

# NEOLIBERAL VALUES EMBEDDED IN A CHINESE COLLEGE ENGLISH TEXTBOOK

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## ABSTRACT

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Since language is not neutral, English Language Teaching (ELT) and English textbooks reflect sociopolitical, economic, and cultural reality so they cannot be value-free. Values in ELT textbooks can affect students' thinking and behaviors to a certain degree. As we are now in the era of globalization and neoliberalism which is the dominant political and economic paradigm, this study aims to investigate whether neoliberal values are implanted into a widely-circulated college English textbook in China by conducting a Critical Discourse Analysis. The research questions of this study are "Are there neoliberal values embedded in a Chinese college listening and speaking textbook? If there are, what are the most salient neoliberal values? How are these values represented in the textbook?" The analysis revealed that there are many neoliberal values embedded in the textbook selected. The most salient neoliberal values found in it are entrepreneurship, individualism, self-responsibility for personal development and fulfillment, and flexibility. The embedding of these neoliberal values can be attributed to economic, social, and political factors in China. Consequently, raising college ELT teachers and students' awareness of and developing their critical thinking abilities with the regard to the values incorporated in the textbooks should be one of the prime tasks of ELT objectives nowadays, especially against a global backdrop of neoliberalism and globalization.

**Keywords:** Neoliberalism; values; college English textbooks; China

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Neoliberalism is an economic theory, political ideology, political and social paradigm which is a "new" form of liberalism which aims to reform the former highly constrained markets by states as described by Maynard Keynes and it is characterized by the governance of market relations (Evans and Sewell, 2013; Holborow, 2012). Neoliberalism as "a stamp of our age" (Holborow, 2012: 14) and globalization have evolved into a global trend in the past four decades (Bori, 2018a). It is the current situation that most nations, institutions, and individuals in the world participate in. Globalization and neoliberalism are inherently interrelated since globalization is one of the representations of neoliberalism (Harvey, 2005). Furthermore, the pervasion of neoliberalism and globalization de facto is closely intertwined with the USA's hegemonic manipulation of the world. Against this global background, the widespread use and penetration of English are intricately interwoven with neoliberalism and globalization because English is an indispensable tool for propagating neoliberalism and globalization around the globe nowadays (Holborow, 2012).

Meanwhile, language teaching is not a neutral undertaking either, but a sociopolitical act that involves cultural and political ideologies; in this respect, English Language Teaching (henceforth ELT) activities and materials are reflections of a sociopolitical, economic, and cultural reality (Cortazzi and Jin, 1999; Widodo et al., 2018). ELT materials can also be cultural mediators because they can convey salient and hidden social values, assumptions and images (Ndura, 2004). The texts in ELT textbooks are value-laden social and cultural artifacts filled with particular beliefs, culturally appropriate values and norms, and ideologies, while they are intended to impose their effects on learners (Curdt-Christiansen, 2008; Gebregeorgis, 2016; Littlejohn, 2012). As a result, ELT textbooks may exert an influence on students' acceptance of a community's dominant values, beliefs, and assumptions to a certain extent (Widodo et al., 2018; Xiong, 2012). By and large, these values can be represented and constructed through visual and textual representations in the textbooks (Widodo, 2018).

With the advent of globalization, internationally designed ELT textbooks have been used more and more by the countries from the Outer and the Expanding Circle (Kachru, 1985). Nevertheless, most textbooks are filled with western cultural values and are Anglo-centric (Kumaravadivelu, 2012; Pennycook, 2017). Although some of them have been curtailed to a certain extent to cater for a more local flavor, global textbooks remain controlled by the Inner-Circle and continue to embrace and spread the ideologies espoused by the advanced capitalist countries (Pennycook, 2017). As a result, locally produced ELT textbooks should be encouraged but, if conditions do not permit, ELT teachers should design supplementary materials for themselves that are appropriate for their local social and cultural environments. Recognizing the impact of ideologies on students through their textbooks, the Chinese Ministry of Education has issued a requirement to ban the use of foreign teaching materials and instill the dominant ideologies and values in the textbooks used by Chinese public primary and secondary schools since 2020 to tighten the ideological control of a new Chinese generation (Cheung, 2020). Nevertheless, the Chinese authorities have not issued a ban on international textbooks used by Chinese college students.

