

## Visual Culture of Foreign Languages: What to do with cultural stereotypes?

Aurelie Zannier-Wahengo<sup>1</sup>  
University of Namibia

### Abstract:

*Although previous studies have shown that learners' visual representations of a culture and its community can affect performance and motivation in the language acquisition process, there are no studies to date on how students engage and interpret the visuals of foreign cultures. Understanding students' visual representations of foreign cultures will inform educators about their teaching strategies and classroom practices when conveying the visual cultural content of the foreign language to students. This should also help students to understand their sometimes overly stereotypical representations of foreign culture and to view learning the cultural content of the foreign language as a useful and realistic intercultural experience. This study explores students' visual representations of foreign cultures. The study was conducted at the University of Namibia in 2022, and the study population was divided into three groups of participants: 21 beginner-level students learning one of the following foreign languages offered in the Department of Humanities and Arts (Chinese, French, Spanish and Portuguese), 24 Visual Arts students enrolled in Visual Culture course but not registered in foreign languages and four foreign languages lecturers from the Department of Humanities and Arts. A quantitative method was used with language students and lecturers through the distribution of online questionnaires. Visual students were requested to produce an artistic work on any medium representing a foreign culture they are not familiar with. Students' view of the visual culture of foreign languages, both foreign language learners and non-learners, generally stereotyped the foreign culture and underestimated its diversity. From the lecturers' perspectives, the results showed that all of them include visual cultural material in their teaching, but half of them have really reflected on the cultural content of their teaching resource nor are they well aware of the critical cultural competencies of their students.*

**Keywords:** *visual representations, foreign culture teaching, visual culture, stereotypes*

### Background of the Study

The rapid emergence of 21st-century visual technologies marks the advent of exponential interest in visual culture as a new discipline of cultural and social studies. According to Mirzoeff (1998) "Visual culture is concerned with visual events in which information, meaning or pleasure is sought by the consumer in an interface with visual technology" (p. 3). He explains that "visual culture does not depend on pictures but on this modern tendency to picture or visualise existence" (p. 7). He finally adds that "the gap between the wealth of visual experience in contemporary culture and the ability to analyse that observation marks both the opportunity and the need for visual culture as a field of study."

Fiske (1998) points out that "Technology may determine what is shown, but society determines what is seen" (p. 156). Visual culture goes hand in hand with our socio-cultural context and is a historical work. It is also a mirror of society that gives a general image of how cultures are represented and perceived. Visual culture is part of our daily lives and that of our students, and it

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<sup>1</sup> **Aur lie Zannier-Wahengo** is a Senior Lecturer of French at the University of Namibia. She holds a Master's degree in Teaching French as a Foreign Language. Her research interests encompass multilingualism, teaching methods, French for Specific Purposes, African Francophone literature, and transculturalism.

completely escapes the academic framework. It is found everywhere, in the street, in the written press, on television and especially on the web. Today, students access media instantly and completely independently. It is therefore essential that they are guided by their educators so that they can analyse and critique the visual representations of foreign cultures encountered through print, audiovisual and digital visual media. The visual culture of foreign language (FL) appears mainly in teaching materials used in the classroom. The University of Namibia (UNAM) lecturers of Mandarin, French, Portuguese and Spanish all use a textbook as their primary teaching tool. Three of them supplement their activities in the manual with other paper or digital documents.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CCERL) gives an important place to cultural content, which, according to the Council of Europe, allows learners to fully understand the way of life and the mentality of other peoples as well as their cultural heritage. More recently, the Council of Europe published a complementary guide to the CCERL devoted to the notions of plurilingualism and interculturalism. The Guide for the Development and Implementation of Curricula for Plurilingual and Intercultural Education (Beacco et al., 2026) shows the crucial role of these concepts in the teaching of foreign languages. The guide explains that plurilingual and intercultural education contributes to quality education; that is, acquisition of skills, knowledge, dispositions and attitudes; diversity of learning experiences; cultural constructions of individual and collective identity.

