The Visual Elements in EFL Coursebooks

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The Visual Elements in EFL Coursebooks

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Education is necessary for everybody. Education is very vital, deprived of education no can lead a good life. Teaching and learning are the important element in education. The teacher use different approaches and substantial to teach their students and their active learning. With the passage of time, altered methods and techniques are entered in the field of education and teacher use different kind of aids to effective learning.

Visual aids arouse the interest of learners and help the teachers to explain the concepts easily. Visual aids are those instructional aids which are used in the classroom to encourage students learning process.

According to Burton "Visual aids are those sensory objects or images which initiate or stimulate and support learning". Kinder, S.James; describe visual aids as "Visual aids are any devices which can be used to make the learning experience more real, more accurate and more active".

There are many visual aids available these days. We may classify these aids as follows: visual aids are which use sense of vision are called Visual aids. For example models, actual objects, charts, pictures, maps, flannel board, flash cards, bulletin board, chalkboard, slides, overhead projector etc.

Out of these black board and chalk are the commonest. Visual aids are the best tool for making teaching effective and the best dissemination of knowledge. Research of Cuban (2001) indicated the psychology of visual aids as under, 1% of what is learned is from the sense of TASTE, 1.5% of what is learned is from the sense of TOUCH, 3.5% of what is learned is from the logic of SMELL, 11% of what is educated is from the logic of HEARING and 83% of what is learned is from the sense of SIGHT. Also people generally remember, 10% of what they READ, 20% of what they HEAR, 30% of what they SEE, 50% of what they HEAR and SEE, 70% of what they SAY and 90% they SAY as they DO a thing. So there is no doubt that technical devices have greater impact and dynamic informative system.

When we use visual aids as teaching aid, it is one of the aspects which root participation of students in the lesson because when students look at visual model or aid, it is measured as a kind of contribution. Also the uses of visual aids encourage the body movement and it may strengthen the control.

(Jain, 2004)There is famous Chinese proverb "one sighted is worth, a hundred words" it is fact that we take knowledge through our intellects. The great educationist Comenius has well said: The foundation of all learning consists in representing clearly to the senses and sensible objects so they can be appreciated easily (Singh, 2005).

As it is known that visual aids are one of the important teaching facilities and they are essential during teaching, they facilitate and make calm to study, teach and extant a theme easily. Visual aids may provide the chance to learn visually and are more effective and easy for human beings.

During teaching with models and visual aids, students effort to identify it, or recognize its functions and try to have its interpretation, to understand its use. They compare it with their preconcepts, adapting the new sensation and pursuing to recognize about it. Hence, it is virtuous to stimulate the students or keep them active for eliciting in teaching and learning process. But, utmost of the teachers do not use adequate visual aids as teaching materials. This may cause barriers to teaching and learning process and directly affects the learning outcomes.

A potential research issue in the evaluation of ELT materials concerns the use of visual elements. It is assumed that a text with visual elements is far better comprehended in comparison with a text devoid of any visual elements (Ametller & Pinto, 2002).

Visuals can be effective if certain conditions are met. For instance, if they are used appropriately with written texts, and there exists a match between the pictures and the purpose for which they are utilized, they can be effective .When used inappropriately, as Allen (2011) points out, visuals can have adverse rather than facilitative effects, that is, they can lead to cognitive load on the part of the L2 students.

For instance, in an experimental study, Erfani (2012) investigated the probable effect of using visual materials on reading comprehension ability of Iranian university students. The participants, who were majoring in physics, were categorized into two experimental and control groups. In the experimental group, some passages accompanied by different kinds of pictures were taught, whereas in the control group, the same passages were taught without the pictorial context. Results showed that the experimental group who received passage furnished with pictures performed better than control group.

Visuals in recent British coursebooks
What do we get?

In order to see what the current situation is with regard to British coursebook visuals, I examined three Student's Books at the Intermediate level spanning the previous decade:
Inside Out (S. Kay and V. Jones (2000), Oxford: Macmillan Heinemann)
face2face (C. Redston and G. Cunningham (2006), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)
Outcomes (H. Dellar and A. Walkely (2010), Andover: Heinle, Cengage Learning EMEA)

Initially I was interested to find out the balance between black-and-white and colour illustration, and between drawings and photographs within the main text pages of the coursebook units (see Table 7.1). These figures only show the existence of a separate individual illustration, regardless of size. All three books are roughly A4 format (c. 21 cm x 30 cm), and the pictures typically vary in size from 20.5 cm x 16 cm down to 3 cm x 4 cm. Cartoon story sequences in a block are counted as one illustration. Perhaps the most obvious thing which stands out from the figures in Table 7.1 is the overwhelming dominance of colour pictures (475/529) to black-and-white (54/529), and the overwhelming dominance of photos (392/529) to drawings (137/529). The use of black-and-white photos is generally limited to historical photos that only exist in that form;