This paper aims to explore whether neoliberal values have been embedded in the visual and textual representations of a Chinese college English listening and speaking textbook, which has been revised by local editors based on internationally produced ELT textbooks. A leading language policy regarding the compilation of Chinese college English textbooks, called a College English Teaching Guide (henceforth The Guide) was issued in 2017 and it prescribed that the curriculum should aim to carry out intercultural education, by helping students understand the differences between Chinese and other world views, values, ways of thinking and other aspects, cultivate students' intercultural consciousness, and by improving students' social language ability and intercultural communicative competence. In this way, neoliberal values as the dominant world values may have infiltrated Chinese college English textbooks. Meanwhile, according to previous studies, it has been confirmed that neoliberal discourses are predominant and prevalent in widely-used international ELT textbooks compiled by Britain and the USA (Bori, 2018a; Bori, 2018b; Chun, 2009; Copley, 2017; Gray, 2012). This study's primary research questions are "Are there neoliberal values embedded in a Chinese college English listening and speaking textbook? If there are, what are the most salient neoliberal values in the textbook? How are these values represented in the textbook?" This study investigated the values in written texts and visual images of a Chinese College textbook to answer these research questions. It may also contribute theoretically to an analysis of Chinese ELT textbooks in China and help to develop a theory of neoliberalism both domestically and internationally; furthermore, Chinese college students and ELT teachers' awareness of the values found in the textbooks, of which they may or not have been aware of previously, might be raised or further strengthened, and thus they may develop or improve their critical thinking with regard to the values and ideologies in these textbooks.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Neoliberalism is

*"a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade."*

(Harvey, 2005: 2)

In other words, neoliberalism propounds a neoliberal state to support strong individual private property rights, the rule of law, and the system of free market and free trade. Meanwhile, it basically opposes any forms of planning and control and advocates an absolutely free market; at the same time, it also calls for governments to provide a suitable environment and to strengthen institutional infrastructures to keep free trade and market operating smoothly (Harvey, 2005). Originally an economic theory, now it is not only a

political and economic paradigm but also a dominant ideology that has reigned in the world for the past 40 years; and its rationality has shaped people's behaviors worldwide (Bori, 2018a).

Since neoliberalism is still an economic structure within the domain of capitalism, individualism as a typical value advocated by capitalism is one of the predominant values of neoliberalism; while different from the capitalist structure embedded liberalism preceding neoliberalism, governments are now absolved from ensuring equitable distribution of wealth or solving collective problems (Lentin and Titley, 2011). The philosophy of neoliberalism is premised on market-driven fundamentalism on the basis of economic individualism, leading to a generally wider and wider wealth gap between rich and poor (Olssen, 2018).

Although the market-driven ideology of neoliberalism stresses freedom over equality, this freedom is closely related to individualism as it is understood as the personal capability to make rational choices considering one's self-interest (Olssen, 2018). In this light, Drucker (2014) argues that we are definitely in an era of the entrepreneurial economy. According to a neoliberal logic, our social domain is governed by the rational choices of entrepreneurs who treat everything they do as maximizing their human capital, and things should be based on this logic (Baez, 2007). Through minimal state intervention in their lives, individuals are "free" to pursue their interests; nonetheless, it is the individuals who bear the costs and responsibility to pursue their interests (Fitzsimons, 2002). Consequently, neoliberalism praises the idea that there are no social problems in the world, but only personal challenges (Saunders, 2010). In addition, one of the necessities to be the "neoliberal citizen" proposed by Block as the ideal subject should also be willing to adapt to changeable working times and locations; and be skillful at addressing emergencies with flexible approaches (Bori, 2018a).

In the current global context, China has also adopted a special kind of market economy marked by the incorporation of neoliberal elements intersected with authoritarian and minute planning from the central government (Harvey, 2005). The reforms after the 1978 Reform and Opening-up in China coincided with the neoliberal structural adjustments in Britain and the US and contributed to the burgeoning development of this trend worldwide. But, in one aspect, China has taken a noticeably different path from the traditional neoliberal template. China has a huge surplus of labor that must be absorbed or severely curbed if social and political stability is to be achieved. This requires the Chinese government to act differently from neoliberal orthodoxy and to behave like a Keynesian state. Nonetheless, there are still many phenomena in China currently that suggest that it is on the way to neoliberalization with its own characteristics (Harvey, 2005). For college students, the Ministry of Finance and the State Administration of Taxation in China issued Notice on Tax Policies for Supporting and Promoting Employment in 2011 to encourage college graduates to start their own businesses to promote employment. The Notice made it clear that graduates who start their own businesses can enjoy a preferential tax reduction or exemption for three years from their graduation year. Such a policy is robust evidence of the embrace of a neoliberal template in China currently.


The ideologies and values of neoliberalism are pervasive universally because neoliberalism has established itself as a hegemonic mode of discourse (Saad-Filho and Johnson, 2005). According to Giroux and Giroux (2004), as neoliberal discourses dominate the public imagination, people cannot come up with the words to describe the political, social changes, or critical concepts of social institutions to expand the meanings and purposes of democratic public life. Additionally, Engel (2000) claims neoliberal ideologies to be a secular religion. Besides the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which are the primary hubs for promulgating neoliberal ideologies since 1982, neoliberal ideologies are also circulated through various sources, such as corporations, the media, institutions and textbooks.

