GEOLINGUISTIC BOUNDARIES IN INTERNATIONAL FOREIGN-LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS: A CROSS-LANGUAGE ANALYSIS

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Abstract: Several studies have reported the quasi-exclusive inclusion of cultural elements of a given country in foreign language textbooks that teach this country's first\second language. This research builds on the findings of these studies by carrying out cross-language analyses. First, it establishes geolinguistic boundaries in a set of international English as a foreign language textbooks and French as a foreign language textbooks by looking into the frequencies of words that refer to geographical places and origins in 1,853 texts. Then, it uncovers the criteria lying behind the definition of these boundaries. Indeed, this paper identifies four geolinguistic areas in either set of textbooks: a "core target language speaking area", an "extended target language speaking area", a "mutual influence area" and a "remote area". It also argues that the identification of the contents of these four geolinguistic areas in a given international foreign-language textbook would supply foreign language teaching professionals with information on the conception of the speaking world of the target language that learners may receive from this textbook. Furthermore, this identification may be useful for finding out whether it contains geolinguistic areas whose contents match foreign language learners' learning needs and wants. It may be used to supplement if it includes geolinguistic areas whose contents are not included.

Key words: International foreign-language textbooks, geolinguistic boundaries, English as a foreign language, French as a foreign language.

Fronteras geolingüísticas en los manuales internacionales de lenguas extranjeras: un análisis interlingüístico

Resumen: *Diversos estudios han constatado que los manuales de lengua extranjera pueden contener casi exclusivamente elementos culturales pertenecientes a un país determinado y en el cual se habla la lengua meta como primera/segunda lengua. La presente investigación complementa los resultados de estos estudios realizando análisis interlingüísticos. Primeramente, establece las fronteras geolingüísticas en un grupo de manuales internacionales de inglés y de francés como lenguas*

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extranjeras a través del análisis de las frecuencias de palabras que mencionan lugares y orígenes geográfcos en 1.853 textos. Luego, revela los criterios que subyacen tras la defnición de estas fronteras. Ciertamente, este artículo identifca cuatro áreas geolingüísticas en ambos grupos de manuales: una "área principal de habla de la lengua meta", una "área extensa de habla de la lengua meta", una "área de infuencia mutua" y una "área remota". También sugiere que la identifcación del contenido de estas cuatro áreas geolingüísticas en un manual internacional de lengua extranjera dado daría a los profesionales de la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras información sobre la concepción del mundo de habla de la lengua meta que los estudiantes pueden recibir de este manual. Es más, sería de ayuda para descubrir si este manual contiene áreas geolingüísticas cuyo contenido corresponde a las necesidades y preferencias de aprendizaje de estudiantes de la lengua meta y para complementarlo si incluye áreas geolingüísticas cuyo contenido no lo hace.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *manuales internacionales de lengua extranjera, fronteras geolingüísticas, inglés como lengua extranjera, francés como lengua extranjera.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The approach that fosters the quasi-exclusive inclusion of cultural elements of a given country in foreign language textbooks that teach this country's first/ second language has been criticised for several reasons. For one thing, language textbooks would not be meant to be used primarily to learn about a country's culture, as it could be the case of social studies textbooks, but to learn its language (Kridech 2008). For a second thing, in the case of English as a foreign language (EFL) textbooks in particular, these would not be supposed to teach the English language in native speakers' cultural environments as this has become a world language (Shah et al 2014). For another, the ideas that foreign language learners build when they portray the culture of the speakers of a target language would involve their a priori constructs stemming from their own cultural background (Popovic 2004), which would lead to the notion that this background should be present in foreign language textbooks as well. In spite of these arguments, several studies have reported that emphasis has been placed on the cultures of the countries where English is spoken as a first/second language within the content of several EFL textbooks (Shah et al 2014; Mahmood et al 2012; Hamiloğlu et al 2010; Cottle 2009 and Basabe 2006).

The present paper builds on the above-mentioned studies in a threefold way. Firstly, it analyses the frequencies of words that refer not only to the countries where English is spoken as a first\second language, but also to any other contemporary countries in a set of comparable international EFL textbooks[1].

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[1]   By "international foreign-language textbooks" it is meant those that are intended to be used in two or more countries.

