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Beyond survival Mandarin Chinese: Adult-appropriate civic-linguistic integration in Chinese language textbooks for immigrants in Taiwan

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Abstract

Taiwan now has more than 610,000 new residents, and its official care-and-service architecture explicitly spans life adaptation, medical and maternity care, employment rights, education and culture, childrearing, personal safety, and legal systems; the Ministry of Education also funds adult basic education classes and the development of teaching materials for new residents. Against that policy backdrop, this study undertakes an exhaustive, whole-corpus content analysis of the New Taipei City series Chinese Learning Basic Textbooks for New Residents: three textbooks and three companion workbooks, all published by the New Taipei City Education Department and organized into nine lessons per volume. The analysis codes every lesson, activity, and workbook item against five SLA lenses—comprehensible input, interaction, sociocultural mediation, task-based authenticity, and interlanguage-sensitive form focus—while mapping content to six immigrant-need domains: daily life, employment, civic participation, education, healthcare, and legal literacy. To avoid impressionistic evaluation, lexical, character, and grammar loads are additionally benchmarked against Taiwan Benchmarks for the Chinese Language, the National Academy for Educational Research's seven-level proficiency framework for non-native Chinese users. Preliminary corpus reading indicates a spiral settlement curriculum that moves from self-introduction, pregnancy, prenatal care, shopping, and learning Chinese, to hospital visits, convenience stores, job interviews, smartphone use, family finance, safe work, internet-based services, and volunteering. At the same time, the workbooks make Chinese-specific difficulty unusually visible through explicit practice in Zhuyin, tone, radicals, character structure, homophonous and visually confusable characters, polyphonic words, synonyms, short phrases, and sentence building. The central argument is that immigrant Chinese textbooks in Taiwan should be evaluated not only for topical practicality, but for whether they convert settlement needs into adult-

appropriate civic-linguistic participation. On that criterion, the New Taipei series appears strongest in comprehensible input and orthographic scaffolding, partly successful in interactional and sociocultural mediation, and more uneven in sustained legal-civic literacy and learner differentiation. The study contributes a replicable theory-and-practice combined framework for analyzing how adult immigrant language education mediates language learning, social rights, and belonging in contemporary Taiwan.

Keywords: Mandarin Chinese, Non-Native Chinese-Speaking Immigrants, Chinese Language Textbook