

## MASTER'S THESIS

### Genre analysis of the reading passages in two series of textbooks used in Hong Kong and the People's Republic of China

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**GENRE ANALYSIS OF THE READING  
PASSAGES IN TWO SERIES OF TEXTBOOKS  
USED IN HONG KONG AND THE PEOPLE'S  
REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

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This paper intends to evaluate the reading texts found in the textbooks used in Hong Kong and the People's Republic of China from the perspective of genre analysis. The variety of texts that emerges from the advertising and communicating, virtual and authentic, environment is so versatile that it demands a mission renewal in the schools to cope with the challenges. The skills of comprehending and analyzing the texts are thus becoming increasingly significant in the learning and teaching processes. However, the input of these comprehension skills still relies heavily on the texts of the textbooks. There is no doubt that textbooks still dominate the classrooms in Hong Kong and its mother country, the People's Republic of China (the PRC). Thus, it is worthwhile to examine the texts of these two places and evaluate whether the texts are preparing the students to meet the needs of the changing society.

This study focuses on the examination of the range of genres found in textbooks and analyses the structural organization found in the reading texts by applying genre analysis. The texts of the main reading passages of each unit were analyzed at the macro and micro levels. The research questions of the study are as follow:

- What is the range of genres presented in the textbooks used in the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong respectively?
- How comprehensible are the texts in these textbooks?

The genre analysis of the PRC series reveals that genres focusing on the description of things dominate the whole series, while genres related to judgments or thesis are rarely found. This uneven coverage of genres will result in an insufficient exposure of genres and difficulty in reading texts with different purposes will arise. The series of textbooks in Hong Kong covers the genres discussed in the literature. The emphasis shifts from a focus on factual information processing to argumentative orientation. The shift is considered appropriate as mature readers will find it easier to meet the demands of comprehending expository texts. Text-types and scope of fields covered are inadequate in both series. According to the findings regarding the familiarity of the texts, most of the contents found in the PRC series are 'least familiar' or 'fairly familiar' to the students. In this case, students do not have the schemas for interpreting the texts involved and thus meanings cannot be constructed. Moreover, the findings regarding the structural organization of the texts chosen for each genre also reveal that the texts found in the PRC series are difficult for students to comprehend. When textbooks remain the most important resource in language learning, the quality of textbooks should be always improving. Diversified

comprehensible texts provide students with the appropriate practices and examples and eventually facilitate students' thinking abilities to cater for the ever-changing society.

## 緒言

本論文的目的旨在從一個「文體類型」分析的角度，對在香港及中華人民共和國(以下簡稱中國)普遍選用的英國語文教科書的課文內容作出研究及分析。基於學生在日常生活所接觸的文章內容十分多元化，故英國語文科的教學目標應面對這些新的挑戰及轉變而作出修正，以符合社會的需要。因此在教學過程中，學習了解及分析課文，變得越來越重要。但是，現時理解能力的訓練仍十分倚賴教科書的篇章，毫無疑問在香港及中國，教科書仍然被廣泛地採用在教學上，因此這是十分值得去研究及評估這兩地教科書的教學內容，是否能夠應付及滿足社會急速轉變的需要。本研究亦集中利用「文體分析」的方法去研究教科書中不同文體類型的分佈，並分析其組織架構，更從一個微觀及宏觀的角度去分析每一個單元的主要篇章內容，而本論文的研究題目為：

- 在香港及中國普遍採用的教科書，其文體的分佈情況如何？
- 學生能明白教科書的篇章內容的程度如何？

研究顯示在中國普遍採用的教科書，其課文內容主要為描述性的篇章，而甚少有批判性及議論性篇章。這種不公平的文體分佈現象，令

學生未有足夠機會去接觸不同的文體，因此學生日後閱讀其他篇章時會倍感困難。至於本文所研究的香港教科書，其書目系列會由描述性的篇章，逐漸發展和滲入較多批判性及議論性篇章，這種模式是適當的，因為成熟的讀者較容易閱讀及理解議論性的文章。此外，無論在中國和香港普遍採用的教科書，其篇章來源及文章的主題均較為狹窄。根據研究顯示，在中國普遍採用的教科書，文章內容欠生活化，與學生的日常生活經驗連繫較少，在這種情況下，學生較難運用其已有知識去理解該等文章；研究亦顯示該等文章的組織架構亦較為雜亂，故學生未能容易掌握及理解。如果教科書仍被視為一重要學習語言的途徑，教科書的質素就必須要被提升及改善，學生須閱讀多元化及可理解的篇章，以促進學生的思維能力應付不斷轉變的社會。

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