

# Community-level Language Planning for Chinese Heritage Language Maintenance in the United States

An Chung Cheng  
University of Toledo

## Abstract

This paper investigates the development of Chinese heritage language in the United States from the perspective of language policy and planning. The case study examines the Chinese heritage language maintenance through community-based Chinese schools (CHS), and CHS's relationships with Chinese American community, as well as governments and non-government organizations in China, Taiwan, and the United States. The paper starts with a theoretical discussion on the definition of language policy and planning, and then describes the history and heritage language education of Chinese Americans in the United States. The paper also presents micro-level planning activities initiated by CHSs in the Chinese American community and non-government organizations. Special focus is placed on the interaction between non-government organizations in the US and governmental bodies in Taiwan and mainland China and in the United States. This paper suggests that micro planning of heritage language maintenance is beneficial when initiated in the community, but it can only be developed and sustained within the wider scope of macro-level planning from governments.

**Keywords:** Chinese heritage language, Community-based language programs, heritage language maintenance, language planning, language policy

## Introduction

Chinese immigration to the United States dates back to the nineteenth century, particularly after the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill also known as the California gold rush. As the oldest and largest Asian American community, the Chinese American community has grown rapidly in size and influence since the 1980s. To maintain the culture and language heritage, the number of Chinese heritage programs (also known as Chinese schools or Chinese weekend schools) in the United States has grown steadily as the immigrants from Chinese-speaking areas increased. While Chinese Americans assimilated into American mainstream society, they also strove to keep the language and cultural identity of their homeland. Chinese heritage language schools or programs (CHS hereafter) emerged in light of the needs of Chinese Americans' language and culture maintenance in the local communities. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the roles played by local communities, non-government organizations, and governments in the host and source countries in the maintenance and development of Chinese heritage language and culture in younger generations in the United States from the perspective of language policy and planning. Traditionally, language policy and planning are undertaken by governments on a national scale in a top-down approach. However, when the activities of language planning go across diplomatic boundaries and beyond the governance of a nation, the language planning agent, who has the power to change language policy and planning, will affect language development differently in the new context of language ecology. Under the theoretical framework of language policy and planning (Baldauf, 2006; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997), this paper shows that micro-level language planning activities are initiated and realized in communities, whereas the macro-level planning is essential in providing resources and guidelines. Both micro- and macro-levels of language policy and planning are vital for the continuous development of heritage language and culture and pivotal for building multi-language capacity in the United States.

### Theories of language policy and planning

Language planning is traditionally considered large-scale (macro) planning projects, often undertaken by governments with the purpose of influencing ways of speaking or writing within a society. Language policies are bodies of ideas, laws, regulations, rules, and practices intended to achieve some planned language change (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, p. 3). They are usually associated with the state and with political decision making. Language policy may be in a form of official language planning documents and announcements (e.g. constitutions, legislation, policy statements, or educational directives). It could also be realized in informal statements of intent, or even be left unstated. Language planning, on the other hand, refers to “a set of concrete measures taken within language policy to act on linguistic communication in a community” (Bugarski, 1992 cited in Schiffman, 1996, p. 3). Language planning is about influencing the language behavior of local communities. While most language planning is described as a large-scale activity, Kaplan and Baldauf (1997, p. 52) proposed that language planning occurs at several levels: the macro (government level), the meso (regional level), and the micro (local level). In traditional macro-planning, the fundamental planning is conceptualized and carried out in a top-down approach and language policy decisions are implemented via meso- and micro-level involvement and support. On the other hand, non-governmental organizations and various institutions can be important “actors” in language planning in a bottom-up approach and play a crucial role in the initiation and implementation of such policies. Baldauf (2006) argues:

“micro planning refers to cases where businesses, institutions, groups or individuals hold agency (who has the power to influence change) and create what can be recognized as a language policy and plan to utilize and develop their language resources; one that is not directly the result of some larger macro policy, but is a response to their own needs, their own ‘language problems’, their own requirement for language management.” (p. 155)

The purpose of this paper, then, is to demonstrate a case of micro planning for the Chinese immigrants in the United States, which involves local communities, non-governmental organizations, governments in the context of immigrants' source and host countries. Micro-level planning initiatives complement macro-level language planning while macro-level and micro-level planning coexist to carry out activities. Fishman (1991) has argued that immigrants' heritage language behavior can only be influenced to benefit the minority language if the community itself is motivated to do so. The Chinese heritage language maintenance is supported by governments in Taiwan and in Mainland China, but the activities of the local communities and non-governmental organizations are realized through micro-level language planning activities in the United States. Micro-level language planning is initiated in the community, but can only be understood within the larger scope of macro-level planning. Micro-planning activities in the Chinese American Community cannot be sustained simply by the local communities themselves in the long run. They rely on communities having access to, and links with, expert support for both content and methodology.

