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Opening mathematics texts: resisting the seduction.

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Summary: This analysis of the writing in a grade 7 mathematics textbook distinguishes between closed texts and open texts, which acknowledge multiple possibilities. I use tools that have recently been applied in mathematics contexts, focussing on grammatical features that include personal pronouns, modality, and types of imperatives, as well as on accompanying structural elements such as photographs and the number of possibilities presented. I extend this discussion to show how even texts that appear open can seduce readers into feeling dialogue while actually leading them down a narrow path. This phenomenon points to the normalizing power of curriculum. For this analysis and reflection, I draw on mathematics textbook material that I wrote. As a way of modelling an alternative to normalization, I identify myself as a self-critical author and thus invite readers to be critical of their reading and writing of mathematics texts.

Classification: U20 D20

Keywords: textbook development; seduction; positioning; appraisal linguistics; sociocultural issues

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