Situations and Countermeasures of Chinese Language Education for the Chinese Living in the USA in the 21st Century *

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Foreword

Nowadays overseas Chinese language teaching activities mainly consist of three parts: Part one is the Chinese language teaching activity of the formal national education system. Part two is the international Chinese language promotion project of Confucius Institutes. Part three is the Education of the Chinese language Teaching Schools in the Chinese communities. These three parts are complemented and supported from one another, which forms the basic pattern of the overseas Chinese language teaching activities. USA is one of the most high-profile areas for the Chinese language teaching and the Chinese language education development in the world ranges. USA has regarded as one of the countries of most important

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immigrants of the Chinese people since the reform and opening policies were executed in China, where the local Chinese people community and the Chinese language education are closely communicated and exchanged with the mainstream Chinese language teaching fields as well as they are mutually promoted and facilitated. The research objects of this thesis mainly are referred to the discussion about the part three of the situations, i.e. to establish the educational service institutions which shall actualize the Chinese language educations and the Chinese culture educations to the children of the Chinese people and the other people who want to study Chinese. Their main bodies are the various Chinese language teaching schools which are managed and run by the local Chinese people, referred to as the Chinese language teaching schools of the Chinese people.

After the Chinese language education in the USA has been developed for several tens of years, it has been recognized by the local people. According to statistics, there are now about 500 Chinese language teaching schools in the USA, which are located in 43 states\(^{[1]}\). The Chinese language teaching schools in the USA are formerly belonged to the Chinese communities. Although the Chinese communities have tried their best to “maintain and promote the development of the Chinese language teaching schools”, for a long time, the legal status of the Chinese language teaching schools are not very clear and the people who are to be taught are relatively simple so that there are some defects in the management of the Chinese language teaching schools.

The development stages the Chinese language teaching schools in the USA are the follows: before the twentieth century, the most Chinese language teaching schools are the auxiliary products of the English schools. The children of the Chinese people usually go to the English schools. In the evenings or at the weekends, the children of the Chinese people usually go to the Chinese language teaching schools. The Chinese language teachers are the parents of the children of the Chinese people who are also keen on the Chinese language teaching and they mainly teach the Guangdong language. With the swarming of a large number of the new immigrants into the USA in 80’s of the twenty century, the Chinese language education of the Chinese language teaching schools began to perk up. There were mainly 2 kinds of the Chinese teaching patterns: one teaching pattern was that the Chinese language teaching schools were established by the immigrants of the Chinese people who were immigrated into the USA from Taiwan and Hong Kong,
in which the traditional original complex form characters of a simplified Chinese characters and Mandarin in Chinese national languages were mainly taught. Another kind of the Chinese teaching pattern was that the Chinese language teaching schools were established by the new immigrants of the Chinese people who were immigrated into the USA from the mainland of China, in which the simplified characters and general conversation in Chinese languages were mainly taught.

Since it went into the twenty-first century, with the continuous enhancement of the international status of China, the hot tidemarks of learning, studying and teaching the Chinese language have become a global Chinese language fever activity. The Chinese people and the overseas Chinese in the USA adequately have caught hold of the hitherto unknown opportunities to vigorously carry out the activities of the Chinese language teaching and the Chinese language education so that the Chinese language education has welcome its spring.

II. Main Characteristics of Chinese Language Education in the USA in Twenty-first Century

With the growing up of China in the 21st century, a large number of the new immigrants of the Chinese people have been immigrated into the USA. The Chinese language education in the USA has entered a new period when it is full of the period of the hitherto unknown, chanceful opportunities and challenges and also some new characteristics are presented: complication, imbalance, Chinese language teachers and chinese textbooks are shorted and chinese language teaching levels are irregular unequal,becoming jointed linearization in the whole USA from separated situations.

III. Development Countermeasures of Chinese Language Education

As can be seen from the surface, many changes of the Chinese language teaching education in the USA have been taken place into the 21st century. Therefore, we should not only drawn the lessons from certain past experiences of the Chinese language teaching educations but also the Chinese language teaching educations shall be changed from time to time according to the different characteristics under the new situations and then we can receipt the actual effects. The author will put forward some opinions on the above problems according to the related research and
the teaching practices and the teaching management experiences in the USA for many years in the follows.

