

Prospects for Research on New-Form International Chinese Language Textbooks

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Abstract

Textbook is one of the “three teachings”, and it is an important basis and carrier of teaching. The new form of textbooks is a product of the intelligent age and an important embodiment of the modernization of teaching materials. In the context of the intelligent era, the development of new forms textbooks is an important content of academic concern. We found that there are not many studies on new forms of international Chinese textbooks, and most of the textbooks have not yet entered the stage of integrated construction. The three-dimensional textbooks such as *Great Wall Chinese* are still an exception. In this regard, we believe that it is necessary to take the creation of three-dimensional teaching materials as the course, closely follow *Chinese Proficiency Grading Standards for International Chinese Language Education*, and multi-party construction teams go hand in hand to implement the dynamic update of international Chinese teaching materials resources.

Keywords: new-form textbooks, international Chinese education, three-dimensional teaching materials, publishers

1. Introduction

As one of the important strategies in *14th Five-Year Plan* construction, international Chinese education has been paid more and more attention to its development. As one of the foundations of the “three teachings”, textbooks are the key basis for carrying out teaching activities and an indispensable and important basis for the construction of international Chinese wisdom education. In order to adapt to the current situation of smart education construction and the real environment of online teaching, it has become an inevitable requirement to develop and construct new-form

international Chinese teaching materials. But (1) what is the research situation of international Chinese new-form textbooks? (2) What changes have the new international Chinese textbooks undergone? (3) How is the construction of international Chinese teaching materials by domestic publishing houses? A series of related issues about new forms international Chinese textbooks have aroused our attention and thinking. In order to better understand the development of international Chinese new-form textbooks, this paper investigates the research status and construction status of international Chinese new-form textbooks, and discusses the overall appearance and business development of

international Chinese new-form textbooks through data analysis.

2. Quantity Distribution and Evolution Analysis of New Form Textbooks Research

2.1 Quantitative Distribution of Research on New-Form Textbooks

According to the search results in CNKI, the term “new form of textbooks” was first seen in 2015, when it was defined as the integration of paper textbooks and digital resource websites (Bao Haobo, 2015). In 2016, China clearly put forward the concept of “new form of integrated teaching materials” in *13th Five-Year Plan* construction, and also pointed out that future educational publications should develop in the direction of digitalization. Subsequently, many scholars at home and abroad have discussed the specific connotation of the new-form textbooks, but so far, the definition of the new-form-textbooks has not been unified and clear. This study takes CNKI as the search path and “new form of textbooks” as the search subject, finds a total of 686 relevant results by the end of December 2022.

But combined with Figure 1 and Figure 2, we can see that the research topics of new-form textbooks are inseparable from “textbooks’ construction”, “new-form”, “integration”, “textbooks’ development” and “textbooks’ publishing”, and are mostly related to “higher vocational education” and “higher education”. “Vocational colleges”, “vocational education”, “Internet +” and other topics are closely related. It is obvious that the research results of the new-form textbooks are concentrated in the five fields of vocational education, higher education, computer software and computer applications, educational theory and education management, and publishing. There are no relevant research results in the field of international Chinese education.

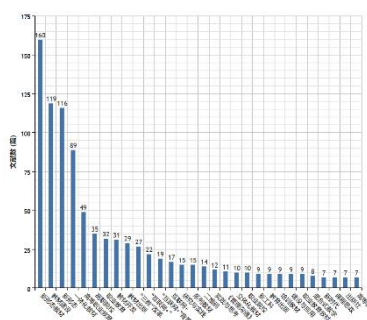


Figure 1. 2005-2022 New Form Textbooks Research Theme Distribution¹

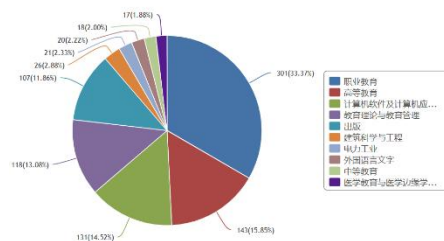


Figure 2. 2005-2022 Research Situation of New Form Textbooks of Various Subjects²

