



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET  
INST FÖR PEDAGOGIK OCH SPECIALPEDAGOGIK

# **It's not all Sun and Bullfighting**

A visual analysis of how Spain is portrayed in Spanish course books in Sweden

**Beatriz Navarro Morales**

**Desireé Ibernón Häll**

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Examensarbete:	15 hp
Program:	LAU 925:2
Nivå:	Grundnivå
Termin/år:	Vt 2015
Handledare:	Staffan Stukát
Examinator:	Ernst Thoutenhoffd
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# Abstract

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I denna uppsats studeras hur spaniens kultur framställs visuellt i läroböcker i spanska som modernt språk och försök att framhäva eventuella stereotyper.

Enligt Skolverkets ämnesplan för moderna språk i gymnasieskolan ska eleven kunna utveckla "förmåga att diskutera och reflektera över livsvillkor, samhällsfrågor och kulturella företeelser i olika sammanhang och områden där språket används" (Skolverket (b), 2011), med andra ord, kunskap om kulturen och länder där målspråket talas. I de här kulturella företeelser ingår också förståelse av folkets vanor lika väl som levnadsförhållanden.

I denna studie analyseras åtta bilder från fyra olika läroböcker för spanska steg 3 i gymnasieskolan. Syftet är att reflektera över bilderna och se om de bidrar för att uppfylla kunskapskraven enligt Skolverket.

Studien använder en semiotisk bildanalys för att grundligt beskriva alla bilder samt tolkningen om vad man som lärare måste göra för att komplettera informationen som finns i bilderna.

Resultatet tyder på att bilderna tenderar att lyfta fram en enkel och simplifierad vy av det spanska samhället och att de inte reflekterar livsvillkor, samhällsfrågor samt kulturella företeelser av Spanien. Dock bidrar inte läroboksbilderna fullständigt till utvecklingen av Skolverkets kunskapskrav utan lärarens komplettering. Bara med en realistisk bild av ett samhälle kan man utbilda framtidens demokratiska medborgare.

## Foreword

We have both taught Spanish as a modern language in Sweden and during the years we have always felt that all the material in the textbooks that we use in class has been somewhat biased and incomplete. Not only for Spanish culture, referring to culture in Spain, but also for the culture in all Latin American countries.

When we met in the VAL project, at Gothenburg University, we both thought that this research idea would be very interesting and would benefit us both as well as our students and we were right.

We considered the idea of writing this essay in Swedish, however we finally decided to write it in English so that more people would have access to the discussion we present in the paper.

### **Author Beatriz**

Writing this essay has been a very good learning experience, especially when it comes to analysing critically what we as teachers usually take for granted. Not only has it helped me become a better teacher, but it has also helped me assert the beauty in teaching from the heart and not just blindly following a book.

I would like to thank Desireé for sharing the same passion as I do for the subject as it has made it so much easier to work on the project together. I will also be eternally grateful to my husband, for the never ending patience he has had during the years that I have studied so that I could pursue my calling: being a teacher – I would have never been able to do this without you. I also would like to show my gratitude to *The Kid* for being my sounding board with all the crazy ideas that have rumbled back and forth. Last but not least, I would like to thank our supervisor, Staffan Stukát, for taking care of us when no-one else would and for supporting us.

### **Author Desireé**

I would like to thank all the people who agreed to voluntarily be part of this project by choosing the pictures, for their time and their help. I also want to thank Staffan Stukát for giving us the chance to write this thesis trusting that we were capable to carry this all the way through.

Moreover, I want to thank my husband for taking care of the house chores as well as the family. Last, but not least I would like to thank Beatriz for writing this essay with me and helping me get over the hard experience that writing a thesis can be.

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# 1. Introduction and Aim

In the Swedish education system, culture and language go hand in hand, but in some cases we form our experience, we believe that the culture portrayed in the textbooks does not reflect a true vision of how the culture really is and it only provides a view of the country's stereotypes. In this study we are going to try and analyze if Spanish textbooks in Sweden really show a real view of how Spain is or if instead they only show a stereotypical image of what Spain is believed to be. To achieve this we are going mainly focus on its images.

## 1.1 Introduction

As teachers of Spanish we have seen how Spanish culture is portrayed in Swedish textbooks for children, and even adults, who learn Spanish as a foreign language in Sweden. When we compare how we have experienced culture in all the years we have lived in Spain we can highlight the fact that many of the images shown to Swedish students do not reflect the reality in Spanish society.

In the Curriculum for the Upper Secondary School (Skolverket, 2011), it clearly states that students should not only learn the language at hand but they should also learn about the culture where the language is spoken. The reason why this is indicated in the school curriculum is because students need to be able to develop strategies and skills that are in one way or another associated with the language and the culture of the language studied, in this case Spanish.

Our hypothesis is that Spanish society is not correctly shown in Swedish course books, and therefore it is our roll as teachers to make sure that we are able to fill in the gaps that are missed in order for the students to be able to have a critical way of thinking towards the language and the regions where the language is spoken. This is also extremely important because in most cases the course books are the first contact that students have with the culture.

We believe that the pictures in the textbooks we use in class are worth more than a thousand words and that students tend to recall the information in the photographs better than the ideas they obtain from reading or listening to texts. Hence we would also believe that images in textbooks should show a representative vision of the society of the language studied and not a mere simplified version of it. This can be very difficult to do, especially for Spanish as a modern language since there are many countries and regions that have Spanish as their official language. It would be impossible for a coursebook to accurately cover the society of all Spanish speaking countries and regions. However, that is where our role as teachers starts.

It is our responsibility as teachers to be aware of what material we use to plan our lessons, specially the content of such material in order to be able to know what to include in our lessons so that our students get a fair representation of the culture. For all the reasons mentioned, we believe this is a relevant investigation topic worth looking into. Only by critically analyzing the material we use, we can teach our students how to become critical thinkers themselves. In other words, it will not only benefit our students directly, but it will also make us become better teachers.

## 1.2 Research Aims

During this study we will have three different research aims.

The main focus will be to provide an analysis of 8 different photos that appear in textbooks used to teach Spanish in Swedish high schools and schools for adult education. We want to limit our study to images of Spain and through their description, try to see if they provide a realistic image of Spain's society or if it is merely a simplified version of the country and its people based on cultural stereotypes. The question "What is represented in the image?" will guide our analysis for this aim.

Our second aim in this study will be, with the help of the visual analysis, to try to show if the pictures portray a simplified version of the country and its people, a stereotyped version of the Spanish culture, or if they truly reflect what the local culture or people are really like. In order to make our analysis is relevant we will be answering to the question "Does the image represent a simplified or stereotyped version of Spain?"

As a third aim, we will try to analyze if these images fulfill a pedagogical function in the learning process of students and if it helps them reach the goals set in the knowledge requirements regarding cultural awareness. If they do not fulfill this function we will try and provide a solution on how we, as teachers, could make sure that this is done. For this part our guideline will be the question "Do the images help the student reach the goals established by the curriculum when it comes to cultural awareness?"

In summary, the questions that we are going try and answer are the following:

- What is represented in the image?
- Does the image represent a simplified or stereotyped version of Spain?
- Do the images help the student to reach the goals established by the curriculum?

## 2. Background

In this section we will introduce previous research relevant to this study as well as theoretical background information required to fully grasp the study's scope.

### 2.1 Previous Research

Up to this day several studies have been published that can be relevant to this topic. In this section we will try and give an overview of the ones we considered more interesting and that suit this study best.

In the study *Amigos, Vale y Tapas*, published in 2006 for Södertörns Högskola, Adrian Letelier analyzes “the cultural contents presented in some textbooks, published in Sweden, used in the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language” (Letelier, 2006). In this study the analysis is based on the cultural information that was presented in the texts of such books. Letelier concludes that in the books analyzed “all texts lack variety when cultural aspects are presented” (Letelier, 2006:30) and that the representation of Spanish culture is very simplified.

The representation of the Spanish speaking countries in Spanish textbooks, published in Sweden, was also brought up by Pavéz in the study *El Mundo Hispanohablante*. In this research project, Pavéz tried to establish if the texts chosen fulfilled the “requirements of the Swedish curriculum for modern languages” (Pavéz, 2014:2). After her study, she concluded that the texts that were analyzed did show the presence of stereotypes and simplification when it comes to Spanish speaking culture.

The last study we will mention, *¡Mira, así es Latinomamérica!* (Holm, 2014), is by far the most relevant to our own study. In this research paper Holm tries to analyze how the Latin-American culture is visually portrayed in course books for Spanish as a modern language. In her study she concludes that some of the pictures do deal with pre-conceived ideas related to Latin-American culture but others, simply showed a more exotic side of the world.

Even if all three studies can be relevant to the present study in terms of the material analyzed and the idea of oversimplifying culture none of them analyze the images that refer only to Spain and its culture exclusively: Holm (2014) analyses Latin-American countries and Pavéz (2014) studies the content in text and not images. Furthermore, Leterier's study could also be argued to be irrelevant since the Swedish curriculum in place when that study was carried out was Lpo 94 and the material used were Spanish textbooks used in primary, not upper-secondary schools in Sweden.

### 2.2. Culture

Culture is a term that has been used by many writers and researchers throughout history. Some writers even make a distinction between, the term *culture* and *civilization*. Examples of this are the terms *Kultur* and *Zivilisation* in German, “the former referring to symbols and values, while the latter refers to technical, economic and political ideas and organization” (Scott and Marshall, 2009).

For this study we will use two terms that we believe are most suitable:

“When social scientists use the term culture they tend to be talking about a less restrictive concept than that implied in everyday speech. In social science, culture is all that in human society which is socially rather than biologically transmitted, whereas the commonsense usage tends to point only to the arts. Culture is thus a general term for the symbolic and learned aspects of human society”  
(Scott and Marshall, 2009)

“Culture is employed, most fundamentally, as an oppositional term, implicitly or explicitly, to the idea of nature. The notion of culture identifies broadly those patterns of human knowledge that refer to the customary beliefs, social formations, and traits of racial, religious or social groups”  
(Wolfreys, 2004: 37)

### **2.2.1 Why is it so important to teach *culture* to our students?**

When learning a language, there is not only new words and grammar rules being learned, but also there is certain knowledge of a cultural base that one must try to link to the language itself in order to achieve better communication skills. In order for this to succeed, the communication between student and teacher must be fluent. We have witnessed the advantage in knowing the culture that is in connection to the language in order to be able to understand the reasoning behind the language itself. Only this way we, as teachers, are able to motivate the student to learn the language being studied. Also, after reading Andersson (2009) we know that a student is also expected to learn how to adapt and understand different cultures. This is the key to educating future citizens of a democratic society.

