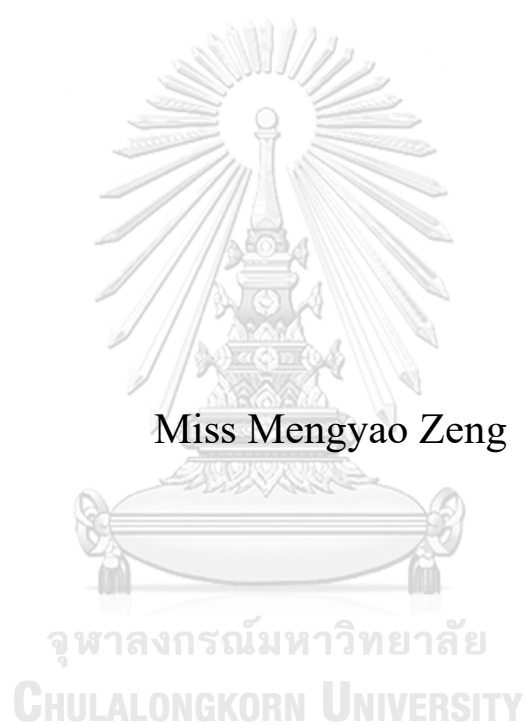


Research on Chinese Language Education Policy and Chinese L
anguage Education Development in Thailand



An Independent Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements

for the Degree of Master of Arts in Southeast Asian Studies

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จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

การวิจัยเรื่องนโยบายการศึกษาจีนและการพัฒนาการศึกษาจีนในประเทศไทย
ไทย



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จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
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เหมิงเหยา เจิ้ง :

การวิจัยเรื่องนโยบายการศึกษาจีนและการพัฒนาการศึกษาจีนในประเทศไทย.

(Research on Chinese Language Education Policy and Chinese Language Education Development in Thailand) อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก : ผศ. ดร.ธีระ นุชเปี่ยม

การพัฒนาการศึกษาภาษาจีนในประเทศไทยเป็นเรื่องปกติไม่เพียงแต่เป็นผู้นำในการศึกษาภาษาจีนระดับโลกเท่านั้น แต่ยังเป็นผู้บุกเบิกกลุ่มแรกๆ มากมายอีกด้วย ประเทศไทยเป็นประเทศแรกที่รวมภาษาจีนเข้าสู่ระบบการศึกษาแห่งชาติ เป็นประเทศแรกที่เชิญอาสาสมัครครูสอนภาษาจีนจากประเทศจีน และเป็นประเทศแรกที่ก่อตั้งห้องเรียนขงจื้อกว่าศตวรรษที่การศึกษาภาษาจีนไทยได้ประสบกับทั้ง "ฤดูใบไม้ผลิ" ที่เจริญรุ่งเรืองและ "ฤดูหนาว" ที่ท้าทาย

ในช่วงไม่กี่ปีที่ผ่านมา ด้วยความสัมพันธ์อันอบอุ่นระหว่างจีน-ไทย และความสนใจที่เพิ่มขึ้นจากกระทรวงศึกษาธิการของไทย ทำให้จำนวนผู้เรียนภาษาจีนกลางเพิ่มขึ้นอย่างรวดเร็ว ถือเป็นช่วงเวลาของการพัฒนาที่สำคัญสำหรับการศึกษาภาษาจีนในประเทศไทย เพื่อใช้ประโยชน์จากโอกาสนี้อย่างเต็มที่ ประเด็นต่างๆ ที่อาจจำกัดการพัฒนาการศึกษาภาษาจีนจะต้องได้รับการแก้ไขอย่างเพียงพอ งานวิจัยนี้แบ่งพัฒนาการทางประวัติศาสตร์ของการศึกษาภาษาจีนในประเทศไทยออกเป็น 3 สาขาวิชา เอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ศึกษา ลายมือชื่อนิสิต

(สหสาขาวิชา)

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ลายมือชื่อ

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๑ ที่ปรึกษาหลัก

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Research on Chinese Language Education Policy and Chinese Language Education Development in Thailand. Advisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. THEERA NUCHPIAM

Development of Chinese language Education in Thailand is highly typical, not only leading in global Chinese language education but also pioneering numerous firsts. Thailand was the first country to incorporate Chinese into its national education system, the first to invite Chinese language teacher volunteers from China, and the first to establish Confucius Classrooms. Over a century, Thai Chinese language education has experienced both prosperous "springs" and challenging "winters." In recent years, with the warming of Sino-Thai relations and the increased attention from the Thai Ministry of Education, the number of Mandarin learners has surged, marking a period of significant development for Chinese language education in Thailand. To fully capitalize on this opportunity, various issues potentially constraining the development of Chinese language education must be adequately addressed. This research divides the historical development of Chinese language education in Thailand into three stages: germination, gradual decline, and comprehensive development. It deeply explores the policies at each stage, examining multifaceted factors influencing its progress.

Analyzing the current implementation of Chinese language education policies in Thailand, the research identifies challenges, including teacher resources, lack of unified teaching materials, and chaotic market supervision. These challenges pose potential obstacles to the sustained development of Chinese language education in Thailand. To overcome these issues, the research suggests the Thai government formulate unified teaching materials and curricula. Additionally, it recommends enhancing training for Thai Chinese teachers and establishing a comprehensive teacher assessment mechanism to ensure the quality of Chinese language instruction. The research concludes by proposing collaboration between China and Thailand, creating a resource-sharing platform through technology to propel Chinese language education in Thailand.

Field of Study: Southeast Asian Studies

Student's

Signature

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Over the past year and a half, I have spent my days in Bangkok like fleeting moments, reaping much joy and valuable experiences. This time has deepened my understanding and insights into Southeast Asia, a region that has always fascinated me.

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In this year and a half of graduate life, I faced numerous challenges and also gained rich rewards. Everyone I met during this journey played an indispensable role in my life path. Looking to the future, I plan to continue learning and working in areas of my interest, constantly seeking growth and progress. I also wish good health and all the best to everyone who has supported and helped me, and thank them for their companionship and guidance during this extraordinary journey.

Mengyao Zeng

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1.Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The world has entered the era of globalization, in which regions and countries are interconnected in political and economic terms. One of the ways of interconnection is that people of different countries and languages learn each other's languages to promote communication. Since the beginning of the 21st century, China's economy has been growing rapidly and continuously, and its international status has been rising, more and more foreigners have chosen to learn Chinese. Up to now, there are more than 430 Confucius Institutes around the world, and the Thai Ministry of Education is actively cooperating with Hanban.

Thailand has a history of Chinese language learning and is at the forefront of China's international promotion of Chinese language. Before the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Thailand, the ruling government of Thailand was very strict in its attitude and policies towards foreign language education, and Chinese language education in particular was subject to a very harsh and mandatory management policy. The establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Thailand in 1975 and the friendly cooperation between the two countries in various fields, such as politics, economy, trade and culture, promoted the further development of Chinese language education in Thailand. Each stage of policy orientation has its

own profound historical significance and other factors, especially political and social reasons.

Chinese has become the second foreign language in Thailand besides English, and Chinese language education has spread to all levels of education in Thailand, whether it is at the basic education level (6 years of elementary school, 3 years of junior high school and 3 years of senior high school), at the higher education level, or at language schools run by private organizations. Everyone in Thailand, from the public people to government officials, is learning Mandarin to understand Chinese culture. In Thailand, most of the educational organizations are under the direct control of the government, so every policy of the Thai government will have a great impact on the development of Chinese language education in Thailand.

