

マイノリティの子ども之母国語教育における主体的取り組み：親の運営するボストンの日曜中国語学校の事例

Taking Initiatives in Minority Children's Mother Tongue Education: Experiences of a Parent-Run Sunday Chinese School in Boston

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immigrant language, minority language, mother tongue education, parent-run, bilingual education, family bilingualism, curriculum design

ABSTRACT

This paper reports the recent changes in the US policies on bilingual education at schools and its implications on mother tongue or second language education of immigrant children with a focus on the Chinese community. It also captures and analyzes the phenomenon of the increasing interest in the programs of Chinese language education at both public and private schools as illustrated in the number of schools that offer Chinese language subjects and the official AP exam of Chinese language and Culture by the College Board. However, the researcher argues that present system of the Chinese language education offered by the 264 schools in the US are far from sufficient for the large population of bilingual Chinese children already in the US and coming to the US as immigrants or residents every year. To fill in the gap, some bilingual parents take positive actions to teach or support their children's mother tongue or L1, i.e. Chinese, at home or in weekend schools. In this paper, a parent-run Chinese language school in the Boston area, Newton Chinese Language School, is reported as a case study. The significance of the school lies in its scale, long history, management, curriculum, parent participation and social contributions. As this research is a longitudinal one, only partial data is reported in this paper including the general information, the brief history, the mission statement and the 2008 curriculum of the

school. The data in this paper is mainly qualitative from the interviews with the management and teachers and the homepage of the school.

本論は、米国内の学校のバイリンガル教育について近年における政策の変化を報告するとともに、その変化が移民の子どもたちに対する母語教育及び第二言語教育にどのような影響を及ぼしているかについて、中華系社会に焦点を定めて検証する。また、大学委員会 (the College Board) 認定の中国語諸科目をカリキュラムに取り入れたり、中国語・中国文化に関する認定試験を受験させたりする公立及び私立学校数の伸びから明らかなように、学校における中国語教育に対して関心が高まっているという現象に注目すると同時に、中国語教育プログラムそのものに対する分析も行なう。しかし、全米264校で行なわれている中国語教育の現行システムでは、多数の中華系の子どもたちを受け入れるところまで態勢が整っていない。米国在住の中華系バイリンガル児童生徒に加えて、毎年流入してくる中華系の子どもたちの数が増加しているからである。このギャップを埋めようとして、バイリンガルの親のなかから、子どもたちの母語 (L1) である中国語を保持したり、教育したりしようと積極的に行動を起こす者が出てきている。本論がケーススタディとして取り上げるボストンの「ニュートン中国語学校」は、親の運営による中国語学校の1つである。事例研究の対象とした理由は、当校の規模、伝統、カリキュラム、親の参加度、社会への貢献度である。当該研究が長期的視野に立つものであるため、本論で報告するデータは、「ニュートン中国語学校」に関する一般情報、沿革、教育方針、2008年度カリキュラムなど、ごく限られたものである。本データは、当校の管理職や教員に対する面接調査、及びホームページから得たものであり、主として質的研究データである。

In the past twenty years, researches on bilingualism and bilingual education treated the field mostly as an academic principle, approaching it mostly from education, linguistic, psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic perspectives at individual, family, and societal levels in various contexts worldwide. However, discussions and studies on the political aspect of bilingual education and bilingualism seem to be increasing in the recent years, especially after 1998. In 1998, Proposition 227 was passed in the State of California of the US. It was a very important event for both the people who believed in the values and benefits of being bilingual and people who believed otherwise because the proposition eliminated the use of the first language (L1) of bilingual children for instructional purposes. Needless to say, the debate over the issues regarding bilingual children's education which involved L1 in school settings started long before 1998 in California. The opponents to the use of L1 instruction in schools

claimed that the insufficient contact with English was to blame for academic failures (especially in English language) experienced by some bilingual children, to put the arguments simply. On the other hand, the proponents of bilingual education argued for the various advantages of the use of L1 in the classroom, e.g. facilitating comprehension of content, cognitive benefits which can be transferred to another language, and more parental involvement. Despite the academic arguments and evidence which showed no direct link between academic problems and L1 programs, California voters passed the proposition. Along with the debate, the mass media nationwide slanted against bilingual education and distorted the role of bilingual programs (Krashen 1999). "By 2002, the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs was renamed the Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement." (Crago 2006)