According to Allwood (1983), in his article published in the magazine *In Lingua* about the process of learning languages, it is very important to have good basic knowledge of the culture associated to the language that you are learning. The writer points out that this knowledge is key and most relevant in order to interpret most of the linguistic expressions. Furthermore, he believes that if this knowledge does not exist, one cannot have the comprehension required of what is being said. Taking all this into account it is understandable that Falk (2011) suggests that culture should be a separate skill within the Swedish Curriculum for modern languages.

Other authors have also talked about the importance of sociocultural skills when learning a foreign language (Galindo, 2005), about the value of verbal and nonverbal communication (Villasclaras, 2006) and about the need to know how communication and culture work in the language that is being learned (Allwood, 1983).

In chapter 5 of the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), we can read that in regards to the knowledge, of the culture of a society or a community where the language is spoken, the student should be able to see how important it is in order for him or her to pay attention to it. Otherwise, most surely this entire learning process will be ignored due to the fact that the student has never felt the need to do it before with his or her mother tongue. In section 2.1.2 of the CEFR, it is highlighted that sociolinguistics within communicative skills refers to the sociocultural conditions of the country, region or community in which the language is spoken. By means of the awareness of social conventions, such as courtesy norms, social classes, etc, the sociolinguistic component affects the verbal communication significantly especially amongst the presence of students who have



different cultural backgrounds, even though one might not be conscious about how much influence this has.

## 2.3 Stereotypes

We believe that in many countries, regions and societies, the cultural aspects mentioned above are often oversimplified and the simplified versions are usually referred to as *stereotypes*.

In order to appreciate the core idea of this study one has to bare in mind what is meant by *stereotype*. Nowadays there are plenty of studies that deal with stereotypes, but in order to understand the concept and to be able to see it in the corpus, a good definition is needed. For this project we are going to use Hilton and Hippel's definition used in the article *Stereotypes*. They describe stereotypes as the "beliefs about the characteristics, attributes, and behaviors of members of certain groups" (Hilton, 1996 p240).

### 2.3.1 Cultural stereotypes

There are some perceptions that are based on cultural stereotypes and for the purpose of this study, those relevant are the ones for Spain and its culture. In particular, the stereotypes found by López Fernández (2005) in her research project were very interesting. In the study *La Enseñanza del Español Como Lengua Estrangera*, López Fernández interviewed students who came to Spain to study Spanish as a second language or other subjects such as Spanish Culture. She interviewed students from different countries<sup>1</sup> from all over the world a couple of days after their courses had started and asked them about what they considered was typical Spanish or from Spain. Unfortunately, López Fernández does not indicate the age of the students that were interviewed in her study. Due to this we one has to consider the fact that the age of the informants is unknown and that for this reason we have to consider the idea that this might slightly affect the results. We believe that the age of the people interviewed can affect the results obtained, however this is not the main purpose of this essay and therefore this idea will not be explored further. For this part of her study she divided the results in three categories as follows:

The image foreign students had of Spanish people was that they were:

- Fun (34%)
- Unpunctual (25%)
- Religious (24%)
- Smart (9%)
- Lazy (8%)

Topics and elements that are often related to the culture of Spain<sup>2</sup>:

- Bullfighting (28%)
- Flamenco (20%)

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<sup>1</sup> She divided her informants into different categories: USA and Canada, Asia, Europe and Africa.

<sup>2</sup> Notice that the term "Spanish culture" is not used to avoid confusión with culture asociated with Spanish speaking countries.

- Siesta (18%)
- Party and Sun (13%)
- Paella (13%)
- Football (8%)

Physical appearance that the students thought were typical of Spanish people:

- Tanned (33%)
- Short (19%)
- Slim (19%)
- Dark haired (18%)
- Dark eyed (11%)

In section 4, of this study, we will be using these stereotypes to investigate if they are present in Spanish textbooks in Sweden.

## **2.4. Curriculum for the Upper Secondary School as Study Material**

The Swedish Curriculum for the Upper Secondary School, also known as LGY 11, published by Skolverket<sup>3</sup> in 2011 opens with a brief introduction about the importance of languages and the importance to be able to speak different languages in order to be able to ensure different world perspectives, more chances for establishing contacts and more and better understanding of the different ways of living (Skolverket, 2011).

The current Swedish Curriculum defines several objectives within education of a foreign language as for example the knowledge of the language, but also other aspects of the countries or regions where the language is spoken. It also states the clear goals that students should be able to achieve from their education. An example of these competences is that that students should be able to understand spoken language as well as written language; they should be able to communicate using strategies that will help them understand and be understood as well as be able to adapt their language to different situations, purposes and recipients. However the most important and most relevant for our study is that “in order to deal with spoken language and texts, pupils should be given the opportunity to develop their skills in relating content to their own experiences, living conditions and interests. Teaching should also provide pupils with opportunities to develop knowledge about and an understanding of different living conditions, as well as social and cultural phenomena in the areas and contexts where the language is used.” (Skolverket, 2011:73) In the case of this research project we refer to, more specifically, social and cultural phenomena in Spain.

Once this is introduced, the Swedish Curriculum explains the core content of the language skills: receptive as well as production and interaction skills for all different steps in upper-secondary school – even though Spanish can also be learned in lower-secondary school<sup>4</sup>. In this section there is a direct reference to the importance of the knowledge that day-to-day life and different life styles have in different contexts and areas where the language is spoken.

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<sup>3</sup> Swedish National Agency for Education

<sup>4</sup> This is not the scope for this study and for this reason it will not be pursued nor taken into account.

This factor is considered so important that it has even been suggested to include cultural studies as a fifth complementary skill in the modern languages curriculum (Falk, 2011)

The Swedish Curriculum for the upper-secondary school (Skolverket, 2011), highlights the importance of including *culture* in the teachers planning and the teaching of a foreign language, however the curriculum itself does not specify how or what must be taught and included. What Skolverket tries to achieve by doing this is to leave it up to each individual teacher to decide not only what *culture* has to be taught to pupils but also how to do it.

## 2.5. Visual semiotics and interpretation

Visual semiotics will be one of the main theories that we are going to use during this study. According to Eriksson and Göthlund (2004), we can assume that images can be interpreted as codes, which within themselves have different senses and expressions. As well as with linguistics, images have visual codes that are part of a common system that organizes signs and thus gives each image meaning. This system is based on social and cultural conventions, which means that when someone looks at the object of analysis, one must be aware and familiar with the context and culture of the codes used. Another idea that must be taken into consideration is that each image, - picture or photograph always has a message, whether hidden or otherwise, that can be found by carrying out a thorough critical analysis. Furthermore, according to Eriksson and Göthlund (2004) images not only can convey a message but also values. For this reason, the interpretation of an image or photograph can be affected by the way in which the message is portrayed, by who the receiver of the image is and his or her experiences in life.

Even though it might seem the same, analyzing a text or analyzing an image are two completely different processes. In the book *Bilder i Läromedel*, Pettersson (2008) explains that when reading a text or “reading” an image the information is not perceived in the same order. In a text with words and letters, the text is usually read from left to right, right to left or up to down depending on the language. However, in an image the eye catches the attention of the most interesting elements in a picture, and not which word, letter or image comes first. Moreover, Pettersson writes that visual codes usually are retained and remember better than texts or written letters. He also confirms the idea that the interpretation of each image can be affected by the person’s culture and life experiences. For this reason different people can interpret one same image in many different ways.

The last theory we will be using in this study is obtained from the book *Bildens Tysta Budskap* by Eriksson (2009). There are visual perception theories that indicate the way we perceive things. According to Eriksson, we mainly see what we recognize and what we believe is exceptional. If for example someone likes phones, he or she will pay more attention to other people’s phones than someone who does not like phones at all. The same way that a very strident colorful phone will be more noticeable than a black or white phone, as they are less common. For this reason it is imperative that in this study, during the analysis of each of the images, a description of the image is carried as well as a description of its components. Without both parts of the analysis, the interpretation might be biased. However, if we focus on all details of the image we will be able to provide a more neutral and balanced analysis than if the image would be vaguely described.

## 3. Data and Method

In this section we will present the method we used for this study as well as the corpus used in it, in order to obtain valid results that are relevant to the main aim of this research project.

### 3.1 Approach

For the research we used both a quantitative and qualitative method for the two main parts of the project that will be described in this section. This idea of using a qualitative and quantitative method is confirmed by Creswell (2003) when stating that both methods are suitable to be able to collect the information required so that later on it can be analyzed.

On the one hand, the method of this study is of a quantitative character because it allows us to know what images from each textbook represent the general idea of what the people we interviewed had about Spain. For this study we chose this type of approach for the first part of the project because our main aim was to know the quantity or amount of pictures that people considered “Spanish” in order to compose our Corpus that would later on be presented to the people we interviewed.

On the other hand, it is a qualitative analysis because it allows us to know what cultural aspects the teacher should include in his or her planning so that Step 3 students of Spanish as a foreign language can break free of the Spanish myths and topics that these type of course books pre-establish. According to Hartman (1998), a qualitative approach is more suitable when one’s aim is to understand a phenomena or the value of something.

### 3.2 Corpus<sup>5</sup>

One of the main materials we have used for this study is the Swedish Curriculum for the Upper Secondary School published by Skolverket in 2011 in relation to modern languages. This publication was used to be able to know if the document itself states what type of Culture must be included in the teaching of Spanish as a second language in order for students to be able to create a realistic first impression when studying with Spanish textbooks.

Furthermore, the corpus for this study was obtained from the coursebooks *Alegría 3*, (Vanäs-Hedberg et al, 2007), *Caminando 3* (Waldenström et al, 2009), *El Sur*, (Cea et al, 2010) and *Vistas 3* (Rönmark et al, 2012). All of these course books are currently used in Swedish schools as material to teach Step 3 according to the Swedish National Curriculum. Each of the books contain a vast amount of images and due to the type of study the present project is, it was impossible for us to analyze all of them. For this reason, we decided that the main aim for this research essay would be to analyze two images from each textbook.

The first step in order to choose what images would be included in the corpus was to discard all the images that did not portray Spain or Spanish society and those that were inconclusive.

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<sup>5</sup> In hindsight we believe that due to the nature of the method chosen the results for our Corpus might be biased. With more time we could have tried to analyze all of the pictures in the texts books or perhaps chosen the pictures that people did not choose at all – in other words, the least stereotypical pictures that are included in the textbooks. This could be dealt with in another study.