In order to avoid retrieval omissions, this study also uses “new-form Chinese textbooks” or “Chinese new form textbooks” “Chinese new form textbooks” as search fields. The two major literature comprehensive search platforms have conducted large-scale searches, but the search results are all displayed as 0. It can be seen that the current research on the new-form international Chinese textbooks is extremely scarce or even non-existent, and its specific construction situation and construction direction are not clear. In this regard, the following will focus on the investigation and analysis of the development and changes of international Chinese new-form textbooks, and find the direction of the construction of international Chinese new-form textbooks.

2.2 “Micro” Evolution of the International Chinese New-Form Textbooks

2015 was a watershed for the research and construction of new-form textbooks in China. This study takes 2015 as the dividing line for the construction of new international Chinese textbooks, and takes 341 textbooks with CD or CD-ROM, 35 with DVD, and 118 textbooks with MP3 audio form resources in the “International Chinese Education Resource Network” website. Based on the 451 volumes of international Chinese textbooks collected in the library and Z library, statistical analysis was carried out on the form of international Chinese textbooks before and after 2015. The bibliographies in the Z library are only a drop in the bucket among the tens of thousands of international Chinese textbooks, but they are all classics, popular with Chinese and foreign teachers and students, and commonly used textbooks in teaching, such as *New Practical Chinese Reader*, *New Concept Chinese*, *Road to Success*, *Developing Chinese*, *Great Wall Chinese* and so on, not only have conventional textbooks, but also cultural, vocational, tourism, and business textbooks. The samples of

textbooks are diverse and have obvious characteristics of the development of the times. It shows the changes and innovations of the new international Chinese textbooks. Therefore, this study takes the field survey data of the Z Museum as the basic reference, and explores the development track of the new-form international Chinese teaching materials.

Nearly half of the international Chinese textbooks in Hall Z are traditional paper textbooks of a single medium, and Figures 3 and 4 show the distribution of the number of teaching materials in other forms of textbooks published by Hall Z around 2015 except pure paper international Chinese textbooks. Comparing them, we can find that the form of international Chinese textbooks has obviously changed from a single form of “paper & audio”, “paper & website”, “paper & video” to “paper & website & QR code” and “paper & website & APP” and “paper & APP & QR code” and other multi-modal transformations: international Chinese teaching materials published in and before 2015 only have five forms: video, audio, website, QR code, and point-and-click pen, and each form. The construction is single, and there is no obvious comprehensive construction; the international Chinese teaching materials published after 2015 have carried out a significant comprehensive construction, from a single audio and video CD, QR code or website in the past to a website and QR code, website and APP, APP and two-dimensional code and other multi-form comprehensive integrated construction, multimedia form resources are integrated with digital resources and interactive resources, and the forms of teaching materials are gradually rich and diverse.

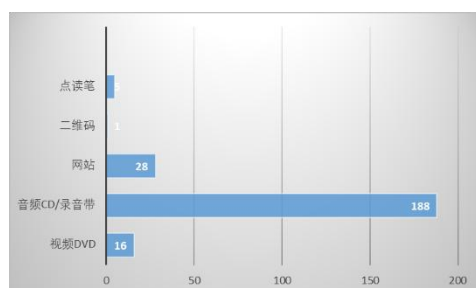


Figure 3. Quantity distribution of international Chinese textbooks in Z library in 2015 and before

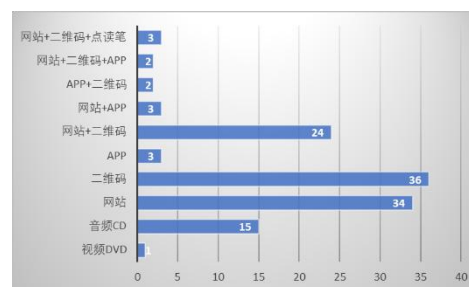


Figure 4. The distribution of the number of international Chinese teaching materials in the Z library after 2015

We initially found that: Before 2015, international Chinese textbooks paid more attention to multimedia audio-visual presentation. The construction of digital resources as a carrier is in the early stage of development, and the interactive media represented by the point reading pen is also under development and construction; after 2015, the form of teaching materials has been greatly enriched, and it is no longer dominated by “paper teaching materials & audio”, but digital resources based on QR codes and websites have become the mainstream of construction, and the integration of interactive function construction and digital resources is constantly developing in the direction of comprehensive integration.

