Ideological views of reading in contemporary commercial French textbooks: A content analysis

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Abstract

Reading instructional practices in foreign language (FL) classrooms often involve asking students to read a text aloud, answer comprehension questions about its referential meanings, and exchange personal opinions about topics evoked in the text. Such practices hint at ideological views of FL reading as a skill and springboard for communication. In an effort to identify the locus of such beliefs and practices, this article reports on a descriptive content analysis of nine beginning and intermediate commercial French textbooks to investigate the way reading, and readers, are positioned. Drawing on theoretical foundations of social semiotics, multiliteracies, and derivatives of Bloom’s Taxonomy, the study addresses two questions: (a) What kinds of texts are included in beginning and intermediate French textbooks? and (b) What kinds of tasks are students called upon to engage in during reading instruction? Findings reveal ideological views of reading as a mostly linguistic, cognitively oriented exercise, and assumptions that less linguistically proficient readers are less cognitively mature. The article concludes by problematizing textbooks as constructed discourses that prevent paradigm change in education and proposes an expansion of an existing textbook reading sequence as an Open Education Resource that engages learners in a critical multimodal analysis of an authentic text and its adaptation.

Keywords: textbook analysis, foreign language reading, multiliteracies, discourse, OER


Introduction

This study emerges out of an accumulation of the authors’ experiences teaching novice and intermediate French as a foreign language (FL), through which we have made several patterned and persistent observations about reading practices. First, instructional techniques for reading often consist of asking students to take turns reading aloud then answering comprehension questions about referential meanings, a practice that has also been documented in second language reading scholarship (e.g., Stoller et al., 2013; Swaffar & Arens, 2005). Second, informal surveys of French FL students in which they have been asked to complete the open-ended sentences “Reading is…” and “Reading in French is…”, have typically yielded responses that reading is important, fun, fundamental, or interesting, and that reading in French is challenging and difficult, although easier than speaking. Third, in a recent classroom-based study of FL reading practices conducted by the first author and co-authors (manuscript in preparation), many students’ in-class conversations around a focal text primarily consisted of exchanging opinions about the topic evoked in the text, with far less attention to interpreting textual propositions, despite guided reading questions intended to orient students to textual meanings.

These experiences hint at ideological views of FL reading as a skill and as a springboard for oral conversations about cultural issues and beg the question of how exactly students have been socialized to
read in an FL. Recognizing that socialization into ways of reading may be occurring in many places, this study focuses on one potential source, textbooks, given that teachers are often strongly guided by textbooks (Guerrettaz & Johnston, 2013). As the Douglas Fir Group (2016), drawing on the research of Guerrettaz and Johnston (2013), attested:

> The type of materials used in formal learning contexts such as L2 classrooms have been shown to play a significant role in shaping students’ contexts of interaction and participation structures, demonstrating that they are not only a primary source of the design of curriculum, but also highly influential to the scope and types of instructional interactions that occur within that learning community. (p. 29)

Put another way, textbooks operate as a sort of ideological method imposed on students.

As part of a broader research agenda examining reading practices of novice and intermediate French FL learners, we analyzed nine beginning and intermediate French textbooks to investigate ideological views of reading represented across these materials. Our inquiry was guided by the following research questions:

1. What kinds of texts are included in beginning and intermediate French textbooks?
2. What kinds of tasks are students called upon to engage in during reading instruction?

**Background and Literature Review**

**Conceptual Background**

We define *texts* as material artifacts that emerge from an intentioned assemblage of semiotic resources, whether linguistic, visual, spatial, audio, or gestural, and reflect and constitute culture. Informed by social semiotic theory (Halliday, 1978; Kress, 2010), texts are not only material representations, but are bound up in social processes of communication; they are created by human actors whose identities, cultures, and values underlie the choice of material resources. They are interpreted in turn through the identities, histories, and interests of the human actors who enter into dialogue with texts from their particular situated positions (Gee, 2001). As artifacts of culture (Swaffar, 1992), texts provide insight into cultural discourses, or particular ways of talking about cultural practices, values, and experiences. In Hallidayan terms, texts do not merely contain representations; they organize these representations to naturalize reality and enact social relations (Halliday, 1994).

We define *tasks* as invitations to learners, communicated through written language, to interact with a text; for example, reflect on its meanings, connect meanings to their own experiences, or engage in stylistic analysis. Given our focus on texts as cultural artifacts tied to social purposes, we oriented our first question around Kern’s (2000) framework of linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural dimensions of literacy, which treats literacy as more than mere cognitive practices. In addition, given the oft-cited bifurcation in collegiate FL programs (Byrnes, 2008; MLA, 2007; Paesani & Allen, 2020) where lower-level courses may not always afford students opportunities for critical thinking (Urlaub & Uelzmann, 2013), we oriented the second question around levels of cognitive complexity, drawing on Afflerbach, Cho & Kim’s (2015) hierarchical framework of reading tasks, which was modeled after Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002).

**Previous Research on Foreign Language Textbooks**

Textbooks are an important site of inquiry given their prominent role in the classroom. Despite representing only one among many different types of materials recruited in service of a curriculum, textbooks are often used as the de facto curriculum (Guerrettaz & Johnson, 2013) and are leaned on substantially by novice instructors. This heavy reliance on textbooks is problematic, however, given that they both reflect and construct discourses and represent “institutionalized opinions” (Meyer & Rosenblatt, 1987, p. 247, as cited in Canale, 2016, p. 226). Numerous studies have demonstrated repeatedly the ideological nature of textbooks when it comes to FL teaching, particularly for the way they promote standard language varieties
public texts were...al questions asking about students’ personal experiences or beliefs, or questions promoting... of knowledge and comprehension. Using a chi square analysis, Alnofal also...

books (70.06%) than higher...s have explored... capabilities. Nine out of ten reading strategies were present in the textbook; notably, such as...mst frequently represented question types by teachers (63.63%) and by textbooks (60.88%) was at the...evel of comprehension, thus tapping lower levels of Bloom’s taxonomy. Further...

level of comprehension, thus tapping lower levels of Bloom’s taxonomy. Further...

