

WH – H 3136

Report
on the Training Seminar for Textbook Analysis
within the framework of the Project on
Intercultural Education and Human Rights Education in
Albania (UNESCO)

28th January, 2002 – 1st February, 2002, Tirana / Albania

Report by
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I. Introduction

The training seminar has been successfully conducted from January 28th, till February 1st, 2002. 22 experts from various Albanian institutions took part in the seminar, among them members of the Ministry of Education, the Institute of Pedagogical Research, the Textbook Publishing House and the six members of the project's core group. All participants are related through their professional work either with the production and design of textbooks or with analysing and approving procedures for textbooks in Albania.

According to the terms of reference, the consultant's task was during five days to train this group of national experts on textbook analysis. The training was to be focussed on the theory and practice of textbook analysis and should enable the local team to conduct an analysis of existing school textbooks at primary and secondary level.

In consultation with the national experts, the training focussed on theory and practice of textbook analysis of the subjects history, geography, civics and literature.

II. Objectives of the seminar

In particular the seminar as prepared by the consultant aimed at the following objectives (see also Appendix A):

- Acquainting the participants with the work of the Georg-Eckert-Institut for International Textbook Research
- Introducing to the participants related problems and results of textbook research and textbook development in South-East Europe with an emphasis on the subjects history and civics
- Identifying major problems of textbook development, textbook use and textbook analysis in Albania
- Acquainting the participants with different methods of textbook analysis
- Discussing problems of human rights education and intercultural learning as presented in the textbooks of different European states (including Albania)

The preliminary programme (see Appendix B) had partly to be revised through the process of the ongoing seminar. This was due to the facts that

- a) the seminar was organised on the basis of time-consuming consecutive translation,
- b) the consultant's intention was to take account of the specific participants' interests in the programme schedule, and
- c) most of the participants had to continue their daily work during the seminar week in the afternoon hours.

III. Organisation of the seminar

The seminar was conducted from Monday till Friday from 9.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. and from 11.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. It was organised around lectures given by the consultant, plenary and group discussions and group work on examples of textbook analysis of Albanian textbooks. Additionally, the participants were asked to prepare on their own for the next day material to be presented and discussed within the whole seminar group.

The participants were provided with manifold materials on textbook analysis translated into Albanian language, which they will be able to use during the process of textbook analysis. All the materials have been discussed during the seminar and checked for their appropriateness within the Albanian context.

The material which has been presented, discussed and disseminated during the seminar enabled the participants to get to know methods and contents of

international textbook analysis. Discussions about these materials as well as about materials originating from other textbook research activities in South-East-Europe have been taken up with strong interest.

IV. Realization of the seminar

Monday, 28.01.2002

The seminar was opened by the Deputy Minister of Education, Mr Sokol Axhemi, and the UNESCO's project coordinator, Mrs Xhulieta Harasani. Mrs Harasani presented the main ideas of the UNESCO's project on intercultural and human rights education in Albania.

The opening speeches were followed by a short presentation of the background of each of the participants as well as of the consultant. The consultant then presented in an opening lecture the work accomplished by the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, its origins and its current activities. The main focus was laid on the different stages of textbook research development, from the German-French and German-Polish textbook talks after the Second World War to the establishment as a scientific discipline at international level from the 80th onwards. Accompanying reorientation processes regarding methods and objectives of textbook research had been identified, such as shifting emphasis from the contents of the textbook to the textbook embedded in the context of the classroom. From the 1980s, stronger emphasis has been laid on identifying didactical components such as skills and attitudes, which are necessary for the teaching of universal values like human rights, citizenship education and tolerance education in the classroom.

The plenary session and introduction was then followed by a „brainstorming“ with all participants, tackling first the question of the role of the textbook in Albania. The participants agreed to divide the question of the role of textbooks into a) how the textbooks actually are, and b) how the textbooks should be. This division revealed up first shortcomings and problems of textbook production and textbook use in Albania.

With regard to point a) the participants agreed on the following:

- Content relevance:
 - Textbooks are resource material. They transmit basic knowledge.
- Curriculum and textbooks:
 - Textbooks are written according to the curriculum. The curricula are, however, overloaded in terms of content, a problem which is mirrored in the textbooks too.
- Didactical aspects/ skills and attitudes:
 - Textbooks encourage learning through reading and writing skills.
 - Textbooks are a kind of encouragement to critical thinking.
- Societal norms
 - Textbooks do convey ethical norms of a society. Ethical norms have been identified more specifically as universal norms of mankind and patriotic norms of the Albanian society.