Throughout the history of the development of Chinese language education in Thailand, although it has gone through twists and turns, it has persisted and integrated with the traditional Thai culture, gradually forming its own characteristics. Along with the evolution and development of Thai society, Chinese language education has been constantly adjusted and innovated. With the rise of Confucius Institutes and the development of Chinese language seminars, Chinese language education has been gradually developing and expanding in various countries. At the same time, the development of Chinese language education in Thailand has also revealed many

problems, and the theoretical research and practical exploration of Chinese language education should be continuously deepened.

1.2 Research Questions

- 1.2.1 Chinese language education development in Thailand from initial germination to rapid development, then to decline, the current recovery has come, what factors have caused these changes? What impact has it had on Thai Chinese language education?
- 1.2.2 What is the current situation of Chinese language education policy in Thailand? What problems still exist in Chinese language education development in Thailand?
- 1.2.3 What initiatives should be taken to promote the development of Chinese language education in Thailand?

1.3 Research Significance

The relevant policies of Chinese language education in Thailand have a significant impact on the education of Chinese language in Thailand, determining the development prospects of Chinese language education in the country. This research, first from the perspective of historical evolution, divides the development of Chinese

language education policies in Thailand into three stages and analyzes the reasons behind the formulation of policies at each stage. This provides theoretical reference for the development of Chinese language education in Thailand and holds practical significance for enhancing the proficiency of Chinese language education in the country.

This research also summarizes the problems that have arisen during the development of Chinese language education in Thailand, analyzes how Chinese language education develops under the current Thai education policy, and puts forward some suggestions as a reference for the development of Chinese language education in Thailand. This will help China and Thailand to adjust and improve the promotion policy of Chinese language education and provide reference for the sustainable development of Chinese language education in Thailand, which is of practical significance for the promotion of Chinese language teaching and learning in Thailand to maintain a long-term healthy development.

1.4 Research Methodology

This research attempts to employ various research methods such as literature review, historical research, and inductive analysis to examine and analyze the development of Chinese language education policies in Thailand from a historical perspective. On the one hand, by reviewing the historical development of Chinese

language education policies in Thailand, the study seeks to explore the reasons behind policy formulation and its resulting impact. On the other hand, through the analysis of influencing factors and the current status of Chinese language education policies in Thailand, the study aims to provide recommendations for the future development of Chinese language education in Thailand. This, in turn, aims to further promote cultural exchange between Thailand and China and offer experiential insights for the development of Chinese language education in other countries.

1.5 Literature Review

Chinese language education refers to educational activities that focus on teaching Chinese language as the main content, with the aim of teaching students the Chinese language, cultivating their Chinese language skills, Chinese cultural literacy, and cross-cultural communication abilities.

Language teaching and learning in Thailand may be divided into two main categories: native language education and foreign language education. Standard Thai is the most important language in education, the foreign language curriculum may be classified into three main categories: language and skills for communication, literature for arts and humanistic values, and linguistics for the scientific study of language, foreign language education is in three streams: liberal education, humanistic education. and career or utilitarian education(Sukamolson, 1998). In the study of the

historical evolution of Chinese language education policies in Thailand. Professor Zhou I.E, in his book "Chinese Language Education in Southeast Asia," provides a detailed exposition in one chapter, analyzing from the perspective of language policies, he comprehensively illustrates the developmental trajectory of Chinese language education in Thailand at various stages, the overview encompasses the entire process of Chinese language education in Thailand, from its rise to decline and subsequent resurgence, the emphasis lies in analyzing the guiding role of the government in Chinese language education, suggesting that Thailand's Chinese language education continues to progress amidst the interplay of multiple influencing factors(Zhou I.E., 1995). British professor Victor Purcell emphasized the discussion on Chinese language education in Thailand, providing a detailed exposition on the similarities and differences between Thai language schools and Chinese language schools in Thailand. He delved into the distinctions in the education received by students from China and Thailand, as well as the scale of Chinese language schools in Thailand, including the number of teachers and students on campus. Additionally, Professor Purcell examined various policies of the Thai government regarding Chinese language education(Purcell, 1966). Narong Phuangphit has collected some official documents regarding Chinese language education policies, comprehensively organizing a wealth of information on foreign language education policies in Thailand, including the evolution of these policies over time(พวงพิศ, 1974).

In the research on the shortcomings of Chinese language education in Thailand, Cun Xuetao believes that the setbacks experienced by Thai Chinese language education over the decades have led to its lagging behind other countries. The reasons for this include insufficient support from government policies, a lack of student resources, and a shortage of funding (Cun Xuetao, 2006). Zhang Bin provided an overview of the development of Chinese language education in Thailand from the past to the present. He believes that the key factor influencing the quality of Chinese language education in Thailand is the strength of the teaching staff. Zhang Bin also analyzed issues such as low income and overall low qualifications among Chinese language teachers in Thailand (Zhang Bin, 2009). Ni Jinsheng thinks that Chinese language education policies in Thailand should be guided by the government to enhance the management and curriculum systems of Chinese language schools (Ni Jinsheng, 2015). Hao Linlin suggests that among the schools in Thailand with Chinese language teaching capabilities, those in the northern region tend to have larger scales. However, these schools still exhibit certain shortcomings in Chinese language education. For instance, some schools lack adequate hardware conditions, have unclear curriculum planning, and face shortcomings in teachers' teaching abilities and proficiency. Given these conditions, Hao Linlin proposes that Thailand should establish a unified standard, implement standardized teaching, and require teachers to enhance their teaching qualities. This includes strengthening the quantity of Chinese

language education courses and adopting a more scientific approach to curriculum standards(Hao Linlin, 2011). Siritwannawat Worryuth primarily researches the current status of Chinese language education policies in Thailand, the study involves analyzing the implementation of Chinese language education policies in Southeast Asian countries and comparing them with the situation in Thailand. The goal is to provide development suggestions for the Chinese language education sector in Thailand(WORRACHAIYUT, 2012).This underscores the importance of Thailand's Chinese language education policies in the development of Chinese language education and contributes to uncovering the challenges present in Chinese language education in Thailand.

In summary, the current international focus on Chinese language education and the increasing depth of research on foreign language education policies in Thailand indicate a growing interest in these areas. The involvement of more researchers and relevant research institutions has provided educators with a wealth of valuable and referenceable information. The research outcomes from these scholars play a crucial role in supporting and informing the present research.

2.The Evolution Process and Factors of Chinese Language Education Policies in Thailand

Since the mid-19th century, Thailand has gradually formulated its own language policy and language education policy, primarily consisting of two aspects. On one hand, there is the implementation of a single national language and its educational policy, which involves the compulsory promotion of the Thai language and culture. This policy restricts, excludes, and eliminates other language cultures to foster integration among various ethnic groups and promote national identity. On the other hand, there is the implementation of a diverse foreign language education policy, especially emphasizing English. This policy underscores the instrumental role of foreign languages and adopts a long-term suppression policy, particularly towards languages that hinder ethnic assimilation, including Chinese (Tan Xiaojian, 2015).

Before the early 20th century, Thailand did not have standardized policies specifically addressing Chinese language education. The Thai government's completely non-interventionist stance had a significant impact on Chinese language education. On the positive side, this laissez-faire policy provided a fertile ground for the free development of Chinese language education, fostering its initial growth and accumulating strength for subsequent rapid development. On the negative side, the default or even encouraging attitude towards Chinese language education in Thailand following the Chinese model, spreading Chinese culture, and engaging in ethnic language and cultural education set the stage for contradictions between Thai Chinese language education and later "assimilation policies" in Thailand. As a result, it

indirectly laid the groundwork for the prolonged suppression of Chinese language education that followed.