There is a large pool of studies which shows that neoliberalism has established its status as a powerful and influential factor in English as a second/foreign language education around the world (Bernstein et al., 2015; Piller and Cho, 2013). Neoliberal discourses have also been incorporated into Chinese ELT textbooks. By taking CDA as their methodological approach, Xiong and Yuan (2018) investigated the neoliberal discourses in a widely used English textbook series for junior middle school students in China. The neoliberal common sense, e.g., commodifying competence in English as a crucial cultural capital, self-responsibility for English competence development and building a monolingual and monocultural virtual dream for the learners, are deeply embedded in the textbooks. The authors hold the opinion that ELT should strive to free the learners from the shackles of certain ideologies and make them more aware of and possibly critical of their circumstances. Besides, it is reported that with the acceleration of globalization, more and more Chinese college students have been found to accept and hold the concept of individualism but with unique Chinese features (Liu and Wang, 2007; Liu, 2009); and this phenomenon may also be attributed to the increase in the proportion of western values in college English textbooks. Values referring to the cultural and moral beliefs, principles, standards and conventions which guide the ways of one's thinking, feeling and behaving are quite influential to individuals (Halstead and Taylor, 2005). Nevertheless, there is a research gap since studies on the exploration of neoliberal values in Chinese college ELT textbooks are rare. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the neoliberal values in a Chinese college English textbook.

### 3. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

A Chinese college English textbook *New Horizon College English: Listening, Speaking and Viewing 2* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) (henceforth NHCE 2) published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press (henceforth FLTRP) in 2017 was chosen for the data analysis to answer the research questions for the following reasons: firstly, FLTRP is one of the most prestigious presses in publishing Chinese college English textbooks in China and it now represents nearly 50% of the Chinese college English textbook market. As a result, the college English textbooks issued by this press are the most widely circulated in China (Zhou, 2012); secondly, the series of NHCE comprising four books has been adopted nationally and is widely used in Chinese universities because they are endorsed by the Chinese Ministry of Education; thirdly, the textbooks of NHCE (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) were revised by Chinese editors on the basis of a series of famous international English textbooks Speakout published by Pearson. As a result of this, Chinese editors have taken the context of ELT in China into consideration while they edited the international textbooks to adapt them to the local context; fourthly, the second textbook which is studied by most Chinese freshmen was picked from the series for analysis because it presents the greatest variety of topics as the topics cover many fields related to students' daily lives, e.g., education, future careers, and jobs. In addition, there are some topics included which can motivate students to think profoundly and deeply e.g., discovering personal identity. Furthermore, according to the sociologist Massey (1972), the key core values held by a person are established by the age of 21, and the age of Chinese freshman is about 18-20, which allows some time for Chinese college English teachers to change and develop their values. Thus, this study is a case study since only one textbook has been selected for analysis although there are a large number of other Chinese college English textbooks published by various presses in the textbook market which are widely studied by Chinese college students. Table 1 presents the basic information about this textbook.

**Table 1:** Introduction to the Selected Textbook

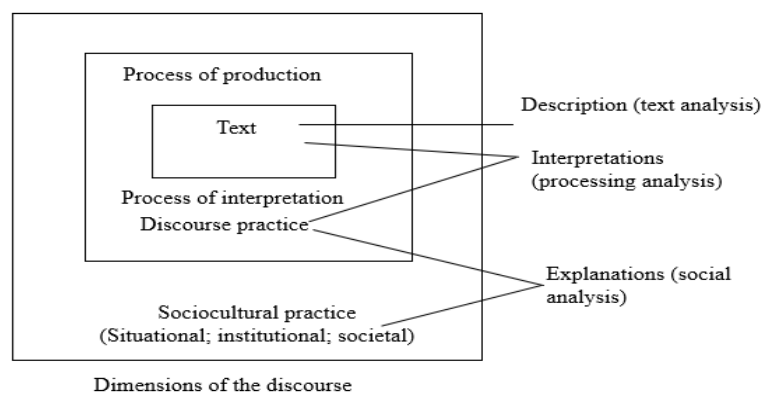
<b>The name of the textbook</b>	<i>New Horizon College English: Listening, Speaking and Viewing 2</i>
<b>Year</b>	2017
<b>Picture of the cover of the textbook</b>	
<b>Topics of units in the textbook</b>	U1 Life is a learning curve U2 Journey into the unknown U3 Time out U4 Life under the spotlight U5 Urban pulse U6 Climbing the career ladder U7 Time of technology: A blessing or a curse U8 Discovering your true identity
<b>Components of the textbooks</b>	It includes eight units covering various topics. Each unit is composed of four parts: listening to the world, speaking for communication, further practice in listening, and wrapping up for self-assessment.