The balance of illustrations, drawings and photos in three intermediate coursebooks

	Inside Out	face2face	Outcomes	Totals
Pages of text	134	95	96	325
Colour drawings	50	30	25	105
B&W drawings	23	0	9	32
Total drawings	73	30	34	137
Colour photos	111	107	152	370
B&W photos	11	4	7	22
Total photos	122	111	159	392
Total pictures	195	141	193	529

the use of black-and-white illustration is generally limited to the use of single funny cartoons. It is also noticeable that the earliest book – *Inside Out,* which was developed in the 1990s – has a higher number of drawn illustrations – more than twice as many as the later two books; this may indicate a greater and simpler access to different types of photographic images parallel to the increased use of electronic technology in publishing. I was then interested in analysing what the pictures were actually illustrating. I decided to examine only the colour photos (CP) and colour drawings (CD) for each of the three course books under consideration, as these constitute the largest percentage of the illustrations. I categorized them according to subject (see Table 7.2).

Who gave them permission to add all of these pictures and charts!

Seriously! It's almost readable. The nerve!

freshspectrum

The figures in Table 7.2 indicate that far more pictures show straight portraits, and people doing something (actions) or interacting with each other. It is interesting to note that the vast majority of portraits are photographs (111, against only 5 drawings) while a relatively high number of the interaction pictures are drawings (38 out of 106); this reflects the fact that it is much easier for a picture editor to get an agency portrait of, say 'a woman in her thirties looking happy' than 'a couple of students arguing about shopping in a supermarket' – although many of this last category of photos are clearly staged for the purpose.

How are they used?

Initially, I analysed the books to find out how many of the pictures were specifically used in the text of the Student's Book, and how many were merely there for decoration.

| Picture type	Inside Out CD	Inside Out CP	face2face CD	face2face CP	Outcomes CD	Outcomes CP	Totals
Portrait	3	59	0	28	2	24	116
Place	5	6	1	7	4	22	45
Object	2	14	10	23	4	29	82
Interaction	14	17	12	28	12	23	106
Action	26	15	7	21	3	54	126
Totals	50	111	30	107	25	152	475

Analysis of colour photos and colour drawings in four coursebooks

Pictures for use versus decoration in the three coursebooks

	Inside Out	face2face	Outcomes	Totals	%
Photos: Decoration	83	43	90	**216**	40.8
Photos: Use	39	68	69	**176**	33.4
Drawings: Decoration	42	14	11	**67**	12.6
Drawings: Use	31	16	23	**70**	13.2
Totals	**195**	**141**	**193**	**529**	100.0

