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TOURISM DISCOURSE IN LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS: A CRITICAL APPROACH

Within the framework of critical pedagogy theory and using critical discourse analysis, the purpose of this article is to examine how tourism discourse is constructed and what ideological forces are manifested in foreign language textbooks. To that end, six series of Catalan language textbooks are critically examined through an analysis based on main themes, genres and perspectives. Findings indicate the relevance of tourism discourse in textbooks, which occurs mainly through autobiographical narratives, promotional texts and commercial-oriented genres. Further, this paper argues that four main perspectives are embedded in tourism discourse in the textbooks examined: (a) consumerism; (b) superficial cosmopolitanism; (c) a dominant rationality related to the neoliberal capitalist economy; and (d) culture as a commodity. The article ends with a call to language teaching professionals to be more aware of the ideological underpinning of textbooks.

Key words: language textbooks, tourism, critical discourse analysis, critical pedagogy, material development, neoliberalism, consumerism, commodification, Catalan language.

1. Introduction

Foreign language textbooks play an important role in language teaching and the learning process. They are usually regarded as "a guide for a teacher, a memory aid for the pupils, a permanent record or measure of what has been learnt" (Awasthi 2006: 1). Moreover, they seem to "have a magical hold on both teachers and learners most of whom just can not do without them" (Kumaravadivelu 2012: 21). Language textbooks have been examined within an area of study called 'material development', which covers a wide range of issues such as a textbook's methodological approaches, content, implementation, evaluation and adaptation (Tomlinson 2012). This article aims to contribute to the study of language textbooks, drawing on the theory of critical pedagogy (Freire 1970), which locates learning within a particular political, historical and economic context. Its aim is to reveal the implications of power in the pedagogical

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process and to transform "the means and ends of learning, in order to construct more egalitarian, equitable, and ethical educational environments" (Canagarajah 2005: 932).

According to critical pedagogy, the textbook (as any other teaching material) is more than just a pedagogical tool that includes explanations and activities to teach a given subject (Apple 1979). Far from being a neutral or objective artifact, the textbook provides particular knowledge and values that are in line with the interests of the political, economic and social elites (Apple & Christian Smith, 1991). The textbook is thus a potent means to spread the ideas that the ruling classes of each historical period want to transmit to the population and perpetuate within a particular community. In this vein, critical pedagogy studies agree that textbooks embody particular ideologies and present an officially sanctioned knowledge (Luke 1988; De Castell, Luke & Luke 1989; Apple & Christian-Smith 1991).

In order to develop the content analysis of textbooks, I draw on the general framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) proposed by Fairclough (1989, 2003, 2012). CDA is an interdisciplinary discipline designed to study the ways in which power, inequality and ideology are manifested, reproduced and resisted in discourse. Fairclough (2012: 453) understands that discourse designates "particular ways of representing particular aspects of social life". Fairclough's approach to discourse analysis is based on the idea that "language is an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life" (Fairclough 2003: 2). As such, the study of discourse has to take into account the larger historical, political and social contexts in which the language is used. According to Luke (2002: 100), CDA aims to link the "micropolitics of everyday texts and macropolitical landscape of ideological and power relations, capital exchange, and material historical conditions".

Due to its potential to understand the power mechanisms in society at large, CDA is a methodological approach that has been widely used in critical content analysis of language textbooks (e.g. Bori & Petanović 2017; Liu 2005; Shardakova & Pavlenko 2004; Taki 2008). Although language textbook studies draw upon a wide range of CDA approaches, they all have the same interest in challenging the status quo and examining how dominant ideologies are reproduced in textbooks. This statement is fully in accordance with the theoretical assumption of critical pedagogy studies referring to textbooks noted above.