To check whether neoliberal values are embedded in the visual images and written texts in the textbook, a codebook was developed through two phases: to begin with, the author carefully examined a number of previous studies on neoliberalism and developed an initial codebook; secondly, the author invited three experts to evaluate the initial codebook to improve it. The codebook was eventually included 20 neoliberal values: commodification (Saunders, 2010); marketisation (Saunders, 2010); financialization (Harvey, 2005); privatization (Harvey, 2005); consumerism (Bori, 2018b); hedonism (Lu and Cui, 2017); costs/benefits (Lemke, 2001); liberalism (Saunders, 2010); freedom (Bori, 2018b); individualism (Bori, 2018b); self-responsibility for personal development and fulfilment (Park, 2015); entrepreneurship (Harvey, 2005); competition (Piller and Cho, 2013); superficial cosmopolitanism (Bori, 2018b); flexibility (Lambert, 2008); versatility (Bauman, 1996); lifelong learning (Mitchell, 2006); self-branding (Block, 2018); uniform commensuration (Espeland and Stevens, 1998); and globalized interconnection. In the codebook, the code label, definition, and examples of each code are presented.

Using the codebook, an analysis of neoliberal values in the textbook was conducted separately by the author and experts for the first time; if disparities existed among the coders, final agreement would be reached after repeated discussions. After that, the second round of the value analysis was carried out to guarantee the trustworthiness of the analysis results. After the analysis, the number of occurrences of the values were counted to calculate their percentage of the total number in order to identify the most salient ones. Although one value may have been infiltrated into a variety of sentences in the whole passage or dialogue, it was counted as only appearing once in a passage or dialogue. Only the visual images in the textbooks were analyzed, while the frames in the videos were excluded. As to the analysis of images, firstly, the underlying meaning or possible plot of the images were interpreted; then the content of the images was checked, e.g., behavior of the people, background of the picture etc., which could reflect neoliberal values. In this study, the salient values are the top three most frequent values according to the number of times they occurred (Arbak, 2005). Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) is treated as an underlying factor guiding the development of the codebook and guiding the process of uncovering and analyzing the values.

CDA was used to study written and spoken discourse in order to reveal the ideological systems inherent in the language and how they are related to larger social structures, such as historical and socio-political factors (Fairclough, 1995). The listening and speaking textbooks are composed of written, spoken texts and images which are instilled with certain ideologies; and these texts and pictures are shaped by a Chinese context and global backdrop, for example, globalization and neoliberalism CDA can provide an effective method of studying how the texts in the textbooks are shaped by the contextual factors. Furthermore, CDA has already been proven to unravel the values in written texts and visual images as can be seen from the previous literature which has already been deployed to conduct similar inquiries (Widodo, 2018; Xiong and Yuan, 2018). Additionally, micro-level linguistic choices at the lexico-grammatical level have long been a key procedure for uncovering the underlying positions and values in written texts (de los Heros, 2009; Fairclough, 1992; 1995). In this study, a three-dimensional analytical framework (Fairclough, 1995) of Critical Discourse Analysis, as shown in Figure 1, was used to analyze the values in the written texts and visual images in the textbooks. To be specific, an analysis of the sociocultural practices at the institutional level, the Chinese contextual level and the global contextual level, the discursive practices which are concerned with production and distribution of the textbook and the textual analysis of genre, discourse patterns (Hoey, 2001) and lexico-grammar found in the textbook was carried out.

Genre is the textual representation of the interaction between discourse and context (Savitri, 2002). Thus, analysis of the genre of texts may provide a lens for the study of the relations between text and discourse. Discourse patterns are a set of culturally popular organization patterns which demonstrate the structure of popular English writing (Hoey, 2001: 122). Among such patterns proposed by Hoey, goal-achievement patterns can be analyzed by asking the following questions: What was the situation? What goal did x want to achieve? What method did x use to achieve it? How successful was this in the opinion of x? What was the result for x? (Hoey, 2001: 146) The components of this pattern subsume Situation, Goal, Method of Achievement and Evaluation and/or Result through the use of signals of words or phrases (e.g., want to, would like to, aim, objective, means, and way). Another pattern is the Desire Arousal-Fulfillment pattern which includes the following components: (Situation)-Object of Desire-Desire Arousal-Attempt at Desire Fulfillment-Positive or Negative Result (Hoey, 2001: 157). While the Opportunity-Taking pattern includes such phases as: Situation-Opportunity-Taking-Result; if the result is a positive result or an irretrievable negative result, that is the end of the pattern, but if it is a negative result not beyond retrieval, the step would go back to the one between opportunity and taking (Hoey, 2001: 151). In terms of the lexico-grammatical analysis of the texts in this study, the analysis was conducted by studying lexical choice, phraseology, modality and transitivity in the texts.