The fact that the US is an immigration country has not changed. New immigrants keep coming into the country for their dreams and their children's future. Most have studied English for numerous years before they got the tickets to enter the US. Being bilingual, i.e. speaking English up to a certain level, is usually the foremost important condition for immigrants who are not political or economic refugees. Many of them bring their "foreign-born" children into the country and speak their mother tongues at home. With the economic development and political changes in China, the US immigration bureau is admitting much more Chinese to the US than before in the recent years. According to the US Census Bureau, the total national population as shown in 2000 was 281,421,906 (301,621,157 in 2007), and the total Chinese population was 2,432,585 with 1,716,682 of "foreign born". The factsheets of the US Census Bureau also show that the percentage of Chinese children attending schools is 100% and the graduation percentage is also 100%. In general, Asian students perform extremely well academically in general from kindergartens to graduate schools. Out of the total population of Chinese (2,432,585), 1,943,644 (population 5 years and over) indicated that they spoke a language other than English at home, which is a significant number. This means that, without counting the population of 4 years and below, 80% of Chinese speak a language (of Asian and Pacific Island languages) different from English at home, thus making them bilinguals on everyday basis. It is highly likely that 1,716,682 "foreign-born" Chinese speak their mother tongue, Mandarin or a dialect of Chinese, at home. It can also be assumed that children in such families speak the language(s) which are the same as their parents and grandparents. Another interesting phenomenon about the Chinese community that is commonly observed in the US is that grandparents are invited to the US to take care of their grandchildren. Though the statistics of the Chinese grandparents who are

caregivers to grandchildren was not found in the Census data, it is a common practice amongst the young Chinese couples who both work and have young children to invite their parents to the US to babysit their children. My research in Boston in 2007 showed that 22 families out of 30 that brought grandparents from China to take care of their grandchildren when grandchildren were born.

With such a big population of Chinese or bilingual Chinese living in the US, what is the situation of Chinese language education at schools? The website of Asia Society, a non-profit and non-partisan educational organization in the US, has the survey data showing 264 schools including both public and private schools from K to 12th grade offer Chinese language (Mandarin) classes as a subject. This is not a small number considering the fact that many of such programs were implemented recently. The demand for Chinese language is evidently higher than before: not only more children of Chinese decent want to study either their mother tongue or their ethnic language but also more non-Chinese children want to have the opportunity to learn Chinese language and culture. Obviously, the interest can be traced to both genuine reasons for language and culture as well as pragmatic reasons such as future studies and jobs. However, are 264 schools enough to provide all children with the interest to learn Chinese? Where will the money come from? After 1998, it seems that some States (other than California) also cut down the funding for bilingual programs or training bilingual teachers. Private schools usually have more freedom in deciding their own budgets. Public schools, on the other hands, will have to rely on public funding. There are 49 schools in Massachusetts that have Chinese programs. In the Great Boston area where I conducted research on the case study of this paper, there are around 9 schools that offer Chinese language education:

Table 1: Schools that Offer Chinese Language Subjects

State	Name of School	Type	Area	Elementary	High School
Massachusetts	Amherst Regional High School	public	Amherst, MA		9-12
Massachusetts	Belmont Hill School	private	Belmont, MA	7-8	9-12
Massachusetts	Berkshire School	private	Sheffield, MA		9-12
Massachusetts	Bigelow Middle School	public	Newton, MA	6-8	
Massachusetts	Boston Latin School	public magnet	Boston, MA	6-8	9-12
Massachusetts	Boston Public Schools	public	Boston, MA	K-8	
Massachusetts	Brookline High School	public	Brookline, MA		9-12
Massachusetts	Buckingham Browne & Nichols School	private	Cambridge, MA		9-12
Massachusetts	Cambridge-Ellis School	private	Cambridge, MA	Pre-K-K	