(1) Constituting Chinese Language Teaching Programs according to Time, Places and Student Objects

It can be known from the above-mentioned analysis that the main student objects who will accept the Chinese language teaching educations in the USA are very complex. Their requirements are also not the same. For the new generation of the young children and the young immigrants, the primary surviving and living problems and how to acclimatize themselves to the local societies and the local communities in the USA are their all-important tasks so that it is very necessary and more impending for them to learn English culture knowledge well. For the second generation and the third generation of the foreign citizen of Chinese origins who were native-born in the USA, they become indifferent to China because they have accepted the deep influences of the American educations from their childhoods and the strong English as well as the atmosphere of the totally different in western cultures. Therefore, it is a difficult problem in front of the current Chinese language teaching educational worker how to let the younger generations of the foreign citizen of the Chinese origin and the new immigrants are willing to accept the Chinese language teaching educations from their childhoods under the society big environment of taking English as their first language.

First of all, we can receive the actual effects by means of constituting the Chinese language teaching programs according to the time, the places and the object personnel. For example, there are the good Chinese language teaching education bases in California State, New York State, Texas State and the other states. These states have brought the Chinese language teaching educations and incorporated into their national education systems. The training objectives, the curriculum constitution and the educational system must comply with the regulations of the local education departments. The Chinese language teaching educations in these states have already no longer belonged to the Chinese language education ranges, but belonged to the language teaching category, i.e. the young children are trained to have the capabilities of using the Chinese languages to carry out intercommunications with the Chinese people by the training of the listening skills, the speaking skills, the reading skills and writing skills. The younger generations of the foreign citizen of the Chinese origin will understand the Chinese culture through
learning Chinese language so as to promote the amalgamation of the cultures of USA with the cultures of China. It is the difference from the local public primary schools that this Chinese language teaching education to the young children have still retained the "Chinese History Headstream", that is to say, in addition to English, the language teaching medium to the other subjects is the Chinese language [2]

For the second generation and the third generation of the foreign citizen of Chinese origins who were native-born in the USA, the Chinese language is their second language, most of the them passively come to learn the Chinese language only under the strong pressure from their parents. These younger children may lose their motive forces and strong interests in learning the Chinese language because of having many difficulties in the course of learning the Chinese language and lacking often the practicality so that the status often appears. These younger children can still not listen to, speak, read and write the Chinese language although they have learnt the Chinese language for years. For these categories of the students, the Chinese language teachers should much more consider the educational ideas, the teaching contents and the teaching methods in order to try their best to achieve “to teach these students in accordance with their situations and aptitudes” and “to let these children enjoy the Chinese language while teaching these children in the recreations”. The Chinese language teachers can add the contents such as the paintings, the calligraphies, the dancing and the martial arts (Wushu Shows) in the process of the Chinese language learning so that these teaching contents can not only stimulate the children's interests in learning the Chinese language but also enable these children to master the Chinese language at the same time. The Chinese language teachers should enable the children to understand the centuries-old brilliant histories and civilization cultures which have been possessed in China much more intuitively and visually as well as deeply. At the same time, the Chinese language teachers should also let them realize that they will obtain the high benefits for their entering the higher schools and institutes as well as the universities and the employment in the future after they have learnt the Chinese language well. And also, the thoughts can arouse the enthusiasm of their learning the Chinese language very well.

In addition, for the new immigrants of the younger generations (such as the personnel who have accepted the basic Chinese language educations in China), the Chinese language teachers should adopt the teaching contents of the multiple
units, the practical usefulness and the life oriented teaching approaches in order that they can make full use of their Chinese language bases and pay special attention to communicating and combining their Chinese language studies with the practical applications and the social intercommunications.

(2) Response Measures to “Chinese Language (3-T) Teachers, Textbooks and Teaching Methods”

