13 Multilingualism(s), Globalization and Identity

Learning 'Chinese' as an Additional Language

Patricia A. Duff

13.1 INTRODUCTION

A growing number of individuals worldwide are learning 'Chinese', a cover label for many different Sinitic languages or regional dialects (known as *fāngyán*) in a wide variety of circumstances (Duff et al., 2013; Duff & Doherty, 2019; Kurpaska, 2019). Chinese is being learned in Sinophone regions such as Greater China by monolinguals learning their primary language, by multilinguals whose first language (e.g. Tibetan, Uyghur, Mongolian) is non-Sinitic, and by sojourners and migrants from abroad (e.g. Americans, Vietnamese, Nigerians). It is also being learned, increasingly, in non-Sinophone regions and in diaspora contexts worldwide. Among non-Chinese-background students in formal education programmes, the learning and use of Chinese, which might once have been considered 'exotic' or novel, has become increasingly commonplace. This trend is in part due to globalization and the oft-cited 'rise' of China, especially in the 2010s (Duff et al., 2013; Duff et al., 2015), and perceived opportunities connected with China's expanding geopolitical and economic power.

In addition to personal, intellectual and economic motives people might have for learning Chinese, major political investments in Chinese education worldwide over the past two decades have also increased opportunities for many students and garnered significant media attention. For example, hundreds of Confucius Institutes worldwide have been established by the Chinese government to teach Mandarin language and Chinese culture from kindergarten through to university (K–16) or in community programmes to European, African, Indian, Thai and other populations (Duff et al., 2013; Duff

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et al., 2015; Gil, 2017).[1] Furthermore, Chinese teaching and learning have been politicized, funded, and promoted by national governments outside of China, such as in the United States. Resources from local, state and federal governments, including the Department of Defense National Security Language Initiative, support the teaching of Mandarin and other 'critical' languages (e.g. Korean, Arabic) to advanced levels. Their curricular goals are achieved through dual-language, immersion and 'flagship' programmes (Sung & Tsai, 2019), as well as traditional foreign-language programmes. The intention is to create well-articulated learning pathways, experiences and curricula from school to university (K–16) that enable students to reach very high levels of proficiency that serve the country's strategic needs. These diverse, ever-changing teaching and learning contexts have implications for the types of multilingualism and geopolitical relationships that are fostered locally and more globally and the identities learners negotiate in the process. In this chapter, through the presentation of a number of cases, I consider how multilingualism, globalization and identity intersect in relation to Chinese across contemporary learning contexts.

13.2 CHANGING LOCAL AND GLOBAL CONTEXTS FOR MULTILINGUALISM(S) INVOLVING CHINESE

The positioning of Chinese as a 'global language' has roots in China's growing influence on economies around the world by means of outbound tourism, significant investments in local business and infrastructure projects (e.g. the Belt and Road Initiative), increasing manufacturing and international trade (e.g. in Nepal – Sharma, 2017; or South Africa, Kenya and Uganda – van den Heever, 2018), as well as inbound migration to Greater China for many of the

[1] It is frequently observed that these Confucius Institutes constitute a form of 'soft-power diplomacy' (see Duff et al., 2013; Duff et al., 2015) similar to the goals of other language and culture programmes developed by national governments for their own national languages and cultures and interests: for example, English (British Council), German (Goethe-Institut) and French (Alliance Française). However, Confucius Institutes (CIs) are different in that they are housed *within* schools and universities worldwide, not as independent external institutions, to enhance the status of Chinese language and culture. The pro-China activities and ideologies inculcated within the programmes are (it is believed) designed to make local populations more open and sympathetic to China and Chinese culture. See Gil (2017) for a more detailed discussion of CIs' *extensivity*, *intensivity* and *velocity* (rapid implementation) but what he deems is still limited or 'diffused' societal or global societal or state-to-state political impact due to other mitigating factors and perceptions.

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same economic reasons. However, the global spread of Chinese and attendant forms of multilingualism are not new phenomena. Chinese communities have a very long, complex and fluid history of transnational migration, multilingualism and cultural hybridity in response to both needs and opportunities on most continents (Duff, 2015). For example, in my own setting in British Columbia, on the west coast of Canada, there is a large, long-established but diverse Chinese–Canadian community, one that has intermixed with Indigenous and other ethnic groups, including those from different parts of Greater China, over many generations (Mizuta, 2017).

Naturally, Chinese-involved multilingualism has changed over the generations due to many contextual factors (see, e.g. Duff & Doherty, 2019). There are consequently many forms, combinations and trajectories of multilingualism in which Chinese plays a role and, like the term *Chinese(s)* itself, *multilingualism* should probably be a plural noun, not a singular one: multilingualism**S**. This plurality and indeterminacy has many implications for experiences of learning and using Chinese(s), as well as for our understanding of the complexity of identity in relation to multilingualism(s) when each situation is unique. I illustrate this point with case studies in this chapter.