However, some of the points raised were controversial, because the participants could not agree on the level of realization of the above mentioned points in the current textbooks. The discussion on expectations attached to future textbooks specified these points.

With regard to point b) the participants noted:

- Didactical aspects / skills and attitudes:
 - Textbooks should more strongly encourage autonomous work
 - Textbooks should more strongly encourage interpretative learning.
 - The system of questions and tasks in the textbooks should be improved.
 - Textbooks should develop critical thinking.
- Curriculum and textbooks
 - Aims and objectives of the specific subject should be emphasised in the curriculum, syllabus and the textbook.
- Societal norms
 - Textbooks should be further enriched with ethical norms.
 - More emphasis should be laid on the development of interpersonal behaviour.
- Appropriateness to the age
 - Textbooks should be written according to the age of the pupils. The language as well as the contents have to be selected according to this principle.

Summing up the first round of „brainstorming“, main problematic areas of the current textbook situation have been identified. The textbooks face a lack of modern didactical approaches. The textbooks are not appropriate to the pupils' age. The textbooks are overloaded in terms of content. This situation is valid for all the subject areas covered at the seminar, i.e. history, geography, civics and literature.

Taking up these results, the participants were then asked to identify the aims of the upcoming textbook analysis. Therefore the participants have been divided into four groups, for identifying the aims of textbook analysis from the perspective of pupils, teachers, parents and textbook and curriculum authors.

It came out that different groups have different perspectives on and expectations towards textbook analyses. So for instance the „parents' group“ identified as the most important topic that textbooks should contain ideas and exercises for home work as well as references on how to deepen the knowledge as transmitted through the textbook. However, for „pupils“ the most important points are the attractiveness of the books in terms of printing quality, enrichment with games and activities appropriate to the age of the pupils. Another important factor for them is, of course, the weight of the book. Textbook and curriculum authors do pay more attention on meeting the aims and objectives of the specific subject, on developing an appropriate methodological apparatus, which at the same time simplifies the transmitted knowledge and meets the scientific standards. Textbook authors as well as parents emphasise the price of a textbook as an important selection criterion. However, as there is at the moment only one textbook for each grade, this criterion does not play a major role.

As teachers and pupils are bound together in the actual classroom work, their expectations towards textbooks meet at different points. Teachers as well as pupils need textbooks written in a clear and understandable language. They both need textbooks, which contain manifold pedagogical operators like questions, tasks, illustrative materials.

The aim of that group work and the following discussion was to raise the awareness among the participants that textbook analyses can be conducted under many

different focuses. The perspectives of analyses and the outcomes will differ depending on who is the author of a textbook analysis, what is his or her purpose and for whom the textbook analysis is written.

Tuesday, 29.01.2001

On Tuesday morning the consultant started with a presentation of the state-of-the art of textbook research in South-East Europe. As the consultant is carrying out a Stability Pact's programme on the Coordination of textbook research, textbook comparison and textbook development in South-East Europe, she discussed the experiences of her work with emphasis on the subjects history and civics. Examples from textbook development and textbook research in Bosnia and Hercegovina, Rumania, Kosovo and Serbia were used to illustrate

- didactical and scientific questions with regard to textbook writing, putting emphasis on the didactical principle of multiperspectivity and the demand for scientific adequacy
- the topic „minorities“ in the textbooks as well as their situation in the educational systems as one of the main problematic areas in the region with regard to the implementation of intercultural learning objectives
- the importance of the spatial dimension in the textbooks with regard to national, regional and European perspectives
- different modes of interpretation with regard to contents and aims of intercultural learning.

The presentation was followed by a plenary discussion on most important topics for future textbook analysis in Albania. The participants discussed especially controversially the topic of „minorities“. No agreement was reached on whether to include this topic in textbook analysis or not. The consultant argued for the importance of including minorities' perspectives in the future textbook analysis, as this topic is of utmost importance for meeting the demands of human rights education and intercultural learning as focussed on within the project. However, political circumstances were mentioned by most of the participants as an obstacle to include minority problems. The participants will concentrate in their future analysis on didactical problems.

