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**STEREOTYPES OF LATIN AMERICAN WOMEN
FOUND IN THE TEXTBOOK OF
SPANISH-AS-A-FOREIGN-LANGUAGE**

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1. Introduction

Stereotypes are generalizations about people in some designated social category.¹ These generalizations can focus on the linguistic-cognitive behavior as symbols of social reality, and describe how the cultural-social relationship and the linguistic behavior influence each other.²

A number of studies discuss the topic of stereotypes from different points of view. Some studies focus on the linguistic stereotype among groups of individuals who speak the same language,³ and describe the function of such stereotypes as setting socio-linguistic boundaries. Other studies analyze the relationship between social reality and the linguistic behavior of women.⁴ Eagle's studies,⁵ based on social behavior, consider sex differences a product of social roles. Hudson suggests that stereotyping takes place when the speech of a group is used by another group as a clue to non-

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1. Susana A. Basow, *Sex-Role Stereotypes* (Montreal: Brooks/Cole, 1980).
 2. Ma. Jesús Buxo Rey, *Antropología de la mujer* (Barcelona: Promoción Cultural, 1978).
 3. R. A. Hudson, *Sociolinguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); W. Labov, *Sociolinguistics Patterns* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972); J. Williams, «Non-native varieties of English: A special case of language acquisition.» *English World-Wide*, 8 (1987).
 4. Buxo Rey.
 5. Alice H. Eagle, *Sex Differences in Social Behavior: A Social-Role Interpretation* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1978).

linguistic information in a subjective and unconscious connection. This sociolinguistic definition can be complemented with Wrightsman's who, from a psychological perspective, argues that a stereotype is «a relatively rigid oversimplified conception of a group of people in which all individuals in the group are labeled with the so-called group characteristics.»⁶ Linguistic, social, and psychological connotations interact in the concept «stereotype.»

There are no clear boundaries that allow a specific description of each connotation. Bell illustrates this integration of all three aspects (he calls them structures) in a sociological model where the social structures, the roles and the codes that typically co-occur with them interact, making change possible in society.⁷ Before examining stereotypes of women, gender stereotypes must first be identified. Gender stereotypes are derived from the sexual division of labor, and portray the distribution of women and men in the social structures of a specific social reality. This division of labor leads to social-occupational segregation, by the ascription to women of communal qualities and a relative lack of agentive qualities. Gender stereotypes are themselves derived from this sexual division of labor and, as Eagle says, «...constitute normative beliefs to which people tend to conform (or are induced to conform).»⁸ These stereotypical beliefs not only favor occupational segregation but also intensify stereotypical perceptions of the sexes, and foster the perception that women and men have personality characteristics that agree with their role assignment. Furthermore, Eagle argues that the status of these roles are within a hierarchical social structure, and they are the source of pressures that have caused women and men to behave differently. Sex differences are a result of the social roles that regulate behavior in adult socialization.

Social roles determine sex differences which, as generalizations of each specific gender, constitute the basis for sex stereotypes. Generalizations, then, foster stereotypes of groups of individuals from the same culture as

6. Quoted by Basow, *Sex-Role Stereotypes*, p. 3.

7. Roger T. Bell, *Sociolinguistics* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1976).

8. Eagle, p. 134.

well as from a foreign culture. Foreign Language textbooks constitute a linguistic and cultural link between two different cultures. The foreign culture is portrayed in the textbook through both linguistic and non-linguistic information on the basis of cultural generalizations. The characteristics and connotations of those generalizations, intended to be representative of the foreign culture (as well as of specific groups within the culture), determine the attitude of the learners toward the foreign culture.

2. The study problem

The present study intends to examine the textbook *Modern Spanish* to determine the stereotypical portrayals of Latin American women in the text. *Modern Spanish* is a Spanish-as-a foreign-language (SFL) textbook intended for English-speaking students in the U.S., edited in 1973 by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc, as a Project of the Modern Language Association. Although *Modern Spanish* was edited 20 years ago, in 1990 this textbook was found in the library of the Linguistics Department in Indiana University, Indiana, as a reference book for SFL students. The aim of this study is to focus attention on several aspects of the stereotypical role of Latin American women. The teaching of foreign languages is involved in this, too: students in foreign countries are learning Spanish and about the Latin American culture in their classrooms, and teaching materials claim to reflect life and culture in the countries whose languages are taught.

A sociolinguistic analysis of the textbook has indicated the presence of stereotypes regarding the Latin American culture. In this study, the concept «stereotype» will be understood as human behavior derived from social regulations as reflected in women's and men's speech (which determines social conventions). In this way, the Spanish textbook *Modern Spanish*, portrays Latin American women through stereotypes which respond to sex differences as a result of social roles. Freudenstein (1978), for example, provides a collection of essays that analyze the role of women in several EFL (English as a Foreign Language) textbooks that have been used in different countries in Europe. These essays report evidence of the existence and characteristics of women-related stereotypes.

3. Methodology

This study followed Hudson's (1980) method for sociolinguistic text analysis. The method is organized in five stages, as follows:

- Selecting speakers, linguistic and situational variables;
- Selecting the texts;
- Identifying the semantic variants in the texts;
- Processing the figures;
- Interpreting the results.