Contemporary learners of Chinese might view Mandarin or Cantonese as their ancestral or 'heritage' languages. Alternatively, Mandarin or Cantonese might be viewed as 'foreign' or 'second' languages unconnected to their ethnic heritage or with which they have only tenuous personal connections, if any. Chinese is, in addition, being learned by spouses marrying into ethnic Chinese families (e.g. many thousands of Vietnamese, Filipina and Indonesian women marrying Taiwanese men in Taiwan; Tseng & Chun, 2019); by foreign migrant workers (typically labourers, e.g. from Bangladesh and other parts of South or Southeast Asia); and by African traders in southern China and Chinese traders in Africa (Han, 2013).

In these and other such contexts, the Chinese language variety being learned might be one of several co-occurring languages in people's homes and communities, each with a different sociolinguistic status. In diglossic situations in Greater China, Mandarin (Putonghua) is the official language of schooling but not of the home or community in ethnic minority areas. Nor is it the home language typically among migrant families whose languages are not Chinese/Sinitic but have moved to Mandarin-speaking parts of China (at least until the children start school, when language shift may occur within that generation and sometimes for their parents, in turn). In these contexts, local varieties of Mandarin, such as Wuhan Mandarin, or other vernacular dialects are often widely used instead of a more standard variety, or rich combinations

of several of these languages are freely used as part of interlocutors' communication repertoires (Curdt-Christiansen & Gao, 2020; Duff, 2020). 'Learners' of standard Mandarin in such cases include a large swathe of the multilingual, migrant Chinese population.

Mandarin Chinese has gained considerable prominence in recent decades in education programmes in schools, universities and community programmes in Greater China and in diaspora countries. Yet it should be noted that Cantonese revitalization is occurring in some diaspora Chinese learning contexts, such as at my university, where a vibrant Cantonese programme now exists alongside Mandarin (Pai, 2019; Pai & Duff, 2021). To understand why people are choosing to learn 'Chinese' (or specific varieties of the language such as Mandarin vs. Cantonese), we need to understand the often-transitory multilingual repertoires, identities, mobilities and aspirations of contemporary learners of Chinese languages and the ideologies and discourses they negotiate in doing so, as well as local histories.

13.3 A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING MULTILINGUALISM AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

In 2016, a group of authors with shared interdisciplinary interests in broadly sociocultural, ecological approaches to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) produced an article and created a heuristic figure depicting the many layers and factors – macro (societal, political), meso (institutional) and micro (social-interactional and even neurocognitive) – operating in SLA in our contemporary multilingual world (Douglas Fir Group/DFG, 2016; see Figure 13.1). This conceptualization highlights the principle that learners are socialized into learning and using multiple languages, dialects, semiotic resources or assemblages and script systems through many forms of mediation and experience, ranging from national language policies to an interlocutor's corrective feedback. Through this process, learners encounter new linguistic forms, communicative repertoires, language/literacy practices, ideologies and worldviews, as well as identities or senses of who they are in the world and in a given situation. This model is not deterministic or reproductive, however. It allows for the contestation and transformation of practices, systems and beliefs vertically, from the top down and bottom up, as well as horizontally or diagonally.

Indeed, as one of the original DFG co-authors, in Duff (2019) I observed that this two-dimensional heuristic, while certainly helpful, is necessarily

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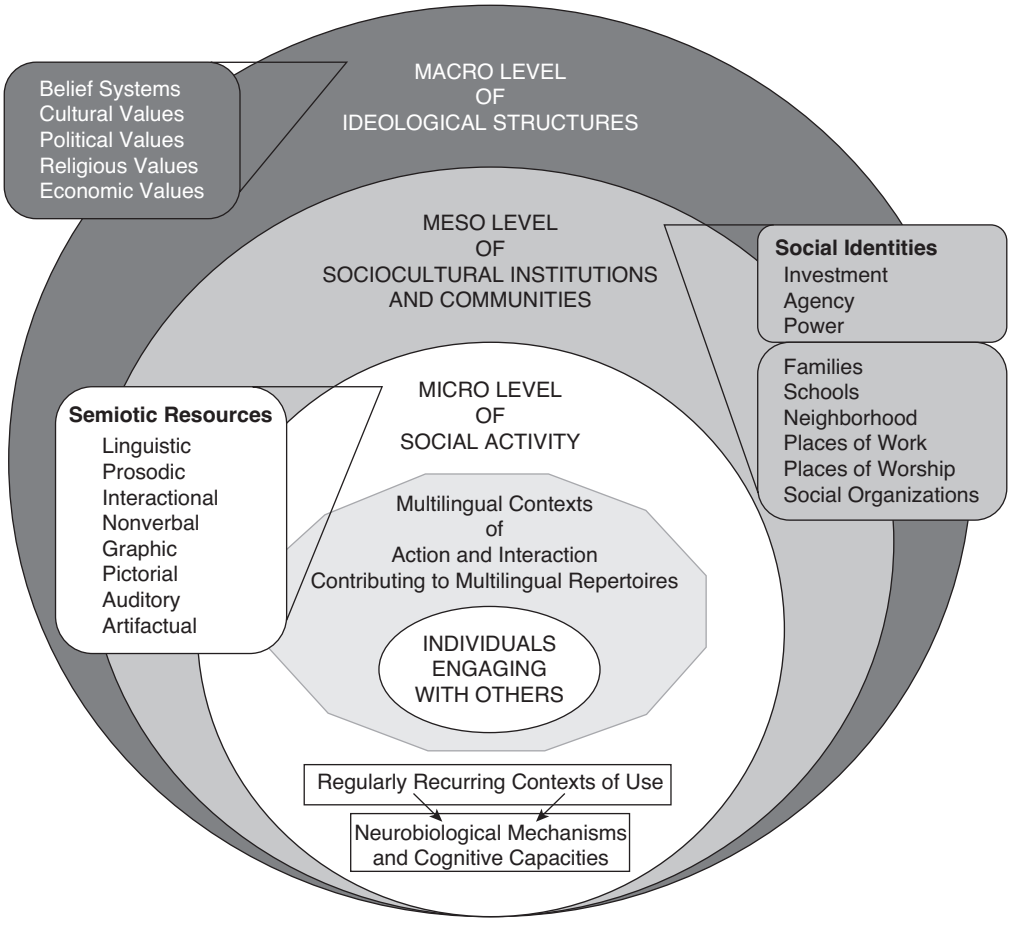
limited and seemingly static. It cannot easily capture change in linguistic knowledge and behaviour over time (i.e. across multiple time scales). Nor can it adequately capture the dynamic multiple configurations – and languages, ideologies, etc. – that individuals negotiate across their local and extended networks and communities *at any given time*. Furthermore, the figure cannot easily show how constructs such as identity, agency and power operate at or are interpolated at *every* level or scale (not just at the meso level, as depicted), or capture the intersectionality of identity itself with unique combinations of race, class, language, gender, sexuality, age, religion, nationality and other

