

# Christopher Columbus in Senior High School History Textbooks in Taiwan: A Critical Analysis

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In education, the adoption of textbooks establishes an authoritative means to transmit and deliver official knowledge. Guided by the tenets of sociology of school knowledge and critical theories (e.g., Althusser's ideology and Williams' selective tradition), this study focused on the investigation of representations of the historical figure Christopher Columbus in seven senior high school history textbooks in Taiwan. The research involved an analysis of how the explorer is introduced and whether the textual depictions can cross the border of power relations to provide another story that differs from the mainstream story presented in the United States. Critical discourse analysis was adopted as a theoretical framework as well as an analytic strategy to undertake a three-layered analysis involving linguistic analysis, intertextual analysis, and an analysis of power relations. The research concluded that the Eurocentric historical tradition of assessing Columbus is still favored. The voices of the Native people are muted, and the devastating effects initiated by the explorer and his crewmen through their voyages to the Americas are ignored. Although presenting an extensive detailed version of history is not possible in textbooks, the incorporation of a more complicated illustration with multiple points of view is feasible and essential.

Keywords: Christopher Columbus, critical literacy, critical discourse analysis, ideology, sociology of school knowledge

Received: December 17, 2018; Revised: September 12, 2019; Accepted:  
October 15, 2019

# 臺灣高中歷史教科書裡的克里斯托弗·哥倫布 ——一個批判性的分析

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在教育的範疇裡，教科書的採用建立了一個威權式的方法傳遞官方認可的知識。本研究以學校知識社會學和批判理論為基礎，探究 7 本高中歷史教科書對於歷史人物克里斯托弗·哥倫布的描繪。理論架構與資料分析採用批判論述分析法 (critical discourse analysis)，並將研究資料分別進行語言分析、互文性分析及權力關係的分析。研究發現，臺灣教科書在評論哥倫布時，傾向以歐洲中心論的歷史傳統為主軸，進而忽略了美洲原住民的觀點以及哥倫布一行人抵達美洲後帶給當地的毀滅性影響。因在有限的篇幅裡要完整且詳細的介紹歷史有其困難度，筆者建議納入多元觀點、佐以稍微複雜的描繪方式，提供並訓練學子們多方思考的機會與能力。

關鍵詞：克里斯托弗·哥倫布、批判識讀、批判論述分析法、意識形態、學校知識社會學

收件：2018年12月17日；修改：2019年9月12日；接受：2019年10月15日

## 1. Introduction

For the past decades, researchers and scholars of school knowledge have questioned the relationships between schooling and socioeconomic and political forces. Focusing on the issue of power, critically-oriented researchers have sought to investigate the formations and distributions of the particular values, beliefs, and perspectives of powerful groups (Taxel, 1989). Sociologists of school knowledge view school knowledge as partial and favorable to certain groups of people in society. Through textbooks, the transmission of knowledge finds a place to take part in the process of socialization in which the social function of school knowledge is to cultivate students to accept the legitimacy of institutional arrangements, and the knowledge provides systematic justification for behaviors, attitudes, and viewpoints (Anyon, 1978). In Taiwan, the adoption of textbooks in education establishes an authoritative means to transmit and deliver official knowledge and helps constitute a specific site for socialization. In the process, the operation of social and political meanings plays a role. Economic and political interests then reside in educational beliefs and practices that make daily educational knowledge available with probable outcomes (Anyon, 1978). In the 1980s, when I experienced compulsory education in Taiwan, the representation of Christopher Columbus taught in school contexts impressed school children with his achievements, ambition, and courage in undertaking sea adventures in unknown parts of the world. The European explorer was often portrayed as a paragon introduced to encourage students to identify with his exceptional characteristics. The construction and dissemination of the well known sentence 哥倫布發現新大陸 (*Columbus discovered the New Continent*) functioned as linguistic symbolism popular among school pupils. The available school knowledge taught justified the belief that Columbus was a hero who triumphed in his seemingly impossible mission – ‘discovering the New World.’ In other words, the children of my generation were involved in a process of socialization in which the available dominant representation of the foreign figure was that of a personage well deserving absolute respect and admiration for his ambition and accomplishment.

In the early twenty-first century, the ‘great Columbus’ discourse was challenged when I was pursuing my graduate degrees in the United States.

Jane Yolen's (1992) *Encounter* invites readers to view the historical episode from a Taino boy's perspective and learn how the first landfall of Columbus in the Americas initiated long-lasting effects in the cultures and destiny of the indigenous communities. With a rather Native-centered perspective, *A Coyote Columbus Story* by Thomas King (2007) introduces Columbus as a kidnapper and a profit-oriented businessman who seeks riches in India but accidentally sails to the Americas. Through King's narration, the vaunted heroic and adventurous Columbus is replaced with a clownish foreigner short in decency. In Taiwan, the question of whether the introduction of Columbus as a discoverer is still the dominant discourse in the school knowledge contributes to one of the two motives of the current study. The other motive originates from a result of a cross-cultural investigation examining social representations of world history. Conducted by Liu, Goldstein-Hawes, Hilton, Huang, Gastardo-Conaco, Dresler-Hawke, Pittolo, Hong, Ward, Abraham, Kashima, Kashima, Ohashi, Yuki, and Hidaka in 2005, one of the research survey questions asked university-educated participants from 12 cultures to list seven of the most important events in world history that they would teach in a hypothetical seminar. The result of the data collected reveals that 'discovery of [the] Americas' was the 6th most frequently listed event by the Taiwanese participants (Liu et al., 2005: 177). However, studies related to the analysis of the representations of the historical event and/or the major figure taught in Taiwanese school contexts are scarce. Thus, the present study aims to investigate the textual representation of Christopher Columbus depicted in senior high school History textbooks recently published in Taiwan. Specifically, the research centers on the critical analysis of how Columbus' personal image is shaped, and how his historical encounter with the Americas is narrated in the research data. For the purpose of identifying appropriate research data, I searched the official website of the National Institute for Compilation and Translation. Based on the Senior High School Curriculum Guidelines promulgated in 2011, eight eligible publishers applied for approval for History (Vol. 3) textbooks and successfully received approval license numbers (National Institute for Compilation and Translation, n.d.). Seven of the approved copies have been published and on the market since the 2015 academic year (shown in Table 1).