**Figure 1:** Three-Dimensional Analytical Framework (Fairclough, 1995: 98)

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Adopting the procedure of data analysis explained above, the author and experts identified 16 pictures and 69 written texts, including the scripts of the videos/audios incorporated with neoliberal values, and their frequency of occurrence is listed in parentheses after them: entrepreneurship (30); individualism (20); self-responsibility (18); flexibility (18), globalized interconnection (17); cost-benefit (15); freedom (13); versatility (9), competition (8), self-branding (5), lifelong learning (5); consumerism (4), commodification (4); uniform commensuration (4); hedonism (3); superficial cosmopolitanism (2); privatization (2); liberalism (2); financialization (1); marketisation (1). As a result of this analysis, 181 neoliberal values were unveiled from *NHCE* and the most salient neoliberal values in this textbook were found to be entrepreneurship (17%), individualism (11%), self-responsibility (10%), and flexibility (10%).

As explained in the literature review section, at the sociocultural level, neoliberalism has established itself as a predominantly political and economic paradigm within the purview of the globe, while China has also taken on certain neoliberal economic characteristics. China has also made a great endeavor to integrate itself into the trend of globalization to promote its development. Discursive practice in analyzing this textbook is primarily conducted from the perspective of textbook production and distribution.

*The NHCE 2* textbook is published by FLTRP, one of the most prestigious publishers for producing college English textbooks in China. Advertising itself as the most international publishing house in China, this press is active in cooperating with well-known publishers in other countries, e.g., Macmillan, Pearson Education, Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, etc., and it promotes Chinese culture and Chinese publishing to the world. Nevertheless, before the textbooks are published, they have to be checked by a special committee at the national level to ensure they do not contain any major ideological deviations. In the following section, we will examine the images and typical texts (genre, discourse patterns, and lexicogrammars) in the textbook to demonstrate how the most salient values are analyzed.

### 4.1 Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship refers to the beliefs or acts characterized by innovation, risk-taking and risk management and it is an essential part of a nation's ability to succeed in an ever-changing and increasingly competitive global marketplace (Harvey, 2005). For example, those people who would like to be innovative, challenging, and even adventurous by, for example, starting their own businesses (Bori, 2018b), engaging in volunteer tourism (Butcher and Smith, 2010), or backpacking (O'Reilly, 2006). This typical neoliberal value is the most espoused of all the neoliberal values in this textbook. In most cases, the editors seem to encourage students to start their own businesses, as reflected in the following listening exercise.

The exercise is presented as a group discussion entitled "Who has got the best money-making idea?" in which students are required to listen to a short paragraph on a business plan presented by a student, then fill in the missing words of the paragraph in the textbook, and lastly, have a group discussion on how to develop their own business with reference to the expressions in the listening material and finally to present their ideas to the class. The genre of this listening material is a promotional speech introducing their desire to start a hand-made cake company and their detailed marketing strategies to promote their cakes. This genre is not new to the students majoring in business, while the students from other majors will become familiar with the genre by participating in the group discussion and, in this way, they will learn about the initial ideas and skills necessary to develop their own businesses. Thus the students are apt to accept and follow the content and values in the text.

The discourse pattern of this text generally falls into the Goal-Achievement Pattern (Hoey, 2001). At the outset of the speech, the speaker comes to the point directly by stating their company's name and their goal of making delicious birthday cakes for children. Then they introduce their strengths and characteristics compared with other companies. The speaker uses several commendatory words and adverbs to highlight their specialty, e.g., very special cake, delicious cake, etc. In order to realize their goal, they have planned different sales channels and various promotion strategies, e.g., advertising campaigns on campus, eye-catching websites, free food samples, etc. Lastly, the speaker expresses great confidence in the market potential of their cakes. According to Hoey (2001), this discourse pattern is quite common in advertisements. This short speech is more of an advertisement for "selling" the ideas and specific practices necessary for starting one's own business than listening material. This discourse pattern and the minute depiction of the procedure and promotional methods may arouse students' curiosity and desire to try to start their own business, which could be further strengthened by the follow-up exercise of drawing up a similar promotional speech.

