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Salvatore Federico and Catherine Moore. *Cas pratiques pour le français des affaires.* New York: McGraw Hill, 1996. 343 pp.

This is an extremely useful collection of 24 case studies, which can be used as a workbook or exercise book to accompany basic texts in Business French classes. Each case study, and the extensive pedagogical material which follows, is written in French. Although the cases are not apparently drawn from authentic situations, they are linguistically accurate, and convey a content probable and significant.

The cases vary widely, from marketing strategies for an American firm in France, to publicity and recruitment problems, to a final example of a woman who wins the lottery. Students relate well to the various topics discussed in the cases, and their length (about three pages) is quite manageable. But a lot of information is packed into each case, as the exercises that follow each one quickly points out.

Whereas the characters and topics change with each new case, the basic framework for exercise presentation remains the same, which is very helpful from a pedagogical viewpoint. After the text and a brief vocabulary, which explains some of the business and general lexical items that may be unfamiliar to the student, a few general comprehension questions are raised. Next follow several pages of practice exercises that require students to identify specific details and key concepts in the case, from the beginning to the end of the case in each group of questions. First there are about ten to fifteen true-false questions, then multiple choice (often involving a key term), a matching section with French and English words, another multiple choice section (adjectives), some fill-in-the-blank exercises, a matching section using French terms and their French synonyms, and a few sentences taken directly from the text for translation into English. By the time students have gotten to this part, they have re-read the case a half dozen times, and have become quite familiar with key terms and concepts; it is this progression of exercises that leads to an ever more complex use of language and materials. Longer, more open-ended exercises are contained in a Communication section in which students are given subjects for discussion or composition based on the case, as well as role-playing possibilities. Finally, a section on Cultural Questions encourages students and instructor to examine customs or cultural references found in the text.

Because of the level of French in the texts and exercises, students need an intermediate or advanced language proficiency. With a little bit of time and help from the instructor, though, even fourth- or fifth-semester students will be able to profit from the wealth of material presented in any one case. The arrangement of the exercises is well thought out, and instructors can use the ones they want. I would make two suggestions, though. I would expand the vocabulary section, and shift the general comprehension questions after the more basic exercises. While it

is beneficial to focus students on some of the general issues raised, the general comprehension questions often require a comprehension or synthesis of material that they are not able to make until after doing the true-false, matching, and fill-in-the-blank exercises. The book, however, does allow for a great deal of flexibility, whether it is in the choice of cases, the order in which to read them, or the use of the many pedagogical exercises.

The cases in this book help bring the Business French classroom alive, and provide a much-needed collection of resource materials in a format that is both enjoyable and sensible.

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Gudrun Clay. *Geschäftsdeutsch: An Introduction to Business German.* 2nd ed. McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994. (Soft cover).

Doris Fulda Merrifield. *Deutsche Wirtschaftssprache für Amerikaner.* 3rd ed. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1994. (Soft cover.)

R. Buhlmann, A. Fearns, E. Leimbacher. *Wirtschaftsdeutsch von A-Z.* Langenscheidt, 1996. (Soft cover.)

While in the 1980s there were few, if any, textbooks for courses in business German available to American students, they began appearing in the catalogues of publishing houses for language textbooks with ever greater frequency in the 1990s.

Today, one can find a wide and varied selection of language textbooks for specific purposes on the beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels. Many are specialized, slim volumes, which concentrate on oral or written communicative skills, in connection with telephoning or negotiating, or letter and report writing, respectively. They lend themselves well as supplementary materials along with a principal textbook in a business language course.

The three books under review show common aspects as well as differences. Each may be used as the principal textbook in a business German class, always preferably in conjunction with a choice of the supplements mentioned above, and also with up-to-the-minute materials such as newspaper or journal articles, or information gleaned from the internet.

All three books prepare the student, to some extent, for the Prüfung Wirtschaftsdeutsch International (PWD). They may be grouped into two levels: beginning to intermediate (*Geschäftsdeutsch*), and intermediate to advanced (*Deutsche Wirtschaftssprache für Amerikaner* and *Wirtschaftsdeutsch von A-Z*).