For this we looked at the pictures and tried to analyze the scenes and objects to see if there were taken in Spain or in another Spanish speaking country. For example, Image 4 in this study could have been a market in any Spanish speaking country, however, all the prices are in Euros – and that confirms the idea that the picture is taken in a Spanish market. When we talk about *inconclusive images*, we refer to those images, which content cannot be clearly defined as Spain or Spanish. For this reason we took into account the caption of the images, the context and text the image were in as well as their content. After all the images from Spain were chosen a portfolio of images was created, in it, we divided all the images into four groups, one per coursebook.

### 3.3 Informants

Once all the images that portrayed any type of situation in Spanish culture were chosen, we had to pick only 2 pictures from each textbook. In order to make sure that the corpus was not biased by our vision of what Spain is, we decided to interview people on the street to see what they considered Spain to be.

According to Lantz (2013) depending on what type of interview you carry out you can have very different results and for us, the key factor for the interviews was to let the informant be able to answer freely without being confined by questions. For this reason we chose to carry out *open interviews*. This way, when we presented our informants with all the pictures from the textbooks, the only question we always asked was “What images do you consider represent Spain, in your opinion?” After that the entire interview was spontaneous and always based on the reaction of the person interviewed. What we considered that was very interesting about this methodology was that, in most cases, the informant actually talked us through on why they believed that the images they picked represented Spain and why they were more important than the others.

For this part of the study we decided that we needed a group of people to gather a convenience sample. For this part, we looked for 45 people who could pick the images that they considered most relevant to Spain. In order to be able to provide convenient results, we decided to target three different age groups. Of the 45 people who were looking for to interview, 15 of them had to be students and be less than 25 years old, we wanted 15 of them to be students or workers and have an age between 25 and 64 years old and the last 15 we wanted to have retired people or people aged 65 years old or more. These three categories were labeled Group 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

- Group 1 - people with 24 years old or less
- Group 2 - people between 25 and 64 years old
- Group 3 - people with 65 years old or more

Figure 1: Different age groups of people interviewed

In order to find the informants we went to schools, different malls, libraries, cafeterias and several public places such as the main square in Halmstad.

A total of 48 people were asked in the regions of Gothenburg and Halland in Sweden so that the corpus could be as balanced as possible and still have a reasonable amount of workload. The reason why we tried to have an even balance within the groups was because we thought that if we would have showed the pictures to one specific group, then we could perhaps have only seen the same type of pictures. We believe that by letting people from different age groups, sex and backgrounds we allowed our corpus to be more balanced and less biased.

Of the 48 people that were invited to choose the corpus, not all of them gave us their consent to use and publish their choices in the present project, for this reason these results are not included in the study. When approached, we first introduced ourselves as students of Gothenburg University and we explained that we were doing a research project. After that, we asked all of them to choose three pictures from all four portfolios that they considered represented best the vision of Spain that they had. Only 45 of the people that were questioned accepted to be part of the project. Three of the ones who did not give their consent did not do so for different reasons: the first one claimed not having had any contact at all with Spain or with Spanish and for this reason declined; the other two did not have enough time to help out.

When we approached each of the people interviewed we noticed how hard it was for the participants to choose only three of the images from each portfolio. Many of them felt that most pictures showed their vision of Spain and to have to choose only 3 of them was a very difficult task.

As Creswell (2003) recommended, we tried to pick both men and women of different ages in order to have reliable study results. Even though it is recommended to have the exact same amount of men and women in each category, it was very difficult to achieve because most of the people in schools, libraries etc. were women. In general we approached people who seemed to be interested in helping out. We did not ask those who seemed uninterested and purposely walked fast past us. We did not approach drunk or homeless people on the streets either and because of this we are aware that our results could be limited and might not be 100 per cent balanced, however we did not want to get ourselves, or anybody else for that matter, into trouble and we opted to not ask those who did not seem to want to be asked.

Furthermore we tried to choose both people who had been in Spain before and people who had not been in Spain at all in order to have yet again accurate and unbiased results. The reason why we wanted to pay particular attention to this last part was because we were curious to see if those who had actually been in Spain had a different idea of Spanish society in comparison to those who had never been to Spain or knew nothing what so ever about Spain. In other words, we wanted to explore the idea that having visited Spain might have a significant impact in the results obtained. Furthermore, Creswell (2003) also points out that the groups included in the study should be even, i.e. there should not be too many of one group or too little of another. For this reason we tried to make sure that the groups consisted of 15 people each. Appendix A shows the results of all the people interviewed, their names, age and what previous knowledge they had about Spain and its language.

The people who were interviewed as well as the material that all the participants chose from when asked is presented in Appendix A in page 36 of this essay.

### 3.4 Research Ethics

In this Project and in research in general it is of extreme importance to consider ethics throughout the entire process. According to the Swedish Research Council<sup>6</sup> (2012), there are four different aspects or requirements that need to be taken into account. In this study the four requirements were taken into account as follows:

- **Information requirement:** The Swedish Research Council (2012) states that all participants are to be informed about the purpose and aim of the study beforehand. This we made sure to carry out as soon as we met each of the informants to know if they were interested in being part of the project or not. We also made sure to highlight to the participants that participation was completely voluntary and that in no way they should feel obliged to answer.
- **The consent requirement:** This requirement ensures that each of the participants have the right to refuse participation in the project at any given point. As with the previous requirement, we informed each of the informants before they started talking about the pictures and choosing the ones they considered most relevant. Furthermore, since all the participants were over 15 years of age, parental consent was not sought before the interviews started. We thanked and respected those informants who did not want to participate. Creswell (2003) and Pino's methodology (2012) also highlight the importance of asking each and everyone of the people interviewed for authorization to be part of the study.
- **The confidentiality requirement:** For this part, as researchers we guarantee the participants anonymity. Each and everyone of the informants were explained that only their name, age and information regarding having visited Spain or studied Spanish would appear in the study. We also ensured that no other information about them would be disclosed. In the case that any of the participants would have refused to use their real name, a fictitious name would have been provided, however we were never required to do so.
- **The usage requirement:** According to the Swedish Research Council (2012) all the results obtained during the study and the materials collected are to be used for research purposes only. In order to fully comply with this requirement, the information we gathered will be used for this project exclusively. As well as with the rest of the requirements, all informants were also notified this.

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<sup>6</sup> In Swedish known as *Vetenskapsrådets*.

## 3.5 Analysis Method Methodology

### 3.2.1 Method

After we gathered all the results we introduced all of the data into a spreadsheet in order to find out what were the two most chosen pictures of each of the books. These became part of our corpus. These results can also be seen in Appendix A.

Most of the images and photographs in the textbooks had its own title, for those images we have kept the original title in Spanish. However, in some cases, like for example in the textbook *Alegría 3* (Vanäs-Hedberg et al, 2007), the images did not have a name. For the sake of this study we have given them a name, based on the content of the image and the text it accompanies, that we deemed suitable in order to facilitate the writing of this paper. In Appendix B four different graphs with the amount of times that each of the pictures in each book were chosen is presented.

The next step was to analyze the images.

### 3.2.2 Methodology

As we mentioned earlier before in section 2.4, to analyze images it is required a different procedure in comparison to text analysis. In the book *Möten med bilder* (2004), Eriksson and Göthlund explain that the semiotic analysis of pictures can be very extensive and that it should be a qualitative process. For this reason, we limited the corpus to eight different images obtained from all four Spanish textbooks. This was the only way we could ensure and provide a detailed and qualitative analysis for all eight images.

For the first three part of the analysis, the theoretical background that we have used to work with in this project paper is Erwin Panofsky's method to study art objects and images described in the book *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Panofsky, 1993).

According to Panofsky (1993), each image should be analyzed in three different levels. The first level of analysis is a simple identification of all the things that are familiar in the picture. Panofsky highlights that it is only the objects that should be analyzed. Even if we could recognize certain gestures or expressions of happiness or pain on faces of the people in the picture, these gestures are subject to personal interpretation and should be ignored in this step. In other words, what we might perceive as an expression of pain, for someone else it could easily be the expression of pushing or simply a sneeze caught at the right moment and at the right time. From now on this part of the analysis will be referred to as *pre-iconographical description*.

In the second step of this analysis, based on Panofsky's method, we deal with the domain of iconography. This step focuses on the links established between the motifs or objects in the picture and concepts or conventions of meaning. For example, the fact that a man is wearing a t-shirt outdoors would make it safe to assume that the weather is warm enough for someone to not have the need to wear a jacket. Henceforth this section will be referred to as *iconographical analysis*.



In the third step of the analysis, Panofsky indicates that one has to “apprehended by ascertaining those underlying principles, which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion - qualified by one personality and condensed into one work.” (Panofsky, 1993) What he means here is basically the content or intrinsic meaning of the elements in the picture, the symbolical values that are shown. From this point onwards the section of the analysis is referred to as *iconographical interpretation*.

### **3.2.3 Method of analysis**

The first step in the analysis procedure was to look at the details of each of the images in order to obtain a pre-iconographical description by observing the images. Here we tried to simply describe what we saw in each of the images with as much detail as possible and always striving to stay away from pre-conceived judgment.

This step was followed by an iconographical analysis where we tried to link the images and details of the first step with concepts that were familiar to both of us. In this case instead of seeing each of the elements individually we tried establishing a connection between them.

In the third step we tried to interpret what those concepts and ideas meant and what value it tried to portray. Here is where we tend to weave in what we know about the Spanish culture due to the fact that we are both raised in Spain.

Last but not least we tried to see if there was any correlation what so ever between the cultural stereotypes mention in section 2.3.1 and the elements, objects and scenes in the picture.

## 4. Findings and discussion

This section will be presented in three main sections. In the first section we will present the analysis of the images. This section will include the study of the form with the subsections: pre-iconographic description, iconographic analysis and iconographic interpretation. In this part of the analysis we also talk about the stereotypical interpretation. For this unit of the analysis all the images analyzed can be seen in Appendix C. The corpus is studied and the results analyzed in alphabetical order according to the textbook's name and the page where the image can be found.

In the second section, we will provide a comparison of all pictures as a whole in relation to previous studies to see if there are any similarities between our results and the results that previous studies have obtained.

In the third part of this section, we will specify a pedagogical analysis based on the results presented in section 4.1.

### 4.1 Analysis of the images

The analysis of every image will consist of four different steps. In the first step we will study the form, also known as the pre-iconographic analysis; in the second step we will provide an iconographic analysis; in the third we will provide an iconographic interpretation and in the fourth and last step we will provide a stereotypical interpretation. In Appendix C you can find all the images analyzed.

The main aim of this subsection is to answer the questions “What is represented in the image?” and “Does the image represent a simplified or stereotyped version of Spain?” that are two of the three questions that are used as guidelines for this study.