Secondly, it does so in texts in contexts that are used in activities that entail reading and\or listening and that appear in this set of textbooks. Thirdly, it compares these frequencies with the frequencies of words that refer to the countries where French is spoken as a first\second language and to any other contemporary countries and that were obtained by analysing a comparable set of texts from a comparable sample of international French as a foreign language (FFL) textbooks. Indeed, the two objectives of this paper are to establish geolinguistic boundaries in the international EFL and FFL textbook samples and, consequently, to enquire into the criteria applied in the establishment of these boundaries in these textbooks. Furthermore, based on the data obtained from the attainment of these two research objectives, it suggests that the application of these criteria may give foreign language teaching professionals information on the conception of the speaking world of a target language in a given international foreign-language textbook and may help them find out whether its geolinguistic areas match foreign language learners' learning needs and wants.

Information regarding the theoretical background and the research objectives of this paper will be given in the section that follows.

2. Literature Review and Objectives

Two broad groups have been identified in research on the representation of countries in EFL textbooks. The first group comprises those studies that have depicted the cultures of the countries where English is spoken as a first language. A case in point is Lappalainen's (2011) analyses of the presentation of American culture in five Finnish EFL secondary school textbooks. In this study, the author analyses all the texts that deal with American culture and that contain information related to a preset range of topics, e.g. national history. Another example that illustrates the research interest of this first group is Varis' (2012) look into the depiction of the United Kingdom (UK), Ireland, the United States (US), Canada, Australia and New Zealand in an EFL secondary school textbook used in Finland. In this case, the author also uses a predetermined checklist of categories, e.g. people and everyday life, to sort out the data that concerns the representation of the cultures of these countries in the target textbook.

The second group, in contrast, is composed of studies that have aimed to find out the amount of cultural content regarding countries where English is spoken as a first\second language in EFL textbooks as compared to that concerning other countries. Shah et al (2014), for example, have analysed the reading texts of four EFL textbooks used in Pakistan. As in the studies of the first group, cultural content has been sorted out according to a pre-established set of topics, e.g. home life, but classified according to the geographical place to which these topics refer. The authors conclude that almost half of the reading texts deal with a country where English is a first language (mainly Britain and

the US), about one third of them deal with international culture and fewer than 20% are related to the learners' own culture. Basabe (2006) has used a similar method and arrived at similar conclusions in the analysis of the cultural content of reading passages in four EFL textbook series used in Argentina. Indeed, in all of the textbook series under scrutiny, references to the countries where English is a first language (mainly the UK and the US) are the most frequent ones when ambiguous references are left out. Other researchers have looked into cultural content in other book sections besides reading texts. In the analysis of intercultural elements present in a wide range of activities, e.g. matching text to pictures, of five EFL textbooks, Hamiloğlu et al (2010) report the prevalence of elements belonging to cultures of English speaking countries in two of these textbooks (of the US and England in one of them). By contrast, Cottle (2009) focuses on background information regarding English speakers in the conversations comprised in eight EFL textbooks used in Japanese universities. The results of Cottle's (2009) study show that, in all the textbooks, the cultural background of most of the characters participating in these conversations is that of a country where English is spoken as a first language and that the characters' accent reflects predominantly American English.

In order to explore the issues discussed in the studies that have been introduced so far, to build on their research findings and to enquire into a broader subject, the language of international foreign-language textbooks across target languages, it has been decided to find out the geolinguistic boundaries of the English speaking world in a sample of comparable international EFL textbooks and to contrast them with those of the speaking world of another language that is also taught in international foreign-language textbooks using one of the methods of corpus linguistics: the analysis of word frequencies[2]. The French language has been chosen because, like the English language, it has international status and, therefore, it is learnt worldwide. Since in the literature that looks into the portrayal of the countries that appear in FFL textbooks (Gaiotti 2013; Boudjadi 2012; Bouguerra 2008; Clouet et al 2008; Dervin et al 2008; Debenat 2005) it may be observed that the emphasis that is placed on these countries depends on the time and\or on the place of publication of the FFL textbook in question, it has been opted to contrast a comparable sample of international EFL textbooks and of international FFL ones. These textbooks will be described in the *Methodology* section. It is believed that the findings of the present study will not only indicate which English or French speaking countries EFL and FFL learners may receive cultural depictions of from the content of comparable international EFL and of

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[2]   In this paper, *geolinguistic boundaries* are those that separate the countries where the target language of a given foreign language textbook is spoken as a first\second language from the rest of the countries. The geolinguistic boundaries of a language are expected to result from the interplay between the historical, cultural, political, economic, social and geographical variables of its speaking world.