Examining Text Type Through Literacy Frameworks
Studies investigating text types in foreign language (FL) materials abound; however, research has tended to focus on examining readability factors and inherent progressions of complexity (e.g., Carcámo Morales, 2020). Although literacy-oriented frameworks have been used to examine instructor-created materials in local contexts (e.g., Menke & Paesani, 2019; Rowland et al., 2014), few researchers have explored...passages are generally already provided for students in textbooks, and second, classroom...question and no textbook questions were found to tap the higher level of synthesis. Teacher questions were more distributed across levels of cognitive complexity, but textbooks tended to be predominantly focused on the lower-order skills of knowledge and comprehension. Using a chi square analysis, Alnofal also compared the distribution of lower- and higher-level question types and found that lower-level question types were significantly more represented among teachers (87.42%) and textbooks (70.06%) than higher-level questions. In an investigation of the presence of critical reading strategies in EFL textbooks used in university-level German courses. Text types were categorized as...rational, for texts featuring fictitious textbook characters, public, for everyday texts such as newspaper articles or ads, private for everyday texts such as personal emails or postcards, and artistic, for cartoons, songs, and literary texts. Public texts were most frequently represented across all three textbooks. Despite the wide range of text types identified, Lange found notable gaps. Specifically, text types with which one might typically interact in everyday life (e.g., cover letter for a job interview, housing ad for finding accommodations) were absent from the textbooks analyzed. Taking a holistic approach to texts and tasks, Lange also conducted a pedagogical analysis of a sampling of chapters to investigate whether the reading tasks promoted literacy-oriented skills such as considering the complexities of language, form-meaning connections, genre, culture, and register. Among the most common types of tasks accompanying texts were comprehension questions about specific facts or details, questions asking about students’ personal experiences or beliefs, or questions promoting expanded discussion of a text’s content or topic. Very few tasks promoted language awareness or critical reflection on text designs.

Examining Cognitive Complexity of Reading Task Types
A predominant focus of studies investigating task types in textbooks is on levels of cognitive demand of questions around reading passages. Adli and Mahmoudi (2017) used Bloom’s taxonomy to analyze reading comprehension questions in four different English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks used in Iran. Focusing on textbooks intended for use in elementary and advanced classrooms, they noted the number of questions at each level in Blooms’ taxonomy and found that both elementary- and advanced-level textbooks contained lower- rather than higher-level question types. Alnofal (2018) analyzed the relative frequencies of question types and used Bloom’s taxonomy to examine two sources: a first-year English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbook and 15 classroom teachers using that textbook. The researcher found that the most frequently represented question types by teachers (63.63%) and by textbooks (60.88%) was at the level of comprehension, thus tapping lower levels of Bloom’s taxonomy. Furthermore, only one teacher question and no textbook questions were found to tap the higher level of synthesis. Teacher questions were more distributed across levels of cognitive complexity, but textbooks tended to be predominantly focused on the lower-order skills of knowledge and comprehension. Using a chi square analysis, Alnofal also compared the distribution of lower- and higher-level question types and found that lower-level question types were significantly more represented among teachers (87.42%) and textbooks (70.06%) than higher-level questions. In an investigation of the presence of critical reading strategies in EFL textbooks used in Jordan, Al-Husban (2019) conducted a content analysis of the reading passages and exercises of the ninth grade EFL textbook, Action Pack, looking for the presence of ten à priori critical reading strategies drawn from the literature. Nine out of ten reading strategies were present in the textbook; notably, generating questions was absent. Researchers attributed this absence to materials and teacher practices. First, questions about reading passages are generally already provided for students in textbooks, and second, classroom teachers typically ask most questions, reflecting an ideology of top-down teaching. Surface-level processes such as identifying facts versus opinions were most common, but more complex processes of comparing and contrasting information were least common. Overall, these studies reveal a tendency in textbooks to treat reading as an opportunity to hone bottom-up processes and skills of recall, or to use texts as...
springboards for conversation. Although important for fostering particular skills in a FL, a disproportionate focus on these lower-level skills construes learners as intellectual novices and misses opportunities for teaching reading as critical practice.

**Methodology**

The current study fits within the tradition of materials analysis, with a specific focus on analyzing textbooks. Different from materials evaluation, which examines materials in use (Graves, 2019; Weninger & Kiss, 2015), a materials analysis focuses primarily on content. This study consists of a descriptive content analysis (Patton, 2015) of textbook materials.

**Corpus and Data Preparation**

We determined our corpus by contacting the top three publishers of commercial FL textbooks (Cengage, McGraw Hill, Pearson) and inquiring which French textbooks were the most widely used at the beginning and intermediate levels of language learning. Their responses determined the nine samples in our corpus, among which are seven beginning and two intermediate textbooks (see Appendix A). Next, we examined each textbook and identified sections that involved interpreting visual and written texts. Textbook sections analyzed were either designated specifically for reading instruction or culture-learning. To prepare the data for coding, we created one Word document for each textbook on which we documented the text type with a brief description, and then transcribed all related reading questions.

**Overview of Analysis**

Word documents for each textbook were imported into NVivo 12 (QSR International, 2018) and coded according to two different units of analysis—texts and tasks—each through three different analyses. An overview of all six analyses, their theoretical frames, and relevant data sets is provided in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Overview of Analyses, Theoretical Frames, and Relevant Data Sets*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of Analysis</th>
<th>Focus of Analysis</th>
<th>Frameworks Used or Adapted in Coding and Theming the Data</th>
<th>Data Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Texts</td>
<td>Degrees of multimodality</td>
<td>Data driven analysis</td>
<td>All texts (n = 242)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Genres</td>
<td>Data driven analysis</td>
<td>All texts (n = 242)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Context of production (a.k.a degree of authenticity)</td>
<td>Simonsen (2019)</td>
<td>All texts (n = 242)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks</td>
<td>Dimensions of literacy</td>
<td>Kern (2000)</td>
<td>All tasks (n = 1641)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Degree of cognitive complexity</td>
<td>Data driven analysis and Afferbach et al. (2015)</td>
<td>Subset: tasks classified under “cognitive” or “cognitive/linguistic” (n = 1205)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Degree of multimodal engagement</td>
<td>Data driven analysis</td>
<td>Subset: tasks (n = 189) relevant to multimodal texts (n = 49)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Both researchers collaboratively coded a sample set of data to align coding practices. Next, each researcher coded tasks and texts separately, then met to compare codes. Any discrepancies in codes were discussed until consensus was reached.

