

A Study of Image-text Relation in English Textbooks

-- An Analysis of New and Old Edition of New Standard English

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Abstract

Based on Martinec and Salway's analysis of image-text relations, this study aims to explore diachronic changes of image-text relations in the two editions of the same sets of English textbooks widely-used by Chinese senior high students. Firstly, as for status relations, the number of "Image Subordinate to Text" occupies the largest part in the reading parts of NSE(2001) and NSE(2012), while that of "Image-text Complementary" accounts for the smallest proportion. Meanwhile, the proportion of "Image Subordinate to Text" in NSE(2012) is larger than that in NSE(2001). Secondly, as for logico-semantic relations, the image-text relations in the two editions of textbooks are mainly "elaboration". Compared with NSE(2001), the proportion of "elaboration" in NSE(2012) declines, and those of "enhancement" and "extension" increase relatively. In general, numbers of image-text relations in these two sets of textbooks show a downward trend. Based on these findings, three reasons and three suggestions for English teachers are proposed.

Keywords

Image-text Relation; Junior High School English Textbook; New and Old Edition.

1. Introduction

Textbook is a multimodal text composed of language, image and other multimodal resources. Since text and image are the two main visual symbols in multimodal textbook, image-text relation has become a hot issue in multimodal discourse analysis of textbook[3][4].

With the development of multimedia technology, the image-text relations are clearly represented in English textbooks. Image can effectively create English teaching situations and help learners to understand deeply the content of textbooks. It is also beneficial for teachers to stimulate and cultivate learners' interest in learning, and to strengthen learners' emotion attitudes. So it is necessary to take a detailed multimodal discourse analysis of the image-text relations in English textbooks.

Nowadays, researches on multimodal discourse analysis of English textbooks mainly focus on the image-text relations in one set of textbook published by a certain press. In addition, the existing research focuses on the textbooks of universities, high schools and primary schools instead of middle schools. Meanwhile, there are relatively less comparative studies of image-text relations of textbooks between different versions of the same set of textbooks.

In view of this, this study attempts to compare the image-text relation in the old and new versions of Junior high school English textbook, New Standard English(2001) and New Standard English(2012), from Grade Seven to Grade Nine respectively. Based on Martinec and

Salway's image-text relation theory, the image-text relations in reading parts of these two sets of textbooks are compared and analyzed to explore their diachronic changes as well as synchronic similarities and differences.

1.1. Research Question

Question 1: What similarities and differences can be found between *NSE(2001)* and *NSE(2012)* in terms of image-text relations?

Question 2: What are the reasons behind those similarities and differences between *NSE(2001)* and *NSE(2012)* in terms of image-text relations?

1.2. Research Data

The research samples chosen in this study are images and texts from Reading part of *NSE(2001)* and *NSE(2012)*. These two sets of the textbooks are composed of six books respectively, ranging from Grade Seven to Grade Nine. The old ones were firstly published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press in 2001, namely *NSE(2001)*, and revised according to the requirements in English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education(2011),[5] hence *NSE(2012)*

The reasons for choosing *NSE(2001)* and *NSE(2012)* as research objects are as follows: (1) These series of textbooks are compiled by experts from both China and the United Kingdom. (2) These series of textbooks are representative, popular and widely used in several areas in China.

2. Analytical Framework

Based the model on Barthes and Halliday, Martinec and Salway (2005) creates a model which describes a mutual relationship between image and text[6]. The descriptions of their model concentrate on image and text connecting together in a multimodal relation rather than images or text separately. The model is regarded as "a generalized system of image-text relations". It is applied to describe intersemiotic relations. In this model, there are two kinds of relations, the status relation and the logico-semantic relation.

Network of combined status and logico-semantics is shown in Figure 1. The network of image-text relations theory is adopted as analytical framework in this study.