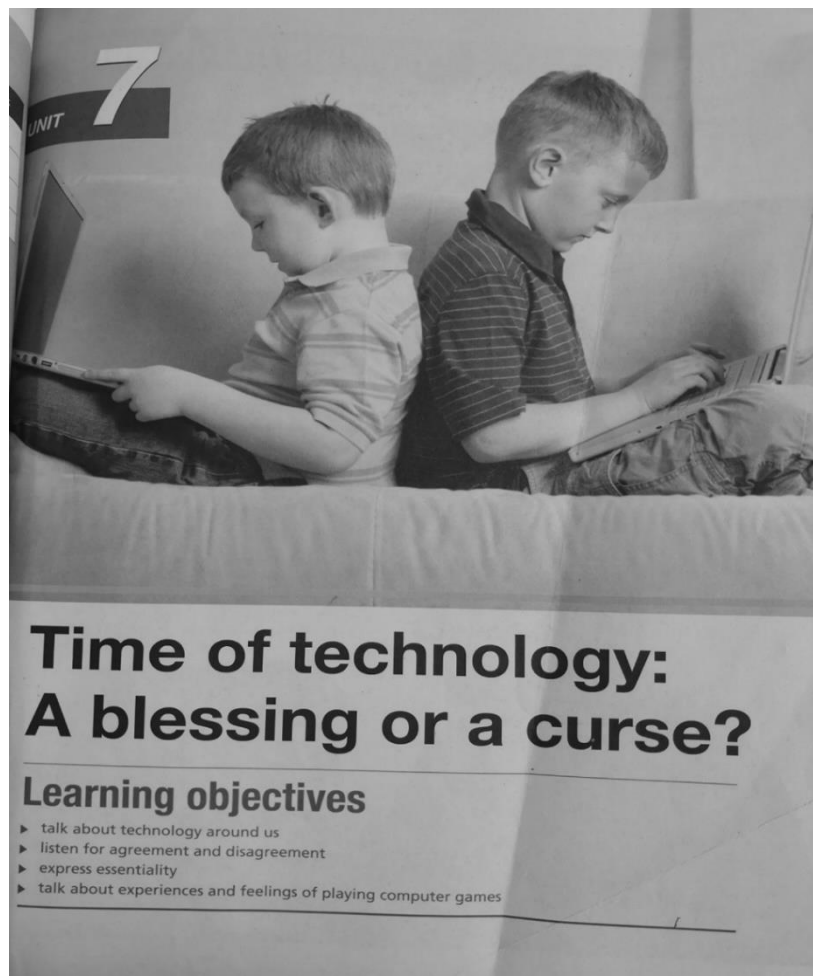
This short text is also featured by the usage of the modal auxiliary 'can' (e.g., the speaker and her friends "can" make the cakes at home), semi-modals (e.g., the speaker and her friends "want to" make interesting cakes; their idea "is to" make delicious birthday cakes; "to be" successful, they need to advertise in schools). Although these modal words mean that the plan of the speakers is purely imaginative and the

factuality of it is indeterminate, they are also a kind of assertion about the future success of the business (Narrog, 2005). Moreover, the assertion is reinforced by some intensifiers, e.g., customers will “definitely want to” buy their cakes. Therefore, modality and lexical choices in this speech may implicitly convey this value.

As a typical neoliberal value, entrepreneurship is proposed as a necessary quality required by individuals and nations to survive effectively in fierce competition, especially in a globalized world. Since China is adopting a special form of neoliberal economic structure, this dominant value of neoliberalism should have already infiltrated all aspects of life in China. Additionally, considering that this value can stimulate the potential and initiative of individuals to be more competitive to promote the development of the country and alleviate the pressure of employment on the Chinese government, it follows that the government has vigorously encouraged college students to start their own undertakings in recent years and, as a result, there is a general trend of holding Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competitions for Chinese college students at schools, and at provincial and national levels to break Chinese people’s former entrenched ideas of finding a stable job to ensure a smooth life. Thus, the embedding of this value in the textbooks also resonates with and facilitates the popularization of the Chinese government’s policy and serve its political functions.

#### 4.2 Individualism

In the last section, the most salient neoliberal value in *NHCE 2* entrepreneurship was discussed. The second most salient value in the textbook is individualism which refers to a social pattern that consists of loosely linked individuals who view themselves as independent of groups and mainly motivated by their own needs, while giving priority to their personal goals over the goals of others (Triandis, 2018). For example, people who are represented by individualism do not regard themselves as members of a group but they work and study independently. Such people tend to admire famous or outstanding individuals and consider them as role models. There are several texts and images in the textbook in which the concept of individualism is embedded. Figure 2 below which shows the cover page of Unit 7 can be used to demonstrate this value.



**Figure 2:** A Visual Image Representing the Value of Individualism from *NHCE 2*

In the picture, two children are sitting on the same sofa in a room. They could be friends or brothers since they are resting on each other's backs. Nevertheless, although they are sitting together on the same sofa, they are busy playing on their own laptops without any interaction. Therefore, this image represents the concept of solitude implying that they are keeping a mental distance from each other although they are physically close and even have intimate physical contact. Furthermore, this image suggests that individuals should care about their own business exclusively and should not make efforts to communicate with other people, nor even help others voluntarily. It should be noted that this picture covers half a page and is placed as the cover page of Unit 7 *Time of technology: A blessing or a curse?* Consequently, the placement and the visual shock of this image may leave students with a deeper impression than most of the other pictures in this textbook. In addition, some students may think that technology is a "curse" because it has given birth to phubbers and makes people less communicative than before. In this way, the values embedded in it may have a serious impact on students.