**Table 1.** Available History (Vol. 3) Textbooks

No.	Publisher	Editor(s)	Publication Date	Approval License No.	Expiry Date
1	Chuan Hwa	Qiu, X.-Y., & Zhang, H.-Z.	March 2014	0915	January 2020
2	Shi Ji Cultural	Yan, Q.-H.	June 2014	0932	June 2020
3	Hanlin	Liu, J.-H., & Kao, M.-S.	August 2014	0894	July 2019
4	Taiyu	Chen, F.-S., & Chen, S.-F.	March 2015	0899	August 2019
5	Kang Si	Sun, R.-Y.	June 2015	0895	July 2019
6	Nan I	Lin, N.-S.	August 2015	0893	June 2019
7	San Min	Gu, W.-Y., & Wang, S.-Z.	August 2015	0886	May 2019

Under the topic European Countries and Overseas Explorations, famous world explorers such as Christopher Columbus, Ferdinand Magellan, and Vasco da Gama are presented in the texts. Given the importance of viewing school knowledge as partial constructions of reality, this study focuses on the investigation of the representation of the historical figure Christopher Columbus depicted in the seven History textbooks. Mainly, the research is concerned with whether the linguistic illustrations provide students a Columbus story that inherits the conventional Eurocentric perspective with a homogeneous depiction or embraces divergent viewpoints. The following research questions will be addressed: How are Christopher Columbus and his first landfall in the Americas introduced in the senior high school History (Vol. 3) textbooks in Taiwan? Whose perspective(s) is embedded in the texts? Whose voice(s) is missing/marginalized? Who benefits from the messages conveyed by the texts?

### *1.1 Ideology, Language, and Cultural Reproduction*

Luke and Woods (2009: 9) argue that ‘Texts are a means for shaping and

reshaping, constructing and “making” possible worlds in particular normative directions with identifiable ideological interests and consequences for individuals and communities.’ However, such knowledge is not static but changes in accordance with the changing of contemporary available ideology and disciplinary knowledge (Luke, de Castell, & Luke, 1989). The present study is informed by the theories of ideology (Althusser, 1971, 1986, 1990), selective tradition (Williams, 1977), and the philosophy of language (Vološinov, 1973). In education, the embodiment of ideology exists in the material ideological apparatuses (i.e., schools) in which the material practice of ideology is governed by the material ritual of textbook production procedures and of obtaining and reading the texts (Althusser, 1971). The material reality and force of textbooks and their given mission to educate pupils exemplify Althusser’s (1990: 84) concept of practical ideologies, defined as,

complex formations which shape notions-representations-images into behavior-conduct-attitude-gestures. The ensemble functions as practical norms that govern the attitude and the concrete positions men adopt towards the real objects and real problems of their social individual existence, and towards their history.

Based on this discussion, people’s ways of thinking and acting are socially defined, and practical ideologies are cultural and embedded in human behaviors with material realities and forces in which ideological meanings permeate our daily objects (Sharp, 1980). To name textbooks as an example, once a printed text is published as reading material specialized for school education, its material presence simultaneously becomes an ideological object specifically designated for depositing officially approved knowledge for studying. This argument reciprocally echoes Vološinov’s (1973: 9) claim that ‘Everything ideological possesses meaning: it represents, depicts, or stands for something lying outside itself.’ In order to make ideological signs communicable, language becomes a mediator through which both speakers and listeners are able to exchange ideas and thoughts. Language is, thus, the key element to understand ideology, and the very basic unit for studying ideology is the word (Sharp, 1980; Vološinov, 1973). Words are neutral and ‘have no intrinsic meaning but are given meaning and content by their structured location within behavioural ideologies’ (Sharp, 1980: 100; Vološinov, 1973).

This is how Vološinov's (1973: 13-14) argument '*The word is the ideological phenomenon par excellence*' can be best interpreted as it is the medium for social interaction and 'can carry out ideological functions of any kind – scientific, aesthetic, ethical, religious.' The interior content of textbooks exhibits ideological information with various forms (e.g., words, images), within which the written form is almost always the must-have element in discussing history. This gives precedence to the study of the written linguistics. The context in which meanings are constructed through social intercourse is of great importance, and the study of language use should be situated in its social and historical context (Sharp, 1980). In the material social process, practical ideologies become an essential constituent because the social relationship is reproduced in other aspects of the society with the reinforcement of the habit of submission (Sharp, 1980). The dialectic relationship between language, ideology, and cultural reproduction is complex but may be identifiable through the analysis of power with the theory and the analytical strategy of critical discourse analysis.

### *1.2 Critical Discourse Analysis*

Critical discourse analysis varies in its different epistemic standpoints. It covers a body of analytic techniques that are used to critically analyze language (including both verbal and written forms) and images with specific concerns about the power and place of the communicative representations available in different social, cultural, and economic circumstances (Luke, 2002). Critical discourse analysis draws primarily from the views of contemporary social and cultural theory of poststructuralism, Bourdieuan sociology, and neoMaxist cultural theory (Luke, 1997). First, it builds on the concept of poststructuralism to argue that 'discourse operates laterally across local institutional sites, and that texts have a constructive function in forming up and shaping human identities and actions' (Luke, 1997: 53). Second, critical discourse analysis is developed from Bourdieuan sociology, which '[assumes] that actual textual practices and interactions with texts become "embodied" forms of "cultural capital" with exchange value in particular social fields' (Luke, 1997: 53). In the third theoretical orientation, critical discourse analysis draws from neoMaxist cultural theory and assumes that discourses are created and circulated

within the domains of political economies, and within the fields, they also create and express ideological interests and the formations and movements of a society (Luke, 1997). The most notable works by Fairclough published 1989 and 1992, van Dijk in 1997, Wodak in 1996, and Gee in 1999 vary in techniques, but they share common ground as the analysis itself involves systematic analytic procedures to study the language used in everyday life and to recognize that the language has relations to power (Luke, 2002).

From a neo-Marxist standpoint, specific worldviews and values are selected and presented in both spoken and written texts (Luke, 1997; Williams, 1977). The phenomenon is theorized as '*a selective tradition...* [in which] certain meanings and practices are selected for emphasis and certain other meanings and practices are neglected or excluded' (Williams, 1977: 115). The power of a selective tradition is that a formulation of the past is employed to validate the present and to designate paths for the future (Williams, 1977). Moreover, the selected representation establishes a 'reading position' (Luke, 1997: 54) that helps the texts interpellate/hail readers into specific subjects (Althusser, 1986; Luke, 1997). Also, the lexical and grammatical structures of texts invite readers to and position them in particular relations of power (Luke, 1997).

