

# Prospects of New-Form International Chinese Language Textbooks Based on Learners' Demands

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**Abstract:** As information technology continues to affect human life, all walks of life have produced derivatives of technology, and the international Chinese education is also no exception. As the main users of textbooks, learners should be paid close attention to their experience of use, learning needs, and willingness to build. This article is learner-centered, found that the current digital textbooks cannot fully meet the needs of learners. Therefore, the new-form international Chinese language textbooks should closely focus on the needs of learners, with the goal of cultivating learners' communicative ability, and create focused, personalized, materialized, contextualized, intelligent, and diversified textbooks.

**Keywords:** New-form textbooks; International Chinese language education; Learners; Demand perspective

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## 1. Introduction

Over the past 70 years since the People's Republic of China, international Chinese language teaching materials have not only developed rapidly, but also achieved remarkable results in both internal and external construction. Driven by the construction of the intelligent era, the construction and application of multimedia, three-dimensional and other new forms of textbooks have become the needs of the times, of reality, of users. But what are the new-form textbooks? The answer to this question has not yet been unified. This study defines that the new-form teaching books refer to electronic fidelity textbooks, multimedia textbooks, digital textbooks and three-dimensional textbooks other than only paper textbooks. As the main part of education, teaching materials are a solid bridge connecting educators and educated, and play a key role in teaching. As the main user group of teaching books, learners' needs and wishes are crucial to the development and how to develop it. This is an unavoidable and considerable issue on the road to promote international Chinese language textbooks. "Textbooks that do not consider the real needs of learners, no matter how interesting they are, will not be really welcomed by learners."<sup>[1]</sup> So, this study focused on learners, and studied the specific situation of Chinese learners using new-form international Chinese language textbooks. Oriented by issues such as user experience and construction willingness, combined qualitative and quantitative analysis methods to summarize, and explore the construction path of new-form international Chinese language textbooks from the perspective of demands.

## 2. Research Design

This study takes the basic situation of the learners as the starting point, the learners' needs and conditions as the guidance, the characteristics of new-form textbooks as the path, and aims to explore the construction space of the new-form international Chinese textbooks. A total of 28 test questions were designed based on four aspects: Chinese language proficiency, learning needs, use of Chinese language textbooks, and suggestions for compilation. Questions such as "What is your Chinese level?" "Why do you study Chinese?" "What new-form international Chinese language textbooks do you know or have you used?" "What kind of courses do you most hope to develop new forms of textbooks?"

### 2.1 Research Objects

The survey subjects of this study are 60 learners who learn Chinese as a second language from all over the world, 55 of them are the subjects of online questionnaires, 5 of them are the subjects of in-depth interviews, 49 are currently learning Chinese online, and only 11 Learn Chinese offline. In addition, 55 are adult learners, and only 1 is a young learner; and most of them have studied Chinese for more than 3 years, and 38 of them are at the level of HSK4-6.

## 2.2 Research Tools and Methods

In order to scientifically and reasonably collect learners' feedback on the use of new-form international Chinese textbooks and their willingness to construct, this research is divided into two steps: Firstly, issued a questionnaire through the "Questionnaire Star" platform; Secondly, selected 5 Chinese learners randomly to conduct in-depth interviews.

## 3. Data Processing & Analysis Methods

### 3.1 Data Collection and Processing

This study gathered data mainly by online release questionnaire links and QR code posters. After the completion of the questionnaires, an analysis report will be automatically generated, and there is no need to enter the results of the questionnaires again. The error of the results is relatively small. Totally, 55 people filled out the questionnaire, and all is valid, the effective response rate was 100%. This shows that the learners believe that the development of new-form international Chinese teaching materials has value and significance, also, the survey is practical among Chinese learners. After collection, we processed them through the "Questionnaire Star" and SPSSAU, and finally obtained the relevant survey data.

### 3.2 Reliability and Validity of Survey Tools

Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is an effective tool for testing scale-type questions, and its reliability coefficient is above 0.8, indicating that the reliability of the scale is very good. In this study, SPSSAU was used to analyze the scale of "Learner-oriented new form of textbook survey" and the obtained Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.849, indicating our study results are more reliable and have reference value.

Factor analysis is an important method to measure whether the item design of the survey scale is reasonable. The KMO value obtained through factor analysis can reflect the validity of the scale. When the KMO value is greater than 0.7, it indicates that the structural validity of the questionnaire is better. Our study KMO value was 0.847, indicating that the survey scale has good structural validity and the data are credible.