«Situational variables» were analyzed according to Hymes' taxonomy as described by Bell (1976:80).

Out of 38 dialogues; a total of 25 were analyzed on the basis of women's direct or indirect participation. The data from the analysis of the dialogues were processed by counting the number of identified occurrences of each variant in the dialogue. Real numbers were used. The number of variants identified were contrasted with the number of women that take part in the dialogues; this result constituted the basis for generalizations.

3.1 *Selecting speakers, and linguistic and situational variables*

3.1.1 *Speakers (senders)*

The term «sender» is substituted for the term «speaker», since this study is an analysis of written text. The senders are the female characters that take part in the dialogues, while the «receiver» (not analyzed in this study), is the reader; the female senders are the subject of study. The concept of woman should be understood as a category, regardless of age or social status. The sender-receiver relationship is dynamic and intended to provoke multiple reactions from the receiver. It may inaccurately portray a given ethnic group, especially if the receiver has limited contact with the particular group. In this specific case, the female characters function as senders, but are actually intermediary instruments playing the role of representatives of a culture. So who are the real senders? This is not discussed here, because it would

constitute another specific study. What is important is that the specific role of the senders in the dialogues is analyzed as that of intermediaries created according to the specific objectives and the personal perspective of the real senders. Therefore, this study is not concerned with the real Latin American woman, but with how she is portrayed in the textbook.

3.1.2 Linguistic and situational variables

The dialogues in this textbook seem to have been organized according to socio-cultural situations, which determine the forms to be chosen. For this reason, this analysis is organized on the basis of the situational variables as explained by Bell's (1976) sociolinguistic approach; it first considers what function, then asks what forms are typically chosen toward specific social goals. The situational variables are analyzed according to the following aspects: act sequence; setting and scene; the message; norms; instrument; linguistic form.

- *Act sequence:*

Form: The textbook contains 24 units. Each unit consists of a main dialogue from which everything else in the unit is drawn: a section of drills and grammar, and a reading section (which is also mostly dialogues). The dialogues are the focus of study, since they seem to integrate the grammatical and syntactic structures for each unit, with the cultural setting.

Content: The content is subject to the situational variables with specific functions that determine the message of each unit. For example, Unit 2, p. 18, under the topic «La familia de Cecilia», presents what the reader would expect to be a typical Latin American family.

[B. Betty; C. Cecilia, hermana de Julio; S. Susana]

B. *¡Qué bonita es su casa, Cecilia!*

C. *Gracias, eres muy amable.*

S. *Y qué grande, también.*

C. *Es que somos muchos: papá, mamá, diez hijos, mi abuela y una tía.*

- B. *¡Catorce en total! ¡Tantos! ¿Tú tienes nueve hermanos?*
 C. *Sí, cinco hermanos y cuatro hermanas. Yo soy la menor.*
 S. *¡Dios mío! ¡Qué familia!*

A specific concept, in this case «the family,» functions as dialogue initiator. However, various other cultural values and patterns of behavior seem to be more relevant through-out the reading.

In Unit 16, for example, under the title «Temprano en la oficina», the main objective seems to be to present a work situation. The dialogues take place in an office, and the characters are the secretary and her boss (male). There is not even one line that tells what people do at work, but it does tell much about women's inferior condition to men, as well as about their behavior and cultural and religious values.

- *Setting and scene:*

The events take place in the 1970's. The textbook does not provide direct reference to Latin America, since it does not give an explicit location of the events occurring in the dialogues. However, each chapter presents an average of three different pictures showing Latin American scenes, and each picture is labeled with names of real Latin American places (e.g., Mexico City: Record Shop; Paipa, Colombia: colonial house; Puerto Rico: Luquillo; Buenos Aires: Palermo cattle show; Lima, Peru: Jorge Chavez Airport).

The dialogues are accompanied by cultural references to typically Latin American expressions; for example, the following on Catholic traditions:

Cultural notes... the use of sacred words in exclamations such as **Dios, Jesús, and María**, is common even among women and does not imply profanity as the English equivalents might (p. 19):

- the celebration of Saint's day as a holiday and an important national event (p. 59);
- the status of God-Father as important and demanding a degree of responsibility (p. 60);

- widows having to dress in black for a certain period of time, not less than a year (p. 360).

Other «cultural notes» refer to Politics:

- Oppressive military governments are mentioned, which seems to be based on the specific characteristics of some Latin American countries, not identified explicitly, but insinuated through the pictures that illustrate those dialogues (pp. 202, 237, 388).
- *The message:*

As noted above, the general topic seems to be only the initiator of the message but not the message itself. Some of the readings are characterized by sarcasm, especially in respect to women. For example, in Unit 4, p. 75, in the dialogue under the title «El teléfono», Juanito's father is explaining to him the importance and the proper use of the telephone. From this conversation, Juanito concludes that men can communicate successfully through the telephone because they know how to follow the basic norms of communication. Subsequently, and based on what he has observed to be women's behavior on the telephone, Juanito concludes that women do not follow these basic norms, so he asks his father how they can possibly communicate.