Fairclough (1992b: 269) sees critical discourse analysis as a three dimensional examination: to analyze textbooks (and other 'discursive events') 'as texts, as instances of discourse practice, and as instances of social practice.' The aim of such analytical strategy and theory is to understand the relationship between the change of language practices and change of social and cultural processes. Coming from the neoMarxist position believing that text in a broader sense circulated in society serves particular purposes in conveying the ideological interests of powerful groups, Fairclough's (1992a) textual analysis (including linguistic and intertextual analyses) is adopted as an analytic scaffold that allows the examination to focus on both text and context with an emphasis on the issue of ideology and power. Linguistic analysis studies how texts are constructed through selected linguistic systems, and it involves analysis within linguistics (e.g., grammar and vocabulary) and the examination of textual organization (e.g., cohesion among sentences and textual structures) (Fairclough, 1992a). Intertextual analysis focuses on the dis-



play of how texts are ‘particular configurations of conventionalized practices...which are available to text producers and interpreters in particular social circumstances’ (Fairclough, 1992a: 194). Fairclough (1992b) further argues that texts ‘are inherently intertextual, constituted by elements of other texts’ because they are associated with preceding ones (i.e., responding to the earlier texts) and influenced by ‘subsequent texts that they “anticipate”’ (Fairclough, 1992b: 270). The chained relationship constitutes the concept of intertextuality. The significance of this intertextuality lies in the power of texts that ‘can transform prior texts and restructure existing conventions (genres, discourse) to generate new ones,’ and the power is socially restrained and ‘conditional upon relations of power’ (Fairclough, 1992b: 270). The dimensions of intertextuality can be further divided into ‘horizontal intertextual relations,’ referring to relationships ‘between a text and those which precede [*sic*] and follow it in the chain of texts,’ and ‘vertical intertextual relations,’ meaning relations ‘between a text and other texts that constitute its more or less immediate or distant contexts’ (Fairclough, 1992b: 271). In practice, the investigation of horizontal intertextual relations studies discourse or texts published across different eras, whereas the examination of vertical intertextual relations examines a selection of texts published contemporarily. For the purpose of the current study aimed at investigating how contemporary high school history textbooks introduce Columbus, the notion of vertical intertextual relations is adopted to assess the research data with the intention of discussing possible contexts constituted by the school knowledge.

In Taiwan, the formulation of school knowledge, which involves officially mandated curriculum guidelines approved by the Ministry of Education (MOE), sustains Wexler’s (1982: 283) argument that ‘Those who own the knowledge apparatus and control the routines which produce and transform popular knowledge for sale as specialized privately owned official knowledge, increasingly own reality.’ In the process, contemporary social, political, and economic forces may have effects on the final presentation of school knowledge as indicated in, for instance, Loewen’s (2008) critical examination of American high school History textbooks, Lu’s (2014) research into the officially published children’s series Historical Picture of Taiwan, and Su’s (2007) study of the representations of ideological and political issues depicted in elementary social studies textbooks published from the 70’s to the 90’s in

Taiwan. In Loewen's (2008) research, the single-dimensional account focusing on Christopher Columbus's 'discovery' of the Americas reinforces the Europeans' righteousness in dominating America but virtually leaves out the facts of Columbus's primary ambition of exploitation and conquest. The phenomenon of selecting and popularizing favorable versions of history through printed products is also observed in Taiwan. Lu (2014) argues that the government-published history of Taiwan in the Martial Law era is laden with the contemporarily valued ideologies of the Nationalist Party, which features China-centered perspectives and assumptions (e.g., Confucianism, Chinese patriotism). Similarly, Su's (2007) findings echo those of Lu's (2014) as the Nationalist Party utilized the school knowledge as a way to facilitate the party's political and cultural agenda of Sinocisation through, for instance, the indoctrination of the one-China ideology. The results of these studies point to an indissoluble relationship between socio-political, cultural, and economic circumstances and the indoctrination and propagation of the specific ideologies in school knowledge. Since Columbus is regarded as a national hero celebrated and commemorated through the establishment of a federal holiday – Columbus Day – in the United States, examining the teaching of the foreign hero in the Taiwanese context requires discussions of ideological and political contexts to examine the possible nexus of power relations.

## 2. Ideological and Political Context in Taiwan

In her visit to Washington, D.C. on June 3, 2015, President Tsai Ing-Wen delivered an important speech to the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Tsai (2015, para. 23) argued that 'Taiwan and its people have a special political, security, economic, and cultural bond with the United States because of our shared values and shared interests.' Taiwan's intimate relationship and partnership with the United States was not newly erected by the Tsai government as American influence has existed in Taiwanese society since the post-World War II era under different political powers with different objectives. It began in the early post-war era as the Kuomintang (KMT) depended on the military and political support of the United States to uphold the party's international status, and the United States needed Chiang's armed

forces to maintain stability in East Asia (Huang, 1999). While helping the KMT retain its power on the island, the United States also provided shelter for elites and political dissidents who migrated to America seeking stability and a promising future. Meanwhile, the U.S. also welcomed and compensated Taiwanese students pursuing higher education opportunities in American universities when opportunities for advanced studies were inadequate on the island (Huang, 1999). As a consequence, 'These factors facilitated the spread of American culture and planted the seeds of Americanization' in the late twentieth-century (Huang, 1999: 146). Since then, the trend of Americanization has filtered into sectors of the society (Huang, 1999).

According to Tsai and Hsu's (2014) research, the United States is the top foreign country to which, annually, over ten thousand Taiwanese students applied for student visas to study abroad during the research period between 2003 and 2013. This unfading popularity indicates that American culture has deeply influenced international education in Taiwan (Tsai & Hsu, 2014). In 1994, Lee Teng-hui's government (1988-2000) launched an education reform program to support its goals of political democratization: (1) *Taiwanization*, focusing on indigenous understanding that departed from Chinese nationalism, and (2) *Americanization*, 'an attempt to imitate and impose the philosophy of contemporary American education on Taiwan' (Huang, 1999: 145). In the following years, the American influence on Taiwanese education has continued, and the 'Americanization of Taiwan's education system and reforms is by no means accidental, given the close historical, political, military, cultural, and migration ties between the two places' (Lam, Wei, Pan, and Chan, 2002: 216). With regard to national defense, the United States plays the role of a 'central ally and security guarantor' (Clark, 2011: 3) who considers the use of any forms of non-peaceful modes to resolve the issue of Taiwan-China relations a menace to the 'security of the Western Pacific' (Kan, 2010: 1). The influence and ideological pressure of American-ness in the realms of economy, politics, and education should not be underestimated as both the hard (arm sales) and soft (education) powers have played parts in and helped shape the formation of contemporary socio-political and economic circumstances. Whether the research data under examination convey American-ness or are influenced by Americanization is the focal point of discussion of the nexus of power relations. That is, whether the representations

of Columbus published in the Taiwanese context inherit mainstream beliefs popular in America allows the discussion to focus on the relationship between the effects of Americanization and social, political, and economic forces in Taiwan.

