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The Cultural Content in Russian Language Textbooks Published in Japan

Abstract

This study analyzes how the Russian culture is presented in textbooks of Russian language published in Japan and discusses what image of Russia they form. The analysis covers not only textual information, but also the images used in textbooks. Although the recognition of the importance of culture learning in language education has drastically grown in recent decades, the analyzed data indicates that the amount of cultural content presented in Russian textbooks has not increased in years and is unexpectedly low. It seems that culture teaching is not on a list of goals of the authors of the textbooks published in Japan. The analysis of the cultural content demonstrates that central position among the cultural themes used in Russian textbooks occupies Russian literature and humor.

1. Introduction

In recent decades it has become common knowledge that language and culture cannot be separated, therefore successful language acquisition entails cultural awareness. Large number of authors insist that culture should be located “at the core” of the curriculum (Chapelle 2016, Kramersch 1993).

Although people nowadays have an unlimited resources and tools for learning any language and culture, still foreign language textbooks maintain their privileged position as the primary source of knowledge on language and culture. At least at the beginning level the textbook remains the cornerstone of the language course and a starting point from which begins students’ acquaintance with a new country. C.A.Chapelle underlining the significance of culture in language teaching notes that a beginning-level textbook “provides the basis for the syllabus, the springboard for other activities or discussion, guidance for new teachers, and socialization into the practice of language teaching and learning for students” (Chapelle 2016: 2). Undoubtedly the cultural content presented in textbooks deserves a careful analysis, as it provides an important starting point for students, helps them to create an image of a new country and grasp its key aspects.

These are the reasons why culture teaching in the foreign language textbooks is one of the central topics in applied linguistics. The discussion on how the culture should be taught and presented in textbooks is held on different levels from the

theoretical on the meaning of culture to practical of teaching it in the classroom (see for example Bateman & Mattos 2006, Chapelle 2016, Curdt-Christiansen & Weninger 2015).

One of the factors impacting the cultural content of textbooks is the release of “Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century”, which specify culture as one of the five goal areas (so called 5c) to be addressed along with communication, connections, comparisons and communities.

The universities of Japan also note the necessity of study language within cultural, historical, geographic and cross-cultural frames. For example, the University of Tsukuba several years ago changed the curriculum of teaching second foreign language and introduced new courses for second year students called “European Culture and Languages”, “Asian Culture and Languages”¹.

2. The Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to describe, how the cultural content is presented in textbooks of Russian published in Japan. I examine what cultural topics are covered in textbooks, how they are incorporated in the teaching materials and discuss what image of Russia they may form. It should be mentioned that evaluation of teaching materials is not the purpose of this study.

Until nowadays there are quite a few works on analysis of textbooks of Russian as foreign language². The present study also aims to partially fill the lacuna in the research on the cultural content of Russian textbooks.

3. Material

In this study I examined Russian language textbooks published in Japan and written by non-native speakers of Russian. The sample consists of 10 beginning-level textbooks produced from 1970 to 2005. The aim was to make a sample of textbooks of different types. The choice of the beginning level is motivated by the fact that the introductory level textbook is a first guide to the foreign culture and, therefore, it is a specially interesting to see how the Russian culture is presented to students who just started their acquaintance with Russia.

All textbooks split in two groups: 1) textbooks published during the Soviet period (3 books of the sample); 2) textbooks published in the post-Soviet period that started after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. This division seems important because during the Soviet period due to the strict control and censorship from the Soviet side access to the sources on Russian culture was much more limited than nowadays. There were fewer opportunities for interaction with native speakers, limited access to text, media and other reference materials, restrictions on travelling within the country³. The post-Soviet era can be characterized by a flow of immigrants, open borders and easy access to unlimited sources of information through different types of media.

These factors together with mentioned above tendency to view culture teaching as one of the important goals in language teaching process let me make an assumption that the proportion and the diversity of cultural content in Russian language textbooks must have increased drastically in comparison with the Soviet period.