#### 4.1.1 Alegría 3<sup>7</sup>

##### Image 1

##### Pre-iconographical description

Image 1 in page 40 of Appendix C is a vertical photograph that shows a close up taken of a man from slightly higher up angle. In the picture he is moving towards the bottom left corner of the picture. He is carrying a black plastic garden tote with a large amount of round orange objects inside. He is wearing a striped shirt, a black or dark coloured hat and white gloves. In the background we can see trees at both sides of the picture and a blue sky with clouds. There are electric power lines that cross the sky. We can tell that the source of light is in front of him because we can see behind him the shadow projected on the ground. The ground is green with quite a few yellow dots and some round orange objects too.

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<sup>7</sup> Heberg, Quero, Dawson (2007)

## **Iconographical analysis**

Due to the setting and all the objects combined we can assume that the round orange objects are oranges, that the trees are therefore orange trees and that the man is working with them. He is not facing the camera and his eyes seem to be slightly closed. This could be due to the fact he is facing the sun. We believe that he does this because he is facing the sun because he is outdoors – this idea is confirmed by the fact that his shadow is projected behind him. We can also see that he usually works outdoors because his face looks gaunt. He is wearing dirty white gloves that are usually used to harvest oranges, and this tells us that he is not just carrying the garden tote, but that he is also picking the oranges. The man is wearing a hat and a long sleeve shirt that is rolled up – this tells us that it is cold. From this we can interpret that it is the orange harvest season that usually takes place during the months of October and February. The picture does not have a caption, so at first sight it is difficult to know that it is a picture that depicts Spain. However, the text to which the picture accompanies talks about a Swedish 17-year-old girl called Julia who is an Exchange student in Valencia, Spain.

The fact that the man is not wearing very fancy or nice clothes and watch tells us that he is working and that he wears clothes meant to get dirty and be comfortable. Also, in the bottom left corner we can see that a tree still has oranges in contrast to the trees he has behind that have no more oranges left – this tells us that he has not yet finished his working day. This hypothesis is confirmed with the fact that the plastic garden tote is full, and therefore needs to be emptied somewhere else so that the man can continue with the harvest.

## **Iconographical interpretation**

The Valencian Community is world famous for its deeply-rooted tradition of growing citrus, in particular oranges. According to IGP (2015), “Valencia has a special climate, with temperatures that alternate between mild at night and hot during the daytime, giving this region's citrus fruit a perfect balance between sweetness and acidity.”

## **Stereotypical interpretation**

If we analyze the image in regards to the stereotypes associated with Spain we can see that both topics and physical appearance stereotypes are present. Regarding topics, we have a sunny day with relatively good weather and even if it is wintertime, it is warm enough to not have to wear a jacket. In relation to physical appearance, the man is thin and dark haired (eyebrows and arm hair). However, from the picture we cannot analyze his character because he is alone and we cannot tell how tall or short he is because we have no reference point or anything else to compare to. Based on Hilton's (1996) definition of stereotypes, in this case we would see characteristics and attributes associated with Spaniards.

## **Image 2**

### **Pre-iconographical description**

This is a horizontal photograph that shows a close up of a dish still contained in its pan held by a man dressed in a white shirt, black bowtie and black trousers. He has a pen in his shirt pocket. We cannot see his head or face as it is out of the picture frame. The man is carrying the dish towards the direction of the camera. The big pan appears in the bottom left corner and center of the picture. In the background we can see another man with a blue suit standing

behind the man we first talked about. Once again, we do not see his face; it is out of the picture frame. In relation to the page, the image is slightly rotated. Except for the big pan dish that is a combination of bright yellows and oranges, the picture is in black and grey colors.

### **Iconographical analysis**

The dish that seems to have been cooked in the pan is Paella. The rotation of the image in relation to the picture makes the paella be in focus. This together with the color combination of the paella in a black/grey background makes us assume that the paella is supposed to stand out and therefore is the most important element in the picture. In order to make the paella more important the head of both men are outside the frame. In the Paella we can see big shrimps, so for this reason we can assume that it is seafood paella.

### **Iconographical interpretation**

By the way that both men are dressed we can assume that we are at an expensive restaurant. The man holding the paella is wearing the typical uniform that a waiter would wear – this idea is confirmed with the pen in his shirt pocket. The posture of man in the background tells us that he is looking towards the man who is holding the paella, it seems as if he would be supervising him. The reason why we believe that this is an expensive restaurant is that both of the uniforms seem to be very formal and also that the shrimps in the paella are very big. Usually big shrimps in restaurants indicate that the restaurant is expensive as they also cost more than smaller shrimps. From our experience while living in Spain, in normal and less expensive restaurants usually waiters do not wear ties or fancier suits.

### **Stereotypical interpretation**

If we compare all the elements in this picture with the stereotypes that López Fernández (2005) mentions in her study we can see that the focus of the image shows one of the elements that often is related to the culture of Spain: the Paella, in this case seafood Paella. Once again this is a clear example of how Spain is portrayed in textbooks for Spanish as a foreign language.

## **4.1.2 *Caminando 3*<sup>8</sup>**

### **Image 3**

#### **Pre-iconographical description**

The image is a horizontal picture of what seems to be a big metal pan with food inside. The dish itself occupies at least three quarters of the picture and it rests on top of a wicker hot mat. In the bottom right corner of the picture we can see a small plate of green round objects on top of what seems to be a small saucer, out of focus, we can see something light brown and white in the back at the top of the image. Just in the middle of the photograph we can see the head of an animal positioned vertically on its side so that we can only see one side of it. We can also see that there is a piece of a yellow fruit in the center of the dish together with a red square in the middle. The picture is composed of a combination of orange, yellow and green colors.

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<sup>8</sup> Waldenström, Westerman, Wik-bretz (2009)

### **Iconographical analysis**

From the ingredients that we can see in the pan: shrimps, yellow rice, mussels, lemon, and red bell pepper, we can deduce that the dish is a Seafood Paella. The yellow fruit in the center of the Paella is half a lemon with a bit of red bell pepper in the middle. The green round objects in the bottom right corner are green olives and the brown and white entity you see in the background is bread. All these object combined give the picture a lot of color that is enhanced by the fact that the main background, we could assume a tablecloth, is very white. All the colors in addition to the Paella that is right in the middle of the picture makes the dish itself stand out and therefore it becomes the most important element. From the ingredients in the dish itself we can see that it is Seafood Paella with shrimps and mussels.

### **Iconographical interpretation**

The Paella is considered a very typical Spanish dish and some even considered it a national dish. These, together with the small plate, or tapa, of green olives constitute two of the clear examples of Spanish cuisine at an international level. The fact that the dish is leaned on a wicker hot mat should also be highlighted because this is a material that is very typical from the Mediterranean regions in Spain. In the background we can see the pieces of bread that are also typical of the Mediterranean diet.

### **Stereotypical interpretation**

In the picture we can see that the Spanish stereotype mentioned by López Fernández (2005) together with other typical foods and dishes from Spain: Tapas and Paella. Another typical material, wicker, is present in the picture, however this does not match any of the stereotypes in López Fernández's study.

## **Image 4**

### **Pre-iconographical description**

The picture is a vertical photograph of a greengrocer. In the textbook the image takes up the entire page, however, to be able to fit the picture into this project, the image has been cropped. In the image, to the right there is a woman with her hand on her waist in what seems to be an observing or waiting position. In the picture we can see a lot of different objects, some smaller other bigger, in very bright colors as well as small rectangles with letters and numbers on them. To the left of the picture, amongst all of the objects being displayed we can appreciate a man with a yellow shirt, behind the counter, with a pencil and a notebook, talking to another woman that is also behind the counter and who is dressed in black. The second woman who is at the other side of the counter is dressed in a dark color. However due to the fact that the light beams towards the other two people, the second woman could be wearing a dark brown or dark blue jacket. In the middle of the image we can also see a silver plated machine with a tray hanging from it.

### **Iconographical analysis**

All the shapes that we see in the pictures are fruits and vegetables; amongst others we can see lemons, peaches, strawberries, bananas, apples, pineapples tomatoes and grapes. Due to the way that the light shines in the picture and the colors, the focus of this picture is the fruits and

vegetables. As we said before, there are people present in the image: two women and a man. One of the women seems to be waiting to buy something. We can deduce this because not only she seems to be in a waiting pose, but also because of the fact that she is waiting at the other side of the counter, and not inside the greengrocer itself. For this reason we strongly believe that she is a customer. The other two people who are behind the counter, a man and the woman in black, are talking to each other. The man is holding a pencil and has a small notebook and his hands are resting on the counter – this could mean that he is talking or discussing an order from the customer with the woman in black or darker clothes. It could be safe to assume that they are both employees at the greengrocer. The fact that the counter provides a division between the employees and the customer make it safer to assume that the two people who are together are indeed the employees or owners of the store and not vice versa. The small white rectangles that we see around are price tags. The fact that the prices are in euros and that the names of the fruits and vegetables are written in Spanish allows us to deduce that this is an image of a greengrocer in Spain. The scale that we see in the middle top part of the picture enhances this idea of being in a greengrocer or a fruit stand in a market. Usually these types of scales are used in Spanish traditional markets to weigh the fruit that the customer asks for.

### **Iconographical interpretation**

Fruits and vegetables are also another typical element in Spain and they both represent agriculture. Spain exports to the rest of the European Union 92% according to the data from the FEPEX<sup>9</sup> (2015). The scene that we see in this picture could be a very typical site in a city in Spain. Even within the biggest cities in Spain there is usually a traditional marketplace where people go and buy their groceries. These types of places can usually have even better goods than in a bigger supermarket because most of the times there are produced locally.

### **Stereotypical interpretation**

In this picture the focus is on the vegetables and fruits that are sold. Even though agriculture is not part of the traits and stereotypes seen in López Fernández's study from 2005 it is still a very important part of Spanish society. In this picture, the only stereotype that might seem relevant when referring to the study carried out by López Fernández could be within the area regarding physical appearance. In the picture we can see that all three people are fairly dark haired, tanned and somewhat slim. We could also mention the fact that they seem short, however this would not be accurate because we do not have any point of reference in order to confirm this assumption.

### **4.1.3 *El Sur Paso 3*<sup>10</sup>**

#### **Image 5**

### **Pre-iconographical description**

In this image we can see a horizontal picture of the side of a building that is lit up. The huge building is full with people. The picture is taken from the front, with a downwards

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<sup>9</sup> Federación Española de productores exportadores de Frutas y Hortalizas.

<sup>10</sup> Cea, López (2010)

perspective. Due to the angle we can see that in the picture there are 5 different sections of stands at different heights.