Teachers: At present, the teacher faculty statuses of the Chinese language teaching education in the USA have been greatly improved but there are still the following problems. Problem One: The quantities of the Chinese language teachers are shorted and the ages of the Chinese language teachers are very old. Problem Two: The Chinese language teachers of the professional levels are lacked. At present, a majority of the Chinese language teachers who are teaching the Chinese languages in the amateurish Chinese language teaching schools or the Chinese language teaching schools at weekends have not been trained with the professional culture Chinese courses. Although these Chinese language teachers have the teaching courses and the fervencies, their professional levels are uneven and unequal and also the specialized subjects of many Chinese language teachers are entirely different from their specialized subjects. In order to solve these problems, the Chinese government has sent many professional Chinese language teachers and volunteers to the USA to be the Chinese language teachers and the assistant teachers, also invited the Chinese language teachers in the Chinese language teaching Schools (including the presidents) to train these Chinese language teachers so as to solve the extreme urgencies. But in order to completely solve the problems of the shorted Chinese language teachers, it is the most ultimate fundamental way to help all Chinese language education schools to train more and more indigenous professional Chinese language teachers, especially the “Seed Chinese language teachers” of the high levels and the high administrative levels. For example, many Chinese language teachers who are on-the-jobs can be selected to go to the universities in China or the universities in the USA to study the Chinese languages, or to unite-train some “Seed Chinese language teachers” of the high levels and the high administrative levels with some universities so as to play the roles of the radiations and demonstrations. In addition, some consulates or embassies in the USA and the Chinese overseas Chinese Federation to invite the domestic Chinese language education experts or the
Chinese lecture giving delegations to go to the places where various Chinese language teaching schools are relatively concentrated to perform various Chinese teacher training activities. In addition, various Chinese language teaching schools can have the cooperation with the local Confucius Institutes to train the Chinese language teachers.

**Textbooks:** At present, the Chinese language teaching schools in the USA adopt the currency general Chinese textbooks. The Chinese textbooks which have the pertinences are shorted. Therefore, it is needed to write and compile the Chinese textbooks which have the strong targeted pertinences and the serializations and the multi dimensions so to meet the needs of the Chinese language teaching educations. In the process of writing and compiling the Chinese textbooks, the writers and the editors should pay special attention to the following aspects:

A. The members of the writers and the editors of the Chinese textbooks should go to the places where the Chinese language teaching schools will use the Chinese textbooks to perform the investigation and researches so as to understand the actual needs of the students;

B. The local experienced Chinese language teachers should be absorbed into the Chinese textbook writing and editing groups.

C. The written and edited Chinese textbooks should be used for the trial teaching.

D. The Chinese language teachers should be trained how to use the Chinese language teaching textbooks well.

Of course, it is one of the first factors to select and use the Chinese textbooks. The most important factor is to select and hire the advanced Chinese language teachers according to the actual needs of the Chinese language teaching activities. Therefore, to train the Chinese language teachers how to select and use the Chinese textbooks should become one of the important parts in the activities of training the Chinese language teachers.

**Teaching Methods:** There are the close relationships between the teaching methods and the teachers' Professional backgrounds: The teachers who are not graduated from the normal teacher's universities have the professional basis of the nonprofessional backgrounds. These Chinese language teachers can only explore in and sum up the professional teaching knowledge and the teaching experiences in the teaching practice so as to form their teaching methods. The Chinese language teachers whom China has sent to the USA take the Chinese language as the second language or lack and short the Chinese language teaching theories and methods of
the foreign language teachings. These Chinese language teachers generally adopt the domestic teaching patterns to carry out the Chinese language teaching activities. In view of the above situations, it is necessary that the local Chinese language teachers in the USA should be trained with the Chinese professional knowledge. It is also necessary to help the Chinese language teachers whom China has sent to USA to get familiar with the characteristics of the Chinese language teaching education and classroom management in the USA, help them to adopt the local Chinese language teaching environments and to change their Chinese language teaching ideas and methods. For example, it is the problem for the Chinese language teachers from the mainland of China to be solved about how to encourage and arouse the enthusiasms and interests in learning the Chinese languages of the children of the Chinese people in the USA.

(3) Policy Convoy

In the background of the fast developing of China, the good opportunities have been brought to the Chinese language education and the Chinese language teaching activities in the USA and the new vitalities have been injected into the Chinese language teaching activities. But if the Chinese language education in the USA wants to be continuously and rapidly developed, it will need the supports of the local administration departments of each of the state government in the USA. For example, the ascription problems of the Chinese language teaching schools should be solved. The local legal status of the Chinese language teaching schools should be approved by the local administration departments of each of the state governments in the USA. In addition, the current finance capital recources of the Chinese language teaching schools are very single and come from the Chinese people community. If the Chinese language teaching schools can be integrated into the local mainstream education systems and can obtain the finance capital supports issued by the administration departments of the federal government and the local government in the USA, which will has the great development guarantee for the sustainable and continuous development to the Chinese language teaching schools.