With the American student in mind, it is important that a textbook for a business German course contain a large component of cultural, geo-

graphic, and historic/political information, which, especially in recent years, must be constantly adjusted and updated. It has been very difficult for new publications to keep abreast of the continual developments and changes that have occurred over the past decade in Germany, and in Europe in general. In *Geschäftsdeutsch*, the changes since 1989 with regard to united Germany and democratized Eastern Europe, and the developments in the European Union, have been incorporated in the second edition, at least up to, but not including, the time from January 1, 1995 (e.g., 15-member EU instead of 12; the monetary unit Euro instead of ECU). Also *Wirtschaftsdeutsch für Amerikaner* has been updated similarly in the third edition.

Geschäftsdeutsch has proved to be suitable for fourth-semester university students with a basic knowledge of the language of approximately 150 to 200 instruction hours. The book, with an accompanying audio tape, is divided into 12 units, each covering a general area of German business and economy. The cultural component is present throughout, and although the emphasis is on the Federal Republic, the information can be applied to other German-speaking countries. The progression moves from general to more specific topics. Units 1 and 2 deal with geography and a brief history and development of the European Union, with subsequent units treating such topics as the infrastructure, tourism, commerce and industry, banking, social services, the consumer, and environmental issues. It has been kept in mind, with each unit, that the student needs to be guided from the foreign to the familiar. Thus, each unit begins by stating "Lernziele," then builds on the material, and ends with a section of "Wussten Sie schon?" summarizing cultural facts relevant to the topic. The units contain a good balance of informative text for reading comprehension, written and oral partner exercises, relevant vocabulary, and a listening comprehension excercise. Although grammar references in short "Grammatiknotiz" sections are interspersed here and there, it would be desirable if they were more expanded upon. Useful information is found in the appendix: conventional abbreviations, weight, measurement and temperature conversions, a list of nationalities and currencies, and, last but not least, a sample test for the PWD.

The second book, *Wirtschaftsdeutsch für Amerikaner*, is geared toward the PWD examination as well, and is similar in scope to *Geschäftsdeutsch* in adhering to the practice of the four language skills, but applicable to a more advanced student level, sixth or seventh semester, or approximately 250 hours of instruction. The third edition, also updated to the extent possible at the date of publication, contains a large selection and variety of topical, informational texts, many of them authentic articles from newspapers and business journals, followed by a German-English business terminology vocabulary, which is practiced, reinforced, and applied in subsequent exercises. Supplementary materials are audio tapes, available with a transcript for the instructor, and with

exercises in the book for comprehension. The grammar, writing and translation exercises may be done and checked in conjunction with IBM-PC computer files. Suggestions and assignments for partner or group exercises add many opportunities for practicing oral expression. The body of the book also moves from an introductory "overview" to the specific chapters that are grouped under five major headings, each with subcategories, e.g., Trade—wholesale and retail, domestic and foreign, trade within the EU; and Public services—means of transportation, communication and mass media, banking, and marketing.

A different kind of approach is used in the third book, *Wirtschaftsdeutsch von A-Z.* While it also prepares for the PWD, it is somewhat narrower in scope with clear focus on business terminology, which is, to be sure, the most demanding and exacting part of the examination. This textbook is not as student-friendly in the sense that it does not seem to be as well-rounded and varied, and more abstract than the other two. It also requires an already solid language background, or at least 300 hours of instruction. Each of the six thematic units is structured into several subunits, which allows the student to learn about many facets of one topic. The treatment of the units is rather uniform and cut-and-dry: Short case studies are used as a point of departure imparting facts and cultural idiosyncracies, while at the same time, exercises follow a set pattern of yes/no responses and terminology identification. On the other hand, an extensive number of business and technical terms is presented in a great number of German-German "Lexikon" sections, which invite the student to build a large and useful vocabulary in all major aspects of economy and trade. While the book seems best used as a learning tool for advanced self-learners (it contains a key to the assignments for self-check, and a review in the form of a test at the end of each unit), it can also be employed in the classroom, but almost necessarily with outside materials to supplement.