**Text Types**

We examined each text to determine the semiotic modes present (e.g., language, image, layout, font) and classified texts on a continuum of multimodality from multimodal to written language only. Next, we coded each text with a genre type (e.g., map, movie synopsis, online article). Types were then grouped into everyday genres, literary genres, and informational texts. Finally, we coded texts on a continuum of authenticity: authentic, adapted, or contrived. However, following Simonsen’s (2019) admonition to the field about the problems associated with the label “authentic texts” and his suggestion to adopt the terms “learner-centered” and “non-learner-centered” (p. 255), we later renamed these categories as follows: created outside of educational contexts, adapted for learners, and created for learners, to emphasize their contexts of production. Where available, we relied on textbook references to determine whether the text had been created for learners or adapted from another source. In cases where source information was provided, we traced the source through internet searches to determine whether the text had been adapted. Texts categorized as literary works were considered excerpted rather than adapted and therefore categorized as “created outside of educational contexts.”

**Tasks**

To analyze tasks, we performed action coding (Saldaña, 2013), using action words to describe the processes being asked of learners (e.g., scanning for information, skimming for gist, predicting content from genre knowledge, evaluating word choice, etc.). Next, we organized these actions into: (a) dimensions of literacy (Kern, 2000), and (b) levels of cognitive complexity. Dimensions of literacy as defined by Kern (2000) include linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural dimensions. In some cases, tasks were considered to represent more than one literacy dimension simultaneously and were coded singly with the descriptor “cognitive and linguistic” rather than being assigned two different codes. For levels of cognitive complexity, first we developed a three-point scale (low, mid, high), as seen in Table 2. We later revised and refined our codes using Afflerbach et al.’s (2015) hierarchical framework of reading tasks as a guide. This framework draws upon Krathwohl’s (2002) revision of Bloom’s Taxonomy (Bloom et al., 1956). Subsequently, we ran two separate analyses of the proportions of low, mid, and high complexity tasks among beginning and intermediate textbooks, respectively.

**Table 2**

*Levels of Cognitive Complexity of Task Type*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>actions involving just observing or scanning for information at surface level where students can respond to questions without full comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>actions involving organizing or integrating new information, interpreting new information; categorizing and classifying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>actions involving integrating new information to make a judgment; problem-solving; drawing inferences beyond surface-level propositions; analyzing textual design choices; using textual evidence to justify a perspective; inferencing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, focusing only on the subset of texts classified as multimodal (n=49), we coded tasks for degrees of engagement with their multimodal features, with the data driving three different processes. *Multimodal processes* indicated tasks that explicitly asked students to engage with multimodal elements in the text. *Combined processes* included open-ended questions where the reader could hypothetically use multimodal
or linguistic features to complete the task. **Linguistic processes** included tasks that would hypothetically lead the reader to use the linguistic mode to respond and would not require engagement with multimodal features.

To ensure coding precision, we used Nvivo’s features of queries and coding stripes. First, we used a basic coding query for code pairs that were conceptually similar in order to confirm that no units of analysis contained more than one code within a single analysis. Second, we conducted a visual inspection of the coding stripes to ensure there was no duplicate coding within a single analysis.

**Findings**

**RQ1: What kinds of texts are included in beginning and intermediate French textbooks?**

**Semiotic Modes**

Four types of texts were found along a continuum of multimodality: written language only; primarily written language with an image or illustration; primarily language with integrated multimodal features such as different fonts, colors, or layout; and multimodal texts. **Written language only** texts were those expressed through the linguistic mode only (see example in Figure 2). If there was a photo on the same textbook page, adjacent to the written language text but not part of the original textual landscape (i.e., in the case of texts adapted for learners), we assumed that the photo or illustration had been added as an advance organizer or schema activator by the textbook producers. Texts classified as **primarily language with an image or illustration** were those where a photo or illustration was endemic to the original text (i.e., in the case of texts adapted for learners). Texts considered **primarily language with integrated multimodal features** were those that did not include any images but contained other important modal features such as different fonts, colors, or layouts that would be especially salient for a particular genre (such as charts or graphs). Finally, **multimodal texts** were those that contained complex systems of multiple semiotic modes such as color, layout, written language, graphics (for example, infographics or posters). **Figures 1** through **4** depict a representative sample of text types for each category. **Figure 5** illustrates the proportion of texts representing different semiotic modes for the data sample of texts examined.

**Figure 1

Written Language Only**
Figure 2

Primarily Language with an Image or Illustration (Scullen et al., 2020, p. 391).

Les Français regardent toujours la télé près de quatre heures par jour
Par Jérôme Lefilliâtre — 25 janvier 2017 à 13 heures 43

Les Français regardent toujours la télé près de quatre heures par jour.

D’après Médiamétrie, la consommation des programmes télévisuels, tous écrans confondus, a même progressé de deux minutes l’an dernier.

Chaque fin janvier, c’est la même chose. L’Institut Médiamétrie publie son bilan sur « l’année TV » passée et on se frotte les yeux devant un chiffre : les Français passent en moyenne près de quatre heures par jour — chaque jour donc — devant les programmes télévisuels. En 2016, la durée d’écoute individuelle (DEI) quotidienne du média télé s’est précisément élevée à 3 heures et 52 minutes. Le fait notable est qu’elle a progressé de deux minutes par rapport à 2015. Loin d’être morte, la télévision reste le loisir indétrônable du monde contemporain et, par la même occasion, une activité économique puissante.

Cette mesure additionne la consommation sur les quatre écrans fondamentaux de notre vie quotidienne : téléviseur, ordinateur, tablette et smartphone. Sur ces 3h52, le classique téléviseur (qui est HD dans 88 % des foyers équipés et connecté à Internet dans 56 % des cas) capte un total de temps passé de 3h43 : la consommation linéaire et en direct des programmes représente encore 3h33, tandis que leur usage en différé (parce qu’ils ont été enregistrés auparavant) ou en replay (sur les services de vidéos à la demande des chaînes) compte pour seulement dix minutes. Les neuf minutes restantes sont le fait de l’ordinateur, de la tablette et du smartphone.