In the 21st century, the Thai government has come to recognize the importance of diverse foreign languages. While ensuring the dominant status of standard Thai, there is also a strong emphasis on preserving various dialects and minority languages within the country. The policy places significance on the instrumental value of multiple foreign languages, and Chinese language education has once again found space for development. This chapter delineates the changes in Thai Chinese language education policies corresponding to three stages: the emergence, development to decline, and resurgence of Chinese language education in Thailand.

2.1 Period of Tortuous Development (early 20th century-1932)

Between the early 20th century and the outbreak of the Second World War, during the thirty years leading up to it, Chinese schools and Chinese language education experienced rapid development in Thailand. Starting with the establishment of the first modern Chinese language school by revolutionary leader Dr. Sun Yat-sen, Chinese language education in Thailand entered a new stage of development, leading to the emergence of numerous Chinese schools across the country. As the scale of Chinese language education in Thailand gradually expanded during this period, the curriculum also improved, focusing on disseminating traditional Chinese culture while promoting revolutionary ideas of democracy and patriotism. At this time,

Chinese schools primarily served Thai-Chinese nationals. The robust development of Chinese language education in Thailand raised concerns within the Thai government. King Rama VI believed that the existence and activities of Chinese communities could jeopardize the unity of Thailand in political, economic, and social aspects. With the aim of national assimilation, a series of language education policies were implemented concerning Chinese language education. Thailand's policies towards Chinese language education emerged on the historical stage with a suppressive and weakening image, initiating a gradual process of confrontation between Chinese policies and Chinese language education in Thailand. During this period, the policy suppression was mainly manifested in:

Time	Title	Promulgation Institutions	Summarize
1918	"Private School Act of Siam"	Siam Government	Control of Chinese schools; control of madrasahs teaching Malay Arabic: emphasis on Thai language learning.
1921	"Regulations for the implementation of forced education in	Siam Government	Limit the curriculum of Chinese schools: Setting the number of years

	Siam”		of primary education in Thai language education
1921	“Regulations of the Ministry of Education”	Ministry of Education	Establishment of the status of Chinese as similar to other foreign languages
1932	“National Education Plan”	Ministry of Education	Encouragement of foreign language study, including Chinese
1932	"Government regulations"	Government	Crackdown on teaching materials in Chinese schools

Table 1 Thailand's Chinese Language Education Policy in a tortuous period.

Emphasizing the importance of the Thai language and restricting Chinese language class hours. The "Private School Act of Siam" enacted in 1918 marked the beginning of restrictions on Chinese language education in Thailand. This regulation aimed to standardize school education within Thailand, including Chinese schools, with the intention of aligning them with Thailand's assimilation policy.

The act emphasized the significance of Thai language learning and mandated schools to offer Thai language classes, ensuring students possessed good reading, writing, and comprehension skills in Thai. It granted the Ministry of Education the authority to ban teaching materials or tools that violated moral or social norms.

Private schools were required to schedule a minimum of 3 hours of Thai language classes per week, among other provisions. While this regulation had a significant impact on Chinese schools, prompting protests and discussions among the Chinese community, many non-compliant Chinese schools did not actively cooperate and maintained their original status. The " Regulations for the implementation of forced education in Siam " of 1921 mandated Thai children to study Thai for a minimum of 800 hours annually, and course structures had to be approved by the education authorities, with instruction conducted in Thai. If other foreign languages were to be taught, approval from the Ministry of Education was required. This regulation caused uproar among the Chinese community, as they perceived it as the Thai government depriving Chinese children of the right to receive education in Chinese language and culture. In response to the social chaos, the Thai government readjusted its policy, indicating that Chinese could have equal status with other languages like German and French, suggesting that the restrictions imposed on Chinese schools were not overly stringent.

During this period, the expansion of Western powers significantly influenced Chinese language education policies in Thailand. From the mid-19th century to the early 20th century, Western powers expanded aggressively, coercing Thailand into signing various unequal treaties. To achieve independence and self-strengthening, King Rama IV and King Rama V initiated top-down reforms, prioritizing national

security and ethnic unity. King Rama VI believed that the existence and activities of Chinese communities could threaten the unity of Thailand in political, economic, and social aspects. Thus, with the goal of national assimilation, the Thai government, starting in 1910, began to control Chinese language education, implementing a series of language education policies that comprehensively managed administrative, teaching, financial, and educational quality aspects of Chinese schools, restricting the activities and development of the Thai-Chinese community.

In summary, superficially, Chinese language education in Thailand during this phase, while subject to policy restrictions, appeared to face limited obstacles and continued to develop robustly, reaching a peak in Chinese language education. It became a prosperous period for the development of Chinese language education in Thailand. However, this also triggered greater dissatisfaction and suppression from the Thai government, marking the starting point of the decline of Chinese language education.

2.2 Period of Difficult Development (1932-1989)

In 1936, “New Private School Act of 1936” had been implemented for only two years when the Second World War erupted in 1939. The military government leader, Plaek Phibunsongkhram, advocated the Thai-Japanese alliance, leading to Thailand fully implementing a pro-Japanese and anti-Chinese policy. Various restrictions were imposed on overseas Chinese, including the establishment of prohibited zones where

Chinese nationals were not allowed to reside. Regulations were enacted to reserve certain professions for Thai nationals, and measures were taken to curb the activities of Chinese workers and businesses. Chinese language education and publications were suppressed. Chinese language education suffered a devastating blow for the first time during this period. The key policies of this era were reflected in the following aspects:

(1) Resolutely implementing the "Regulations for the implementation of forced education in Siam" and the "New Private School Act of 1936," strict assimilation policies were enforced during this period. Chinese language was considered a "socialist language" and a "threat" to national security. Authorities became more hostile towards Chinese language education, strengthening control over Chinese schools and introducing increasingly stringent regulations.

(2) In April 1939, the Minister of Education issued a new order, stipulating compulsory education ages (7-14 years). Chinese classes were limited to two hours per week, with all other subjects taught in Thai. Chinese teachers of Chinese descent had to pass a Thai language proficiency exam equivalent to fourth-grade level, and the use of Chinese was restricted within schools.

(3) In 1944, the Phibun government fell, and Thailand entered the "Free Thai" era. In 1945, Japan surrendered, and as a former ally of Japan, Thailand needed China's support to join the United Nations. Consequently, Thailand and China signed

the "China-Thai Friendship Treaty," which mandated Chinese language classes for primary school students ranging from 10.5 to 12.5 hours per week, depending on the grade. Chinese language teachers were no longer required to take Thai language exams. This agreement provided crucial protection for the revival of Chinese language education in post-war Thailand. From then on, overseas Chinese could establish Chinese schools in Thailand, officially referred to as "private Chinese schools".

(4) From 1945 to 1947, Chinese language education experienced a revival, but the positive trend did not last long. In April 1948, Phibun returned to power and launched a series of anti-Chinese policies. In May 1948, the Ministry of Education restricted the number of Chinese schools, limited Chinese classes to the fourth grade of primary school, and capped weekly teaching hours at 10. Chinese schools were required to use Chinese textbooks approved by the Thai Ministry of Education, excluding any mention of Chinese history, culture, customs, etc. All school affairs and teaching activities were subject to supervision by the Ministry of Education's Private School Bureau.

(5) In 1954, for ideological reasons, the Thai Ministry of Education intensified control over Chinese schools and promulgated the "Private School Amendment Act." The act stipulated that the founders of schools must be Thai citizens, and if legal entities, they must be Thai nationals. In other words, only Thai citizens could serve as

school principals. The number of teachers was determined by the authorities, and teachers had to be proficient in Thai. Students had to be fluent in reading, writing, and understanding Thai. Chinese language classes were reduced to only 5 hours per week, and if a school was closed for more than 7 days without valid reasons, its operating license would be revoked.

