

Basque textbooks during the 20th century: the contents and the context

Begoña Bilbao*, Gurutze Ezkurdia**, Karmele Perez Urraza*

* EHU: Didaktika eta Eskola Antolakuntza saila

**EHU: Hezkuntzaren Teoria eta Historia saila

topbibib@lg.ehu.es, hdpezarg@lg.ehu.es, toppeurk@vc.ehu.es

Abstract

The technological improvements of the 19th century increased the presence of iconography in textbooks: they made the understanding easier and became complement of the text. Textbooks' contents have never been the same, and have always been produced differently. When it comes to the quality of information, the choice of how and when the content is detailed is important, as it changes the message. We have limited six options to put the content into context: socio-cultural, legal, mixed, foreign, State-based and non-specified references. Therefore, in the last decade of the century the looser is the socio-cultural perspective, and the presence it has in the textbooks of the last decade of the century drops to the half.

Laburpena

XIX. mendean izan ziren aurrerapen teknologikoen ondorioz, garrantzi handiagoa eman zitzaion testuliburuaren ikonografiari, testuak ulerterrazago bihurtuz eta informazio gehiago erantsiz. Handik aurrera guztiz aldatu dira testuliburuaren edukiak, eta beti ere modu desberdinean sortu dira. Testuliburuetan ematen den informazioari dagokionez, oso garrantzitsua da erabakitzea noiz eta nola zehazten diren edukiak, zeren erabaki horrek mezuari eragingo baitio. Edukiak testuinguruan txertatzeko moduak direla eta, sei aukera zehaztu ditugu lan honetan: sozio-kulturala, juridikoa, era askotakoa, atzerrikoa, Estatuari dagokiona eta erreferentzia zehaztugabeak. Horren ondorioz, XX. mendearen azken hamarraldian ikuspuntu sozio-kulturala galtzaile irten da, zeren erdira jaitsi baitzen testuliburuetan zeukan presentzia.

Keywords : Textbook, curriculum, iconography, content, context.

Hitz gakoak : Testuliburu, curriculum, ikonografia, eduki, testuinguru.

1. Introduction

Despite the importance school and textbooks have on the development of identity is accepted, the relevance that their contents provide to hegemonic or social and cultural identity should be defined, because, while the first one legitimates knowledge, the second one is the identity of resistance.

We have researched the characteristics of the textbooks used in the Basque Country during the 20th century –the shape and the content-, as well as their development, because there are significant differences between the ones published in the early 20th century and the ones published at the end of the century.

The research is limited to 70 Basque textbooks. We have set three main periods to explain the development of Basque textbooks. The first period goes from 1876 to 1974: it brought the abolition of the law code, and was the time of the Basque Renaissance, as well as of the creation of the Basque Government, of the Ikastolas and of the unified Basque language. The second period goes from 1975 to 1990, time of the development of Basque

schools and commercial publishing houses. Many textbooks were published during the third period, 1991-2000, most of them in publishing houses outside the Basque Country.

2. Shape characteristics of textbooks

The formal shape of textbooks has visibly evolved throughout the century. The first books were small, well printed, had various shapes, few pages and icons, and most of them were only published in black and white.

From the 60's up to date, as established by the new print patterns, the size of textbooks became more uniform, bigger, with more pages, icons and colours. Even if books from the beginning of the century had a single icon per page, it should be highlighted that some Basque and French books showed more than one, thereby following European trends. By the end of the century trends changed and the number of icons per page grew, but textbooks written in Basque followed the model set by Spanish textbooks.

Textbooks' pages show three different elements: the icon, the text and blank spaces. These elements have

not always appeared with the same frequency throughout the 20th century. The table below shows the number of pages containing icons, text or blank spaces, and is divided into periods.

	Icons	Text	Blank spaces
1st period (1876-1974)	1.790	837	65
2nd period (1975-1990)	4.224	340	80
3rd period (1991-2000)	5.715	207	52

1st table: Arrangement of pages in textbooks

The presence of icons increases as time goes by. In the third period, the last ten years of the century, the most frequent ones were pages with icons. The text showed the opposite trend: the number of pages with just text dropped, and most of the pages were full of icons. With regard to blank spaces, it should be pointed out that, as a result of typographical modifications, their use increased.