Another criterion that must be taken into the account is the target audience. According to it, the textbooks also can be divided into two categories: textbooks designed for university or language school use and commercial ones. It worth mentioning that in Japan commercial foreign language textbooks, with the exception for ESL textbooks, are often published in a single series i.e. French, German, Italian, Spanish and Russian textbooks are made in one format and design, which leaves less room for an author to realize all his intentions. Five of the textbooks of the sample are published within the series (textbooks No 1, 4, 5, 9, 10). Therefore the difference in cultural content presentation can be also expected according to this division.

The full list of the textbooks and publisher's imprint is given in Appendix A. I also attributed an order number to each textbook in the sample, so in all mentions of the textbooks in this study I will provide the title in Japanese accompanied by number, for example, ④ NHK 新ロシア語入門.

4. Cultural Content

By cultural content I mean all direct and indirect references that can be related either as high culture content (facts about famous people, geographical places, religion and belief, historical events etc.) or low culture or, as it is sometimes called, culture with a small «c» (Tomalin & Stempelski 1993), that includes everyday practices, names and the way to address people, people's habits, traditions, food preferences and so on. The cultural content can be incorporated in textbooks **explicitly** through narratives, dialogues, authentic and pseudo-authentic texts, explanatory notes in Japanese telling about some culture practice or **implicitly** through the choice of lexical items in vocabulary lists or in sentences illustrating grammatical patterns etc. For example, students can make an assumption from the text of a joke about a girl, who was asked to buy smetana (sour cream), that Russians eat such diary products as sour cream quiet frequently, although the narrative itself was not about Russians' food preferences or common Russian products (④ NHK 新ロシア語入門).

5. Methodology

To study how the cultural content is incorporated in textbooks so called content analysis was employed (Krippendorff 2013, p.24). I examined the overall content of the textbooks of the sample, retrieved all the entries that can be related as cultural content, grouped them by theme and counted the number of entries in one theme. The retrieved entries bearing cultural information were counted

as one unit, if they follow two conditions: 1) are located within one exercise or section, 2) relate to one cultural theme. I counted the frequency of all retrieved entries to see, what cultural themes are more popular. I also examined the way this cultural information was conveyed and paid a special attention to the authentic texts used.

The analysis of the cultural content includes not only the text analysis but also the analysis of all images (illustrations) used in textbooks, their quantity and function. They will be discussed below.

6. Analysis of the cultural content

All the cultural content retrieved from the textbooks of the sample was grouped into 12 cultural themes. They are presented in the Table 1 in descending order according to their frequency, i.e. the first row is taken by the cultural theme that was explicitly presented in the great majority of the textbooks. The first figure in the cell presents the number of explicit entries in each cultural theme, the figure in brackets stands for the number of implicit entries. Below I will discuss all the cultural themes presented in the textbooks in detail. But before starting the analysis, I would like to draw the attention to an incredibly low amount of the cultural content practically in all the textbooks. As can be clearly seen from the Table 1, some textbooks (3 of the sample) provide practically no explicit information on any of cultural topics. I will discuss this point later, but it means that some of Russian textbooks lack any cultural content and the acquaintance with Russian culture was not on the list goals of the textbook authors.

The cultural themes presented in textbooks are as follows:

- 1) ***Russian names and greeting customs.*** The first place of this theme is obvious because it is very difficult to present Russian names, which include not only name and surname but also patronymics, without any extralinguistic commentary. In most cases this commentary is made in Japanese in the grammar section. Except for the Russian name structure and some information concerning the way to address people in Russia, no other remarks on gestures or culture of handshaking are provided in any of the textbooks.
- 2) ***Regions of Russia.*** This theme includes all kind of information on climate, geography, cities and places of interests of Russia. The second place of this topic is highly expected, as the acquaintance with a new country usually starts with its geography. In most textbooks there is a couple of narratives or dialogues about Moscow, Saint-Petersburg or other major cities. Names of other places are often used in grammar exercises. Practically all textbooks can boast such sentences as “*Baikal is the deepest lake in the world*” or “*The distance between Moscow and Saint-Petersburg is 650 km*”.
- 3) ***Everyday life practices.*** This topic occupies the third place because it is very broad and includes great variety of subtopics such as leisure, hobbies, vacations, transport system, shopping and sports. As can be seen from the figures in the Table 1, even being formulated so broadly, this theme is covered very superficially. Some information on this topic can be found in most of textbooks, but a closer look reveals that there are no narratives on