I am aware, of course, that it is possible that there are instructions in the accompanying Teacher's Book which direct the teacher in getting students to use a particular picture independent of instructions in the Student's Book, but I have chosen to ignore this eventuality as being quite uncommon in most courses. I am considering all pictures, both black-and-white and colour here. These results are presented in Table 7.3.
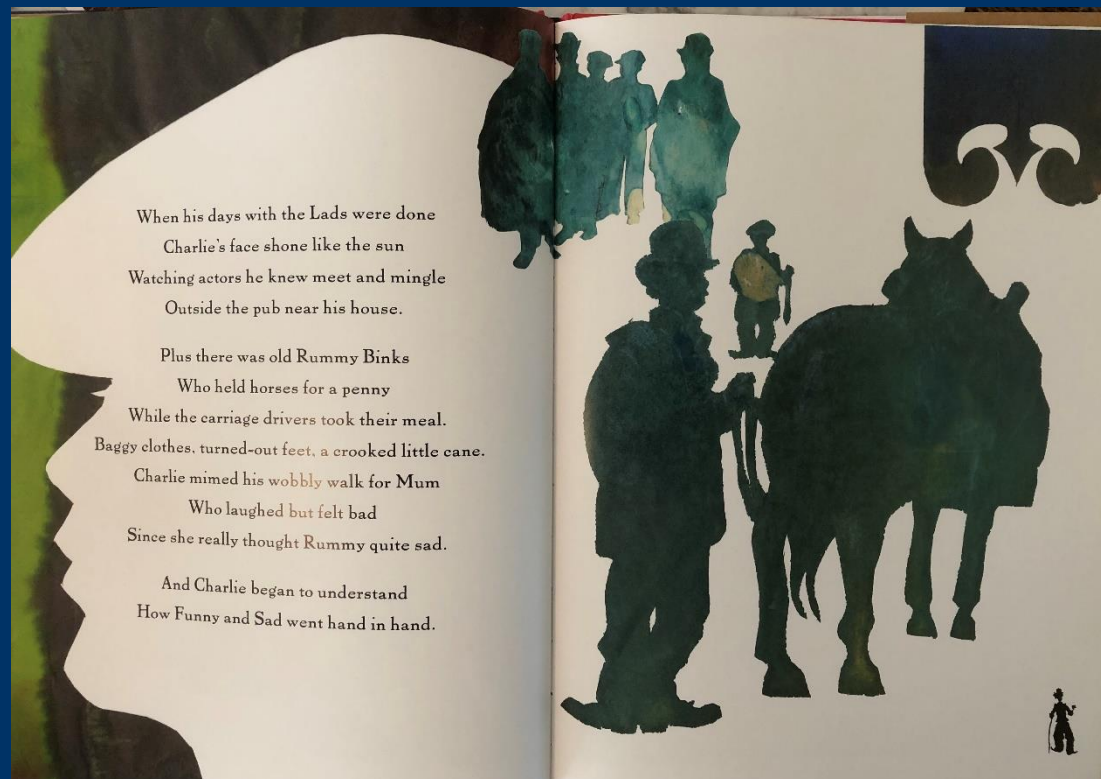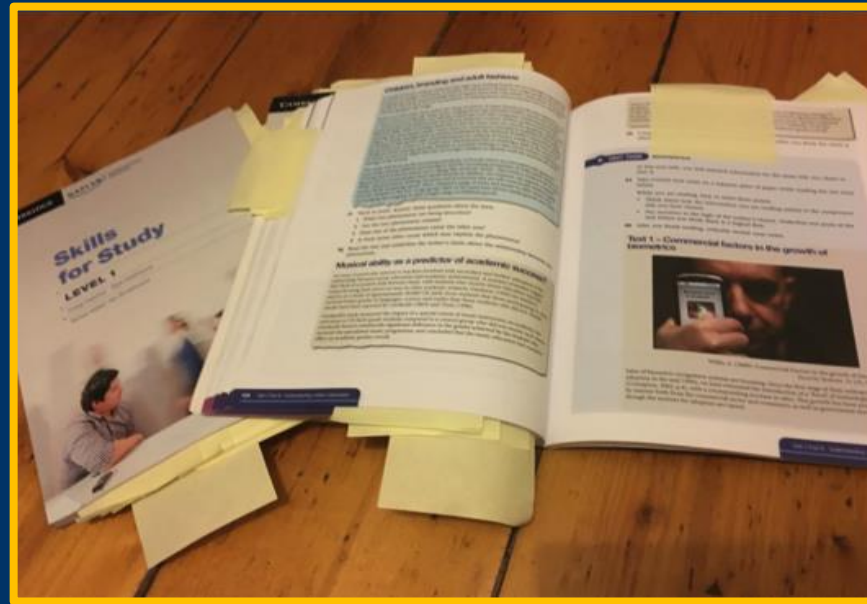
The striking statistics here show that over half of the images (40.8% + 12.6%) across the three books are still used purely for decoration, for example, if a conversation takes place in a restaurant, there is a photo or drawing of a restaurant beside the dialogue, but students are not asked to refer to the picture. Although *face2face* has fewer pictures than the other two courses, it also has the highest percentage which are used by the students (59.6%). The other two courses have an almost identical number of pictures in them, but while *Inside Out* only uses 35.9 per cent of its pictures, the balance in *Outcomes* is almost equal (52.3% decoration, 47.7% use).

While not claiming that figures based on the Intermediate level young adult/adult Student's Books of three coursebooks are in any way representative of all coursebooks, my intuition is that similar statistics could be derived from a larger sample. What do these figures seem to imply? That ELT publishers, editors and authors think that it is more or as important to provide attractive space-filling accompanying illustrations in their coursebooks than it is to provide pictures with related activities.