## 4. Findings & Discussion

### 4.1 Learning Needs and Learning Styles

According to the survey of 55 learners, it was found that 41.82% learners could only spend 1 to 7 hours learning Chinese per week, and even 14.55% learners spent less than one hour per week on Chinese learning. It can be seen that adult learners are affected by work, study or life, and the time for learning Chinese is quite limited.

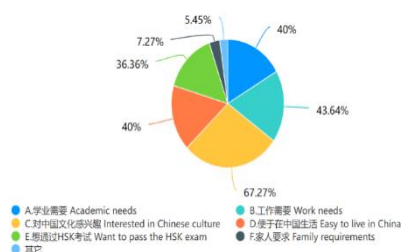


Figure 1 Reasons of why Learn Chinese

According to Figure 1, we can find that the vast majority of learners learning Chinese are attracted by the long-established Chinese culture. It can be seen that Chinese culture must occupy a place in the development of new-form international Chinese teaching materials. In addition, combined with the results of learners' learning styles, we also found that adults learn Chinese mainly to meet the needs of life, work, study and examinations. They usually watch videos, listen to recordings or songs, and read news or articles. Many learners also learn Chinese by chatting with Chinese people, using social media or self-media platforms, such as "WeChat", "Xiaohongshu", and so on. Based on this, we can get that adult learners often have a strong purpose, often to meet their own actual needs, and due to they just have a short time to concentrate study Chinese, most learners will seize the fragmented time to learn.

### 4.2 The Use of New-Form International Chinese Textbooks

#### 4.2.1 The Utilization Rate of Digital Textbooks is Rising and Most Commonly Used

Based on the impact of COVID-19 on Chinese learning, online learners have become the main part, and it is inevitable to use electronic fidelity textbooks, digital textbooks, and three-dimensional textbooks to carry out teaching. According to the survey results, users of paper textbooks accounted for 52.17%, digital textbooks accounted for 47.83%, the users' number of paper textbooks and digital

textbooks tended to be balanced. But when learners are faced with the choice of using paper textbooks or digital textbooks, 65.22% of learners think that paper textbooks are better. Obviously, although the online learning has become the mainstream, paper textbooks are still one of the most popular form of textbooks for learners. This survey carried out further interviews and discussions on this result. A learner said that he prefers to use paper textbooks for offline learning, but use digital textbooks for online learning, which shows that digital textbooks are applied to Chinese online learning, affected by irresistible objective conditions.

We can be seen from Figure 2, multimedia textbooks based on CD-ROMs are rarely used by learners, while digital textbooks used in conjunction with smartphones have become the mainstream of current applications. Among the textbooks that learners have known or used, digital textbooks with APP and website as the medium account for the majority, especially textbooks equipped with mobile terminal APPs. On this basis, we learned through interviews that the apps used by learners are mainly “Wutong Chinese” and “Chinese Union” two apps. And at present, the supporting APPs for new-form textbooks used by learners are still relatively rare and single, the types of mobile terminals for international Chinese new-form textbooks are not diverse enough.

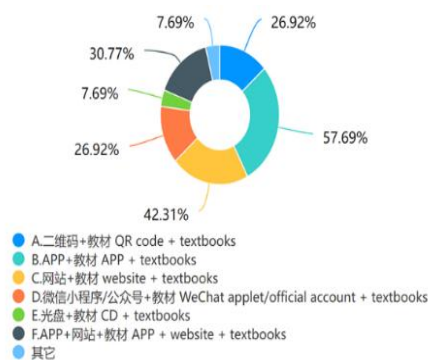


Figure 2 Medium Types of New-form Textbooks Learners Know or Have Used

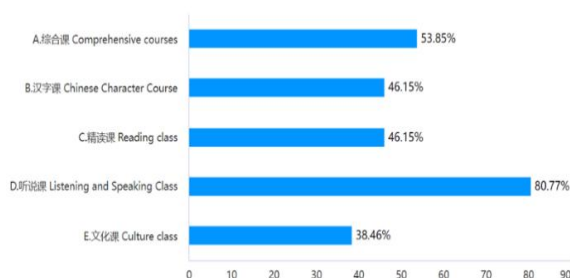


Figure 3 Applicable courses for the New-form Textbooks that Learners have Used

## 4.2.2 Diversified Content and Forms but Unbalanced Use of Courses

The results of the content presentation methods of the new-form textbooks used by learners show that the current international Chinese new-form textbook content presentations are mainly videos and audios, there are also animations, games and other forms, the content presentation methods are gradually diversified. Combined with the survey on the use of applicable courses of international Chinese new-form textbooks, most are currently used in listening and speaking classes. According to Figure 3, it can be clearly seen that the use of new-form textbooks in different course types exists unbalanced state, and the difference between the listening and speaking courses and the cultural courses even reached more than 40%.