habits of Russians, their way of spending vacations, free time and daily routine. In most textbooks this topic is conveyed only through a couple of lines in a dialogue, or even only through several sentences in an exercise: *We like to pick up mushrooms. In summer we usually go to Crimea or Sochi* (⑥ 1年生のロシア語, ⑦ロシア語程 I、II, ⑨ CD エクスプレス).

In many textbooks some facts on everyday life of Russians are given even more implicitly. Having studied several units, students may assume that reading books, attending a theatre or a concert are typical ways of spending free time for Russians. This information is provided in dialogues of many textbooks (8 of 10), in which characters discuss their way of spending free time. For example, the typical answer to the question “*Where are you going?*” will be mentioning a theatre or a concert hall, as well as the most frequent answer to the question “*What were you doing yesterday?*” will be “*I was reading a novel by Tolstoy*”. The use of such phrases together with other references to literature and music in narratives support the implication that Russia is a country, where literature and fine art play an important role in everyday life of people.

The only textbook that describes in detail some practices of everyday life in Russia is ⑧モスクワのロシア語入門. There are 18 commentaries in Japanese and two dialogues regarding different aspects of Russian everyday life.

- 4) **Russian Literature.** This theme unites all kinds of information on Russian literature and folklore, including narratives on writers’ biography, dialogues discussing Russian novels or poems. The authentic folklore and literary texts were also counted as an explicit cultural content. Literary texts are one of the most the frequently used type of authentic texts used in the textbooks of the sample. Implicit entries include mentioning of Russian writers’ names in grammar exercises and references to literature in dialogues discussing hobbies and leisure. As I mentioned above, in many dialogues, provided in the textbooks, characters say that they often spend their free time reading a novel by Tolstoy or Dostoevsky. Such references to literature on the pages of the textbooks, support the statement that Russian society is a literary-oriented one, and literature occupies a special place in Russian life.

I would like to enumerate literary texts suggested as reading materials in the analyzed textbooks: short stories by Chekhov and Gorky, letters and diaries of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, a poem by Zhukovsky, Russian fairytales edited by Tolstoy, narratives by Dragunsky, Sisnev, Aleksievich. Most of these narratives discuss either abstract philosophical issues, concerning life, death, love or interpersonal relationships. All of them are not incorporated in a unit structure of the textbooks and are provided separately as reading materials, often without any pre-reading activities, discussion of the story and the plot or any other exercises or activities that may help learners to overcome the difficulty of reading and interpreting a literary text that is full of not only new grammar constructions and vocabulary, but also of unknown cultural, social and historical information. Apparently, the choice of writers and their literary works is determined by the personal taste of the textbook authors.

- 5) **Russian History.** It was very interesting to see, what historical events

found their place in the textbooks. Unfortunately, only four textbooks enclosed materials on historical topics. The textbook ⑧モスクワのロシア語入門 provides a brief sketch on history of Russia and a narrative on the Russian emperor *Peter the First*, as a commentary to the dialogue about the visit to a Peter the Great's Summer House. Both of them are written in Japanese. This textbook is very close to a guidebook, therefore the author draws readers' attention to the historical events and figures, which are connected with some tourist attractions.