In the center of the image we can see a green surface that seems to be a field and at either side of this field two metal structures. In the center of this green surface there is a white circle on the ground with what seems to be people around it. There is also a stripe of yellow and red colors away from this circle slightly further away from the camera. Closer to the camera we can see 25 people standing in a horizontal line, or in other words, standing next to each other, with their hands behind their backs and facing towards the side where the camera is situated. In front of these 25 men there is a white banner that reads “Final Copa de S.M. El Rey” two times and in capital block letters. In front of this, towards the camera and on the green surface there are three more white blocks with different drawings on them. Even closer to the camera in what seems to be an area with a different shades of green there are two groups of people in a non-organized manner with a big gap in between them.

At the bottom of the picture we can see two white blocks with what seems to be pictures drawn on top and behind these two, there are even more people looking towards the direction where the men in line are standing.

### **Iconographical analysis**

The image shows what we commonly know as a football match. The people who are sitting the 5 different sections of stands are supporters or football spectators that are there to watch the match. The downwards perspective of the picture makes the arena feel grand and it gives sensation that it is very big – this idea is confirmed when you take a look at the amount of spectators that you can see in the crowd on the different stands.

The green surface at the center of the image is the football field and the two metallic structures at either end are the goals. The white circle in the middle in Spain is usually the logo of the Royal Spanish Football Federation (RSFF). The people around this circular banner are the young players that usually carry the banner in and out of the arena when the players are presented. The 25 men that are standing looking towards the side in which the camera is, are the football players of the teams that are going to play in addition to three referees. The three different white blocks in front of them are different banners. The one in the middle has the logo of the RSFF, the one in the left has the logo of the team dressed in blue and the one to the right has the logo from the team dressed in white. The part of the football field that is closest to the camera is called the sideline and in this case, we can see the sideline where the benches for each team are. The two crowds of people in the sideline are photographers and reporters that are taking pictures of the players that will play the match. The white panels at either side are the roofs of the benches that protect the players who are waiting to play from the weather. The gap in between the two benches and the two crowds of people is the exit for players to come into the field from the changing room.

At the very bottom, the people standing there are most likely part of the premium stands. We believe that this is why there are considerably less people there than in the rest of the football arena.

## Iconographical interpretation

Football is considered one of the most popular sports in Spain, and according to the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports; this sport is the second most practiced Sport in the entire country. In the last study carried out in 2005, a mere of 31.7 per cent of the people who live in Spain trained football on a regular basis. In this particular case we believe that the teams who played this final of *La Copa del Rey* were Sevilla F.C. and Getafe C.F on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June of 2007 (García, 2007). We believe this because we could not find any other match were the same teams faced each other for the final match of this football competition.

## Stereotypical interpretation

As with the case of the previous images analyzed, this one shows once again some of the stereotypes that López Fernández (2005) talks about in her study. In this case, we have the following stereotypes: fun, football and dark haired. If you look closely you can see that the few people that actually can be distinguished in the bottom part of the picture, they are all mostly dark-haired. Moreover, this is obviously a football match and people went to Santiago Bernaveu to have fun and watch their teams play. Furthermore, the Spanish football league is very well known worldwide and the fact that the arena that is shown in the picture is in the Real Madrid stadium, in the capital of Spain and that the arean itself is full – it enhances the stereotype of the greatness of football in Spain.

## Image 6

### Pre-iconographical description

Image 6 in Appendix C is a horizontal image that in the textbook fills the entire top half of the page. We can assume that the picture has been taken outdoors because we can see buildings in the background of the picture. The main focal point of the picture is a black bull that seems to be moving towards the bottom left corner of the picture, this is deduced by the fact that the bull's legs are blurry and this blurriness in contrast with the sharpness of the rest of the image indicates movement. On the right hand side of the picture we can see a man that is facing away from the camera as if he was looking at something behind the bull. In the top center of the photograph and as well as the left side of it we can see a crowd of people. Some of them are looking towards the same direction that the man on the right is looking, especially those in the top center part of the image. Also, some of them are looking towards the bull situated in the center of the picture. Some of the people who are in the left side of the picture seem to be running parallel to the bull – we can say that they are running and not standing still by the fact that their legs are not straight, their legs are bent or crossed as someone walking or running would have. Most of the people in the picture have a white t-shirt with red scarves around their necks or belts around their waist – only the man that is to the right of the bull has a red bandana also. As said before, in the background of the picture we can see different buildings in different colours with balconies that are mostly full with people. In the balconies you can also see that the colours white and red predominate. The people in the balconies are looking towards different directions, some of them are looking towards the direction where the camera is situated and others are looking at the hidden spot behind the bull. The street seems to be paved with cobblestone bricks of different shades of brown and grey and they seem to be wet. We believe they are wet because they have a bit of a shine to them that reflects the light back instead of absorbing it.



## Iconographical analysis

Due to the fact that the black bull is the center of the photo, we believe that the center of attention in the picture has to be the bull. The bull, as said before, is black and has very sharp horns. The horns seem to be a dirty white shade but at the end they get darker until the point where the end of the horns seems to be completely black. The bull is running because two of its legs are lifted in the air. We believe that this is a fighting bull because of the fact that he is completely black and because his horns are sharpened. We can see that the bull has his head facing downwards with the horns sticking out towards the front and this could mean that the bull is also fierce. The group of people that are moving together with or around the bull do not seem to be scared because there is no expression of fear in their faces, they seem to be concentrated on the bull, some of them even have smile on their face and this makes us assume that it is some sort of bull fighting celebration that people are accustomed to. As mentioned before, the colour of the clothing that predominates and what most of the people are wearing is white and red. The idea that the bull is the center of attention and not the people around it is confirmed by the fact that the only person whose image is sharp does not show his face. This makes this person anonymous since his identity is hidden.

We believe that the street is wet because of the way that the light reflects on the cobblestone. There could be various reasons why this would be the case. Perhaps it is a rainy day or it has rained previously and what we can see is rainwater that has not dried up fully. Perhaps it could also be spilled drinks on the ground from the night before that have not been cleaned yet.

As we said in the previous section, in general people are looking in two different directions, towards the first bull and somewhere behind it. This could make us assume that there is another bull or something interesting behind the bull that the people on the ground need to look out for.

## Iconographical interpretation

The bull itself, with the combination of the colours of the clothes that people are wearing tells us that we are in the month of July and in the city of Pamplona in northern Spain. The name of the celebration we believe it is is San Fermin and due to the fact that people are looking behind the bull we can assume that there is indeed one more bull and therefore presuppose that the picture is of one of the *Encierros*<sup>11</sup> were approximately six bulls run through the center of a town or city towards the place that they are going to be kept. This idea of the San Fermin festivity is confirmed by the fact that the people are outside in their balconies looking at what is happening on the streets and the fact that there seems to be a dresscode or uniform common to almost all the people on the picture.

Usually the *Encierro* is celebrated very early in the morning, around 8 o'clock, and this could also explain why the streets seem to still be wet. If there was rain during the night, the heat and the sun have not yet had time to dry it all up. We should also consider the theory that the ground could also be wet because of the drinks and other liquids from the party the night before and that the cleaning services have not had time to clean the streets yet, as the *Encierros* start early in the morning. The celebration of San Fermin starts on July 7<sup>th</sup> and lasts one week.

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<sup>11</sup> Known as "Running of the Bulls" in English.

## **Stereotypical interpretation**

The celebration of the San Fermin bull runs are world famous especially after Hemmingways novel *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) where he writes about “a group of American and British expatriates who travel from Paris to the Festival of San Fermín in Pamplona to watch the running of the bulls and the bullfights.” (Wikipedia, 2015) A number of the stereotypes and pre-conceptions that López Fernández (2005) discovered in her study are present in this image and the idea of the celebration of San Fermin. We can see the presence of people having fun that corresponds to one of the ways that Spanish people were seen by foreign students. Furthermore, bullfighting was the most common topic often related to Spanish culture with 28 per cent of the votes in this study. When observing the last category related to physical appearance, we can see that in the picture we see relatively tanned, slim and dark haired people, especially men.

### **4.1.4 *Vistas 3*<sup>12</sup>**

#### **Image 7**

#### **Pre-iconographical description**

This photograph is a horizontal picture that was situated in the bottom half of page 152 in the textbook *Vistas 3*. Right in the middle of the picture we can see a young woman laying on her stomach on what seems to be the ground with her arms stretched forward and her legs stretched backwards and lifting her feet looking towards the direction of where the camera is but yet not looking straight into it. On her left we can see another girl also laying on the floor or ground but in this case she is on her side and resting on top of her left arm with her right arm stretched upwards into the air and leg up bent and also pulled upwards. In the background you can see more people most of them standing and one man sitting on the floor with a yellow helmet on. Some of the people at the back are facing towards the camera but most of them are facing the opposite direction.

The light reflected on the people as well as the white background at the back of the photograph leads us to assume that the picture is taken outdoors.

The people in the picture are not wearing a lot of clothes; some of them seem to even be wearing bathing suits and shorts. This tells us that it is not very cold and therefore we can say that the picture was taken during a warm month in Spain.

Also, in the back you can see blue plastic or cloth hanging from both sides and the entire picture is covered in a red substance – even the people in the picture are covered with this substance. If we pay special attention to the two girls and the man in the picture we can see their skin and hair are covered. The colour that predominates in this picture is thus red with a hint of blue in the background.

#### **Iconographical analysis**

The people in the picture seem to really be having fun. The two girls in the front of the camera are smiling and the fact that they are “diving” on the red substance enhances this

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<sup>12</sup> Rönmark, Quintana (2012)

idea of happiness. The fact that the girl in the middle of the photograph also has her mouth quite open means that she is screaming or yelling something positive. In the back we can see people in a very relaxed pose. If we look closely there is even a man in shorts and no t-shirt that is lifting his arms as if cheering or celebrating something.

If all this is put into context we could say that the liquid or substance that covers the entire picture is tomato and it seems that people are diving or rolling in it. The blue plastic hanging from either side of the pictures at the back could be plastic to protect buildings from getting dirty with the tomato sauce that seems to be all over the place.

### **Iconographical interpretation**

Putting together the previous interpretations we can take for granted that this is a picture taken in Buñol and it is the last Wednesday of August. This day, in this particular city in the province of Valencia, a celebration called *La Tomatina* takes place. This can also be called as “the party of the tomato” where people fight using tomatoes as their main and only weapon. This hypothesis would confirm the red substance all over the picture, the fact that the picture is taken outdoors and that the people in the picture are not wearing too much clothes while having fun.

### **Stereotypical interpretation**

Once again the festivity of *la Tomatina* and this picture show more of the stereotypes that are mentioned in López Fernández’s study from 2005. In this case, from the first category of adjective, we can see that the adjective *fun* is predominant in the picture: people having fun. Furthermore, we can see elements from the second category related to Spanish culture, them being *party* and *sun*. Furthermore physical stereotypes are also present in this picture. Even though the tomato makes it hard to see, the people in the photograph seem to be tanned, slim and dark haired. We are unable to determine if they are short or tall because there are no reference points. It would also be hard to determine if they are dark-eyed because the picture is taken at a distance that makes it impossible to appreciate.