[J. Juanito; P. Papá]

- J. *Cuando dos hombres hablan por teléfono, habla primero uno y después el otro. Uno habla y el otro escucha. Cuando mamá y tía Julia hablan por teléfono, las dos hablan al mismo tiempo, y ninguna escucha. Pero creo que se entienden perfectamente. ¿Cómo puede ser eso?*
- P. *Es que..., es que las señoras son..., son... muy inteligentes, hijo.*

The structure of the sentence and the punctuation marks used seem to be indicators of a double meaning. Could the real meaning be: *Es que las*

señoras no son tan inteligentes como los hombres, or Es que las señoras no tienen cosas importantes de qué hablar, por lo tanto no necesitan saber de normas de comunicación.

In Unit 18, «La política en la casa», the mother complains about her husband and her son talking about politics, so her son, in a sarcastic tone, replies: «*¿De qué quieres que hablemos, mamá? ¿De vestidos?*» He seems to assume that women are only capable of talking about trivial topics.

In other examples, sarcasm appears in women's speech referring to other women. In Unit 6, p.101, «Conversación en el aeropuerto», secretaries are described as trivial, vain and lacking cultural refinement.

[O. Octavio, señor de la casa; I. Isabel, su esposa]

I. ¡Ay, Octavio! Por favor, no me hables de vuelos.

O. ¿Y por qué no? ¿Mal tiempo?

I. No, son los pasajeros. Yo, sentada con dos señoritas que hablaban sólo de sus novios... secretarias, yo creo.

- *Norms:*

Norms of behavior and interaction are marked by the social roles that the characters play within the textbook boundaries. Some aspects of the norms of behavior for men and women are clearly set. In Unit 11, pp. 181-182, «La familia Alvarez va a la feria», for example, the father calls Paquito's attention towards the bull and emphasizes the characteristics of the animal's strength: «*...mira a este toro, Paquito. Qué cabeza tan grande, ¿no?*» Men are expected to be strong, brave and wild. Paquito also likes the pigs; men's games are usually rude, and getting dirty may be part of the fun.

[M. Mamá; P. Paquito]

M. ¿Qué estás haciendo?

P. Estoy jugando con los cerdos. ¿No son...?

M. (escandalizada) ¡Con los cerdos! ¿Con esos sucios animales? ¡Ay, ese chico va a volverme loca!

To be consistent with the social roles assigned, Luisa, the daughter, likes the sheep; women are expected to be the same, passive, nice and clean.

- *Instruments (channels and forms of speech):*

This study considers the written channel within a static parameter. The characters seem to use the same type of Spanish, with no shifts into other varieties.

- *Language style:*

The language used in the textbook must be understood as a variety of the Spanish language. Most of the dialogues have an informal colloquial linguistic form. Only two show a semi-formal speech (e.g. Unit 18: «Escojamos una carrera»; Unit 19: «Un hombre de negocios»). This preference for informal speech seems to agree with the content of the dialogues rather than with the topics suggested, since even under those titles in which the reader would expect a more formal speech, the content is trivial and non formal. Is the real sender trying to mean that the Latin American society is characterized by informality? Again, the answer to this question would require another specific study on how society is portrayed in the textbook.

3.1.3 *Selecting the texts*

The 24 dialogues and one newspaper employment advertisement under study were chosen on the basis of the amount of female participation. The dialogues that showed very little or no female participation, were left out. However, references to dialogues other than those selected were used to illustrate the form and content of the textbook.

4. **Results and discussion**

4.1 *Identifying the semantic variants*

Within the situational variable, semantic variants are identified. These

variants characterize women's speech in the dialogues, and foster female social roles. Variants are illustrated by carefully analyzed relevant quotations.

The book presents a cultural context where the principle of the division of the sexes is strong. The society portrayed in the textbook is structured on the basis of this division. The main social form of organization of this society is the family; and through the family, the moral and cultural values—as well as the patterns of behavior—are presented. All women in the dialogues are linked in some way to a family situation.

4.2 *Portrayal of women in the textbook: Features of the stereotype*

- Women are highly dependent on men. Middle-aged and old women with no men are dependent on male relatives, so they join a protector family. In Unit 2, p. 3, Cecilia's family is composed of the father, the mother, ten children, a grandmother and an aunt;
- Women are in charge of domestic tasks, while men are the active, productive members of the family. No cases of women providers for the family are mentioned in the book; the few cases that refer to women who work, do not mention women as productive members of the family;
- Women's behavior is expected to be passive, unassertive and foolish (while men appear as rude, strong, decision-makers, and smart), and it is the parents' task to encourage such social roles in their children. The dialogue «La familia Alvarez va a la feria», p. 181, provides a clear example of the assignment of social roles.

[P. Papá; M. Mamá; Paq. Paquito; L. Luisa]

P. *Bueno, aquí estamos en la feria. Muchos animales, muchas cosas que ver...*

M. *Sí, pero hay mucha gente... te apuesto a que no vemos nada. ¡Uf!*

P. *No fue idea mía, María, que...*

- Paq. ¡Mamáaa! Tengo hambre.
- M. Ay, Paquito, acabamos de llegar. Siempre estás pensando en el estómago. Tuvimos una buena comida y...
- L. ¡Mamáaa! Quiero ver las ovejas.
- P. Sí, sí: vamos a ver los animales. Están por aquí, a la derecha... Aquí están. Me dijeron que había mucho ganado en esta feria... Sí, mira a este toro, Paquito. ¡Qué cabeza tan grande, no! ¡Qué...!
- L. ¡Quiero ver las ovejas! ¡Quiero ver las ovejas!
- M. Paciencia, hija. No se puede ver todo a la vez.