In the textbook ③現代ロシア語の基礎、読本 historical theme is presented by 1) an authentic literary text by V.Sisnev telling about victims of the Second World War; 2) biography of Ukrainian poet *Taras Shevchenko*. One more narrative that I also attributed to this theme is a text about first Soviet cosmonauts Gagarin, Titov and Tereshkova. The textbook ⑦ロシア語教程 I,II provides a passage from a novel by S. Alexievich on tragical consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.

- 6) The theme **Russian Art** includes all information on Russian music, theatre and ballet. It is presented through narratives on biography of famous composers and opera singers such Chaikovsky or Rakhmaninov, Shalyapin and dialogues, in which characters discuss a visit to a theatre or to a Ballet and Opera House. This is one of popular topics among dialogues presented in the textbooks. Implicit references of this theme are mentions of well-known composers, musicians and names of theaters and concert halls. By the way, practically all famous Russian persons listed in the textbooks are people of art – writers, poets, composers, musicians and painters. I found only three exceptions – Russian communist revolutionary *Vladimir Lenin*, who is mentioned in the textbooks published in Soviet period, the Russian emperor Peter the Great and the first cosmonaut Yury Gagarin, who is referred in 6 textbooks. I found no mentions of Russian scientists, sport players, businessmen or other political figures in any textbook.
- 7) **Russian Folk Crafts** are objects that have become symbols of Russia: matreshka, balalaika, samovar. Perhaps images of these objects first to come to mind, when someone hears a word Russia. Although the pictures of matreshkas are found on the cover page of three textbooks of the sample in most of the textbooks there are no texts, dialogues or any other commentary devoted to them. The textbook ⑧モスクワのロシア語入門 offers a commentary in Japanese on Russian souvenirs and ⑦ロシア語教程 I,II provides a narrative in Russian about the history of matreshkas. In some textbooks images of Russian folk crafts play a role of page breakers and space fillers (see ⑩しっかり学ぶロシア語).
- 8) The theme **Language** unites all kind of information on Russian language (its history, alphabet etc). In the textbooks of the sample it was presented by the following materials: the history of Russian alphabet, information on Slavic languages, Russian proverbs (②自習ロシア語問題集, ⑧モスクワのロシア語入門) and a list of Russian borrowings to Japanese (①初歩のロシア語).
- 9) The theme **Food practices** covers all information about Russian cuisine, grocery products, table etiquette and drinking culture. Extremely low frequency of this topic is very unexpected. Especially because this topic fits

very well a beginners-level textbook, as it can be easily presented through the dialogues at the restaurant, menus and recipes. Explicitly it is discussed only in three textbooks. In other textbooks one can find only names of some dishes of Russian cuisine, such as *borsch* or *pirozhki*, scattered in the grammatical exercises. As the food occupies one of the central positions in Japanese culture, I expected this theme to be more popular among the authors of the textbooks. Perhaps, they were influenced by Russian tradition, in which people do not pay so much attention to food practices and preferences. However, drinking culture (e.g. toast speeches), which undoubtedly is an important part of Russian culture is not presented either, except for ⑧モスクワのロシア語入門, where there is a vast commentary in Japanese devoted to toast speeches and the way of drinking in Russia.

- 10) The theme **Russian traditions**, which includes such topics as wedding, New Year, Easter celebrations etc., seems potentially very interesting and may enthral students, is practically not presented in the majority of the textbooks.
- 11) **Russia and Japan** is the topic that covers all kind of relations between two countries, cross-cultural information, comparison of cultures, influence of cultures on one another etc. It is presented only by a dialogue, describing the ways of rice cooking in Russian and Japanese cuisine and the place of rice in both cultures. Although this kind of narratives evoke discussions and stimulate speech activity, the authors practically did not include them in their materials.
- 12) **Politics** occupies the last row in the table. None of the textbooks provides sufficient information on politics. The only exception is ①初歩のロシア語 published during the Soviet period, which listed the names of Soviet political figures on one of the first pages. Implicitly political information is presented in Soviet slogans that textbook authors offer for translation. For example, Workers of the world, unite! (②自習ロシア語問題集). This is the only presence of political topics on the pages of the textbooks. Perhaps absence of any political content is connected with a post-war law the Basic Act on Education adopted in Japan, according to which it is not recommended to publish political information in the textbooks.