In summary: *Geschäftsdeutsch* leaves a student having basic to moderate language background with a knowledge of, and familiarity with, living and working conditions in Germany and German-speaking countries, and also informs him or her about recent history, and cultural and societal trends and developments. Grammar needs to be supplemented. *Deutsche Wirtschaftssprache für Amerikaner* offers the same benefits, if more detailed, for a student with a somewhat higher language background. *Wirtschaftsdeutsch von A-Z* is more specifically and directly geared toward the business person outside the classroom, or to a student in the field of management with an already solid language background. All three publications prepare the learner in some way for the Prüfung Wirtschaftsdeutsch International.

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Nyusya Milman. *Business Russian: A Cultural Approach*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 1996. x + 208 pp. (illus., paper); videotape.

With the dearth of business Russian textbooks presently on the market, the appearance of any new publication in the field is a welcome event. And on the face of it, *Business Russian* has much to recommend it. Subtitled "A Cultural Approach," it encompasses not only matters pertaining to language, but social and cultural factors as well. This is a pedagogically sound combination, because, as the author notes in the Preface, "language and culture are intertwined" (vii), and a second language is best acquired in a social situational context. This context is provided by the accompanying 73-minute videotape, "Business and Its Ten Commandments," which is an integral part of the book and must be viewed in conjunction with it. The package is intended primarily for students at the intermediate level—"especially undergraduate and graduate students in upper-level college courses" (iv).

In examining *Business Russian* it is appropriate to begin with the videotape, because this is what lends the book its structure. The tape, which, as Milman tells us, "was made in Moscow by a professional crew under my supervision" (v), is of fairly good quality in terms of both the video images and the sound recording. It consists of ten segments that chronicle the experiences of Alex Frost, an American graduate student studying the Russian economy. The episodes take him from the time of his arrival at Sheremet'evo Airport in Moscow, where he is met by his guide and hostess, Alëna, through his interviews and meetings with a variety of people in the Russian business community (a professor of economics, an assistant deputy director of a tractor plant, a business woman in charge of a cosmetics company, a brazen "New Russian," etc.), a birthday party for Alëna hosted by her father, a chat with a garrulous taxicab driver, and finally, a concluding dinner date with Alëna in a Moscow night club. The mix of formal and informal settings is an excellent idea. Each episode is intended to illustrate one of the ten "commandments" that give the segments their titles. These are Russian sayings or proverbs, some old (*Vek zhivi—vek uchis'* 'Live and Learn,' *Sem' raz otmer'—odin otrezh'* 'Look before You Leap'), some of more recent vintage (*Nichemu ne nado udivliat'sia* 'Nothing Should Come as a Surprise,' *Khochesh' byt' bogatym—bud'!* 'If You Want to Be Rich—Be Rich!'). The author refers to these sayings as the "Ten Commandments" because, she says, they provide "clues not only to the structure of the language but [also] to the appropriate use of the proverb in culture-specific situations" (iv). It is difficult to see how ten proverbs can provide clues to the "structure of the language," let alone serve as linguistic models for interacting with Russians. Be that as it may, the titles/proverbs are flippantly off-beat and set the tone for much of what goes on.

The segments of the videotape are interspersed with eye-catching video footage—modernistic "vignettes" that provide an enjoyable sightseeing tour of post-perestroika Moscow. Flamboyant soundtrack music from such stock Russian favorites as Glinka's "Kamarinskaia" performed by a balalaika orchestra and the coronation scene chorus from Moussorgsky's opera *Boris Godunov* accompanies these interludes. In the Preface, the author tells us that the video "features 30 pieces of Russian classical music (which are listed in the textbook), to motivate students to learn more about the music, the composers and the literary works used for librettos" (v). This attempt to incorporate "high" culture into a textbook on business Russian, laudable though it may be, is of questionable practical value. Or is Milman seriously suggesting that American students studying business Russian will take the time to ponder the question, "What music by Tchaikovsky was not heard in [the fifth] 'commandment' but is very famous and is based on Pushkin's novel in verse" (viii)?

