy and motivation certainly vary according to age, sex, cultural background, etc. In the case of the population to whom this textbook is aimed, eleven to twelve-year schoolchildren, the one ingredient to draw their attention and raise their interest is the story-line narrative. As children, these learners are certainly not aware

³ Empathy is defined as "*the process of putting yourself in someone else's shoes*" (Arnold 1999: 19), i.e. developing a kind of identification with someone or something, something which raises interest by sympathising. Motivation is "*the combination of desire and effort made to achieve a goal.*" (McGroarty 2001: 5)

of, nor concerned by, the practical benefits of learning a foreign language, nor are they conscious of its importance to their future careers. It is then necessary to discard the objective and cognitive interests from the list of stimuli that may provoke these learners' 'instrumental motivation' (Arnold 1999: 13) and will to learn the language.

As children, and most particularly, as Algerian children grown up in cultures still very much marked by the oral tradition heritage of story-telling, they can only be *lured* by pleasure⁴, the pleasure to read a text that tells a story, the pleasure to follow the narrative of the textbook *characters*. It is thus their 'integrative motivation' (ibid.: 13), i.e. the desire and will to learn the language for the purpose of integrating a different world, a different culture, which can be the dynamic of their learning process. The textbook is there to create the need to communicate among learners, the need to say something whatever the language is. Brown adheres to the same idea in his suggestions for stimulating motivation, among which is the necessity to provide learners with content-based activities that call for their focus on meanings rather than on linguistic items (1994: 43-44).⁵

In this respect, examples of textbooks for teaching British Civilisation in France are quite good instances to meditate upon. To arouse learners' interest, new manuals, for twelve-year schoolchildren (12-13), were introduced in the 1970s and found a quite positive response from learners. *L for Learners*⁶,

⁴ "Motivation, after all," assumes Arnold, "is better guided by a move towards pleasure..." (1999: 2)

⁵ With this suggestion, Brown proposed others such as : 1) *help learners develop autonomy...* 2) *...encourage them to find self-satisfaction...* 3) *...give opportunities for cooperative learning ...*" (Arnold 1999: 15).

⁶ Lesage, A., A. Regourd and S. Fredj-Hebllethwaite. 1975. *L for Learners*. Paris: Larousse.

for instance, chronicles the stories of two children (of the same age as the learners) travelling across Britain and discovering all kinds of jobs and professions (Poirier 1982: 186).

It is, however, important to state that the stories need to be interesting for the learners, according to their age, and considerate towards their cultures. It can be observed that *Spotlight on English* is inspired, in terms of content, organisation and methodology, from the *Look Ahead* classroom course book⁷ for teaching English as a foreign language. The problem is that this book is destined to adult learners, and thus comprises topics which are out of the reach and interest of the children for whom *Spotlight on English* has been devised.⁸

Yet, as foreign language learners, they may be subject to what psychoanalysts call *culture shock*, a kind of anxiety that some young learners feel when they do not identify with the target language group (Young 1992). Education in general, and foreign language learning in particular, are often hindered by the difficulty that young learners confront, and that stir up negative affective reactions such as discouragement and anxiety. Therefore, the success of teaching and learning materials reside also in the ability to induce optimal effortless learning, or what the psychologist M. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) labels *flow*. According to Goleman:

⁷ Vivier, M. du, A. Hopkins and J. Potter. 1994. *Look Ahead*. London: Longman.

⁸ The book is organised along drama episodes that recount the daily situations of a group of characters working in the advertising business. I myself had a 5-year experience in teaching English as a foreign language, at a private language school, using *Look Ahead*. I must admit that it was a successful experience and that the topics tackled in the book and their presentation appealed to my adult students. These topics are also appreciated by my students at the ENSET (a teacher-training college) who are over 18. I doubt that these same topics would meet the same enthusiasm from 12-year schoolchildren.

flow represents perhaps the ultimate in harnessing the emotions in the service of performance and learning. In flow the emotions are not just contained and channeled, but positive, energized and aligned with the task at hand.

Because flow feels so good, it is intrinsically rewarding. It is a state in which people become utterly absorbed in what they are doing, paying no attention to the task... (1995: 90-91)

The absence, in this textbook, of a story-line narrative, an enjoyment which is so motivating for young learners, and that can develop their empathetic ties (intimate contacts) with the texts studied, to avoid culture shock, within a climate of complicity between the learners and the texts – a 'community of people' (Kramsch 2001: 118) – is a considerable *loss of earnings* for an effective learning process.