The *Dictionnaire de didactique de français langue étrangère et seconde* (2003) looks back at the origin of the word “intercultural” (p. 136-138), which appeared in the field of education in the 1970s during post-war migrations and the period of reconstruction, and has transformed French society into a multicultural society. In the teaching of FLs, intercultural activities in the French as a Foreign Language (FFL) class involve “exchange between different cultures, articulation, connections and mutual enrichment” (2003, p. 136). The definition of the notion of interculturality continues: “[It] is based on the fundamental principle that cultures are equal in dignity and that on an ethical level, they must be treated as such with mutual respect” (2003, p. 237).

For educators and practitioners of arts, languages and cultures, visual supports (photographs, paper, audiovisuals or digital documents) are basic multimedia tools used in the classroom. Electronic resources are considered by language teachers as a bottomless well of varied and recent educational material. In addition, teaching FL through a multimedia educational device allows interactivity, hypertextuality, multimodality and multireferentiality. Finally, digital material provides access to recent authentic documents of great diversity, highly recommended in FL teaching.

The visual and cultural elements of FL textbooks have been widely studied across many geographies and from different perspectives. However, research has primarily focused on gender equity, marginalised communities, and racial representations. To improve the cultural and visual content of textbooks, Narcy-Combes (2011) proposed collaborative work between teachers and textbook authors to “overcome the problem of cultural ignorance between textbook authors and learners” (p. 33). On a pedagogical level, Hamiloglu (2013) highlights the importance of FL teachers on how to approach the transmission of the target culture to learners. He explains that Turkish teachers of English LE at a university in Istanbul admit to not really evaluating the cultural content they transmit to students. Participants readily accepted the pre-established selection of textbooks and preferred international content over localised content.

On another hand, when the teaching of FL takes place abroad, especially in quite distant cultures, the intercultural dimension becomes essential. The study conducted by Baharami (2015) with 50 FFL teachers from the Kish Language Institute in Iran reveals that the cultural content presented in the Total English Series manual is judged by the participants as too Western, without opening up to their own culture and almost always incompatible with their

cultural environment. He adds that this group of teachers preferentially devotes little time to the cultural activities proposed in their textbooks and prefers to develop educational material according to their needs in the country. This example shows that some FL teachers abroad can be resistant to the foreign culture they teach. However, we can imagine that they do not constitute the majority of FL teachers.

If foreign textbooks still struggle to integrate the true multicultural reality of their country and intercultural activities, FL teachers working abroad are expected to understand and adapt their content and their way of teaching according to their audience, which comes from a unique learning culture and cultural references sometimes far from the values of the culture studied. In Higher Education, lecturers generally decide the content of their courses: they must, therefore, decide on the culture taught. For example, in the case of the Portuguese and French FLs, we cannot ignore the linguistic and cultural varieties of their cultures across Lusophone and Francophone countries, particularly on the South American and African continents.

Until now, few scientific studies have focused on the visual representations of students' FL culture. The *Dictionnaire de didactique de français langue étrangère et seconde* (2003) emphasises the importance, in the teaching of a FL, of including learners' representations in the observation of teaching-learning situations (whether visual or other) in order to be able to make relevant didactic choices adapted to the audience and the teaching context and to allow this intercultural encounter between cultures. In this approach, stereotypes are seen as fixed, fossilised representations which lock culture into pseudo-cultural knowledge and teachers should identify and discuss them to provide learners with accurate intercultural perception.

In this article, we will first analyse the visual representations of foreign cultures of 21 beginner-level FL students (Mandarin, French, Spanish and Portuguese) and 24 third-year students enrolled in a visual culture module in the Department of Arts and Humanities at UNAM. Students learning the FL filled in an online questionnaire proposing a series of pictures related to a concept: freedom, party, love, power, holidays and work. The questionnaire also investigated their visual sources. Arts students were asked to produce an artistic piece in any medium representing a foreign language taught at UNAM. Data collected from four lecturers of Spanish, French, Mandarin, and Portuguese provided information on their perspectives on the visual and cultural contents of their teaching and classroom materials. The findings discussion investigated the educational benefit of using stereotypes in class with a student audience as a start to an intercultural dialogue.

