Being A "Professional" LCTL At A "Professional" Level: A Call For The Inclusion Of Multiple Chinese Languages In "Chinese" Language Pedagogy

Genevieve Y. Leung
Ming-Hsuan Wu
University of Pennsylvania

Abstract

This paper examines the term "Chinese" in light of the prevalent rhetoric of Chinese as a critical language for the job market. As Mandarin has received rapid recognition and usage in "professional" contexts such as academia and international business, we call for a critical viewing of placing too much worth in the political economy of Mandarin at the expense of overlooking all the other varieties of Chinese in the local ecologies. Using data from the authors' own experiences as instructors of Mandarin and Cantonese in secondary and university contexts, this paper speaks to the possibility of multiple Chinese languages being taught and used together, or, conversely, what the negative consequences have been in neglecting multiple varieties of Chinese in a Mandarin-only language classroom. We argue that while it is currently not the case, Mandarin can be "professional" with its fellow Chinese varieties while still being considered a LCTL used at the "professional" level.

Introduction

While Chinese in the form of Mandarin is currently heavily emphasized in language teaching arenas, little research has looked at the maintenance of other equally relevant Chinese languages. Though not often talked about, long-standing diversity of Chinese languages has existed both in the U.S. and Asian contexts for centuries. Thus, inattention to this diversity sparks the need for a critical viewing of placing too much worth in the political economy of Mandarin, still considered a Less Commonly Taught Language (LCTL) at

the expense of overlooking all the other varieties of Chinese, which then should be Truly Less Commonly Taught Languages (TLCTL), in the local ecologies. In looking at local-level processes we can better understand how to bring forward varieties with minority status (Hornberger and King, 1996).

This paper will begin with background information on the varieties of Chinese, followed by definitions of "professional" in the arenas of LCTLs and heritage language learners. The paper will end with the authors' personal experiences teaching Mandarin and Cantonese.

Background

In order to understand the interrelationships among the many varieties of Chinese, it becomes necessary to first step back and view the macro-level processes of how the term "Chinese" came to be singular and why this must be critically problematized, since not doing so directly impacts non-Mandarin Chineses and their speakers. Through the linguistic lens of mutual unintelligibility, a langauge like Cantonese is quite unarguably a separate language from Mandarin, but enough overlap in phonology, intonation, and particularly grammar and script allow for the translating of Cantonese knowledge into assets for Mandarin learning. Yet these elephant-in-the-room factors are largely quashed because from a more sociolinguistic lens, "we usually do not speak of Chinese in the plural" (Ramsey, 1987, p. 17). This ideology is bolstered by the fact that standard written Chinese, matching most closely to spoken Modern Standard Mandarin (MSM), overrides all oral varieties of Chinese because it is (more or less) the shared writing system of speakers of all varieties of Chinese.

In addition, the name for these varieties of Chinese, called 方言 (MSM: fangyan), has long been erroneously translated as "dialect." The meaning is better captured with "topolect" (Mair, 1991), referring to language groups (Sinitic or otherwise) by topographic distribution; the mistranslation and linguistically irresponsible perpetuation of "dialect" without cultural and historical prefacing further solidifies the ideology that "[t]he language variety that has the higher social value is called a 'Language', and the language variety with the lower social value is called a 'dialect'" (Roy, 1987, p. 234). Li (2004)

puts forth the idea that geography plays a major role in determining linguistic "likeness" in another way, using a hypothetical "Chinese layman":

> [T]he western language-dialect distinction cuts through traditional Chinese regional groupings of language. The Chinese layman, reasoning from historic-geographical proximity, would group Taiwan Mandarin with Taiwanese, and Shanghai Mandarin with Shanghainese, concluding that both varieties are distant from and thus unintelligible with northern or Beijing Mandarin, when in fact similarities between the Mandarin varieties of Taiwan, Beijing and Shanghai are in fact far greater than those between Taiwan Mandarin and Taiwanese, or between Shanghai Mandarin and Shanghainese. (p. 112)