The written text of *Business Russian* consists of ten units corresponding to the "Ten Commandments" of the videotape. They have the same titles as the video episodes and begin with the script of each. These "dialogues" or "polylogues," as Milman refers to them on page iv of the Preface, are followed by a "text" on a business-related topic (since a dialogue is, by definition, a conversation between two *or more* parties, the term "polylogue" is superfluous). Supposedly, these are materials that the character Alex is reading—they are given under the heading *"Aleks chitaet."* (In unit 5, it is Alëna, the Russian, who is doing the reading: the topic is Western marketing practices—something that Alex, the American, presumably knows all about.) The topics, in the words of the author, "range from the history of Russian entrepreneurship to the social analysis of the contemporary Russian business elite and the current legal environment" (iv). "The current legal environment," since it is in a state of flux, dates many of the readings, some of which explicitly refer to events of 1990 and 1991. Moreover, with the exception of the text in unit 3, the sources are not identified. This is unfortunate, because the source is a measure of the reliability of the material being presented. Despite these drawbacks, the readings are certainly useful and contain a wealth of much-needed background information on culture, history, and economics. They also complement the dialogues stylistically, allowing for the juxtaposition of colloquial language with much more formal expository prose.

Both the dialogue section and the reading section of each unit are accompanied by a set of exercises, some grammatical, some content-oriented and "culture-specific." A variety of types is represented, including fill-in, completion, matching, and conversion exercises. Also included in each section are questions for discussion (*Voprosy k tektsu*—in the Preface, the author repeatedly refers to these as "Questions *for* the Text," vi–vii; emphasis added). The units conclude with a vocabulary list, which

covers both sections and gives items in the order in which they appear in the text. Comprehensive English-Russian and Russian-English glossaries, with entries in alphabetical order, are found at the back of the book.

The units are arranged with no apparent progression in difficulty or complexity, the organizing principle being the "story line" contained in the dialogue sections. The book is illustrated with less-than-crisp black and white pictures—frames from the videotape.

The author herself points out in the Preface certain "exclusions" from *Business Russian,* namely, "stress marks" and "explanations of grammar" (vii). The latter omission is not serious, because students at the intermediate level should have had all the grammar that they need, and the teacher can review or fill in as necessary. The absence of stress-marks, however, is unfortunate. Shifting stress is a major problem in learning Russian, and by encouraging students "to pay close attention to the pronunciation of the native speakers in the corresponding segments of the videotape" (vii), Milman is only sweeping it under the rug, especially in view of the fact that there is no audio component to the much lengthier reading sections to guide the student.

There are also some obvious omissions that the author does not mention. No samples are provided of business letters, memos, faxes, contracts, invoices, bills of sale, or other business-related documentation that is standard fare in textbooks of this nature. The last two readings (in units 9 and 10), which deal with international business contracts, do not compensate for this oversight. Sample documents could easily have been given as an addendum—following the list of musical pieces that is provided. It would also have been helpful to include commentary, perhaps in the form of footnotes or endnotes, that might have elucidated numerous points of cultural behavior or linguistic etiquette that will be unfamiliar to most students viewing the videotape. Why, for example, does Alex stand up in the birthday party scene to propose a toast? And in what social contexts is it appropriate for a foreigner to use such non-standard locutions as *sovok* 'a person with an ingrained Soviet mentality' (18) and *tochit' liasy* 'to shoot the bull' (107). Many of these matters are brought up as questions in the exercises that follow the dialogues, but it is essentially left up to the instructor to provide the answers. All of these omissions make the textbook just that much less "user-friendly."

As one delves deeper into *Business Russian,* more flaws, errors, and omissions become apparent. Some of these are relatively minor and insignificant, others are of a more serious nature. I can only point out some of these.

Consider the vocabulary lists at the end of each unit. They leave much to be desired. For one thing, the number of entries varies greatly from unit to unit. For example, unit 4 has 140 entries, while unit 5 has only 21. Such extreme fluctuations in the amount of vocabulary to be assimilated will not aid the student in the acquisition of new lexicon. Furthermore,

nouns ending in a soft consonant, some of which are masculine and others feminine class II (over two dozen such nouns occur), are not differentiated according to gender, leaving the student to guess at the declensional pattern. Similarly, a dozen or so nouns are given only in the plural. Although some of these indeed are used primarily in that form (*investitsii* 'investments' and *ubytki* 'losses' in unit 3, for example), the singular should also have been provided—especially if, on occasion, both forms are supplied (*kutëzh/kutezhi* 'binge/binges,' *delets/del'tsy* 'businessman/businessmen,' both in unit 4). Finally, it is not clear why certain lexical items, such as *sovok* and *tochit' liasy* (units 2 and 7, respectively), are excluded from the vocabulary, even though they are pointedly referred to in the exercises.