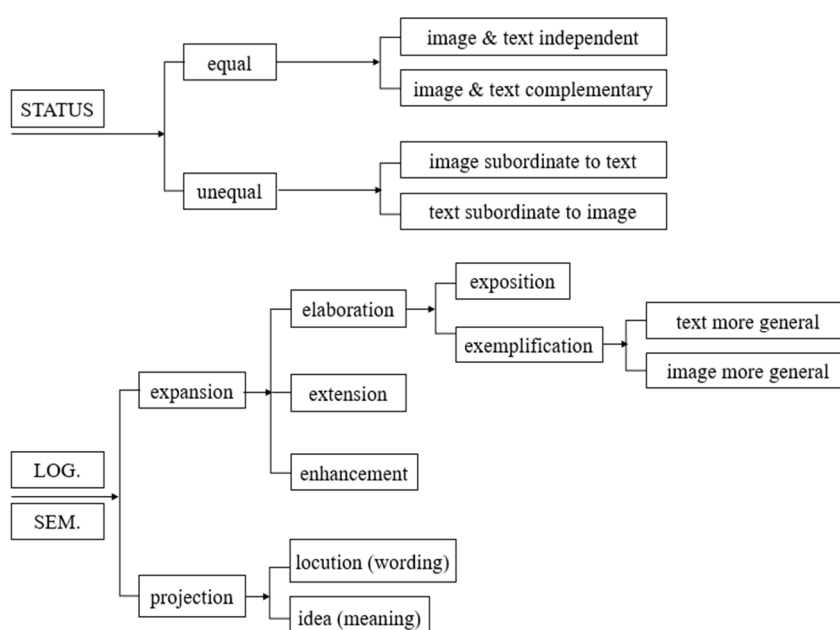


Figure 1. Network of combined status and logico-semantics

In equal status, the image-text relation can be divided into independent and complementary. The relative status of an image and a text is considered as “image and text independent” when the whole image is related to the whole text. When an image and a text are connected together equally and one doesn’t modify another, then they are considered to be independent from each other and their status is equal. As is shown in Figure 2, examples from Module 5, Grade 8 Book 1, the whole images of instruments relate with the whole text “drums, guitar, organ, piano, trumpet, violin”. The juxtaposition of these images and texts co-deploys allows students to understand these instruments easily.



Figure 2. Example of Image-text Independent

As for “image and text complementary”, “when an image and a text are connected together equally and one modifies the other, their status is considered to be complementary”[6]. For example, in Figure 3, students are encouraged to talk about “Is your food and drink healthy”, so they have to distinguish food and drink with the correct verb. The texts present the verb or the action matched with the images showing food and drink in our daily life. It is clear that these images and texts work together to convey a larger message.



Figure 3. Example of Image-text Complementary

Image and text are considered to be unequal in status when they are partly related. Similarly, unequal status can also be divided into two types: “text subordinate to image” and “image subordinate to text”. The relation of text subordinating image has two subtypes. Firstly, text subordination can be defined as an inter-semiotic relationship between visual images and verbal texts when a whole text is well-related to only a part of a whole image. Figure 4 selected from Grade 8 Book 1 of NSE(2001) can exemplify the relation in detail. The image depicts a girl in white and blue holding a yellow schoolbag in front of airplanes. The related text “She’s tall with long hair” describes part of the girl’s physical appearance. However, there is no description about other related information such as her clothes, actions and location. In this case, the texts “She’s tall with long hair.” and “She looks friendly.” relate to a part of the picture.



Figure 4. Example of Text Subordinate to Image

Secondly, editors don't tend to describe everything in the whole image in textbooks, specially the introductions of a famous person. Generally, background of the persons such as birthday, contributions and achievements are illustrated in the text. When a whole image is connected to part of the text, the relation is called "image subordinate to the text". For instance, in Figure 5, the image from Module 3, Grade 9 Book1 is Dr. Norman Bethune. It is obviously that information about Dr. Norman Bethune, such as his nationality, job, contributions and achievements are stated in the text.