The technological improvements of the 19th century increased the presence of iconography in textbooks: they made the understanding easier and became a complement of the text. At the end of the 20th century, image, iconography, had a significant importance: thanks to technological development, image is used very often, in all kinds of media.

The most important change in the use of iconography happened from the 1st to the 2nd period. Textbook manufacturing left behind old methods, and started using new iconography systems evolved from technological improvements. In the 2nd period, textbook manufacturing changed thanks to photography, computers, and modern typographies. But it is the 3rd period where the influence of all those new technologies is best reflected: the text was usually polychrome, and black and white prints were only used to achieve a historical perspective.

However, the most important samples of iconography in Basque textbooks can be found in the 1st and 2nd periods. During these two periods, Europe was the model for Basque textbook manufacturing. As Arrien wrote (1987, 116) the pedagogues from this country had close relationships with European pedagogues such as Ferriere, Montessori, Decroly, etc., who made use of modern textbook manufacturing in pedagogy, education and design. During that period of time, Basque education was mainly focused on the bilingual model. Olano and Landeta, among others, researched useful methods and applications for

Europe's bilingual education, and were interested in finding suitable solutions and precise applications (Landeta 1919, 1923, 1932; Olano, 1936).

The use of technology can modify the design of textbooks, covers and contents. These books give a new use to colour, page makeup and space, as well as to multimedia formats.

Icons may have a different distribution within the same page. In fact, their position has a substantial importance. Some authors consider that icons are usually placed in the middle or top part of the page when they want to be highlighted.

As far as the spatial position of icons on the surface of the page is concerned, we have found evident changes from the beginning to the end of the 20th century. At the beginning of the century, it is the top half of the text where most icons are placed. By mid-century, the position of icons changes. Even if many icons are still placed on the top half, during the second period we can see them placed on the right side of the page, from top to bottom.

That is the new position, which was established at the end of the century. Here the right side of the page has more importance than the left side. It seems that marketing strategies had an important influence in textbook manufacturing. These techniques wish to attract readers, arouse their interest and attention. Most icons are placed on the right side of the page, just on the way to the next page.

3. About the content of textbooks

We have considered the development of textbook manufacturing, and have analysed the three periods to examine the data. The first period was the longest one, but there were not any important changes. Those publications clearly reflect the situation and events of the time, due to the fact that most of them were published in Basque, in the south of the Basque Country. Political changes came in the 70's, when the Basque public educational model was established, which led to an increase in textbooks produced in Basque.

The next important change came in 1990, as a result of the new law from the south of the Basque Country. These situations are the cause of the different distribution of contents in each period. Textbooks' contents have never been the same, and have always been produced differently.

The references used to select the contents have also evolved. At the beginning and at the end of the century different contexts were used to specify each content. In this section, we will explain how those contents have evolved throughout the periods, depending on the language of each textbook. When it comes to the quality of information, the choice of how and when the content is detailed is important, as it changes the message. We have limited six options to put the content into context: socio-cultural, legal, mixed, foreign, State-based and non-specified references.

Due to the fact that all contents are differently focused, we have defined and used these perspectives in the analysis of textbook contents:

- Socio-cultural: when the contents are close to the socio-cultural environment. The context in which they are explained is the Basque Country.
- Legal (regional) when the context is the regional organization of Spain.
- Mixed: it includes the mentioned two.
- Hegemonic (state-based): when the contents refer to the State.
- Foreign: when the context is another country, not the Basque Country neither Spain nor France.
- Non-specified: when the contents are not in relation with an specific context.

Although throughout the century not all the contexts had the same importance, observing the diagram of the whole century we can see the importance each context has in textbooks.