Authenticity of Texts

Although *Spotlight on English* is supposed to adopt a communicative approach to ELT, the texts used are also devoid of social contextualisation, fabricated for the sole purpose of displaying language without a stated communicative event. The use of these artificial texts can only develop the learners' grammatical competence, without equipping them with communicative competence, which is vital for the production of new structures and meanings. The use of authentic texts is necessary for a realistic and effective learning and use of the language.

The term *authentic* is understood, here, in the sense of natural (ibid.: 177), and applied to texts that are produced for non-pedagogic purposes. "*An authentic text*," writes Little and

Singleton, "is a text that was created to fulfil some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced." (1988: 21)

Authentic texts are opposed to those texts that are artificial and basically devoid of the social and cultural content related to the speech community of the target language, and whose concern is to highlight the grammatical items at the expense of context. Context, in its various forms, is a key element in the authentication of texts. Texts are artificial when the context cannot be retrieved. The corollary is that texts become authentic when they can be contextualised.

Context

Context is the background information, internal or external to the text. It may then be linguistic or non-linguistic. The linguistic context, or the *co-text*, is the words that surround a piece of discourse within a text. It is also the stylistic features or the figures of speech that are employed to convey particular meanings. The non-linguistic context is two types:

- Context of situation: the type of communicative event (joke, story, lesson, sermon, political speech, conversation, interview, etc.), the topic, the purpose of the communicative event, the time, the setting, the participants in the event and the relationships between
- Background knowledge: it is the reader's knowledge about the world and the culture within which the text was produced, and which determines and helps his/her interpretation and understanding of the discourse of the text. It ranges from the frame (stereotypical situations drawn from one's past experiences) to schemata (culture-based expectations of behaviour in specific social situations), through functional background knowledge

(knowledge of the speech acts as expressed in a particular language) (see Kramsch 2000).

When using a text to teach a foreign language, learners need the context to be able to *re-categorise* the world in the way the foreign culture does (Brown 1998). It is important for foreign language teachers to be aware of the fact that a foreign language is more than new lexis. It is a new culture, that is a new way of viewing people and things, depending on context, and which is quite often different to the young learner's native one. Malmkjaer and Williams concur to say that

since different cultures' preferred modes of introducing children to the world and language probably give rise to different modes of conceptualising the world, one problem of second [and certainly of foreign] language learning is likely to be a problem of re-categorisation of context. Clearly, this argument presupposes that context is of crucial importance in the child's efforts at interpreting the input which comes its way during acquisition. (1998: 169)

It should be noted, however, that authenticity of materials does not lie only in the intrinsic authenticity of texts, but also, and more according to Widdowson, in the use speakers and readers make of them:

It is probably better to consider authenticity not as a quality residing in instances of language but as a quality which is bestowed upon them, created by the response of the receiver. Authenticity in this view is a function of the interaction between the reader/hearer and the text which incorporates the intentions of the writer/speaker ... Authenticity has to do with appropriate response. (1979:166)

Textbook texts should then be presented in a way to prompt the relevant responses according to the cultures of the target language. For instance, a weather forecast bulletin, taken from British television, is not authentic classroom material yet until the learners are introduced to the importance of such information about the weather to English people, i.e. until the text is authenticated within the culture where it has been produced. In other words, both the linguistic and cultural contexts have to be made available to the pupils in the process of foreign language learning.

To help learners to be aware of the context that shapes the social meaning of the studied structures contained in the text, the textbook activities have to be made in such a way to exploit their prolific meaning potential, by varying, for the same activity, the context parameters. Kramsch speaks of "*expanding the context ... not just to introduce diversity in an otherwise monotonous lesson; they are to provide food for thought.*" (2001: 94) For this purpose, she suggests tasks such as changing the spatial and temporal setting for learner A telling a story to Learner B. Sitting face-to-face or back-to-back, in a simulated party or in a faked job interview will bring the two interlocutors to vary, for example, "*the equation of silence and talk, the amount of redundancy, the order in which information is transmitted.*" (ibid.: 95) This works also for the changing of topics, participants, purposes, etc.

Authenticity through contextualisation is certainly one way of teaching structures, functions and cultural insights in a far more effective methodology than mechanical out-of-context drillings that, though they reinforce structures, they still curb the learners' potential for creativity.

Language and Ideology

The other rationale behind this paper is that this textbook presents the English language, as a referential system, in the form of a universal and neutral medium devoid of any particular embedded cultural/ideological substance.⁹ The texts used in *Spotlight on English* sustain the fallacious idea that language is a mere code, in the semiotic sense of the word, that describes a reality and expresses thoughts, and which can be substituted by any other code, i.e. by any other language, through translation, to refer to the same reality and produce the same thoughts and effects.