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- P. Y ahora, aquí están las ovejas, Luisa. ¡Mira qué bonitas y qué blancas!
- L. ¡Ah sí! ¿Puedo tocarlas, papá?
- P. ¡Claro que sí!
- M. ¡Claro que no!
- P. Mira, María, no van a hacerle daño.
- M. ¡No se trata de eso! Es que se va a ensuciar... ¡Ay Jesús, Luisa, tócalas con las manos pero no con la cara! ¡Vámonos!
- L. ¿Adónde, mamá?
- M. Vamos a... ¿Dónde está Paquito? (llamando) ¡Paquitoo! ¡Paquitoo!
- Paq. (gritando) ¡Aquí estoy, mamá!
- M. ¿Qué estás haciendo?
- Paq. Estoy jugando con los cerdos. ¿No son...?
- M. (escandalizada) ¿Con los cerdos? ¿Con esos sucios animales? ¡Ay, ese chico va a volverme loca!
- L. Yo lo voy a buscar, mamá. (Va corriendo a donde está su hermano. Corto silencio. Entonces se oye un grito formidable) ¡Mamáaa! ¡Papáaa! ¡Paquito me tiró del vestido y me caí...!
- Paq. ¡No le hice nada, no le hice nada! ¡Fue culpa de Luisa! ¡Me tiró del pelo!
- P. ¡LUIZA! ¡PACO!
- M. ¡Jesús, María y José! ¡Denme paciencia!

Paquito and Luisa behave according to the stereotyped social norms of behavior for males and females: he likes the bull and the pigs, and enjoys getting dirty; she likes the cleanness of the sheep because getting dirty upsets her and makes her cry. It is important to note that the father encourages Paquito (and not Luisa) to look at the bull, and then asks Luisa to look at the sheep. The parents are also stereotype of the male and female: while the father is interested in having the children learn about animals, the mother complains about the children getting dirty.

- Women seem to be expected to serve men. During all family meals in the textbook, women are in charge of serving men. In Unit 7, p. 115, the wife, who has been working all day at home, is cooking dinner while the husband rests on a sofa and complains about his hard day at work: «(El policía acaba de volver a casa. Va a la sala y se sienta en el sofá. Espera la comida que su esposa le prepara en la cocina)». In three of the four dialogues where the whole family is eating, Paquito demands to be served by his mother or his sister, but never by his father: Unit 11, p. 181: «¡Mamáaa! Tengo hambre»; Unit 17, pp. 37, 122-123, 125: «Pásame la carne, mamá», «Mamacita, ¿me pasas un poquito de carne, por favor?», «Elena, pásame los frijoles». The only situation in which Paquito addresses his father with regard to food is in Unit 5, p. 89.

[Paq. Paquito; P. Papá]

Paq. Papá, tengo mucha hambre; quiero arroz, rosbif, frijoles, tres huevos...

P. ¡Dios mío, Paquito, tú no te vas a comer todo eso!

Paq. ¿No? ¿Y por qué?

P. Porque te vas a enfermar... En primer lugar, no debes pedir tantos huevos. Quieres ser tan grande como yo, ¿verdad?...

However, this situation is different from the previous ones in that it takes place in a restaurant. According to the social norms of behavior portrayed in the book, adult men are in charge of making the final decisions in these kinds of situations. There are no examples of men serving women or performing domestic tasks, either.

- Women do not participate in relevant conversations or decision-making situations, even within the family. In Unit 18, p. 289, only the father and the son discuss politics and make decisions about the son's professional career.

[R. Ramón; P. Padre; M. Madre]

- R. *Pues digan lo que digan, Vargas Campo es el hombre del día.*
 P. *No digas tonterías. Es un loco idealista que todo lo quiere cambiar. Nuestro pueblo jamás lo va a aceptar.*
 R. *A pesar de lo que tu digas, papá, no estoy de acuerdo contigo.*
 M. *Les ruego que no discutan más de política. Cambiemos de tema.*
 R. *¿De qué quieres que hablemos, mamá? ¿De vestidos?*

* * *

- P. *Dejemos ese tema. De todos modos, quería hablarte de otra cosa más importante, tus estudios.*
 R. *Por favor, no insistan en que estudie medicina.*
 P. *No nos vamos a oponer a lo que tú escojas. Tú eres el que decide. Pero...*
 M. *Lo único que te pedimos es que no estudies para abogado.*
 R. *¿Qué hay de malo en eso?*
 M. *Es que hay tantos abogados que es muy difícil destacarse en ese campo.*
 P. *A menos que uno se meta en la política; y ojalá que tú no te dediques a eso. Que lo hagan otros.*
 M. *Bueno, sigan ustedes hablando de eso. Voy a ver cómo anda lo de la comida.*
 R. *...Mira, papá, volviendo a lo otro, sinceramente, ¿qué tienes tú en contra de Vargas Campo? ¿Por qué lo odias?*
 P. *Porque no quiero ver a nuestra patria en la ruina. Y no discutamos más. A ustedes los jóvenes no los convence nadie.*

The few interventions of the mother are weak and disregarded by the

men. The mother seems not to be qualified to talk about the topic, so she goes to the kitchen to take care of the lunch while the two men make important decisions. The mother's role allows domestic-related decisions only.