1.1. Critical research on language textbooks

Critical studies into language textbooks have been mainly based on politics of recognition and identity politics (Bori 2018). According to Fraser (2003), there are two ways of critical approaches to social injustices: the redistribution and the recognition paradigm. The recognition paradigm mainly treats the social processes as 'cultural' and attempts to respond to social inequality by positively valorizing and recognizing marginalized groups. As a consequence, this approach addresses questions of gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity without placing them in relation to the wider socio-economic context. The recognition paradigm has been often used in language textbook analysis since the 1970s. On the other hand, the redistribution paradigm, which emphasizes the economic structures of the society and how the changes of the economic order help overcome social injustices, has never had a major importance in the field of applied linguistics. It only gained momentum after the 2008 economic crises and the publication of *Neoliberalism and Applied Linguistics* (Block, Gray & Holborrow 2012). Recent studies by Gray (2010), Babaii & Sheikhi (2017), Bori (2018) and Xiong & Yuan (2018), among others, stress the importance of the politico-economic analysis of language textbooks. Their work points to neoliberal capitalist practices such as consumerism, individualism and entrepreneurship as becoming naturalized and promoted by language textbooks.

1.2. Tourism discourse

This article aims to shed new light on critical language textbook analysis by examining how tourism discourse is constructed and what ideological forces are manifested in language textbooks. I follow Pappen (2005: 79) in defining tourism discourse as "a set of expressions, words and behaviour as well as particular touristic structures and activities that describe a place and its inhabitants". As tourism has become one of the most important globalized industries in the 21st century, an increasing number of critical studies turn their attention to situate tourism discourse within the context of neoliberal globalization. One of the salient interests of these studies has been the increasing commodification of language (Heller, Pujolar & Duchêne 2014), places (Urry 1995) and nature (Duffy 2015) in tourism discourse.

Regarding language textbooks, travel and tourism have always been among the most popular and recurring themes. As Gray (2002: 159) asserts, the topics related to travel have been declared "safe topics" by global language textbooks publishers, which also accounts for the reason why they appear with such frequency. A topic is

considered 'safe' when it is believed that it does not offend the sensibility of learners from different backgrounds. The characters in English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks have been described by Risager (1991) as young, middle-class individuals who are often tourists or visitors to urban centers. In line with Gray's (2002) affirmation mentioned above, a more recent study from Kramsch & Vinall (2015) found that current language textbooks have an increasingly tourist character, avoiding any political or historical confrontation. Moreover, according to these two authors, the tourism discourse found in textbooks is not just utilitarian discourse of communicative language teaching in general but a predominant discourse that runs a risk of transforming itself into an "instrumental, disengaged skill to get things done and to get others to do things" (Kramsch & Vinall 2015: 21).

In the following section, I present the research framework of the study. Then I move to the results of the analysis. First, I present the main themes in language textbooks. Later, the textual genres and the main perspectives in which the tourism discourse occurs in the corpus are discussed. Finally, conclusions and implications of the study for language teaching professionals are presented.

2. Research Framework
2.1. Methodology

In this study, following a CDA approach and with the aim to examine the discourse of tourism in the content of language textbooks, I distinguish between three levels of analysis: themes, genres, and perspectives (Fairclough 2003).

First, I identify the main themes that appear in language textbooks, that is "the main parts of the world (including areas of social life) which are represented" (Fairclough 2003: 129). I use the classification of 14 themes listed in the *Common European Framework of Reference* (CEFR) of the Council of Europe (2001) presented in more detail in *Threshold Level 1990* (Van Ek & Trim 1991): personal identification; house and home, environment; daily life; free time, entertainment; travel; relations with other people; health and body care; education; shopping; food and drink; services; places; language; weather. I consider this classification to be suitable for the purpose of the research since all the textbooks from my corpus claim that they follow the CEFR. However, I decided to add a 15th category to this classification which specifically addresses the world of work because this topic is one of the recurrent ones in current foreign language textbooks (Bori & Petanović 2016; Gray 2010). I call this 15th category 'trade, profession, occupation' – the same name used to refer to this

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topic in the classification presented in the first version of *Threshold Level* (Van Ek 1975).