My hero — Dr Norman Bethune

By Wang Lingling

Norman Bethune is one of the most famous heroes in China. He was a Canadian doctor. He came to China to help the Chinese people and died for them.

Norman Bethune was born in 1890. He became a doctor in 1916 and went to Spain in 1936 to treat the wounded soldiers during the war there. He soon realised that many people were dying because they did not get to hospital quickly enough. Dr Bethune developed new ways of taking care of the sick. He invented special medical tools to use outside hospitals and close to the fighting areas so that doctors could treat the wounded more quickly. His inventions saved many lives.

In 1938, Dr Bethune came to China and helped treat the wounded during the Anti-Japanese War. At that time, there were few doctors, so he had to work very hard on his own. His experience of treating people in Spain was useful in China. He developed training courses for local doctors and nurses, and wrote books so that they could learn about how he treated the sick.

Dr Bethune often worked very hard without resting or taking care of himself. Once, he even worked for sixty-nine hours without stopping and managed to save over a hundred lives. One day in 1939, he cut his finger during an operation, but he continued his work without treating it. In the end, he died of his wound.

Dr Bethune's work for the Chinese people made him a hero in China. There are many books and films about him, and he is still remembered in both China and Canada today.

Figure 5. Example of Text Subordinate to Image

Logico-semantic relations are classified into two types: projection and expansion. Projection is mainly concerned with relations between events that have already been represented. In EFL textbooks, it represents in either a combination of text and diagram, or a comic strip. Projection can be classified into two types: locution (wording) and idea (meaning). Information depicted in speech bubbles is regarded as locution, while that in thought bubbles is considered as idea. Hence, it is straightforward to distinguish locution and idea, or projection of wording and meaning in comic strips. For instance, in Figure 6 from Module 4, Grade 7 Book 1, there are two thoughts bubbles and two speech bubbles with exemplary sentences and images respectively. The picture and text are about family members. The boy asks "Have you got a small family?" directly in a speech bubble, which is considered to be a projection of wording. The girl's reply

of “No, I’ve got a big family” relates to the thoughts bubble of “six family members”, which shows “a big family”.

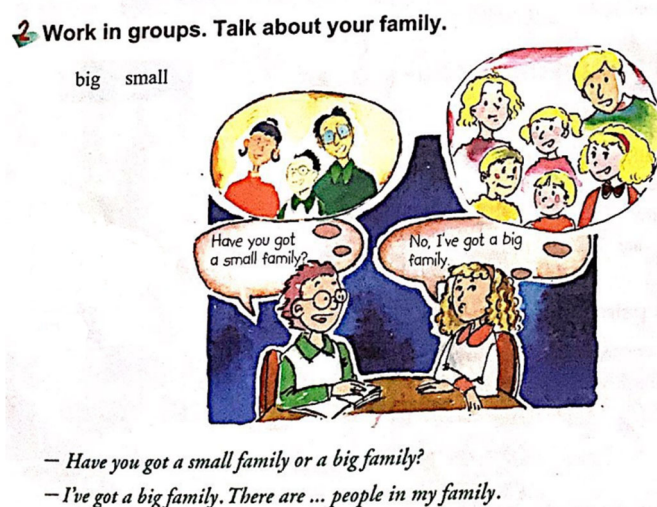


Figure 6. Example of Projection

Expansion can be classified into three types: elaboration, extension, and enhancement.

If the same participants, processes and circumstances are depicted and referred to, then there is elaboration. There are two kinds of elaboration between images and texts: exposition and exemplification. In the process of exposition, the image and the text are in the same level of generality while in that of exemplification they are in different levels and one may be more general than another[6]. In fact, when image and text are independent, the logico-semantic relation is regarded as exposition. Exemplification can be further divided into two types: text more general and image more general. When the general level of the image and text is not the same, either a more general image or more general text occurs. In this image-text logico-semantic relationship, an image functions as an example of a text. It is realized by hyponymy between them, with the super-ordinate element in the text and the subordinate in the image.