Figure 13.1 A transdisciplinary framework for SLA in a multilingual world (DFG, 2016)



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social factors potentially at play in people's perceptions, behaviours and situated experiences of multilingualism. These are dimensions that researchers can analyze in detailed case studies of multilingualism, language learning and identity within a particular context as I explain in the following sections.

13.3.1 Language Ideologies and Identities in Chinese Language Learning

Depicted at the macro level are the all-important circulating ideologies or beliefs in society regarding the relative status or symbolic value of particular languages (English vs. Mandarin; Mandarin vs. Cantonese; Mongolian vs. Mandarin; vernacular vs. Standard speech forms) and their speakers. These ideologies have histories and antecedents, of course, such as legacies of colonialism, migration and the consolidation of power in certain areas and regimes. Naturally, these ideologies may not be universally espoused, appreciated, reproduced or enacted in everyday practice but their codification and enforcement in international spheres (e.g. in organizations that choose English but not Spanish or Mandarin as their working language) and in national language education policies and laws may intensify or accelerate their impact and uptake. Yet, ideologies and policies are also subject to contestation and change. One stark example is that of bilingual schooling in autonomous regions of China once permitted both in policy and practice (e.g. Uyghur–Mandarin, Tibetan–Mandarin or Mongolian–Mandarin) that is no longer allowed; transmission or use of the minority language may be banned and even punished due to political ideologies and rhetoric related to Sinification, Mandarinization, unification, terrorism, assimilation and ethnolinguistic erasure (e.g. Blum, 2019; Gan, 2020; The Economist, 2020). Teaching, learning and using the minority languages, even in diaspora contexts, can raise suspicions and have serious consequences for those involved, near and far. Multilingualism in these settings involving these languages can be very dangerous. Such colonization and cultural genocide is not new, however. The historical and contemporary record is replete with examples worldwide (including in Canada) of Indigenous and other groups that have experienced inter-ethnic conflict, oppression and colonization. These factors necessarily have an effect on multilinguals' identities though, and may lead to monolingualism or only certain sanctioned forms of bilingualism or multilingualism (e.g. Mandarin–English) and possibly legacies of trauma associated with the heritage and colonial languages.

Also operating at this macro-societal level are ideologies concerning language learning itself, such as how easy or difficult (or, as just noted, dangerous

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or suspicious) it is. For example, Chinese is often depicted in the media as an 'impossibly difficult' language and its learners are therefore somehow 'exceptional' (Duff et al., 2015). Other language learning ideologies might concern how it should be taught, what forms and genres of literacy should be taught, and how – via handwritten or computer-input systems – and by whom (e.g. native vs. non-native speakers of Mandarin) (McDonald, 2011; Duff et al., 2013; Duff et al., 2015; Gil, 2020).

At the meso level, and overlapping with these macro forces, are the various institutional contexts in which learners are embedded – home, community, school or university, workplace – each with their own ideologies (including those just mentioned), which may or may not align with those at the broader societal level or with one another or with actual practices. For example, a 'Mandarin-only' policy might exist at a school or within a home or classroom but students and teachers may freely deviate from it – even when they may believe they are enacting the policy; alternatively, they may be deliberately challenging that ideology because it is overly restrictive. Finally, at the micro level are the interactions, activities, and linguistic practices or forms that learners engage with and that index, (re)produce or contest particular identities, ideologies and dispositions (or habituses, to use Bourdieu's (1991) term). For example, in the Mandarin-learning context, particular phonemes, accents or stance-marking particles learners are exposed to and may (or may not) learn to use, may index a regional dialect or place (e.g. Shanghai or Guangzhou) or a youthful or gendered stance (Diao, 2016); similarly, the use of four-character idioms may index high level of proficiency, learnedness and cultural sensitivity (Duff et al., 2013). These 'micro' elements learned through social interactions or texts thus convey particular identities and ideologies – whether speakers are consciously aware of them or not.