Using a framework of language policy and planning, Baldauf (2006) proposed that the practice of explicit and implicit language policy and planning can take the form of any four major types: status planning (about society); corpus planning (about language); language-in-education (acquisition) planning (about learning); and prestige planning (about image). Each of these four types of language planning can be realized under one of two approaches: (1) a policy approach, which emphasizes form (basic language and policy decisions and their implementation), or (2) a cultivation approach, which emphasized function (language development and use). The language planning activities described in this paper fit in large part under the categories of status planning (planning of language use in the society), corpus planning (about language form), and acquisition planning (the planning of the learning of the selected language by the community). These activities aim at the maintenance of mostly Mandarin Chinese in the first generation among younger learners and transmitting the language to the second and third generations. Some of the cultural activities may not directly relate to the use of Chinese

heritage language but aim at strengthening the community spirit and networking through traditional festivals and holiday celebrations. The maintenance of Chinese heritage language is seen by the community as a crucial tool in identity maintenance and inheritance of traditional culture. The following is an outline of the paper: the first section reviews the waves of Chinese immigrants to the United States and the Chinese heritage language maintenance in the community, the second section examines the micro-planning in the United States, the third section discusses the macro-planning in the context of host and source countries, and final section discusses micro-level language planning initiatives in the Chinese community of the United States.

### **Chinese in the United States and Chinese heritage education**

The term Chinese Americans, in this paper, refers to people who were born in Chinese speaking areas (mostly in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and East and Southeast Asia) residing in the United States, or people born in the United States with at least one parent of Chinese origin. The term of Chinese heritage speakers refers to those who have access to Chinese speech community, either listening or speaking Chinese heritage language(s) (Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese, Southern Min/Taiwanese, or other dialects spoken in China) at home but use English in other domains.

There were few Chinese immigrants in America before 1848 and they were mainly merchants, students, and sailors. In general, Chinese immigrants came to the US in three major waves that corresponded to and reflected Chinese history and US immigration laws. These waves were the migration after the California Gold Rush in the mid-1880s, after the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act in 1965, and after 1980.

The first wave of Chinese arrived in the US was mostly male laborers from southern China, fleeing from a civil war known as the Taiping Rebellion, for the California Gold Rush between 1848 and 1860, and for the first transcontinental railway construction between 1860 and 1870 (Takaki, 1989; Tuan, 1998). At the time the Chinese were treated far worse than most other ethnic minorities, as evident in a series of discriminatory laws, e.g. the Nationality Act of 1870, the

Page Law of 1875, the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, and the Immigration Act of 1924 (Chen, 1993; Hing, 1993; Lyman, 1974; Sung, 1967). In particular, the Chinese Exclusion Act passed by Congress in 1882 prohibited skilled and unskilled Chinese laborers from entering the United States for ten years and was the first Federal law that excluded a single group of people on the basis of race. This law was then extended by the Geary Act in 1892. The Chinese who approached American society then were sojourner strangers, who clung to their Chinese culture and ethnic group and remained unassimilated into mainstream American society, which was largely because of the hostile environment, cultural differences, and racial discrimination (Chen, 1993; Chin, 1996). Chinese Americans were segregated from the mainstream society and their children were not allowed to attend public schools outside of Chinatowns before 1884 (Yung, 1995). The offspring of Chinese immigrants learned Chinese to maintain Chinese language skills that would be needed for continuing education upon returning to China, to survive racial discrimination, and to adjust to life in Chinatowns. Many early Community-based Chinese schools were concentrated in Chinatowns, particularly in the San Francisco area before the 1880s (Lai, 2000; Wang, 1982). As stated by Iris Chang (2003), "Chinese-language schools represented the hope and efforts of first-wave immigrant parents' eager to maintain in their American-born children some vestige of their Chinese heritage" (p.182). After WWII, more Chinese heritage schools were established outside of Chinatowns in suburban areas by religious groups, local civic groups, and groups of parents, but the instructional hours were reduced by half, to only 2-3 hour weekend classes, due to the distance between Chinese schools and homes of Chinese Americans. Nevertheless, these schools were few in number compared to the CHSs, which ran on a daily basis, in Chinatowns (Lai, 2001). After WWII, the number of Chinese schools was reduced to a record low, due to the changing attitudes of immigrants toward Chinese language and the increasing job opportunities in the U.S. (Chen, 2009).

With the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act in 1965, the second wave of immigration presented more diverse demographics from different Chinese-speaking areas. The immigration laws passed in 1970 and 1976 gave preference to those

with professional skills or those seeking family reunification, so well-educated intellectuals, highly skilled workers, and professionals from Taiwan and Hong Kong made up the second wave of Chinese immigration (Espiritu, 1997; Hing, 1993; Takaki, 1989). In addition to relaxed US immigration laws, political situations such as the Chinese Communist Revolution in 1949, the replacement of People's Republic of China (PRC) over Republic of China (ROC, Taiwan) in the United Nations in 1971, and the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, all contributed to the influx of Chinese into the United States. There was no immigration from mainland China from 1949 to 1977 due to restrictions on emigration in China. There was a large influx of refugees from Southeast Asia, many of them ethnic Chinese, who arrived from 1974 to 1984 as a result of the US policy in the area (Wong, 1988). The increasingly heterogeneous first- and second-generation Chinese Americans did not cluster in old urban Chinatown, but spread into suburban areas. The demographic traits of these immigrants could be characterized as young, educated, and entrepreneurial (Chen, 2006). A new trend of cultural assimilation into mainstream American culture among the new immigrants, coupled with the pressure to achieve scholastic excellence in English-language schools at the expense of Chinese lessons, caused the operation of Chinese schools to gradually shift to weekend classes as an alternative to daily ones after the 1960s. By the 1970s, many parents' attitudes regarding sending children to CHSs changed because their main objective had become acquiring awareness of their ancestral heritage. Due to the movement of Chinese families to suburban areas, the number of schools continued to multiply across the United States (Li, 1997).