Source: Asia Society <http://www.askasia.org/chinese/index.htm>

In the midst of the trend of cutting funding for bilingual programs in the US, the US federal government, through the National Security Education Program (NSEP), announced a plan in 2005 to establish a comprehensive, sequential Chinese language instruction program for students in kindergarten through college as reported by the National School Boards Association (NSBA). This program, known as the Chinese K16 Flagship Project, was aimed to increase the number of Americans fluent in the Chinese language and knowledgeable about the history and culture of China. Some funding was provided for Chinese language programs by the US Defense Department, which was quite ironical as it was not from the Education Department. There are two components to the Flagship program – immersion for non-Chinese students and heritage program for Chinese-American students. So far, there were only reports of such funding for programs at college level, hence K16. As for K-12, the schools would have to find other revenues.

Another recent development regarding the teaching of Chinese language is that the US College Board started to offer an “Advanced Placement” (AP) exam for “Chinese Language and Culture” in

2006 (along with Chinese, Japanese language was also offered for the first time in the same year). The following are the question and answer by College Board regarding the level of language proficiency and understanding of culture required for this exam:

What level of Chinese language ability and what aspects of Chinese culture will be taught in the course and assessed in the exam?

The AP Chinese Language and Culture course will be roughly equivalent to a 4th semester college course. The course and exam will incorporate Chinese cultural information within the teaching of reading, writing, and speaking the language. The specific aspects of Chinese culture to be included in the course will be posted here at a later date.

(Source: US College Board)

The results of the AP exams of languages have been released by the College Board showing remarkable results for Chinese Language and Culture. 81.1% of test takers achieved the top score of 5, much higher

than with other language tests. Does this mean that Chinese language is no longer as hard as before with its characters and pinyin system or that the pedagogy for this subject has reached a close-to-perfect level? The answer is no, because only 11.1 percent of the 3,260 people taking the Mandarin exam did not

indicate on their test that they “regularly speak or hear the foreign language of the examination at home, or that they have lived for one month or more in a country where the language is spoken.” (Asia Society: <http://www.askasia.org>)

