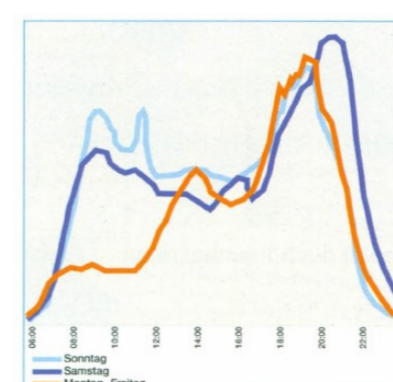


Visuals for teaching about German speaking countries in German language textbooks

Karolína Pešková



Visuals can be considered cultural products which present a perspective of the target culture. However, there are some general features which visuals should possess to make learning from textbooks effective. Visuals can be characterized by different types, they can present various sociocultural contents and possess different functions. Based on 2 own investigations, the poster aims to provide a description of selected features of visuals for teaching about German speaking countries in German as a foreign language textbooks used in Czech lower secondary schools.

Theoretical framework

Selected theoretical and empirical findings and principles of teaching culture which were reflected in the presented research:

- (1) Textbooks should contain various types of visuals so that visuals suit different types of pupils and activate different thinking operations of pupils (Einsiedler & Martschinke, 1997)
- (2) Teaching culture should not just include providing factual knowledge about the target culture (geographical, historical etc.). It should also include providing knowledge about everyday life and knowledge for developing awareness of pupils own and foreign culture and for building values and attitudes (ABCD-Thesen, 1990; Byram, 1993).
- (3) German language textbooks should include contents presenting all German speaking countries (ABCD-Thesen, 1990).
- (4) Visuals should correspond with text. The most facilitative of prose learning are visuals in organisation, interpretation and transformation function (Carney & Levin, 2002).
- (5) Visuals are important in the process of learning a foreign language mainly in enhancing, activation and review function.

Investigation no. 1

Research aim

To describe what *types*, *functions* and *contents* of visuals for teaching about German speaking countries are to be identified in German language textbooks used in Czech lower secondary schools.

Research sample

- 4 German language textbooks used in Czech lower secondary schools:
1. Fišarová, O., & Zbranková, M. (2007). *Němčina A1. Deutsch mit Max – díl 2. Učebnice pro základní školy a víceletá gymnázia*. Plzeň: Fraus. (Czech publisher)
 2. Funk, H. et al. (2003). *Geni@I - Němčina jako druhý cizí jazyk. Kursbuch A2*. Berlin, München: Langenscheidt. (German publisher)
 3. Jankásková, M. et al. (2010). *Macht mit! : učebnice němčiny pro základní školy a víceletá gymnázia, druhý cizí jazyk. 2. díl*. Praha: Polyglot. (Czech publisher)
 4. Kopp, G., Büttner, S., & Albert, J. (2005). *Planet 2: Deutsch für Jugendliche*. Kursbuch. Ismaning: Hueber Verlag. (German publisher)

Method

a quantitative analysis based on the application of the system of categories as a research instrument

system of categories based on theoretical works of Ballstaedt (1997), Weidenmann (1991), Byram (1993), Carney and Levin (2002), Biechele (1996) and Pýchová (1990), concerning types, contents and functions of visuals:

Category	Type
1. realistic	T1.1 photograph
	T1.2 photograph of an authentic object
	T1.3 reproduction of an art work
2. analogous	T2.1 drawing
	T2.2 comics
	T2.3 sketch
3. logical	T3.1 chart and diagram
	T3.2 table
4. symbolic	T4.1 pictogram
	T4.2 symbol and logo
5. cartographic	T5.1 map
	T5.2 plan
6. combined	

Figure 1: Types of visuals

Category	Type
1. sociocultural aspect	O1.1 national geography
	O1.2 national history
	O1.3 state and politics
	O1.4 culture and science
	O1.5 daily life
	O1.6 social interaction
	O1.7 national and social identity
2. geographical aspect	O2.1 Germany
	O2.2 Austria
	O2.3 Switzerland
	O2.4 Luxembourg, Liechtenstein
	O2.5 more German speaking countries
	O2.6 undefined

Figure 2: Contents of visuals

Category	Type
1. in relation to text	F1.1 decoration
	F1.2 representation
	F1.3 organization
	F1.4 interpretation
	F1.5 transformation
	F1.6 none
2. in relation to the process of learning	F2.1 engaging
	F2.2 construction
	F2.3 activation
	F2.4 review
3. in relation to content	F3.1 communication and socialization
	F3.2 orientation and regulation
	F3.3 promotion
	F3.4 intercultural
	F3.5 stereotyping
	F3.6 factual

Figure 3: Functions of visuals

Investigation no. 2

Research aim

To investigate how teachers evaluate visuals for teaching about German speaking countries in the textbook they use (concerning *types*, *contents* and *functions* of visuals).