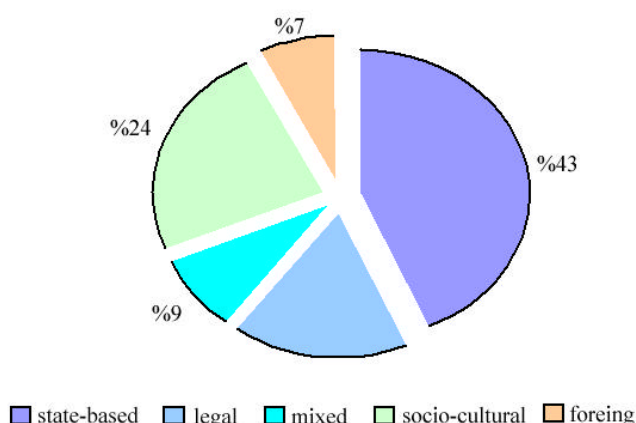


Figure 1: Frequency of Context Types throughout the 20th Century

The analysis of the data shows that there are many non-specified contents, and that they exceed the half of all the data, reaching the 61%. The specified contents are limited to the 39%, despite the fluctuations each context had throughout the century.

The diagram shows the frequency given to each context in the specified contents. The contents of textbooks from the south of the Basque Country –ruled by the Spanish Government- and from the north of the Basque Country –ruled by the French Government-, show a significant link with the State, reaching the 43%. The socio-cultural perspective consists of only the 24% of all contents. Almost a quarter part of these contents are located in the Basque Country. Those which reflect the legal organization reach the 17%, and the mixed perspective reaches the 9% of the contents. Finally, the contents which refer to foreign countries hardly reach the 7%.

If we analyse the nature of contents according to the periods of the 20th century, we will observe that in the first textbooks –without considering the non-defined contents-, the only references are socio-cultural, of the state, or related to foreign countries.

The state is the main context, and the importance given to the socio-cultural basis is outstandingly minor. The contents of the textbooks of this period is divided, and while some are state-based, others take the Basque Country as their reference.

The language of textbooks might influence in their nature, because the reference of those published in Basque is the Basque Country. The reference of the textbooks published in Spanish is Spain, and of those published in French, France.

The 70's brought a political change. Basque teaching was established in the public education system of the south of the Basque Country, therefore increasing the production of textbooks written in Basque. However, if we observe their nature, the socio-cultural basis -which until that moment was the 100% - dropped from that moment on.

We have clearly proved that the data of the last decade of the century is totally different. The regional and mixed perspectives from the previous period are highlighted –reflecting the political-administrative condition of the south of the Basque Country-, as, together with the state based, it gathers the highest percentages of the context of contents.

Therefore, the looser is the socio-cultural perspective, and the presence it has in the textbooks of the last decade of the century drops to the half.

4. Content of textbooks vs language

The second bar chart shows the differences between textbooks written in each language. The colours represent the differences between languages, and, while they are state-based in French, the widest socio-cultural basis appears in those written in Basque.

Looking at the context of contents in each language, we can see that the books written in French show a clear dichotomy with a 50% of state and non-specified references. The dichotomy of contents is inversely proportional, and the more state-based it is, the lower the proportion of non-specified contents is, and vice versa. It is obvious that, as in those books most of the contents are linked with the state context, there are not any socio-cultural, legal or mixed perspectives.

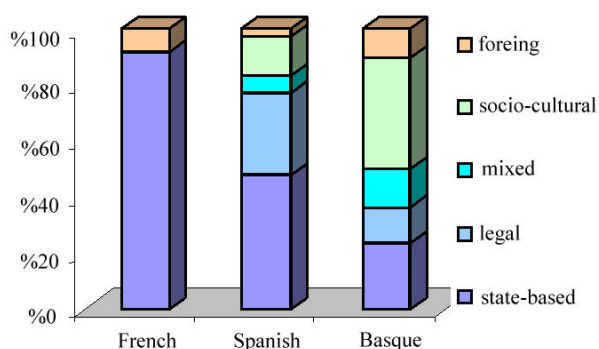


Figure 2: Context Type by Language

As we have already mentioned, in most of the contents which are studied in French the reference is the state, and the rest are linked to foreign countries. In general, content appears in the context of the state, and students link the state to the content.