(6) The restrictions on Chinese language education in Thailand did not change after the fall of the Phibun government in 1975; instead, they continued to intensify. In 1960, the Thai government issued the "National Education Development Plan," disapproving the establishment of new Chinese schools and enrollment increases. Weekly Chinese class hours were further reduced to 5, and compulsory education was extended to seven years, creating enrollment challenges for Chinese children. Many Chinese school students left, leading to a significant decrease in the number of Chinese schools. Even in the 1970s, with the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Thailand, the situation for Chinese language education did not improve. The Thai government consistently attempted to transform Chinese schools into effective tools for accelerating the assimilation of the Chinese into Thai society, but despite the forced suppression during this period, the assimilation strategy has had limited success. The suppression of Chinese language education and the assimilation of the Chinese by the Thai government can be considered successful. The era of

Chinese as a mother tongue began to fade, and, like English and other languages, it became a foreign language.

In 1975, Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj of Thailand and Premier Zhou Enlai signed a joint communique establishing diplomatic relations between China and Thailand. Since then, Sino-Thai relations have gradually improved, leading to some relaxation in the Thai government's control over Chinese language education. It can be said that from the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Thailand until the 1980s, there was a certain turning point in Chinese language education in Thailand. However, the Thai government's vigilance against the People's Republic of China did not completely dissipate. The policy relaxation regarding Chinese language education was insufficient, resulting in slow development.

In the 1980s, the Thai government's attitude towards Chinese language wavered. While it explicitly stated that Chinese would be recognized as a foreign language in Thailand, it also imposed a limit of no more than 5 hours per week for Chinese language instruction in Chinese schools. In 1982, an education ministry document expanded the scope of Chinese language classes in primary schools, secondary schools, and universities. Restrictions on the number of Chinese language teachers and students were also eased. However, the actual implementation of these policies was limited, and by 1985, the number of Chinese schools had dwindled to only 123. In 1989, the head of the Thai Prime Minister's Office made a statement,

acknowledging that "Chinese people should preserve Chinese culture, and implementing Chinese language education is understandable." This had a certain guiding effect. The assimilation policy pursued by the Thai government for a long time proved effective, and Chinese language education eventually became part of foreign language education. This alleviated the government's concerns about Chinese language posing a threat to national unity.

During this period, two main factors contributed to the formulation of Chinese language education policies in Thailand: the changing international situation in the 1970s and the formal establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Thailand.

Firstly, in 1971, the People's Republic of China regained its legitimate seat in the United Nations, advocating friendship and peaceful coexistence with countries of different social systems, opposing imperialism, and promoting world peace. China gained support from many developing countries, enhancing its international standing.

In this period, Southeast Asian nations actively sought to free themselves from the control of major powers. In Thailand, parties like the Social Democratic Party hoped for a swift restoration of diplomatic relations with China. They submitted an urgent proposal to the parliament to establish friendly relations with China.

2.3 Period of Comprehensive Development (1989-Current)

In the 1990s, with the end of the Cold War and increasing economic interactions between China and Thailand, both governments and the public began to realize the substantial benefits brought about by trade and economic cooperation. Thailand fully opened its doors to the promotion of the Chinese language, the Thai population, including descendants of Chinese immigrants, gradually developed a new understanding of the instrumental value of Chinese. Learning Chinese was no longer a cultural identity requirement for individuals but a national necessity. For Thailand, developing the national economy, fostering unity among diverse ethnic groups, and enhancing friendly exchanges with China and the world all required better proficiency in Chinese. Thus, the revival of Chinese language education began.

Thailand, in line with the needs of national development, continued to strengthen the status of Thai as the national language and emphasized the importance of learning English. However, in addition to maintaining Thai as the most important language and English as the most important foreign language, the Thai government actively supported the reopening of Chinese language education during this period. The key policies during this time were:

(1) February 4, 1992: The Thai government made a significant adjustment to its Chinese language education policy, allowing the establishment of various foreign language courses, including Chinese. Schools were permitted to arrange courses for

grades 5-6 according to their own circumstances. They could choose their own teaching materials, and teaching staff could be recruited from China. This new policy marked the comprehensive lifting of the ban on Chinese language education.

(2) In October 1998: The Thai Ministry of Education's Higher Education Commission announced Chinese as one of the foreign language choices for the national exam. Chinese, as a foreign language, was officially introduced in the entrance exams for Thai universities. Chinese, like other foreign languages such as English, Japanese, French, and German, could be selected as one of the foreign language exam subjects for humanities and social science majors.

(3) In 2006: In order to further enhance national competitiveness, the Thai government formulated and implemented the "Strategic Plan for Promoting Chinese Teaching and Enhancing National Competitiveness (2006-2010)." This plan articulated the status and significance of Chinese language education from the perspective of national competitiveness, becoming a guiding document for Chinese language education in Thailand in the early 21st century.

(4) In 2008: The Ministry of Education introduced a new "Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2008," which included "Foreign Language" as one of the eight basic courses for 12 years of basic education. English was mandatory, while Chinese and other foreign languages were elective. Schools could determine their own

arrangements based on their actual situations. The Chinese language curricula used in Thai primary and secondary schools are developed in accordance with this standard.

(5) Thailand Higher Education Commission in 2010 Recognizing its important role in Chinese language education in Thailand, the commission proposed the "2010 Strategic Plan for Promoting Chinese Teaching in Thai Higher Education." This plan focused on improving the quality of Chinese language education and cultivating advanced Chinese language talents, aiming to increase Chinese language students by 20% and Thai-Chinese language teachers by 15% annually, and developing Chinese language teaching materials suitable for higher education in Thailand.

(6) In 2014: Following the footsteps of China's "Belt and Road" initiative, the Thai Ministry of Education formulated policies related to the "Reform of Chinese Language Teaching in Thailand" in 2014. This served as a guiding principle for Chinese language education in the context of the "Belt and Road" initiative. The policy specified various teaching elements at different levels of schools, providing timely and effective support for Chinese language education at the policy level.

Factors behind the transformation of Chinese language education policy in Thailand during this period:

(1) 1997 Asian Financial Crisis: During the crisis, China provided support and assistance to countries affected by the crisis, gradually becoming an essential part of

the world economy. After the financial crisis, Thailand, like other ASEAN countries, realized the importance of establishing cooperative mechanisms with China.

(2) China's Socialist System Poses No Threat to Thailand's National Security:

The friendship between China and Thailand is in a positive phase, and China's socialist system is not seen as a threat to Thailand's national security.

(3) Highlighting the Instrumental and Practical Functions of Chinese: After the

1990s, the wave of economic globalization gradually swept the world, leading to close economic interactions and collaborations among various countries and regions. With the increasing frequency of economic activities, language and language talents became in high demand. China has played a significant role in the process of globalization, and countries sought collaboration with China. This demand resulted in a need for a substantial number of Chinese language talents. In recent years, cooperation between Thailand and China in economic and trade, culture, tourism, infrastructure, and other fields has become increasingly close. Proficiency in Chinese has become a means to enhance one's competitiveness, and individuals proficient in Chinese are more likely to find well-paying jobs in Thailand today.

3.Current Chinese Language Education Policy in Thailand and its Influence

Currently, the educational institutions in Thailand offering Chinese language instruction include not only Confucius Institutes jointly operated by China and

Thailand but also Chinese schools, basic education schools, vocational education schools, higher education institutions, private civilian language training institutions, and more. Chinese language education in Thailand has now formed a preliminary, systematic, and continuous educational chain from kindergarten to higher education.