### **3. Christopher Columbus in America – Before and After 1992**

In the 19th century, American textbooks identified Christopher Columbus as a national hero. His reputation received the highest appraisals through textual representations composed of partial historical facts, the explorer's imagination, and glorified biographies presenting Columbus as a great man (Bello & Shaver, 2011). While emphases were placed on the historical accounts of the explorer and the continent of Europe, ethnocentrism was detectable with a tendency to present a romantic mythology of Columbus absent the voices of Native Americans (Bello & Shaver, 2011; Crosby, 1993). In accordance with social changes, historical assumptions related to Columbus have been called into question for the past few decades (Bello & Shaver, 2011). In 1992, the Quincentenary of Christopher Columbus' first landfall in the Americas, revisionist criticisms and Native Americans' active protests reached their heyday in the United States (Schuman, Schwartz, & d'Arcy, 2005). The Eurocentric historical tradition of the literary account observed earlier has been replaced with Analytic scholarship at a time when the historiographic style is popular among historians (Crosby, 1993). This new trend expands the old tradition to include discussion of the Columbian voyages with regard to the demographic changes and biological and geographic effects (Bello & Shaver, 2011; Crosby, 1993). Although the once marginalized aspects of the history have started to share a place in the textual presentation, the mythic representation of Columbus featuring his personal ambition, courage, and persistence, and the notion of 'discovery' still overrides, presenting an exalted Columbus in American high school History textbooks (Bello & Shaver, 2011).

The situation is not much different in the domain of American children's literature, in which few changes have been made in the portrayal of the figure (Bigelow, 1992; Desai, 2014; Taxel, 1993). According to Bigelow (1992) in

his analysis of eight Columbus biographies for children published before the Quincentenary, the essence of the Columbus myth is the idea of Columbus' 'discovery' of the Americas. The catastrophic consequences (e.g., enslavement and colonialism) caused by Columbus' voyages are common omissions (Bigelow, 1992). The repetitive usage of certain vocabulary (i.e., discovery), either with care or not, suggests Columbus' sailing west is praiseworthy and readily to be celebrated. It further reveals a Eurocentric perspective in constructing the historical encounter (Bigelow, 1992; Desai, 2014). Similarly, Columbus' adventurous spirit and exploration of the Americas was presented in children's books including both fiction and nonfiction published between 1991 and 1992 (Botelho, Young, & Nappi, 2014). However, the explorer's pride and ambition in terms of mastery, enslavement, and assimilation are selectively excluded in contemporary books published for children.

According to Columbus' journal (Franklin Watts cited in Meltzer, 1992: 4), '[the Indians] would make fine servants... I believe they could easily be made Christians... all the inhabitants could be taken away to Castile, or made slaves on the islands.' His proposals in making the Native Americans Christians, and kidnapping and turning them into servants and slaves (an act of enslavement) are self-documented. Sale (2006: 97) argues that 'It may fairly be called the birth of American slavery,' although it is unclear whether the idea of slavery was consistently prominent in Columbus's mind. In addition, Columbus wrote the following message to Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, who were the royal patrons of Columbus' voyages: 'They bear no arms, and are all unprotected and so very cowardly that a thousand would not face three; so they are fit to be ordered about and made to work' (Franklin Watts cited in Meltzer, 1992: 5). In the passage, Columbus remarked that the Native people were a group of unarmed people easily to be controlled and exploited. His comments suggest belief in their inferiority. Meltzer (1992: 2) argues that the bland acceptance of the conventional version of Columbus' story concentrating on his 'discovery' of the Americas 'makes it easier for the people who wield political power to get away with the platitudes and pieties they feed the public so they can carry out their policies at home and abroad.' Although the late twentieth century saw the emergence of revisionist history and the redirection of American historiography, picture books for younger children are still dominated by the romantic, mythic version of Christopher

Columbus (Desai, 2014). Columbus remains a hero whose ‘conquest and exploitation of the weak’ is forgiven through the literary accounts glorifying his courageous exploration and his achievement in expanding territories for Spain (Desai, 2014: 194).

### 3.1 *Columbus as Legend and the Columbian Legacy*

In the sixteenth century, Columbus’ fame was widespread because the exploits of other navigators of the time were little known to the public and because Columbus was the undisputed originator of European expansion (Sale, 2006). To his successors, Columbus was the template of colonization and exploitation, and he became the symbolic image of visions and fantasy that delineated that expansion (Sale, 2006). How did the Genoa-born Columbus become a nationally honored figure of America? It began with the amiable relationship and close official ties between Spain and England dating back to the late fifteenth century when both nations were allies and engaged in marine activities in the Atlantic (Sale, 2006). Both nations shared something in common: ambition in and capacity for colonization, exploitation, and expansion. With the news that Columbus had found the new continent, the Columbian Legacy gradually infiltrated the English community. Through translated works published in the early sixteenth century, the ideas of the discovery and America were introduced to the English, and *Cristóbal Colón* in Spanish was then translated into the Latinized version Christopher Columbus brought by the English to America (Sale, 2006). The English community learned from Richard Eden’s translation about Columbus’ triumph in discovering a new continent for his royal patrons (Sale, 2006). It was Columbus who made unremitting efforts and overcame obstacles to find the paradise full of fabulous riches and beautiful lands that were ideal for Spanish expansion with extensive immigration. Through Eden’s work, the process of the embedment of the Columbian Legacy in English minds began. Christopher Columbus then became a trailblazer and a spiritual symbol that represented dreams, hope, and resurrection. And, inspired by the Legacy, England in the early seventeenth century dispatched a fleet to the New World, which initiated an age of colonial activity and later transformed the people and the land of North America, where large-scale permanent immigrations and ‘political

and ideological hegemony' were established (Sale, 2006: 269).

## 4. Columbus in the Taiwanese History Textbooks

The very basic elements that constitute a textbook involve linguistic signs and images, and both share equal weight in delivering messages to its audiences. However, examining both forms of knowledge may hinder the attempt to provide detailed and comprehensive discussion of the research data within the page limits. Thus, my research will focus on the analysis of the written language presented in the textbooks to provide a deep and thorough discussion. Fairclough (1992a) seriously objects to the use of translated data for critical discourse analysis as the act of translating one language into another changes the organization of the original texts; as a result, the original form of the research data will remain as the primary text for analysis, and the translated English version will serve as a reference for those who do not read Mandarin.