## **Image 8**

### **Pre-iconographical description**

In the last picture of this study we can see once again similar elements to the ones we saw in Image 2. In this case we can see a horizontal picture that takes up the top half of the textbook. In the center –right side of the picture we see a closeup of a bull taken from a slightly lower angle. The fact that the floor is so close to the bottom of the picture makes it feel as if the camera was on the floor.

The main focus and center of the picture is the head of the black bull with its dirty-white sharpened horns that seems to be running towards the left side of the picture. We believe that the bull is running because once again the bottom of the bull, especially the legs, are blurry and this usually indicates that the object has moved while taking the picture. Slightly more in the background we see people who also seem to be running. This we can deduce due to the fact that in most cases both feet are suspended in the air or the legs are bent in a running angle, like for example the legs of the first man you see from the left of the picture. In this photography most of the people are facing towards the same direction that the bull is facing,

but some people in the balcony still seem to look backwards towards the top center part of the picture.

As with Image 6, in Image 8 there is a predominant combination of colours: white and red in the clothes of the people.

At either side of the picture we see buildings and balconies with people in them. On one of the buildings we can see a street lamp. The source of light comes from behind the head of the bull.

### **Iconographical analysis**

Unlike the faces in Image 6, in this image it seems as if some of the men who are running are actually tense. This is especially clear in the face of the man with the dark sweater and red scarf around his neck and head. There seems to be a safety space between the people and the bull, so this makes us believe that the people are somewhat running together with the bull at the same time as they keep a safe distance.

The source of light that comes from behind the bull and the buildings makes us understand that this picture is taken outdoors. This idea is once again confirmed by the fact that the ground seems to be paved with cobblestone. This element was also present in Image 6.

As mentioned in the previous sub-section the colours red and white are present in both the people who are on the ground and those who are standing in the balconies observing the people who are running. The light in the background is too bright for us to see if there is anything going on behind the people who are running.

### **Iconographical interpretation**

In this picture we can understand that once again the main focus of the picture is not the people running but the bull itself. The fact that the bull is black and its horns are sharpened tells us that he is a fighting bull.

The people looking outside their balconies and the way that the people are dressed allow us to deduce that once again we have a picture of the celebration of San Fermin in the month of July. The sun is low, so this would confirm the suspicion that it is one of the *Encierros* early in the morning since the sun has not gone up fully yet.

### **Stereotypical interpretation**

The celebrations of San Fermin in Pamplona, as said previously, are famous world-wide. In this case we want to add that the entire celebration of San Fermin is actually celebrated in honor of Saint Fermin. This idea adds even more depth to the stereotypes that are usually associated with Spanish people. In this case we would have the presence of fun and religious people that are emphasized by the “party and sun” topics related to Spanish culture. The people in this picture once again are somewhat tanned, slim and dark haired. As with previous cases we are unable to determine if they are short due to the lack of reference points and if they are dark eyed because of the fact that we do not have a closeup of any of the people in the picture.

## 4.2 Comparing Results

When comparing all the images we can say that in all of them there is at least one element of simplification of the Spanish culture. In most all of the pictures that are shot outdoors the weather seems to be great, the physical appearance of the people that are shown in the picture are similar and in one way or another each and every single one of the pictures actually show something that Spain is known for worldwide.

One of the things that we thought was interesting is that only in the pictures where agriculture was the focus of attention, that being Image 1 and Image 4, people are actually in a purely working environment. In all the other pictures there is always a party, celebration or a touristic situation that can be related to the picture. However, even if agriculture is not one of the stereotypes that López Fernández (2005) talks about in her study, it is still common to believe that Spain is a country where agriculture is very common, especially the profession of farming land, even if this is not the case.

If now we compare our study to the ones carried out by Letelier (2006), Pavéz (2014) and Holm (2014) we can see that our results are even more conclusive. As with all the rest of the studies we can see that the idea of stereotypes being portrayed over and over again in the textbooks is accurate.

According to Eriksson and Göthlund, (2014) each semiotic system is based on codes and these codes can only be interpreted correctly if one is familiar with the code itself. The problem here lies that if our students of upper secondary school are not familiar with this codes, in this case the codes that help us visualize Spanish society, what are they really learning? How can they have critical standpoint towards the pictures presented to them if they do not have the required tools to aid them? An image is worth more than a hundred words, and for this reason it is of vital importance that we show our students more images than the ones presented by the different textbooks.

## 4.3 Pedagogical analysis

As we have seen in the previous section, the pictures that have been selected for the corpus all show one side of what people and culture are in Spain. Skolverket considers that it is important that our students in Step 3 of Spanish, and in all other steps for that matter, also learn the *culture* at the same time that they study the language. So, taking this into account, here we will try and analyse what it is we, as pedagogs, need to teach our students and how to make the information that is currently in the textbooks complete, so that our pupils can have a realistic view of Spain's society and this way avoid falling into oversimplification and stereotypical views.

One of the three questions, and the last one left to answer, that we used to help to guide us through this thesis was the question "Do the images help the student to reach the goals established by the Swedish Curriculum?" The answer to this question is: not completely. If we take a look at the previous analysis, all the pictures portray in one way or another one side of Spanish culture and therefore in order to reach the goals established by the Swedish Curriculum of modern languages the teacher's intervention is required. So, in this case what else should the teacher include in his or her lesson for Spanish step 3 in order to fulfill the course requirements?

In the rest of this section, we will talk firstly about what extra culture to include in our lesson plan to make sure that our students have all the information they need to be able to be true critical thinkers and secondly write about why it is so important that this extra information is actually taught.

### 4.3.1 What *culture* should we include in our lessons for Step 3?

To be able to answer the question of what *culture* should be taught in Spanish Step 3 in Swedish highschoools and due to the fact that the Swedish School Curriculum is so vague regarding what should be taught, we need to use the CEFR to help us decide, most specifically chapter 5.1.1.2 that talks about sociocultural knowledge of the Spanish language. The traits and characteristics that are distinct in a specific European society and its culture, in this case Spain, can be related to through several learning units. Some examples of how this can be done is through lesson plans about *daily life* were the students could learn about what food, drinks, activities, hobbies, hollidays, etc are important in the country. Another unit could be for instance *living conditions* of the country, in this case as teacher we could initiate class discussions about social hierarchies or social startification, living conditions, housing, etc. Furthermore, in order to learn more about the culture, the teacher and students could do a module about *personal relationships*, were the students could talk about how family members can relate to each other, gender issues in the country and even go deep into traditional values were the topic could be extended to cover ideas such as traditions, music, politics and even religion.

All this could also be complemented by having general lesson plans that could be extended througout the entire term. In this case we could have units that could deal with body language and what specific gestures within the culture mean, social conventions such as being on time, giving or receiving presents etc or even rituals typical from the culture such as how one is expected to behave in certain ceremonies or celebrations.

It is not possible to find a direct answer to the question on how to teach culture, especially considering that Allwood (2003) also explains that there is no method that can be used in all classrooms and with all teachers or pupils. For this reason, both teachers and students usually have different learning strategies, different background knowledge and different needs to learn the foreign language. Due to the fact that too many factors can affect a lesson plan, the best idea is to combine different learning methods, highlighting the importance that the learning process has to be motivating, encouraging both for the student and the teacher, active and that at the same time will not affect negatively the students image of him or herself. Allwood also writes about the fact that the teacher should be able to created a classroom atmosphere were students can dare and want to use the language that is being learned. This idea is also confirmed by Galindo Merino (2005) that adds that with this type of education and atmosphere students manage to achieve more competent and developed communicative skills.

This idea of using different methods to achieve the best possible learning environment is also supported by the Swedish School Curriculum, since in the section of *foreign language*, it is not really specified how the teacher should teach culture. Thus, culture can be taught, for example, through different means such as videos related to traditions, foods or festivities and other information regarding Spain. One could even develop board games or more fun activities in which the questions could be related to Spanish culture, this way students not

only will learn, but will also have fun at the same time, all of this taking into consideration to not work with images, foods, traditions etc. that could be considered stereotypes.

## 5. Conclusion

As we have seen in the present study, the pictures that are included in highschool textbooks of Spanish as a foreign language do not really reflect the reality of the Spanish society nowadays. There seems to be no trace of current political affairs, the social values and norms of the country etc.

As native speakers of Spanish we like to talk about our customs and we have seen that our students really do enjoy learning more about this foreign culture. For this reason we believe that as teachers we should always include cultural aspects and ideas in the lesson plan constantly and not as a unit of its own. In a way, we could say that the ideal way of learning the culture is to learn it in a somewhat passive way and not through difficult tests where only the historical knowledge is assessed. Only this way, where culture is assimilated gradually, we can guarantee a correct interpretation and understanding of the culture within the right context.

The task of teaching culture does not have to be a tedious one. As a teacher we can aid the learning progress with popular culture elements such as movies or music, through the pleasure of reading literature classics or even by simply watching the news or reading the newspaper. Using all these tools in the classroom not only we allow our students to learn about the culture, but at the same time they practice all the verbal and nonverbal communication skills that the Swedish Curriculum describes.

Moreover, the textbook in the class should be only one of the cornerstones of the lesson plans and should certainly be used together with the additional even personal input from the teacher and other material. This can also be complemented by our attitude in class, after all, the culture that we grew up in really does tell a lot about who we are as individuals – about how we socialize and even our character. Otherwise our students will simply learn a single minded and simplified version of the story of a country and its culture. At the same time, the students should also learn to become critical thinkers and we as teacher should be able to guide them – we should strive to teach our students to analyze critically every source of information and understand that it might be biased and therefore must be completed with extra information. This will not only help them become competent future citizens of a democratic society, but also learn more and more on their own about the culture related to the language being learned.

In conclusion and pointing back to the three key questions of the essay – the pictures that appear in the textbooks we analyzed did represent a simplified version of the culture and people in Spain and due to this, they do not help students to reach the requirements established by the Swedish Curriculum for Upper Secondary School. Consequently, if we rely one hundred per cent on the textbooks our students will never learn that it is not all sun and bullfighting.

## 6. Further Research

When looking back to this study, there are areas we would have liked to explore further, however, due to the time and the scope of this study it was not possible.

One of the aspects of the study that we would have liked to improve on is the fact that the age groups for our informants were not as even as we would have liked. Even though our initial intention was to get a very balanced group of informants, it proved to be an extremely difficult aim to achieve. We would have liked to have the same amount of women as for men for each of the groups as well as the same amount of people who had been to Spain before or studied Spanish before versus the amount of those who had not done either of those things.