## Research Methodology

### ***General Information about Students' Relationship with FL Culture Representation***

To understand the visual representations, two groups of students from the Department of Arts and Humanities were selected: 21 beginner FL students agreed to participate in the research (Table 1) and responded to an online questionnaire offering open-ended questions about foreign culture and images representing foreign culture.

Table 1

*Distribution of the group of participants registered in foreign languages*

	Total Population	Respondents
French	40	8
Portuguese	25	3
Spanish	12	2

Mandarin	10	8
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The group of 24 students from the visual arts section not learning FL were registered for a course in visual culture. This group made it possible to measure whether FL students who were more exposed to visual supports of foreign culture and received cultural courses were more able to analyse and interpret cultural images and detect stereotypes. This group of participants had to propose a visual production (sculpture, collage, photography or drawing) representative of a culture of their choice between Mandarin, Portuguese, Spanish and French. Visual arts students were invited to create an artistic work about a foreign culture that is unfamiliar to them.

Finally, an online questionnaire collected the opinions of teachers from the Mandarin, Spanish, Portuguese and French sections on their point of view on the way in which they transmit their linguistic culture to students.

### **Mapping of the Visual Sources Consulted by FL Students (Figure 1).**

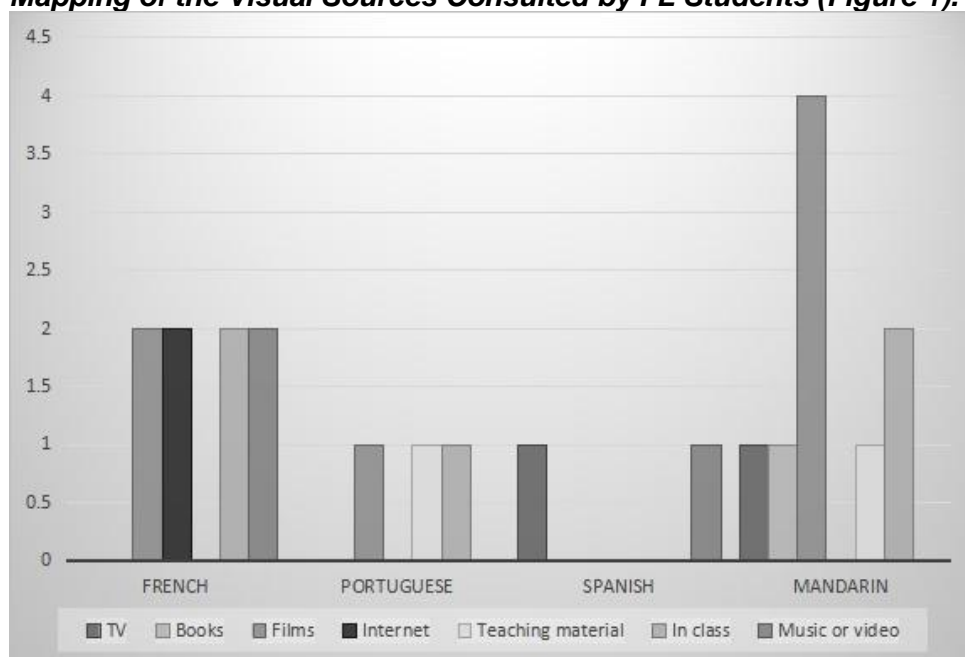


Figure 1. Sources of information on the cultural elements of foreign culture

### **Data Analysis**

Igor Guryanov et al. remind us that “[t]he goal of teaching a foreign language means not only improved communication skills, but also an old cultural and linguistic personality” (2019, p. 116). Ewa Bandura (2011) adds that sociocultural knowledge of cultures depends on the quality of communication. Alsamani (2014) lists several studies, such as those of Cheng 2012, Byram 2012 or Norton and Toohey 2011, which demonstrate that the acquisition of a language is impossible without knowledge of the cultural aspects associated with it. Since culture and language are inextricable, Cheng goes so far as to assert that teaching a language without cultural content will prevent the learner from socialising in the foreign culture and that their linguistic mastery will not allow them to use the language in real situations of daily life.