As I discussed earlier, ideologies regarding the relative status of different varieties of Sinitic or non-Sinitic languages (e.g. Dai, Bai, Tibetan; Beijing vs. Taipei Mandarin; Cantonese vs. Mandarin) are by no means static or uniform and are propagated to a large extent by discursive regimes of state media and national language and education policies. Formal or informal family language policies and practices may, in turn, either align with or diverge from these ideologies or may simply be inconsistent. Naturally, language ideologies concerning Mandarin have evolved within Greater China and internationally with the increasing mobility of Chinese speakers from particular source regions and the strengthening economic and political apparatus in China. Furthermore, the bold (neo-imperial/colonial) ambitions of China's leaders (e.g. Belt and Road Initiative; activity in the South China Sea and Africa) and

ethnocidal campaigns (e.g. anti-Uyghur), among other factors, support and reflect these ideologies and the (performed) ethnolinguistic identities and relationships that are allowed by the state in schools or in public life more broadly. It is important, therefore, to view any contemporary perspectives and practices related to Chinese language learning and other forms of cultural practice along multiple timescales as well as in light of transnational migration and global flows of capital, geopolitical tensions and laws and campaigns designed to assimilate or control populations (see Mizuta, 2017, for a discussion of such processes vis-à-vis Chinese in the Canadian context).

National language ideologies and educational priorities also influence the international diaspora. From a historical view, earlier waves of Chinese (heritage) speakers in Anglophone diaspora contexts such as the United Kingdom and Canada tended to speak Taishanese/Hoisan or Cantonese and therefore taught those languages in local community school settings, typically in Chinatowns (Li & Zhu, 2010; Zhu & Li, 2014; Duff & Doherty, 2019). Now, however, because Mandarin immigrant speakers from mainland China greatly outnumber people from those earlier waves of Taiwanese or Hong Kongese immigrants in the diaspora, Putonghua (Mandarin) and simplified Chinese orthography have been officially adopted in many formal learning contexts, including those that formerly used Cantonese. Thus, Mandarin is supplanting earlier varieties and demoting the status and multilingualism of populations who embraced other forms of cultural and symbolic capital. Zhu and Li (2014) discuss these 'changing hierarchies of the Chinese language' due to evolving geopolitics involving Greater China and the Chinese diaspora in the UK.

Beijing's investment in the teaching/learning of Putonghua through the aforementioned Confucius Institutes initiative has also accelerated this seemingly global shift to Mandarin and simplified characters, and ideologies of what it means to be Sinophone (e.g. mandatory visits to the Great Wall; acknowledgements of the rich history and geography of China; embrace of traditional iconic elements of Chinese culture; ability to perform – sing, dance, joke, do martial arts – using Chinese in particular ways and with certain dispositions). In the meantime, in economies that in the past required and privileged the use of English as an additional (colonial) language primarily for international business and tourist sectors, Mandarin Chinese now confers many advantages; local merchants respond to new markets as China cultivates 'friendship and cooperation' in new spheres and sectors, often in competition with other previously dominant external forces (Hindi/India). Examples of this include

the growth in Mandarin education among business people in Kathmandu (Sharma, 2017) and in the K–16 curriculum in Saudi Arabia (Al Arabiya English, 2019).

Mandarin is therefore associated with growing symbolic power, capital and cachet. However, its much-touted status as a potentially high-value language in Anglophone contexts in the 2010s (see the analysis of media representations of Chinese language learning in Duff et al., 2015) now appears to be suffering from a number of vexing issues: China's authoritarian geopolitical stances and policies, its alarming human rights record, ongoing trade disputes, questions about cybersecurity and surveillance, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and environmental issues such as pollution, all of which may deter some people from studying Chinese or seeking to live and work in China. Even in Africa, the increasing prominence of Chinese teaching in certain school curricula (e.g. in South Africa) has become quite contentious (e.g. Kaschula et al., 2015) and seen to be a displacement of Indigenous African languages. Nevertheless, news and entertainment media, service industries and language programmes internationally continue to accommodate to the new reality of the global standing of Mandarin, and the ambitions of China and Chinese language education continue apace.

For both non-Chinese learners of 'Chinese' and those from Chinese-heritage backgrounds, as well as educators, such global trends inform decisions about which languages and dialects of oral and written Chinese should be learned (Gil, 2020). Ideologies surrounding Chinese also influence learners' identities in fundamental ways. They can lead to questions regarding what it means to be 'Chinese' or Sinophone (or an ethnic minority) – issues of belonging, affiliation, legitimacy, authenticity, positioning and various other social, cultural and political aspects of 'Chineseness' (Duff et al., 2013). For example, being a White speaker or learner of Chinese or sojourner in China, often referred to by Chinese people as *laowai* ([White] foreigner), confers a particular double-edged or contradictory status – namely, treated as privileged and yet always visibly a cultural 'outsider' (Ilnyckyi, 2010). The perceptions of non-White learners of Chinese can be quite different (Liu & Self, 2019), impacting their experiences of multilingualism and especially their learning and use of Chinese. They can face discrimination and marginalization based on how their ethnicities are 'read' in a socially and racially stratified society. Furthermore, having ethnolinguistic ties to a language does not mean that people should or will desire to learn the language despite others' assumptions to the contrary. This situation was described by Chinese–Indonesian scholar

Ien Ang in her book *On Not Speaking Chinese* (Ang, 2001). Thus, various raciolinguistic ideologies (Rosa & Flores, 2017) and practices can affect the identities, motivations, positionings, opportunities and pathways of learners of Chinese.