This leads us to another area that we deemed was very interesting and that would be a great idea for a future possible research. All the people from all three age groups were allowed to pick whatever picture they wanted and it could be interesting to explore if the age group within itself showed different tendencies towards a specific type of picture – if we take football and men, maybe men are more inclined to pick a picture of a football stadium simply because they know more about that than for example popular festivities in Spain.

As mentioned in footnote 5 in the Corpus section, after completing the study we believe that the method itself led us to a biased representation that from the start was already stereotypical. I believe that changing the angle of the methodology and focusing perhaps on those pictures that were not chosen by any of the groups could lead to a very interesting study that would complement this study well.



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# Appendices

## Appendix A - Informants

	Name & Age	Textbook				Information <sup>13</sup>
		<i>Alegría</i>	<i>Caminando</i>	<i>El Sur</i>	<i>Vistas</i>	
Group 1	Alicia, 17	27, 57, 192	21, 118, 141	116, 120, 152	136, 139, 155	No / No
	Badan, 20	27, 38, 57	32, 35, 138	16, 120, 152	35, 36, 139	Yes / No
	Charlotte, 16	140, 185, 192	21, 32, 35	44, 119, 152	35, 139, 155	Yes / No
	Clara, 15	27, 57, 185	35, 64, 118	44, 119, 152	35, 74, 155	Yes / No
	Emma, 17	27, 38, 41	32, 64, 141	116, 152, 166	36, 152, 155	Yes / No
	Halla, 16	38, 57, 185	32, 35, 118	120, 152, 166	36, 155, 157	No / No
	Isabella, 19	27, 38, 41	32, 35, 97	116, 89, 152	136, 155, 185	Yes / Yes
	Marlene, 16	41, 57, 185	32, 35, 123	80, 120, 152	35, 139, 155	No / Yes
	Nadia, 15	27, 119, 185	97, 118, 141	152, 79, 120	35, 139, 155	No / No
	Nadine, 16	57, 164, 185	32, 35, 141	44, 119, 120	35, 136, 155	No / No
	Safaa, 18	55, 57, 119	21, 97, 138	43, 154, 80	36, 74, 136	No / No
	Shirav, 17	28, 38, 140	120, 141, 138	116, 154, 166	36, 74, 185	No / No
	Tea, 16	27, 41, 185	21, 32, 64	43, 119, 120	35, 36, 152	No / No
	Viktoria, 17	19, 38, 185	32, 64, 97	44, 119, 120	35, 152, 155	Yes / Yes
Zara, 18	27, 41, 185	32, 35, 118	6, 44, 152	136, 152, 157	No / Yes	

Table 1: Images chosen by informants from Group 1

	Name & Age	Textbook				Information
		<i>Alegría</i>	<i>Caminando</i>	<i>El Sur</i>	<i>Vistas</i>	
Group 2	Andrés, 26	27, 57, 185	32, 120, 123	6, 119, 152	35, 152, 155	Yes / Yes
	Bella, 37	39, 164, 185	24, 25, 35	44, 116, 119	36, 152, 158	Yes / Yes
	Carlos, 33	27, 57, 19	32, 35, 138	43, 116, 154	35, 152, 155	No / Yes
	Cissi, 44	41, 57, 119	64, 32, 21	44, 116, 119	36, 152, 136	Yes / No
	Edwin, 24	57, 19, 185	25, 138, 139	38, 79, 152	183, 155, 36	No / No
	Helen, 43	41, 119, 164	21, 25, 141	10, 53, 103	36, 152, 155	Yes / Yes
	Helen, 47	19, 27, 185	64, 32, 35	116, 120, 152	36, 155, 152	Yes / No
	Helena, 36	57, 119, 185	35, 32, 25	44, 89, 119	74, 152, 155	Yes / No
	Johan, 37	19, 185, 192	15, 21, 97	16, 38, 119	36, 74, 139	Yes / No
	Joseph, 55	27, 55, 41	118, 138, 141	44, 104, 120	74, 136, 157	No / No
	Juliane, 40	27, 38, 192	35, 64, 139	116, 120, 152	36, 152, 155	No / No
	Rebecca, 26	27, 38, 185	32, 35, 97	10, 116, 152	36, 155, 185	Yes / No
	Robert, 31	19, 57, 192	25, 32, 35	44, 116, 119	35, 136, 152	Yes / Yes
	Sebastian, 23	140, 57, 185	25, 32, 138	116, 119, 152	36, 139, 152	Yes / No
Sofia, 37	38, 57, 185	25, 32, 35	44, 103, 152	136, 155, 158	Yes / No	

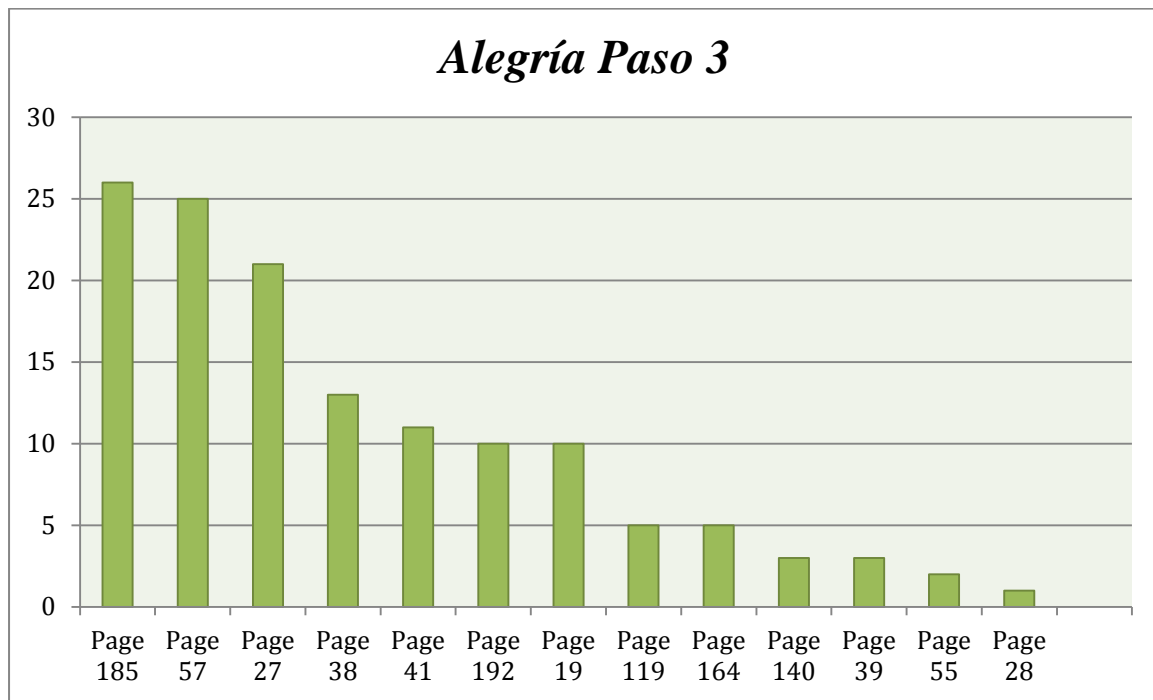
Table 2: Images chosen by informants from Group 2

<sup>13</sup> Additional information: Been to Spain / Studied Spanish

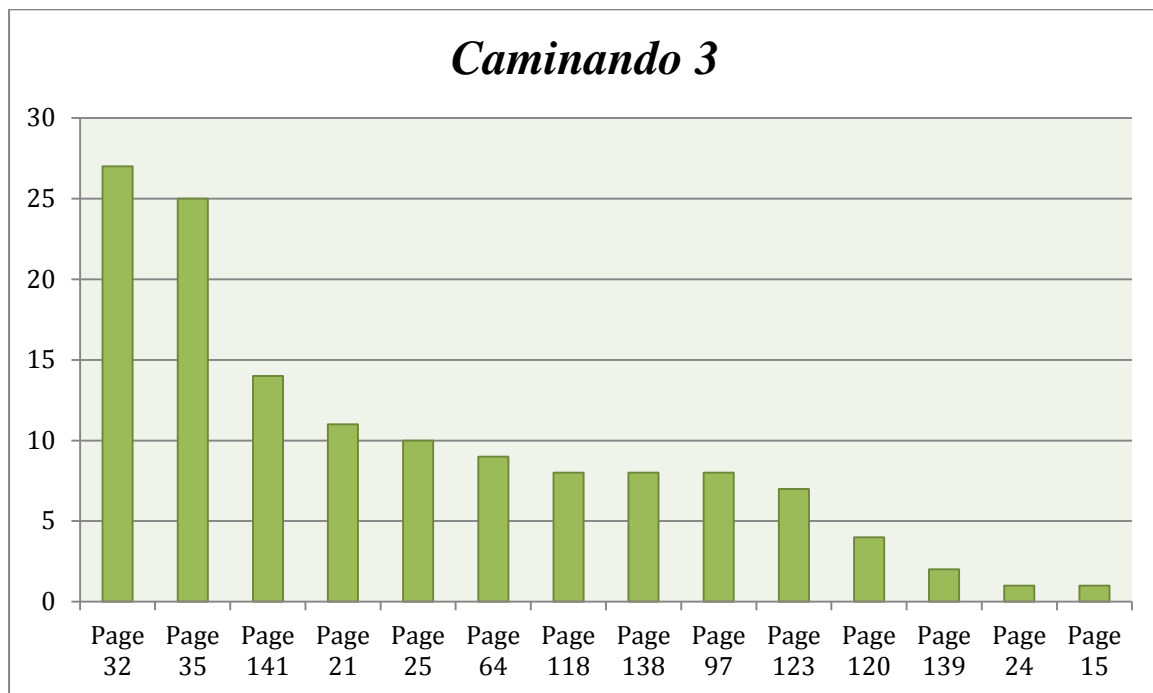
	Name & Age	Textbook				Information
		<i>Alegría</i>	<i>Caminando</i>	<i>El Sur</i>	<i>Vistas</i>	
Group 3	Gerd, 77	27, 57, 192	21, 32, 141	119, 120, 152	35, 152, 155	Yes / No
	Gillis, 75	57, 164, 192	35, 141, 120	120, 152, 6	36, 152, 157	Yes / No
	Inger, 71	39, 57, 185	32, 35, 118	43, 44, 152	35, 36, 155	Yes / No
	Jörgen, 68	27, 41, 185	32, 35, 123	43, 53, 152	35, 36, 155	Yes / No
	Marie, 67	57, 185, 192	25, 32, 35	38, 119, 152	36, 152, 155	Yes / No
	Mats, 70	38, 57, 185	25, 123, 141	16, 89, 166	36, 152, 155	No / No
	Thurwald, 65	19, 27, 185	21, 32, 35	10, 103, 119	35, 139, 155	Yes / No
	Unni, 73	27, 164, 19	141, 123, 25	44, 116, 89	36, 152, 157	Yes / No
	Anders, 71	27, 57, 192	21, 32, 141	119, 120, 152	35, 155, 152	No / Yes
	Olle, 66	19, 41, 57	32, 35, 141	10, 43, 104	35, 152, 155	No / No
	Bo, 74	38, 57, 185	97, 118, 123	53, 120, 152	152, 155, 185	No / No
	Tina, 65	38, 57, 185	21, 35, 64	44, 120, 152	35, 36, 152	No / No
	Kathrin, 66	27, 38, 57	120, 123, 138	44, 116, 119	136, 152, 155	No / No
	Eric, 82	27, 39, 19	32, 35, 64	44, 116, 152	74, 152, 155	No / No
	Björn, 70	185, 192, 41	141, 97, 35	119, 152, 89	36, 74, 155	No / No