### **Students’ visual sources**

Asked in the online questionnaire about their visual sources, the students responded quite differently from one FL to another. Figure 1 indicates that learners in the Mandarin, French and Portuguese sections access visual information of the FL mainly in the classroom. Spanish and French students listen to music and watch videos, while Mandarin students watch films. Books

only appear in Mandarin student responses. Finally, French students seem to be the only ones to regularly visit websites.

If we turn to the data obtained from lecturers, we see that these variations can be explained by different classroom practices. For example, the Chinese section provides teaching manuals to students while the other languages work on different media and teaching documents, which may justify that only Mandarin students report using “books”. No student has selected either the written press, radio or social networks. None of the FL lecturers use films in class. Lecturers of French and Spanish occasionally use music videos as a teaching resource. Only the French section systematically offers activities on the Internet. Lecturers explained in their questionnaire that they use visual materials at the frequency indicated in Table 2.

Table 2  
*Frequency of use of visual supports in the FL class*

Mandarin					
Photography	Internet	Video	Authentic Documents	TV	Printing Press
Sometimes	Sometimes	Rarely	Often	Rarely	Rarely
Spanish					
Often	Sometimes	Sometimes	Often	Rarely	Rarely
Portuguese					
Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Often	Rarely	Rarely
French					
Often	Sometimes	Sometimes	Often	Rarely	Rarely

The second group of students, who were not learning FL but enrolled in the visual culture course, they had to produce a visual of a foreign culture among Mandarin, Spanish, French and Portuguese. Out of 24 proposals, 14 were drawings (13 in pencil and 1 painting) and a collage of photos, seven photos from the Internet and from a poster displayed in the corridor of the French section. Two other photos reportedly show an object: Noodles with chopsticks for China and a Christian Dior shopping bag for France.

### **Visual Image Associated with a Word**

The online questionnaire for language students offered a series of open-ended questions about their relationship with the visual culture of the FL. One question asked them to find a word to represent the foreign culture studied. The majority of Mandarin students thought of the words “culture” and “work,” and French students answered “food” and “Paris.” The Portuguese students chose the word “travel” and all the Spanish students thought of the word “interesting”.

### Images Representing a Universal Concept

Participants then had to associate a photo with a universal concept such as “freedom” or “love”. To select the series of photos associated with these words, a list of photos was offered to the four FL lecturers of the department, where they chose the photo that seemed closest to their culture and the one that they considered the most stereotypical. In the same questionnaire, lecturers also elaborated on their classroom practices and their reflection on the visual and cultural culture taught in class. The graphs below present the results for each universal concept tested by language. For the word “freedom”, the two landscape photos (the sea and the view from an aeroplane) caught the attention of the majority of students in all sections; they would therefore be the most popular.

### Freedom



*Figure 2. Chart of Students' Preferred Picture for the word 'Freedom'*

The Spanish lecturer was of the opinion that the photo most representative of Spanish culture was picture 3 of the set of proposed pictures.





Figure 3. Picture 3 for the word 'Freedom'

The lecturer of Portuguese had chosen the following picture as the most representative:



Figure 4. Picture 4 for the word 'Freedom'

The Mandarin lecturer had considered the 'money' photo to be a stereotype and the only three students who chose this photo were from the Mandarin section.



Figure 5. Chart of Mandarin Students' Preferred Picture for the word 'Freedom'

Work and money are strong Chinese cultural values for students, but not for their lecturer. The photo that represents “the family” is important for students of Portuguese and Spanish. As for the photo representing the different religions, it was selected by students from the French and Mandarin sections. If we try to interpret this selection, students may express their knowledge of the French and Chinese conception of secularism and therefore of religious diversity.

The word ‘power’ received the following selection of images:



*Figure 6. Chart of Students' Preferred Pictures for the word 'Power'*

In Figure 6, the photo representing a politician was popular with students of Mandarin, French and Portuguese: it represents the largest proportion. The second photo would be the credit card, then the photo of the soldiers and finally the wind turbine. Lecturers of Portuguese, Mandarin and Spanish themselves have chosen politics as a visual representation of the word “power”.