No less troubling are some of the author's inaccurate translations from the Russian into English. Here are some examples: the expression *kaplia v more* is translated unidiomatically as "a drop in the sea" (140), not "a drop in the bucket"; *stat'ia raskhodov* is rendered as "class of expenses" (68) instead of "item of expenditure"; the word *flius* is misleadingly translated as both "flux" and "swollen cheek" (31), though in the text it is used only in the latter sense and should probably be rendered as "dental abscess" (a metaphorical reference to Russia's inflated economy). And in the Preface, the author does the *Moguchaia kuchka* (The Mighty Five) a disservice when she refers to this group of famous nineteenth-century Russian composers, which included Moussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov, as "The Mighty *Heap*" (viii; emphasis added).

Related to the above are inaccuracies in exercises, including the matching synonym or antonym type. Here Milman often provides only very approximate correspondences (synonymic or antonymous, as the case may be), thus depriving the exercises of their full pedagogical value. For example, *otsutstvie* 'absence' is opposed to *izobilie* 'abundance' (28), when the antonym of the former is *prisutstvie* 'presence'; the verbal adjective *protivorechashchii* 'contradicting' matches up with *logichnyi* 'logical' (44), which is not at all its antonym; the adjective *udachnyi* 'lucky' is a paronym of *udachlivyi* 'successful' (118), not its synonym. Perhaps most disturbing of all, because of its ideological implications, is the opposition in one of the exercises of *russkie* 'Russians' and *amerikantsy* 'Americans' (44). Many other examples of unsuccessful "pairings" could be cited, but none as ill-considered as this one.

Throughout the textbook one finds cases of nonprescriptive Russian punctuation and capitalization. In all of the questions pertaining to the dialogues, when students are addressed directly—as in the question, "*Soglasny li Vy s ètim mneniem?*" ("Do you agree with this opinion?") on page 21—the formal *Vy* 'you' is capitalized. This form is required by etiquette in official correspondence or when the correspondents are not on a first-name basis, but is out of place in the given context. Similarly, in book titles, chapter headings, and the like, as also in names of organi-

zations, institutions, etc., normally only the first word is capitalized. Thus both in the title "*Chto takoe 'Marketing'?*" ("What is 'Marketing'?") and in the appellation "*Moskovskii Universitet*" ("Moscow University"), on pages ix and 17 respectively, the final word should begin with a small letter. In Russian, the makes of cars are traditionally enclosed in quotation marks, which are missing from a reference to Mercedes and Rolls-Royce automobiles on page 146. As with all introductory phrases in Russian, *mozhet byt'* 'perhaps' on page 125 should be set off by commas. "Saint Petersburg" in Russian is written with a hyphen (*Sankt-Peterburg*), not without, as on pages 143 and 146. On page 166 Alëna says, ". . . *mne bylo neponiatno, kak vy obshchaetes' drug s drugom?*" (". . . I was at a loss as to how you interact with one another?"). The clause introduced by *kak* 'how' is not a true question, and therefore the sentence should close with a period, not a question mark. Some of these mistakes are clearly traceable to the influence of English norms.

Occasionally, Anglicisms can also be detected at the lexical and syntactical levels. The interrogative sentence, *Chto bylo sleduiushchim shagom v èvoliutsii marketinga?* 'What was the next step in the evolution of marketing?' (79), should be rewritten to read: *Kakoi byl sleduiushchii shag v èvoliutsii marketinga?* The beginning of the sentence as it is written is a calque from English. Another interrogative sentence, *Pervonachal'no, chto predusmatrivalos' pod marketingom?* (78), is more problematic. If we translate it literally, we come up with gibberish: "Originally, what was foreseen under marketing?" First, the verb *predusmatrivat'sia* 'to be foreseen' should be replaced by the verb *podrazumevat'sia* 'to be meant,' which does work with the preposition *pod* (here meaning "by") as the first verb does not. Second, the word order and punctuation must be changed to make the sentence read: *Chto pervonachal'no podrazumevalos' pod marketingom?* In its new incarnation, the sentence translates as: "What was originally meant by marketing?" or better, in the active voice, "What did marketing originally mean?" Not only did the author make an unconscious substitution of one verb by another, but also used the initial adverb "*pervonachal'no*" ("originally") as an introductory word followed by a comma—which is standard practice in English, but not in Russian. Fortunately, there are few such contorted sentences in the textbook.