Of course, these figures highlight what I see as one of the major problems in the production of coursebooks: the authors, unless they specifically provide a brief for a particular picture for use with an activity, leave the rest of the production process up to the editors and designers, and it is at that stage that the decorative images are usually added. And what goes onto a page is dependent upon a number of non-educational factors, such as the space left once the necessary exercises and illustrations have been included, what illustrated straplines are included at the top of pages or start of chapters and how many pictures they can afford from picture agencies without going over budget.
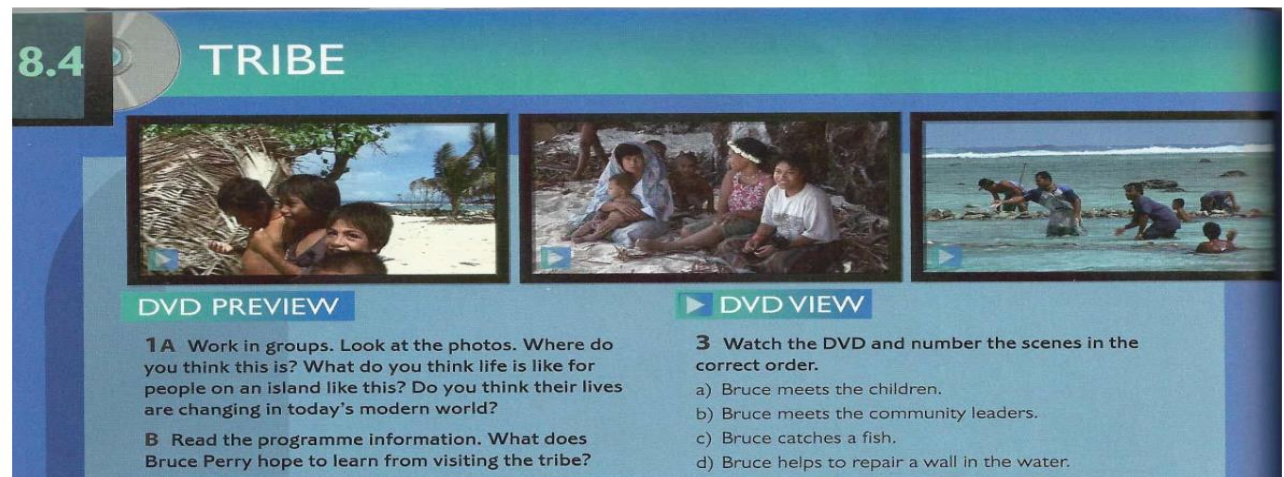

Figure 4 Social actors depicted as the decorative units of a "remote exotic land" from Speakout

While I would be the first to admit that editors and designers generally do a very good job – most contemporary British coursebooks are attractive products which students and teachers enjoy using – one cannot help but lament the huge lost opportunities.
Harmer (200, p. 135) put forward the view that pictures used for what he terms 'ornamentation' (my 'decoration') are important because:

If the pictures are interesting they will appeal to at least some members of the class strongly. They have the power (at least for the more visually oriented) to engage students.

It is almost certainly true that students today prefer the colourfully decorated pages of current textbooks as opposed to the picture-free pages of the 1960s and the black and white line drawings of the early 1970s, however this is at least partially because of their expectations. They live in a world in which they are endlessly surrounded by visual images, and so it feels 'comfortable' and 'normal' if their coursebook surrounds them in the same way. Some students may also respond to such ornamentation 'strongly', although whether that strong appeal translates directly into any language learning benefits is a moot point.

Harmer is equally vague about what kind of engagement these more visually oriented students might display. I suspect it would require a lengthy and subtle longitudinal study to prove that illustration-as-mere-decoration has a direct effect on student attitudes to English or to language learning, or indeed helps the learner to learn English better.

What kind of use?

Given that 46.6 per cent of the illustrations in the three coursebooks analysed do have activities attached to them, it would be instructive to find out exactly what kind of use they are put to. The following activity types were found in the three books:

a)   Activities dealing with precise elements of the unit language focus (syntax/vocabulary):

Finding objects from a written list in the picture.
Matching written texts with pictures.
Using situations in pictures to work out what people are saying.
Using the pictures as cues for written grammar drills.
Giving physical descriptions of people or places in the pictures.

b) Activities working on listening comprehension:

Recognizing and labelling people/objects on the basis of a listening passage.

Spotting differences between details in the picture and information given in the recording.

Deciding what people are saying in the pictures based on the recorded dialogues.

c) Finding or giving information:

Illustrations which clarify details in a reading text.

Looking for information in the picture.

d) **Deduction and creativity:**

Making judgements and inventing information about people and situations in the pictures.

- Such an analysis might lead one to make a distinction between purely functional illustrations which have the aim of making comprehension of the target language easier (e.g. a photograph of an object or a drawing of an event in a text)
- and those whose object is to stimulate a mental and linguistic response (e.g. an illustration positioned to allow reader speculation at the end of one and before the beginning of another piece of text).

- One might also distinguish between those illustrations which aim to facilitate explicit teaching (e.g. defining the meaning of words by having a picture of their referents)
- and those which facilitate tasks (e.g. by illustrating an interactive situation which students are using the language for).