The second level of my discourse-analytical approach consists in identifying the main textual genres in which tourism discourse occurs in textbooks. Thurlow & Jaworski (2003: 582) define genre as a kind of text type "characterized in term of: (a) its central purpose, (b) its prototypical content and form, and (c) its being conventionally recognised and labelled as such by the discourse community of which it is a part". Choosing a particular set of genres does not mean simply placing discourses in ordered and shaped texts. As Briggs & Bauman (2009: 224) explain following Bakhtin (1986), it also means transmitting certain "ideologically mediated connections with social groups and 'spheres of human activity' in historical perspective". I use the classification proposal of discursive genres in the language of tourism by Calvi (2010), but I adapted it in order to be operational and effective to classify the textual genres of large texts where tourism discourse occurs in textbooks. Similarly to Littlejohn (1992: 43), I consider a large text as one with more than 50 words. Texts with fewer words were disregarded because the information was not sufficient for analysis.

The third level of analysis consists of identifying the perspectives in which the tourism discourse is constructed in the most frequent textual genres in language textbooks. By perspectives, I understand the angle or point of view from which discourses are represented (Fairclough 2003: 129). As in a recent study in which I critically examine the content of language textbooks (Bori 2018), I take into consideration the voices of the authors, the comments the characters make, the experiences and results they talk about, the activities given by the textbook and the visual material that accompanies the texts.

The economic, political and social transformations in capitalist societies in the last decades have brought changes in the conception of contemporary tourism. On the one hand, the advance of transportation and communication technologies, together with the enrichment of Western capitalist countries means that long-distance travel has become routine for many people from these countries and also for the economic elites from poor and developing countries (Hall 2005). On the other hand, tourism is not concentrated on a single time of year and inevitable place (like summer holidays in tourist resorts) but occurs year-round and in many different places (Franklin 2003). These transformations of tourism are related to the liberalization of markets and the growing importance of consumerism, marketization and values like individualism,

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personal freedom and authenticity. Through a detailed page-by-page scrutiny of verbal and visual language related to tourism and travel, I identify four main perspectives that have been explained by other critical authors in which tourism discourse appears in the language textbooks of my corpus:

a) *Consumerism*: Sklair (2002) developed the concept of the 'culture-ideology of consumerism' to refer to the spread of consumerism in all spheres of life in the era of capitalist globalization. Its aim is "to persuade people to consume above their 'biological needs' in order to perpetuate the accumulation of capital for private profit" (Sklair 1998: 3). In tourism, this ideological project is associated, for example, with global readiness through consumption, which consists of knowing what to buy and in which situation it can be used, demonstrating "a cosmopolitan competence in knowing how to consume the right commodities, places or cultures in the right way" (Molz 2006: 9).

b) *Superficial cosmopolitanism*: According to Bauman (1996: 29), contemporary travelers like to submerge themselves into unknown contexts but at the same time want to maintain a certain distance and to have the opportunity to get out of these contexts whenever they wish. As a result, these privileged tourists can "get close to the Other, but not too close or too involved" (Molz 2011: 39). Superficial cosmopolitanism would be the opposite of another kind of attitude in traveling that attempts to engage with the people, the cultures, the history and the places that are visited. Related to superficial cosmopolitanism, Hannerz (1992) developed the 'home plus' metaphor in which the tourist wants the experience of an exotic place but also to have almost everything be the same as at home.

c) *Neoliberal rationality*: According to Dardot & Laval (2013), neoliberalism should be regarded as the rationality of contemporary capitalism that shapes people's behavior in western societies and beyond. This new rationality, based on competition and entrepreneurship, constructs a certain kind of subjectivity that embodies ideas such as individualism, freedom, self-responsibility, personal development and fulfillment. These neoliberal features can be found in different forms of alternative tourism such as adventure sports (Fletcher 2008), volunteer tourism (Butcher & Smith 2010) and backpacking (O'Reilly 2006), despite all the contradictions for the people who engage in them. In this sense, Fletcher (2008: 323)

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contends that "although athletes' discourse often suggests that they engage in risk sports to resist or escape mainstream social values, their actual practice embodies many of the very values that they claim to reject".

d) *Culture as commodity*: Another consequence of the spread of neoliberalism in recent decades is that tourist destinations and their cultures, natural environments and urban settings, people, traditions and customs are transformed into something that can be bought and sold as an article of commerce (Heller, Jaworski & Thurlow 2014; Urry 1995). They are advertised, sold and consumed like every other commodity.

