Abstract

The purpose of the study is to examine the use of modals expressing necessity in four popular series of Chinese textbooks of elementary and intermediate levels, and contrast the frequency of necessity modal use with real-world usage in the corpus databases from Beijing Language and Culture University Chinese Corpus and the Academia Sinica Balanced Corpus of Modern Chinese from Taiwan. The study attempts to reveal how necessity modals are introduced and used in the textbooks, and whether the usage is close to the real life, in hopes of providing current Chinese language educators with empirical results. A total of 16 Chinese textbooks of elementary and intermediate levels published in the United States, China, and Taiwan were reviewed. Findings show that 要 yào ‘must’ appears to be the most common modal to express necessity in the textbooks and the corpus databases but the use of other modals differs afterwards. Other most used modals in the textbooks are 一定 yídìng ‘must’, 得 děi ‘must’, 应该 yīnggāi ‘should; ought to’, 当然 dāngrán ‘of course; certainly’, and 除了 chūle ‘except; besides’. 一定 yídìng, 得 děi, and 除了 chūle are individually explained while 应该 yīnggāi and 当然 dāngrán receive no attention. 应 yīng ‘should; ought to’, 该 gāi ‘should, ought to’, and 必须 bìxū ‘have to’ show the high frequency of usage in the corpus databases but are not often used in the textbooks. The findings indicate that the use and practice of Chinese necessity modals in the textbooks does not genuinely reflect real-world usage. In addition, the two corpora show different frequency of use of 得 děi ‘to have to; must’, 该 gāi ‘should; ought to’, 准 zhǔn ‘definitely; surely’, and 应当 yīngdāng. The sociocultural backgrounds of China and Taiwan could be the reason to the different usage between the corpora.
Abstract 063

Key words: Chinese as a foreign language, foreign language acquisition, necessity, modality, textbook, corpus