Along a more diachronic vein, Keeler (2008) reminds us of the long-standing translingual practices of cross-cultural and cross-linguistic parlance of meaning:

> The notion of 'dialect' as understood by some Chinese speakers today is part of a way of thinking about language change and language relatedness that was elaborated by European and American linguists in the 19th century. Any discussion of the translation into 'Western' languages of the Chinese words for 'dialect' or 'language' must make clear that the Chinese words themselves are palimpsests of over a century of events of translation and cross-cultural negotiation. (p. 345)

This metaphor of translingual naming practices as palimpsests, where parts of a document are written over more than once or erased, often incompletely, to make room for more text, helps to characterize the current state of the "Chinese" confusion, and why disentanglement is dutifully and duly required, especially when considering the field of language education.

Scholarship on language policy and planning notes that in creating national hegemony, states often simultaneously engage in

creating language hegemony that ignores language diversity in order
to define who is in and who is out (Billing, 1995; Blackledge, 2008);
education often becomes a major means to achieve this end. A grow-
ing number of researchers with a critical and social-minded lens have
proposed more equitable approaches to education that take into ac-
count linguistic diversity and do not disadvantage speakers of non-
dominant languages (e.g., Canagarajah, 1999, 2004; Delpit, 1996; Katz
& DaSilva Iddings, 2009; Lin, 2004). As China has been a multilin-
gual location since its very inception as the "Middle Kingdom," the
teaching of its languages also needs to recognize this linguistic reali-
ty. Lam (2005) writes:

> A land of many languages and dialects, China is also faced
> with making linguistic choices; so are learners in China. Fo-
> cusing on one language or dialect means less learning re-
> sources for others…. At the individual level, the language
> learning experience of learners in China is certainly not lin-
> guistically discrete; each learner tends to be exposed to more
> than one language and more than one dialect. Hence, a mul-
> tilingual approach is quite essential for an appreciation of the
> realities of language education in China. (p. 18)

In the case of language education in the U.S., we argue that
there is also a critical need to acknowledge a variety of Chinese resid-
ing in the U.S. language ecology.

Due to recent esteem for China and Mandarin Chinese, the
current folk mapping of "Chinese" as only being Standard Mandarin
has caused an inordinate spike in educational research studies dealing
singularly with Chinese in the form of Mandarin. The situation is no
different in discourse projected by the mass media. As Stubbs (1998)
notes of text and corpus analyses, looking at semantic prosody (a type
of collocational phenomenon where the co-occurrence of words
shifts toward predominantly positive or negative semantic values) can
help researchers understand and clearly present, through large bodies
of written text as data, the intuitive cultural significance of words (p.
176). A recent corpus analysis of U.S. newspapers of the last 22 years
shows clear semantic prosody for the word "Mandarin" with "lan-

guage," "Chinese," and "fluency" (Leung, 2009). Conversely, for the word "Cantonese," which appears more than half as frequently in the corpora, there is semantic prosody with the words "dialect," "Chinatown," and "restaurant." The current metalinguistic and metapragmatic commentary about "Chinese," that is, the "talkings about" what "Chinese" is, having been reappropriated and changed over time, has both explicitly and implicitly propelled Mandarin over all other Chinese languages. This directly impacts how non-Mandarin Chinese languages are thought of and talked about.

In the educational arena, we find Gambhir's (2001) distinction between Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs) and Truly Less Commonly Taught Languages (TLCTLs) to be particularly useful in categorizing the current prized state of Mandarin and other, less esteemed varieties of Chinese in the U.S. If Mandarin is considered a LCTL, then other varieties of non-Mandarin Chinese must definitely be considered TLCTLs. Gambhir points out the need to distinguish the two because programs of the two types of languages encounter different issues and challenges. For instance, programs of TLCTLs often enroll few students and high proportions of them are heritage language learners. Although Mandarin is still a LCTL at this moment, it is identified as a critical language to the U.S. in policy and public discourse, thus receiving growing governmental and educational attention. Since the current discourse on "Chinese" mostly refers to Chinese in the form of Mandarin, and folk discourse never talks about it in the plural (cf. Ramsey, 1987), this renders funding for other varieties of Chinese unavailable and furthers the power imbalance between Mandarin and non-Mandarin Chinese languages.