There are many instances, from the book, that illustrate this statement. In an effort to present English, not as a culturally and ideologically-loaded medium, but as a mere lingua franca, an *un-cultured* language, the authors use, for example, Algerian referents such as Algerian football teams and conversations between Algerians speaking in English. The culture section (entitled 'Learn about Culture') is devoted to the discovery of world culture (flags of English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries, world monuments, greeting in different languages, sports in the world, Chinese horoscope, etc.), instead of the cultures that relate to the English language. The influence of *Look Ahead* is also perceptible here. However, it must be noted that *Look Ahead* was conceived for a multicultural class, displaying topics that refer to different countries so as to allow learners to find some

⁹ This approach to English language teaching may well be influenced by the educational philosophy and policy that prevail in Algeria, most particularly through a foreign language policy, and by the ideological position of the official language of the country, Arabic. The functional and/or business orientation of English language teaching is seldom free from political agendas that underlie political power (for the relation between language and power, see Fairclough 2001).

elements of identification, as an affective incentive. In the case of *Spotlight on English*, the class is Algerian and learners have relatively the same reference system. It is probably interesting and helpful to keep Algerian referents, for comparative and identification purposes, but the reasons for including the other countries, such as China and Lebanon are quite blurred.

Yet, one ideological element is kept. The use of Arabic-Islamic names (Sami, Zakia, etc.) to refer to people coming from Arab countries, and Christian names (Sally, Steve, etc.) for people from western countries sustains the ideological statement that the West is Christian and Arab countries are Muslim, that native speakers of English are westerners and all Arabs are not. However, the reality of these countries is far from being as clear-cut and simple as the book tends to suggest.

English, like all other language is more than that. Actually, language is not only the product of a social context, but also a producer of context. According to Kramsch, foreign language structures bring their user to produce thoughts that his/her native language could not make available, a phenomenon that Britton et al. described as "*shaping at the utterance*" (Kramsch 2001: 104). This is the very difficulty of translation which is at times unable to express in the target language the *silential dimension* (Becker 1985) of the original language. Ortega illustrates this point writing:

Each language represents a different equation between manifestations and silences. Each people leaves some things unsaid in order to be able to say others... Hence the immense difficulty of translation: translation is a matter of saying in a language precisely what that language

tends to pass over in silence. (Quoted in Becker 1985: 25)

What differs from one language to another, besides the lexis, grammar and sound system, is the culture. There is probably no longer any disagreement among scholars over the question of the strong link between language and culture, and it has certainly become a truism to say that teaching language is teaching culture. Learning a foreign language is congruent to learning the beliefs, values, assumptions of the people who speak that language. As Kramsch put it: "*If, however, language is seen as social practice, culture becomes the very core of language teaching.*" (2001: 8) Byram speaks of what he labels Cultural Studies – "*any information, knowledge or attitudes about the foreign culture*" (1989: 3) – as part and parcel of foreign language teaching, taught and learned both explicitly and implicitly.

However, it is the ideological dimension of language which is somehow not made conspicuous enough. Malinowski coined the term *context of culture* to refer to that institutional and ideological knowledge shared by the members of a speech community and which helps them interpret discourse (Kramsch 2001: 42).

It is the approach to language as discourse, i.e. as a form of social practice, that can reveal its real essence. This approach is what Fairclough (2001) calls *Critical Language Study*, or CLS. This approach, as compared to the other approaches such as linguistics, pragmatics or sociolinguistics,¹⁰ is critical

¹⁰ Critical language study has been put forward by N. Fairclough (2001) first as a complement to these approaches to language which ignore the relationship between language, power and ideology. While linguistics focused on *langue*, a standard language, pragmatics on the functional aspect of language through speech acts, and sociolinguistics on language as determined by social determinants, critical language study shows that the

inasmuch as it attempts to reveal the hidden (an act done voluntarily or not) connections between language and ideology, and how ideology determines social relations and language use.

Language as Discourse

For a clear understanding of this approach, we need to clarify what is meant by discourse. Discourse is understood here in Widdowson's sense of "*language in use, for communication*" (Cook 2000: 6), i.e. a social practice that has social effects and that is greatly affected by other social practices, norms, conventions and values. This is quite different from Saussure's approach to language through his concepts of *langue* (taken as prior and homogeneous knowledge of the language) and mainly *parole* (individually-determined language use). Ethnography of communication (since Hyme's and later Saville-Troike's writings) and pragmatics (with Halliday's theory of language use) have today shown that language and language use are inseparable, that the theoretical rules of the same language vary according to the speech community (notably with B. Kachru's theory of *Nativised English*), and that language use is more socially than individually shaped.