Extension is a relationship between an image and a text in which either the one or the other add new, related information. For example, in Figure 7, the text “a silk dress” adds new information of the textile to the image. It is difficult to recognize that the dress is made from silk from the image. On the contrary, the image also adds new and related information of color about the dress.



Figure 7. Example of Extension

Another kind of expansion is enhancement. It is characterized as a relationship between image and text when one qualifies the other circumstantially. For a text to be considered enhancing an image or vice versa, it has to be related to its ideational content. For instance, in Figure 8, the image shows Alex Greenall’s daily activities at school. The text, “We have lunch in the dining hall at half past twelve”, provides time and place information to enhance Alex’s activity. The

place “dining hall” is closely linked with students’ daily life, which stimulates students to imagine what the characters will happened in this place.

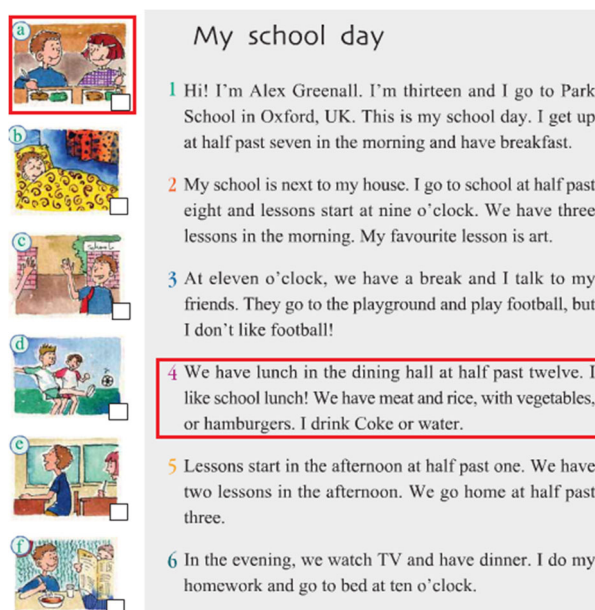


Figure 8. Example of Enhancement

3. Data Analysis and Discussion

3.1. Similarities and Differences of Status Relations

The status relations of image and text in all twelve books of NSE are counted and classified to reveal their distribution in these two sets of EFL textbooks. The total number of image-text status is 265 in NSE(2001) and 230 in NSE(2012).

Table 1. Percentages of Status Relations in NSE(2001) and NSE(2012)

	Equal		Unequal	
	Independent	Complementary	Image Subordinate to Text	Text Subordinate to Image
NSE(2001)	25.66%	13.21%	38.49%	22.64%
NSE(2012)	26.96%	13.04%	41.30%	18.70%

As is shown in Table 1, both of the percentages of “image subordinate to text” account for the largest proportion, with the percentage of 38.49% and 41.3% respectively. On the contrary, the proportion of complementary occupies the smallest part, with the percentage of 13.21% and 13.04%. Therefore, it is obviously shown that text mainly plays an essential role while image plays an auxiliary role in textbooks. Moreover, it can be inferred from the graphs that the text contains more information than that represented by the image and extra information can still be decoded from the image to enhance the text.

Although both of the figures of equal status are quite smaller than that of unequal status, there are differences between these two sets of textbooks.

In terms of total number of status relations, the number in NSE(2001) is larger than that in NSE(2012), which indicates an downward trend of status relations. In other words, there is a

decreased number of images in the new version of textbooks. It can be inferred from the tendency that image still plays an auxiliary role in textbooks.

In addition, the figures of status of independent and “image subordinate to text” increase whereas that of the other two statuses decrease, especially the percentages of text subordinate to image decline significantly from 22.64% to 18.7%.

Table 2. Status Relations of image-text in different Grades

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
NSE(2001)	56.60%	18.11%	25.28%
NSE(2012)	53.91%	24.35%	21.74%

Both of the status relations take the most significant part in Grade 7, with a percentage of 56.6% and 53.91% respectively, while the smallest part occupies in different grades. As is clearly shown in Table 2, the percentage of status relation is 18.11% in Grade 8 of NSE(2001) while that is 21.74% in Grade 9 of NSE(2012).