FFL textbooks respectively, but it is also hoped that they will uncover any possible criteria lying behind the establishment of these boundaries.

Indeed, as anticipated in the introduction, this paper has two objectives. The first objective is to establish the geolinguistic boundaries in a sample of comparable international foreign-language textbooks that teach a language that has achieved international status (either English or French) by analysing the frequencies of words that refer to all contemporary countries. As regards the second objective, it is to find out whether linguistic mapping in comparable international FFL and EFL foreign language textbooks follows similar criteria cross-linguistically. Furthermore, any pedagogical implications stemming from the findings of this paper in relation to the possibility of discovering the conception of the speaking world of a target language in a given international foreign-language textbook and of finding out whether its geolinguistic areas match foreign language learners' learning needs and wants are expected to be discussed.

Having presented the theoretical background and the objectives of this research, its methodology will be described in the section that follows.

3. Methodology

In order to achieve the two objectives of this paper, a sample of comparable international EFL and FFL textbooks had to be selected. It was decided to analyse contemporary textbooks produced by European publishing houses as these textbooks seemed to be ubiquitous in EFL and FFL textbook markets. Three EFL textbook series and three FFL ones were selected at random. To make the findings from the six series comparable, it was ensured that the textbooks that were selected for analysis were targeted at the same public within each series. These were those that taught the A1, A2 and B1 levels set in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. The reason for the selection of these levels was that they were the ones that were taught in the six textbook series. Consequently, three textbooks from each series were analysed, which added up to nine international EFL textbooks and nine international FFL ones. The FFL textbook series were *Le Nouveau Taxi*, *Tout va bien!* and *Forum*. As for the EFL textbook series, these were *New Headway*, *New Inside Out* and *New Cutting Edge*.

After the textbook sample had been selected, it was decided to look for listening and for reading texts that were available in the main section of the students' textbooks, that appeared to contain information in context and that were mostly employed as input to do further activities and not to make changes to them. As a result, a variety of texts such as dialogues, stories, posters, to name just a few, were obtained. These methodological decisions entailed the following limitations:

a. other components of the textbook series such as workbooks or supplementary activities that were supplied at the back of the students' books and\or in the teacher's books and that would also inform their users of diverse cultural aspects of different countries were not analysed. The main reason for this was that it was supposed that the students' books had more chances to be used in a given foreign language course than any other components of the textbook series.

b. information about national cultures that textbook users could receive from activities and texts that focused on structure and\or form such as gap filling activities or grammar information boxes was not analysed. Nevertheless, it was thought that this would increase the chances that texts that provided textbook users with information that focused mainly on content comprehension in context were examined, as these texts seemed to be more suitable for the accomplishment of the objectives of this paper.

In spite of these limitations, the number of texts to be scrutinised was expected to be large enough to provide interesting insights into the subjects concerning the research objectives of the present study.

Once the texts to be analysed had been picked out, a set of words that referred to contemporary countries in these texts had to be defined. It was decided to look for words that indicated geographical places and origins. However, the main hindrance in the selection of the former was that a wide variety of places was identified. These ranged from names of public places such as government buildings and streets to names of private buildings and countries. Therefore, it was assumed that the best way to deal with comparable results was that the selected types of words were to appear in all the textbooks. Consequently, the frequencies of words that referred to administrative divisions, e.g. states, provinces, cities, countries, districts, etc., in each of the target texts were calculated. It is important to point out that here lies the third limitation of this study: words that also made reference to the culture of contemporary countries such as objects and events were left out. This is because it was observed that words that denote objects and events may refer to a multitude of countries, which does not make them comparable data. Let us consider a word that refers to an event: *Olympics*. Some textbook users could associate this word with the country where this event originated and\or with any or none of the countries that have participated in it. Owing to the intricacies of the national associations of these words and, as explained above, with a view to making data comparable, it was decided to omit them. With respect to the second item, geographical origins, the same criteria as the one followed in the selection of geographical places were applied: the frequencies of those words that made reference to administrative divisions were calculated. The selected words appeared in a total of 802 texts in the EFL textbook sample and of 1,051 texts in the FFL textbook sample.