Above I discussed topics that are incorporated in textbooks, but the absence of some topics is also meaningful. The first fact that attracted my attention is absence of any discussions on social problems. The only one topic that can be attributed as a social one is the theme of war and peace. In ⑤標準ロシア語入門 it appears explicitly in one dialogue, in which characters discuss the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and implicitly through the content of grammar exercises, in which five or six times such sentences as “*We are against war*” are used. In ③現代ロシア語の基礎、読本 this theme is covered by the choice of a literary text. It is a short story by Sisenov telling about a mother who lost her children in the Second World War. Apart from the war theme, other social issues are not reflected in textbooks at all. It seems that the textbook authors avoid not only discussions on some sensible or controversial political or social issues, but exclude all topics of political and social relevance.

Table 1. Cultural themes used in textbooks

Cultural Themes	①初歩のロシア語	②自習ロシア語問題集	③現代ロシア語の基礎、読本	④NHK 新ロシア語入門	⑤標準ロシア語入門	⑥1年生のロシア語	⑦ロシア語教程 I、II	⑧モスクワのロシア語入門	⑨CD エクスプレス	⑩しっかり学ぶロシア語	Total No of textbooks in which the theme is presented
Russian names	2 (0)	0	0 (1)	3 (0)	1 (0)	1 (0)	2 (3)	15	1 (1)	2 (0)	8
Regions of Russia	3 (4)	0 (9)	8 (7)	5 (3)	4 (6)	2 (4)	2 (6)	19 (3)	0 (6)	0 (5)	7
Everyday life	3 (2)	0 (2)	1 (3)	0 (3)	0 (3)	4 (0)	3 (6)	18 (5)	1 (0)	0 (2)	6
Russian Literature	0 (1)	15 (5)	6 (4)	3 (2)	0 (6)	2 (3)	4 (5)	3 (0)	0 (1)	0	6
Russian Art	1 (0)	1 (3)	2 (4)	0 (1)	0	0 (2)	2 (4)	8 (1)	0 (1)	0	8
History	2 (0)	0 (2)	3 (1)	0	0	0	3 (3)	5 (1)	0	0	4
Food practices	0	0 (1)	0	0 (3)	0	0 (1)	3	11 (3)	1 (1)	0 (1)	3
Language	3 (0)	8 (0)	0	0	0	0	0	3 (0)	0	0	3
Russian Folk Crafts	0	0	0	1 (0)	0	0	1 (3)	4 (2)	0	0	3
Russia and Japan	1 (0)	0	0	0	1	1 (0)	2	3 (0)	0	0	3
Traditions	0	0	0	2 (0)	0 (1)	0	1	6 (0)	0	0	3
Politics	1 (1)	0 (3)	0 (3)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total No of themes covered explicitly	9	3	5	5	2	5	10	11	3	1	

7. Authentic Texts

Authentic texts are a very important source of teaching materials and can be a very rich source of cultural information. They expose students to natural language and culture, therefore I decided to look in detail what kind of authentic texts are presented in the textbooks of the sample.

First of all, it should be mentioned that authentic texts appear only in 7 textbooks of the sample, and two of them include less than three authentic texts. All the texts can be categorized in six types: literary texts, jokes, songs, proverbs, magazine articles and recipes. The last two types are used only in one textbook ⑦ ロシア語教程 I、II. Most of textbooks lack such popular authentic materials as greeting cards, newspaper articles, interviews, menus, food labels advertising, street signs etc., i.e. texts which people encounter in their daily lives.

As the Table 2 demonstrates, authentic texts presented in the textbooks are mainly of two types: literary texts and jokes. The literary texts were examined in previous section. Here I would like to discuss a huge number of humorous texts presented in three textbooks of the sample. The role of humor and the importance of “lower” strata of culture as opposed to the official high culture are widely discussed by scholars starting from the famous Bakhtin’s work on carnival culture (Bakhtin 1990), therefore undoubtedly enclosing of such materials enriches the cultural content of the textbooks.