## 4.2.3 The Frequency of Use is High but the Learning Needs are Expanding

The results of the use frequency and demand of the new-form international Chinese textbooks show that 46.15% of the learners will use it 5-10 times within a month, and 34.62% of the learners will use it in one month more than 10 times. The new-form teaching materials is becoming more and more important for learners’ daily learning, and the demand is also increasing significantly.

About learners who have used international Chinese new-form textbooks found that current learners generally use that to learn phonetics, vocabulary, Chinese characters, grammar, and culture, but their primary needs are not to satisfy phonetics. It is learning Chinese characters and vocabulary. However, as shown in Figure 4, the current new-form international Chinese textbooks can only better meet the needs of learners in listening and speaking, and the effects in reading, writing and using are not outstanding. This also illustrates

that it is necessary for the new-form international Chinese textbooks to pay attention to the learning needs of learners in terms of vocabulary and Chinese characters, and it is essential to strengthen the simultaneous construction of the five major needs of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and using.

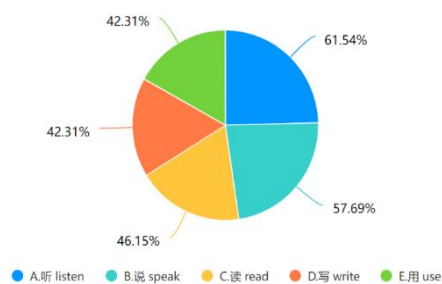


Figure 4 Satisfaction of the Learning Needs

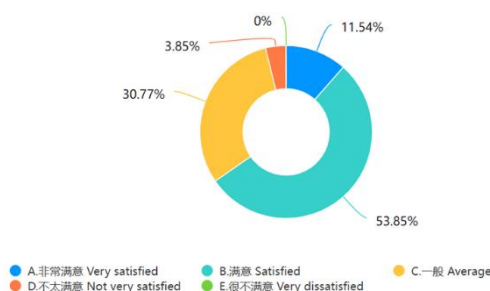


Figure 5 Learners' Satisfaction with Used New-Form Textbooks

#### 4.2.4 High User Satisfaction but Slow Iterative Innovation

This survey divides learners' satisfaction with the new-form textbooks have used into five levels: "very satisfied", "satisfied", "general", "dissatisfied" and "very dissatisfied". As shown in Figure 5, the majority learners are "satisfied" with the current new-form international Chinese textbooks. Although no learners choose "very dissatisfied", the proportion of learning users who are "very satisfied" is also very small. The vast majority of users feel that the current new international Chinese textbooks are "general" or "dissatisfied". It can be seen that although most of the current new-form international Chinese teaching books cannot meet the needs of learners, they have not met the expectations of learners, and further improvement is needed. So what are the views and opinions of the learners on the development and construction of the new-form international Chinese language textbooks?

### 4.3 Suggestions on Compile the New-Form International Chinese Language Textbooks

Before collecting learners' suggestions for writing, this study first adopted learners' opinions on whether it is needful to develop new-form international Chinese textbooks. Among the 55 people, 46 people think it is integral to develop it, and 9 people think it is not need to develop it. In this regard, the study conducted in-depth interviews on the question "Why do you think it is unnecessary to develop new-form international Chinese textbooks?" During the interview, a learner believed that the new-form international Chinese textbooks need to be equipped with mobile phones, etc. The use of electronic products, but distraction due to personal subjective reasons, so that the intended learning objectives cannot be completed. Another learner said that the new-form textbooks depends on the Internet to survive. If the conditions of the Internet, mobile phones, and computers cannot be met, Chinese learning cannot be carried out, so it is not recommended to develop. It can be seen that the development and construction of new-form international Chinese teaching books must take into account the subjective factors of the learners, as well as the objective conditions such as the network and electronic equipment.

In addition to above-mentioned questions and conclusions, this study also conducted a survey on the course types, age groups, Chinese proficiency, usage functions, supporting resources, etc. that need to be strengthened in the development of new-form international Chinese textbooks. The resulting recommendations include the following four points:

① Priority should be given to the listening and speaking classes, the comprehensive classes should be the key point, and the multi-dimensional development of the grammar classes, Chinese characters' classes and culture classes should be taken into consideration.

②The intermediate stage should focus on the development of new-form international Chinese textbooks, with teenagers (15-17 years old) and adults (18 years old and above) as the key development age groups.

③Functional construction should be as diverse, digital and intelligent as possible.