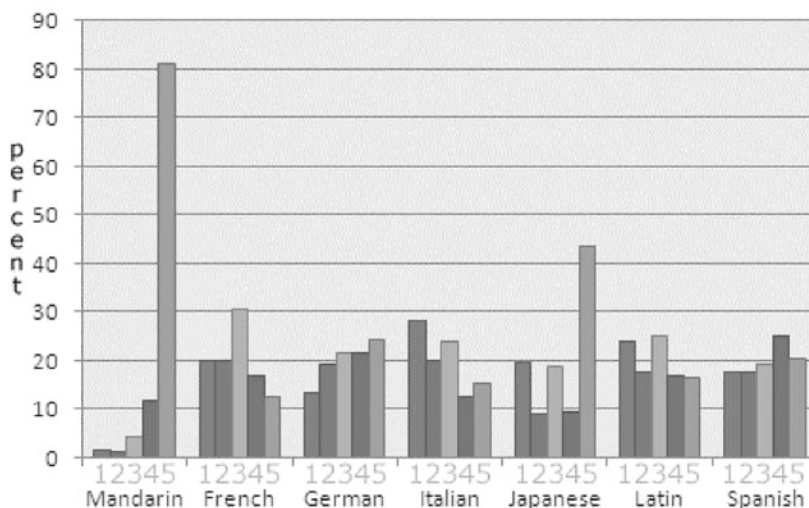


Fig. 1: Comparison of scores across language exams

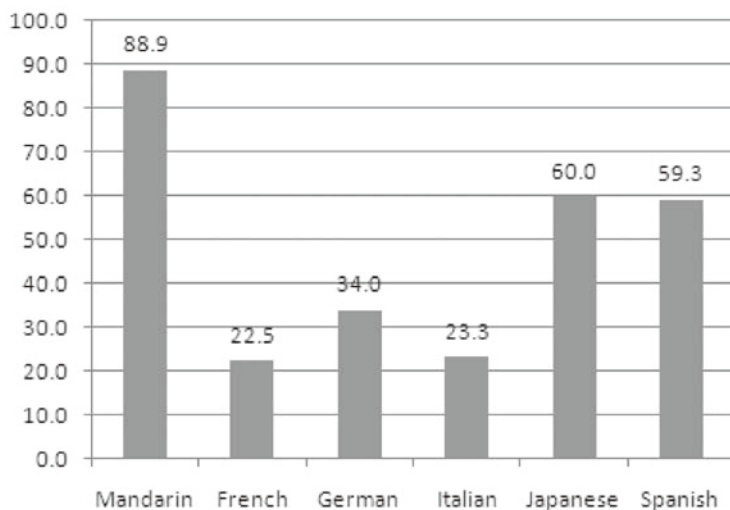


Fig. 2: The percentages of test takers who “regularly speak or hear the foreign language of the examination at home” or “have lived for one month or more in a country where the language is spoken”

As mentioned above, the total population of Chinese was 2,432,585 in 2000 with 80% of the population speaking a language other than English at home. Assuming that the number of schools (K-12) that offer Chinese language subject remains to be 264 in 2008, it is highly likely that a large percent of Chinese school children are unable to attend such programs at school. Since 80% of the population speak a language other than English at home, it can be inferred that family plays an important role to support their children's development of Chinese language(s). Family bilingualism is an important and old area of bilingualism research. Since 1902 when Maurice Grammont, a French linguist, published his research in family bilingual education in the book *Observations sur le Language des Enfants* (*Observations on Children's Language*) (1902), much attention has been given to methodologies, attitudes/motivation of parents, language attainment, cultural and identity developments in bilinguals. Recognizing the difficulties of family bilingual education, handbooks introducing academic research data, experiences and strategies have been published to provide support for parents who raise children bilingually at home (Sanders 1984, Baker 2007, Harding-Esch & Riley 2003, Barron-Hauwaert 2004). However, these books do not always reach the desks of the bilingual parents who are non-researchers or non-teachers. Raising children bilingually is a long and complex process that varies in different contexts. Often, the home language is a minority language and isolated from the speech community of the language as well. It is also a fact that some parents give up teaching L2 or the mother tongue/minority language at home and send their children to commercial schools or classes in the community or area, as in many of the cases in Japan. However, some parents who do not agree with the educational systems of commercial schools or who live far from any of these classes join with other parents of bilingual children to teach by themselves,

i.e. parent-run schools or groups. There are many advantages to this style of bilingual education, such as sharing teaching ideas, reduced fatigue from teaching alone, and children being able to meet peers.

This paper reports such a school which is run by Chinese parents for bilingual Chinese children in the area of "Great Boston" (Boston city and its neighboring towns) to develop Chinese language abilities and cultural knowledge. The school history and education system will be introduced. This case study is part of a longitudinal study of family bilingualism by Chinese families in the world. The research methods employed for this study include interviews with school administrator, teachers, parents and students, translated information in homepage and e-mail messages from school administration to all parents, and direct observation of classes. Thus, both qualitative and quantitative data will be included.