Once the frequencies of the words that referred to geographical places and origins of contemporary countries in the texts that had been selected for analysis

and the number of texts in which these words occurred had been tabulated in spreadsheets, the following steps were taken:

a. In order to achieve the first objective, which was to establish geolinguistic boundaries, the frequencies of the words that indicated geographical places and origins and that referred to countries whose first\second language was English (in the case of the EFL textbooks) or French (in the case of the FFL textbooks) were calculated. So was the number of texts in which these words appeared in each textbook series. As regards the frequencies of the words that indicated geographical places and origins and that made reference to any other contemporary countries, they were grouped by continent. In addition, the number of texts in which these words occurred was figured out[3]. It needs to be pointed out that overseas territories were placed in the continent where the state to which they belong is and that, when a word referred to a country that belongs to two continents, one occurrence was added to either continent.

b. As for the second objective, which was to compare the criteria followed in the establishment of geolinguistic boundaries, the frequencies of the words that named geographical places and origins and that referred to countries whose first\second language is English or French (in the EFL and in the FFL textbooks respectively) and to any other contemporary countries (which had been sorted out into continents) were contrasted by calculating ratios, and so was the number of texts in which these words were found.

This data will be presented by objectives in the *Findings* section and it will also be discussed in accordance with the research objectives in the *Discussion* section.

4. Findings

The findings related to the first objective will follow.

4.1. Objective 1

As explained in the sections above, geolinguistic boundaries in a sample of comparable international foreign-language textbooks will be established by analysing the frequencies of words that refer to all contemporary countries. The frequencies of the words that name geographical places will be presented in table 1, and those that indicate geographical origins will be introduced in table 2.

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[3]   Much of the information concerning geographical issues was obtained from the *Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia* and the *National Geographic* websites.

EFL textbooks			FFL textbooks		
Groups	**Countries\ continents**	**f**	**Groups**	**Countries\ continents**	**f**
English speaking countries	UK	586	French speaking countries	France	1,803
	US	342		Belgium	90
	Australia	85		Canada	71
	India	47		Switzerland	40
	Ireland	41		Morocco	17
	Canada	37		Mali	14
	New Zealand	21		Luxembourg	12
	Kenya	20		Senegal	11
	South Africa	19		Tunisia	10
	Singapore	12		Burkina Faso	6
	Barbados	8		Algeria	4
	Ghana	7			
	Tanzania	3			
	Total	1,245		Total	2,093
Other countries (per continent)	Africa	44	Other countries (per continent)	Africa	4
	America	164		America	86
	Asia	352		Asia	57
	Europe	580		Europe	305
	Australia\Oceania	5		Australia\Oceania	8
	Total	1,041		Total	447

Table 1. Frequencies of words that name geographical places[4]

It should be remembered that when a word referred to a geographical place or origin of a country that belongs to two continents, one occurrence was added to either continent. It should also be noted that the total occurrences of the words that refer to geographical places of *Other countries* in table 1 (EFL textbooks = 1,041; FFL textbooks = 447) do not take into account these overlaps.

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[4]   f: frequencies (Only English and French speaking countries that have a frequency equal to or higher than 3 have been included in this table)

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EFL textbooks			FFL textbooks		
Groups	**Countries\continents**	**f**	**Groups**	**Countries\continents**	**f**
English speaking countries	UK	110	French speaking countries	France	549
	US	68		Canada	23
	Ireland	15		Belgium	23
	Australia	13		Switzerland	20
	India	8		Tunisia	6
				Morocco	4
				Senegal	3
	Total	220		Total	637
Other countries (per continent)	Africa	5	Other countries (per continent)	Africa	5
	America	13		America	61
	Asia	97		Asia	38
	Europe	171		Europe	161
	Australia\Oceania	0		Australia\Oceania	3
	Total	261		Total	262

Table 2. Frequencies of words that indicate geographical origins[5]

As in table 1, the total occurrences of the words that denote origins of *Other countries* in table 2 (EFL textbooks = 261; FFL textbooks = 262) do not include frequency overlaps.

As regards the frequencies of the texts in which the words that name geographical places and origins occur, they will be presented in table 3.