The third wave of immigration started around the 1980s. While the United States recognized the People's Republic of China (PRC, mainland China) and broke diplomatic relations with Republic of China in Taiwan in 1978, the Taiwan Relations Act in 1979 gave Taiwan and China separate immigration quotas. With the open door policy, an increased number of students from China arrived at graduate schools and found employment after graduation in the US. There was also a steady stream of working-class Chinese, both legal and illegal, who arrived in the U.S. from China. Under British rule, Hong Kong was considered a separate jurisdiction for the purpose of

immigration, and this status continued after the handover in 1997 as a result of the Immigration Act of 1990. The fact that the United States maintained separate quotas for Mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, aided the increase of Chinese immigrants and Chinese American communities. The more affluent people emigrating from Hong Kong and Taiwan have created modern versions of Chinatowns such as the “Little Taipei” in Monterey Park (California), Flushing (Queens, New York), or in many suburbs in California and New Jersey in the 1980s (Cao & Novas, 1996; Hung, 2007; Takaki, 1989). The last group includes professionals, students, and their families who came from China around and after the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989 (Zweig & Chen, 1995). Ethnic Chinese from China started to outnumber those from Taiwan and other areas in the 1990s. In terms of language use, because of the influx of more diverse Chinese immigrants in the 70s, Mandarin Chinese gradually superseded Cantonese (a major language of communication in the Chinese American community since the 19<sup>th</sup> century) as the predominant language of instruction in the Chinese heritage programs in the 1980s. Most immigrants from Taiwan clustered around southern California and new Chinese heritage programs were established each year since 1971 to the peak time in the 1990s (Chen, 2009). While the number of Chinese heritage programs with children of parents from Taiwan decreased gradually after the 1990s, the number of Chinese heritage programs with children from mainland China continues to grow as new immigrants continue arriving in the United States.

Currently, Chinese American immigrants are the fourth-largest immigrant group in the United States after Mexican, Filipino, and Indian immigrants. The Chinese immigrant population grew rapidly during the 1990s and 2000s. Today there are almost as many native-born US citizens who claim Chinese ancestry as there are Chinese immigrants. In 2010, there were 3,538,407 Chinese Americans, which constitutes 1.2 percent of the entire U.S. population and 22.2 percent of Asian Americans. With regard to language use, of the 281 million people who were five years and older in the United States in 2007, 55.4 million, or 19.7 percent, reported speaking a language other than English at home. After English and Spanish, Chinese was the language most commonly spoken at home.

From 1980 to 2007, the percentage of speakers of Chinese (age five and older) grew by 290 percent, at nearly 2.46 million. Chinese Americans are overwhelmingly bilingual; 83.4 percent speak more than one language at home (Cantonese, Mandarin, Taiwanese, or other languages) (U.S. Census, 2010). There are currently over 1,000 Chinese heritage programs across the US, with concentration in major metropolitan cities such as Los Angeles, New York City/Northeast New Jersey, and San Francisco. (Cheng, 2011)

### **Grass-root micro-planning in the United States**

This section describes some of the main organizations as ‘actors’ of micro-planning and some of the main activities as micro-planning initiatives. The central micro-level language planning agents for the Chinese Americans in the United States are the National Council of Associations of Chinese Language Schools (NCACLS) and the Chinese School Association in the United States (CSAUS). These two are voluntary, non-profit organizations operating at national level. The former maintains a working relationship with Taiwan, the latter with mainland China. The NCACLS, established on April 16th, 1994, is composed of 15 regional associations within or across states, under which individual community-based Chinese heritage schools (CHS) participate as member schools. NCACLS was led by educators who strongly favored teaching traditional characters and using phonetic symbols. Thus CHSs advocating simplified characters and Hanyu Pinyin decided to organize a separate group. In May 1994, the same year NCACLS was founded, representatives from five schools met in Washington, D.C. to establish the Chinese School Association in the United States (CSAUS) to promote the Chinese language using simplified characters and Hanyu Pinyin Romanization (CSAUS, 2008). In spite of different preferences of Chinese written scripts, both organizations share similar goals of promoting Chinese language and culture in the Chinese American community and society in the United States.