Defining "professional" in language education

For the purposes of this paper we are viewing the root word "professional" on two divergent yet related planes that help us come to terms with the problematizing of a singular "Chinese." From one sense of the word, to "professionalize" a language means making it into a world language, connecting it to be used in professions and businesses. In many ways, this singularizes "Chinese" to solely Chinese in the form of Mandarin. However, a related form of the word is also the sense of acting "professionally," that is, having appropriate behavior and thinking, with ties to access and ethics. It is through

this definition that language learners can gain heightened Critical Language Awareness (CLA, cf. Fairclough, 2001; Males, 2000) about the power differentials amongst Chineses and the implicit capital instilled in the variety that they are learning.

This is particularly important for teachers of heritage language learners whose language variety is not an institutionalized one. In a survey paper that delves into "who studies which languages and why" among the first year college-level language learners in two large East Coast universities, Howard, Reynolds and Déak (2010) find that students register for language courses for various reasons: non-heritage language learners often register for a language course for career motivation, while heritage language learners often do so for the purpose of understanding their heritages. The latter group's classroom experiences are further complicated by their previous experiences with ways of communication in different contexts and thus Howard et al. remind us:

> Language teachers need to be especially careful to honor the wide variety of rich (yet often non-standard) language resources that students bring to class, while providing an environment in which learners become increasingly aware of the sociolinguistic variation present in any language, and more adept at flexibly deploying a growing linguistic repertoire to inhabit their social worlds, to express their identities, and to realize their aspirations. (pp. 29-30)

For the "Chinese" language teaching field, we suggest that the first step is to professionally recognize multiple varieties of Chinese and to avoid reinforcing the "Mandarin equals Chinese language" ideology. We currently face a critical junction in the field, with the Chinese government making strenuous efforts to promote Mandarin abroad (i.e., the establishment of Confucius Institutes and classrooms, providing schools with low-cost guest teachers from China), compounding with the fact that the U.S. hosts the most Confucius Institutes worldwide and depend heavily on guest teachers from China for their "critical" language programs, one needs to be especially mindful about the repercussions of such relationship on non-Mandarin Chinese heritage learners in the U. S. The following section

takes a closer look at non-Mandarin Chinese heritage learners' experiences. As a group that has been largely neglected by research on "Chinese" education, non-Mandarin Chinese heritage learners' perspectives are crucial in providing insights in promoting and professionalizing TLCTLs.

Definitions for Heritage Language Learners (HLLs)

It is necessary to begin by mentioning that researchers acknowledge there is no one set "type" of HLL (Hornberger & Wang, 2008) and that labeling is sometimes very problematic because schooling often links learners with the prestige variety but not necessarily with the community or heritage variety (Wiley, 2001). Nonetheless, scholars' attempts to define HLLs have resulted in several widely accepted descriptions useful in understanding the diversity of HLLs in the United States.

Valdés (2001) gives two types of HL students along a continuum: one who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, speaks or at least understands the language and who is to some degree bilingual in that language and English and one who has historical or personal ties to a language that is indigenous or an immigrant language not generally taught in school. Fishman (2001) groups heritage language students in terms of speakers with roots to Native American languages, colonial languages (e.g., French, German, Spanish), or immigrant languages (e.g., Arabic, Japanese, Korean).

Together, Valdés and Fishman's definitions describe HLLs using their language and socio-historical backgrounds within the United States; already the difficulty in generalizing such a huge population of language learners is evident. Additionally, focusing on these definitions alone diverts attention away from identity and psychosocial conflicts many culturally and linguistically non-dominant HLLs face in the United States. As HLLs are seen as linguistic border crossers (Harklau, 1994; Kelleher, 2008; Rampton, 1995, among others), the politicization of these identities often pits the HL(s) against English, forcing speakers to choose one language over another in a show of language loyalty for social alignment. Choosing affiliation with an ethnic or heritage speaker identity over the acceptance by a dominant group is not uncommon, and akin to this element of

choice, Hornberger and Wang (2008) suggest that individuals have agency in deciding whether they want to consider themselves HLLs. In addition, they make the differentiation between HL speakers and HL learners who may or may not speak the HL (p. 6).