### 4.1 Linguistic Analysis: Vocabulary, Grammar, and Textual Structures

Certain vocabulary selections convey ideological positions as they help deliver intended messages. That is, 'what is significant about a text is its vocabulary items per se' (Fairclough, 1989: 113). In the case of the representation of Christopher Columbus, Hanlin (Liu & Kao, 2014: 204), Kang Si (Sun, 2015: 231), San Min (Gu & Wang, 2015: 227) and Taiyu (Chen & Chen, 2015: 266) have adopted the verb 發現 (discover) to describe Columbus' first encounter with the Americas. According to the Revised Edition of the National Language Dictionary published by the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2015), the verb is defined as,

發覺前人所未有見過的事物、地方或道理。如：「哥倫布發現新大陸。」  
(to find/perceive things, places, or reasons that the people of former times had not seen, such as 'Columbus discovered the New Continent').

In the definition, 發現 (discover) carries a connotation that recognizes the person who performs the action of *discovery* as the world's first finder or perceiver of something. Thus, the associative meaning of the sample sentence

is the recognition of Columbus' unparalleled status in the history: the finder of the Americas. Bigelow (1989: 636) argues, 'The word itself carries with it a perspective, a bias; it takes sides. "Discovery" is the phrase of the supposed discoverers.' Through the adoption of the verb *discover*, Europeans' domination of the Americas is legitimized both in the Taiwanese official dictionary and the research data because the verb helps construct a seemingly logical cause and effect conclusion – the finder deserved to be the possessor. However, Sale (2006: 70) argues,

If "discovery" means sighting and landing by Europeans, then it is Leif Eirikson who should most likely be honored...If it means simply sighting the land, the honor probably goes to Bjarni Herjolfsson, who reported this land on a trip out from Greenland in 986.

According to the historical record, Columbus was by no means the first to find the fourth continent. But why has the Columbian voyage been so important in world history? First, it was an authorized official mission sponsored by the king and queen of Spain, and the voyage was well documented by the Admiral and by the royal observers who helped establish the authenticity of the record (Sale, 2006). In addition, it established routes for other navigators to sail between the old and the new continents. Furthermore, the Columbian encounter was swiftly disseminated in print throughout the old continent, which had far reaching and long lasting effects (Sale, 2006). Rather than merely finding fishing grounds, the voyage was granted with bigger purposes of colonization and exploitation, and it ultimately helped the despondent and decadent culture to find relief and hope in the new world. Thus, the significance of the Columbian voyage undoubtedly rests on its commencement of the European conquest of the world (Sale, 2006). In the school knowledge, adopting the vocabulary *discover* is perhaps one way to extol Columbus's unprecedented accomplishment in the history, making him the embodiment of conquest, colonization, expansion, and independence.

According to the Revised Manual of Punctuation Marks edited by the National Languages Committee of the Ministry of Education (2008), Mandarin quotation marks 「」 are used to mark direct speech, citations, special denotations, or emphasized words and expressions. Although the punctuation symbols are applied to the verb 「發現」 in San Min's version to specify



either special denotations or emphases, no further explanation or description is available to provide students a full illustration. The inexplicit depiction makes the literary presentation rather vague and the action of discovery the only available linguistic element for students to interpret.

Two popular nouns presented along with the verb 發現 (discover) are 新世界 (new world) and 新大陸 (new continent). According to the online Dictionary (MOE, 2015), 新世界 (new world) refers to ‘未曾見過的新奇境界 (novel realms never seen before).’ Similarly, 新大陸 (new continent): (1) is either ‘比喻新奇的境界或發現 (a metaphor for novel realms or discoveries),’ or (2) refers to ‘美洲 (the Americas)’ (MOE, 2015). However, both definitions carry a Eurocentric perspective as the continent was a novel realm or discovery to the Europeans. Linguistically, the word selections emphasize the Europeans’ experiences but obscure the existence of Native Americans. In the research data, the two nouns have gained popularity. Except for the texts published by Shi Ji Cultural (Yan, 2014) and Nan I (Lin, 2015), either 新大陸 (new continent) or 新世界 (new world) is incorporated into the textbooks. Without quotation marks, the straightforward, confident usage of the nouns in Kang Si’s (Sun, 2015), San Min’s (Gu & Wang, 2015), and Taiyu’s (Chen & Chen, 2015) texts invites readers to recognize the Americas as a new continent or a new world. It further leads to the inauguration of the invader’s dominance of the territory as righteous and legitimate similar to and echoing the adoption of the vocabulary 發現 (discover). Although the application of the quotation marks in Chuan Hwa’s (Qiu & Zhang, 2014) and Hanlin’s (Liu & Kao, 2014) texts cautions readers to interpret the nouns with attention, the lack of additional justification/explanation presents an insufficient historical context. Interpreted from different perspectives, the so-called ‘new world’ or ‘new continent’ was never a new piece of land or a new discovery to the Tainos who Columbus encountered and who arrived at Guanahani (named *San Salvador* by Columbus) around A.D. 900, hundreds of years before the explorer set his foot on the island (Sale, 2006). Although they are known as the Tainos, the popularity and adoption of the taxonomy is seriously underdeveloped and entirely absent from the research data.

In Shi Ji Cultural’s (Yan, 2014: 240) version, ‘當地人 (the locals)’ is used to introduce Columbus’ misconception in taking the Americas for India, which resulted in ‘喚當地人爲「Indians」 (call[ing] the locals ‘Indians’).’ The

original intention of the sentence was to help introduce the origin of the appellation; however, this discursive sketch appears to be problematic as the usage of ‘the locals’ masks the identity of the Native Americans – the Tainos. Without lucid rectification, the Native people still remain a group of unimportant, unidentified subjects. In a very similar fashion, ‘當地土著 (the local aborigines)’ is adopted in Taiyu’s (Chen & Chen, 2015: 266) and Hanlin’s (Liu & Kao, 2014: 204) illustrations. The term 土著 (aborigines) in Mandarin carries a rather negative connotation that suggests the people were, although native, uncivilized. Ideologically, the belittling noun helps establish an imaginary relationship (Althusser, 1971), a racial hierarchy between the dominating civilized colonizers and the dominated uncivilized ‘aborigines.’ The message behind the wordings suggests that the Europeans’ domination of the Americas was an act of salvation in which the newcomers functioned as saviors who brought civilization and sophistication. In terms of the vocabulary choices, the literary accounts resemble that of colonialist discourse, defined as ‘the verbal expression of the West’s will and right to power,’ which ‘aimed at affirming the superiority of a dominant group over another and at justifying that dominance so as to perpetuate it’ (Charles, 1995: 135). According to Sale’s (2006: 97-98) research, the Tainos were not wholly ‘uncivilized’ but were ‘an extensive, populous, and successful people’ whose capability of making delicate and beautiful canoes and hammocks persuaded the invaders to adopt the artifacts. The people were also sophisticated in: (1) integrating technology into their agricultural system, which was productive and wisely adapted to the environmental conditions of the island, (2) building spacious, clean, and functional houses that helped them resist natural disasters – hurricanes, and (3) painting their bodies to prevent sunburn when garmenture was not a better choice to guard against the intense sun (Sale, 2006). Among the seven published textbooks, the representation of the Native Americans is entirely absent in Chuan Hwa’s (Qiu & Zhang, 2014), Kang Si’s (Sun, 2015), and Nan I’s (Lin, 2015) discussions. The absence indicates the story taught is a one-dimensional, Columbus-centered account. Overwhelmingly focusing on the description of the Europeans provides partial, often biased, history, placing it in opposition to the principles of diversity and equality.