- Women are characterized as having strong religious beliefs, which are shown in the use of expressions with religious connotations: «Dios mío...» (pp. 89, 389), «...gracias a Dios...» (p. 89), «¡Jesús, María y José!» (p. 181), and «¡Jesús, María!» (p. 373). Only women are expected to follow religious traditions. In Unit 16, p. 255, for example, the boss (male) tells his secretary (female) about his wife's religious concerns.

[S. Secretaria; J. Jefe]

J. A propósito, debo ir a comulgar uno de estos días. Tengo que complacer a mi mujer.

S. Tiene razón ella. Hay que cumplir con la iglesia por lo menos en Cuaresma.

J. ¿Usted comulga muy a menudo?

S. Casi todos los domingos.

J. ¡Caramba! Y pensar que yo casi nunca voy a misa. Pero mi mujer va siempre y reza por los dos. Bueno, señorita, vamos a trabajar.

From the dialogue it is understood that, even though individuals are expected to live according to religious principles, religious traditions seem to concern women only; men are exempted from religious activities. Furthermore, it is legitimate that the wife be in charge of satisfying this social need for both herself and her husband. The secretary, as expected from a woman, goes to church every Sunday.

- Women are weak and cannot take care of themselves, so they need a man to protect them. In Unit 23, p. 373, Alicia (the wife) is extremely nervous about some noises she hears, so she looks for her husband for protection.

[A. Alicia; D. Diego]

- A. *¡Diego! ¡Deja de roncar! ¡Despierta!*
 D. *¿Qué? ¿Cómo?*
 A. *¡Despierta! Oí unos ruidos abajo.*
 D. *¡¡Sh...!! ¿Dónde habré dejado la pistola?*
 A. *¿Adónde vas? No me dejes sola...*

In this dialogue, the wife is so nervous that she seems emotionally unstable. Her behavior annoys her husband because she makes him feel unstable for a moment, which is unacceptable male behavior. This condition of dependency is confirmed in the following dialogue, on p. 386, where Alicia tells another woman about the bad experience she had gone through the night before.

[M. Marta; A. Alicia]

- A. *Pues fue así: Diego y yo estábamos acostados. El estaba roncando, pero yo no podía dormir y estaba en la cama cuando escuché ruidos extraños.*
 M. *¡Sí, sí. Una oye todos los ruidos de la noche... y se imagina otros.*
 A. *Eso es... Pues, como digo, allí estaba yo, y de repente oí unos ruidos abajo. En seguida sacudí a Diego, diciéndole que despertara. El murmuró que habría sido el gato, que yo lo dejara dormir. ¡Figúrate eso!... Entonces otra vez... ¡cataplum!*
 M. *¿Y te creyó Diego esta vez?*
 A. *¡Claro! Diego también oyó el ruido... Le pedí que llamara a la policía.*
 M. *¿Tiene Diego una pistola en la casa?*
 A. *Sí, pero se le había olvidado dónde la había dejado... Sea lo que sea, las pistolas me dan miedo.*
 M. *¿De modo que llamaron a la policía?*
 A. *¿Cómo no!... El resto tú lo sabes por el periódico.*

Marta is not surprised by Alicia's emotionally unstable behavior because she believes that women are afraid of night noises. Furthermore,

Marta affirms that this fear can make women hallucinate and hear imaginary noises.

Unit 19 (p. 312) provides another example of women's stereotypical dependency.

[S. Sr. Suárez; J. Juanita, su secretaria]

(Suena el teléfono).

J. *Oficina del señor Suárez... Sí, señora... Un momento, por favor.*

S. *¿Quién es?*

J. *La señora Suárez. Dice que cerró el coche y que ahora no puede abrirlo. Que se le quedaron las llaves adentro. Y que con tantos bultos no puede ir a pie ni hasta la parada de autobuses.*

S. *¡Qué señora! Dígale que deje el coche allí y vuelva en taxi. Ya veré cómo arreglo eso.*

The wife, who is out shopping, locks the keys in the car. Unable to solve the problem herself, she calls her husband at his office expecting him to provide the solution. Even though he is busy at work, he assumes the responsibility and takes his wife's inadequacy as acceptable female behavior.

- Good behavior makes good girls; therefore, girls must be supervised to be good and catch better men. In Unit 17, p. 275, the father disapproves of the mother's decision to let their daughter go alone with her boyfriend to the movies at night.

[M. Mamá; P. Papá]

P. *No sé, Alicia, pero me parece que las muchachas no deben salir solas de noche. Ojalá que regresen temprano.*

M. *No te preocupes. Además, Luis Alberto es un buen muchacho y de muy buena familia.*

The mother justifies her decision with the argument that their daughter's boyfriend is nice and belongs to a «good family» (meaning well-off); hence,

supervision is not necessary. This dialogue suggests the importance of the man's family status when choosing a boyfriend. It seems that men who come from «good families» are reliable and contribute to build women's good image.