3. The Appearance from the Publishing Construction of the New Form of Teaching Materials

As one of the main forces in the construction of teaching materials, the publishing houses is of great value and significance for the investigation of the construction strength, construction direction and construction results of the new international Chinese teaching materials. Up to now, this research has counted 35 domestic publishing houses that have published international Chinese textbooks. Among the 35 publishing houses, only Beijing Language and Culture University Press, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, Chinese Teaching Press, Beijing Hanyu Tiancheng Education Technology Co., Ltd., Peking University Press, Higher Education Press, Shanghai Foreign Language Education 9 publishing houses, including Jiangsu University Press and Xidian University Press, have published and developed new-form international Chinese teaching materials, and can provide digital resources for building websites for international Chinese teaching materials. It can be seen that there are

many platforms for publishing international Chinese textbooks, but few platforms for building new international Chinese textbooks. The development of new international Chinese textbooks has not received much attention from publishing platforms.

This study conducts a classified investigation on whether the nine publishing houses that construct international Chinese new-form textbooks are language publishing houses.

3.1 Language Publishers: The Main Force in the Research and Development of New-Form International Chinese Teaching Materials

Language publishing houses refer to publishing houses that mainly publish publications on language research, language education, and language ability. Among the 9 publishing houses that develop and build international Chinese new-form teaching materials, there are 4 language publishing houses: Beijing Language and Culture University Press, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, Chinese Teaching Press, and Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.

(1) From the perspective of the number of international Chinese teaching materials published, language publishing houses have a large number of publications.

Beijing Language and Culture University Press has published a total of 1,488 paper books, 1,292 e-books, 198 electronic audio-visual items, and 120 sets of digital point-to-point reading; Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press has provided a total of 582 sets of teaching materials, 31 sets of digital point-of-view reading materials, and digitalized textbooks. There are 223 sets of supporting resources and 206 copies of classroom teaching resources; Chinese Teaching Publishing House is selling nearly 1,000 kinds of international Chinese teaching books and audio-visual products.

(2) From the perspective of the construction of new forms of teaching materials, the pace of development of resources in various modalities is inconsistent.

Taking Beijing Language and Culture University Press as an example, 1,292 of its 1,488 paper books have e-books, but there are only 120 sets of textbooks with digital point-to-point reading resources, and only 198 digital electronic audio-visual resources. It mainly focuses on cultural textbooks such as *Chinese*

Culture/Geography/General Knowledge, and no electronic audio-visual resources with classic textbooks such as *Standard Course HSK* have been retrieved. The construction of the new form teaching materials remains at the level of e-books, and the construction of resources such as audio, video, and digital reading is not enough.

In addition, although Beijing Language and Culture University Press has set up an “International Chinese Textbook Zone”, “International Chinese Resource Center” and a mobile terminal “Wutong Chinese” APP for international Chinese education, the “International Chinese Textbooks’ Zone” only contains 30 sets Digital resources such as audio recordings, courseware, and videos of international Chinese textbooks; the “Wutong Chinese” only provides 117 paid electronic textbooks such as *Standard Course HSK* and some paid teaching demonstration excellent courses and lectures suitable for teachers. The construction of paper resources and digital resources is not synchronized.

(3) From the perspective of the development of supporting courses for the new-form textbooks, the number of them is small, the duration is short, and they are easy to get stuck, which cannot fully meet the needs of independent learning, and there is a huge room for improvement.