In recent years, some of the most influential policies affecting Chinese language education in Thailand include: “Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2008”, this serves as a guiding document for the basic education stage in Thailand. “Strategic Plan for Promoting Chinese Language Teaching and Enhancing National Competitiveness (2006–2010)”, this plan outlines the overall strategic planning for Chinese language education in Thailand. In 2014, the Thai Ministry of Education introduced the "Chinese Language Teaching Development Plan,” which further advances the teaching of Chinese in Thailand. These Chinese language education policies have had a profound impact on Chinese language instruction in Thailand. This paper aims to analyze the current status of Chinese language education in Thailand, reflect on the implementation of current Chinese language education policies, and assess the impact of these policies on Chinese language education. Through this analysis, the paper seeks to identify and address existing challenges in the development of Chinese language education.

3.1 Analysis of Chinese Language Education in Basic Education

3.1.1 Chinese language education in primary and secondary schools is gradually moving to the lower grades

In 2001, the Thai Ministry of Education formally incorporated Chinese language courses into the basic education curriculum, and by 2012, Chinese language courses had basically been introduced into Thai secondary schools, and are now in the process of being fully overloaded into elementary school kindergartens(Zhu Xiao, 2013).

The Chinese language curriculum in Thai primary and secondary schools is widespread and widely adopted, but it is also highly complex. The emphasis on Chinese language education varies due to the fact that the performance in Chinese language courses at the primary and secondary levels is not included in the required curriculum. This variation depends on the school's traditions and the degree of importance placed on Chinese language education by both the school administration and parents. Schools that place a higher emphasis on Chinese language education typically offer an average of 10-14 hours of Chinese language instruction per week. On the other hand, schools that place less importance on Chinese language education may only provide 1-2 hours of instruction per week. The format of Chinese language courses in Thai primary and secondary schools often follows a unified "comprehensive course" structure, where listening, speaking, reading, and writing are not separately emphasized as primary skills. However, some schools may introduce specific courses in reading and listening skills at the high school level.

3.1.2 Primary and secondary school Chinese language education has not formulated a curriculum outline in accordance with policy requirements

The provision of Chinese language courses in Thai primary and secondary schools should be based on the nature, quantity, and training objectives outlined in the "Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2008." The curriculum and talent development should be established accordingly, and a Chinese language curriculum outline can be developed based on this. The "Strategic Plan for Promotion Chinese Teaching and Enhancing National Competitiveness (2006-2010)" also clearly specifies the active promotion of the formulation of Chinese language curriculum outlines at all levels. However, up to now, there has been no corresponding Chinese language teaching outline for primary and secondary schools, lacking clear teaching objectives, progress, etc. This is highly unfavorable for the effectiveness and future development of Chinese language teaching in primary and secondary schools.

3.1.3 The majority of Chinese language teachers come from China

Currently, Chinese language teachers in Thailand primarily consist of two groups: input-oriented Chinese language teachers and local Chinese language teachers. Input-oriented Chinese language teachers include teachers dispatched by the Chinese government, volunteers from the Confucius Institute (Hanban), teachers involved in inter-school cooperative exchanges, and independently recruited teachers from the

private sector. Among them, Hanban volunteers constitute the main force in the teaching staff. Hanban volunteers are typically composed of graduate students majoring in Chinese language education and graduates with various undergraduate majors. They exhibit characteristics of youthfulness and professionalism but often lack experience and intercultural communication skills. Other Chinese language practitioners who come to Thailand for teaching have diverse educational backgrounds and varying qualifications, with the majority engaging in Chinese language teaching in primary and secondary schools.

3.1.4 Chinese language education materials in Thailand primarily come from mainland China

In the "Strategic Plan," it is stipulated to support the revision of high-quality teaching materials suitable for Chinese language teaching in Thailand and improve teaching aids. The issue with Chinese language teaching materials in Thailand is not a lack of materials but rather a problem of selecting materials and enhancing their scientific and rational qualities. Due to the absence of a teaching outline in the basic education stage, Chinese language teaching in basic education is still in the early stages of development, the capacity for the development of Chinese language education in basic education is not as advanced as higher education. Consequently, there is a wide variety of teaching materials, making it challenging to choose. Materials can be categorized based on their source: mainland Chinese materials,

Taiwanese materials, Thai materials, school-developed materials, and Sino-Thai co-developed materials.

Zhang Chen stated that currently, the most widely used teaching materials in Thai primary and secondary schools are from mainland China, accounting for a high proportion of 70%. This is much higher than the combined proportion of Thai-written materials, Taiwanese materials, and school-developed materials. One reason for this is that the main body of Thai basic education—public primary and secondary schools—tends to use materials provided by the Confucius Institute, such as "Experiencing Chinese," "Happy Chinese," and "Chuangzhi Handei." At the same time, he also mentioned that currently, most teachers are not highly satisfied with the teaching materials (Zhang Chen, 2019).

At present, the situation of basic Chinese language education in Thailand can be inferred as follows: the vast majority of secondary schools offer Chinese language courses, and primary schools are steadily introducing them. The situation of Chinese language education varies greatly among different regions and schools. Besides objective developmental factors, this is related to the different attitudes of schools towards Chinese language education, the setting of teaching standards, the emphasis on teaching effectiveness, and the allocation of resource proportions. Regardless of how effective the course offerings are, at least at the level of "targeting the majority," Chinese language education in primary and secondary schools in Thailand has a great

improvement. It has essentially responded to the government's policy of offering Chinese language courses in all basic education schools, forming a preliminary teaching framework and laying the foundation for further expansion and development.

3.2 Analysis of Chinese Language Education in Higher Education

Thai higher education institutions can generally be divided into two systems: public universities and private universities. Both are led by the Thai Higher Education Commission to ensure the academic quality and discipline standards of each university. The Thai Higher Education Commission operates under the Ministry of Education, alongside the Basic Education Commission and the Vocational Education Commission.

In 2010, the International Cooperation Department of the Thai Higher Education Commission conducted a nationwide survey on the status of Chinese language education in Thai universities. The results revealed that a total of 100 universities in Thailand offered Chinese language courses, including elective courses, minor courses, and major courses, with a total of 106 Chinese language teaching points, constituting 63% of Thai universities. Among them, 58 universities offered Chinese language majors, accounting for 35% of Thai universities. The total number of students learning Chinese was 26,242, including 765 below the undergraduate level, 25,336 undergraduates, 136 postgraduates, and 5 doctoral students(Ding Mi, 2011).

3.2.1 Diverse Chinese language courses offered by universities in Thailand

Compared to primary and secondary schools, Thai universities have a higher degree of autonomy. The Thai Higher Education Commission only exercises guidance and supervision over universities. Each major university in Thailand offers its own distinctive Chinese language courses to cultivate talents aligned with the university's educational objectives. This diversity results in a variety of Chinese language programs. National universities offering Chinese language majors term the program "Chinese Language Studies." Over a dozen other universities with demand have successively introduced undergraduate programs in "Chinese Language Education." Some institutions, based on their unique educational needs, offer 5-year Chinese language teaching programs or Chinese language teaching programs without specifying the duration. For example, universities such as Oriental University, Queen Dowager University, and Lan Khonkaen University explicitly offer 5-year Chinese language teaching programs, while universities like Chiang Rai Rajabhat University and Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna provide Chinese language courses without specifying the exact duration.