2.2. Corpus

This paper is based on the analysis of six series of textbooks for learning Catalan as a second/foreign language. The focus on Catalan language textbooks of this study aims to enrich the critical research on language teaching materials going beyond the traditional focus on ELT textbooks. I decided to focus on textbooks for adult beginners because they are the most common Catalan as a second/foreign language target group. Two criteria guided the textbook selection. I chose textbooks that (a) are recent (published in the last decade, between 2008 and 2018), and (b) present general Catalan (I excluded materials for specific purposes or addressed to specific target groups).

The corpus includes the following books: *Curs de català bàsic B1, B2, B3* (CNLB 2008a, 2008b, 2011); *Veus 1, 2, 3* (Mas & Vilagrassa 2009a, 2009b, 2010); *Nou Nivell Bàsic 1, 2, 3* (Guerrero, Mercadal, Roig & Rovira 2010a, 2010b, 2010c) and *Nou Nivell Elemental 1, 2, 3* (Anguera, Roig, Tomàs & Verdugo 2010a, 2010b, 2010c); *Català Bàsic (*Esteban 2012) and *Català Elemental* (Campoy, Esteban & Sagrera 2011); *Fil per randa Bàsic* (Vilà & Homs 2013a) and *Fil per randa Elemental* (Vilà & Homs 2013b); *Passos 1* (Roig, Padrós & Camps 2017) and *Passos 2* (Roig & Daranas 2017). The textbooks are addressed mostly to immigrants living in Catalonia, although some of them are also used in some of the more than 100 centers teaching Catalan abroad.

3. Textbooks Analysis

In what follows, first a descriptive view is provided about the main themes in Catalan language textbooks in order to ascertain the importance of tourism discourse in the corpus. Then, the textual genres in which tourism discourse occurs are discussed. Finally, adopting a qualitative perspective, several examples from textbooks

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are critically examined to uncover the main perspectives of textbooks about tourism discourse. All direct citations from the textbooks presented below have been translated from Catalan into English by the author.

3.1. Themes

The thematic area of 'travel', in which tourism discourse occurs, is the main topic in 26 out of 219 units, which means that around 12 per cent of the units is dedicated to travel, as can be seen in Table 1 below. 'Travel' is the second topic of those listed in Table 1 with more units, just after 'personal identification', which covers issues related to personal data, family, clothes, physical appearance, character, moods, likes and dislikes, and so on.

Table 1. Number of units in which Threshold Level/CEFR topics are addressed

Topics	Number of units	Percentage
personal identification	34	15.5
travel	26	11.9
relations with other people	25	11.4
house and home, environment	22	10
trade, profession, occupation	22	10
shopping	18	8.2
free time, entertainment	17	7.8
health and body care	16	7.3
food and drink	11	5
education	7	3.2
daily life	5	2.3
places	4	1.8
weather	2	0.9
services	1	0.5
language	1	0.5
Other	8	3.7
Total number of units	219	100

The units related to 'travel' emphasize practical issues of preparing oneself to go on a journey (accommodation, transport, medicines, tourist services, travel

documents) and holiday's experiences. They also include information about places to stay as tourists. All the textbooks include examples of travel both inside Catalonia and abroad. Textbooks present different forms of tourism, from organized tours to tourist resorts to exotic adventures to distant places, or various forms of alternative tourism.