As a whole, textbooks for students in Grade 7 contain more images than those for higher-level EFL learners. Younger learners are more likely to be attracted and motivated by images of tedious texts in target language learning. Moreover, the downward trends of image-text status from Grade 7 to Grade 9 also show a declined trend of status relations illustrated in the textbook in higher grade with the development of students' cognitive ability and language proficiency.

Generally speaking, the similarities between NSE(2001) and NSE(2012) mainly lie in the distribution and the shifting trend in image-text relations.

On the one hand, there is an overall decrease in the percentages of image-text relations over both sets of textbooks. As is shown in Table 2, the percentages of image-text status in NSE(2012) dropped dramatically, from 53.91% in Grade 7 to 21.74% in Grade 9, which is similar to the downward shift in NSE(2001), from 56.6% in Grade 7 to 25.28% in Grade 9. The result indicates that as the students in junior high school move into the upper grades and obtain higher English language proficiency, more space in EFL textbook is occupied with verbal texts instead of images to ensure their comprehensive input of target language.

On the other hand, the unequal status of image subordinate to text accounts for a vast majority while the proportion of commentary occupies the smallest part. It indicates that special emphasis is placed on text while the image mainly plays an auxiliary role in textbooks. Moreover, it can be inferred from the graphs that text contains more information than that represented by the image and extra information can still be decoded from the image to enhance the text.

As for the differences, the percentages change significantly between NSE(2001) and NSE(2012) in terms of grades, especially in unequal status. In Grade 7, though the percentage of image subordinate to text reduce relatively, the percentages of equal status and text subordinate to image rise. It is shown that editors start to pay more attention to the role of images in NSE(2012) because image helps students in a lower grade to acquire knowledge directly. In Grade 8, the percentages of unequal status increased significantly, especially in text subordinate to image. However, there is a decreased tendency in Grade 9, especially in text subordinate to image.

3.2. Similarities and Differences of Logico-semantic Relations

In all twelve books of NSE, the logico-semantic relations are counted and classified to reveal their distribution in these two sets of EFL textbooks in junior high school. The total number of logico-semantic relations is 259 in NSE(2001) and 211 in NSE(2012).

Table 3. Percentages of Logico-semantic Relations in NSE(2001) and NSE(2012)

Textbooks		Logico-semantic Relations		NSE(2001)	NSE(2012)
Expansion	Elaboration	Exposition		50.97%	45.50%
		Text more general		11.97%	8.06%
		Exemplification		6.18%	3.32%
		Image more general		29.73%	34.60%
		Extension		0.77%	6.64%
Projection		Enhancement		0.39%	1.90%
		Locution		0	0
		Idea			

It is found that projection occupies a small scale in these two sets of textbooks, and the projection of idea is not illustrated, which may result from the limitation of abstract thinking for middle school students.

Among the three classifications of elaboration, exposition accounts for the largest scale. As for exemplification, text more general occupies a larger scale, which shows the auxiliary role of image. For example, it would be suffering for students to grasp five words that they do not know. However, they will grasp and understand the words faster if they are provided by 20 words of the same type with related image[7]. Therefore, texts with images encourage students to understand the meanings between words and things easily and to simplify those complicated words, which leaves a deep impression on students.

The proportion of extension shows a relatively large part, which indicates that a considerable number of images and texts provide new and related information to each other and construct discourse meanings in the textbooks. In all, the distribution of logico-semantic relations is quite similar in these two sets of textbooks.

However, there is a change in the trend of logico-semantic relations. It is shown that the percentages of elaboration in NSE(2012) are smaller while those of extension, enhancement and projection are larger than those in NSE(2001). It can be inferred from the tendency that editors start to focus on the functions of image and cognitive development of junior students. A combination of images and text is better than a single text to promote meaningful learning. After that, almost all comparative studies between these two ways of presentation reveal a fact that a combination of text and image stimulates learners to select, organize and process information to a greater extent. Therefore, it is beneficial for their retention and transfer of knowledge.