In addition to the main courses focusing on listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation, Thai universities also offer distinctive elective courses. For instance, Rangsit University provides practical and targeted courses such as "Service Industry Chinese," "Office Chinese," "Gateway to Chinese Investment," and "Chinese

Computer Processing." Huachiew Chalermprakiet University offers specialized courses like "Chinese for Doctors and Nurses," "Public Relations Chinese," and "Tourism Management." Oriental University emphasizes the study and research of Chinese literature, offering courses such as "Chinese Folk Literature" and "Modern China." The diverse curriculum offerings reflect Thai universities' commitment to cultivating practical social elites to meet the current needs of Thailand's economic development and beyond.

3.2.2 Gradual upgrading of the school level

With the continuous improvement of educational levels and the growing demand for learning Chinese, some national universities in Thailand have gradually introduced master's and doctoral programs in Chinese language. Chulalongkorn University took the lead in offering postgraduate Chinese language programs in Thailand. As early as 1998, the university signed a cooperation agreement with Peking University and initiated a master's program in Chinese language. In 2004, the university also established a master's program in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (International Program)(Huang Hankun, 2011). In the same year, Rangsit University applied to the Ministry of Education for a graduate program on China's economy and society.

3.3 Analysis of Chinese Language Education in Private Training Institutions

The "Chinese popular" in Thailand has also spurred the development of private Chinese language training. In Thailand, private Chinese language tutoring schools, also known as Chinese language training institutions, fall under informal education. The "Promotion of Regulations for Informal and Non-Formal Education in 2008" issued by the Ministry of Education on March 4, 2008, came into effect. These regulations stipulate that organizations outside the formal education system should have flexible learning objectives, teaching methods, and educational organization methods, with learning content and curricula meeting the needs of learners.

With the development of formal Chinese language education in mainstream education, various levels of educational institutions in informal education in Thailand have opened Chinese language courses. Chinese language training institutions in Thailand have diverse training models, focusing on practical content, and have a wide range of training programs. They are popular among students and Chinese language learners, showing promising prospects. Most Chinese language institutions are operated by individuals or social groups, varying in size. Well-known institutions, such as the "Oriental Cultural Academy," had over 20,000 students during its peak period. As training institutions in Thailand fall under the category of service-oriented private enterprises, not affiliated with the education sector, they benefit from more relaxed requirements in terms of teaching organization and evaluation, compared to public schools, as stipulated by the Thailand Private School Education Act of 1982.

Consequently, most institutions find it relatively easy to operate. In terms of teaching, these institutions often adjust their approaches promptly based on real-world teaching challenges, making Chinese language education more practical. However, many training institutions still face challenges in areas such as curriculum development, teaching materials, teaching methods, faculty qualifications, and funding sources.

Teachers in private Chinese language training institutions come from various backgrounds, and there are slight differences in the faculty composition compared to formal schools. These institutions do not have publicly appointed teachers, and the sources and backgrounds of teachers are more complex. When recruiting Chinese language teachers, training institutions often employ two main approaches: independent recruitment and intermediary services.

Large Chinese language training institutions typically have a team of experienced foreign full-time teachers with strong teaching qualifications, outstanding educational achievements, and a good reputation. They generally require teachers to hold at least a bachelor's degree, with relevant majors in English, Thai, or related fields. Additionally, they place importance on teachers' professional qualifications. Thai Chinese language teachers are usually required to hold the "Chinese Proficiency Test Level Certificate" issued by Hanban or the "Chinese Language Teaching Certificate" issued by the Thai Ministry of Education. Chinese teachers are encouraged to possess the "International Chinese Language Teacher Certificate" if

possible. However, in reality, most Chinese language teachers in training institutions do not meet such high criteria. Finding teachers who meet the ideal standards can be challenging, possibly due to factors such as low remuneration, unclear career development paths, and a shortage of qualified Chinese language instructors.

Therefore, many training institutions opt to seek Chinese language teachers through intermediaries. These intermediary companies are typically operated by Chinese individuals who recruit university students from various Chinese universities. These students have diverse academic backgrounds, ranging from relevant majors to unrelated ones, and include both graduates and third- and fourth-year students. They are characterized by their youth, enthusiasm, broad perspectives, and willingness to embrace new methods and concepts. However, they also have high mobility, lack cross-cultural communication experience, weak psychological resilience, and limited Chinese language teaching and social life experience.

Another category of teachers in Thailand's Chinese language training institutions consists of Chinese students studying in Thailand. These students, during holidays or to experience life overseas or alleviate financial pressures, choose to work as part-time Chinese language teachers or private tutors. This group of teachers is gradually increasing. Since 2003, Hanban has been dispatching volunteers to Thailand. The Thai government has implemented a series of policies to incorporate Chinese language education into the national system, promoting it across various levels of

school education. With increasing density in Sino-Thai economic and trade exchanges, a rising enthusiasm for Chinese language learning in the private sector, and growing demand for Chinese language skills, the Chinese language market in Thailand has become more diverse.

Chinese language training institutions in Thailand fall under the category of informal education. They are supposed to be managed and overseen by the Private Education Commission, but in reality, the market entry threshold for these institutions is low, and the government currently lacks an effective management and supervision mechanism. This situation may hinder the development of private Chinese language education in Thailand and the dissemination of Chinese culture.

3.4 The Impact of Current Thai Policies on Chinese Language Education in Thailand

At present, the main policies in effect in Thailand include the "Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2008," the "Strategic Plan for Promotion Chinese Teaching and Enhancing National Competitiveness (2006-2010)," and the "Chinese Language Teaching Development Plan."

3.4.1 Impact of the "Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2008" on Chinese Language Education in Primary and Secondary Schools

The "Core Curriculum 2008" establishes norms for the development of Chinese language courses in Thai primary and secondary schools. The "Core Curriculum

2008" specifies the basic hours and basic course types for each learning area, providing a foundation for the development of the Chinese language curriculum. According to this outline, students in basic education schools should have 120 hours of foreign language courses per year in junior high school and 240 hours per year in high school. The average foreign language class hours per semester should be: 60 hours for junior high school and 120 hours for high school, with Chinese as a supplementary subject. Pan Suying through an analysis of the Thai Chinese language education system and educational policies, drew inspiration from the "Core Curriculum" regarding the structure of primary and secondary school curriculum time and learning abilities. She formulated the "Thai Primary and Secondary School Chinese Language Curriculum Outline(Pan Suying, 2012)." However, the adoption of this curriculum outline in Chinese language education in Thai primary and secondary schools remains to be tested over time.

The "Core Curriculum 2008" has contributed to the diversity of Chinese language courses in the basic education stage in Thailand. Many schools lack a Chinese language teaching outline and do not have clear teaching goals, progress, and content. Consequently, there is significant differentiation in course offerings, with no explicit curriculum outline. For example, considering weekly class hours, Chinese schools with a significant population of Chinese-origin students often flexibly increase Chinese language class hours to highlight the school's distinctive

characteristics. As a result, Chinese language class hours in Chinese schools are generally around 10-14 hours per week, while public schools typically have only 1-2 hours per week. Therefore, the emphasis placed on Chinese language by parents and students is influenced by the school's level of commitment to Chinese language instruction.

3.4.2 Impact of the "Strategic Plan" on Chinese Language Education in Thailand

The "Strategic Plan" sets specific goals for students and various levels and types of schools. Since its enactment, this plan has significantly propelled Chinese language education in Thailand, leading to a favorable situation where schools at all levels are eager to offer Chinese language courses. Regarding the goal of increasing the number of students learning Chinese, currently, over three thousand schools in Thailand offer Chinese language courses, with nearly one million students learning Chinese. Compared to the situation in 2003 when 242 schools in Thailand offered Chinese courses with 80,500 students, the number of schools offering Chinese courses has increased sevenfold, and the number of students learning Chinese has increased ninefold over the past decade.