Take Beijing Language and Culture University Press as an example. Its official website has a special area for “micro-classes” and “International Chinese Online Classes”. The “Micro Classes” area covers three types of course systems: Chinese culture, Chinese language learning and business culture. Among them, Chinese culture courses are the most popular, and almost every course has been viewed more than 10,000 times. It is a pity that there are no supporting textbooks for the Chinese culture courses represented by *Chinese People’s Birthday*. Although each course video is only about 3 minutes long, it is very easy to get stuck when watching it on the webpage, and the separate Chinese and English subtitles are not conducive to learners learning Chinese while watching the video, which will affect viewers to a certain extent. The viewing experience cannot achieve a good Chinese learning effect.

MOOCs and online course resources in the “International Chinese Online Class” have the

same problem. Only *New Practical Chinese Reader* is provided in the online courses. MOOCs only provide 5 sets of teaching materials: *Developing Chinese*, *Road to Success*, *Chinese Stories - Intensive Reading of Intermediate Chinese*, *Intensive Spoken Chinese*, *301 Sentences in Chinese Conversation*, among which *Developing Chinese*. The elementary and intermediate series are the most popular. Each episode of the *Developing Chinese* series of courses is about 10 minutes long. They are all classroom records. The recording screen lacks the content of multimedia courseware. Online learners can only listen to the teacher, but they may not know which part the teacher is talking about, which is not suitable. Online self-watching and learning, the number of viewings in each stage currently stays around 950 times, and the viewing volume and playback rate are obviously not high.

3.2 Non-Language Publishing Houses: An Important Support for the Research and Development of New-Form International Chinese Teaching Materials

Non-linguistic publishing houses refer to general publishing houses, science and technology publishing houses, and economic publishing houses other than language publishers. Among the non-linguistic publishing houses with achievements in the development and construction of new-form international Chinese textbooks, there are only four: Peking University Press, Higher Education Press, Jiangsu University Press, and Xidian University Press.

Combined with the exhaustive search of the official websites of the four publishing houses, it was found that Peking University Press is the non-language publishing house that publishes the newest forms of international Chinese teaching materials. A set of digital recordings and 39 pieces of digital teaching auxiliary resources, all of which are supporting construction of paper teaching materials, have a high degree of adaptability of teaching materials. However, other publishing houses have only carried out new forms of construction for a set of teaching materials. For example, Higher Education Press only offers supporting SPOC courses for *Charming Chinese*, and Jiangsu University Press only provides the audio and teaching courseware of *Charming Chinese*. Xidian University Press only provides the teaching courseware of *Economic and Trade Chinese*. Although there are digital resources for supporting development, they are not

comprehensive and comprehensive, and there is no in-depth development of the content of the textbook and other forms.

3.3 Multi-Agent Collaboration: The Future Construction Direction of New-Form International Chinese Teaching Materials

Great Wall Chinese was originally a series of textbooks published by Beijing Language and Culture University Press in 2005. Later, it was developed by Beijing Hanya Tiancheng Education Technology Co., Ltd. with textbooks as the core and artificial intelligence technology and network multimedia technology as the support. Dimensional and integrated development of digital three-dimensional teaching materials. *Great Wall Chinese* has basically realized the independence of digital textbooks, and learners can achieve learning effects without paper textbooks, meeting individualized learning needs. The staged product realizes the trinity of "book & platform & classroom" three-dimensional teaching material development concept.

After the publication of the *Chinese Proficiency Grading Standards for International Chinese Language Education* (hereinafter referred to as *Grade Standards*) in 2021, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Publishing House launched *Great Wall Chinese · Survival Communication* (No.2 version), the supporting courses and interactive exercises in *Great Wall Chinese* learning platform have also been updated. Just because *Great Wall Chinese* is a digital three-dimensional textbook jointly developed by multiple subjects, the process of republishing and reediting can reduce many links such as paper printing, transportation, etc., improve publishing efficiency, and speed up iterative updates. A high degree of coordination and consistency among the various writing bodies is required.

On the whole, language publishing houses attach the highest importance to the development of new-form international Chinese teaching materials, and the teaching materials have the characteristics of integration and three-dimensionality. With the joint efforts of multiple writing and development subjects, the new-form international Chinese textbooks have entered a three-dimensional development array, and the development of digital three-dimensional textbooks should become a new direction for construction.