NCACLS has about 400 CHSs with approximately 70,000 students in 2009 (Lu, 2010). Although some regional associations had organized cultural events and activities prior to 1994, the

establishment of the national organization enabled them to consolidate their resources and share experiences within a larger network. These CHSs, favoring the instruction of traditional Chinese characters, were established after WWII and were most numerous in the U. S. before the 1990s. The NCACLS initiated short- and long-term language planning activities for member regional associations across the United States by publishing newsletters, organizing annual national conferences in major cities and an annual symposium at the Convention of the American Council on Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), and coordinating teacher professional development workshops, student summer camps, SAT II practice tests, culture knowledge contests, as well as major cultural and social events. With the support from the Overseas Compatriot Affairs Commission in Taiwan, NCACLS has led the editorial team to design and develop textbook series and supplementary materials, Mei Zhou Hua Yu, targeted at Chinese heritage speakers in the United States (Chang, 2006; Mao, 2011).

The other national organization, the Chinese School Association in the United States (CSAUS), was established on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1994. It has about 400 CHSs as members with approximately 100,000 students in 2009. Unlike OCACLS, CSAUS has no member of regional associations; individual Chinese heritage schools belong to the CSAUS directly. The CSAUS publishes newsletters twice a year, holds biannual conferences for school members across 43 states since 1995, and organizes student roots-seeking summer camp trips to China since 2002. It has coordinated national-level culture contests and standardized language tests such as China's Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi, known as HSK or the Chinese Proficiency Test, and Youth Chinese Test (YCT), as well as social and cultural events (CSAUS, 2008; CSAUS Newsletter, 2011). With support from the Chinese government, the CSAUS initiated and helped edit a Chinese textbook series "Zhong Wen/Chinese," a widely used textbook in Chinese heritage schools, published by Jinan University in China (CSAUS, 2008).

The crucial role that the NCACLS and CASUS play is representing the Chinese heritage community's interests at all official levels. For instance, numerous school districts have approved the high school foreign language credits be awarded to students of CHSs

since 1986 (Chen, 1996; Lai, 2001; Liu, 1996). The NCACLS and CASUS, with support from source countries, lobbied for the addition of a Chinese language and culture subject to the Advance Placement test (commonly known as AP Chinese), which started in 2007. The input from these national organizations regarding Chinese language education was sought out by government officers in the United States and overseas.

### **Government and Non-government Institutions in the Source Countries**

Micro-level planning initiatives involve maintaining a close cooperation with several government bodies and non-government organizations in source countries, ROC in Taiwan and PRC. One of these key government organizations is the Taiwan Overseas Compatriot Affairs Commission (OCAC). Because the founding father of the Republic of China, which overthrew the Qing Dynasty in 1911, was a Chinese American, overseas Chinese (also Chinese diaspora) have always been considered a wealth of resource and support for the Chinese homeland. In October 1926, considering the importance of overseas Chinese affairs, the Kuomintang government then established the "Overseas Compatriot Affairs Commission" as the single administrative agency in the government for the welfare of Chinese overseas. After the communist party took over China in 1949 and the Kuomintang government moved to Taiwan, overseas Chinese became even more important for the government in Taiwan to form allies and international support. In 1971, the People's Republic of China replaced the Republic of China in the United Nations; Taiwan became more isolated from the international communities. After the United States recognized the People's Republic of China (PRC, mainland China) and broke diplomatic relations with the Republic of China in Taiwan in 1978, the OCAC shifted its focus from Asia to the United States in order to continue Taiwan's relationship with the U.S. through non-diplomatic relationships. With the increase of Taiwanese immigrants to the US, due to the unstable political situation in Taiwan, the OCAC has assisted the CHSs by subsidizing textbooks teaching traditional Chinese characters, and by sending master teachers to conduct

training workshops since the 1980s (Hong, 2006). The OCAC has also hosted teacher training workshops on e-learning since 1990, established twelve “Overseas Chinese Culture Center” in major cities in the US since 1985, hosted the “E-learning Huayu of Taiwan (<http://www.huayuworld.org>),” an online resources for Chinese teaching and learning center. It has sponsored the publication of instructional materials for overseas Chinese, international conferences on Overseas Chinese and Chinese language education, Youth Chinese language and culture seminars in Taiwan since 1970 as well as subsidizing CHS summer camps in the United States since 1985 (Chang, 2006; Li, 1997).

Not until the 1970s did the government of the People’s Republic of China reconsider the role of overseas Chinese in economic and cultural exchange in international affairs. The central governmental body “Overseas Chinese Affairs of State Council,” established in 1978, is an administrative office which assists the Premier in handling overseas Chinese affairs for forming liaisons with Chinese residing abroad or returning to China. Under the state office, there are thirty “Municipal Government Offices for Overseas Nationals” in major cities across China (Overseas Chinese Affairs of State Council, n.d.). Since the 1990s, they have engaged more actively in supporting the development of instructional materials for Chinese heritage speakers, Chinese teacher training workshops, and organizing Roots-seeking Summer Camps in China for the younger generation of Overseas Chinese, hosting the Overseas Chinese Language and Culture Education Online (<http://www.hwjyw.com/>), selecting Models Chinese Heritage Schools, Outstanding teachers and personnel in promoting Chinese language education, and sponsoring Chinese language and culture contests (Overseas Chinese Language and Culture Education Online, n.d.) Though the governmental language policy and planning for Chinese heritage language maintenance started 20 years later than that of Taiwan, the scope and support for Chinese heritage language education is unprecedented (Kao, Kao & Kao, 2010; Rao, 2010).