Some jokes used there can be classified as semi-authentic texts because they are borrowed from textbooks of Russian published in Russia. These are the jokes used in ④ NHK 新ロシア語入門. The other two textbooks (② 自習ロシア語問題集, ⑤ 標準ロシア語入門) incorporate the Russian authentic genre of jokes called anecdotes (anekdoty) – short anonymous stories, potentially satirical, usually structured in three segments with a punch line. Russian or Soviet anecdotes are undoubtedly a very significant part of Russian and Soviet urban folklore. The huge literature is devoted to the analysis of them and their place in Soviet and Russian culture (see, for example, (Graham 2003)). Anecdotes treat different topics from interpersonal relationships to nationalities, but the central one is definitely politics. They interpret satirically or irrelevantly the information conveyed in state media or social-realist texts. However political anecdotes are not included in the textbooks of Russian. Apparently, this is connected with taboo on use political themes in textbooks that I mentioned above. The authors preferred to choose more neutral theme – interpersonal relationships, hence all anecdotes represent dialogues between the family members. Although this type of anecdotes provide some insights on Russian humor and Soviet and Russian urban culture, it does not give full picture on what Russian and Soviet anecdote and Russian humor is. In ⑤ 標準ロシア語入門 the humorous content is conveyed not only through the textual information, but also through images, since all images used in this textbook are exclusively newspaper caricatures with captions.

The dominance of literary texts and anecdotes as main types of authentic texts can be explained by the following reasons:

- 1) The authors are following Soviet and Russian tradition of teaching Russian as a foreign language and choose the same type of texts and cultural content.
- 2) These types of texts were chosen according to the author’s personal taste and

research interests.

- 3) Authors consider that classical literature and anecdotes as representatives of high and low strata of culture are one of the best ways to get some understanding of Russian way of thinking, set of values and humor.

Table 2. Types and Frequency of Authentic Texts

	①初歩のロシア語	②自習ロシア語問題集	③現代ロシア語の基礎、読本	④NHK 新ロシア語入門	⑤標準ロシア語入門	⑥1年生のロシア語	⑦ロシア語教程 I, II	⑧モスクワのロシア語入門	⑨CD エクスプレス	⑩しっかり学ぶロシア語	Total Number of textbooks in which the this type of text presented
1. Jokes	0	25	0	24	41	1	1	0	0	0	5
2. Literary texts	0	14	7	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	4
3. Proverbs	0	8	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	2
4. Songs, rhymes	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
5. Non-fiction texts	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1
6. Recipes	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	1	47	7	24	41	3	13	0	0	0	7

8. Use of Images

The use of images (illustrations) is one more way to convey the cultural content. The role of images in language learning is widely discussed in applied linguistics (for discussion see Chapelle 2016: 128) and it is bigger than it may seem from the first glance. Not only they provide some additional information on culture, illustrate narratives and dialogues, but also invite readers to engage with the culture, come closer to it.

I examined all the images presented in the textbooks of the sample and classified them according to their type and function. The Table 3 demonstrates the types of images used, the number of images of each type and their functions.

The first fact that attracted my attention when I started to analyze the images of the sample is the lack of color images. This can be explained by economic factor and market consideration. The authors and publishers in Japan prefer to issue a cheaper, budget-friendly book, rather than to make a customer buy more expensive book, adding colorful pictures to increase its attractiveness. The other reason explaining the lack of color images that comes to mind is an assumption that color images and so called magazine format of the textbook can disturb reader's attention from the main learning goals – grammar and vocabulary

acquisition.