In addition, it is suggested that it should be led by Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China to establish the interaction mechanism organization of the Chinese language teaching educations between China and the USA which consists of the government overseas Chinese department and the base units of the Chinese language teaching educations (as
shown in Figure 2). The interaction mechanism organization of the Chinese language teaching educations will break the complexion phase of the separation from each other and each party does things in his own way between the domestic and overseas Chinese language educations, carry through the scientific and effective cooperation and realize the desires of sharing the Chinese language education resources together, be mutually promoted and be commonly improved from each other. In addition, the government of China can constitute the preferential policies to attract and integrate the civil powers of the Chinese language teaching education in the folks. A variety of the Chinese language teaching education pageants and forums can be held by relying on the domestic Chinese language education bases so that the Chinese language teaching education can be constructed as an international well-known brand. All of these activities can become the roll boosters of the Chinese language teaching education cause in the USA.

![Interaction Mechanism Organization of the Chinese Language Teaching Education Between China and USA](image)

(4) Strengthening Cooperation with Local Confucius Institutes (Confucius classes)

There are about more than 90 Confucius Institutes and more than 100 Confucius classrooms in the USA at present. There is 1 Confucius institute or 2 Confucius Institutes in each state of USA at least. The Confucius Institutes have adopted the running school patterns of the Chinese foreign cooperation. Most of the Confucius Institutes in the USA have become a part of the local university education systems. The opened Chinese language teaching courses have been brought into the credit system courses of the local universities. At the same time, the Confucius Institutes have the good cooperation relations with the local educational institutions at all
levels. In addition, the teaching resources of the Confucius Institutes are very relatively rich because the Confucius Institutes can obtain the great supports from the domestic cooperation partner colleges and universities as well as the Confucius Institute headquarters. The Confucius Institutes also have taken the leading effects in the fields of the Chinese language teaching activities, the training of the Chinese language teachers, the writing and editing of the Chinese textbooks, the education information and the social information consultation etc.

If the Chinese language teaching schools can be cooperated with the local Confucius Institutes more closely, the Chinese language teaching schools can reduce the costs of the investment, decrease the pressures of the Chinese language teachers, increase the diversities of the education levels and the cooperation projects as well as jointly organize the Chinese culture art activities etc with the Confucius Institutes very well with the help of the existing Chinese language teaching bases, the Chinese language teachers, the Chinese language teaching places, the books, the teaching tools and the other important educational resources which the Confucius Institutes have possessed at present.

For example, the students of the Chinese language teaching schools can apply for the scholarships of the Confucius institutes to come to China to study overseas and can take part in the Summer Camp activities for the students of the primary schools and the junior schools as well as the senior schools held by Confucius Institutes. For example, since the year 2011, Zhongshan Chinese language teaching School, Huaxia Chinese language teaching School, Sun-wen Chinese language teaching School and other Chinese language teaching schools as well as other more than ten Chinese language teaching schools which are located near Los Angeles have jointly held many large-scale Chinese culture exchange cooperation projects and school summer camp delegations for the students of the primary schools and the junior schools as well as the senior schools with Confucius Institute of University of California. At the same time, Confucius Institutes have also not regularly invite the Chinese experts from China to these more than ten Chinese language teaching schools to hold the Chinese training classes for the Chinese language teachers. These activities have caused the great impacts in the local areas and have aroused the great concerned attentions of the local media units and the mainstream education organizations.
(5) Cultural Identities

At present, most of the students who are studying in the Chinese language teaching schools are 5-18 years old. These students have accepted the western cultures and contacted all English environments from their childhoods in addition to their families because they were born in the USA. These students have already weakened the sensations to their ancestral home—China and are quite strange in the Chinese cultures and the mores customs. Therefore, at the same time when the Chinese language teaching schools teach the students the Chinese languages, the Chinese language teaching schools should infuse the students with the broad and profound ideas of the Chinese civilization traditional cultures in order to let the children and students have the more intuitive understandings of the Chinese long histories and cultures born in the weight of the Chinese language, further deepen the warm feelings to China from the Chinese civilization traditional cultures, increase their interests in Chinese civilization traditional cultures from the bottoms of their hearts and have clearly the senses of identities as well as can make their psychological orientation by themselves.

(6) Concerting Effort Cooperation and Strive to Integrating into Local Mainstream Societies

At Eighth National Congress of National Association of the Chinese language teaching schools of China and the USA in December 2010, more than 200 representatives discussed about and studied that the traditional Chinese language teaching education in the USA should face how to meet the challenges, how to successfully transform the patterns and how to better integrate into the local mainstream societies in the new situation. The Chinese language teaching School Association in the whole USA made the further exposition and descriptions of how entering the mainstream of the education systems in the USA on the title “Agglomeration Powers, Broadening Channels and Deeping Development” at Ninth National Congress of National Association of the Chinese language teaching schools of China and the USA in December 2012.