As can be seen in Table 1, the majority of units address the topics suggested by the CEFR, following the *Threshold Level* list. However, it should be noted that individual units often feature more than one discourse. Actually, tourism discourse, in addition to being a major theme in all 26 units about 'travel', also occurs in other units. For example, in *Català Elemental* there is a whole unit dedicated to customer complaints after buying a product or a service, which I classified under the category 'shopping'. In this unit, tourism discourse occurs in a letter of complaint from a customer to a tourist agency that had organized a journey to Costa Rica through the commentaries about the travel program, accommodation and transportation (Campoy et al. 2011: 138). All in all, tourism discourse is one of the most frequently recurrent themes in the corpus. In a similar way, Gray (2002) noted that tourism related topics occur repeatedly in ELT textbooks. Hence, it is worthwhile to study tourism discourse in foreign language textbooks in detail, as I will do in the next two sections.

3.2. Genres

I recorded a total of 216 large texts in which tourism discourse occurs in Catalan textbooks, as can be seen in Table 2 below. The most frequent textual genre is the personal account narrated in the first person by the protagonists, who explain their tourist experience or what they think about a travel plan. Many personal accounts are devoted to the practical needs of a trip, such as the following commentary about an accommodation: "This hotel in Paris is fantastic — in the very center of the city, recently renovated and at a very affordable price. When I found it on the internet, I booked it immediately because it has an offer for retired people like me. The pity is that beds are a little hard" (CNLB 2011: 115). The personal account belongs to what Calvi (2010) calls 'informal' genres, produced by non-professionals. They emphasize the autobiographical dimension of the travel and the individual point of view, and do not intend to present a particularly objective description and do not have commercial purposes. The subjective view and the personal style also feature in the second most frequent textual genre – dialogue between friends or relatives about travel experiences or plans. The same features occur in other not as frequent textual genres - emails, postcards, letters to a friend, and travels blogs. Although these genres are not

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principally meant to promote or sell products, they very often serve as a means of expressing consumer practices. For example, a dialogue between a couple is about the reliability of the travel agency whose package they have just bought (Guerrero et al. 2010c: 60), and in another textbook a couple discusses how to save money for their next holiday by organizing the travel themselves (Vilà and Homs 2013b: 45).

Table 2. Textual genres of large texts in which tourism discourse occurs

Textual genre	Number of texts	Percentage (%)
personal account	61	28.2
dialogue between friends/relatives	32	14.8
tourist brochure	24	11.1
tourist guide	24	11.1
email to a friend	15	6.9
dialogue between agencies and customers	10	4.6
travel ads	10	4.6
postcard	9	4.2
magazine/newspaper article	8	3.7
expert advice	6	2.8
message between customers and agencies	4	1.9
travel blog	4	1.9
itinerary	2	0.9
message to a friend	2	0.9
quiz	2	0.9
interview	1	0.5
letter of complaint	1	0.5
letter to the family	1	0.5
Total of texts	216	100

On the other hand, as can be seen in Table 2, textbooks feature many textual genres normally created by tourist industry professionals, such as tourist brochures, tourist guides, and travel ads, which contain linguistic elements aimed at persuasion. The main purpose of tourist brochures is to persuade the readers to buy a tourist

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product. Using language similar to that of the advertisement industry, tourist brochures in Catalan textbooks mainly promote places to visit, touristic tours, accommodation and restaurants. Travel guides contain more detailed information about a place from an artistic or natural point of view, as well as practical information. The description of a place in travel guides also has the attractive and persuasive style of advertising, as can be seen in the following sentences: "Andorra stands out for its architectural heritage: Romanesque churches, bridges... There is no single country that has so many monuments in such a small space. They are places worth visiting" (Vilà & Homs 2013a: 122). In addition, the textbooks include 10 travel ads, a typical textual genre of the world of advertising, which aim to conquer the minds and hearts of the consumers to directly sell a tourist product. Other textual genres normally created by professionals that also feature in textbooks, but not as frequently, are newspaper/article magazines, expert advice about travel recommendations mainly by a governmental institution, itineraries (information about the stages of a trip) and magazine quizzes and interviews about traveling. Finally, tourism discourse also appears associated with genres dedicated to commercial transactions such as dialogues and messages between customers and agencies, or a letter of complaint to a travel company.