There are also few typographical errors. Occurring in both the English and the Russian, they are all minor: "somewere" instead of "somewhere" (iv); "wich" instead of "which" (vii); "*cto*" instead "*chto*" (viii); "*celovekom*" instead of "*chelovekom*" (viii); "*amerikanskomi*" instead of "*amerikanskimi*" (46); and "F.A.C." instead of "F.A.S." (125). In the construction "*chto, po svoei nature zhenshchiny*" on page 75, there should be a comma between the last two words, to set off the parenthetical phrase "*po svoei nature*." The head letter "*I*" in the glossary on page 200 should be "*Kh.*" I would also have included *konkurent**n**osposobnost'*

'ability to compete' (49) among the typos (the "n" in boldface should be deleted), except that the word and its adjectival derivative, *konkurent**n**osposobnyi*, occur in the erroneous form at least five times in unit 3 (the error stems from the reading material for that unit).

One of the most serious problems that a student using *Business Russian* will encounter has to do with its core, the videotape. One aspect of this problem is purely linguistic. The student is, after all, trying to learn the Russian language (in its business mode), yet there is a considerable discrepancy between what he *hears* on the tape and what he *sees* on the printed page. This is especially true of the first three units, where the actors all too often stray from the script, ad-libbing freely. The student who views the videotape with book in hand, trying to determine where the stresses fall, will quickly discover that many words and expressions that appear in the dialogues are absent from the tape, and vice-versa; or that the position and/or form of the words has been changed. In other words, the student will be frustrated.

Another problem with the videotape is its content and the way in which the contemporary business scene in Russia and Russian society at large are represented. Surely not all assistant deputy directors of Moscow tractor plants are as comically vain and cocky as Pirogov. He speaks disparagingly of his boss, the deputy director, to a foreign visitor (Alex), winks knowingly at the visitor's attractive guide (Alëna), uses the Russian national flag plucked from his desk to scratch his head, and before rushing off to attend to more important matters, stretches improbably in front of his guests, assuming the pose of Atlas supporting the sky—as the camera pans to a mural depicting the Greek god. And what about Valentin Sergeevich, the rich New Russian ensconced in his plush office? He flirts outrageously with his secretary in front of a total stranger (again Alex), then suggests to that stranger, whom he plies with "Absolut" vodka while smoking furiously all the time, that the secretary is his lover: having one is a matter of "company" pride, he explains. In a later episode, Valentin Sergeevich takes Alex along with him to witness the negotiation of a business deal with a foreign company, implausibly allowing the American to intercede on behalf of the other side. Are all new Russian businessmen so crass, arrogant, sexist, and indiscreet?

I have, of course, focused on the more outrageous character types in the videotape, but that is exactly what Milman does in the wider context of Russian culture. She focuses on the negative and magnifies it. No one can deny that Russia is experiencing serious social and economic problems, and such individuals do, no doubt, exist. But is it prudent, in a textbook that claims to provide "a thorough understanding of Russia's history, traditions, norms, beliefs, attitudes (and, of course, language!)" (iii), to adopt an openly satirical approach? By presenting caricatures instead of characters and emphasizing the unusual, the bizarre, and the negative, the author does little to help students develop a positive attitude toward

the target culture (an attitude that stimulates language learning). This is made perfectly clear in the matching antonym exercise mentioned above, where Milman gratuitously sets up the opposition "Russians—Americans"—vocabulary items with which intermediate-level students have long been familiar. Small wonder, then, that Alëna says to Alex, ". . . *zapadnye firmy dolzhny ochen' khorosho podumat', prezhde chem s russkimi sviazyvat'sia*" (". . . Western companies need to think twice before getting involved with Russians," 34). This is a conspicuous pattern in the book.

Business Russian: A Cultural Approach, together with the videotape "Business and Its Ten Commandments," represents a new and ambitious attempt to provide the profession with a comprehensive cultural resource for an intermediate-advanced level communicative language course in business Russian. However, the flaws and inaccuracies outlined above undermine the textbook's reliability in the areas of both language and culture.

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