Thus, language is acquired and/or learned and practised as discourse, that is as a process of social interaction that involves two socially and culturally-determined sub-processes of production and interpretation between two or more social

standard language is just a variety that happened to be privileged for reasons of power, that speech acts are less individually-determined than a socially-prescribed, that social variables that determine language use are not static and very much permeated by dominant ideologies. Critical language study is also an alternative direction to language study that implies epistemological reconsideration. For Fairclough, linguistics should not have any privileged status in language study, while other functionalist disciplines, such as pragmatics or discourse analysis, relegated to the position of sub-disciplines (ibid.: 10-11).

beings, addresser/communicator and addressee/interpreter (Charaudeau 1983), in oral or written forms, whose relationships are also prescribed and organised by social and cultural norms and conventions.

Language as discourse implies that language and society are dialectically intertwined, i.e. language use is a social phenomenon that is determined by "*other non-linguistic parts of society*" (Fairclough 2001: 19). Fairclough expresses this idea by advancing that "*whenever people speak or listen or write or read, they do so in ways which are determined socially and have social effects.*" (ibid.: 19). As a form of social practice, language is the vehicle of the society's view of the world, its values as well as its dominant ideology.

Ideological Base

Defined as the projection of the dominant group's practices as *common sense*, ideology allows the wrapping of certain ideas and practices, peculiar to a specific group, in a universal package, and their diffusion in the society through language (Foucault 1971; Bourdieu 1992). Language is then ideological in the sense that a group's assumptions, representations and stereotypes are embedded in the language they use, or as Barthes put it, all operations of language are deformations (Said 1995: 273). As such, language is never innocent or universal. It is always suspicious, particular, and extremely marked with the culture and ideology within which it is constructed and construed.

I am not suggesting here that these characteristics of language be explained explicitly to this category of learners. The point I am making is that the social situations within which the foreign language is used, that is the contexts of the texts used for grammatical and functional purposes have to be made explicit, by clearly establishing the social situation of the

communicative event in the text. I also think that the cultural section in *Spotlight on English* should be ethnographically-oriented, i.e. re-targeted towards the retrieval of the particular cultures the English language feeds and feeds on. Saville-Troike rightly observes that

There is no doubt, however, that there is a correlation between the form and content of a language and the beliefs, values, and needs present in the culture of its speakers. The vocabulary of a language provides us with a catalogue of things considered important to the society, an index to the way speakers categorize experience, and often a record of past contacts and cultural borrowings; the grammar may reveal the way time is segmented and organised, beliefs about animacy and the relative power of beings, and salient social categories in the culture. (2003: 28)

These cultures, in the case of the English language, are not to be exclusively American or British, but should include the other cultures of the people who have *nativised* English and made it theirs through daily and expert use. This is what Kachru labels *world Englishes*, about which he writes

It is imperative that teachers and students be aware of the sort of presence that English has in the world today, in order to keep the divergences among the extant varieties in a reasonable context. That is, that there are differences does not automatically imply that someone is wrong. The concept of a monolithic English as the exponent of culture and communication in all-English-using countries has been a convenient working fiction that is now becoming harder and harder to maintain. (2001: 76-77)

The United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand are but the *old-variety English-using countries*, or what Kachru calls the *Inner Circle* (ibid.: 77). These countries and their cultures cannot claim monopoly over English that is also spoken and written with the same expertise in other countries such as India, Pakistan and Nigeria, that is in the *Outer Circle* (ibid.: 78). Thus, teaching English as a foreign language in those countries where it is used for more specific purposes, the *Expanding Circle* (ibid.: 78) such as Algeria, may well be teaching the Indian or Nigerian varieties of English and their cultures, using their writers and the texts they produced.

The goal of ELT is not to enable learners to exchange words in a foreign language but actually produce their own structures and meanings and understand the other's. It is also to discover the Other and oneself, with the contradictions that each one displays. Trying to protect the children from foreign cultures and ideologies is distorting the foreign languages that they learn, for language and society are so intertwined to the point that you cannot teach one without the other. And any attempt to separate the two has more to do with duping than teaching. If ELT is to be a process of administering a substance to the learner, the substance would rather be energising than soporific.

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