For the word “love”, the photos represented several types of love: maternal love, family love of grandparents towards their grandchildren, friendly love and love towards animals, as Graph 5 illustrates. It is the young lovers who won the most attention in all language sections combined, followed by love between friends and maternal love.





Figure 7. Chart of Students' Preferred Pictures for the word 'Love'

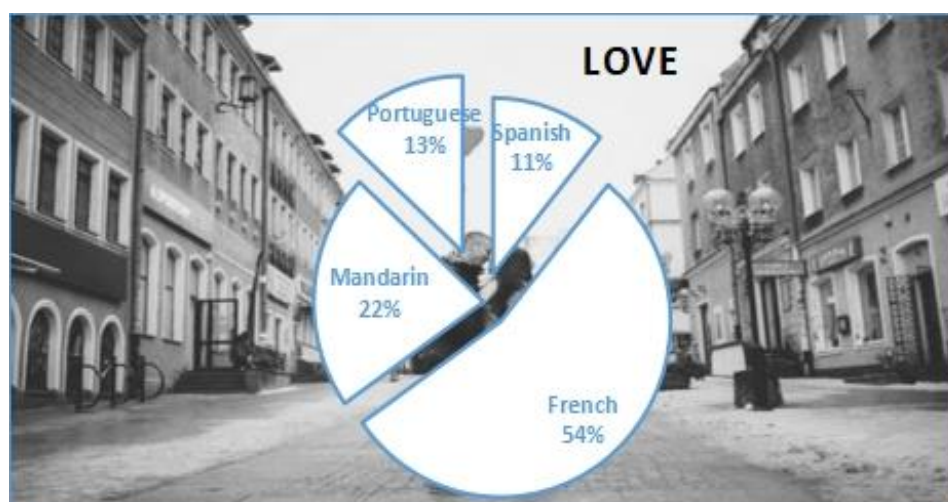


Figure 8. Chart of Students' Preferred Pictures for the word 'Love'

As presented in Figures 7 and 8, if the majority of FFL students chose the photo of the kiss in a Parisian street to represent love, the French teacher - just like the Spanish, Portuguese and Mandarin lecturer - had chosen it as a stereotype and had selected the photo of the mother and her baby as the most appropriate to illustrate the word love in their cultures.

Figure 9 presents the photo chosen for the word "holidays" for the four sections of LE represents a family vacation.



Figure 9. Chart of Students Preferred Pictures for the word 'Holidays'

While the majority of students of all languages chose this photo of a family reunion to illustrate the word "holidays", the lecturers all chose the seaside vacation. The Mandarin lecturer classified this photo as stereotypical.

Holidays at the sea represent the second choice of students, but photos of extreme sports were rarely chosen. The photo of the museum came in third position and was selected by 62% of Mandarin students and 38% of French students.

The word 'party' associated with the idea of having a drink together outside was the first choice of Mandarin students, while for their lecturer, it constituted a stereotype. The French and Portuguese students chose the photo of the party between acquaintances at a chic reception, just like their lecturers. Graph 8 demonstrates that there were few favourable responses for photos of the child's birthday, music concert and drinks at a friend's house.



Figure 10. Chart of Students' Preferred Pictures for the word 'Party'

Figures 11, 12 and 13 provide students' preferred pictures to illustrate the concept of 'work' in the FL culture.