To make matters more complicated, the stigma of being a speaker of Chinese who is not *literate* in the language according to standard norms reflects ideologies of 'Chineseness' – being or becoming *truly* Chinese. However, Chinese literacy can be so burdensome and elitist that people often abandon their learning of Chinese precisely because of it (McDonald, 2011; Curdt-Christiansen & Hancock, 2014; Duff et al., 2015; Gil, 2020). Some learners and users of Chinese balk at highbrow expectations and find clever ways of intentionally subverting norms of Chinese literacy for their own playful, political reasons (e.g. what Li & Zhu (2019) have called 'tranßcription'). Connected with this issue, debates continue about the viability of various character-based script systems for Chinese as a 'global' language versus the promotion of more widely accessible phonetic systems and how this affects learner retention versus attrition (Gil, 2020). Thus ideologies and actual learning/teaching practices are tightly intertwined.

13.4 NARRATIVES OF MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS OF CHINESE: CHANGING CONTEXTS, IDEOLOGIES AND IDENTITIES

Against the preceding backdrop of ideologies and identities associated with the learning (or non-learning) of Chinese, it can be helpful to look closely at the experiences of individuals in specific temporal, geospatial, educational and multilingual contexts. Some early memoirs exist of non-Chinese learners of Chinese such as early missionaries, explorers and other settlers in Sinophone regions over the centuries or of children's early bilingual or biliterate development (Duff et al., 2013). However, detailed holistic narratives and case studies of contemporary learners of Chinese and their families have only recently been examined qualitatively by applied linguists (e.g. Duff et al., 2013; Mizuta, 2017). Of interest to these researchers and of particular relevance in this chapter are sociocultural themes associated with ideologies, identities, communities and trajectories of migration and multilingualism across time and space/place. In what follows, I present several illustrative cases from research conducted by me and other scholars that illustrate some of the issues connected with multilingualism and identity among Chinese learners across diverse settings.

13.4.1 'Heritage' Learners of Chinese in Canada and USA

The first two cases concern 'heritage' learners of Chinese, a designation that is widely used but is nonetheless fraught because of the multiple possible identities, abilities and ethnolinguistic histories, as well as aspirations, wrapped up in the term *heritage* (Duff & Li, 2014). For example, a 'heritage language' (HL) learner (or their parents) might (not) have learned or used Chinese in the past; the oral/written variety of Chinese learned/used in the home (e.g. Cantonese) may not be the same language as the one taught in schools (e.g. Mandarin), yet it is assumed that students in a HL section share the same heritage; the 'HL' learner may come from an ethnically mixed background, only one part of which is considered 'Chinese' and may not strongly identify with that Chinese heritage; or the HL learner may not look like others from that same heritage and thus may not be 'read' as Chinese. Further, it is often assumed that HL learners have well-developed oral proficiency but undeveloped literacy skills but many counter-examples exist; and increasing numbers of non-HL learners who have grown up or spent significant periods of time in Sinophone regions may demonstrate typical HL linguistic profiles but because of their ethnolinguistic backgrounds are not classified as HL learners (Li & Duff, 2018). Many applied linguists working in other linguistic contexts have, similarly, problematized the notion of 'heritage' (Leung, Harris & Rampton, 1997; Blackledge et al., 2008). Some contemporary scholars also take issue with the common romanticization of 'heritage' in HL contexts, which for some communities and individuals may be freighted with trauma arising from dislocation, persecution, war, genocide or exile, as in the case of many Indigenous and refugee communities in recent decades.

Case 1: Jason

Agnes He has written extensively about a Chinese HL learner in New York state named 'Jason' (He, 2006, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2015). Jason is actually a composite subject reflecting a number of HL learners' identities, home and school linguistic environments and trajectories based on He's longitudinal research in a Chinese HL school, in Chinese homes and in university Chinese language programmes. Jason's case represents a prototypical HL learner – now a young adult – whose Cantonese-speaking family immigrated to the USA from (Greater) China when the child was young. The child hears Cantonese at home, shifts to English almost completely upon entering public school, may or may not attend Chinese HL (likely Mandarin) classes on weekends, and then, together with friends, takes Spanish, the language most commonly

offered in the K–12 years and the one studied by his non-Chinese friends. As He illustrates through the analysis of oral discourse, home communication becomes an artful mixture of Chinese dialects and English (He, 2015). A younger 'Jason' may resent the pressure to speak Chinese at home or to continue with dispiriting weekend HL classes and may feel judged by both Chinese and non-Chinese communities for not being proficient in oral and written Chinese. His parents (but not grandparents) begin to learn more English with time and exposure and then, as a young adult, Jason finally opts to study Mandarin for university course credit. There may be personal reasons for doing so as well, such as new Mandarin-speaking friends and a growing sense of Chinese identity. Identity issues tug away at Jason, who by now has a language repertoire that includes a combination of Cantonese, Mandarin, Spanish and English. His ambivalence towards his HL and changes in orientations to it over time are shared by many learners who study their HL at university in He's study, often after earlier unsuccessful forays into Chinese through community HL classes. Their experiences may be further complicated by programmes that either do or do not separate HL learners from learners without such a background, or HL programmes that make erroneous assumptions about the linguistic backgrounds, cultural interests and goals of students who are, as I noted earlier, very diverse (Li & Duff, 2018).