Thus distinct notions of what researchers regard HLLs to be and how HLLs decide to position themselves lead to complex and dynamic pedagogical implications of HL teaching for a heterogeneous body of learners. Indeed, someone with linguistic roots or personal ties to a less commonly taught language but with limited to no linguistic experience in it[1] might consider him/herself a foreign language (FL) learner instead. FL/HL dual tracks are available at universities with resources to bifurcate, though the range of students within even a single track is wide and, depending on the university, a student might not be able to choose the FL class if faculty prescribe him/her to be a HL learner.

"Chinese" as a heritage language in the classroom

One exemplar of the hierarchies of Chineses and "Chinese confusion" running rampant lies in the heritage language (HL) sector of Mandarin language instruction. The case of Mandarin education in the U.S. helps illustrate how even when programs exist for so-called heritage language learners (HLLs), providing for all students is not a straightforward task. In the university where Kelleher (2008) conducted her research, the FL class was designated as the "regular" class, while the HL class was designated the "bilingual" one. Students of ethnic Chinese heritage and students with linguistic experience in other Chineses were found in both FL and HL classes. She notes that for the "bilingual" class, 55% of the class identified Mandarin as their first language (L1), while for the "regular" class, 54% identified Cantonese as their L1. While the dual track system seemed most effective for those students at the extremes (i.e., either significant or no previous experience with Mandarin) Cantonese HL speakers traversed through both classes and were forced to reposition themselves and their expectations of the class, "caught at the intersection of institutional values, program structure and their own lin-

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[1] Hornberger and Wang (2008) mention the example of adoptees.

guistic and cultural resources" (p. 239). So embedded is this frustration to Chinese Americans of various Cantonese heritage that even Sterling Lung, the main character of David Wong Louie's book, The Barbarians Are Coming, speaks of the disjunct between his home language and Mandarin:

> My spoken Chinese is weak. Zsa Zsa [his mother] talks at me and my sisters only in Chinese; we in turn understand much more than we can speak, and answer her mostly in a tossed salad of bad English and ruptured Chinese. I studied Chinese for seven semesters in college, earning straight A-minuses, costarring in a Chinese-language theatrical production (I played the patriarch whose wayward son goes to the United States and marries an American girl, forsaking his first, Chinese wife at home), and later was an extra in a professional Peking opera. But all that study is wasted on my parents, because their dialect (Toisanese) and the one I learned (Mandarin) are as different as Spanish and French. (2000, p. 60)

Kelleher (2008) notes that identifying characteristics of students' fangyan assists in legitimizing the presence of HLLs in the language classroom, adding that "this is important for Chinese HL students whose 'visible' ethnicity makes them particularly susceptible to criticism, borne of ignorance, for studying a language they are presumed to already 'know'" (p. 242).

The needs and potential of HLLs in the contemporary Mandarin classroom, particularly those of a non-Mandarin Chinese background, have been oversimplified, as the following examples from Cantonese HL speakers in Mandarin classes illustrate. Weger-Guntharp (2008) describes the university-level Mandarin classroom as one where Cantonese plays a role for half the class. She writes:

> [F]or half of the CHLLs of this study, Cantonese is the language of at least one of their parents and is the source of their background knowledge in Chinese. Participant 26 identified Cantonese as his native language; and during the interview session, he mentioned his years spent studying at Cantonese

school, "So I didn't learn anything there, just like Cantonese, which is not useful here". Participant 18 said of her unwillingness to use vocabulary, "I don't want to say [a word] and it's wrong, and then plus it's in Cantonese, so then everyone's like 'What?'". And Participant 5 commented, "My parents wanted me to take Chinese, because I am Chinese, except almost no one speaks Mandarin in my family, so it's pretty pointless [to take classes here]". (p. 223-224)