Nieto (1999) has urged the investigation of overstatements as they may help disseminate distorted and/or embellished history. After scrutiny, several

exaggerative adjectives found in Taiyu's (Chen & Chen, 2015) text require further examination as they emphasize Columbus' bravery and persistency, and the fierceness of his crewmen. As the narration goes,

哥倫布船隊在漫無邊際的大洋中航行數週，船上許多水手囿於舊觀念的恐懼，數度發生威脅哥倫布返航的舉動；然而哥倫布深信「地圓說」的理論，他以無比堅硬的信心，勸服意圖叛亂的水手，繼續朝西航行，終於在當年 10 月 12 日抵達中美洲 (Columbus's fleet sailed in the endless ocean for several weeks. Confined by the fear of old concepts, many sailors on the ship took the action of threatening Columbus to make him return several times; however, Columbus firmly believed in the theory of "the Spherical Earth," he used his incomparable resolute confidence to persuade the sailors, who intended to rebel, to continue sailing west. Finally, on October 12 of the same year [they] reached Central America). (Chen & Chen, 2015: 266)

Presented as an annotation, Columbus' heroism comes from the romantic depiction narrating his extraordinary and successful leadership in leading the '剽悍難馴 (agile, fierce, and difficult-to-tame)' (Chen & Chen, 2015: 266) sailors in the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean. As defined by the online Dictionary (MOE, 2015), 剽悍 (agile and fierce) means '敏捷勇猛 (swift, brave and fierce),' and 難馴 (difficult to tame) is a short form of '難以馴服 (difficult to tame).' Not threatened by the intractable and unruly sailors, Columbus used his '無比堅硬的信心 (incomparable resolute confidence)' (Chen & Chen, 2015: 266) to convince them to continue the mission of sailing west. In the phrase, 無比 (incomparable) refers to '沒有別的可以比得上 (nothing else can be compared),' and 堅硬 (resolute) is a short form of '堅實強硬 (solid and tough)' (MOE, 2015). According to Sale's (2006: 60) research, the story of the crewmen's 'mutiny' created by the text is by no means close to the original journal entry recorded by Columbus. Instead, Columbus wrote the following sentence to describe his crew, 'Here the people could stand it no longer, and complained [*quexavase*] of the long voyage' (cited in Sale, 2006: 60). The drama added to the History textbook transforms the crewmen's grumble and impatience into 'an outright rebellion' (Sale, 2006: 60), which perhaps manifests Columbus's superior qualities. Based on Taiyu's portrayal, Columbus' great ambition in reaching his anticipated destination is then supported by his solid and tough self-belief that nothing in the world

is able to exceed it. His geographic knowledge is stressed by adopting the phrasing ‘深信「地圓說」的理論 (firmly believed in the theory of “the Spherical Earth”)’ (Chen & Chen, 2015: 266). However, this assessment may be far too flowery and not parallel with the explorer’s geographical concept documented in Sale’s (2006: 176) book, in which

he [Columbus] became convinced that the earth was not perfectly round, but rather in this hemisphere “it has the shape of a pear, which is all very round, except at the stem, where it is very prominent, or that it is as if one had a very round ball, and on one part of it was placed something like a woman’s nipple...and that this part with the stem is the highest and nearest to the sky, and it is beneath the equinoctial line and in this Ocean Sea at the end of the East.”

Using the shape of a woman’s breast to describe the outline of the hemisphere is suggestive at best and further reinforces the overall indication that his belief in the geographic theory was not as solid as the textbook suggests. The mythic description emphasizing his personal character with strong determination and his knowledge of the geographical theory dramatizes and apotheosizes the explorer – Columbus. The exaggerative descriptions also help construct a faultless and indomitable hero whose personal characteristics of boasting, deception, self-serving, and self-pitying (Sale, 2006) are overlooked. The experiential value (Fairclough, 1989: 112), referring to ‘a trace of and a cue to the way in which the text producer’s experience of the natural or social world is represented,’ revealed from the vocabulary words, phrases, and grammatical features (i.e., adopting the rather positive sentences) suggests the inheritance of the time-honored popularity of the pro-European beliefs. In addition, the relational value, meaning ‘a trace of and a cue to the social relationships which are enacted via the text’ (Fairclough, 1989: 112), exemplified through the vocabulary selections and the grammatical features (i.e., using the declarative mode to describe the figure) is aligned with the construction and dissemination of Eurocentrism or Euro-superiority and further sustains the harmonious relationship between Taiwan and the United States.

In terms of textual features, most of the publishers adopted simple, straightforward, concise and comprehensive language to discuss Columbus and the history. Only San Min’s (Gu & Wang, 2015) presentation is relatively

recondite both in its word choices and the formation of the text. The idiomatic phrase ‘遺世獨立 (remained independent and divorced from the affairs of the world)’ (Gu & Wang, 2015: 227) is incorporated to describe the earlier state of the Americas. Its textual structure (i.e., larger-scale structures noted by Fairclough in 1989) starts with the subheading ‘Discovering’ the Ancient Civilization of Central and South America (Gu & Wang, 2015: 227) and ends with the interpretation of the Columbian Exchange (Gu & Wang, 2015: 237). The focus of attention is on the breadth, but not depth, of the history, making Columbus’ story one of the historical episodes to be made available in the textbook. Different from the wide span of the formation is the intense over-emphasis on the Europeans discussed under the subheadings Spain (Qiu & Zhang, 2014: 231), Columbus (Yan, 2014: 240), Discovery of the New Continent (Liu & Kao, 2014: 204), and Navigation Activities of Spain and Other Countries (Chen & Chen, 2015: 266). Following the section heading Discovery of the New Continent (Liu & Kao, 2014: 204), the topic sentence cited below makes clear the main theme from the very beginning:

新大陸是由航海家哥倫布（Christopher Columbus, 1451~1506）發現的。  
(The New Continent was discovered by the navigator Columbus (Christopher Columbus, 1451-1506).)