Case 2: Kay

Kay was a university-level Chinese 'HL' learner in a study by Li and Duff (2014, 2018) in Canada. Unlike Jason, both of whose parents came from the same geographical and linguistic region of southern China, Kay's mother was from Shanghai and her father from Denmark, but both parents had lived in Hong Kong for decades. Kay was born and raised in Hong Kong speaking Cantonese but moved to Denmark at age ten, where she learned both Danish and German. Her father, a transnational businessman with interests in Hong Kong, spoke English, German and Danish, but not Cantonese or Mandarin. Her mother, on the other hand, spoke a number of European and Chinese languages, including her native Shanghainese. Kay came to Canada as an international university student and was studying Mandarin (in a HL programme) as well as German. Unlike many other HL learners, however, Kay did not 'look' Chinese due to her Danish heritage and fair hair and complexion. She therefore encountered fewer expectations regarding her ability or moral obligation (based on her ethnic background) to speak a Chinese language, unlike Jason described earlier, or Ang (2001). However, Kay was committed to learning Mandarin as a form of personal responsibility. Interestingly,

at the time of the study, she acknowledged a preference for Mandarin over Cantonese, despite having been raised speaking the latter. Kay returned to Denmark following her successful undergraduate studies. A couple of years later, she pursued graduate studies at another Canadian university and conducted sociological fieldwork in Shanghai with migrant workers struggling with precarious housing. Kay's Mandarin and other Chinese (dialect) skills proved very important in carrying out that work and helped define her future career trajectory as a multilingual, transnational European Sinophone as well.

These two cases reflect the rather unpredictable linguistic trajectories, affinities, identities and repertoires of 'HL' learners and the role of multilingualism in their lives. Their biographical stories presented here are, it is important to note, suspended at the point when correspondence with participants ended, unlike more retrospective cross-generational studies that reveal which forms of multilingualism are sustained or undergo change over time or intergenerationally (e.g. Mizuta, 2017). As a result, we do not know what ongoing learning, loss or use of various dialects of Chinese or other languages might ensue for Jason or Kay, or what kinds of transmission of Chinese (if any) might proceed into the next generation of their families. The two cases also remind us that multilingualisms are fluid and dynamic and always partial and situated. They vacillate across both time and space as circumstances change. And with those changes, the priorities, identities, social memberships and exigencies of the individuals and communities change as well.

13.4.2 'Non-Heritage' Learners of Chinese in Canada and Australia

The next two cases feature individuals who lack Sinophone ancestral links but who persisted with Mandarin language study for more than a decade, demonstrating considerable agency. Their engagements with Chinese were often mediated by the Internet (e.g. Skype, chat rooms, news sites), by learning technologies (distance learning), by strategic choices on the learners' part and by committed tutors, teachers and peers. Their learning also involved frequent transnational travel and sojourns between their homes and Chinese-speaking regions in Taiwan and China, respectively.

Case 3: Elliott

Elliott, an Anglo-Canadian with dual citizenship in the USA, was one of five cases of Canadian adult learners of Mandarin described in Duff et al. (2013). Elliott had a background in physics and computer engineering. He had learned Mandarin at university in Canada and then in Taiwan, where he

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had lived for some years. He had also studied French, Japanese and Korean. For Elliott, being multilingual, articulate and precise in self-expression was a priority regardless of the language he was speaking. This disposition aligned with his identity as an analytic, educated, highly literate, resourceful and agentive person. Indeed, attaining – and also demonstrating – advanced literacy in Chinese was a source of great pride and symbolic capital to Elliott and to his identity as a polyglot, and he reported personal satisfaction when others saw him reading Chinese books in public, such as on the subway or in other locations in Canada. It was a marker of exceptionalism and erudition. However, his Sinophone identity was not affirmed to his satisfaction while living in Taiwan. He reportedly lacked a sense of belonging to the local Taiwanese community in spite of his efforts to master and use Chinese, to join a soccer team with local youth and to befriend colleagues. He simply felt little common cultural cause or affinity with Taiwanese peers whose lives he found boring and whose recreational karaoke, tearoom and other activities were of little interest. He reflected on what he called 'incomprehensible or incompatible cultural chasms and the image that crosscultural friendship sometimes took effort and lacked humour' (Duff et al., 2013: 236). Elliott lamented that he was 'doomed to feel permanently on the outside of this culture' (Duff et al., 2013: 240). Several of the other participants in the Duff et al. (2013) study, likewise, described the sense of *not belonging* within Sinophone communities and resented being positioned as perpetual ethnic outsiders (*laowai*), thereby affecting their Sinophone identities and commitments (cf. McDonald, 2011; Liu & Self, 2020).