**Table 3: Images chosen by informants from Group 3**

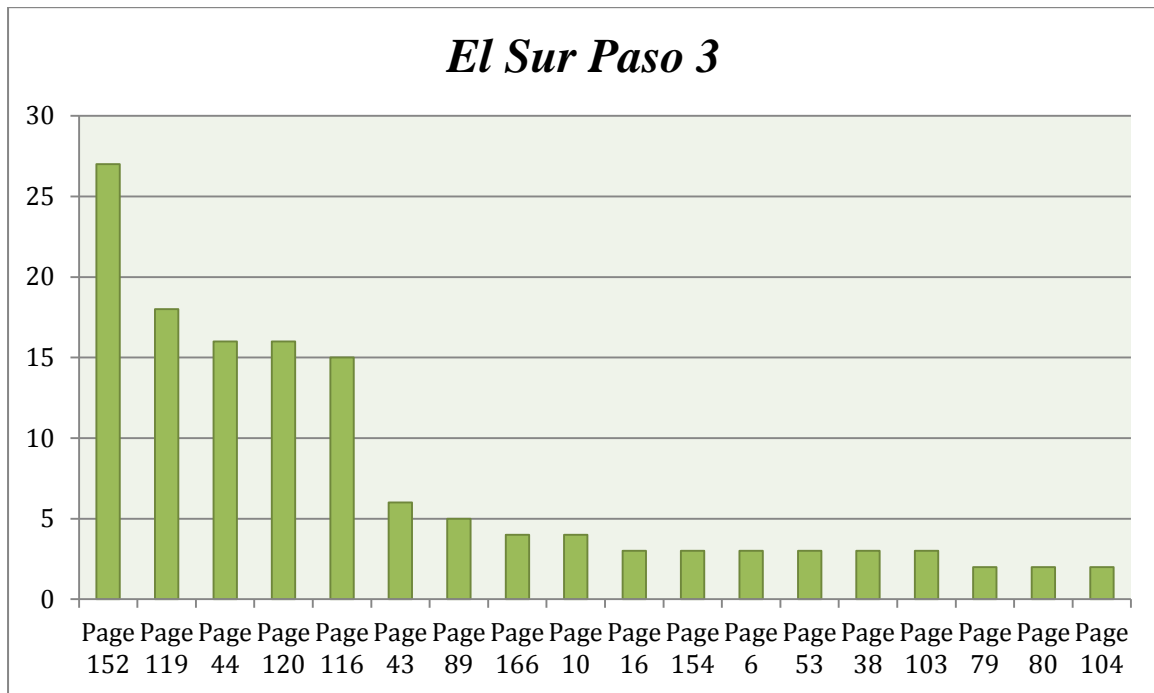
## Appendix B - Picture Frequency



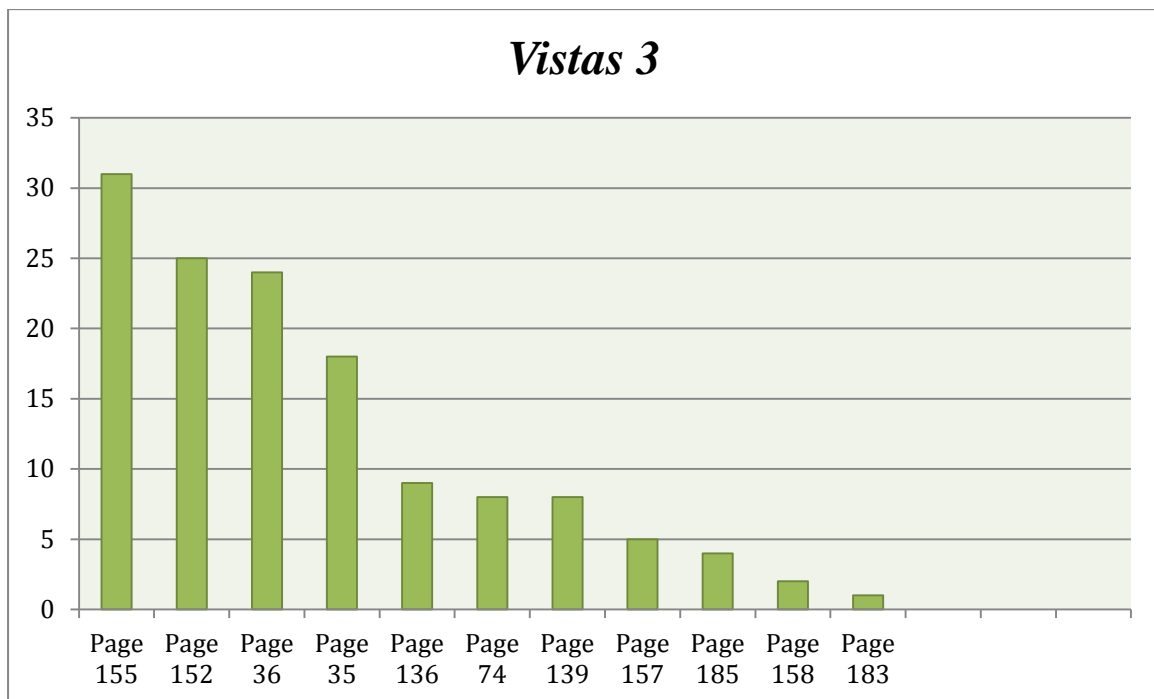
**Table 4: Picture frequency for each of the pictures (page) in the textbook Alegría Paso 3.**



**Table 5: Picture frequency for each of the pictures (page) in the textbook Caminando 3**



**Table 6: Picture frequency for each of the pictures (page) in the textbook El Sur Paso 3**



**Table 7: Picture frequency for each of the pictures (page) in the textbook Vistas 3**

## Appendix C - Images

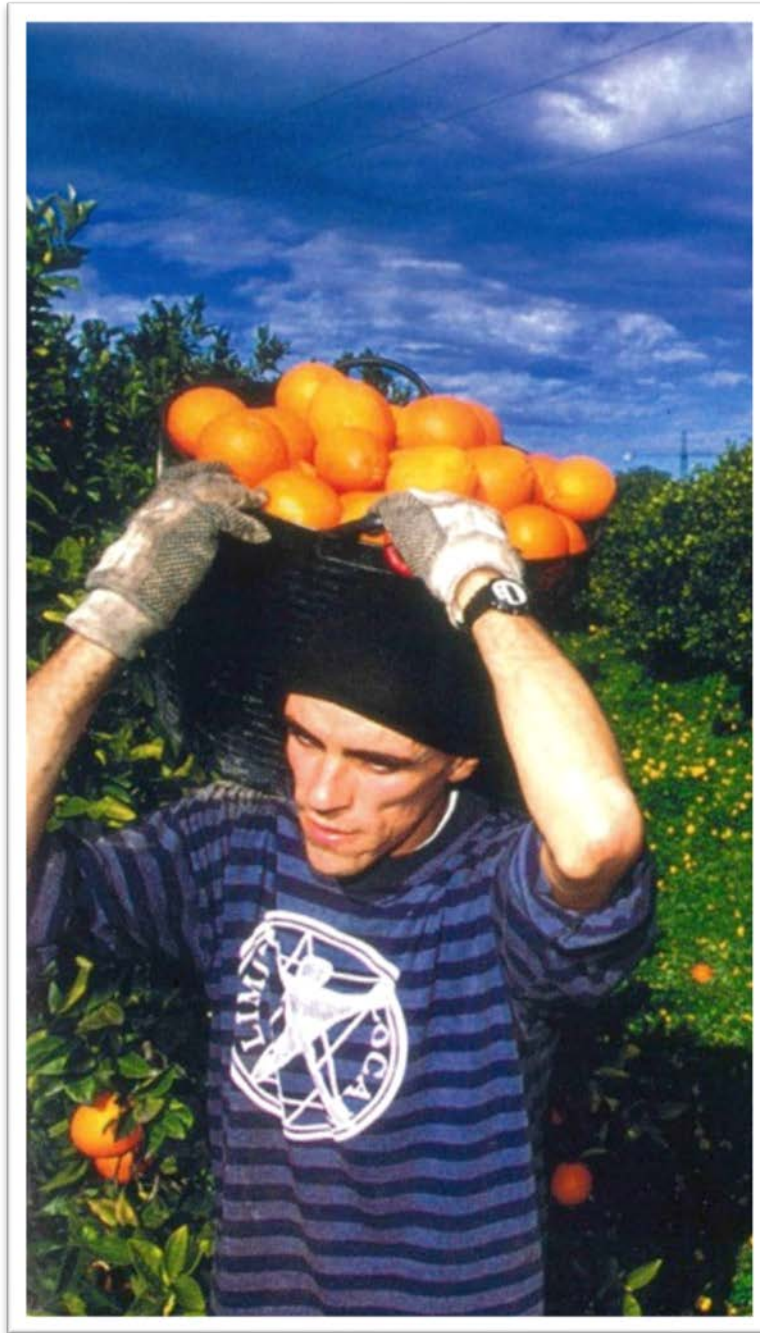


Image 1: El cogedor de naranjas - Alegría Paso 3, page 57





**Image 2: Paella de marisco I - Alegría Paso 3, page 185**



**Image 3: Paella de marisco II - Caminando 3, page 32**



Image 4: Frutería - Caminando 3, page 35



Image 5: Estadio de fútbol, El Sur Paso 3, page119



Image 2: San Fermín I - El Sur Paso 3, page 152



Image 7: La tomatina - Vistas 3, page 152



Image 8: San Fermín II - Vistas 3, page 155