THE CASE STUDY: Newton Chinese Language School (NCLS)

In the academic year of 2007-2008 (Japanese university system), I visited the school of the case study, NCLS, once a week, except public and school holidays over a period of 5 months (from September, 2007 to March, 2008). The general information of the school is as follows:

From my research on parent-run schools in Boston, I was aware of four such schools that scattered in different towns and cities in the region. Driven by the fine reputation of the school, I decided to pay NCLS a visit for both my research and my son who was looking for a weekend school to maintain his Chinese language. My first visit to the school was the first day of classes for the school at the beginning of September, 2007. My first impression of the school started from outside of the school where crowds of Chinese parents coming

Table 1: General information of NCLS

Name	Newton Chinese Language School (NCLS)
Type of organization	Non-profit
Supervision & governing bodies	Board of Directors (9 members inclusive of a representative of teachers and a representative of parents) Parents Representatives Association (13 members)
Management	Parents (9 members: 1 principal, 1 vice principal, 5 chiefs of various school affairs, 1 assistant for principal, 1 chief editor for school journal)
Teachers	Parents
Teaching assistants	Enrolled students, graduates of the school, children whose is competent in Chinese language
Time of Operation	Sunday afternoons 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm (except public and school holidays)
Semesters	2, same with public school system
Class Hours	Period 1: 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm Period 2: 3:40 pm – 5:00 pm
Eligible Students	Age: Kindergarten to K12 (children of 4.5 years and older) The average student is from Chinese speaking families (regardless of dialects) and who have some knowledge and skills of Chinese language. Students are placed into suitable classes according to their school grade and their level of Chinese.
Number of students	Regular students of school age: 800 (2007)
Types of classes	Chinese language classes Cultural classes Test preparation classes in English and Chinese English classes for seniors
Location	A rented public elementary school in Newtonville (west of Boston city)
Fees	Charged by semester. Average fee per class for children and adults: \$140; Fee for senior classes per semester: \$50.

from all directions with children and policemen busy directing traffic for the crowds. The numbers of students and parents were incredibly large, 800 regular school-age children enrolled in the various classes.

How did the school become so popular? How did the parents manage such a big school? How could the school manage to last so many years? What was the curriculum? Who were the teachers? I had many questions but had to wait for the registration

period to be over before I was able to interview the management, later some teachers, parents and students. The management of 2007–2008 that I interviewed include: the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Wang Weidong; Principal, Mr. Liu Xichun; Vice Principal, Ms Li Ping; the Director of the General Services, Mr. Lei Longping; and the previous long-time principal, Mr. Shen Anping. Only partial data will be reported in this paper in the form of summaries.

A Brief History of NCLS (Summarized interviews mainly with Mr. Shen Anping and Mr. Wang Weidong)

NCLS was founded in Boston in 1959 by three Taiwanese families. There were around 5 students when it was started. The teachers were the parents of the three families, and the children were the teachers' children only. According to Mr. Shen, the founders of the school were Taiwanese researchers who had come from Taiwan with their families to conduct research and study in Boston, but soon realized that their children could not study Chinese at school or outside of school and were losing Chinese day by day. The worrying parents decided to take their children's Chinese education in their own hands and started teaching their children Chinese by themselves. Soon, more members started to join the group, but all the members were from Taiwan. The language that was taught at school followed Taiwanese Chinese curriculum and the traditional characters were used. By the end of 1970s, the school already had around 100 students. At the end of 1970 and the beginning of 1980s, the relationship between the People's Republic of China and the US improved, which was reflected in the sudden increase of Mainland Chinese going to the US to study or to visit families and relatives. Many of the students from China chose to remain in the US after their studies were complete instead of returning to China. Some later nationalized in the US. By the mid of 1980s, many Chinese of this group brought their families from China to live in the US as immigrants. Similar to the Taiwanese students and researchers in the 1950s, Chinese from Mainland China also faced the same situation with their Children's Chinese language. Mr. Shen was amongst the first parents from Mainland China who discovered and joined NCLS in the middle of 1980s. Both of Mr Shen's children studied Chinese language and culture at NCLS. With the increase of Mainland Chinese