Des proportions qui changent selon l’âge
Si l’on veut pousser l’analyse plus loin, on notera que les contenus télévisuels représentent 93 % du temps passé à mater de la vidéo sur les quatre écrans. Les choses disponibles seulement sur YouTube et ses congénères en ligne, hors programmes des chaînes de télé accessibles sur ces plateformes, comptent pour 6 %. Enfin, la vidéo à la demande (VOD), par exemple l’achat d’un film à l’unité sur la boutique en ligne de TF1 et la vidéo à la demande par abonnement (SVOD), type Netflix ou Canalplay, font 1 % du total.

Cependant, ces proportions changent nettement si l’on se focalise sur les 15-24 ans : YouTube et les autres montrent à 20 %, la VOD/SVOD à 3 % et les contenus télévisuels tombent à 76 %. Pour l’industrie des médias, la question à 1 000 euros, et même beaucoup plus, est de savoir si les jeunes maintiendront ces habitudes de consommation en vieillissant, auquel cas le média télé s’aflaiblira.

Figure 3

*Primarily Written Language with Integrated Multimodal Features (Scullen et al., 2020, p. 121).*
Figure 4
Multimodal Text (Anderson & Dolidon, 2020, p. 58-59)
Genres

The most prevalent genres discovered were everyday genres (47.52%), followed by informational texts (31.40%), and literary texts (21.07%). Examples of everyday genres included online articles (see Figure 6), song lyrics, infographics, and interviews. Literary genres included poems, short stories, or excerpts from longer literary works (e.g., novels). Informational texts included texts created for learners about a particular cultural practice.

Figure 6

Example of an Article Online (Anderson & Dolidon, 2020, p. 279-280)
**Contexts of Production**

Overall, we found that texts created for learners were most prevalent (44.63%), followed by texts created outside of educational contexts (33.88%), then adapted texts (21.49%). Figure 7 depicts the proportion of text types by contexts of production.

**Figure 7**

*Proportion of Text Types Based on Context of Production*

To explore further the intersections between genres and contexts of production, we ran a crosstab analysis in Nvivo of the three macro categories of genres identified and the three contexts of production. We found that literary texts were primarily unmodified (even if truncated); everyday texts were equally created outside of educational contexts, adapted, or created for learners; and informational texts were primarily created for learners (see Table 3).

**Table 3**

*Crosstab of Genres and Contexts of Production*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Created outside educational contexts</th>
<th>Literary</th>
<th>Everyday Genres</th>
<th>Info Texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adapted</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created for learners</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RQ2: What kinds of tasks are students called upon to engage in during reading instruction?**

**Dimensions of Literacy**

As noted above, tasks were grouped along Kern’s (2000) literacy dimensions. However, rather than a one-task-one-literacy-dimensional approach, because some tasks simultaneously tapped more than one dimension, we created categories of overlapping literacy dimensions. Having expanded the number of
In a study of textbook tasks, we categorized tasks into cognitive, sociocultural, cognitive/linguistic, linguistic, and sociocultural/linguistic dimensions. Among the cognitive dimensions, the most common task types were skimming and scanning, determining explicit meanings, and reflecting critically on the text. In the sociocultural dimension, making personal and cultural connections, and discussing social issues were prominent. Cognitive/linguistic tasks focused on restating and inferring meanings, while linguistic tasks prioritized vocabulary and grammatical structures. Sociocultural/linguistic tasks were less common, with a focus on oral communication.

**Levels of Cognitive Complexity**

Between the two textbook levels, beginning and intermediate, there was a marked difference in the proportions of levels of cognitive complexity. Most tasks in beginning textbooks were low-level (63.80%), whereas high-level tasks were least frequent (13.07%). For intermediate textbooks, the proportion appeared more evenly divided, with low-level tasks still holding a majority (45.23%), followed by high-level (28.27%) and mid-level (26.50%). Taking a closer look, low-level tasks in both types of textbooks were primarily scanning for information (60.09%) and determining what the text says explicitly (26.70%). The least common low-level tasks involved predicting content from visuals/title/key information (13.71%). Among mid-level tasks, the most frequent were taking a stance related to the topic (15.38%), and predicting content from visuals/title/key information (13.71%). The least common mid-level tasks involved analyzing text style (10.89%). High-level tasks were those involving students producing their own texts, such as creating a scenario/story based on the text (1.49%) and reproducing the genre (1.98%). Figure 8 depicts a comparison of the proportion of task types in terms of levels of complexity for beginning (n=7) and intermediate (n=2) textbooks together. Tables 4, 5, and 6 present the proportion of high, mid, and low-level task types.

Figure 8

**Comparison of the Proportion of Task Types (levels of complexity) for Beginning (n=7) and Intermediate (n=2) Textbooks**
### Table 4

*Proportion of High-Level Task Types*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Percentage of Instances</th>
<th>Number of Instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summarizing or synthesizing</td>
<td>12.38%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stating the main idea of phrase or text</td>
<td>11.88%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critiquing the text</td>
<td>10.89%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying rhetorical purpose</td>
<td>10.40%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reproducing the genre</td>
<td>8.42%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transposing text (new genre)</td>
<td>8.42%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extending the story</td>
<td>6.44%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a new scenario or story based on text</td>
<td>5.94%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restating meanings</td>
<td>3.96%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting meaning from style analysis</td>
<td>3.47%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting author meaning or perspective</td>
<td>2.97%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing text style</td>
<td>2.97%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a title for the text</td>
<td>2.97%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective taking or role playing</td>
<td>2.97%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting meaning from indirect characterizations</td>
<td>1.98%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing author’s approach or techniques</td>
<td>1.49%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating word choice</td>
<td>0.99%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a character portrait</td>
<td>0.99%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing interview questions</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5

*Proportion of Mid-Level Task Types*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Percentage of Instances</th>
<th>Number of Instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taking a stance related to the text-topic</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferring meanings of figurative and literal language</td>
<td>15.05%</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predicting content from visuals, title, key information</td>
<td>13.71%</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading between the lines</td>
<td>12.37%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classifying and categorizing information</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting the text across modes (text &amp; image)</td>
<td>6.69%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing textual events and dynamics</td>
<td>5.35%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considering text structure and patterns</td>
<td>4.68%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparing &amp; contrasting</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relating information (matching)</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predicting content from genre knowledge</td>
<td>2.68%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skimming for gist</td>
<td>2.34%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Visualizing & imagining content 2.01% 6
Sequencing 1.34% 4
Predicting content from structure 1.34% 4
Updating predictions 0.67% 2