[5]   f: frequencies (Only English and French speaking countries that have a frequency equal to or higher than 3 have been included in this table)

EFL textbooks			FFL textbooks		
Groups	**Countries\continents**	**f**	**Groups**	**Countries\continents**	**f**
English speaking countries	UK	329	French speaking countries	France	887
	US	204		Belgium	55
	Australia	45		Canada	50
	India	24		Switzerland	38
	Canada	22		Morocco	10
	Ireland	17		Tunisia	9
	New Zealand	15		Senegal	7
	South Africa	14		Luxembourg	7
	Kenya	10		Algeria	5
	Barbados	7		Mali	3
	Ghana	3			
	Singapore	3			
	Tanzania	3			
	Total	545		Total	959
Other countries	Total	447	Other countries	Total	282

Table 3. Frequencies of the texts in which the words that name geographical places and origins occur[6]

The findings related to the second objective will follow.

4.2. Objective 2

As indicated in the *Methodology* section, not only the frequencies of the words that name geographical places and origins and that refer to countries whose first\second language is English or French and to any other contemporary countries, but also the number of texts in which these words have been found will be compared by calculating ratios. Table 4 shows the ratios that compare the frequencies of the words that name geographical places, table 5 does so in regard to the frequencies of the words that name geographical origins, whereas table 6 presents the ratios that compare the number of texts in which these words appear[7].

[6]   f: frequencies (Only English and French speaking countries that have a frequency equal to or higher than 3 have been included in this table)

[7]   The following abbreviations apply to tables 4, 5 and 6: ESP (English speaking countries), FSC (French speaking countries), OC (other countries).

EFL textbooks		FFL textbooks	
Pair	**Ratio**	**Pair**	**Ratio**
ESP - OC	1.2:1	FSC - OC	4.68:1
ESP - Africa	28.3:1	FSC - Africa	523.25:1
ESP - America	7.59:1	FSC - America	24.34:1
ESP - Asia	3.54:1	FSC - Asia	36.72:1
ESP - Europe	2.15:1	FSC - Europe	6.86:1
ESP - Australia\Oceania	249:1	FSC - Australia\Oceania	261.62:1

Table 4. Ratios that compare the frequencies of the words that name geographical places

EFL textbooks		FFL textbooks	
Pair	**Ratio**	**Pair**	**Ratio**
ESP - OC	.84:1	FSC - OC	2.43:1
ESP - Africa	44:1	FSC - Africa	127.4:1
ESP - America	16.92:1	FSC - America	10.44:1
ESP - Asia	2.27:1	FSC - Asia	16.76:1
ESP - Europe	1.29:1	FSC - Europe	3.96:1
ESP - Australia\Oceania	0	FSC - Australia\Oceania	212.33:1

Table 5. Ratios that compare the frequencies of the words that name geographical origins

EFL textbooks		FFL textbooks	
Pair	**Ratio**	**Pair**	**Ratio**
OC - ESP	1:1.22	OC - FSC	1:3.4

Table 6. Ratios that compare the number of texts

The figures presented in the six tables above will be discussed in the following section.

5. Discussion

The data related to the first objective will be discussed first.

5.1. Objective 1

In this section, geolinguistic boundaries in both sets of textbooks will be defined.

Table 1 shows that the number of countries where the target language is spoken as a first\second language and whose frequencies are equal to or higher than three is similar in both sets of textbooks (EFL = 13; FFL = 11). In addition, it reveals that

distributions are quite similar. Indeed, there is a nucleus within the boundaries of the English speaking countries and of the French speaking countries in the international EFL and FFL textbooks respectively. In the EFL ones, this nucleus is composed of the UK (47%) and of the US (27%), whereas, in the FFL textbooks, it comprises France (86%). As regards the frequencies outside these nuclei, they range from 85 to 3 in the former and from 90 to 4 in the latter. Similarities have also been identified in the frequencies of words that indicate geographical origins. Table 2 reports the existence of core countries within the boundaries of English speaking countries (UK = 50%; US = 31%) and of French speaking countries (France = 86%). Furthermore, frequencies range in a similar manner beyond core countries: from 15 to 8 in the EFL textbooks and from 23 to 3 in the FFL ones. Parallel patterns may also be observed in the number of texts in which the words that represent geographical places and origins occur as shown in table 3.

Core countries appear in a high percentage of texts that contain words that refer to English speaking countries in the EFL textbooks (UK = 60%; US = 37%) and that include words that refer to French speaking countries in the FFL ones (France = 92%). As for the texts that carry words that refer to other English or French speaking countries, frequencies are also similar in both groups of textbooks. In the EFL ones, they range from 45 to 3, whereas, in the FFL textbooks, they vary between 55 and 3. These results indicate that EFL and FFL textbook users would find not only more words that refer to countries that compose the nucleus of English and of French speaking countries (the UK, the US and France) than words that represent any of the rest of these countries in the textbooks under scrutiny, but also that they would read or listen to these words in a larger number of texts.