The selection of these particular genres, rather than other ones, is ideologically significant. It shows that the advertisement industry and economic rationality are colonizing more and more domains of the content of language textbooks, which earlier did not include promotional and commercial genres. On the other hand, it should be added that the textual genres presented in textbooks are those that students are likely to find in real life outside the classroom. This trend was also identified in contemporary ELT textbooks (Lähdesmäki 2009), and it is consistent with the aim of the communicative language teaching approach to present students with real-life and authentic situations. Despite this emphasis on authenticity, it should be noted that textbooks rarely include authentic texts, namely those texts that were originally not written for a classroom audience. Instead, texts are written by the textbooks' authors and they very much resemble those that can be found in everyday life contexts outside the classroom.

3.3. Perspectives

The main perspectives identified in discourse tourism in Catalan language textbooks are consumerism, superficial cosmopolitanism and neoliberal rationality,

which occur mainly in informal genres such as personal accounts, dialogues and emails between friends, and travel blogs. Meanwhile, promotional texts embody the perspective of culture as a commodity.

3.3.1. Consumerism

Consumerism is the most frequently presented perspective I identified in tourism discourse in Catalan textbooks. Personal accounts and dialogues between friends in language textbooks are replete with consumption practices related to travel. There are examples of purchasing tourist services, accommodation or transport tickets, and especially examples of products to pack before travel, such as clothes, footwear, bug repellent, sunscreen, guidebooks and sunglasses. Characters that travel in textbooks tend to adopt a consumer tourist role. For example, a story about a summer trip to the Caribbean islands is centered on the high prices of restaurants, the tours and renting deck chairs, while another person describes her travel to New York through the products consumed: shows, meals and drinks in nightclubs (CNLB 2011: 23). A typical example of the emphasis on consumption patterns in textbooks is the dialogue and the emails between two Catalan friends in which one of them receives advice to travel to India (Mas & Vilagrassa 2010: 16-17). The advice is mostly about products and services that should be consumed, such as vaccines and medicines, means of transport, clothes and guidebooks. Through such advice, we can also see that both characters have a fair amount of disposable income: "If I were you I would take a couple of credit cards in case you lose one, along with money in cash. When you arrive there, it's worth your while to rent a car with a driver". What these texts reveal is a form of travel where consumption, of both the utilitarian and the symbolic kind (Molz 2006), takes priority together with a lack of interest in the reality of the places and their culture and people, as will be discussed further in the next section.

3.3.2. Superficial cosmopolitanism

The perspective of superficial cosmopolitanism occurs in many personal accounts about trips. Characters in textbooks rarely engage with the cultures and people they visit, and their experiences about traveling are only related to their personal impressions or their own anecdotes. For example, a personal account about a trip to Australia in *Fil per Randa* is all about a "very bizarre experience" that the main character has with some friends (Vilà & Homs 2013b: 137). They drive many kilometers in the wrong direction and they do not notice the mistake until many hours

later when they come across another car driven by another absent-minded tourist who is also driving in the wrong direction.

These textbooks also present various examples in the form of a personal account of the 'home plus' metaphor developed by Hannerz (1992). This is the case of the travel blog of a Catalan cyclist, Xavi, and his experience in Mongolia after his bicycle breaks down in *Nou Nivell Elemental 2* (Anguera *et al.* 2010b: 38-9). At the beginning, he discovers that there are no regular buses to take him where he wants to go, so he has to hire a personal driver who does not arrive on time. When he finally gets into the minibus he is surprised with the lack of space: "we're on our way with two drivers sitting in front […], and twelve, yes, twelve people in the back". Xavi also informs us about the reaction of the Mongolians to this, from his perspective, a very unpleasant situation. In his words: "The Mongolian (students) bear up with incredible stoicism, a radio cassette playing Mongolian music and all of them singing together as if going on an excursion". As in the home plus metaphor, Xavi wants to enjoy the same commodities, the same way of life as he has at home, although he is in a very distant culture. On the other hand, the textbook does not provide any insight into how the Mongolians view this trip. Indeed, cultural comparisons in the textbooks analyzed are generally very rare, which can be interpreted as a missed opportunity to explore different views on the cultures and people presented. The activities related to Xavi's travel blog include putting paragraphs in the correct order and indicating time expressions in the text. The textbook also asks students to imagine an ending for Xavi's story, but there are not any questions that would encourage discussion about his points of view and attitude during his travels.