Micro-planning also involves building contacts with non-government organizations. Such organizations include the World Chinese Language Association (WCLA), established in 1972 in Taiwan, with the goals of promoting research on Chinese language

and Chinese language teaching and encouraging scholarly exchange of Chinese language education in the world. With 2000 members around the globe, the WCLA has provided pivotal services in providing Chinese language teacher training workshops since 1977. These services also include the publication of a Chinese teaching magazine, Chinese teaching research journal, Chinese learning textbooks, and books on Chinese language teaching for professional development, and organizing the triennial International Conference on Teaching Chinese as a Second Language since 1984 (World Chinese Language Association, n.d.). Another major non-government organization in China is the “China Overseas Exchange Association” (COEA), which was established in 1990, aiming at connecting overseas Chinese and their organizations and promoting culture exchange and collaboration in trade, business, technology, education, culture, news media, travel, sports and social welfare. Collaborating with governmental organizations in China, the COEA has served as a bridge between governmental organizations in China and the Chinese School Association in the United States with a wealth of resources and supports for the micro-planning activities in the U.S.

### **Acquisition Planning: Chinese schools in the United States**

Micro-level language planning, particularly acquisition planning plays a crucial role in ensuring that new immigrants, and second and third generation Chinese American children have access to Chinese courses in the United States.

Chinese American children have two options for studying Chinese in the United States. One is in the mainstream educational system from Kindergarten to grade twelve. Because of insufficient numbers of Chinese language programs in public elementary schools, such programs are usually found in private schools, and few immersion or bilingual schools. In spite of the increasing number of Chinese programs at high school level, the Chinese program goals in the mainstream education sector do not generally consider the special linguistic needs of Chinese heritage speakers. The second option of the Chinese American Children is community-based Chinese heritage schools, which are generally funded by religious groups, local civic

groups, and groups of parents, the majority of whom are suburbanites, scientists and other educated professionals. School administrators and teachers are typically volunteers with little or limited training or preparation in curriculum and instruction in the Chinese language. These programs are generally of three types: weekend, after-school, and summer, but the majority of them are weekend programs, which last mostly two or three hours per week and the classes include not only language but also culture and, sometimes, tutorial lessons in English, mathematics, music or arts (Wang, 1996). These Chinese teachers often do not fully understand the different culture values and classroom management styles of the American schools to which the students of CHSs are accustomed (Li, 2010; Schrier, 2009). Thus, students in the CHSs often are not highly motivated and they attend CHSs for the sake of their parents, rather than intrinsic motivation (Li, 2010; Zhang, 2009; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). In the same time, the CHSs often serve as hub of social and cultural activities of local Chinese American communities, particularly for new immigrants who wish to remain connected with their cultural heritage and socialized with people from the same ethnic background. The development of CHSs is often related to the demographic evolution of local Chinese American communities (Cheng, 2010).

The CHSs associated with the National Council of Associations of Chinese Language Schools (NCACLS) have strongly favored teaching traditional characters and have generally adopted textbooks and materials designed by scholars in Taiwan. Because of the decline in the number of age-school children from parents of Taiwan and the use of simplified Chinese characters in the Chinese programs in public school system, the number of students learning traditional Chinese characters has declined in recent years, as evident in the decreasing number of CHS schools associated with NCACLS over the past 10 years (Lu, 2010). Many of these CHSs have started to teach simplified Chinese characters as well. On the other hand, the Chinese School Association in the United States (CSAUS), typically connected with the People's Republic of China, generally use textbooks, designed and published in China, with simplified characters (Chao, 1997). While the instructional materials produced overseas are often provided free or at a minimal cost, which is ideal

for CHSs on a tight budget, other problems are present. For example, the theme or subject matter of many lessons differs from the students' perspectives and daily experiences in North America. Other lessons are too elementary and are not suited to the age or mental development of Chinese American teenagers (Lai, 2004). Some of the exciting instructional materials created overseas may not help Chinese American students better understand Chinese culture as it exists in the American context. Nevertheless, recent publications of Chinese textbook series and supplementary materials of Mei Zhou Hua Yu and Zhong Wen, successfully exemplified the collaboration between the national Chinese heritage school organizations, NCSACLS and CSAUS, and governmental and non-governmental organizations in source countries. While additional materials available for Chinese language education exist, a systematic approach to evaluating appropriate materials for heritage Chinese learners suitable to meet the needs of various age groups is in strong demand.