Table 4. Logico-semantic Relations of image-text in different Grades

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
NSE(2001)	56.37%	17.76%	25.87%
NSE(2012)	54.50%	27.01%	18.48%

It is obviously seen that both of the logico-semantic relations occupy the largest part in Grade 7, with a percentage of 56.37% and 54.50% respectively. However, the smallest parts are presented in different grades. As is clearly shown in Table 4, the figure of logico-semantic

relation is 17.76% in Grade 8 of NSE(2001), while the percentage is 18.48% in Grade 9 of NSE(2012).

In summary, the distribution of logico-semantic relations is similar to that of status relations in these two sets of textbooks.

4. Major Findings

(1) Both of the status relations and logico-semantic relations in these two editions of textbooks account for the largest proportion in Grade 7. The smallest part of NSE(2001) is presented in Grade 8, whereas that of NSE(2012) is shown in Grade 9. It shows that the number of image-text relations in NSE(2012) decreases with the increase of grade, which is in accordance with students' cognitive development.

(2) From the perspective of status relations, the unequal status of "Image Subordinate to Text" occupies the largest part in the reading parts of NSE(2001) and NSE(2012) while the number of equal status of "Image-text Complementary" occupies the smallest proportion. It is clearly shown that textbook compilers have strictly followed the requirements of NECS(2011). Based on the NECS(2011), students are required to acquire language knowledge and language skills. There are lots of language points that students should grasp in reading parts. Thus image plays an auxiliary role in attracting their attention and interests.

(3) The proportion of "Image Subordinate to Text" in NSE(2012) is larger than that in NSE(2001). It is illustrated that the position of the text is constantly promoted day by day, while the image has been in a subordinate position, playing an auxiliary role. It is obviously shown that the textbook compilers take a higher emphasize on text. However, it is the image and text work together that construct context to readers. With a rapid development of multimedia technology, image is becoming increasingly important, which ought to be paid more attention by textbook compilers and teachers.

(4) In terms of logico-semantic relations, the image-text relations in the two editions of textbooks are mainly embodied in "elaboration", but the proportion of "elaboration" in NSE(2012) decreases, and the proportion of "enhancement" and "extension" increases relatively. It explains that images of NSE(2012) are used to interpret and reproduce text information from different perspectives, which increases the diversification and complexity of the form of pictures and text and improves the requirements of students' language cognition.

5. Pedagogical Implications

Making use of textbooks creatively with the help of multimedia technology. In the era of multimedia technology, multimedia teaching equipment has been well-applied in class, and multimedia teaching has gradually become the mainstream. According to the requirements of NECS(2011), teachers should actively develop and utilize textbook resources. Therefore, teachers can pay attention to the potential meanings of different symbol elements. Besides, they should make full use of multimodal resources by using multimedia technology, so that they can help students to enhance their multiliteracy from multiple channels such as viewing and listening.

Firstly, teachers should add more images to those texts with fewer images in class. For example, in Module 8, Grade 8 Book 2, teachers can provide pictures of "Chinese New Year Celebrations" to strengthen students' understanding of the theme of the New Year Celebration. Secondly, teachers can also switch the traditional paper teaching mode by using electronic textbooks and teaching software with an electronic whiteboard to mark key information in class. Besides, teachers can record micro-class videos by using screen recording software in class. After class, teachers can encourage students to do dubbing or recording short videos on apps. Taking "Alice

in Wonderland” in Module 7, Grade 8 Book 1 as an example, it is better for students to do role-play in or after class and to record videos for communicative evaluations. In addition, teachers should provide audiovisual materials by using multimedia teaching equipment and expand acquisition channels of multimodal information. Furthermore, teachers can design dynamic images by software such as Flash to enrich students' emotional experience. For example, students have more intuitive feelings of the characters and deep impressions on the plots of “The Adventures of Tom Sawyer” from Module 2 Grade 9 Book 1, from relevant audio or video clips provided by teachers in class.

