

An Intercultural Analysis of a CFL Textbook

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Introduction

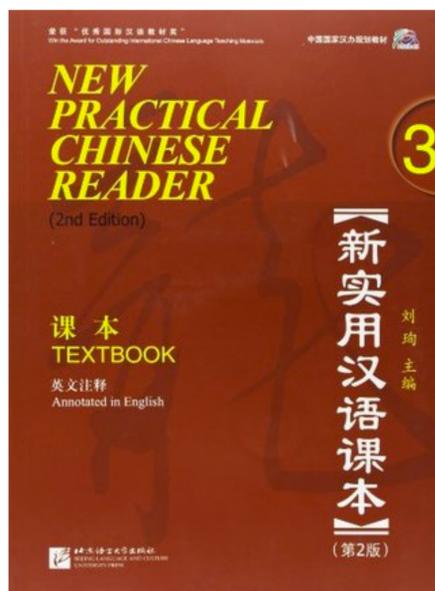
Intercultural approaches to second language acquisition (SLA) state that language and culture are interdependent, and that SLA entails not only language learning, but also learning how to engage with linguistically and culturally diverse others in a new context (Liddicoat, 2020; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

Textbooks represent many students' first encounter with a new culture, and significantly shape their resulting cultural understanding (Bewley, 2018). Liddicoat & Scarino (2013) suggest that the best resources for intercultural language learning will allow students opportunities for active construction of meaning, social interaction, reflection, making connections with their own experiences and an understanding of their responsibility in communicating with diverse others (p. 101).

Research Problem

There is a lack of research that looks at common language textbooks (Curdt-Christiansen & Weninger, 2015), and the majority of studies in the field of critical textbook analysis deal with English language textbooks (Bewley, 2018), and neglect other globally important languages, such as Chinese.

The New Practical Chinese Reader (NPCR) is one of the most popular textbooks for learning Chinese as a foreign language (CFL). For anyone hoping to use NPCR as part of an intercultural approach to Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) learning, the literature currently offers only very limited guidance as to NPCR's actual capacity to be used to promote intercultural language learning.



Textbook serving as primary source of data

Objective

The purpose of my study is to systematically explore the current affordances of NPCR and its texts and activities for approaching CFL learning from an intercultural perspective.

Research Questions

1. What narratives about (inter) cultural learning and relationships are promoted by this textbook and its texts?
2. In what ways is the third NPCR textbook able to support intercultural language learning?
3. In what ways does it hinder or not make space for intercultural language learning?

Theoretical framework

In my analysis, I will be drawing on Liddicoat & Scarino's (2013) theorization of Intercultural language learning and Maria Dasli's (Dasli & Díaz, 2016) work on critical perspectives on Intercultural language learning. My approach to textbook analysis will also be informed by Curdt-Christiansen and Weninger's (2015) work on the politics of textbooks in language education, as well as critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 2003). Moreover, I will be building on the work that Chen & Black (2016) and Bewley (2018) have done regarding the representation of culture in NPCR.

Methodology

Drawing on the literature on intercultural approaches to language learning and on other critical analyzes of culture in textbooks, I will create a framework to guide the analysis of the textbook from an intercultural approach. My approach to textbook analysis will also make use of concepts and methods from CDA (Fairclough, 2003) and content analysis.

Potential contributions of research

This research will equip educators to understand NPCR's potential strengths and limitations for supporting an intercultural approach to SLA. More broadly, this study will contribute to the field of critical textbook analysis by providing an example of how to approach a language textbook from an intercultural perspective, which other educators and scholars may find useful in analyzing other foreign language textbooks.

Reference / Bibliography

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