This introductory remark recognizes Columbus as the discoverer of the Americas. The subject position of ‘新大陸 (the New Continent)’ acknowledges the proper noun to be the topic of the paragraph and the most important message to be taught. The adoption of passive voice in constructing the sentence, which is different from the other six texts using active voice, emphasizes the experience of being discovered and, perhaps, of salvation. To a certain extent, the opening praises Columbus’ discoverer and savior position. The lack of intimate subheadings in Nan I’s (Lin, 2015) and Kang Si’s (Sun, 2015) texts does not circumvent the problematic discussions. The formations of the later six texts revolve mainly around the constructions of the Europeans and the pro-European outcomes usually within one paragraph. This resembles a focused theme-oriented strategy to present a condensed form of the official knowledge that usually is crammed with one-dimensional beliefs. The phenomenon leads to the next level of discussion as specific viewpoints revealed from distinctive textual structures form divergent discourses.

#### 4.2 *Intertextual Analysis: Genre, Discourse, and Intertextuality*

In the discussion of intertextual analysis, Fairclough (1992a: 215) defines genre as ‘a socially ratified type of linguistic activity with specified positions for subjects,’ such as technical manual and interview. Different genres imply their ‘particular processes of producing, distributing and consuming texts’ (Fairclough, 1992b: 284-285) and have specific institutional purposes and are granted with definite missions. Entitled as History textbooks, one of their jobs is to pass on the story of the past with selected historical incidents/events and figures that the authorities of school knowledge believe to be the most important contemporary scholarship to be taught to the guaranteed consumers (i.e., students). The research data under examination conventionally take the form of presenting informational/non-fiction statements. Four texts include annotations along with the main texts to add supplementary information or more detailed descriptions. In Chuan Hwa’s (Qiu & Zhang, 2014) text, annotation ② on page 231 elaborates on the theory of the Spherical Earth, which serves to connect Columbus as a follower of the belief in the main text. In Nan I’s (Lin, 2015) text, the sovereignty of the Americas is assertively awarded to Spain in annotation ⑤, which echoes the major narration of Columbus’ unexpected contribution in expanding colonies for Spain. As it indicates,

哥倫布的航行乃受到西班牙伊莎貝拉女王之支持，因此，新發現的領土自然成為西班牙君主領土的一部分(Columbus’ voyage was supported by Queen Isabella of Spain; therefore, the newly discovered territory, as a matter of course, became a part of the sovereign territory of Spain). (Lin, 2015: 231)

This annotated message frames a sponsor-as-well-deserving-reaper relationship. It educates students regarding the right to claim the ownership of intended articles or properties, leaving the issue of morality as an untouched subject. Furthermore, the selected construction treats the Americas as an orphan region and insinuates the absence of inhabitation and long-established culture before the arrival of the Europeans.

Taiyu’s (Chen & Chen, 2015) annotation ② on page 266 discussed earlier details that dramatized and mythicized Columbus, stressing his personal characteristics and laden with words that exceed that of the main text. So as to provide a more vivacious and engaging illustration, a pinch of storytelling

style is added to the linguistic presentation through cryptic descriptions such as ‘在漫無邊際的大洋中航行 (sailing in the endless ocean)’ (Chen & Chen, 2015: 266). Departing from the Eurocentric perspectives observed in the three textbooks, San Min’s (Gu & Wang, 2015: 227) text annotates the first immigration to the Americas, indicating the earliest arrivals to be people from Asia. However, both the main text and the annotated information fail to provide adequate illustration regarding the issues of, for instance, the correlation between Columbus’ landfall and the cultural and demographic changes that occurred in the Native American communities.

With regard to discourse, Fairclough (1992a: 215) further describes it as ‘a practice of signifying a domain of knowledge or experience from a particular perspective’ (e.g., Democratic discourse and postmodernist discourse). That is, discourse is an exercise in expressing fields of knowledge and belief from specific viewpoints. Being test-oriented, the genre of history usually incorporates chronological tables to list important events/activities with corresponding years to provide students with succinct but must-know knowledge. What information is included, how the knowledge is transcribed, and where the knowledge is presented/located imply the authors’ ideological interests and preferences. In Taiyu’s (Chen & Chen, 2015) version, the event ‘1492 哥倫布發現美洲 (1492 Columbus discovered the Americas)’ is listed and functions as a part of the main text on page 264. A rather similar construction and fashion is observed in Kang Si’s (Sun, 2015: 231) text, indicating ‘1492 年哥倫布發現美洲新大陸 (The year of 1492 Columbus discovered the Americas the New Continent)’. Comparing the two listed events reveals that they share identical grammatical structure and very similar vocabulary selections starting with the name ‘哥倫布 (Columbus)’ who performed the action of the verb ‘發現 (discover).’ The immediate object positions enlist the proper noun ‘美洲 (the Americas)’ to point out the specific territory being discovered. In Kang Si’s version, ‘新大陸 (the New Continent)’ is added to provide a more comprehensive and thorough description. The juxtaposition of the two nouns accentuates the importance of the result of the ‘discovery.’

Besides the chronological tables that incorporate the wordings of Columbus's discovery<sup>1</sup> of the Americas, similar narrations are observed and locate in the main texts of Hanlin's Chapter 5, Section 2; Taiyu's Chapter 5, Section 2; and San Min's Chapter 11, Section 2. Under the subheading (三) 新大陸的發現 (3. Discovery of the New Continent), the first paragraph starts with the sentence, '新大陸是由航海家哥倫布 (Christopher Columbus, 1451~1506) 發現的 (The New Continent was discovered by the navigator Columbus (Christopher Columbus, 1451-1506))' (Liu & Kao, 2014: 204). In Taiyu's Chapter 5, Section 2, the beginning of the fourth paragraph states, '哥倫布發現美洲新大陸之後, 各國展開海上冒險活動 (After Columbus discovered the Americas the New Continent, various countries carried out sea adventures)' (Chen & Chen, 2015: 266). In Chapter 11, Section 2 of San Min's text, the opening sentence of the first paragraph indicates, '在 1492 年哥倫布 (Christopher Columbus, 1451~1506 年) 「發現」新大陸之前, 美洲是一個遺世獨立的世界 (In 1492, before Columbus (Christopher Columbus, 1451-1506) "discovered" the New Continent, the Americas remained independent and divorced from the affairs of the world)' (Gu & Wang, 2015: 227). Whether presented in the chronological tables or the main texts, the dominant discourse adopted in the texts is the discourse of discovery as the perspective revealed from the descriptions centers on the notion of discovery. This finding echoes the viewpoints documented in the historical papers related to the voyages. According to the official Capitulations, the monarchs of Spain authorized Columbus 'to "discover and acquire" certain "Islands and Mainlands"' (cited in Sale, 2006: 25). As for Columbus himself, 'the business of discovery' (cited in Sale, 2006: 8) and 'bypass[ing] no island without taking possession' (cited in Sale, 2006: 93) were recorded in his journal. Replacing 'Islands and Mainlands' with '美洲 (the Americas)' and '新大陸 (the New Continent)' and the omissions of the wording 'acquire' and 'taking possession' in the textbooks further restructures the relationship between Taiwan and the United States to not only maintain but also reassure the 'discovery' as heroic and applausive. In addition to the colonialist discourse discussed in the earlier section, the discourse of discovery observed in the research data also corresponds to the mainstream discourse found in the fields of American