In conclusion, with the help of modern education technology, teachers should improve their ability of using multimodal teaching and update their teaching concepts frequently. Moreover, they should take the initiative to adopt multimodal teaching methods to create a multimodal teaching circumstance, and pay more attention to visual information such as pictures in teaching activities to meet students' development needs of multiliteracy.

Concentrating on the functions of images. The importance of images is highly illustrated in NECS(2011). Students are required to understand and explain the information of images, and to convey information in the form of simple diagrams and posters, to describe series of pictures in phrases or sentences, to write simple stories and descriptions for pictures in phrases or simple sentences, and to write simple paragraphs or instructions based on diagrams or tables. Meanwhile, the combination of images and text improves students' retention of memory effectively and promotes learners' meaningful learning[8]. Furthermore, teachers' teaching methods also affect the learning effect of students[9].

Therefore teachers should extend images' function of serving-for-text-materials into that of intermediary thinking as well as make good use of image-text relations properly. When designing teaching plans, teachers should consider the integration of images and text and reorganize images rationally. Most importantly, they should dig deeper into the educating functions of images[10][11]. For example, making use of images for brainstorming or knowledge contests before reading classes, and encouraging students to retell or recite text with the help of images, and to write a multimodal composition with images[12]. Then teachers could improve the practicality of the images of the textbooks.

Taking the examples of enhancement, as an example. With the help of images, it is easier for students to retell or recite the plots of Alex's school day enhanced by timeline. On the one hand, based on the combination of text and image, students are stimulated to select and organize the information to a greater extent, which promotes retention and transfer of knowledge. On the other hand, students acquire the hints of the content from images when they are retelling or reciting the passage.

Increasing numbers of equal status relations appropriately. In terms of textbook compiling, the number of images should not be decreased from the perspective of status relations. With a percentage of 38.49% in NSE(2001) and 41.3% in NSE(2012), there is an increased tendency in the unequal status of image subordinate to text in these two sets of textbooks. It is clearly shown that the role of text is becoming increasingly crucial in textbooks. As a navigator, images guide learners to read under the assumed timeline. It is said that students with lower-level English prefer to put sight from text to images frequently. On the contrary, those with high-level English pay little attention to the image. Therefore, images are helpful and useful to students, especially those with lower-level English[13]. In this way, textbook designers will not add or remove images just for the sake of adding or removing images.

Therefore, three limitations of this essay are illustrated as follows:

First of all, only two sets of textbooks published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press are selected and evaluated as samples in this study, which may not be representative of all the EFL textbooks in junior high school all around China. Furthermore, only texts and images

in the reading part are selected as the research data in the present study, while other parts of the textbooks are not analyzed and compared.

Secondly, the subjectivity in comparing and analyzing cannot be evitable. To some degree, this study may not be as objective as those studies applying quantitative methods.

Thirdly, opinions of users and textbook designers are also crucial. Due to the limitation of time, teachers and students are not interviewed and recorded to show their interactions in class with the help of textbooks. Moreover, it is not easy to interview textbook designers and experts of Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

Therefore, three suggestions for further studies on image-text relations of EFL textbooks are illustrated as follows:

Firstly, it is suggested that a larger sample corpus can be taken into the comparative study of textbooks, such as selecting more than two sets of textbooks as well as the image-text relations of other sections. Secondly, in order to collect teachers' and students' attitudes and opinions towards textbooks, more research methods such as interview and questionnaire can be adopted in further studies. Thirdly, as Masuhara[14] suggests that class observation and recordings can be adopted to show how teachers using textbooks in class and the interaction of students and teachers can be recorded and analyzed.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by grants from Elementary Education Research Project of Jiangxi Province "A Comparative Study of Image-text Relation in English Textbooks between China and the U.S." (No.SZUNDYY2019-1067).

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