Traditionally, students in community-based CHSs are from Chinese heritage families. However, there have been increasing numbers of students from typical English-speaking families attending local Chinese community schools in recent years due to the lack of Chinese language programs in existing formal school systems (Wang, 2007). CHSs with enough student enrollments from heritage families and families with adopted children from China could create different tracks for students learning Chinese as heritage speakers and for students learning Chinese as a foreign language. However, the diverse student backgrounds in the CHSs often present a consistent challenge for teachers and administrators for smaller CHSs where all students are mixed in one class. In addition, the continuity of these schools is largely dependent on the number of Chinese American children in the local community and their level of motivation to maintain or learn Chinese. Given the decreasing immigrants from Taiwan and larger numbers of Chinese programs teaching simplified Chinese characters in the Chinese programs of K-12 mainstream schools, recruiting new students to these classes teaching traditional Chinese characters is one of the challenges and main micro-planning activities that the community undertakes.

One of the recurring problems of the quality of Chinese heritage schools is the qualification of Chinese teachers, resulting

from the nature of part-time teaching staff in community-based programs. While many heritage language teachers are typically native Chinese parents and professionals in other disciplines, or graduate students who need teaching experience, they often have little experience or training in the pedagogy of foreign languages or Chinese instruction and curriculum. Furthermore, isolated within their local community, they are often not connected to language resources. Given the situation in which teachers of Chinese community schools have become the pool of human resources for the K-12 formal school system, a dialogue between educators in both heritage sector and the mainstream education sector is much needed. Some CHSs have actively sought out collaborative opportunities with educators in the mainstream education system. The STARTALK program, a presidential Initiative started in 2007 to fund summer programs in critical languages in the US, has provided a new venue for teachers in CHSs in professional development and in building dialogues with educators in the mainstream. Several regional associations of Chinese heritage schools, in collaboration with local school districts and universities, have been awarded with grants in organizing student programs and teacher training programs in the summer since 2007. With federal funding, the CHSs such as Consortium of Illinois Language Schools, Consortium of Texas Chinese Language Institutes, Delaware Valley Chinese School, Southern California Council of Chinese Schools, Consortium of Chinese Heritage Language Schools in Southern California, and Association of Chinese Schools successfully initiated and implemented micro-planning activities to enhance CHS teacher quality and to promote Chinese language and culture not only in the Chinese American community, but also in general public education.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

From the various organizations and activities described in the previous sections, it is clear that micro-planning in the Chinese American community is diverse and has demonstrated a unique case of language planning which operates on multiple levels: involving local communities, government, and non-government organizations both in the host country (the United States) and in the source

countries (Taiwan and PRC). The major goals of the micro-planning activities are to maintain Chinese language and culture heritage in the Chinese American community and promote language and culture exchange in national and international domains, even though the language learning needs and opportunities of the community are often not met by the mainstream education system of the host country. From the networking activities that the community has initiated, the motivation to transmit Chinese culture and language to the next generations will continue to be strong for several decades.

Chinese Americans have a large number of community-based Chinese heritage schools which help them preserve their culture and language heritage. Despite the Chinese Americans' relative demographic weaknesses – such as the numerical weakness as ethnic minorities in the U.S. and geographic dispersion, particularly in regions other than coastal areas – the community has maintained a variety of activities through various government and non-government organizations in both host country and source countries. Language policies do not necessarily bring the desired effects on the linguistic environment of migrant communities. It is essential that the Chinese American community take initiatives for the maintenance and development of the cultural and linguistic heritage, although differences exist among individual CHSs. This is especially true for some CHSs with decreasing student enrollment and shifts of instruction in Chinese written scripts. In the context of national security in the U. S. and rising demands for professional functional speakers in the global economy, it is clear that macro-planning and government level language policy need to be supported by such micro-planning in order to tap into the rich linguistic resources of heritage language communities.

From the case of the micro-planning activities in the Chinese American community, it is also crucial that the community has access to and connect with expert support for both content and methodology. In this regard, the development of instructional materials, teacher training workshops and conferences, as well as social/cultural events organized by regional CHS associations and national organizations (NCACLS, and CSAUS) are exemplary. These micro-planning activities address the need to articulate the desired outcomes of the Chinese heritage education, the need for shared

thinking, planning and action in order to cultivate the future of the Chinese American community in the United States. Some initiatives have come to fruitful results in preserving cultural traditions, building Chinese language capacity, and creating connections and opportunities for personal enrichment and career advancement. While the Chinese American community as a whole is successful in addressing various language needs, the planning activities seem somewhat loose at the local community level, particularly in smaller Chinese heritage schools. There is no explicit and consistent policy which describes language planning goals regarding curriculum and instruction in many small CHSs. Attracting young members of the community to the various community-based CHSs, managing programs on a tight budget and maintaining high quality teaching staff and curriculum are still found to be challenging tasks for language planners. Still, the numerous initiatives on the micro level are to some extent guided by the national and regional level networking, mainly through two CHS national non-government organizations.

As shown earlier, both the source countries and the host country have an essential part to play in micro-planning activities. While the support from source countries seems to be more accessible than that from the host country in the case of the Chinese American community, it is evident that language policy and macro-planning at government level create opportunities and provide resources and support for the implementation of activities in maintaining heritage language and culture in local community-based Chinese heritage schools. Non-government organizations also play a critical role in this dynamic process by identifying common needs, planning activities, linking various groups, and reacting to constant changes in the Chinese heritage schools and local communities. Clearly, the case of Chinese American community in language planning can provide a useful example for other critical language communities. In spite of the success of STARTALK initiatives in recent years, consistent national macro-level language policy and diverse planning activities are still much needed for sustainable and lasting effects on heritage language maintenance in the United States.