As regards the frequencies of the words that name geographical places of other countries per continent, table 1 indicates that it is mainly European countries that may be found beyond the geolinguistic boundaries of the French speaking countries in the FFL textbooks (66%), followed by American countries (19%) and by Asian ones (12%). Words that refer to countries that are in Africa and in Australia\Oceania are much less frequent: there are fewer than 2% in either case. If assumed that these figures are indicative of the cultural content of the texts under analysis, they would suggest that the users of these texts would learn French in French and in European contexts and, as a result, that they would receive an important amount of information about Europe. This argument would be reinforced by looking at the frequencies of the words that refer to geographical origins in table 2. Geolinguistic boundaries of French speaking countries are also surrounded by European countries principally (60%) and then by American countries (23%), Asian countries (14%), and those that belong to Africa and to Australia\Oceania (less than 2% each).

Tables 1 and 2 also reflect that boundaries in the international EFL textbooks and in the FFL ones are very alike except for the fact that, in the former, borders with Asian countries are much larger than those with American countries. Indeed, with respect to the words that name geographical places in the EFL textbooks, around 51% of them refer to Europe, 31% to Asia, 14% to America, 4% to Africa and less than 1% to Australia\Oceania. This pattern is repeated in the frequencies of words that name

geographical origins. The most numerous ones are related to Europe (60%) and are followed by those that make reference to Asia (34%), to America (5%) and to Africa (less than 2%). Therefore, it could be argued that the users of the EFL textbooks would learn English in European, US, UK, and Asian contexts if assumed that these figures are indicative of the content of the texts under scrutiny.

5.2. Objective 2

Criteria lying behind the establishment of geolinguistic boundaries, which were discussed in the section above, will be dealt with in this section. References to the pedagogical implications of these criteria will also be made.

Table 6 indicates that in both the international EFL textbooks and the FFL ones, there are more texts that contain words that refer to English and to French speaking countries respectively than to other countries. It may be noticed, however, that this difference is more significant in the FFL textbooks (1:3.4) than in the EFL ones (1:1.22). This indicates that international foreign-language textbooks would prioritise the types of countries they talk about in varying proportions as some of the studies discussed above have reported. This argument may be supported by the figures that compare the frequencies of the words that name geographical places and origins.

As for the former, table 4 shows that the frequencies of the words that refer to English and to French speaking countries are higher than those that make reference to other countries (1.2:1 and 4.68:1 respectively). By contrast, table 5 reveals that this applies to the frequencies of the words that refer to the French speaking countries (2.43:1), but not to those of the words that make reference to the English ones (.84:1). Nevertheless, the total ratio of the latter comes to 1.13:1 if both the words that refer to geographical places and to geographical origins are put together. As a result, it may be asserted that the first criterion lying beneath the definition of geolinguistic boundaries in the international foreign-language textbook samples is for the size of the target language speaking area to be larger than that of the rest of the areas. Nonetheless, it should be remembered that, within the group of English and of French speaking countries, there is a nucleus that comprises countries whose frequencies are significantly high and a set of countries surrounding this nucleus whose frequencies fall gradually. This observation leads to the second criterion: within the target language speaking area, there is a nucleus that will be called the "core target language speaking area" of international foreign-language textbooks and a surrounding area that will be defined as the "extended target language speaking area" of international foreign-language textbooks.

As regards the word frequencies of the other countries, tables 4 and 5 indicate that, similarly, prominence is given to some continents in both sets of textbooks. For example, ESP - Europe and ESP - Asia ratios (3.54:1; 2.15:1; 2.27:1; 1.29:1) are much lower than those of the other ESP pairs (28.3:1; 7.59:1; 249:1; 44:1; 16.92:1), and so is the FSC - Europe ratio (6.86:1; 3.96:1) in relation to the rest of the FSC ratios

(261.62:1; 24.34:1; 36.72:1; 127.4:1; 10.44:1; 16.76:1; 212.33:1; 523.25:1). These figures attest the existence of two criteria that apply to the definition of the geolinguistic areas that lie beyond the geolinguistic boundaries of English and of French speaking countries. Indeed, the third criterion consists in the delineation of a "mutual influence area" in international foreign-language textbooks. This area is composed of European and of Asian countries in the EFL textbooks and of European countries in the FFL ones. Owing to the high frequencies of the words that refer to these countries and to the consequent expectation that the users of the textbooks under analysis will read and listen to texts that speak about links between them and English speaking countries and French ones, the term "mutual influence area" has been adopted. The fourth criterion is the existence of a "remote area". This area comprises Africa, America and Australia\Oceania in the EFL textbooks, and Africa, America, Asia and Australia\Oceania in the FFL ones. The term "remote" stems from the fact that textbook users are not expected to find much information about other countries that belong to these continents or about their relations with countries in the other three areas due to the lower frequencies of the words that make reference to them.