Furthermore, this value has also widely infiltrated various texts from different units in the textbook, such as a monologue of a marine biologist introducing his job. The genre of this listening material is an informal talk. It seems like the speaker is having a leisurely talk with students by sharing his inner ideas and thoughts. Therefore, the boundary between the world in the textbook and the real world where the students live is blurred. As a result, the students may imagine themselves as the juniors of the speaker who can receive insightful suggestions from him. Thus, this genre may facilitate the inculcation of the values embedded in the text.

The lexico-grammar in this talk is characterized by the usage of transitive verbs followed by gerunds, such as the speaker "likes working" outside, he doesn't "like working" in a team and "prefers working" alone, and he doesn't "mind getting" his hands dirty. Transitivity studies the way people or things are depicted as the actors and their actions (Machin and Mayr, 2012). The use of transitive verbs may express a more positive affect (Narrog, 2005). In this case, the speaker would like to express his preference for his career by explaining that he can work alone without any potential pressure from a team. Moreover, students will be made aware of the speaker's enthusiasm for his job and strong belief in ideas like individualism through repeated usage of words such as "like", "love", "keen on" throughout the talk. All the settings in the language usage of this talk reach a climax in the sentence "it's the perfect job" for the speaker and the assertion "I want to be my own boss." As a result, the lexico-grammar in the text contributes to and consolidates the inculcation of the value.

Since neoliberalism is still an economic form of capitalism, individualism is highly glorified. As this textbook is a revision of the international textbook *Speakout*, it can be observed that the local editors have chosen to keep this mainstream value of neoliberalism although it is contradictory to the traditional Chinese value of collectivism. Nonetheless, it is in line with previous studies which have reported that individualism is quite pervasive among Chinese college students nowadays (Liu and Wang, 2007; Liu, 2009). The embedding of this value may embody a new trend in China: maintain tradition on the one hand, but absorb reasonable, practical and dominant ideas in the world on the other hand; in the meantime, it may also be attributed to the emphasis on intercultural education required in the Chinese language policy of *The Guide*. By this means, students may acquire a greater knowledge of the world and their horizons will not be confined exclusively to China.

#### 4.3 Self-responsibility for personal development and fulfillment

Self-responsibility for personal development and fulfillment is closely related to individualism. In this study, it refers to the beliefs or acts which propose that people rather than the government and social structure should take the responsibility to develop and improve themselves to fit into the new competitive era and social contexts (Xiong and Yuan, 2018). Since people may come to consider themselves as independent of groups and to care more about their own concerns, they may think the onus to develop themselves is their responsibility. In Unit 1, a listening exercise touches upon a new form of schooling in the United States: homeschooling means that parents provide their children with a learning environment by themselves rather than the traditional form of sending their children to school. In this way, parents take all the responsibilities and risks of teaching their children; as a result, if their children cannot pass the high-stake national examinations and their education proves to be a failure, they should blame themselves as they chose this form of schooling. Also, in the textbook there is a video which introduces Lewis Hamilton, a top Formula One driver. Before watching the video, some basic information is given about this successful driver in which his struggle from "an ordinary British boy" to become an individual who "has already had a big impact on the sport" at a young age cannot be praised higher. The driver also expresses great satisfaction with his life by saying that his dream has come true. Following this information, the students begin to watch the video and do some relevant exercises.

With regard to the video genre, there is a documentary in which Lewis was interviewed by the presenter in an informal way: 7-year-old Lewis was teaching the presenter how to drive a go kart at the beginning of the video. This genre may remove or alleviate students' resistance to exercises by making them

feel they are watching a movie and it may also arouse their interest. The discourse pattern of the dialogue and voice-over in the video can be categorized as a Desire Arousal-Fulfillment pattern following the process of Situation-Object of desire-Desire arousal-Attempt with a desire fulfillment-Positive result (Hoey, 2001). At the outset, the situation is presented by giving some brief information about Lewis, then little Lewis states his desire of being a Formula One driver because he likes the power and speed of this sport. Later, he moves on to Formula Three and Two from karting before he finally became the king of Formula One. Eventually, the positive evaluation was given by himself as he proudly states becoming a champion has changed everything, and he has realized his dream. However, there is no mention of any help he received from the government or any social organizations, therefore, students may receive the impression that they should rely on themselves in pursuit of their careers and dreams like him. Hoey (2001) proposes that the ideological implications of this discourse pattern are that it can accord the object of desire to higher values, namely, the fame, glory, and wealth which have resulted from Lewis's own unremitting efforts and struggle to achieve his final success. Furthermore, recognition of Lewis's personal achievements in the video is given by the presenter praising him as "a hero today" in the video. As a result, students may be convinced of the possibility and reasonableness of self-responsibility for personal development and fulfillment.