It can be seen that the illustrations are largely being used for fairly low-level language practice, with few activities aimed at stimulating students to use the language at their disposal creatively starting from the pictures. Such an activity would be *Roads* (Hill, 1990, p. 34), in which students are given pictures of different types of country roads (e.g. lanes through fields, mountain roads, forest tracks) on which there are no people, vehicles or animals. When they have examined their pictures they are asked to imagine they are standing on that road, and to note down their responses to the following:

a) something they can see outside their picture to their left, which we can't see;

b)   something they can hear;

c)   something they can see outside their picture to their right, which we can't see;

d)   something they can smell;

e)   something small they find on the road, pick up and take home with them;

f)   something they see in front of them which they do not like when they walk down the road and out of the picture.

The students then discuss their responses with partners – I usually ask them to talk to someone with a similar picture to theirs and someone with a very different picture. The result is always a lengthy conversation, initially about their immediate responses to the verbal stimuli, followed by discussion of the reasons for each response and then, frequently, by talk about the places, what they remind them of, etc.

What might we do with visuals in coursebooks?

It seems to me that having over 50 per cent of the pictures in a given coursebook used for purely decorative purposes is a great waste of effort on the part of the publisher and a great waste of opportunity for the language learner and teacher. I do not doubt that many teachers use the decorative pictures accompanying, say, reading passages, for arousing interest in and/or awareness of topic by discussing what the learners can see in the pictures. However, let us see what we find in the coursebook.

Look at the page from Unit 10 of *Outcomes Intermediate*, which is fairly typical of the use of decorative pictures (see Figure 7.1). First, there is a sense in which the use of the picture feels deceitful, in that it is in colour when the rest of the page isn't so that one's eye is automatically attracted to it, that it takes up an area of 189cm² out of the whole 588cm² of the page – one-third, and yet despite the importance that colour and size affords it, it is not used directly.
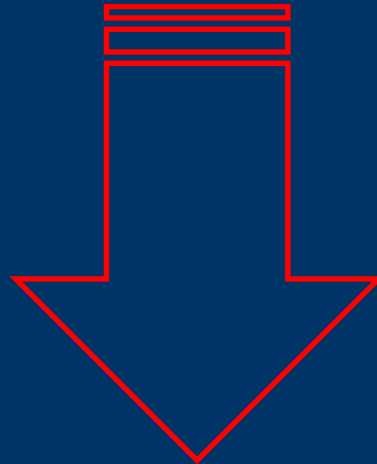
SPEAKING

A Work in pairs. Discuss these questions:
- Have you been out anywhere recently?
- Where did you go?
- How was it?

VOCABULARY Describing an event

A Match 1–8 with a–h.
1 It was really good, but they were quite weird paintings.
2 It's OK – a bit overrated, though.
3 It was really moving.
4 It was boiling hot.
5 It was completely sold out.
6 It's very trendy – full of young, beautiful people.
7 They were rubbish – just very dull.
8 Amazing. There was such a great atmosphere.

a It wasn't as brilliant as everyone's been saying.
b I can't really describe them or say why I like them!
c I was sweating like crazy.
d It was absolutely packed.
e I was in tears by the end.
f The music, the people, everything.
g I felt a bit out of place.
h We actually left halfway through.

B Decide if the answers could refer to a film, club, play, exhibition or gig. More than one answer may be possible.

C Work in pairs. Try to remember as much of the language in exercise A as you can.
Student A: ask How was the ... ?
Student B: close your book and give an appropriate answer from exercise A.

D Tell each other about some films / clubs / plays / exhibitions you think are: great / overrated / moving / trendy / rubbish / weird.

PRONUNCIATION Intonation and lists

When we give our opinion about things we have seen, we often list what we liked or disliked. As we say a list of words, the intonation goes up on each word until the last one, when it goes down. We often finish these lists by adding everything.

A ♦ 10.4 Listen to these lists and repeat them.
It was great. The special effects, the soundtrack, everything!
It was awful. The music, the venue, everything!
It was terrific. The acting, the scenery, everything!

B Work in pairs. Take turns saying these sentences.
Student A: ask What was so good / bad about it?
Student B: give the answer.

1 The food, the service, everything. It was fantastic.
2 The people, the music, everything. It was just brilliant.
3 The story, the acting, everything. It was one of the worst things I've seen in a long time.
4 The music, the dancing, everything. It was dreadful.
5 The hotel, the countryside, everything. It was great.
6 The weather, the place, everything. We had a great time.
7 The special effects, the soundtrack, everything. It was one of the best things I've seen in ages.
8 The scenery, the direction, everything. It was really bad.