In higher education, before the policy was introduced, according to the Thai Higher Education Commission's 2004 statistics, there were already 21 higher education institutions offering Chinese majors for undergraduates. By 2010, a total of 100 Thai universities had offered Chinese courses, including elective, minor, and

major courses, with 106 Chinese major teaching points, accounting for 63% of Thai universities. Additionally, private Chinese training institutions, according to the 2015 statistics from the Office of the Private Education Commission, totaled 135 in Thailand, with 51 in Bangkok, comprising 37.77% of the total, and 84 in other regions, comprising 62.22%. The number of learners continues to increase, with 48,820 learners in Chinese supplementary schools nationwide, including 32,338 in Bangkok, accounting for 66.23%.

During the implementation of the "Strategic Plan," official exchanges between China and Thailand became closer, and various cooperation and exchange projects were implemented, deepening the collaborative efforts of China and Thailand in Chinese language education. This has led to rapid development in Chinese language education in Thailand. By the end of 2017, China had established 525 Confucius Institutes in 146 countries and regions worldwide, with 16 in Thailand, accounting for 3%. This proportion ranks high globally. Whether through Confucius Institutes, Confucius Classrooms, or the collaboration and support of Chinese language teacher volunteers, the quality of Chinese language education in Thailand has significantly improved. The implementation of this policy has greatly promoted the dissemination of Chinese in Thailand, providing meaningful references for the dissemination of Chinese in other countries in terms of modes, methods, and approaches.

3.4.3 Impact of the "Chinese Language Teaching Development Plan" on Chinese Language Education in Thailand

The "Chinese Language Teaching Development Plan," formulated by the Thai Ministry of Education in 2014, has elevated the status of Chinese language courses, incorporating six major reform measures. This policy defines the nature, objectives, weekly hours, and class sizes of Chinese language courses from primary to high school levels. In terms of management goals for Chinese language education, the policy specifies that Chinese is no longer an optional elective but can be taught as a compulsory subject. The elevated status of Chinese language courses in Thai basic education implies greater developmental opportunities for Chinese language education. Regarding Sino-Thai cooperation, the policy mentions continuous collaboration through government initiatives, private institutions, Confucius Institutes at various universities, and other units for the development of sustained Chinese language education curriculum guidelines and guidelines for lesson plan design. It also advocates creating specialized curriculum guidelines for students with expertise in Chinese within the Chinese Program, enabling them to further enhance and develop their Chinese language proficiency.

In the area of Chinese language textbook development, the measures focus on improving existing materials. This includes developing high-quality textbooks aligned with professional goals and learning objectives, along with corresponding teacher

manuals. The policy also addresses the establishment of a Chinese language exam question bank and advocates using international standard exams to assess Chinese language learners' proficiency. The ultimate goal of this policy is to enhance the quality of Chinese language education in Thailand, improve students' learning abilities, and encourage education departments to adopt it as a guiding policy for Chinese language education, so that aims to ensure that students truly master Chinese and enhance the competitiveness of Thai students internationally.

4. Problems in the Development of Chinese Language Education in Thailand and Suggestions for the Development of Chinese Language Education in Thailand

4.1 Problems Existing in the Development of Chinese Language Education in Thailand

4.1.1 *Teacher resource issues*

The teaching profession in Thailand was initially undertaken by monks, but with the development of the times, teachers became a specialized profession. In Thailand, teachers are highly respected and viewed as individuals engaged in the sacred profession of educating and enlightening the people. With the Thai government's relaxation of Chinese language education and the recent wave of Chinese language enthusiasm in Thailand, Chinese language teachers are gradually professionalizing.

However, due to various reasons, there are still several issues with the teaching staff in Chinese language education.

Thai Chinese teachers often have limited proficiency in Chinese. According to a survey by the Thai Ministry of Education, Chinese language teachers in Thailand are mainly divided into two categories: Thai Chinese teachers and Chinese teachers. Thai Chinese teachers, being local, have advantages in teaching, such as familiarity with the Thai language, understanding students' habits, and ease of communication. However, a survey by Zhang Chen showed that, among Thai Chinese language teachers in public schools, private schools, and Chinese-language schools across Thailand, only 33.2% held Chinese language education qualifications, 4.3% obtained HSK certificates, and 23.9% had no certificates (Zhang Chen, 2019). This data indicates that while most Thai Chinese language teachers have a basic understanding of Chinese and formal education, there are still many challenges.

About 80% of Thai Chinese language teachers are from Chinese descent, and many schools, in order to meet the demand for Chinese language teachers, overlook the requirements for teachers' Chinese proficiency and teaching quality. Thai Chinese language teachers face challenges such as high teaching hours, low salaries, and additional administrative tasks, which result in low enthusiasm and teaching quality. The salaries of Thai Chinese language teachers are not high, ranging from 15,000 to

25,000 Thai baht. These factors constrain the enthusiasm of Thai Chinese language teachers and affect the quality of Chinese teaching.

Although Hanban send thousands of volunteer teachers and teachers to Thailand for Chinese language education each year, and private intermediaries recruit a large number of Chinese language teachers, this has greatly alleviated the shortage of teacher resources in Chinese education in Thailand. However, it has also brought new problems. The majority of Chinese language teachers are volunteers from Hanban, most of whom are undergraduate or graduate students in China, with diverse academic backgrounds, limited teaching experience, and the primary motivation of seeking work opportunities abroad due to the challenging Chinese employment situation. As a result, very few teachers choose to stay abroad for long-term development. It can be imagined that the turnover of teachers in Thai schools is at least once every two years, making it challenging to ensure the continuity of teaching. From a career development perspective, teachers who believe their tenure will end soon may find it difficult to plan for long-term teaching. Schools may also face challenges in managing such teachers.

4.1.2 Issues with the teaching system

In Chinese language education, while teacher resources are a primary factor, the role of teaching materials cannot be underestimated. Teaching materials are a crucial aspect of Chinese language education, serving as tools for teachers and important

foundations for student learning. Although Chinese courses are offered at various educational levels in Thailand, there is no unified set of teaching materials. This lack of consistency in teaching materials has significantly affected the coherence of both teacher instruction and student learning, seriously impeding the development of Chinese language education.

Currently, Chinese language teaching materials in Thailand mainly come in two forms: those from China, divided primarily into Taiwan and mainland versions, and those developed by local Thai teachers. While locally developed materials are more relevant to Thai realities and contain more Thai-language content, making it easier for Thai students to learn, these materials may lack the precision in explaining Chinese expressions and may deviate from the norms of modern Chinese. Additionally, the lack of a unified teaching outline in the development of these materials poses challenges for students learning Chinese.

Due to the absence of unified teaching materials, each school in Thailand has to choose Chinese teaching materials based on its specific circumstances, and some schools may even allow Chinese language teachers to teach without any materials. This severely impacts the coherence and systematic nature of students' Chinese language learning. The use of different teaching materials and varying levels of teacher competence across schools result in uneven Chinese language proficiency among students. Moreover, there is no effective standardized assessment method;

some schools conduct final written exams, some have oral exams, and some rely only on regular assessments. At each educational stage, students graduate without a unified Chinese language exam as a benchmark for evaluating their language proficiency. These factors seriously limit the effectiveness of Chinese language teaching and student learning.