The state or the legal and mixed context related to it, are also the most used in textbooks written in Spanish. In books written in Basque and Spanish, however, the socio-cultural, legal and mixed context are very common. It must be highlighted that non-specified contents have a similar presence in both languages, reaching the 61,01% in those written in Basque, and the 63,06% in those written in Spanish.

In general, content appears in the context of the state, and students link the state to the content. It happens the same with textbooks written in Spanish, as the state or the regional and mixed context, all coming

from the same root, are the most used. Nevertheless, despite the use is poor, we can't affirm that the socio-cultural context does not appear.

Half of the specified contents of textbooks published in Basque involve a socio-cultural basis, and the other half a state, legal and mixed reference.

Knowledge from many countries around the world is studied, and foreign countries are more relevant than in French and in Spanish.

Anyway, textbooks written in Basque and Spanish reflect similar contexts, and, in spite of the differences in data percentages, that similarity shows that textbooks produced in Basque are a long way from those produced in French, and nearer from those produced in Spanish.

However, in Basque textbooks the presence of the mixed context doubles its presence in Spanish textbooks. This superiority might have more than one source, but we consider that some of them have had an important influence. In some cases the cause might be the translation, because the Spanish *País Vasco* is translated as *Euskal Herria*, and, even if they had the same meaning, nowadays-the concept- *País Vasco* is identified with Autonomous Community of Euskadi. In others, it can be the consequence of the translation, going beyond the Spanish *País Vasco* and trying to use *Euskal Herria*. The cause of the presence of the mixed context could be found in the lack of definition of the different realities, or in the fact of having different political ideologies.

In addition to those language differences, if we refer to the publishing place of books, we will have retain the interpretation made up to date, as the mentioned tendencies increase. The evolution of each context is not the same in textbooks produced in the Basque Country or outside the Basque Country. In the last ones the contents are located in the state and in the autonomous region, and in textbooks produced in the Basque Country the socio-cultural basis is significant.

5. The place of publication of textbooks

If we think about the place of publication, we will easily observe that it has changed throughout the century. At the beginning of the century most textbooks were published in the Basque Country, but at the end of the century the production substantially decreased. However, this research is based on textbooks written in Basque. The third bar chart shows how, at the end of the century, most publications took place outside the Basque Country.

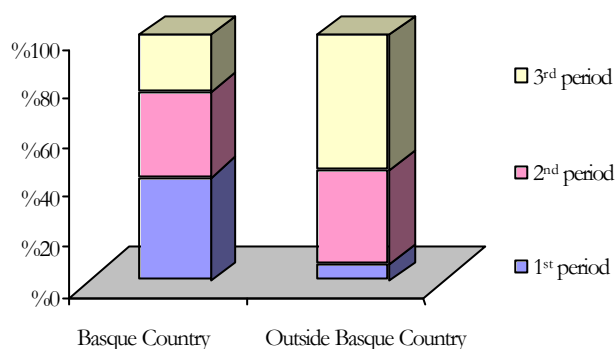


Figure 3: Publication Place by Period

The number of textbooks published in the Basque Country is decreasing. At the beginning of the century most textbooks were published in the Basque Country, but at the end of the century the production substantially decreased. Even if the place of publication of textbooks written in Basque, Spanish or French is different, it should be highlighted that most of those written in Basque are published in Madrid, concretely the 38%. Only the 15% and the %8 are published in Bilbao and San Sebastian.

Therefore, we can affirm that the textbook, the main teaching resource in the schools of the Basque Country, is produced abroad at the end of the 20th century. Consequently, it is easy to understand why the way of putting the content into context is different, as the context of books produced here and abroad is not the same.

In general, the textbooks produced here and in the schools of the Basque Country are different from those which important publishing houses produce abroad. While some are more hegemonic, others are more linked to the socio-cultural context. Those links have changed in each period of the 20th century. While in the textbooks of the first and second periods the presence of the hegemonic identity grows, the presence of the socio-cultural identity drops, in favour of the first one.

As a conclusion, it should be mentioned that for students in the Basque Country it is difficult to perceive the whole reality of the Basque Speaking Land through textbooks.

6. Aipamenak

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