### **Acknowledgements**

The author wishes to thank the support of the International Research and Studies Program Grant from the US Department of Education and the Faculty Research Grant for Taiwan Studies from the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China.

## References

- Baldauf, Jr, R.B. (2006 ). Rearticulating the case for micro language planning in a language ecology context, *Current Issues in Language Planning*, p.147-170.
- Cao, I. & Novas, H. (1996). *Everything you need to know about Asian American history*. New York: Plume/Penguin Books.
- Chang, I. (2003). *The Chinese in America: A narrative history*. New York, N.Y.: Viking Adult.
- Chang, L. M. (2006). Quán qiú huà yǔ xué xí rè cháo yǔ qiáo jiào fā zhǎn [Global interests in learning Chinese language and the development of Chinese heritage education], *yán xí zǐ xùn (Inservice Education Bulletin)*, 23(2), 9-15.
- Chen, C.-Y. (1993). A century of Chinese discrimination and exclusion in the United States 1985-1965, *Chung-Hsing Journal of History (also xīng dà lì shǐ xué bào)*, 3, 187-216.
- Chen, C.-Y. (2006).. 1965 Nián hòu měi guó huá rén shè huì jīng yīng jiē céng zhī yán jiū [The Research Chinese-American Elite Class after 1965], *Chung-Hsing Journal of History (also xīng dà lì shǐ xué bào)*, 207-206.
- Chen, C.-Y. (2009) *Měi guó dà luò shā jī de ōu zhōng wén xué xiào zhī tàn tǎo [Chinese Schools in Greater Los Angeles Area—A Case Study of Los Angeles County and Orange County, 1965-2005]*, Unpublished doctoral dissertation, National Chung Hsing University, Taiwan.
- Chen, R. S. (1996). Obtaining credit from school districts. In X. Wang (Ed.), *A voice from within: A case study of Chinese heritage community language schools in the United States* (pp.51-58). Washington, D.C.: The National Foreign Language Center.

- Cheng, A. C. (2011, April). Current State of Chinese Heritage Programs in the US, presented at the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages, Madison, WI.
- Cheng, Y.-Y. (2010). *Zài dì shì yě xià de měi nán xiū shì dùn qū tái xì zhōng wén xué xiào fā zhǎn yǔ xiàn kuàng* [Local Perspective on the Development of Taiwanese-Based Chinese Schools in Houston, U.S.A] (Unpublished master's thesis). Taiwan National Normal University, Taipei, Taiwan.
- Chin, G. J. (1996). The Civil Rights Revolution Comes to Immigration Law: A New Look at the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. *North Carolina Law Review* 75, 273. Retrieved from: SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1121504>
- Chinese School Association in the United States. (2008, February 03). Introduction of Chinese School Association in the United States. Retrieved from: [http://www.csaus.org/csaus15/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=94:introduction-of-chinese-school-association-in-the-united-states&catid=43:introduction-&Itemid=129](http://www.csaus.org/csaus15/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=94:introduction-of-chinese-school-association-in-the-united-states&catid=43:introduction-&Itemid=129)
- Chinn, T. W., (ed.). (1969). *A history of the Chinese in California: A syllabus*. San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society of America.
- Chu, Yuan-Chi. (2006). *Chinese Schools in Greater Los Angeles Area—A Case Study of Los Angeles County and Orange County (1965-2005)* (Unpublished master's thesis). National Chung-Hsing University, Taiwan.
- Espiritu, Y. L. (1997). *Asian American women and men*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Fishman, J. A. (1991). *Reversing language shift: Theoretical and empirical foundations of assistance to threatened languages*. Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

- Kao, T.-Y, Kao, H., & Kao, P.-H., (2000). Hǎi wài huà wén jiào yù de huí gù yǔ zhǎn wàng [The Review and Prediction of Overseas Chinese Education], *Zhong Yuan Hua Yu Wen Xiao Bao (Chung Yuan Journal of Teaching Chinese as a Second Language)* 6, 181-208.
- Hing, B. (1993). *Making and remaking Asian America through immigration policy, 1850–1990*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Hong, Y. R. (2006). Měi guó Tái wān yí mǐn zhèng cè de xiàn zhuàng [Current status of Taiwanese American Immigration Policy], *Zhōng Xīng Shǐ Xué [Zhong Xing Journal of History]*, 12: 153-196.
- Hung, Y.-J. (2007). *Cóng jiā zhōu méng tè lì gōng yuán shì dào shēng gě bó gǔ huà rén yí mǐn shè qū zhī xíng sù (1965~2006)* [Migration, Evolution, and Identification: The Shaping Chinese Immigrant Community from Monterey Park to San Gabriel Valley, California (1965~2006)] (Unpublished master's thesis). National Chung Hsing University, Taiwan.
- Kaplan, R.B. and Baldauf, Jr, R.B. (1997) *Language planning from practice to theory*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Lai, H. M. (2000). Retention of the Chinese heritage. *Chinese America: History and Perspective*, 10-30.
- Lai, H. M. (2001). Retention of the Chinese heritage, Part II. *Chinese America: History and Perspective*,
- Lai, H. (2004). *Becoming Chinese American: A History of Communities and Institutions*. New York: Altamira Press.
- Li, D.-Y., (2010). *Měi guó jiā zhōu dì qū zhōng wén xué xiào diào chá yán jiū [A Study of the Chinese Schools in California, USA]* (Unpublished master's thesis). National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan.
- Li, Y.-H. (1997). 1949 nián yǐ lái Zhōng Huá Mǐn Guó de huà qiáo jiào yù zhèng cè [Overseas Chinese education policy of the Republic of China since 1949], *The National Chi Nan University Journal (also Jì dà xué bào)*, 165-194 °