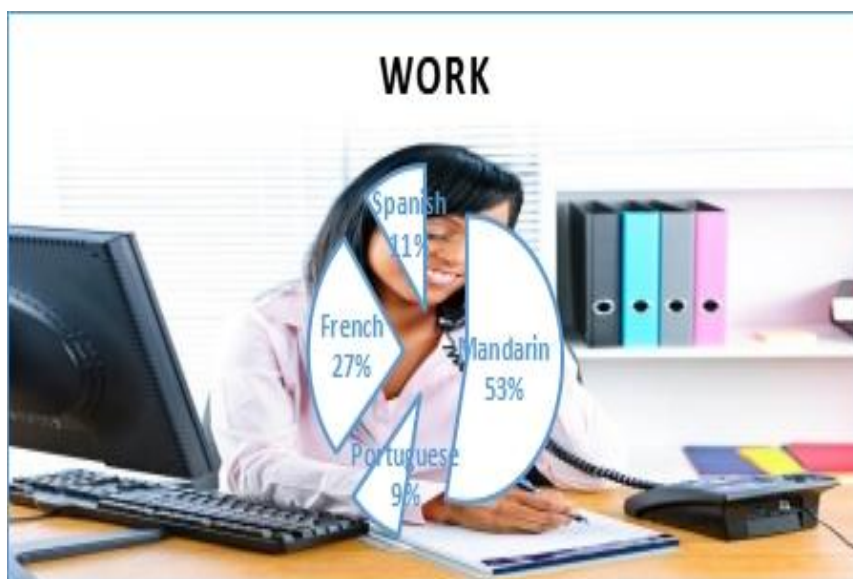


Figure 11: Chart of Students Preferred Pictures for the word 'Work'

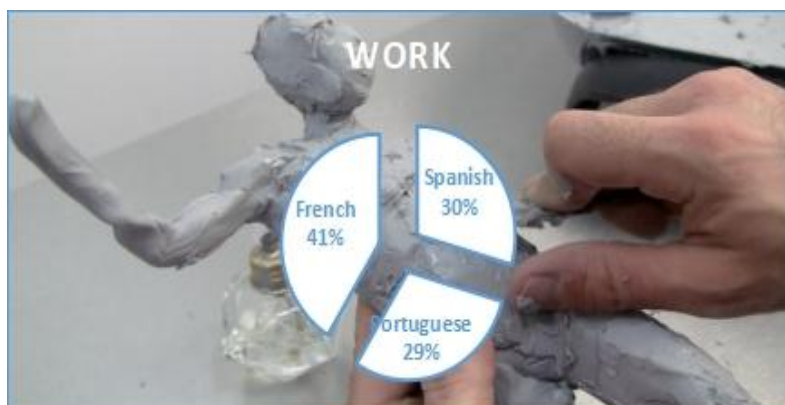


Figure 12: Chart of Students' Preferred Pictures for the word 'Work'



Figure 13: Chart of Students' Preferred Pictures for the word 'Work'

Three major professional sectors stand out: office work, manual and artistic work and building-construction. The majority of French, Portuguese and Spanish students chose the first photo, as did their lecturers. Figure 13 of the construction site was seen by the Spanish lecturer as stereotypical.

The selection of photos of FL students and their lecturers constitutes a set of correspondences and oppositions which underlines the place of stereotypes in the cultural representations conveyed. Among the notable oppositions of this study, we can cite the photo of the word “power” which was for the Mandarin students illustrated by the briefcase of banknotes, even though the lecturer had identified it as very stereotypical. The word ‘love’ also sparked opposing responses between FLE students and teachers – the latter considered it stereotypical. The visual representation of the party among the Mandarin students was drinking beer together, even though their teacher had deemed the photo stereotypical.

The 24 contributions of drawings, collages and photographs representing Chinese, French, Portuguese and Spanish culture were also presented with many stereotypes. For photos representing French culture, the arts students proposed photos of certain monuments of Paris (the Eiffel Tower or the Bridge of Sighs). However, we can question the categorisation of internationally known historical monuments as stereotypes. Conversely, a student in the visual culture module chose a photo of a French house dating from the 17th century because of his interest in Renaissance style windows. Figure 13 illustrates an interesting twist on stereotypes.



*Figure 13. Mixed media production for French Culture*

Four drawings illustrate Chinese Noodles and associate their visual representations with gastronomy (Figure 14 and 15).





Figure 14. Student photography for Chinese Culture



Figure 15. Student Pencil Drawing for Chinese Culture

Illustrations of Portuguese culture featured rural landscapes and traditional habits, as illustrated in Figures 16 and 17.



Figure 16: Student photography for Portuguese Culture



Figure 17: Student Pencil Drawing for Portuguese Culture

Figures 18 and 19 present Spanish culture featuring collages of telenovelas and Spanish cultural symbols like the acoustic guitar.