<sup>1</sup> In the analysis of vocabulary, I named the publishers who have adopted the wording *discover/discovery* in the narrations. In this section, in order to provide a thorough discussion of discourse, I list the sentences and phrases where the vocabulary appears.



history textbooks (Bello & Shaver, 2011; Loewen, 2008) and American children's literature (Bigelow, 1992; Desai, 2014; Meltzer, 1992). The ethnocentrism discussed in Bello and Shaver's (2011) and Crosby's (1993) articles is further observed in the research data as the literary accounts focus on the dissemination of the mythological Columbus but eliminate the presence of the Native Americans. Through the texts, intertextuality is crucial in shaping subjects 'and [in] the contribution of changing discursive practices to changes in social identity' (Fairclough, 1992b: 290). The texts also establish 'interpretive positions' for students who are able to use their background knowledge to make coherent connections and interpretation (Fairclough, 1992b: 291). Furthermore, the intertextual relations constructed through ethnocentrism, the colonialist discourse, and the discourse of discovery across different types of the texts and available in the two nations help reproduce the amicable relationship between Taiwan and the foreign state.

With the intended audiences (i.e., pupils) in mind, the authors of the textbooks perform a role similar to that of knowledge 'mediators' (Fairclough, 1992b: 275) who mediate, translate the history and the personality of Columbus into the versions featured with detectable characteristics. Through the critical analyses, the representations of Columbus and the historical encounter discussed in the research data exhibit specific patterns and construct particular contexts. The overemphasis on the introduction of the explorer with a tendency to sometimes exaggerate his personal characteristics through selected vocabulary and phrases delivers an honored, uncontroversial, and sometimes dramatized historical personage. The act of *heroification* (Bickford, 2013) aligns with the goal of making Columbus a universal hero. Though Columbus' intended landfall aimed at reaching India in the East, his unexpected encounter with the Americas is extolled and distorted as an action of valorous discovery presented in nearly half of the research data. The presentation of the selected account echoes Bickford's (2013) notion of *exceptionalism* as the un-expectancy is presented as the representative of the historical encounter. The recurring usage of particular wording and statements such as 'discovery' and 'the New World,' and the reiterated theme focusing on the historical experiences of the Europeans across different texts formulate specific, hegemonic versions of Columbus' story. The observed

repetitions and the alignments between the texts, the American history textbooks and children's literature, and the historical documents further construct a certain form of intertextuality that helps 'constitute [specific] social identities' (Fairclough, 1992b: 272), and the retellings erect and provide a reading position that encourages readers/pupils to identify with the Eurocentric point of view. This linguistic interpellation (Althusser, 1986; Luke, 1997) may further help transplant the linguistic molding of the Eurocentric history into readers' mindsets, helping to construct a Columbian world of reality.

Additionally, the majority of the research data deposit the colonialist discourse and the discourse of discovery, focusing on delivering the perspectives and the history of the white people. Columbus and his people's invader (colonialism), murderer (genocide), and human trafficker (slave trade) status is muffled, and Columbus' primary goal of coveting wealth by expanding his enterprises to the Eastern Hemisphere (Bigelow, 1992) is further neglected. The embodiment of the adventurous and fearless Columbus becomes a one of a kind image available for students to learn about him. The Eurocentric perspectives succeed. Only San Min's text appears to be an exception in its presentation since the content itself discusses both the Europeans and the impacts. Unfortunately, the rather shallow and incomplete description still does not help construct a comprehensive past. Obscuring the devastating effects (e.g., genocide of the Natives), silencing the voices of the Natives, and overlooking Columbus' wealth-oriented ambition in sailing west are shared omissions observed in the research data. To a certain extent, the available school knowledge educates students to praise and appreciate Columbus' triumphs and to commemorate him as the great world explorer and discoverer. In consequence, Williams' (1977) notion of a selective tradition is established as the employment of formulating a favorable, pleasing past about Columbus in the foreign community helps validate white people's hegemonic control over the Natives and maintain white Europeans' supreme status in the world. The intertextual relations and the intertextual similarities further create an ideologically pro-European context in which the relationship between Taiwan and its economic partner and security guardian remains congenial.

## 5. Conclusion

The present research is part of ongoing scholarship in the realm of critical sociology of school knowledge, which is concerned with how and why school knowledge has shaped and been shaped by contemporary social, economic, ideological, and political forces. Similar to the result of Desai's (2014) research, the discourse of the Analytic interpretation has had very minimal effects on Taiwanese scholarship in the second decade of the twenty-first century. Although the representations of Columbus are not entirely without historical validities, it is a matter of selectivity in viewpoints and word choice. The dissemination of the Eurocentric interpretation, on the one hand, might be the result of uncritical adoption of the conventional discourse that has been taught for decades both in Taiwan and in the United States. However, I argue that it is the influence of Americanization in that whatever knowledge has been widely accessible in the United States is implanted in or adopted by Taiwanese scholarship. The European descendants of America benefit from the Eurocentric history of Columbus as the textual discourses help pass down the story from the Europeans' point of view. Alridge (2006: 663) states, 'History should provide students with an understanding of the complexities, contradictions, and nuances in [history]'. The dominance of the simplistic and truncated history of Columbus relinquishes such an opportunity of practice and renounces the mission of equipping students with critical lenses that help them learn of earlier times and connect with the real world. While presenting an extensive version of the history is not possible in textbooks, the incorporation of a more complicated history with multiple points of view is feasible and essential. While it is not necessarily the case that others' readings of the same texts would yield identical interpretations, the value of the current study lies in its critical examination of the school knowledge, which, as demonstrated, deposits particular ideological information from the powerful groups. Research questions related to which text(s) is popularly adopted in school education and how senior high school students interpret and respond to the texts require further investigations with different research designs. In addition, the question of whether History textbooks used for different school levels exhibit similar messages in discussing Columbus' story also demands further exploration.

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