- Marriage appears as a main goal and social requirement for women. Furthermore, marriage ensures women their personal protector. In Unit 16, p. 255, the secretary and her boss (male) are talking about a former secretary (female) who plans to get married.

[S. Secretaria; J. Jefe]

- S. *Que se casa con Lorenzo, el español, su novio de años.*
 J. *¿De veras? ¡Cuánto me alegro!*
 S. *Dice ella que él ya le pidió la mano a su padre.*

This dialogue illustrates the practice of requiring the boyfriend to ask the girlfriend's father for permission to marry her. It portrays the stereotypical image of marriage as the change from father-protector to husband-protector.

- Women are expected to marry young, otherwise they may be the subject of criticism, sarcastic comments and ridicule from society. In Unit 17, p. 287, Paquito questions, in a sarcastic tone, why his older sister is not married yet.

[P. Paquito; E. Elena, su hermana mayor; M. Madre]

- E. *Esa palabra es «nada», no «na: na-da». ¿Cuándo vas a hablar correctamente? A tu edad...*
 P. *A tu edad Tía Julia estaba casada y tenía tres hijos. ¿Cuándo te vas a casar tú?*

In Unit 15 (p. 252), the professor (male) illustrates a pronunciation problem for his students through a humorous story about a father's concern for his «old-maid» daughters.

... *Este cazador se detuvo delante de una casa situada cerca de la selva y llamó a la puerta. Apareció el dueño de la casa y le preguntó al cazador qué deseaba. Este respondió: ¿Aquí se caza, señor? El dueño, señalando a sus tres hijas, de edad avanzada para el matrimonio, contestó rápido: Sí, señor, elija usted a cualquiera.* (Risa complaciente de parte de la clase).

- Wives provide men with a prestigious social image. As part of this stereotypical social role, women represent expensive objects that men support in order to assume certain status. Woman, on the other hand, are insensitive and unconscious about spending. In Unit 6, p. 91, the wife is traveling in Europe in spite of her husband's serious financial problems.

[S. Yolanda, la sirvienta; O. Octavio, el señor de casa]

- S. *Señor, ¿cuándo vuelve la señora de Europa? Es para saber cuándo me van a pagar mi sueldo. Me deben doscientos cincuenta, de dos meses.*
- O. *¡No sé, no me preguntes! ¡Déjame en paz ahora!*

* * *

Conversación en el aeropuerto:

[O. Octavio, señor de la casa; I. Isabel, su esposa]

- I. *¡Qué bueno comer en casa otra vez! Y Yolanda prepara tan bien la comida.*
- O. *Sí... lástima que ya no esté con nosotros.*
- I. *¡Cómo que no está! Octavio, ¿qué pasa? Dímelo en seguida.*
- O. *Pues ¿recuerdas los doscientos mil que debemos?*
- I. *Sí, al Banco Central.*
- O. *Dicen que nos quitan la casa si no pagamos ahora.*
- I. *Pueden esperar.*
- O. *No, ya no esperan más.*

- I. *Entonces... ¿el coche?*
 O. *Está vendido. Y también el televisor, los radios, el piano, las pinturas, los muebles...*
 I. *No me digas más, Octavio. Vamos a un restorán y te muestro el regalo que te compré en París.*

The wife shows no real worry about her husband's financial situation; she is not expected to get involved or understand those matters which, any way, seem to be men's concern only.

- Women appear as ornaments for men's enjoyment. Thus, attractive young women are held by men in special regard. In Unit 5, p. 89, Paquito asks his father why men look at pretty young ladies. His father answers that pretty ladies are to be admired.

[Paq. Paquito; P. Papá]

- Paq. *Papá, ¿por qué miran los hombres a las señoritas bonitas?*
 P. *(Mirando a Mamá) Bueno... como admiran una pintura... es cuestión de arte... Ah, aquí viene el mozo. Yo también tengo mucha hambre.*

In Unit 18 (p. 309) a professor is talking with one of his male students, and he has already decided not to see any more students that day. However, when his secretary tells him that a young lady wants to see him, the professor reacts excitedly at the fact that she is young, and accepts to see her.

[S. Secretaria; P. Profesor]

- S. *(Entrando) Hay una señorita aquí afuera que quiere hablarle.*
 P. *Que vuelva. ...¿Una señorita, dice?... Pues, que espere. No voy a tardar mucho. Que espere, que espere.*
 S. *Muy bien, señor. (Sale)*

On the other hand, women who do not satisfy the physical requirements imposed by men are harshly disregarded. Unit 14, p. 235, provides a clear example.

[P. Pepe; R. Ramón]

P. *Yo me acuerdo de una visita...*

R. *(Con el aire insistente de un hombre que va a decirlo todo)*
Cuando entré, estaba la enfermera sentada en la antesala...

P. *¿Era bonita?*

R. *¡Ni en pintura! Bastante vieja, demasiado gorda... De todos modos, me preguntó si quería ver al doctor... ¡qué diablos! ¿Para qué creía que estaba allí?... Le dije que sí, y le recordé que tenía hora con él para las once. Entonces me preguntó cómo me llamaba ¡Caramba! Si tengo gripe, fiebre, dolor de cabeza o cualquier otra cosa, ¿qué puede importar mi nombre? Pero al fin se acordó de que yo tenía hora con el médico, y me admitió a la presencia de Su Señoría...*

This dialogue expresses men's disrespectful attitude toward old, unattractive women. The doctor's nurse is portrayed as old and fat; therefore, ugliness and stupidity seem to be the stereotyped result of such characteristics.