In this text, Lewis also uses modal auxiliaries (e.g., Formula One "must" be very powerful) and semi-modals (e.g., he "wanna be" a Formula One driver, his ambition "is to" get to Formula One etc.) to assert his determination to be a Formula One driver. In addition, adverbs such as "really", "definitely", "absolutely" are used by Lewis to emphasize his confidence in being successful through his struggles. In this way, the usage of particular words and certain grammar structures in this text make Lewis's experiences and personal development all the more appealing.

Self-responsibility is advocated as a virtue in neoliberalism with the aim of encouraging individuals to develop their own human capital without placing extra burdens on society, but it is the individuals that shoulder all the responsibilities and risks and not their governments. The embedding of this value is influenced by the Chinese context with an economic paradigm which is characterized by authoritarianism dispersed with neoliberal elements (Harvey, 2005) and the intention of the Chinese government to gradually transfer the responsibility of some burdens on the nation, for example, unemployment, to individuals. In this way, the textbook may intend to help the Chinese government to promote global values which are distinct from the national and traditional ones.

#### 4.4 Flexibility

In *NHCE 2*, the other and third most salient value is flexibility, which is intricately connected with entrepreneurship. Flexibility refers to the beliefs or acts that enable people to be flexible enough to adapt to the ever-changing world and the requirements of the market or institutions (Bori, 2018a). The textbook includes numerous listening exercises on topics which are relevant to flexible working time, for example, "I work part-time in a music store", flexible working locales, for example, "I work from home and then I also work in schools", and flexible working methods in dealing with emergency situations. There is a long video and listening exercise about a new mode of commuting in Britain: working in Britain and living abroad.

The genre of this exercise is also the documentary which may make its content more attractive to students who will be more likely to accept the content and values in the text. The discourse pattern of the video script generally follows the Opportunity-Taking pattern which consists of the steps of Situation, Opportunity, Taking and Result (Hoey, 2001). At the beginning, the presenter briefly presents this new mode of commuting and the situation is that of one of the "lucky" commuters who has adopted this mode. On his way back to his new house in southwest France on a Friday evening, the commuter Justin is relating his experience of browsing on a website where he saw a cheap property in France which resulted in his finally taking this opportunity to live in France. He is more than satisfied with this move which he describes as a dream. The Opportunity-Taking pattern is also frequently deployed in advertisements to persuade people to buy products, for example, to accept the idea of flexible working locales. Thus, this practice and the value of "flexibility" are encouraged. As to the lexico-grammar features in this text, Justin depicts his life before he moves to France by repeatedly using passive forms to express negative feeling, for example, he and his family "were fed up" with the commuting and traffic (Narrog, 2005). By contrast, when he is asked to describe his current life, he compares it to a "dream" and he says he is "pretty happy" now.

Flexibility may potentially legitimize working overtime as people can work anytime and anywhere. Furthermore, the risks of health problems caused by working overtime can be transferred from employers to employees (Bori, 2018a). Similar to the typical neoliberal worker portrayed in international ELT textbooks as depicted by Gray (2012), this textbook also incorporates an image of a worker equipped with the ability to adapt and adjust to any working conditions and the willingness to change jobs despite the challenges of risking stability and lifelong security. The compilation of ELT textbooks usually serves a political function (Cortazzi and Jin, 1999), especially in China where there is tight ideological control. The value of flexibility is highly

recommended in international textbooks because it encourages entrepreneurship which, in turn, requires the individual to be flexible in addressing various unforeseen circumstances, while entrepreneurship is also widely promoted among Chinese youth by the Chinese government at present.

## 5. CONCLUSION

To conclude, the written texts and visual images in the *Chinese New Horizon College English: Listening, Speaking and Viewing 2* published in 2017 embodies a large number of neoliberal values, which may potentially exert profound effects on Chinese college students. The genres of most of the texts in this textbook can blur the boundaries between the worlds depicted in the book and reality, so that students may accept its values, while the discourse patterns and usage of words and grammar are also conducive to the inculcation of these values. Since the contents and publication of textbooks are under the strict surveillance of the Chinese government, the embedding of neoliberal values in the textbooks primarily serves the political and economic functions of the nation which aim to integrate China into globalization, develop its economy and meet the requirements of the era. It is natural for a country's government to integrate certain values in the textbooks to facilitate their governance and at the same time the publishers would also like to integrate various types of values into the textbooks to make students aware of the diversity of the real world; nevertheless, teachers and students should be allowed to accept or reject these particular values. Therefore, it is important to raise awareness of cultural values among Chinese college ELT teachers and students and then a critical pedagogy can be adopted to develop students' critical thinking abilities with regard to the values discussed in this study (Kumaravadivelu, 2008). Thus, it is high time for Chinese ELT teachers to equip themselves with the ability to critically evaluate teaching contents, analyze traditional and western values, assess the ideologies in the textbooks, and to assist their students in fostering such abilities through critical pedagogy.

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