Research sample

6 German language teachers teaching at Czech lower secondary schools, evaluating the textbook *Deutsch mit Max* (the most frequently used in Czech lower secondary schools)

Method

a qualitative analysis based on the data of semistructural interviews

Results

Teachers pointed out some aspects of visuals they require in their textbook:

- **types:** more photographs and maps (mainly in geographical context)
- **contents:** more topics which can appeal pupils (everyday topics, travel, sport etc.), more topics related to Austria
- **functions:** more visuals in the representation function (more texts which can be used in combination with visuals for a pre-reading task, communicative activities etc.)

Recommendations for the textbook design

1. in order to develop different ways of pupils thinking there should be *more differentiated types* of visuals (not only realistic, also logical and cartographic visuals) in the German language textbooks,
2. in order to intensify the process of learning, visuals should be accompanied by *texts which correspond* with the content of the visuals,
3. due to the dominant occurrence of visuals depicting Germany, there should be more visuals relating to *other German speaking countries* (e.g. Austria) in the textbooks.

Results

Total number of visuals for teaching about German speaking countries in the sample: 585

common features of the analysed textbooks:

- **types:** similar distribution (statistically verified: $\chi^2 = 13,11$; $p = 0,13$) high amount of realistic visuals (70-80 %), low amount of logical and cartographic visuals (0-5 %)
- **contents (sociocultural aspect):** high amount of visuals related to daily life (30-50 %), low amount of visuals related to politics and history (0-3 %)
- **contents (geographical aspect):** high amount of undefined contents (45-80 %)
- **functions:** low amount of functions supporting prose-learning (F1.3, F1.4, F1.5; 0-5 %)

differences between the textbooks coming from Czech and German publishers:

- **contents (geographical aspect):** German textbooks are more Germany-centred
- **functions:** more activities with visuals in German textbooks - higher amount of the activation function (by 15 % and 40 %)

References

- ABCD-Thesen zur Rolle der Landeskunde im Deutschunterricht. (1990). *Fremdsprache Deutsch*, 3, 60–61.
- Ballstaedt, S. P. (1997). *Wissenvermittlung. Die Gestaltung von Lernmaterial*. Weinheim: Beltz Psychologie Verlags Union.
- Biechele, B. (1996). Bilder als Kommunikate und Lernmedien im Fremdsprachenunterricht/ DaF. *Informationen Deutsch als Fremdsprache (Info DaF)*, 23(6), 746–757.
- Byram, M. (1993). *Germany. Its Representation in Textbooks for Teaching German in Great Britain*. Frankfurt a.M.: Diesterweg.
- Carney, R. N., Levin, J. R. (2002). Pictorial Illustrations Still Improve Students Learning from Text. *Educational Psychology Review*, 14(1), 5–26.
- Einsiedler, W., & Martschinke, S. (1997). *Elaboriertheit und Strukturiertheit in Schulbuchillustrationen des Grundschulunterrichts*. Nürnberg: Institut für Grundschulforschung der Universität Erlangen – Nürnberg.
- Pýchová, I. (1990). *K funkci vizuální v rozvoji osobnosti žáka*. *Pedagogika*, 40(6), 669–684.
- Weidenmann, B. (1991). *Lernen mit Bildmedien. Psychologische und didaktische Grundlagen*. Weinheim (u.a.): Beltz.



Contact
Karolína Pešková
Masaryk University Brno
Faculty of Education
Poříčí 7, Brno 602 00
E-mail: peskova@ped.muni.cz

The poster was prepared for the ECER 2012 with the support of the scholarship fund of PdF MU and the project SKOLA 2012.