### C Work in pairs. What do you think the sentences in exercise B are describing?

D Tell your partner about a great / terrible time you had on holiday / at a cinema / theatre / restaurant / hotel / party, etc. Use the patterns in exercise B. Add some more details with other language you have learned in this unit.

LANGUAGE PATTERNS

Write the sentences in your language. Translate them back into English. Compare your English to the original.
It was one of the worst things I've seen in a long time.
It was one of the best things I've seen in ages.
It's one of the worst clubs I've ever been to.
He's one of nicest people I've ever met.
It's the nicest thing anyone's ever done for me.
It's the best book I've read in ages.

FIGURE 7.1 *Page 74 from* Outcomes Intermediate.
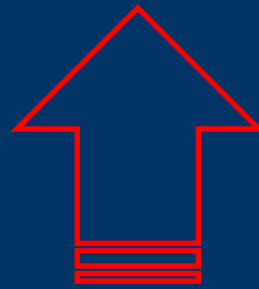
The page works through a series of nine activities under three headings: Speaking (1), Vocabulary (4), and Pronunciation (4). They all deal with aspects of the topic of talking about going out to different events and entertainment. What is actually happening in the picture is not clear, but it would seem to be young Japanese people at a rock concert. It therefore relates clearly to some of the sentences in Vocabulary exercise A and could relate to Vocabulary exercise D and Pronunciation exercises A and B, too, without being directly referred to. All the exercises aim to help students describe attendance at events using more interesting and colourful language.

So the picture provides a context of a kind, however it is not used for any linguistic purpose. The activities would work just as well without the picture. Students will almost certainly describe events they have attended better because of the written information given and the examples they hear on the recording, not because of the picture. Supposing the author, editor and designer wanted to keep the picture and texts more or less as they are, it would have been very easy to lead into the language tasks through some picture-related discussion, using rubrics such as:
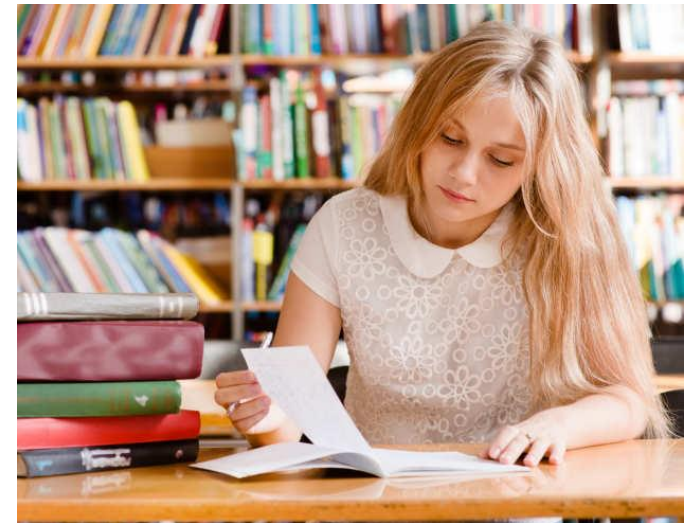
What kind of events do young people enjoy going out to in the evenings and at weekends?

How do young people dress when they go to a rock concert?

Look at the picture below. What nationality do you think these people are? Are they dressed and behaving like young people at a concert in your country? Why/ why not?

How do you think they are feeling?

And it is this issue of dealing only with what is seen, or dealing with what the learner knows, thinks or deduces which I would like to touch on now. Pit Corder was, to my knowledge, the first to make the distinction between 'talking about' a picture and 'talking with' a picture (1966, p. 35). If you talk about a picture you are limited and constrained by what you can see – 'there are some young people, probably Japanese, at a concert. . . . Some of them are dancing and others are. . . .' It is factual and visible. It is also useful to revise some bits of the language system.