Most of images used in textbooks are simple line drawings. Some textbooks placed also black-and-white photographs. Practically all textbooks use only one type of images. Only ①初歩のロシア語 and ⑦ロシア語教程 I、II employ images of two types – *line drawing*, which are used in decorative and denotative functions, i.e. to illustrate some episode form a dialogue or a narrative or to explain the meaning of some word, and *maps and black-and-white photographs*, which are employed to illustrate some cultural content given in narratives.

All images included in the textbooks can be classified according to the function they carry.

1) Decorative or Illustrative (I)

Images attract readers' attention, break up text, function as space fillers or illustrate some part of a dialogue or a narrative. Strictly speaking all images used in teaching materials carry on decorative function, therefore this function is considered as main according to the "left-over principle", i.e. if no any other function could apply.

2) Denotative (D)

Images are used to help to grasp the meaning of a word and function as visual reinforcement of lexical items or grammar. They can perform active learning purpose, for example, substitute a certain word in an exercise.

3) Cultural (C)

Images bring up a new cultural content or clarify the cultural information provided in teaching materials.

The Table 3 also demonstrates, what functions images carry in each textbook. The images that present some cultural information are found only in three textbooks. The textbooks ①初歩のロシア語 and ⑩モスクワのロシア語入門 use black-and-white photographs to illustrate some Russian realities (places of interest, tickets, metro stations, wedding celebration, Christmas party etc.). Some cultural information is also conveyed through the maps. All maps used in textbooks are the maps of Russia and are used to demonstrate the location of main Russian cities, which are mentioned in the textbook. The textbook ⑤標準ロシア語入門 deserves special attention because all the images used in it are exclusively caricatures with captions. They can be considered as authentic texts providing information on Russian humor.

Lack of color images, small number of images (less than 1 image per page), dominance of illustrative and denotative functions demonstrate that language textbooks in Japan still mainly concentrate on grammar and lexical aspects paying much less attention to the cultural component.

Table 3. Types of Images Used and Their Functions

	①初歩のロシア語	②自習ロシア語問題集	③現代ロシア語の基礎、読本	④NHK 新ロシア語入門	⑤標準ロシア語入門	⑥1年生のロシア語	⑦ロシア語教程 I, II	⑧モスクワのロシア語入門	⑨CD エクスプレス	⑩しっかり学ぶロシア語
Color pictures	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Photographs	14	0	0	0	0	0	2	59	0	0
Line drawing	95	0	0	20	37	37	184	0	0	0
Maps	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0
Function	I, D, C	-	-	D, I	C	D, I	D, I, C	C	I	I
Total number of images	110	0	0	21	37	37	187	59	72	25
Total number of pages	375	-	-	319	227	63	250	227	145	227
Number of images per page	0.3	-	-	0.06	0.2	0.6	0.7	0.25	0.5	

9. Conclusion

Although the significance of culture in language teaching is nowadays common sense, most of the Russian language textbooks published in Japan remain grammar-translation textbooks with little cultural content. The results of the content analysis of the textbooks do not correspond with my preliminary assumptions. I supposed that the collapse of Soviet Union together with the recognition of the importance of culture learning in recent works in applied linguistics would have made a significant impact on the content of textbooks published during two last decades. However, the analysis of the sample indicates that neither amount of the cultural information presented in the Russian textbooks has increased, nor the content of it has drastically changed within the years. It turned out that the cultural content presentation does not either depend on the target audience the textbook is oriented. Textbooks for college students and commercial textbooks for general public do not differ much in the aspect of culture presentation. It seems that the culture teaching still remains on the periphery of the textbook authors' interests.

In only one textbook (⑧モスクワのロシア語入門) culture teaching was listed as a one of the teaching goals and this is the only textbook where cultural information

covers more than 20% of the whole content. However, the cultural content is provided mostly in long commentaries in Japanese that makes this textbook look more like a guidebook than a textbook of Russian.