It is unclear whether Weger-Guntharp knows that Cantonese is a variety of "Chinese," but she does not seem to, as she still calls Cantonese-background learners "limited proficiency heritage language learners." This label is misleading because while these participants might have "limited proficiency" in Mandarin, it discounts existing knowledge of "Chinese" in the form of Cantonese as a HL. This oversight reverberates in the language attitudes of "everyone" in the classroom being confused when Cantonese is spoken, is internalized in Cantonese HL speakers to the point where Mandarin classes become "pointless," and, ultimately, Cantonese as a possible linguistic scaffolding tool for Mandarin acquisition is not even alluded to by Weger-Guntharp herself. Kelleher's (2008) Cantonese HL speaker respondent, Kelly, says of her Mandarin class:

> I've gotten used to it…it doesn't address Cantonese speakers. [The program is] ignoring us…[It would be] more effective to have a Cantonese program…not teaching Cantonese as a language…[I] don't expect that, but [I] would like it if there was a Cantonese transition course to Mandarin." (p. 250)

Kelly's desire for "a Cantonese program" does not actually mean a Cantonese language class for HLs, which is, in theory, a completely viable option. Instead, her description of a "transition course to Mandarin" is slightly reminiscent of transitional bilingual education programs, which entail language shift, cultural assimilation, and social incorporation into a mainstream (Hornberger, 1991).

Wiley (2008) proposes that Mandarin teachers be "minimally trained in contrastive analysis and sociolinguistics of the major Chinese languages," validating the "dialect" as being just as rule-

governed as Mandarin, an issue fitting squarely in the realm of status planning (p. 102). The fact that this implies Mandarin language teachers are not trained in such sociolinguistic techniques demonstrates the need for consciousness-raising around issues of language, identity, and ideologies of language for all members of the classroom. Employing instructors who speak Mandarin plus other Chinese languages or instructors who are American-born and have completed Mandarin language courses in the U.S. could serve as options in diversifying the pool of teachers.

The tensions above illustrate how the language classroom is a site that "reinforc [es] societal values about language in general" (Valdés, Gonzalez, Lopez Garcia, & Marquez, 2008) and can have severe effects on Cantonese HL speakers' perceptions of language heritage. Hornberger and Wang's (2008) distinction between HL speakers and HL learners come to mind as Kelly, the Cantonese HL speaker, would prefer to be transitioned into a Mandarin HL learner as opposed to being a Cantonese HL learner. It should not be discounted that heritage speakers of other Chinese languages have an imagined ethnic or nationalistic affinity towards learning Mandarin. However, this desire to shift from one's "true" heritage language to a "surrogate" one (and the implications this has on shifting learners' investment and linguistic identities) can also be attributed to the decrease in instruction of other Chinese languages due to the increase of Mandarin instruction. Wiley (2008) writes

The status of Mandarin as a common "heritage" language for all ethnic Chinese is open to debate. Despite this fact, there is currently little attempt in the U.S. to promote HL instruction in other Chinese languages (with the exception of Cantonese) such as Taiwanese or Hakka. As these are languages of the home and local communities, they could also be considered HLs. (p. 96)

While fundamentally this holds true, we argue that currently there is still little attempt to promote HL instruction in Cantonese. Officially Cantonese might be listed as a language option for university students, but it might not have been offered in years or state budget cuts have cancelled it altogether (as in smaller state colleges in Cali-

fornia).[2] Moreover, it is not the case that languages like Cantonese, Taiwanese, and Hakka "could" also be considered HLs: they should be considered so because they are HLs and have collectively been so for over 100 years. It is not enough to simply consider debating whether or not Mandarin is the only heritage language of ethnic Chinese learners because Mandarin classrooms are already reinforcing (blatantly or latently) the idea that "Chinese" only refers to Mandarin Chinese and are invalidating HL speakers of other Chinese languages at a faster rate than learners are attaining heightened awareness of sociolinguistics. Similar tensions of dialect face heritage learners of Spanish, where scholars like Martínez (2003) argue for critical dialect awareness through explicit teaching of dialect function, dialect distribution, and dialect evaluation beginning from the first year of college Spanish for heritage learners (p. 1). While what "Chinese" heritage classes need falls more along the lines of critical language awareness, much can be learned from the very productive and progressive field of Spanish for Heritage Learners. As the field of "Chinese" heritage language seems to deal singularly with Chinese in the form of Mandarin, it is hoped that this paper leads to more scholarship that will eventually look at other Chinese languages in order to more accurately reflect the actual language makeup of speakers of Chinese languages around the world and develop a more equitable language education that does not discount learners' prior resources and knowledge in other varieties of Chinese.