Table 6
Proportion of Low-Level Task Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Percentage instances</th>
<th>Number of instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scanning for information</td>
<td>60.09%</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determining what the text says explicitly</td>
<td>26.70%</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activating prior topic knowledge</td>
<td>7.10%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying key elements</td>
<td>1.56%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferring meaning from cognates</td>
<td>1.14%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describing an image</td>
<td>0.99%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferring meaning from known structures</td>
<td>0.85%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading or listening to text-song-poem</td>
<td>0.85%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scanning for &amp; identifying cognates</td>
<td>0.71%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Degree of Multimodal Engagement

Three different types of engagement with multimodal texts were found: linguistic, multimodal, and combined. Among the degrees of engagement with multimodal text features, we found linguistic processes to be the most prevalent type of engagement (50.26%), followed by combined processes (45.50%), and finally multimodal processes (4.23%). Notably, this latter percentage accounted for only eight tasks. In other words, for the 49 multimodal texts that appeared across the nine textbooks analyzed, only eight tasks asked students to engage with multiple semiotic modes beyond the linguistic mode. Additionally, these task types were present in only four (i.e., fewer than 50%) of the textbooks sampled. Table 7 provides an illustrative example for each category.

Table 7
Examples of Types of Multimodal Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multimodal processes</th>
<th>Combined (multimodal and/or linguistic processes)</th>
<th>Linguistic processes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Look at the graphic elements. How do they help you understand the text?</td>
<td>Le texte est une publicité pour quelle sorte du tourisme ? [The text is an advertisement for what kind of tourism?]</td>
<td>For individuals taking a course à temps complet [full time], how much time is typically involved? What levels of instruction are offered? Subsidies are provided for childcare (frais de garde); what other types of subsidies are offered?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

Our content analysis of texts and tasks associated with reading across nine commercial French textbooks revealed four predominant messages across the corpus. We discuss each one in turn and demonstrate the way these messages crystallize in the discourse systems prevalent in FL education. We also explore potential pathways for moving toward pedagogical practices that more aptly reflect recent scholarship in FL education, and indeed contemporary literacy practices. We then propose a pedagogical expansion that engages teachers and learners in the critical examination of texts, and, indirectly, examination of the some of the ways textbooks perpetuate ideological discourses.

First, reading in the analyzed textbooks is seen primarily as an exercise in decoding written language texts. Texts in our corpus were predominantly expressed through the linguistic mode, with multimodal texts representing fewer than a quarter of texts. Given the historical focus on language as a linguistic system as the object of study, it is not surprising that the number of multimodal texts was limited, and when included, that the degree of engagement with these texts was limited to their linguistic modes. What is more, for many of the adapted texts, the nature of the adaptation was to strip away the multimodal elements from the original text and to preserve the linguistic mode. Such adaptations ignore the fundamental contributions of multimodal semiotic elements to the overall meanings in texts thereby “missing important building blocks in the process of meaning making and meaning negotiation” (Álvarez Valencia, 2016, p. 113).

Second, everyday texts are perceived as inferior to literary texts, suggested by the fact that the former were more frequently adapted for learners than literary texts. This finding reifies an underlying view of literary texts as pure; by keeping the original form intact, deference is given to the author. The literary canon, itself “nothing more than a construct, fashioned by particular people for particular reasons at a certain time” (Eagleton, 1983, p. 15 as cited in Kern & Schulz, 2005, p. 385), maintains its prestige status. Everyday texts, by contrast, serve as everyone’s texts to use and modify. Such a distinction makes sense considering the social and historical conditions of each text type; on the one hand, the literary text, traditionally existing in an era of print culture; on the other, everyday texts, which are largely artifacts of the contemporary digital landscape and subject to fewer copyrights (c.f. Blyth, 2014a for discussion of reading as cultural and historical practice).

Third, less linguistically proficient readers are assumed to be less cognitively mature. Our finding that the levels of cognitive complexity are more balanced (e.g., fewer lower-level tasks) in the intermediate textbooks implies an assumption that beginning and intermediate FL learners are not equipped to tackle cognitively complex tasks. Whereas certain number of tasks did correspond to higher-level cognitive processes and invited students to engage in textual analysis and critical reading, the majority remained anchored in lower-level processes focused on superficial, bottom-up processes such as skimming and scanning and determining explicit textual meanings, particularly among beginning textbooks. However, novice language skills should not equate with novice cognitive processes. As Freahat and Smadi (2014) suggested, “higher-level questions are effective tools for stimulating thinking and developing other cognitive skills such as problem solving and decision making” (p. 1812). Although developing bottom-up reading skills are an important component of reading, they seem to come at the expense of more critical textual analysis.

Finally, reading is primarily a cognitively oriented exercise, given the predominance of tasks such as predicting content, inferencing, or critically reflecting on meanings. Sociocultural (17%) and sociocultural/linguistic (1.52%) tasks made up only 18.52% percent of all tasks. Through tasks anchored primarily in cognitive dimensions of literacy, the exercise of reading remains focused on text-internal factors and the individual mentalistic processes learners engage in interpretation. In contrast, text-external factors (such as the social contexts of a text’s production, author identity, and so forth) that are equally critical to textual understanding are negligible. Within sociocultural dimensions of literacy, most tasks involved using the text as a springboard for more personal conversations, supporting Stoller et al.’s (2013) claim that post-reading generally involves “‘personalization’ activities in written or spoken form, during
which [students] state an opinion about the reading or connect some aspect of the passage to their own lives” (p. 3). Such an over-privileging of students’ personal responses fails to engage learners in critical examination of texts in their own right and consists of “a fundamentally solipsistic approach to the literary that eclipses notions of alterity or otherness” (Kern and Schulz, 2005, p. 384). What is more, such reader-response activities and development of oral communication become ensnared in a codependent relationship: The bias toward oral communication in lower-level FL classrooms co-opts reading activities as springboards for oral communication practice, all while “the primacy of the personal…conforms to oral proficiency and communicatively oriented approaches to language teaching” (Kern & Schultz, 2005, p. 384).