members, Taiwanese families decreased around 1990. Mr. Shen and some other Chinese parents requested the school to teach simplified characters instead of traditional characters because Mainland China used simplified characters. The school management and teachers faced its first crisis and finally decided to introduce simplified characters in some classes but also keep traditional characters in some other classes. Later, Mainland Chinese parents started to get involved in school management and curriculum design, two very important areas of the school. Mr. Shen became the first principal from Mainland China in the beginning of 1990. He remained in the position for 4 years. During this period, he introduced the system of Board of Directors, put a cap to the maximum number of years for principals, and PTA (parent representatives association) amongst others. Since Mr. Shen, the principals of NCLS have been Mainland Chinese only. After Taiwanese families became the minority of the school, many left the school and formed a different school which is devoted to Taiwanese education system of Chinese language. Few Taiwanese families as well as teachers remained till now. Up to 2000, the size of NCLS grew steadily and annually. However, after 2000, the number of student increased drastically with an annual increase of over 100 in some years. Many times the school wanted to stop admitting new students as a way of limiting the number of enrollment, but eventually they decided to move out of downtown Boston and to the present location, a far bigger venue, so that more students could be admitted. The school did the best they could to accommodate the demand for Chinese language and culture education. Currently, NCLS rents an elementary school for the afternoons on Sundays during school semesters. Mr. Shen said that the number of students increased sharply in the past 5 years and the school is still short of space even though it is already occupying the whole school. NCLS has developed from a 5-kid group to an

800-student language school. This number does not include some adults and senior students.

The School Mission

The following is the school mission published in the homepage of the school:

Our Mission (excerpt)

Newton Chinese School has 49 years history. It's the community that seniors, parents and their kids love to go for every Sunday. Newton Chinese Language School (NCLS), a nonprofit education organization registered in MA, is one of the oldest (with 49 years of history) and one of the largest in the great Boston area. NCLS offers Chinese Language learning programs and variety of Chinese culture training programs. The primary mission statement of the school is to serve the local, as well as great Boston communities in excellence for culture diversity training and language teaching with the specialty in Chinese language and culture. NCLS provides Chinese Language classes ranging from kindergarten to grade 10 and cultural classes including folk dancing, Chinese painting, martial arts, etc.

NCLS is also actively involved in local school culture diversity program throughout the town of Newton and several other towns in the area, as well as state and local town culture activities and social events throughout the year....

The Curriculum

The curriculum of NCLS can be divided into two components. The first component is the classes designed for school children which consists of

(Chinese) language classes (*yuwen-ke* 语文课) and other academic subjects such as SAT preparation and Mathematics classes that not necessarily conducted in Chinese. The second component of the curriculum is the culture classes (*wenhua-ke* 文化课) offered mainly for pre-school children, adults and seniors (grandparents). Since the school has only two periods, classes are arranged to benefit the school children, i.e. languages classes are only offered in the first period while SAT, Math and culture classes aimed at young children classes are in taught in the second period. Students will be able to take both types of academic classes if they wish in this arrangement. Other classes for adults and seniors are placed during both first and second periods.

The first period is the main part of the school curriculum and almost all regular students are enrolled in one of two of these classes because this period is mainly for Chinese language classes. The language classes are arranged according to the school grades of the students in their regular schools during the week. The textbooks used are published in China but written for students who learn Chinese as a second language. The second period offers academic skills classes for children, culture classes for both children and adults, and English classes for seniors. The teaching materials are usually provided by the teachers for a fee. Some adult classes need to acquire uniforms or costumes for performances.

In the fall of 2008, the following three classes were added as the third period. However, it is not clear if these classes will become regular classes in future.