The Tuesday afternoon session was used to enlarge the understanding of textbook analysis from the emphasis on the text to the inclusion of visual material, such as pictures, graphs, maps, illustrations. The participants discussed in a plenary session the functions of visual materials in the textbooks. As during the discussion on the role of the textbook, the participants agreed that there is a gap between the actual use of visual material and the expectations attached to it in the textbooks. Financial budget restrictions were mentioned as a main reason for this gap the factor of . Due this fact, visuals are mostly of insufficient printing quality. However, there are didactical problems related to the use of visuals in textbooks, too. The link between texts and visuals was discussed, the role of visuals being emphasised as either only reproductive material or tools for deepening the knowledge as transmitted through the text.

The plenary discussion was a useful introduction into the next day's work, when the participants started with subject-related picture analyses of the textbooks.

Wednesday, 30.01.2001

Before the picture analysis of Albanian textbooks started, the participants developed with the consultant a model for in-depth-picture analysis. As a preparatory work, the participants had been asked to read relevant chapters in the „UNESCO Guidebook on Textbook Research and Textbook Revision“ (ed. by Falk Pingel), which had been translated into Albanian language by Mrs Xhulieta Harasani. The participants identified three major areas within picture analysis:

1. delivering of background information
2. description of the visuals
3. interpretation of the visuals

According to these areas the participants developed questions, in order to detect the necessary information through their analysis. With regard to background information important questions are for instance: Is the visual a primary or secondary source? Who is the author of the visual? When was the visual made? Which of all this information is delivered to the pupils in the subtitles or in the legend?

With regard to the description of the visual, the following questions were identified as important: Who are the persons presented in the visuals, are they male / female / portraits or groups of people? In which contexts (military, political, social, cultural) which kind of persons prevail in the textbooks? Is the emphasis laid on persons or on the portrayal of institutions, organisations, landscapes, buildings? Are symbols or signs integrated into the visuals?

The most important step in analysing pictures (as well as written texts) is, however, the interpretation of the material. Here questions have to be developed by the textbook analysers, which serve as operators to detect the actual functions of the material as well as underlying assumptions. Interpreting visuals should include questions like: Do visuals add new perspectives to the text? Do visuals change the angle of approach or do they simply complement the text? Do the pictures touch on readers' emotions and when so, in which contexts? Which values or bias can we find in the visuals? Which topics are selected for visual presentation and which are not? What does the selection of visuals say about the author's intention?

Using this model as a guideline the participants then started to analyse the visuals in textbooks according to their subject interests. They agreed on the importance of including the method of picture analysis in their upcoming textbook analysis with the following arguments:

- The analysis of visuals can be used to detect shortcomings in the textbooks in terms of didactics and content.
- The analysis of visuals opens up wider possibilities to detect underlying assumptions in the textbooks.
- Analysing visuals is important in terms of future textbook improvement.

Today many textbooks contain visuals which do only partly meet modern didactical requirements. As exemplified through the analysis of Albanian textbooks, visuals are often reduced to repeat the contents of the written text. Often their legend does not deliver the minimum of necessary information to the pupils. As these problems are not merely bound to financial restrictions but to the conceptualization of visuals within the process of textbook production, the analysis will detect related shortcomings in order to give recommendations for future textbook production.

Thursday, 31.01.2001

As the focus of the UNESCO project is on human rights and intercultural education, the participants asked for a specific session on textbook analysis related to these subjects. The participants were delivered beforehand different „checklists“ for intercultural learning. This material had been developed within a project initiated by PAREL (Lies Sercu (ed.), National helpdesks for intercultural learning materials. A guideline. Utrecht 1999). The consultant's intention was not simply to take on checklists as they are, but to discuss and adapt them to the situation in Albania.

Human rights and intercultural education are cross-curricular topics. Of course they are important especially within the subject civics, which is taught as a separate subject in Albania. However, human rights and intercultural education are global themes, which can be subsumed under the teaching of other subjects as well.

The discussion started with attempts to define the term „culture“ itself. The more components the participants identified (language, customs, spiritual and material culture, folklore, arts, symbols etc.) the more it became clear that discussing intercultural education first of all requires a clear vision of what are the components of culture.

As the discussion shifted then to the problem of boundaries between different cultures, the participants approached more and more the specific content needs of intercultural education in Albania. The participants agreed that dealing with human rights and intercultural education in textbooks is more useful and understandable for pupils if one starts to deal with these problems on a regional level (examples from Albania itself).