Such messages are problematic not only for the way they constrain possibilities for learner action and literacy development, but also for the way they perpetuate and reflect larger discourses about language learners and about language in general. As has been argued elsewhere (Dupuy & Michelson, 2021), it is ideological discourses that constrain possibilities for paradigm change in education. The messages uncovered in this study reflect and perpetuate all-too-familiar macro discourses in FL education of a monolingual language learner with goals of reaching “native-speaker” proficiency through extensive oral practice and acute manipulation of grammar and vocabulary. This idealized language learner’s trajectory is bolstered through these textbook materials by maximal exposure to examples of target language structures in texts and extensive opportunities for conversational practice. The metaphorically linear trajectory of language learning maps onto a presumed parallel cognitive development trajectory whereby a “deficient” learner must first achieve linguistic mastery before engaging in more complex literacy practices. Communication is reduced to an exercise in decoding language and transacting messages rather than as an exercise in interpreting webs of cultural messages.

Pedagogical Expansions and Potential Solutions

Given the problematic nature of textbooks, Canale (2016) suggested that FL teachers and curriculum designers focus on “how to design classroom environments in which learners can understand textbook discourse as a genre which operates socially, historically and ideologically, and not as the accumulation of uncontestable factual (verbal and visual) evidence about language and culture” (p. 240). Potential responses to Canale’s invitation reside in the Open Education movement. As Blyth (2014b) explained:

[O]pen education emphasizes the use of digital materials that are easily edited and personalized, an anytime/anywhere approach to learning, the integration of knowledge and social networks in order to connect people to ideas, and a belief that knowledge is best understood as a creative process of co-constructed meaning within a community of practice. (p. 662)

Open Educational Resources (OERs), which can take the form of textbooks, individual lessons, or single pedagogical resources (e.g., images, videos, or slideshows), serve to democratize education by providing affordable, widely distributable, on-demand resources that can be created by anyone and licensed according to one of six Creative Commons attributions (Creative Commons, n.d.; see also Blyth & Thoms, 2021). More broadly, Open Educational Practices (OEP), including open pedagogy, involve learners taking an active role in finding and curating learning resources. Beyond issues of cost and access, an important benefit of OER/OEP is the ability to circumvent constraints imposed by the publishing industry that are more likely to make task and text choices based on users’ expectations in the interest of marketability, rather than on pedagogically sound principles.

In the following section, we offer an OER in the form of a sample instructional sequence that builds upon an existing textbook sequence from our corpus. In addition to expanding possibilities for students to engage in a broader range of literacies, this sequence, through its method of comparing an original text with its textbook adaptation, responds to Canale’s (2016) call by laying bare the limitations on meaning making that textbooks impose, thereby serving as a springboard for students and instructors to begin contesting textbook discourses. The lesson begins with an adapted text and asks students to search for the original to engage in an analysis of the design choices made in both the original text and the adaptation. Engaging with
the original text is important because as Swaffar (1992) suggested:

As artifacts of the second language’s culture, such texts present the second language learner with social functions familiar in many, perhaps all, cultures. Yet at the same time they depict concrete situations that are culture specific. In other words, authentic texts offer readers case studies of fundamental human relationships, needs, and social institutions such as kinship, ritual behavior, social status, governance, or eating arrangements as they are manifested in the unfamiliar culture. (p. 238)

Figure 9 depicts the original text alongside its corresponding textbook adaptation.

**Figure 9**

*Screen Shot of Original (Lefilliâtre, 2017) and Adapted Text (Scullen, Pons & Valdman, 2020, p. 391)*

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**A Sample Lesson Expansion**

We draw upon the multiliteracies framework (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015) as well as multimodal pedagogies (e.g., Álvarez Valencia, 2016) to guide engagement with texts, and demonstrate how critical textual analysis can be integrated alongside language development when well scaffolded. Frameworks such as Learning by Design (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015), and specifically the Knowledge Processes (KPs) of experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing, and applying, offer heuristics for guiding students’ engagement with texts, including reflecting critically not only on what texts say, but importantly, how texts come to mean through the semiotic designs that authors choose (see Appendix B).

**Pedagogical Rationale**

Phase 1 provides an entry point into the texts by asking students to identify surface features. The instructor must know target language vocabulary for semiotic modes, which can be taught explicitly through context.
(i.e., saying and pointing) and reinforced through repeated activities of analyzing modes of different texts in subsequent lessons. In this phase, students use simple sentences (There is…; There is no…) to identify the presence or absence of certain features. Once surface features have been noticed through a naming task, students consider the contexts of production of the original text (Phase 2). Having potentially identified features such as the logo, email and twitter icons, navigation bar, names of specific newspaper sections, color, and typeface features (e.g., bold, hyperlinks), students can further rely on their familiarity with web genres to deduce that this is an online newspaper.

After identifying different base units and their modal features, the class conducts a deeper analysis of salient modes. In this text and its adaptation, the most striking differences are evident in the photos and in the lack of semiotic elements such as the logo, the navigation bar, and the social media icons. Logos are carefully designed emblems that reflect an organization and attempt to capture values within a succinct, recognizable, yet unique form. As such, logos can provide clues into the values or perspectives underlying a particular news source. In Phase 3, students are guided in a multimodal logo analysis, taking note of the colors, shapes, words, font style. Language needed for this task might include a review of vocabulary for colors and potentially some new words for shapes. Students are guided to respond in simple sentences linked with “because” to show cause and effect. Their interpretation of the logo can then be linked to speculations about the type of newspaper, leading to further predictions about this text’s contexts of production.

Knowing the origin of this article allows students to make more precise predictions about the slant or perspectives they might encounter in this text based on what they know about this newspaper or other articles or sections of the newspaper that they are encouraged to explore. If students are exposed to texts in their original habitats, their cumulative experiences over time might help them predict patterns of perspectives in a particular news source. Indeed, pre-reading tasks that accompany this particular textbook adaptation ask students to use title and subtitles to make predictions about content and to reflect on the image and whether it resonates with students’ own experiences. Adding semiotic elements such as logo and other base units that are part of the original textual habitat provides students with a more comprehensive context through which to make more informed predictions.