Therefore, it could be argued that four geolinguistic areas may be found in international foreign-language textbooks: a "core target language speaking area", an "extended target language speaking area", a "mutual influence area" and a "remote area". It could also be suggested that the content of these areas would result from the way in which the interplay between the historical, cultural, political, economic, social and geographical variables of the world that speaks the target language is captured in international foreign-language textbooks. Owing to this, it is believed that the identification of the content of these four geolinguistic areas may have several pedagogical implications as international foreign-language textbooks would teach a given language in the context of the representation of this interplay.

Indeed, being familiar with the geographical places that compose each of these areas in a given international foreign-language textbook may give foreign language teaching professionals information on the conception of the speaking world of the target language the learners may receive from it. For example, it is supposed that there is a direct correlation between the size of the "core target language speaking area" and of the "extended target language speaking area" in an international foreign-language textbook and the extent to which elements of the countries where its target language is spoken as a first\second language are involved in the interplay of the variables alluded to above: the larger the former, the larger the latter. In the FFL textbook sample of this study, for instance, the French speaking world would be one in which the historical, cultural, political, economic, social and geographical variables of France would eclipse those of other French speaking countries. Moreover, it is expected that the identification of the content of these four geolinguistic areas would allow foreign language teaching professionals to find out the degree to which it matches the learning needs and wants of a certain group of learners. For example, an international foreign-language textbook whose "core target language speaking area" is composed solely of historical, cultural, political, economic, social and geographical aspects of country A and whose "extended target language speaking area" lacks references to

country B and students who need and\or want to learn the language that this textbook teaches exclusively to work and\or to study in country B may not end up being a good match. Likewise, an international foreign-language textbook in which country C is situated in the "remote area" and learners whose country of origin is country C and who need and\or want to learn the language that this textbook teaches to work and\or to study in country C may not be found to be a suitable combination. Consequently, the third pedagogical implication lies in the fact that knowledge of the content of each geolinguistic area in a given international foreign-language textbook could help foreign language teaching professionals to discover if this textbook needs to be suitably supplemented to compensate for potential mismatches between its geolinguistic areas and its users' learning needs and wants.

6. Conclusions

This paper has found out that geolinguistic boundaries in a set of international EFL textbooks and in another set of international FFL textbooks are different in a few respects, e.g. the boundary between Asia and English speaking countries is larger than the one between Asia and French speaking countries, but similar in many others, e.g. the boundary between Europe and English speaking countries is the largest in the former and so is the one between Europe and French speaking countries in the latter. Moreover, it has been observed that similar criteria have been adopted in the establishment of these boundaries. Indeed, four geolinguistic areas have been identified in both sets of international foreign-language textbooks: a "core target language speaking area", an "extended target language speaking area", a "mutual influence area" and a "remote area". It has also been argued that the identification of the content of these four geolinguistic areas in a given international foreign-language textbook may provide foreign language teaching professionals with information on the conception of the speaking world of the target language that learners may receive from this textbook, as international foreign-language textbooks would teach a language in the midst of their representation of the interplay between the historical, cultural, political, economic, social and geographical variables of its speaking world. Furthermore, this has led to the notion that this identification may help foreign language teaching professionals to see if this international foreign-language textbook contains geolinguistic areas whose content matches foreign language learners' learning needs and wants and, at the same time, to supplement it if it contains geolinguistic areas whose content does not do so.

Finally, it will be noted that this research opens up further research possibilities. It would be interesting to find out how the geolinguistic boundaries established in this paper compare with those in a comparable set of international foreign-language textbooks that teach any other language that has international status such as Spanish or Portuguese. Knowing how the criteria that have been discussed in this paper apply to these textbooks and unveiling any other criteria would also be a challenging endeavour.

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