There exist different (sub)cultures within Albania, mirroring especially the North-South-division of the country, differences between urban and rural areas and of course also different national cultures. However, in the textbooks pupils will only rarely find information on these problems. Even where minorities like the Roma population are treated within certain subchapters of the textbooks, there is no problematization of different ways of living, of stereotypes and prejudices which are however obvious in the society. The participants agreed that it is not enough just to mention other cultures. More important is in fact discussing modern global problems of diversity and integration, of assimilation and differentiation and exemplifying them by showing problems within the Albanian society. The participants agreed, that even a discussion on the term „culture“ would be a useful starting point to raise the pupil's ability of „boundary-crossing“ with their counterparts in other cultures. At the moment the textbooks are, however, not designed to provoke this kind of discussion.

For the detection of contents related to human rights in the current textbooks, two methods were presented by the consultant. The first method consists in doing a quantitative analysis, measuring direct and indirect references to human rights in textbooks, the second method in conducting a qualitative analysis, using checklists which have to be developed by the analysers. As the first method does not give any information about how the topic is dealt with in the textbooks, both methods should be combined. Conducting a qualitative analysis on human rights with the help of a questionnaire is, however, a time-consuming process, because it requires intensive discussions among the analysers on how to use and define the terms they use.

The discussion on „culture“ revealed the importance of clarifying concepts before starting with the analysis among the seminar participants.

Friday, 01.02.2002

The last day of the seminar was used by the contractor to present and discuss with the participants in a plenary session the main methods of textbook analysis. The participants prepared themselves by reading related chapters in the above mentioned UNESCO guidebook.

Different methods allow to answer different questions, and so the analysers have to choose carefully their instruments.

As mentioned already on Thursday there exist quantitative and qualitative methods. The contractor illustrated quantitative methods by taking the example of frequency and space analysis. Qualitative methods like hermeneutic, contingency and discourse analysis are designed to reveal underlying assumptions, which cannot be measured. The advantage of qualitative methods is that they have the potential to bring together the textbook's methodology and content.

Specific types of analyses such as picture or linguistic analyses can be used in quantitative as well as in qualitative terms.

The participants discussed the methods presented and agreed that each team has to combine different methods.

V. Results of the seminar

As the participants filled in a questionnaire on the process of textbook production, selection and use, which had been developed within the above mentioned PAREL project, the seminar brought out an impressive picture of the state-of-the-art of these processes in Albania. Answering these questions is a starting point for every textbook analysis, as it opens up the chance to compare textbook analyses on an international level. The answers of the participants have been evaluated by the contractor, and should become part of the Albanian textbook analysis.

Regarding questions of textbook production and selection the participants agreed that:

- Textbook writers are usually curriculum specialists, people appointed by the government or by the publishing house, or researchers and university specialists.
- The textbooks have to be approved by an official institution, e.g. the Ministry of Education and Sciences, and the Publishing House of School Textbooks, before they can be published.
- There is only one Publishing House in Albania, which usually selects textbook authors in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Sciences.
- In Albania for almost all the subjects there is only one textbook per grade/subject. Under these circumstances the teachers cannot choose between textbooks.
- The textbooks have to abide by the curriculum. Those checking whether textbooks abide by the curriculum are (teams of) specialists at the Ministry of Education and Sciences. No other institutions checking the quality of textbooks were known by the participants.

With regard to textbook use in the classroom the participants agreed that:

- The textbook is almost the sole teaching material. Therefore, nearby all teachers use textbooks.
- Other teaching aids, such as CD-ROMs, the Internet or computer-assisted learning, do not play any role in the schools in Albania. Even slides are used only

rarely because of the lack of technical equipment. The only additional material which is widely used in the classroom are maps.

- Textbooks in Albania are used on average between 5 and 10 years.

Within the framework of the questionnaire the participants were given the possibility to develop checklists on which criteria are most important for judging the quality of teaching materials in Albania.

According to them, the most important criteria of textbook quality are (ranking according to the importance):

1. meeting the demands of curricula
2. mirroring the state of the art of the discipline
3. adequately reflecting evolutions in society, being interesting for the pupils, leaving the teachers sufficient room for creativity
4. attractiveness of presentation, availability of teachers guides, taking account of intercultural dimensions such as social, local, ethnic diversities
5. being practicable within the number of time-slots that teachers have, assisting pupils in becoming „autonomous learners“
6. availability of testing materials
7. availability of additional materials, price

To sum up the results of the answers given in the questionnaire, most of the participants of the seminar state that many problems of textbook quality emerge because of the monolithic textbook system and agreed that a free textbook market would improve the quality of teaching materials. At the moment, there is a great lack of involvement of teachers, parents or pupils into the process of textbook writing and textbook selection.