Later, as a graduate student in Canada, Elliott was delighted to become a teaching assistant (TA) for an undergraduate Chinese HL course. However, his confidence in his Chinese proficiency and sense of legitimacy (or 'validity') as an advanced learner (and TA) were shaken when his knowledge of written Chinese was challenged by some HL students – based, in part, on confusion between simplified characters (used in China) and the traditional characters used in Taiwan and Hong Kong that he was more familiar with.[2] Elliott subsequently assisted with marking *non-HL-section* assignments instead. Eventually, he married a Korean scholar and settled in the United States. Although still maintaining a high level of proficiency in Mandarin, he turned his attention to Korean, given his travels to Korea and his extended family networks there. He viewed his knowledge of Japanese, Mandarin and Korean

[2] Such critical incidents are often cited by non-Chinese teachers of Chinese; see, for example, Zhang & Zhang, 2018.

as highly interrelated and interdependent. In a more detailed presentation of Elliott's experience, Duff et al. (2013) noted how issues of identity must be seen in relation to the various communities he and other learners are – or wish to be – part of and how those community (dis-)engagements affect their ongoing investments in Chinese.

Case 4: Stella

Stella is one of the cases described by Tasker (2012) in her longitudinal study of several resilient Australian long-term learners of Mandarin. Tasker examined issues of agency, motivation and identity among the learners' experiences. The study participants had studied Chinese with the researcher via distance learning many years earlier and had continued to study it formally or informally. Unlike the first three cases presented here, Stella had begun studying Chinese as an older adult (in her late 50s) and had persisted with it into her late 70s, when the study ended. Born and raised in South Africa, speaking Afrikaans and English, Stella moved to Australia with her husband and raised a family on a farm in a remote region. Along the way, she had taken Japanese coursework and later decided to study Mandarin, initially through evening courses. Her husband was not very supportive of the time and energy she devoted to Chinese, but she continued her studies over many years regardless. After her son and his wife moved to China for professional reasons – learning Chinese and adopting two Chinese children while there – Stella's interest in learning Chinese increased. She began to travel frequently to visit them and employed a language tutor in China over several years to support her learning while on her visits to China and then, via Skype, when back in Australia. Finally, approaching age 70, she signed up for a four-year Chinese university distance programme in Australia. Her learning activities continued for many years, even after her husband died and she herself suffered a stroke. Although Stella was not a heritage learner, the fact that her son's family had such a significant history in China and his children had Chinese heritage intensified Stella's desire to learn and use Chinese and maintain ties with the language and culture (and family). Thus, she identified with that heritage through her family (i.e. her descendants, not ancestors) despite coming from a different ethnolinguistic background herself. Eventually, her son's family repatriated to Australia, after which her two granddaughters reportedly 'resisted using or learning Chinese' (Tasker 2012: 13) and, sadly, Stella was no longer able to converse with them in Mandarin as a result.

These accounts of Elliott and Stella illustrate some of the conundrums non-heritage learners of Chinese encounter when they express deep desires

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to be – and to be seen as – valued members of a culture or 'insiders' but, for various reasons, are unable to achieve that status in spite of their sustained efforts. They also illustrate how, for many mature learners of Chinese, other languages (both Asian and European) are often part of their linguistic repertoires but Chinese learning holds a special allure, either because of fascination with Chinese literacy or other connections or entanglements they have with the language and Sinophone community.

13.4.3 Multilingual Minority Learners of Chinese in China

Case 5: Yang

The final case is very different from the others because it concerns a Chinese student growing up in southwest China. Yang was a multilingual youth in a special scholarship programme in Yunnan sponsored by the Chinese government. The programme, the name of which translates as 'Great Expectations' in English, enabled academically promising students from remote, mountainous areas of southwestern Yunnan to attend high school in a residential programme in a large provincial city. My colleague Duanduan Li and I collected essays from nearly 100 high school students at the same school, the majority of whom, like Yang, came from ethnic-minority backgrounds (i.e. they were not Han Chinese). For many of them, Mandarin was not their home language. We interviewed these students about their linguistic and cultural repertories, histories and aspirations, as well as identities.

Yang's ethnolinguistic background was Bai, a common one at his school given its location. His home was in an impoverished community in Dehong, near the border with Myanmar. Yang reported speaking both Bai and Achang, two different languages, in his home and community, and had learned a local dialect of Mandarin in elementary school and English from middle school. Thus, Mandarin was his third language and English his fourth. His parents were subsistence farmers with minimal elementary school education and Yang was the first in his family to be literate.

Yang said that after he began learning English, he often spoke it at school – although Mandarin was the language of all instruction other than in his English class – to the point where someone had apparently asked him: 'Are you a hybrid?' He reported taking great pride in his multicultural background and multilingual proficiencies in Bai, Achang, Mandarin and English. Ironically, as with many of his classmates from Bai, Hui, Yi, Lisu, Dai and other minority backgrounds (there are twenty-six distinct ethnic groups in that province, twenty-five of which are minorities), success with learning both Standard

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Mandarin and English typically takes them geographically and linguistically even further from their roots, especially if enrolled in universities in distant cities and provinces. This shift to Mandarin and English then contributes to further erosion of their home language competence and the vitality of the languages within their home communities as well (ultimately, with significant outbound migration, even eroding the sustainability of their villages).