One way to diversify simply viewing "Chinese" (in the form of Mandarin) for its instrumental value for individuals and nations is to bring to the public's attention the existence of non-Mandarin Chinese languages, to view them as resources, and to promote them. Although an orientation to multilingualism that characterizes language-as-resource (LAR, cf., Ruiz, 1984) has recently been taken up

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[2] Additionally, even in the case where Cantonese is taught at a university institution, it definitely is not placed on equal footing with Mandarin, as at Harvard, where the course description for its one Cantonese course is: "Non-intensive introduction to Cantonese dialect...primarily intended for non-native speakers who will conduct research in a Cantonese-speaking locale. Prerequisite: Two years formal study of Mandarin," suggesting that somehow knowledge of Mandarin is a requisite to learn Cantonese, implying that one "language" is more important than the other "dialect."

by advocates and academics to promote HLs in the U.S., Ricento (2005) argues that we must still be mindful that the values embedded in a LAR orientation in current policy and public discourse often lie only in the needs and interests of the state, and may perpetuate a view of language as an instrument and a commodity that is irrelevant to ethnic groups' identities and ignores historical contexts. HL movement advocates' narrow interpretation of HLs' values in terms of advancing economic interests of nations and individuals makes Ricento cast doubts on how the LAR orientation can actually elevate HLs' status. He urges advocates of the promotion of HLs in the U.S. to ponder on important questions, such as "Resources for whom? For what purposes or end?" (p. 364).

In response to Ricento's critiques, Ruiz (2010) argues that while language policies are driven by the economy and do not necessarily aim to promote cultural democracy and social justice, the issue "is how we (researchers) can accommodate it (economic argument) without having it define the entire effort" while giving guidance on how to promote the use of minority languages (p. 162). Ruiz (2010) reminds us that a LAR orientation connotes even the most marginalized HL can be seen as advantageous because their multifaceted values are defined along intellectual, aesthetic, cultural, economic, social, and citizenship planes, all of which are valuable resources. Ruiz cites the fact that for many communities that have used their languages for generations without placing instrumental values on them, these languages can work alongside majority languages to show that values can be given to languages within the communities in ways that outside communities may not appreciate in their own languages.

In the remaining paragraphs, we will illustrate how we, as instructors of Cantonese and Mandarin, build on students' prior knowledge in different varieties of Chinese and different scripts to facilitate their learning of the targeted languages in our teaching. We hope our experiences presented here can initiate more grounded discussions on how to professionalize the "Chinese" language education in the U.S. without disadvantaging speakers of non-Mandarin Chinese languages but instead bringing all Chinese languages forward to a professional level.

Genevieve's Cantonese Teaching Experience

During the 2009-2010 academic year, Genevieve taught a Cantonese language independent study to an undergraduate student with interests in working with in a medical clinic located in New York City Chinatown. This student, a Chinese American who was partly of Cantonese heritage, had extensive Mandarin language experience and was very fluent in both speaking and writing; additionally he had exposure to Cantonese through home and peer group interactions. Genevieve, who had also learned Mandarin as a foreign language in college, set up the course under the explicit premise that Cantonese would be viewed as the course's central focus but that Mandarin contrastive analysis would be used to supplement instruction (cf., Wiley, 2008). Additionally, the course discussed issues of power differentials and language ideologies between Cantonese and Mandarin. Many of these conversations used Cantonese, English, and Mandarin in combination and drew from shared cultural experiences growing up Chinese American and popular culture references from Mandarin and Cantonese music and movies.