Although superficial cosmopolitanism is a dominant perspective in tourism discourse, two texts in *Veus* give a somewhat more critical and elaborate view of tourism today. One of these is a newspaper article by the Catalan writer Josep M. Espinàs who is critical about the way people travel today and the little interest they have in the places they are visiting (Mas & Vilagrassa 2010: 11). Another is an interview with an author of travel books. He talks about many of his travels with great passion and respect for all the places he has been (Mas & Vilagrassa 2010: 24-5).

3.3.3. Neoliberal rationality

Neoliberal traits such as such as individualism, freedom, self-responsibility, personal development and fulfillment can be found in texts dedicated to alternative tourism. One of the most frequently offered alternatives to mass tourism in textbooks

is trekking and adventure sports. In *Català Bàsic* (Esteban 2012) there are up to five personal accounts about climbing Catalan mountains. *Curs de català bàsic B2*, meanwhile, presents a survey with the following question: "Do you consider yourself an athlete?" (CNLB 2008b: 49). After that, there are various sports-related photos with an activity with questions like: "In your view, what is the worst and the best adventure sport?". Many of the values related to adventure sports – individualism, risk management, self-dependency, personal progress thanks to new challenges, good physical condition and resilience – are all congruent with the ideas that neoliberal rationality promotes for society, in spite of all the possible conflicts that this can create among many athletes (Fletcher 2008). In this sense, it is relevant to mention the courses of adventure sports organized by companies for its workers, with the aim to teach them to manage risk and the labor uncertainty in the world of work in neoliberal capitalism.

Another example of alternative tourism that embodies neoliberal rationality, despite the contradictions that their protagonists may feel, can be found in a personal account about a family who goes on an environment saving trip in *Català Bàsic* (Esteban 2012: 90). It consists of taking part in the cleaning of paths and springs in a Catalan mountain. This volunteer tourist proposal illustrates the increasing importance of individual responsibility in the era of neoliberalism, with the withdrawal of the states from community spheres of life (in this case, the conservation of a natural space).

Finally, personal accounts about backpacking around the world in textbooks are also in accordance, to a certain extent, with many principles of neoliberal rationality – the entrepreneurial and individualist spirit, freedom and personal enrichment, and the capacity for resistance against adversity (in this case, of landscapes and unknown cultures). *Passos* dedicates two pages to Kristina, a 60-year-old Swedish backpacker traveling around the world (Roig and Daranas 2017: 104-5). She explains that in China, for example, she had to cross a huge lake with a woman that was only using her feet to row the boat. In the 21st century, round-the-world backpacking journeys have become fashionable and are forming part of a certain Western middle-class lifestyle. This has become possible against the backdrop of the growing economies of the West (at least until the 2008 crisis) and the neoliberal style of work which has become more flexible (O'Reilly 2006). The cheapening of airplane tickets and the development of new technologies (especially the internet) has also made this kind of journey more accessible to increasingly wide sectors of the Western population. Many people taking these journeys, following the 1960s hippy philosophy, often think of

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themselves as anti-globalists (O'Reilly 2006). This last conception can be found in *Passos* in the account of a Catalan journalist who goes on a journey around the world (Roig and Daranas 2017: 102). He explains that he wants to arrive in Siberia before everything is covered with the sameness that globalization will ultimately bring. Unfortunately, here the textbook does not offer any reading comprehension activity to discuss, for example, the consequences of the neoliberal globalization process.

