Learning Chinese in Diasporic Communities

Many pathways to being Chinese

Edited by Xiao Lan Curdt-Christiansen and Andy Hancock

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This book brings together new theoretical perspectives and bilingual education models from different sociopolitical and cultural contexts across the globe in order to address the importance of sociocultural, educational and linguistic environments that create, enhance or limit the ways in which diasporic children and young people acquire the ‘Chinese’ language. The chapters present a variety of research-based studies on Chinese heritage language education and bilingual education drawing on detailed investigations of formal and informal educational input including language socialization in families, community heritage language schools and government sponsored educational institutions. Exploring the many pathways of learning ‘Chinese’ and being ‘Chinese’, this volume also examines the complex nature of language acquisition and development, involving language attitudes and ideologies as well as linguistic practices and identity formation. Learning Chinese in Diasporic Communities is intended for researchers, teacher-educators, students and practitioners in the fields of Chinese language education and bilingual education and more broadly those concerned with language policy studies and sociolinguistics.


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“This book makes a solid and sustained contribution to not only the burgeoning literature about Chinese as a global language but also our general understanding of linguistic, cultural and educational development in an increasingly multilingual world. Bringing together perspectives from an array of researchers from Asia, Europe, North America and Australia, it sheds new light on the creative and complex process whereby the Chinese language is used, taught, acquired, inherited and maintained in a wide range of socio-cultural-historical contexts. It advances our knowledge of the interaction between transnational migrations on the one hand, and language, identity, family dynamics, formal education, policy and politics on the other. It succeeds in striking a balance between rigor in research and richness in recounting.”

Agnes He, Stony Brook University