A second result regards the interrelationship between curricula and textbooks. As textbooks have to meet the demands of the curricula, the latter have to be part of the analysis, too.

In terms of the consultant's contract, the seminar objectives have been met successfully. The programme enabled the group to discuss most important areas of textbook analysis for the subjects history, geography, civics and literature.

The participants' awareness of different perspectives and methods of textbook analysis has been considerably grown through the plenary discussions and group works.

Additionally to the expected support of the analysers' work, one participant will apply for a scholarship at the Georg Eckert Institute.

Appendix A: Final Programme

Monday, 28th January, 2002

09.00-11.00 Presentation: The work of the Georg-Eckert-Institute for International Textbook Research

11.30.-13.30 Brainstorming and Plenary Discussion

- The role of textbooks in Albania
- The aims of textbook analysis in Albania

Tuesday, 29th January, 2002

09.00-11.00 Presentation: South-East Europe and the Stability Pact's Programme of the GEI: Problems and results

- 11.30-12.30 Presentation: Methods of textbook analysis: Pictures in textbooks
12.30-13.30 Working groups: Picture analysis (history, geography, civics, literature)

Wednesday, 30th January, 2002

- 09.00-11.00 Subject related needs analysis: Dimensions of textbook analysis in Albania with regard to the subjects history, geography, civics and literature
11.30-13.30 Presentation of the working group results (history, geogaphy, civics, literature)

Thursday, 31st January, 2002

- 09.00-11.00 Plenary Discussion: Human Rights in Textbooks
11.30-13.30 Discussion: Comparison of International Checklists on intercultural learning materials

Friday, 1st February, 2002

- 09.00-11.00 Presentation: Quantitative and qualitative methods of textbook analysis
11.30-13.30 Evaluation and closing of the seminar

**Appendix B:
Draft Programme**

Monday, 28.01.

- ☞ Opening
- ☞ Presentation of the work of the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research
- ☞ Presentation of the participants (background, expectations)
- ☞ Discussion: Textbooks in the Albanian context

Tuesday, 29.01.

- ☞ Discussion: theoretical and practical guidelines for textbook analysis
- ☞ Discussion on examples of textbook analyses (through English copies)

Wednesday, 30.01.

- ☞ Establishing of working groups (according to the terms of interest of the participants),
 - History
 - Geography
 - Literature
 - Civics
- Development of questionnaires for textbook analysis for the different subjects

Thursday, 31.01.

- ☞ Continuation of the working groups
- ☞ Discussion on the questionnaires
- ☞ First examples of textbook analyses:
 - ☞ Qualitative examples of textbook analysis

Quantitative examples of textbook analysis

Friday, 01.02.

- 📄 Presentation of the results of the working groups
- 📄 Development of common guidelines for textbook analysis
- 📄 Evaluation of the seminar (problems, results)
- 📄 Perspectives for future cooperation

Appendix C Participants

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|------------------------|---|
| 1. Sokol Axhemi, | Deputy Minister of Education |
| 2. Zhulieta Harasani, | UNESCO |
| 3. Marjana Sinani, | Deputy Director of the Institute for Pedagogical Research |
| 4. Petrit Muka, | Institute for Pedagogical Research |
| 5. Zana Tabaku, | Ministry of Education and Science |
| 6. Milika Dhamo, | Faculty of Social Sciences |
| 7. Fatmiroshe Xhemali, | Ministry of Education and Science |
| 8. Gramoz Bregu, | Ministry of Education and Science |
| 9. Albana Lama, | Institute for Pedagogical Research |
| 10. Mimoza Gjokutaj, | Institute for Pedagogical Research |
| 11. Aurela Zisi, | Institute for Pedagogical Research |
| 12. Vehbi Hoti, | Shkodra University |
| 13. Andromaqi Haloci, | Tirana University |
| 14. Sokrat Gjini, | Gjirokastra University |
| 15. Gjergji Permeti, | Korca University |
| 16. Aleks Trushaj, | Vlore University |
| 17. Fatbardha Gjini, | Elbasan University |
| 18. Teuta Mati, | Director of the Textbook Publishing House |
| 19. Vjola Mazi, | Textbook Publishing House |
| 20. Vjollca Thimio, | Textbook Publishing House |
| 21. Shpresa Petrela, | Director of the National Centre for School Evaluation |
| 22. Rezana Lati, | National Centre for School Evaluation |