After conducting a deeper analysis of the logo, students are then guided to analyze the photo (Phase 4). Students begin by naming objects in the room depicted or the people pictured in the photos in terms of friend or kinship relationships, using prepositions of location to describe where they are in relation to one another. From a content perspective, both photos are similar: a family (presumably) hang out and watching TV with their devices. On closer look, one might get different ideas about the family dynamics or values between these two images. In the adaptation, the books on a shelf might infer that this family reads, even if they also watch a lot of TV. The image in the adapted text depicts two of the younger members interacting with one another; however, the original image depicts all family members engaged in solitary side-by-side activities.

Students are then guided into a more critical analysis of the photos using adjectives for describing facial expressions, allowing an interpretation of the perceived emotions of the individuals pictured. In the original image, the individuals seem expressionless and zoned out; in the adaptation, one of the adults appears to be smiling, as do the younger children, and they all appear to be interacting with one another. In the adapted text, the colors are overall brighter and give the impression of a sunny happy family. Next, students depart from their descriptive analysis to form a judgment about the relationships between the people pictured. Further, taking a critical perspective, students ponder what kind of family is featured (e.g., opposite sex couples, a boy and a girl) and what kind of family is not featured (e.g., same sex couples) and critically reflect on the messages being promoted by the author, whether or not intentionally.

Through this expanded engagement with semiotic modes beyond the linguistic mode, students then read the linguistic portion of the text (Phase 6), either from the original source or from the adaptation. Existing questions that accompany the textbook center around comprehension checks and developing linguistic agility through morphological awareness and could be integrated at this stage.
After reading the text, students then revisit questions about the social purpose of the article (Phase 7) and the contexts of production of the text (Phase 8) by taking note of other elements appearing in the original web page, such as navigation bars, headings and titles of drop-down categories, and hyperlinks, to again make a judgment about the website type. Depending on the language level of students, this discussion might be conducted in L1.

A further clue into contexts of production can be gained by exploring other articles from this same journal. Thus, students could be asked to find two other articles (Phase 9) and note their titles, hypothesizing about the kinds of topics that are featured in this newspaper, and further considering the rhetorical purpose of the focal text through an exercise in comparison. Using grammatical structures for making comparisons with adjectives and using a pre-provided list of potential adjectives for describing the rhetorical purpose of online articles, students can compare purposes of the additional articles they have found.

Yet another possibility for fostering critical reflection on these texts is to ask students to consider choices made in the adaptation (Phase 10). For instance, they might evaluate what has been gained or lost in the process, and whether the omitted information changes their understanding of the article. In this adaptation, an entire paragraph about other media has been omitted, which includes a paragraph with hyperlinks to social media influencers.

After carefully considering a fuller set of the semiotic resources that contribute to textual meanings, students embark on an Internet search (Phase 11) for data about media consumption practices in other countries (in this case, other Francophone countries), synthesize their findings in a chart or graph depicting these statistics, and present their findings orally to the class. To foster a fully attentive audience, classmates can evaluate the findings and speculate on possible reasons for any differences uncovered, in terms of underlying cultural practices or perspectives or bias in reporting.

This expanded lesson promotes potentially deeper reflections on texts and the way that texts create and reflect cultural and personal meanings. It additionally exposes students to cultural discourses and practices around media consumption and use, for example, the number of hours of TV watching, or the various platforms, influencers promoted, and media sources. Additionally, the lesson fosters students’ ongoing language development by organizing the oral communication tasks around specific lexicogrammatical forms that students have already learned and can re-use in a meaningful communicative context. The relatively few additional language structures needed to participate in these conversations in the target language are vocabulary for different semiotic modes and for talking about online articles. This vocabulary can be provided through short, constrained lists that can be easily introduced via a gloss prior to or during the lesson. Not only does this lesson help foster textual awareness, but it also teaches students to question textbooks as constructed discourses (Huang, 2011).

Summary

Stripped of its original semiotic features, the textbook version eclipses important genre cues that could be used to scaffold interpretation. Furthermore, through this adaptation, authorial perspectives and meanings intended through the original text’s designs may also be obscured. Guiding students through a comparative analysis of the original text and its adaptation provides opportunities for critical reflection on textual meanings while also promoting language development. The original textbook pre-reading activity asks, “Now look at the photo that accompanies the article. Does it resonate with your own experience? In what ways?” (Scullen et al., 2020, p. 390), asking students to use the photo as a schema-activating device. This kind of question focuses the reading activity on a comparison of the student’s personal lifeworld with the lifeworld of those depicted. Students are further encouraged to remain in their own lifeworld through the textbook post-reading tasks, which ask students how many hours of TV they watch, on which platforms, what programs they watch, and what their future television-watching habits might be.

Yet Fang et al. (2014) suggested that a critical paradigm:

aims to empower students to read both the ‘word’/screen and the ‘world’ through analysing,
evaluating, problematising, and transforming texts. It emphasizes the development of critical consciousness about text and language/media use and promotes thoughtful critique and eventual disruption of social inequalities and hegemonic power structure. (p. 56)

The proposed expansion invites students to use the entire semiotic context to gain nuanced perspectives about potential underlying bias in contemporary media and the ideological positions that underlie textual adaptations. Furthermore, it engages students with the cultural context of the text on its own terms, such that discussing and comparing their own media consumption practices can then take place within a much broader cultural context than the four walls of the classroom.

Conclusion

The initial catalysts for our inquiry were persistent observations of FL learners’ perceptions and practices around reading in French, perhaps the most notable of which were observations that carefully structured reading prompts informed by multiliteracies pedagogies did little to engage students in the kind of textual thinking repeatedly called for in FL scholarship (e.g., Byrnes, 2006, Paesani, 2018). Students’ FL reading practices were deeply ingrained. The messages and discourses uncovered in this content analysis of nine commercial French FL textbooks decidedly locate these practices in the very materials used to teach reading. In fact, what is being taught through these materials is not necessarily reading, but rather a stance that views texts as containers of the linguistic structures deemed important to the trajectory of the idealized FL learner. Further, students are taught ways of interacting with texts and peers that prioritize linguistic practice and exchange of personal reflections. As Kern (2000) suggested:

We are socialized to read in certain ways for particular purposes in particular settings, and to hold certain beliefs about texts….We abide by certain interpretive conventions established within the discourse communities to which we belong and we gain entry into new discourse communities by learning their respective conventions through apprenticeship. (p. 117)

The FL classroom is one very real discourse community in which learners are socialized to read. Consequently, it behooves us as FL educators to think carefully about the kinds of ideological messages about reading and FL learning that we may be perpetuating through our materials and our modeling of interactions with said materials, and instead seek ways of countering these discourses: on our own, in collaboration with colleagues, and in tandem with our students.