However, this need not be an end in itself, but the way into talking with the picture: 'The girl with the blonde hair looks as if she's enjoying herself dancing, and this guy in the red hat and white glasses reminds me of someone I saw at the last concert I went to . . . he was. . . .'. Here, with a suitable task, the picture allows learners to bring their own reality to the lesson. Coursebooks seem to offer very few opportunities to use pictures to stimulate their own inner meanings.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to show the nature of typical illustration used in British ELT coursebooks aimed at young adults and adults. It has shown that a majority of pictures included are used only for decorative purposes, and that those used for language purposes tend to concentrate on low-level language skills related to basic language manipulation. It has suggested how such materials might be improved, and has gone on to exemplify the type of materials which is deemed necessary for a more meaningful and involved kind of language learning experience.
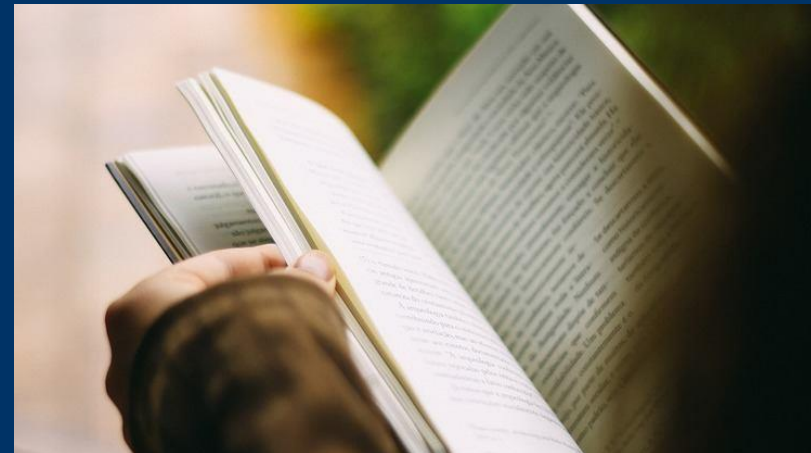
VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS AS EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

| 1	Learning with visual representations: domains addressed by research
2	Visuals in FLT
3	How language learners use pictures: A study

Learning with visual representations: domains addressed by research

A familiar arena in which text and image interact is the foreign language coursebook. But though few publishers today would contemplate launching a language learning series that was not replete with attractive illustrations, there is a striking dearth of research on the uses, effects and effectiveness of visual representations in foreign language learning and teaching (FLT). By contrast, hundreds of empirical studies focusing on instructional visuals in natural science and technical domains have been published since the 1960s.
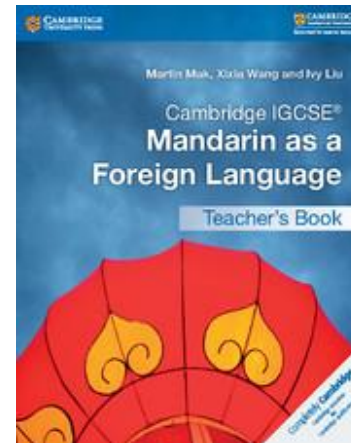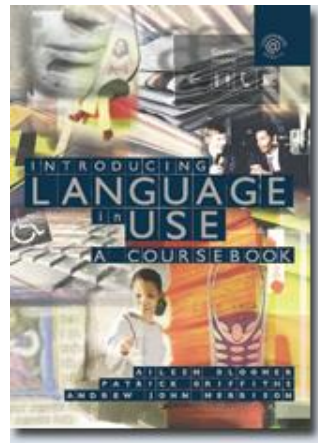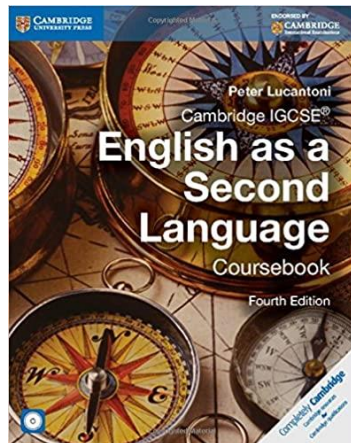
research in these areas continues apace, with the focus shifting in recent years from the question of what kinds of pictures and graphics produce learning effects to the exploration of the effective use of visuals to reduce cognitive load and support schema formation.

Mainstream research on learning with pictures has largely avoided material from the social sciences and humanities, however, possibly due to the difficulty of constructing valid, reliable and quantifiable lab-style experiments to explore knowledge acquisition in these areas. Similar difficulties with research design might also explain why there has been so little work on pictures in foreign language learning.

the material to be learnt, the learning and instructional goals, and the types of visuals used in science and technology instruction differ fundamentally from those in FLT.

the question for the learners is how effectively they are able to use the visuals to develop their language skills. These differences in how visuals ideally support learning in the two domains have implications that go beyond research design, unfortunately. They also mean that the insights offered by the extensive research on visuals in science and technology instruction are, for the most part, not applicable to FLT at all.

Nevertheless, on the basis of research in completely dissimilar contexts, Weidenmann (1989), Schnotz and Bannert (1999) and Tang (1991) have all arrived at a general conclusion which holds good for pictures and graphics in any kind of instruction. It is that visual representations can only be effective in instructional contexts if they are perceived as bearers of significant, serious information which is clearly relevant to the task at hand, and are processed attentively in the expectation of some kind of learning gain or better management of the task.

publishers plainly believe that abundant pictures and graphics are essential in coursebooks for the language classroom.