Figure 18. Student Drawing for Spanish Culture



Figure 19. Student Collage for Spanish Culture

### **Stereotypes: In the Service of or against Teaching Foreign Culture?**

The findings provide evidence that students' visual representations of foreign culture are often associated with images deemed stereotypical by lecturers, especially in Chinese culture.

According to Widdowson (as cited in Alptelin, 2012), the learning experience of FL learners is specific in that the audience has already been socialized in their native language within their community: they therefore already have their own social and cultural conceptions. Widdowson illustrates his proposition by taking the example of an Anglo-American child who imagines the dog as man's best friend, while a child from Eastern countries considers it rather as a dangerous animal. Finally, he concludes that when students learn a FL, they first interpret cultural images with reference to their own cultural associations.

Overall, the results of the FL students' questionnaires compared to those of lecturers show that students' visual representations of foreign cultures are extremely stereotypical. Gianpaolo Ferrari (2001) recalls that the word "stereotype" was used for the first time by Lippmann, a journalist who borrowed the word given to "[...] cliché used for the invariable reproduction of a text. The first characteristic of the stereotype is therefore the repetition, without variables, of an original copy" (p. 85).

Castellotti and Moore (2002), in their guide to the development of educational language policies in Europe, give the following definition:

Stereotypes are normally considered of as a *specific expression of attitudes*; they entail an agreement between members of a single group on certain characteristics, which are accepted as a valid, discriminating means of describing the difference of other groups [...] Stereotypes consequently reveal how a group perceives its own identity, and demonstrate its cohesion. They provide a framework for interpretation, through comparisons and contrasts with characteristics attributed to other groups. The key is not deciding whether a stereotype is "true", but being able to recognise it as such and acknowledging its validity for a given group, in terms of its effect on relations between groups and therefore on the learning of languages spoken by those groups. (pp. 8-9)

Amossy and Herschberg-Pierrot (as cited in Gras & Corbeil, 2008) consider stereotypes as "ready-made representations, pre-existing cultural schemas, with the help of which each filters



the ambient reality” (2008, p. 61). Anne Lehmans (2018) recalls that stereotypes are long associated with “representations of the Other, of the distant, the one that we put at a distance” (p. 217).

Amossy states that (1989) “the stereotype is seen as a whole negatively valued: the term, pejorative, has come to designate everything that the community cuts out, fixes and freezes for us” pp. 29-32. She emphasises that even today, the definition of the stereotype remains “a vague notion whose contours are known, and whose functions remain controversial. [...] Sometimes a concept and sometimes an idea, it is also belief, attitude, judgment, image, representation.” She adds that in 1960, Pierre Larousse unfairly used the term ‘cliché’ to define the stereotype – “while the cliché designates a fact of style and the stereotype indicates a preconceived idea” (p. 34). Finally, Lehmans warns that “Stereotypes build walls or bridges between ‘them’ and ‘us’” (2018, p. 217). It is, therefore, not recommended to ignore them. Our findings revealed that half of the FLs lecturers confirmed that they scanned the visual cultural content of their textbooks, and three indicated that they found the images in their textbook quite stereotypical and that they limit the diversity of their culture. They add that their culture is not fairly represented and is often outdated. However, none indicated whether they had attempted to address these textbook weaknesses. Lecturers in the Mandarin, Spanish and Portuguese sections admit that they have not really analysed or modified the cultural content offered in their textbooks or curricula. None had yet broached the subject of visual culture in FL with their learners. This observation is a little surprising and deserves particular attention from the teaching team. The conclusions indicate that it is necessary to make FL teachers aware of the importance of positioning themselves on the cultural content transmitted to their students and of seeing how to deconstruct the stereotypes conveyed in the media and the elements of choice in international commercial and political strategies.

Ash (as cited in Amossy, 1989) claims the advantages, in the language classroom, of the simplification and generalisation inherent in stereotypes. He believes that “simplified impressions constitute a first step towards understanding those around us [...] Simplification often helps to see a situation clearly and to overcome the perplexity and confusion induced by the multiplicity of details” (1989, p. 38-39). Gras and Corbeil recommend “presenting France and so-called ‘standard’ French culture, while offering alternative points of view about France in order to develop learners’ critical thinking and reduce the impact of cultural shocks” (2008, p. 72).

