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***Visual Equality or Visual Bias?  
The Visibility of Multiculturalism in Language Course-books***

This paper discusses the visual representation of multiculturalism in language course-books designed for global audiences. The study is based on a quantitative and qualitative visual analysis of three language course-books: the English *New Headway*; the French *Le Nouveau Sans Frontières*; and the Italian *Progetto Italiano*. The aim of the visual analysis was to define the extent to which ethnic diversity is represented. The qualitative analysis, going beyond the typical visual design tendencies, helped detect some highly specific ways in which various minority ethnic groups are portrayed, i. e. whether they are presented as equals to the ethnic majority, or as inferior or possibly superior. Since language course-books are particularly able to affect language learners' behaviour with fellow non-native speakers of the target language, course-book content and curriculum design needs to be informed by visual discourse analysis in order to avoid potential representational biases and perpetuating discrimination. The results of the present study show that such undesirable visual biases occur in very typical forms and configurations.



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