4. Reflections on the Construction of New-Form International Chinese Textbooks

The new form of textbooks is an inevitable product of the era of intelligent education. At present, the development of new form international Chinese textbooks is on the road of digital three-dimensional construction transformation, facing challenges such as scientificity, integration, and intelligence. Therefore, the author explores the construction path of international Chinese new form textbooks from the following aspects.

4.1 Taking Grade Standards as the Wind Vane and Taking the Individual Needs of the Users as the Construction Orientation

The release and implementation of the *Grade Standards* provides strong support for the development of international Chinese education, and also provides an important reference for the compilation of international Chinese teaching materials. The new form international Chinese textbooks in the new era should show the style of the times, integrate the technologies of the times, take *Grade Standards* as the guide for construction, and highly integrate textbooks, teaching, teaching methods and other resources to meet the needs of the main users as the construction goal. Starting from the actual needs of learners, adopt new module structure and form to reconstruct the content of paper textbooks, and use video, audio, virtual simulation, animation games and other information technologies to develop and construct scientific, diverse and three-dimensional integrated teaching materials. The content conforms to the learners' cognitive characteristics and learning rules, effectively meets the all-round needs of learners' independent learning, and builds a personalized and intelligent Chinese learning space for learners.

4.2 The Construction Team Advances Hand in Hand, Laying a Solid Foundation for the Integration of Teaching Material Construction, Curriculum Design, and Technology Development

The compilation of digital three-dimensional teaching materials requires the joint efforts of multiple parties. The publishing platform must carry out business reorganization and process reengineering, strengthen the collective awareness and integration awareness among the main body of teaching material users, writing teams, publishing teams, and information

technology teams, and maintain close communication and cooperation. To deepen the skills division and business training of the editorial team, and strengthen the editorial team's ability to apply new technologies. The main body of the user collects and provides construction opinions; the writing team grasps the teaching reform trend and provides case materials; the publishing team completes the multi-carrier layout design; the information technology team realizes resource transformation and builds an integrated digital resource platform (Zhao Bu, 2021). Based on the integration of textbook writing teams, strengthen the construction of "teaching materials, curriculum, and technology" and realize the integration of textbook content and form compilation and design.

4.3 Strictly Check the Review and Processing, and Implement the Dynamic Update of Resource Construction

Massive educational information resources have become an important feature of the Internet age. However, the quality of these information resources is often uneven, and some content is also lacking in scientificity, accuracy, and standardization. The review content of the new form of textbooks includes not only paper textbooks, but also digital resources. The audio, video, animation, text, interactive exercises and other resource types it carries also put forward higher requirements for the review work of the publishing platform. To ensure that the content of the selected digital resources is accurate, it is also necessary to consider its coordination with teaching materials and curriculum construction. In addition, under the background of the "Internet +" era with the rapid development of information technology, the innovation and simultaneous construction of teaching material content and resources are particularly important. In the development of new international Chinese teaching materials and resources, the Internet will become a new carrier of teaching materials. Relying on the digital teaching materials in the network media, we will develop loose-leaf and customized teaching materials that suit the needs of students. Updates keep pace with the times.

5. Epilogue

In the era of intelligence, education informatization and textbook digitization have become an unstoppable wave, and the

development of digital three-dimensional new international Chinese textbooks has become one of the important ways to promote the development of international Chinese education intelligence. The three-dimensional textbooks such as *Great Wall Chinese* are just a few individual achievements, and many other classic textbooks have not yet started digital three-dimensional construction, such as *New Practical Chinese Reader* and *New Concept Chinese*. The construction of three-dimensional international Chinese new-form teaching materials must adhere to the guidance of *Grade Standards*, and must also strengthen the collaborative construction of the writing team, embrace new technologies, explore new models, and keep pace with the times to do a good job in the iterative updating of teaching materials.

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¹ Originates from the visualization analysis of CNKI.

² Originates from the visualization analysis of CNKI.