Unit 19 (p. 323) provides an example of a newspaper employment advertisement. From eleven jobs advertised, three are exclusively directed to women, and in all three the common requirement is to be «señorita», that is, single. Even though «señorita» is a title to indicate marital status, in this specific context the term may be understood as «of a young age.» In this case, then, the term not only functions as a gender specifier, but also as a modifier that defines more precisely the kind of women eligible for the job.

NECESITAMOS dos señoritas mecanógrafas que tengan velocidad y presentación. Palma Norte No. 518, despacho 503.

SOLICITO señorita que haya trabajado en café para trabajo en restaurante. Covarrubias 45, Tacubaya.

SE SOLICITA señorita que hable inglés, para atender niños de las 14 a las 20 horas. Teléfono 14-79-80.

- Women's job opportunities are limited, which is consistent with their low expectations for career advancement. In the employment ad above, women's job opportunities are limited, and menial (typing, waiting on tables, babysitting). In the textbook, the only working women mentioned appear doing the following jobs: *maid*: (Unit 5, p. 35; Unit 6, p. 91); *secretary*: (Unit 6, p. 93; Unit 16, p. 101; Unit 18, p. 309; Unit 19, p. 311; Unit 20, pp. 325, 339); *desk nurse*: (Unit 14, p. 221, 235); *laundry clerk*: (Unit 12, p. 183).

Women appear as incapable of more specialized skilled jobs, or decision-making jobs; they are unreliable, and cannot take work seriously. Furthermore, women do not think logically, like men do. This is consistent with the fact that the only jobs available for women have the common characteristic of not being agentive, but rather passive, uncreative and indecisive. In Unit 20, p. 325, only women are always late to work.

[W. Mr. Wright, el nuevo gerente; D. Señor Delgado; R. Rosa; S. Susana; E. Esperanza]

- W. *Entonces, ¿qué pasa? Ya faltan veinticinco para las nueve y todavía no han llegado todos.*
- D. *No sé. Es la costumbre que han tenido de llegar siempre entre ocho y media y nueve menos cuarto.*
- W. *Pues si antes que yo viniera existía esa costumbre, ahora vamos a cambiarla.*
- D. *Ojalá que usted les hablara directamente, si pudiera.*
- W. *Como nuevo gerente, lo primero que exijo es que todo el mundo sea puntual.*

* * *

- R. *Mr. Wright está enojadísimo porque ustedes llegaron diez minutos tarde.*
- S. *Sí, ya me di cuenta sin que me lo dijeras. ¡Cómo si nosotras tuviéramos la culpa...! Son esos cochinos autobuses.*
- E. *Además, ¿qué son diez minutos? ¡Qué antipático es ese señor!*

In this dialogue the women appear as unreliable and reluctant to take responsibility for their behavior. The secretaries (females) are always late to work, which does not seem to worry them. Furthermore, they complain about their new boss (male) making a big problem just because they usually arrive a little late (around 15 minutes late every day). They describe his attitude as unpleasant and intolerant rather than strict. Later, on page 328, two of the secretaries are commenting on the same event.

[E. Esperanza; R. Rosa]

- E. *...Ahora insiste en que todos llegemos al trabajo a las ocho y media «en punto».*
- R. *No entiendo. Es lo que hacemos ahora.*
- E. *No, no. No comprendes. Mr. Wright dice que algunas veces no llegamos antes de las nueve menos cuarto.*
- R. *Ah, eso es verdad, pero... ¡Qué diablo! Una no es máquina, como un reloj. Por ejemplo, si te digo que voy a encontrarte a las cinco para el té, no es como si te dijera que estuvieras allí precisamente a las cinco. Pudieras llegar a las cinco y cinco, o a las cinco y diez, o aun a las cinco y cuarto, sin que yo me preocupara de ello.*

In this dialogue, the women argue that there is no reason for their new boss to be so angry about their being late. Their comparing the office situation with an appointment for tea time, where no one is going to worry about arriving a few minutes late, illustrates women's lack of intelligent arguments and reasoned thinking. In Unit 12 (p. 184) the laundry clerks (female) fail to carry out their work properly.

[D. Dependiente; A. Doña Ana]

- A. *Señorita, no recibimos un traje y un vestido que ustedes quedaron en mandar ayer.*
- D. *Imposible, señora. ¿Usted misma nos lo trajo?*
- A. *No, vino la criada.*
- D. *Ah, entonces ella no dijo que era para ayer.*

- A. *Pero aquí están los recibos.*
 D. *A ver... Pero aquí no hay dirección.*
 A. *¿Y por qué no se la preguntaron?*
 D. *Quién sabe, señora. Yo no fui la que recibí esta ropa.*
 A. *¡Qué barbaridad!*

In Unit 14, 235 (quoted above), the nurse's speech is shown as foolish and absurd. In Unit 5, p. 77, in the dialogue «Vida de una dueña de casa», the maids need to be told what to do because they absolutely lack the ability to make simple decisions.