References


McGraw Hill.


Creative Commons (n.d.). *About the licenses.* Creative Commons. https://creativecommons.org/licenses/


Gee, J. P. (2001). Reading as situated language: A sociocognitive perspective. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 44*(8), 714–725. [https://doi.org/10.1598/jaal.44.8.3](https://doi.org/10.1598/jaal.44.8.3)


### Appendix A. Textbooks Used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atelier</td>
<td>Cengage</td>
<td>Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chez nous</td>
<td>Pearson</td>
<td>Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deux mondes</td>
<td>McGraw Hill</td>
<td>Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>En avant</td>
<td>McGraw Hill</td>
<td>Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horizons</td>
<td>Cengage</td>
<td>Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaisons</td>
<td>Cengage</td>
<td>Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis-à-vis</td>
<td>McGraw Hill</td>
<td>Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encore</td>
<td>Cengage</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sur le vif</td>
<td>Cengage</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Appendix B. Sample Lesson Expansion Based on Comparisons of Original and Adapted Texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task phase</th>
<th>Teacher instructions and learner tasks</th>
<th>Mode of communication</th>
<th>Lexicogrammar</th>
<th>Knowledge Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Analyzing base units (Álvarez Valencia, 2016)</td>
<td>Look at the two texts. What is different? Model response: “In text 1, there is/are _______; in text 2, there is/are no _______.” Possible responses: logo, ads, navigation bar, social media icons, photo caption</td>
<td>Oral interpersonal</td>
<td>There is/there are (no) … vocabulary for semiotic modes, such as logo, icon, hyperlink, bold font, italics, navigation bar, etc.</td>
<td>Experiencing the known and the new Conceptualizing by naming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Analyzing contexts of production (Álvarez Valencia, 2016)</td>
<td>Look at the two texts. Text 1 on the left is the original text; Text 2 on the right is the adaptation.</td>
<td>Oral interpersonal/interpretive</td>
<td>Adjectives, vocabulary to describe textual genres, vocabulary for website features</td>
<td>Conceptualizing by naming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016)</td>
<td>Where did the original text appear? What kind of website is this? What do you see? How do you know? What kind of a text is this? (Informative? Sensationalist? Factual? Opinion?)</td>
<td>Analyzing critically</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Describing and critically analyzing the logo</td>
<td>What colors do you see? What shapes do you see? What words do you see? Is the font playful, serious? What kind of a website is this? This is a ____ because there is/are ____</td>
<td>Oral interpersonal/interpretive</td>
<td>Vocabulary for colors, shapes; vocabulary for web genres; simple clauses connected with “because” to show cause/effect or interpretation/justification</td>
<td>Experiencing the new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Analyzing photos for content</td>
<td>Describe the photo in text 1. What do you see? Are the people interacting with each other? What are the people doing? Where are they sitting? Who are they? Where is the television? Is everyone watching TV? Not everyone is watching. Why is the TV on?</td>
<td>Oral interpersonal/interpretive</td>
<td>Question words and structures using the verb “to be”; verbs to describe actions; vocabulary for members of a family; prepositions of location</td>
<td>Experiencing the new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Analyzing photos</td>
<td>Describe the family in text 1 in three</td>
<td>Oral interpersonal/</td>
<td>Adjectives to describe physical traits and</td>
<td>Conceptualizing with theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Reading written language of the article</td>
<td>Existing textbook instructional sequence could be used here</td>
<td>Interpretive</td>
<td>Experience the new</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Critically analyzing the article’s social purpose</td>
<td>Why might the author think this is an important topic to discuss? What do you think is the overall message that the author is trying to convey? What leads you to think this?</td>
<td>Oral interpersonal</td>
<td>Verbs in the infinitive to describe various intentions; students are offered gambits and fill in an infinitive verb phrase, or select from a list of choices, e.g. The author wants to _______ An (analyzing critically) Analyzing functionally</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Critically describing and analyzing the web context</td>
<td>What else do you see on this website in addition to the article (e.g., ads)? Is this website/journal reliable? How do you know? <strong>Possible responses:</strong> Clickbait articles and/or ads; navigation bar and drop-down</td>
<td>Oral interpersonal/ interpretive</td>
<td><strong>Vocabulary for website features:</strong> (click bait, hyperlinks, etc.) Experience the new Analyzing critically</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 9. Expanding through discovery | Find two other articles and note their titles.  
What kinds of topics are featured in this online newspaper?  
Compare this article to other articles that you have found using adjectives such as: serious, reliable, universal, interesting, entertaining, informative, persuasive | Oral interpersonal/interpretive | Using the comparative with adjectives; adjectives for evaluating online articles | Experiencing the new  
Conceptualizing by naming |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10. Critically evaluating the adaptation (conducted in L1) | Do you think the omitted information was important and should have been left in; why or why not?  
What does that section add to the overall message/purpose of the article? What does it add to your understanding of the topic? | NA | NA | Analyzing critically |
| 11. Applying | Find stats about screen time from one other Francophone country. Prepare a chart or graph that depicts these stats, to conclude details about age range, screen time, types of media | Written and oral presentational | Various | Applying creatively and appropriately |

*categories, hyperlinks (for Médiamétrie, to chase a cultural reference, or for the author, to learn more about the kinds of articles they write, etc.)*
watched/consumed.
Prepare a one-minute oral presentation in which you explain the stats.
Evaluate the findings:
What underlying practices/perspectives might be behind these different stats?

About the Authors

Kristen Michelson is Assistant Professor of French and Applied Linguistics at Texas Tech University. Her work aims to raise awareness of how particular representational choices are made with agency and intention against a backdrop of broader social contexts and to provide opportunities for second and foreign language learners to understand and participate flexibly in multiple cultural discourses.

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