

Dictionaries and ideology: examples from *The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary* (*Xiandai hanyu cidian* 现代汉语词典)

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Abstract:

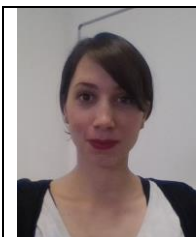
Any dictionary-making process involves choices about the selection of words that can be included in (or excluded from) the list of entries as well as about the nature of their definitions (Crowley 2005: 138). As Fishman pointed out (1995: 29), dictionaries are cultural artifacts and, as such, they always tell us something about the characteristics of their compilers, of their intended users as well as of the society and culture to which they belong. In this sense, dictionaries can also be seen from an ideological perspective, i.e. by considering them as potential means of expressions of the *dominant ideology* (Fairclough 1989) of the specific political, social and cultural context in which the compilation has occurred.

The paper discusses the results of a case study conducted on different editions of *The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary* (*Xiandai hanyu cidian* 现代汉语词典), one of the most authoritative monolingual Chinese dictionaries, which is compiled by the Institute of Linguistics of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. By presenting the analysis of selected entries and definitions, the paper aims at examining if, and to what extent, the several ideological shifts *The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary* has gone through (Lee 2014: 429) reflect the ideological, political, social and cultural changes that have taken place in the People's Republic of China during the nearly forty years of its publication (1978 – 2016).

References

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