This student's capacity for language learning aside, a significant amount of his progress in language acquisition can be attributed to his explicit building on and awareness of multiple Chinese languages. Because of this student's prior exposure to pinyin Romanization, he was able to pick up both Yale and Jyutping Romanization schemes for Cantonese with much more ease than students with little familiarity to Romanization. He was able to easily enhance his Cantonese vocabulary and word choice through existing knowledge of Mandarin and MSM words. His connection to Hong Kong and Guangzhou as places of his heritage, as well as his appreciation for Cantonese as much more than "a mere dialect" propelled him to see this class as not only a means to adding to his language background to help his future profession, but also acting "professionally" by placing Cantonese and Mandarin side by side, each serving a different purpose, thereby facilitating language learning.

Ming-Hsuan's Mandarin Teaching Experience

In a STARTALK Mandarin class for heritage language learners that Ming-Hsuan co-taught with another teacher in 2009, students

came from families speaking a wide range of Chinese languages, including Mandarin, Cantonese, Taiwanese and Shanghainese. Students also showed different preferences to traditional and simplified Chinese characters. When asked to set personal goals for their learning at the camp, most students hoped to improve their language skills, especially in speaking, and their understanding of Chinese culture. Teachers then constructed the class around students' lived experiences to help students learn to tell their stories, to record their life, and to discuss their thoughts in Mandarin. Teachers encouraged students to express themselves in Mandarin as much as they could and also made it clear to the students that everyone of us speaks a language with some accents and that many languages are spoken in China, thus many people in China actually learn Mandarin as a second language. After Ming and her co-teacher helped students recognize the complexity and reality of language phenomena in society, they further stressed that discriminating against someone based on how he/she speaks was not permitted in this class. By the same token, Beijing-accented Mandarin was not the goal or criteria for the class, but comprehensibility and intelligibility.

Influence of other varieties of Chinese on students' spoken Mandarin was particularly noticeable in classroom activities where they talked about their personal experiences of Chinatowns or intergenerational relationships. While students might have limited knowledge in some expressions in Mandarin, they oftentimes had some knowledge in food or emotion-related expressions in another variety spoken at home. It was important for teachers to have a resourceful view toward students' heritage languages: when students switched to other varieties in their speaking, their contributions to the class were acknowledged, and then they were taught how to say those particular phrases in Mandarin and were encouraged to pay particular attention to the differences.

Moreover, we extended classroom interaction to the Internet by creating a class blog on Google. On a daily basis, students needed to respond to teachers' and peers' posts on the blog in Chinese, be traditional or simplified characters. As students came from different backgrounds in traditional or simplified Chinese characters, we tried not to discourage any of them by including both uses as much as we could. After all, as Valdés (2000) suggests, effective HL instruction

builds on HLLs' existing knowledge rather than stigmatizing it: HL teaching is about "expand(ing) the bilingual range (of the HLLs)" (p. 388). Toward the middle of the class, there were several cases when students using different scripts asked each other for how certain characters should be written in traditional or simplified characters, showing their interest in broadening their writing repertoires by learning from their peers.

Conclusion

The status of non-Mandarin Chinese languages within the overall conceptualization of "Chinese" HL programs is sure to incur ambivalent reactions at a time when most resources and efforts have been put to promote Mandarin. However, as many of "Chinese" heritage language students in the U. S. are from families where other varieties are spoken, teachers of such students should recognize their unique status as border crossers and develop pedagogies or curricula that take into consideration their multilingual backgrounds. Wiley (1996) argues that language programs' incorporating (or failure to incorporate) students' heritage languages represents issues related to the domain of status planning from a language policy and planning perspective. In line with the view that all language teachers are engaged with language planners from the bottom-up (Hornberger, 1997; Ricento & Hornberger, 1994), we hope our paper highlights the importance of recognizing and professionalizing multiple Chineses, as well as for the learners, teachers, and administrators of various Chineses to work together professionally within the local ecologies of languages.

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