4.1.3 Disorder in Management of Private Institutions and Lack of Government Oversight

Currently, there is intense competition in various Chinese language training programs in Thailand. The lack of industry standards and insufficient government regulatory efforts have led to chaotic conditions in the Chinese language education market in Thailand. As mentioned in the previous section, Chinese language training institutions in Thailand fall under the category of informal education. The government encourages the development of informal education, resulting in low market entry barriers for Chinese language training institutions. Chinese language education institutions in Thailand lack effective management and supervision mechanisms.

As discussed earlier, many private Chinese language institutions have low standards for recruiting Chinese language teachers due to a significant demand in the market. Some institutions take risks by hiring unqualified teachers for Chinese language instruction. Moreover, when faced with temporary issues such as a teacher falling ill or taking leave, many institutions turn to intermediary agencies in the hope

of swiftly replacing teachers to fill the gaps. This phenomenon occurs frequently. Both training institutions and intermediary companies lack credibility in managing teachers. Teachers going to Thailand often face frequent conflicts with intermediary agencies and schools without any personal security guarantees. This situation discourages talented individuals who are interested in teaching Chinese in Thailand. More worrisome is that some intermediaries engage in market monopolies, restricting access to talent, and profiting immensely from the situation. This monopoly makes it difficult for talented individuals to enter schools or institutions for teaching without going through intermediaries. Consequently, this situation is detrimental to the development of private Chinese language institutions in Thailand and the dissemination of Chinese culture.

4.2 Suggestions on the Development of Chinese Language Education in Thailand

4.2.1 *Regulatory management by the Thai Government*

While Chinese language education in Thailand has a long history, and the development of Chinese language teaching is at the forefront in Asia and even globally, there are still many issues affecting the progress of Chinese language education in Thailand. Therefore, Thai society should primarily rely on the government to standardize and regulate Chinese language teaching to better promote the development of Chinese language education in Thailand.

Firstly, the Thai government should establish a Chinese language teaching plan and formulate unified teaching outlines and materials. Although Thailand formulated the "Strategic Plan for Promoting Chinese Language Teaching and Enhancing National Competitiveness (2006-2010)", aiming to develop an effective management system, adjust the Chinese language education system, and standardize its development, the complexities involved in Chinese language teaching at various educational stages require more than just a development plan, developing a nationwide Chinese language education outline and plan is crucial. This would specify the standards that Chinese language teaching should meet at each stage, the level of Chinese proficiency that graduates should achieve at each stage, and it should be complemented with effective management and operational mechanisms. This step is essential for improving the level of Chinese language teaching in Thailand and achieving standardized and institutionalized management.

Secondly, the Thai government should unify the teaching materials for Chinese language instruction. In addition to developing Chinese language education outlines and plans, and specifying the desired levels of Chinese proficiency at each stage, the government should also create Chinese language teaching materials that align with the outlined plans. The Thai government should organize relevant educational personnel in Thailand, with assistance from Chinese experts, to develop comprehensive Chinese language teaching materials that match the objectives at each stage. These materials

should be localized as much as possible, incorporating scenes from local Thai contexts to help students adapt quickly and smoothly to Chinese language instruction.

Furthermore, private institutions play a vital role in the Chinese language education market in Thailand. Given the significant demand for Chinese language learning, the government increasing its regulatory oversight of the Chinese language market is an essential means to ensure the development of private Chinese language institutions.

4.2.2 Strengthening the training of Chinese language teachers and establishing an evaluation system

Thai Chinese teachers, being local educators, have advantages such as proficiency in Thai, understanding student habits, and easy communication with students. However, the number of Thai Chinese teachers is quite limited, and some may lack a professional diploma in Chinese. The shortage and varying levels of Thai Chinese teachers affect the progress of Chinese language teaching. Therefore, there is a need to enhance the development of Thai Chinese teachers. Firstly, efforts should be made to strengthen the recruitment and training of Chinese language education majors in universities. More incentives should be provided to students majoring in Chinese, especially those in pedagogy, with active collaboration agreements established with Chinese universities to facilitate the exchange and learning of more Chinese majors in Thailand. For existing Thai Chinese teachers, there should be enhanced management

and assessments, similar to a Chinese language teacher qualification examination. Those Thai Chinese teachers who do not meet the specified standards should undergo training, either by enrolling in local teacher training institutions in Thailand or participating in advanced studies at Confucius Institutes in Thailand or undergoing short-term training programs in China.

4.2.3 Improving the resource allocation for Chinese language education in Thailand

International Chinese language education is managed by the China National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (Hanban), under the leadership of the Chinese government, and it possesses abundant resources. In order to achieve rapid development in Chinese language education in Thailand, there must be a mutual sharing of resources between China and Thailand. This includes introducing advanced educational technologies such as online teaching platforms and educational apps. By establishing a platform for resource sharing, a larger online education network can be created, enhancing teaching effectiveness and facilitating language learning for those interested in studying Chinese. In remote or resource-scarce areas, utilizing information technology can enable resource sharing, ensuring that schools in all regions have access to high-quality teaching materials.

5. Conclusion

Chinese language education in Thailand has gone through the stages of germination, transition to a low point, and resurgence. With the increasing interactions between China and Thailand and the continuous expansion of China's influence, Chinese language education in Thailand has made significant progress and development, ranking among the forefront in the global scope of Chinese language learning.

However, Chinese language education in Thailand still faces challenges in terms of teacher resources, teaching materials, market supervision, and other aspects. These issues have impacted the development of Chinese language education in Thailand, and if not addressed promptly, they could become even greater obstacles. To address these challenges, this research proposes joint efforts from both China and Thailand, it suggests that Thailand should formulate unified teaching materials and curricula while enhancing the training of Thai Chinese language teachers. The establishment of a teacher assessment mechanism is also recommended. Additionally, this research suggests that Thailand and China collaborate to build a resource-sharing platform, leveraging technology to promote the new era of Chinese language education development in Thailand.

The development of Chinese language education in Thailand is a cutting-edge and interdisciplinary issue. It requires collective efforts from the governments, teachers, and students of both China and Thailand. The author's knowledge and

abilities are limited, only allowing for a superficial understanding of the issues and proposing solutions. It is hoped that these suggestions can provide some reference for the future development of Chinese language education in Thailand.



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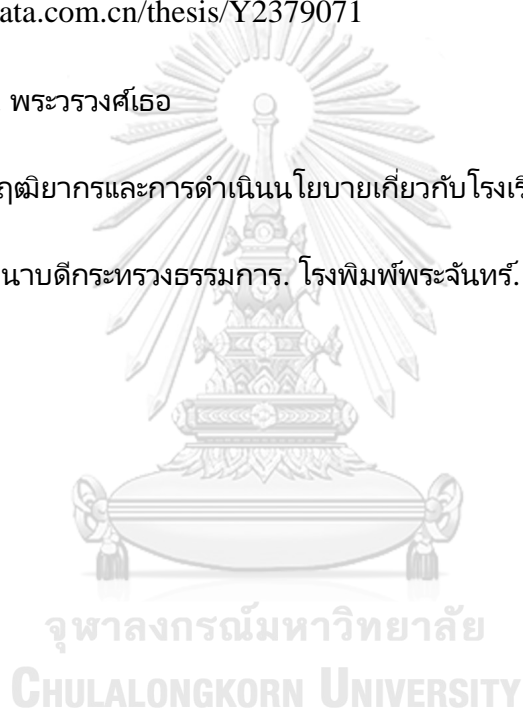
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กรมหมื่นพิทยลาภพฤฒิยากรและการดำเนินนโยบายเกี่ยวกับโรงเรียนจีนในประเทศไทยเมืองศรี
นครดำรงตำแหน่งเสนาบดีกระทรวงธรรมการ. โรงพิมพ์พระจันทร์.



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