### ***Advocacy for more Visual Culture and Intercultural Activities in Higher Education Programmes***

The Guide for the Development and Implementation of Curricula for Plurilingual and Intercultural Education (2016) defines intercultural competence as:

[...] the ability to experience otherness and cultural diversity, to analyse this experience and to benefit from it. The intercultural competence thus developed aims to better understand otherness, to establish cognitive and emotional links between the acquired knowledge and the contributions of any new experience of otherness, to allow mediation between different social groups and to question the generally privileged aspects. taken for granted within one’s own cultural group and environment (p. 11).

Cheng (as cited in Alsamani, 2014) argues that when learning a FL, isolating the language from its cultural roots prevents the learner from knowing it in its cultural context. He recalls that linguistic knowledge does not guarantee access to political, social, religious or economic information. This is consistent with Ewa Bandura’s study (2011), which showed that cultural knowledge and knowledge of how it works is paramount to any successful communication and intercultural activity. She adds (citing Huber-Kriegler et al.) that for learners to be open to other

cultures, they must first observe their own culture and then grasp how to understand this culture as opposed to their own. Chaisri (2013) counters that FL learners can embrace the intercultural concept while preserving their own culture. For her, the importance of culture in the teaching of foreign languages goes beyond national cultural singularities; it can educate about fairly universal social dangers such as xenophobia, ethnocentrism, prejudice and even discrimination.

Finally, Hoecherl-Alden and Fegely (2019), citing the work of Farrell 2015 and Felten 2008, warn against the dangers of leaving students to their own devices in the face of a proliferation of visual documents often digitally modified for political and economic purposes. Dos Santos Costa and Carlos (2016, citing Spalter and Metros) confirm the limited knowledge of students in this area and support the idea of integrating visual culture at all levels of education and especially in the humanities.

This research has shown that students, whether they are learning an FL or not, tend to perceive foreign culture in a stereotypical way. But most of the stereotypes identified are ultimately quite common and sometimes faithful to the cultural characteristics of foreign cultures. On the other hand, they also prove the lack of openness of students to the cultural diversity of these countries. The students' responses also suggest that they are not necessarily familiar with so-called "popular" culture as mentioned by Alexandre Gras and Steve Corbeil (2008). The authors propose starting from the current culture likely to interest the students and gradually introducing more complex notions of society and intellectual life – a process they describe as the passage from folkloric knowledge to in-depth knowledge of the language and foreign countries.

## Conclusions

Gohard-Radenkovic defines cultural content as "[...] the set of social practices and behaviours that are invented and transmitted within the group: language, rites and cults, mythological tradition, but also clothing, habitat and crafts constituting the essential elements" (2004, p. 109). Damen (1987) reminds us that culture is transmitted and informed and found in all societies. It provides patterns, values and beliefs that change. Thus, language and culture interact and are inextricable. Hence, the interest of the FL teacher is to analyse and reflect on the cultural content to be transmitted to learners and its methods of transmission.

The results reveal that the visual representations of UNAM students, whether FL learners or not, tend to visualise foreign culture in a very stereotypical way. But these stereotypes of French, Portuguese, Spanish and Chinese societies are quite widespread and are becoming in a certain way, unavoidable. The four FL lecturers at UNAM seem sensitive to the visual and cultural culture that they transmit to their students, but they know little about their students' visual representations of foreign culture. Perhaps they should be more attentive to the stereotypes expressed by their students to ensure that they are not their only cultural references. Furthermore, several studies have proven that it is interesting to use these stereotypes to initiate intercultural discussions. Ash, (quoted by Amossy, 1989) explains that the simplification and generalisation inherent in stereotypes allow discussions about cultures. As our study shows that students also obtain information independently outside the classroom, it is recommended that lecturers guide their students to reliable multimedia materials as course supplements and engage with students on their preferred media to integrate them in FL courses as teaching aids. Finally, we can also call for more intercultural activities in class and virtually as an extension of the visual supports studied.

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