3.3.4. Culture as commodity

In Catalan textbooks, the perspective of culture as a commodity can be found especially in tourist promotional genres: brochures, guides, and ads. For example, in *Veus* there are several texts in the form of a tourist guide where exotic destinations are conceptualized as commodities, as in the following text about northern Brazil:

> This vast territory will allow us to discover a unique nature. Strange landscapes such as the Pantanal wetlands or the impressive Iguazu Falls, with more than two hundred and seventy waterfalls and with a vegetation and a fauna that are still unalterable. It is possible to sail the Amazon River up to Manaus, a lost city inside the jungle. In the impenetrable jungle, tribes still live that follow their traditional lifestyle (Mas & Vilagrassa 2010: 13).

The promotional character of this text can be seen in its pervasive tone and the use of spectacular and attractive adjectives to highlight the authenticity of the place: *unique* nature*, impressive* Iguazu Falls, *unalterable* vegetation and fauna, *impenetrable* jungle. The text not only commercializes the landscapes, but also the people who live there and maintain their traditional way of life. The text is accompanied by a paradisiacal picture of the place, a potential construct of a desired image of a destination to be consumed.

As might be expected, the perspective of culture as commodity is further accentuated in texts that resemble travel ads. In *Fil per randa*, for example, in a series of ads sentences such as the following ones appear: "Awaken your senses in China! An unforgettable experience that will allow you to experience a very different and rich culture. New sounds, new smells...!" (Vilà & Homs, 2013a: 123). After reading this text, the textbook asks students to take the role of an agent writing ads for titles such as "Swim with sharks in Australia".

4. Conclusion

The findings of this analysis show that tourism is one of the main discourses in Catalan language textbooks. This could be attributed to the importance of everyday situations in communicative language teaching and to the fact that the tourist industry produces the largest number of world travelers and is one of the biggest businesses in the world. Tourism discourse appears in Catalan language textbooks mainly through informal genres such as personal accounts and dialogues between friends where particular individuals explain their personal travel experiences. At the same time, textbooks appropriate the forms of promotional tourist genres (brochures, ads, guides) and commercial transactions such as in dialogues between agencies and customers. In that way, textbooks emphasize the most commercial part of the world of tourism. On the other hand, travel literature and philosophical or historical writings are conspicuous in their absence, despite their potential to encourage multiple interpretations and critical thinking among students. By choosing promotional and economic genres, textbooks present a typified reality into well marked text types which express an ideological, socio-political message. Textbooks therefore, even through a 'safe' topic such as tourism, transmit the conventions and ideals that embody particular ideologies — in this case, consumerism and the commodification of culture.

The analysis of the perspectives of tourism discourse reveals that consumption, both the utilitarian and symbolic kinds, takes priority over an interest in the reality of the places, the culture and the people that are visited. The destinations and cultures become commodities to be consumed as commercial products, and characters distance themselves from places they visit, adopting a perspective of superficial cosmopolitanism. In addition, I identified examples of several forms of alternative tourism, associated with values that are concomitant with the ideas that neoliberal rationality promotes for the whole of society, in which individual responsibility and personal challenge are foregrounded.

Textbooks present a tourism discourse free of social conflicts and problems, addressed to the middle and upper classes of the society, in which hedonism is the main reason why people travel. On the other hand, textbooks do not offer alternative perspectives to counter the main views embedded in tourism discourse. Activities to discuss the perspectives presented in order to develop critical thinking among students are also missing. All in all, language textbooks present a reality which resembles the images and texts that appear in ads and in lifestyle magazines.

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Evidently, this study is limited by its static nature. The real impact of the content of language textbooks can only be seen through an observation of the real use of textbooks by professors and students in the classroom. However, I consider that the critical analysis of language textbooks is still necessary because it reveals what the ideological forces embedded in textbooks are. This may be particularly useful for language teachers that can become aware that textbooks are not 'neutral' products. In that way, teachers may opt to include alternative knowledge in classrooms to that disseminated by textbooks and to challenge the main perspectives in textbooks by encouraging critical awareness, reflection and dialogue among students in the classroom.

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