- Liu, J. Y. (1996). Awarding credit through testing. In X. Wang (Ed.), *A voice from within: A case study of Chinese heritage community language schools in the United States* (pp.59-62). Washington, D.C.: The National Foreign Language Center.
- Lyman, S. (1974). *Chinese Americans*. New York: Random House.
- Lu, H.-M. T. (2010, February). A proposed model for Chinese heritage schools. Paper presented at the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Heritage/Community Languages, University of California at Los Angeles. Retrieved from: <http://nhlrc.ucla.edu/events/conference/1st/papers/Proposed%20Model%20Chinese%20Heritage%20Schools.pdf>
- Mao, S. L. (2011), Former president's remarks, NCACLS Journal 16 (2), 8-9. Retrieved from: [http://blog.huayuworld.org/gallery/9488/Volume%2016-2\\_2011.pdf](http://blog.huayuworld.org/gallery/9488/Volume%2016-2_2011.pdf)
- National Council of Associations of Chinese Language Schools. (n.d.). About us. Retrieved from <http://www.ncacls.net> .
- Overseas Chinese Language and Culture Education Online, (n.d.). Retrieved from: <http://www.hwjyw.com/>
- Rao, C.-L. (2005). *Hǎi xiá liǎng àn tuī zhǎn qiáo wù zhèng cè zhī bǐ jiào yán jiū: jiān lùn qiáo jiào zhī bǐ jiào* [A study of comparing the policies of overseas Chinese affairs cross the straits: The comparison of overseas Chinese education. (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation). National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan.
- Schrier, L. (2009). Understanding the culture of American schools, and managing the successful Chinese language classroom. Everson & Xiao (Eds.), *Teaching Chinese as a foreign language* (pp. 227-249). Boston: Cheng & Tsui Company.

- Sung, B. L. (1967). *Mountain of gold: The story of the Chinese in America*. New York: Macmillan.
- Sung, B. L. (1976) *A survey of Chinese American manpower and employment*. New York, N.Y.: Praeger Publishers.
- Takaki, R. (1989). *Strangers from a different shore*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Co.
- Tuan, M. (1998). *Forever foreigners or honorary whites? The Asian ethnic experience today*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). Language Use in the United States: 2007, America Community Survey report. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/language/data/acs/ACS-12.pdf>.
- Wang, J. T. (1982). *Měi guó zhōng wén xué xiào jiào de fā zhǎn yǔ duì huà tong de jiào yù yì yì* [The development of Chinese language schools in the US and its meaning for Chinese American children's education], *The World of Chinese Language*, 28 30-36
- Wang, S. C. (2004). *Bi-literacy resource eco-System of intergenerational transmission of heritage language and culture: An ethnographic study of a Chinese community in the United States*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.
- Wang, S. C. (2007) Building Societal Capital: Chinese in the United States. *Language Policy*, 6(1), 27-52.
- Wang, X. (Ed.), (1996). *A view from within: A case study of Chinese heritage community language schools in the United States*, Monograph Series. The National Foreign Language Center.
- Wong, S. L. C. (1988). The language situation of Chinese Americans. In S. L. McKay, & S. C. Wong (Eds.), *Language diversity, problem or resource?: a social and educational perspective on language minorities in the United States*. New York: Newbury House.

- World Chinese Language Association (n.d.). An introduction to the World Chinese Language Association. Retrieved from <http://www.wcla.org.tw/front/bin/ptlist.phtml?Category=101167>
- Yung, J. (1995). *Unbound feet: A social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Zhang, D., & Slaughter-Defoe, D. (2009). Language attitudes and heritage language maintenance among Chinese immigrant families in the USA. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 22: 77-93.
- Zhang, J. (2009). Mandarin maintenance among immigrant children from the People's Republic of China: an examination of individual networks of linguistic contact. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 22: 195-213.
- Zweig, D., & Chen C. (1995) *China's brain drain to the United States: Views of overseas Chinese students and scholars in the 1990s*. China Research Monograph, Institute of East Asian Studies. University of California, Berkeley: Center for Chinese Studies.