This case and recent related research in minority communities in China (see Curdt-Christiansen & Gao, 2020; Duff, 2020) illustrate some of the tensions between attachments to local (heritage) languages associated with distant ancestral villages versus more institutionally powerful languages such as Mandarin and English taught in county or city schools. The latter languages offer learners pathways out of poverty and on to higher education, the conveniences and opportunities found in city living and, ideally, greater career prospects and a higher standard of living as well. The shift is also promulgated by government pressures (referred to earlier) fostering (1) assimilation into Mandarin-speaking society, (2) a strong identification with national (Han) culture and the dominant political ethos of unity and (3) the learning of powerful foreign languages like English, at the expense of home languages, histories and cultures. Students and their families were often well aware of the dilemmas and tensions posed by this in-country migration, higher-quality education than what is available in local communities and assimilation towards the national standard language, and especially how this might impact their home languages, cultures and future livelihoods. However, the perceived benefits outweighed the (ethnolinguistic) costs.

13.5 DISCUSSION

These five cases, and many more like them, provide evidence of the many emotions and stances – passion, ambivalence, curiosity and tenacity – connected with learning and using Chinese languages such as Mandarin as well as practical constraints and ideological misgivings in some cases. They also illustrate some of the forms of multilingualism (or multilingualisms) that exist in each context, the perceived novelty and symbolic capital of the pursuits for some learners (e.g. for Elliott, Stella), the natural, if latent, identification with Chineseness for heritage-background youth (e.g. Jason and Kay), and the hegemony of Mandarin education for minority youth (e.g. Yang) in greater China, often at the expense of their own linguistic and cultural connections, rootedness and identities.

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Admittedly, this set of five is a selective and ungeneralizable representation of HL and non-HL learners of Chinese. One reason is that the studies all focused on learners of Chinese who persisted with their learning and use of Mandarin over long periods of time, whereas many students do not (e.g. Diao & Liu, 2020), for myriad reasons. In addition, apart from the HL learners, Elliott and Stella were middle-class Anglophone Caucasian learners from Canada and Australia, respectively, as were the other cases in the larger studies from which each was drawn. Case studies encompassing a much wider range of multilingualisms, raciolinguistic identities and migration histories and trajectories are needed in the area of Chinese language learning research because of how minoritized or racialized learners might be positioned vis-à-vis White Anglophone learners (see, e.g. Anya, 2017, for African-American learners of Portuguese in Brazil). Recent research on racially minoritized university students such as African Americans in Mandarin study-abroad programmes in China have begun to fill this void (Du, 2015, 2018); other research is examining Māori and other racialized learners of Mandarin in New Zealand (Wang, in progress). Due to globalization and the growth in Chinese teaching and learning in Africa and elsewhere in the Global South described earlier, analysis of a wider range of experiences of multilingualisms and (Sinophone) identities among Chinese learners is overdue and will offer important new theoretical insights as well.

These cases nonetheless demonstrate the importance of contextualizing research on language learning both within the here and now and also against the backdrop of learners' histories, mobilities, technologies, subjectivities, desires and places. The cases foreground some of the factors that support or impede multilingualism within people's lives and communities. As noted earlier, multilingualisms and the identities they engender can be precarious, transitory, flexible and short-lived. Alternatively, in more positive scenarios, they can be maintained albeit at some personal cost, especially when the stakes are considered very high (as in Yang's case). The stakes in achieving high levels of Mandarin proficiency for Jason, Elliott and Stella were not particularly high as they resided for the most part in North America or Australia, where expertise in Chinese was not critical in their everyday lives or careers. In contrast, there would be far greater pressure to learn Chinese and perform their multilingual identities differently (which would also be assessed very differently) if they lived in Chinese milieus such as in Taiwan, as immigrants or migrant workers with less locally valued first languages (e.g. Vietnamese or Khmer), raising children and seeking employment and social integration and acceptance (Tseng & Chun, 2019). Indeed, practical and ideological pressures

might reduce and eventually eliminate their first-language use or maintenance within their homes (Curdt-Christiansen & Gao, 2020).

Returning to the DFG (2016) framework discussed earlier, language learning and home-language retention in a multilingual world is often fraught as a result of circulating ideologies and language socialization practices that impinge on language choice and learner agency. Myriad complex sociopolitical, economic and personal factors affect what language learning pursuits are deemed by learners, institutions (including their families and educational programmes) and wider society to have both short-term and lasting value and significance.

13.6 CONCLUSION

Much attention has been paid to English as a global language and lingua franca and to multilingualism(s) connected with the learning of European languages by Anglophones, and English by Europeans and Asians. The learning of Chinese by people from different ethnolinguistic and social backgrounds – limited here to heritage and non-heritage learners in so-called Inner Circle Anglophone countries in addition to those in Greater China – poses intriguing interdisciplinary possibilities for understanding the changing status of Chinese in particular communities. It also allows researchers to examine the meanings and methods of learning Chinese(s) and other languages in contemporary learners' lives and society, and the links between multilingualism and identity across different scales of time, space and analysis.

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