[B. Doña Beatriz; R. Rosa, criada de doña Beatriz; J. Josefina, criada]

- R. *¿Pongo arroz también?*
 B. *Está bien, ponga dos kilos. Tome la plata; vea que son cincuenta pesos. No los pierda. ...Y usted, Rosa, oiga otra cosa: no se deje dar gato por liebre. Haga como yo; si no, no alcanza ni con cien pesos.*
 J. *Y ahora, ¿barro primero aquí abajo en el comedor?*
 B. *Sí, y sacuda bien todos esos muebles. Tenga cuidado de no romper nada.*
 J. *¿Y los juguetes?*
 B. *Llévelos al jardín. Paquito tiene que jugar ahí.*
 J. *¿Y qué hago con esta ropa que acabamos de traer? ¿La llevo arriba?*

It must be emphasized that no woman in the textbook is portrayed studying, making plans for her future, or having professional ambitions. To study and plan for the future seem to be men's privileges (e.g. Units 8, p. 130: «Paquito y la relatividad»; Unit 10, p. 162: «Lección de aritmética»; Unit 13, p. 202: «La universidad y la política»; Unit 18, p. 309: «Escojamos una carrera»).

Women's topics of conversation are: *the family*: (Unit 2, p.1; Unit 5, p. 11; Unit 11, p. 24; Unit 17, pp. 37, 40; Unit 18, p. 42); *family related events*: (Unit 23, pp. 57, 61); *a trip*: (Unit 6, p. 18); *the boss*: (Unit 20, pp. 51, 54); *men and boyfriends*: (Unit 17, pp. 37, 40; Unit 24, p. 63).

Chart 1

TOPICS OF CONVERSATION	MEN	WOMEN
family related topics	4	12
trips	-	1
the boss	-	2
men	-	1
complaints	-	2
at work	5	2
learning	7	-
decision-making	3	-
financial problems	2	-
politics	3	-
women	2	-
sports	2	-
news and local events	2	-
other	4	1

In contrast to men's topics of conversation: *school, technology, knowledge*: (Units 4, 8, 10, 15, 16); *decision making*: (Units 6, 7, 11, 18, 19, 20); *financial problems*: (Unit 6); *job*: (Units 7, 11, 19); *sports*: (Units 8, 9); *politics*: (Units 10, 13, 15, 18); *important news*: (Units 7, 14, 21).

4.3 Processing the figures

The book has a total of 38 dialogues. Female characters appear in 21 of the 38 dialogues. However, only in four of the dialogues do women appear with no male company. There are four dialogues in which women do not appear but are mentioned, and 13 dialogues with exclusive male participation.

A significantly higher number of male characters take part in the dialogues. There are 60 men, or 64%, and 33 women, or 35% of the total number of characters in the textbook. Chart 1 shows that 16 of 33 women are housewives, and only 12 are working women. Only in three of the dialogues young girls and teenagers are mentioned in the book; however, they do not appear involved in any school-related activity.

Chart 2 shows the different occupations for men and women. The most popular jobs for women seem to be as secretaries and maids. There are no women in highly professional or prestigious jobs.

In 17 cases the jobs of the men are directly mentioned, businessman, professor and policeman being the most popular. In the rest of the cases, even though the job is not explicitly mentioned, the topics of conversation suggest that the characters are involved in some kind of intellectual or productive activity. A total of 13 males appear involved in academic activities. Some of the examples are explicit, some others are implied.

In 12 of 21 dialogues in which women appear, the main topic is family-related (their own family or someone else's family). These conversations include discussions of values and norms of behavior, congruent with the social roles set within the parameters of the book.

Chart 2

OCCUPATIONS	MEN	WOMEN
housewife		16
secretary		5
maid		4
desk nurse		1
laundry clerk		2
student	13	
policeman	4	
Ministry employee	1	
businessman	5	
professor	4	
barber	1	
farmer	2	

4.4 *Interpreting the results*

The two charts show the hierarchy between men and women and their distribution in the social structure portrayed in the textbook. This distribution is illustrated by the sexual division of labor, where most women are in charge of housework and menial jobs, while men are in agentive activities.

The significant difference between the number of males and females that take part in the dialogues, and the social role of each, seem to portray a society ruled by men. The aspects of cultural behavior and values analyzed in the section «Identifying the semantic variants» constitute the characteristics with which the receiver will identify the Latin American culture.

5. **Conclusion**

This study seeks to establish the characteristics of the stereotype of Latin American women in the textbook *Modern Spanish* by focusing on women as the main subject of study within the parameters of the book. The dialogues were carefully analyzed to find explicit and implicit information, and determinant characteristic features of women were found. Based on this portrayal, it is possible to predict the main features that a receiver (whose only contact with the target culture is the textbook) will give to this stereotype of women: highly dependent on men, passive members of society, in charge of non skilled and menial jobs, not concerned about knowledge or formal education, fond of dull and trivial conversation, lacking reasoned thinking, lacking a strong and decision-making personality, and unreliable.

Even though stereotyping does not necessarily imply negative connotations, this study seems to show a high tendency to negative stereotyping. As a Latin American Woman, it was hard for me to keep an objective perspective since the topic is so much of my concern.

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