If the Chinese language teaching education wants to connect the tracks and be integrated with the mainstream education in the USA, the Chinese language teaching directions should be adjusted properly. Firstly, the social status of the Chinese language teaching schools should be enhanced and upgraded and the Chinese language teaching schools should be brought as far as possible into the
formal national education system of the USA so as to obtain the security guarantees and supports from the administration departments of the governing states of the USA. Secondly, the teaching programs of the Chinese language teaching schools should be constituted according to the Chinese examination standards of the Chinese language teaching programs of the mainstream societies. The Chinese language teachers should be cultivated and trained according to the Chinese language teacher qualification standards in the mainstream societies. For example, the Chinese language has become the examination items, i.e. the preparatory course in the Universities in the USA (AP) (Advanced Placement, the Chinese name for the American University preparatory course, which is applied to the students of the senior schools in whole world who are going to go to the USA to study the program of the undergraduate courses) since the year 2007, it means that the Chinese language teaching education which is connected the tracks with the “local mainstream education” is the main trend in the 21st century[5].

Then, when the Chinese language education is closed to the mainstream education system of USA, not only the achievements of the Chinese language education which have been acquired for many years should be introduced to the corresponding opposing parties, but also the multi-angle profiles and multi-pattern patterns should be adopted to promote and advance the local Chinese language teaching causes so as to expand the influences of the Chinese language teaching schools in the local areas. In addition, we should try our best to highlight and show the Chinese language education as the dominant advanced effects of the ethnic education and should get the Chinese language education to become the internationalization of the Chinese language education, the diversification of the student resources, the local popularization and the typification of the social functions of the Chinese language teaching schools. At last, the bridge roles of the cultural exchanges between China and the USA should adequately be brought into play so that the exchanges and cooperation from the civil culture education and the official culture education between China and the USA can be actively promoted and driven.

(7) Strengthening Researches on Theories and Practices of Chinese Language Education and Chinese Language Teaching Itself

The theory researches of the Chinese language education must be enhanced in order to grasp and understand the whole development statuses, the characteristics of
and the directions of the Chinese language education in the USA. On the one hand, we should probe into the theories of the characteristics, the patterns and the persistent development of conducting the Chinese language teaching schools in each state in the USA. On the other hand, the theory is urgently needed to guide to solve the problems such as the relationships between the Chinese language education and the subject construction and the specialties, the relationships between the Chinese language education and the Chinese language teaching, the relationships between the language teaching and the culture teaching, the textbook construction and the teacher group construction.

It is felicitous and gratified that at present the project which is supported and funded by “The International Research Project of Ministry of Education of USA and Chinese language teaching Education and Researches of Chinese Language Teaching Schools in Chinese Communities in the Whole USA” which is answered for by the investigation and research teams of “Toledo University of Ohio State” has officially been started up. It is the aim and task to comprehensively investigate and research as well as synthetically analyze the Chinese language teaching schools on the basis of the current communities in the whole USA for one time. The Chinese language education research project will integrate the resources of all the Chinese language teaching schools on the basis of the current communities in the whole USA and set an example for the future language education development of Chinese language education and the other ethnic minority language education in the whole USA.

In a word, the Chinese language education is not only a business but also a subject which is being constructed. There are many theoretical and practical problems so that we should research, explore and solve these problems, clearly comb out the situations and the changes of the Chinese language education in the USA at present and put forward the corresponding countermeasures on this base. We will promote the development and grandness of the Chinese language education in the USA and eventually achieve the final purpose of integrating the Chinese language education into the mainstream society in the USA.

Notes:
[1] An Chung Cheng. "Toward a High Quality Program". The Chinese Language Teaching School Association in the United States 9th National Convention and Chinese language Education Conference. 2012.
[2] Ye Jing. “The History and Current Situation of the Overseas Chinese Language Education”, Theory and Practice, 2012(11).

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[5] An Chung Cheng. “Toward a High Quality Program”. The Chinese Language Teaching School Association in the United States 9th National Convention and Chinese language Education Conference. 2012.

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[1] An Chung Cheng. “Toward a High Quality Program”. The Chinese Language Teaching School Association in the United States 9th National Convention and Chinese language Education Conference. 2012.

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[5] The population of the Chinese people in the USA arrive at nearly 4300000, the higher culture and English bias: http://www.chinareviewnews.com, the central social commentary in Washington.2012-01-30.

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