- 成人形体健美 Adult Fitness Exercise (1 class)
- 成人交谊舞(初) Adult Ballroom Dance (Beginner) (1 class)
- 成人活动 Adult Activity Class (1 class)

The total of classes offered in the fall semester of 2008 amounts to 67. The curriculum of NCLS is practical, unique and excellent in its selection of subjects. It not only meets the needs of children for

Table 2: Classes Offered by NCLS (Fall, 2008)

Names of Classes in Period 1	No. of Classes	Name of Classes in Period 2	No. of Classes
学前班 Language, K Grade	4	学前班 甲班-2 Language, K Grade	1
一年级 Language, 1st Grade	5	iChinese(直映)趣味快速认字(Beginner & Intermediate)	2
二年级 Language, 2nd Grade	4	SAT: Critical Reading (1) & (2)	2
三年级 Language, 3rd Grade	3	数学, Math (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)	9
四年级 Language, 3rd Grade	4	绘画 Art (Chinese Brush, Chinese Brush Painting, Water Color, Drawing, Sketching, Cartoon, Crayon, Craft) (Ages 5-10 and above)	11
五年级 Language, 3rd Grade	4	少儿表演艺术 Young Children Performing Arts	1
六年级 Language, 3rd Grade	3	儿童演唱艺术 Children Vocal Arts (7.5 yrs old)	1
七年级 Language, 3rd Grade	3	儿童民族舞 Children Chinese Folk Dance	1
八年级 Language, 8th Grade	3	儿童劳作 Children Crafts	1
九年级 Language, 9th Grade	2	儿童舞蹈基础 Children Dance Basics	1
十年级 Language, 10th Grade	2	书法 Chinese Calligraphy	1
SAT II 中文 SAT II Chinese	1	国际象棋 (高级) Chess (Advanced Level)	1
数学11, Math - XI	1	围棋 (初中级) GO (begin/intermediate level)	1
绘画一甲(蜡笔, 4-5岁) Art 1A: Crayon	1	国际象棋 (初级) Chess (beginner Level)	1
成人交谊舞(中) Adult Ballroom Dance (Intermediate)	1	乒乓球 Ping-Pong	1
成人素描 Adult Sketch Drawing	1	武术 Martial Art	1
成人国画 Adult Brush Painting	1	篮球 Basketball (beginner & intermediate)	2
成人舞蹈健身 Adult Dance Exercise	1	少儿抖空竹 (六岁以上) (Chinese Yoyo)	1
成人演唱艺术 Adult Vocal Arts	1	击剑 Fencing Class (beginner & intermediate)	2
成人运动健身 Adult Aerobic Exercise	1	成人瑜伽 Adult Yoga	1
成人书画研习班 Adult calligraphy and painting	1	成人交谊舞(高) Adult Ballroom Dance (Advance)	1
老人国画 Senior Brush Painting	1	老人英语会话1 Senior English conversation (Advanced)	1
		老人英语会话2 Senior English conversation (Beginner)	1
Total number of classes	19	Total number of classes	45

Chinese language and culture also provides support for adults and seniors alike. NCLS also functions as a community center where all age groups of

Chinese community gather for various kinds of social activities (Due to limitation of space, this part is omitted).

Concluding Remarks

The US's policies on bilingual education have undergone modification since 1998, offering less financial support for L1 medium educational programs at schools and reinforcing the programs for stronger English and academic skills especially amongst minority children. In contrast to this trend, the US policymakers seem to recognize the needs for more Chinese language programs along side with the economic development between China and the US. The College Board added Chinese to its AP exams in 2006. More schools and universities are offering Chinese language classes for both native level students as well as non-native speaking students. It seems that the Chinese language rush is on. However, the number of Chinese language programs that are currently offered at schools is far from enough for the increasing number of Chinese students who desire for more advanced studies. For many bilingual Chinese students, Sunday/Saturday schools are a valuable and viable alternative. NCLS is one of the oldest parent-run language schools in the US and perhaps the longest running one in the world. I am fortunate to be the first researcher to study this school and participate in some of its classes and activities. It is a fascinating school to study for its successes in curriculum design, management, and the social roles that it plays. Due to the limitation of space, only part of my research on NCLS is included in this paper. Other aspects of the school such as teaching materials, assessment, teacher recruitment, teacher training, other aspects of the organizational structure, and social functions will be reported in future papers.

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