Few pictures served decorative purposes alone. Nevertheless, the majority appeared not to have been conceived from the outset as an integral part of the task or activity in question, nor to have identifiable, transparent functions arising primarily from methodologically well-founded language-teaching considerations.

Teachers believe that this is not to suggest they were superfluous or merely decorative: they seemed to fulfil their (presumably intended) functions of providing visual glosses, intercultural information, contextualization of language, pragmatic cues, aids to comprehension, impulses for language production, mnemonic effects, etc. adequately – but, as it were, invisibly.

3 How language learners use pictures: A study

3.1. Premises, aims, design

3.2. Materials and participants

3.3. Authenticity

3.4. Findings

3.1. Premises, aims, design

It was with these questions in mind that I set out to gather empirical data which would make it possible to examine how frequent divergent interpretations really were, and also throw light on advanced learners' processing, understanding and use of visuals in an authentic classroom activity designed to foster discussion skills

As already noted, there is a vast difference between the science or technology classroom and the communicative language classroom in terms of the activities that go on and the roles visual representations play in them. One common and vital function of pictorial elements in language learning materials, especially beyond beginner level, is to provide impulses for language practice and production. Accordingly, the study described here focused on visuals with this kind of function, using a writing/speaking task modelled loosely on a picture-based conversation activity (Jones 1997: 13) I had carried out dozens of times in the classroom.

3.2. Materials and participants

The ideas for the ten drawings I prepared for the study came from intercultural information given in guidelines for international business contacts, student exchanges and advice for travelers. By producing my own drawings, I was able to reflect on difficulties in encoding certain kinds of visual information, and also to state with certainty what the pictures had been intended to show

. I concede at once that the intended meanings of the pictures may have simply been obscured by sloppy drawing in some cases. It cannot be emphasized enough, however, that the aim of the study was not to discover whether the participants interpreted the pictures "correctly" or not. Nor was it to ascertain whether the nature of the pictures had any effect on the successful performance of the task. If, whilst recording their responses, learners expressed concerns about not stating the "right" meaning, they were told that any interpretations they arrived at were valid. In the subsequent analysis picture interpretations were categorized as mainstream or divergent, not right or wrong.

3.3. Authenticity

The task, as stated before, was based on an authentic speaking exercise, and the materials were conceived from the outset not in terms of ambiguous, challenging or culturally specific images designed to elicit flamboyant interpretations. Rather, the approach was to prepare a viable teaching unit in which participants had to make use of pictorial material: this was preceded by a phase in which the usually tacit and unquestioned process of interpreting the visual information was made manifest. To obtain insights into the picture interpretations and their implications when carrying out the task under these realistic conditions, it was essential that the learners were not told in advance that they would be going on to discuss differing cultural or personal conceptions of desirable behavior.

It was anticipated that different views would be expressed, triggering a lively, spontaneous discussion. Different opinions are what fuel the exercise; and what makes it so attractive for research on learners' use of pictures is the fact that the essential impulses for verbal interaction are provided in pictorial form.

3.4. Findings

The data did not suggest that divergent interpretations were either very frequent or extreme . For the most part, the participants' statements of what was going on in the pictures coincided with the intended meanings. Where divergent interpretations did come to light, many were classified as "non-intrusive". That is, they were related to trivial details (identifying an object intended to be a milk-jug as a coffee-pot, for instance) and would have been unlikely to lead to serious miscommunication in the classroom.

My claim is that the data reveal how the requirements of the language practice task (as the learners understood them), that is, the verbal production component of the activity, took clear precedence over picture processing, which was perceived merely as a means to a (verbal) end and carried out as economically and mechanically as possible.

References

Slides 2-8

 EVALUATING VISUAL ELEMENTS IN TWO EFL TEXTBOOKS
Ali Roohani ,Mohammad Sharifi ,*Shahrekord University, Iran*
email: roohani.ali@gmail.com, sharifimohammad66@gmail.com
And **Impact of Visual Aids in Enhancing the Learning Process Case
Research: District Dera Ghazi Khan.**
Ghulam Shabiralyani1*, Khuram Shahzad Hasan2, Naqvi Hamad3, Nadeem
Iqbal4, 1,2GC University Faisalabad, Punjab Pakistan, 3Policy and Strategic
Planning Unit, Health Department Punjab,
Pakistan, 4Ghazi University Dera Ghazi Khan, Punjab Pakistan.

Slides 9-40

Developing Materials for Language Teaching book, Part B, Chapter7, The Visual
Elements in EFL Coursebooks , David A. Hill

Slides 41-56

VISUAL PERESENTATIONS AS EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA IN FOREIGN
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Thanks for your attention.