The formats of teaching material presentation have not either changed within the time: vocabulary lists, sentences for translation, short dialogues and narratives written by the authors. Most of textbooks use audio-lingual method, in which the emphasis is made on dialogue memorization. These dialogues are designed to teach linguistic structures and conversational patterns and are accompanied by a grammar commentary in Japanese, but most of them they do not provide any cultural information. Only some textbooks include cultural information in the dialogues or in accompanying notes. Authentic texts presented in the textbooks are mainly of two types: literary texts and jokes. Although such types of authentic materials as newspaper articles and interviews, greeting cards, receipts, leaflets, menus etc. are wide spread in the textbooks of EFL/ESL textbooks, for some reasons they are extremely rare in Russian textbooks published in Japan.

One more area that deserves attention is the way, in which textbooks address cultural issues. Four ways of incorporating cultural content in textbook materials were employed in the analyzed textbooks: 1) commentary in Japanese, 2) use of authentic texts 3) dialogues or short narratives composed by the textbooks authors, in which some cultural topic is discussed 4) use of images (mainly black-and-white photographs), which illustrate some textual information.

All cultural content used in the textbooks fulfill mainly informative function, i.e. provide some facts about Russian geography, places of interests, famous persons, historical events or some aspects of everyday life in Russia. The cultural narratives presented in textbooks do not include controversial political or social topics and do not aim to evoke discussions, stimulate critical thinking or raise social awareness. The wish to present all narratives containing cultural information most neutrally and disinterestedly leads to the hollowing out of this content and, respectively, interest in it. Patricia Duff's words that textbooks are "sanitized and idealized, omitting references to hardships, strife, socially marginalized ethnic minorities <...> and debates, or other content that may be highly relevant to learners" can be fully applied to the Russian textbooks published in Japan (Duff 2015).

With such a poor cultural content used it is very difficult to talk about the image of Russia. However it should be mentioned that the authors tried to avoid stereotypes connected with Russia and Russians (such as *Russia is a cold country where all the population is drinking vodka*), but did not provide enough new information on Russia and Russians instead. On the pages of textbooks Russians appear as classic literature and theater lovers with good sense of humor.

Notes:

1. This course is introduced by the Foreign Language Education Division of the Center of Education for Global Communication of the University of Tsukuba (<http://www.cegloc.tsukuba.ac.jp>).

2. There is an interesting study devoted to the image of Russia in the textbooks of 19th – beginning of the 20th century that examines the textbooks from the point of view of imagology (Miloslavskaya 2008).
3. There is a vast literature on the censorship and propaganda in the USSR, the restrictions on contacts of Soviet citizens with foreigners which I am not able to discuss within the present study in detail. For the further reference see, for example, (Matthews 1989).

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Appendix A. Textbooks Analyzed in This Study

- ① 初歩のロシア語 / Русский язык для начинающих, 佐藤純一 東京: 昇竜堂出版, 1973
- ② 自習ロシア語問題集 / Сборник упражнений по русскому языку, 中村建之

- 介 東京：白水社，1982.04
- ③ 現代ロシア語の基礎 阿部軍治 山田 恒 大学書材 1988.01
初級現代ロシア語読本 阿部軍治 山田 恒 大学書材 1992.01
- ④ NHK 新ロシア語入門 / Вводный курс русского языка.Новая редакция,
佐藤純一 東京：日本放送出版協会，1994.12
- ⑤ 標準ロシア語入門 東一夫，東多喜子共 改訂版 東京：白水社，1994
- ⑥ 1年生のロシア語 / Мы читаем и говорим по-русски, 戸部又方 東京：白
水社，1999.04
- ⑦ ロシア語教程 I (初級編) / Курс русского языка I 東京ロシア語学院，1998
ロシア語教程 II (中級編) / Курс русского языка II 東京ロシア語学院，
1998
- ⑧ モスクワのロシア語入門 金田一真澄 東京：三省堂，2001.1
- ⑨ CD エクスプレス 桑野隆 東京：白水社，2002.07
- ⑩ しっかり学ぶロシア語：文法と練習問題前木祥子 東京：ベレ出版，2004.11