According to Figure 6, we found that the primary function that learners need is to meet the needs of phonetic learning, and intelligent phonetic correction and practice functions need to be developed emphatically. Secondly, functions such as online intelligent testing, human-computer interaction or real-person interactive exercises, writing, and grammar explanations are also required by learners. In addition, most learners believe that the development and construction of automated, personalized, and intelligent service functions such as “automatically correcting homework”, “providing personal situation analysis”, and “creating personally customized courses and teaching materials” are also necessary.

④ Resource construction should be rich and diverse.



Figure 6 Learners' Needs for the Function Construction

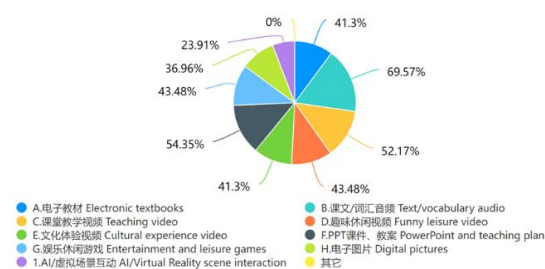


Figure 7 Learners' Demand for the Construction of Resources

According to Figure 7, learners have very diverse resource application needs, especially for audio and video resources, and they are clearly targeted. For example, video resources must not only provide MOOCs, micro-classes, live-Classroom videos, as well as cultural, leisure videos. In addition to audio and video resources, learners also need corresponding electronic teaching materials, coursewares, pictures, virtual interactive scenes and other resources.

## 5. Prospects for the Construction of New-Form International Chinese Textbooks

Writing textbooks is a lengthy and cumbersome task, it should be done carefully and in a long-term manner, not a quick fix. “The era of relying on a single textbook has passed, and the textbooks have and will continue to develop in a three-dimensional direction.”<sup>[1]</sup> And “Intelligent Chinese textbooks should be based on the big data of teaching needs and the interactive teaching process.”<sup>[2]</sup> Based on this, this study is learner-centered. By investigating learners' needs, desires, and thoughts on international Chinese new-form textbooks, we can understand different requirements of different learners for textbooks, understand their likes and dislikes, and hope to contribute to provide what they most want.

### 5.1 Starting from the Needs of Learners, Creating Focused and Personalized Textbooks

To maintain learners' interest and motivation in learning Chinese and to mobilize learners' subjective initiative requires lively, interesting and inspiring teaching materials. Therefore, we must take orientation, qualitative, positioning, and quantitative as the basic principles, and select interesting materials that learners are interested in, want to know, willing to learn, and enter Chinese textbooks. Taking scientificity as the soul and backbone of textbooks, taking learners' needs as the fundamental basis, fully considering the practicability and diversity of language materials in teaching materials, adapting to learners' psychological characteristics, developing menu-based, combined-type, intelligent-type and other targeted, customized books, breaking the traditional “one book with multiple students” model, and realizing the one-to-one correspondence between the content of textbooks and the needs of learners.

## 5.2 Taking the Function of Language Communication as the Starting Point, Creating Materialized and Contextualized Textbooks

Cultivating language communicative ability is the ultimate goal of language teaching. Under the background of intelligent age, the international Chinese teaching paradigm is constantly enriched, and the innovation of teaching materials needs to keep pace with the changes and development of the teaching models. Focusing on different types of courses and teaching forms, select the content and materials needed in real life, construct teaching scenarios based on real life, and make all the content better meet the students' practical needs and communication desires. The "5C" includes Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities, which all can be integrated into the compilation of textbooks to help students improve their language communication skills in an immersive way.

## 5.3 Taking Three-Dimensional and Integrated as the Foothold, Forging Intelligent and Diversified New-Form Textbooks

The construction of teaching books in the new era must be based on the development of information technology. Three-dimensional and integrated are the inevitable trends in the development of international Chinese textbooks. In the compilation of current international Chinese teaching books, it should be more detailed, updated, and edited, more practical in content, more diverse in function, richer in form, and smarter in operation. Committed to creating integrated three-dimensional teaching materials that integrate multi-modal resources such as text, pictures, videos, virtual practice scenes, and artificial intelligence feedback, turning teaching materials into a collection of resources, models, and spaces.

## 6. Conclusion

Starting from the learners' feelings of use, willingness to build, and expected needs, this research explores the current status of the use of new-form international Chinese textbooks and the direction of future development. It was found that the current popular new-form textbooks is digital books, but affected by the background of the intelligent era, more and more learners have application requirements for three-dimensional teaching materials with personalized and intelligent services. It is necessary to further develop the new-form teaching books. Further more, the future construction of new-form international Chinese teaching materials should pay more attention to the specific needs of learners, with the goal of cultivating communicative skills, and create three-dimensional and integrated teaching materials that adapt to the trend of the times.

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