

## Chapter 2

# How an IBDP Chinese Program is Born



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**Abstract** This research study focuses on the Chinese language acquisition planning of a case-study school developing an initial International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) Chinese program stage. We would like to identify the thoughts and decision-making process regarding Chinese language acquisition planning at international schools and then provide practical suggestions for the schools that plan to develop an IBDP Chinese program.

Regarding methodology, we applied multi-sited ethnography (Heller and Pujolar, 2009; Marcus, 1995). Data sources were mainly interviews, school documents, and surveys. Participants included one IBDP Chinese teacher, two school language policy makers, and 15 students studying IBDP Chinese. We are especially interested in acquiring more insight into how students view their IBDP Chinese program and the challenges that they face during their studies.

Several research results were found:

1. The IBDP Chinese is considered as a norm for the internationalization of an educational institute.
2. The IBDP Chinese program is developed through school-based language acquisition planning that recognizes students' diversity in students' learning rights and linguistic resources.
3. To respond to mixed-level classes, and to help students integrate smoothly into the IBDP, the case-study school has planned to extend Chinese language acquisition planning down to the lower grades and provide more learning support.

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This research describes the origin, development, and implementation of a Chinese language program in an international school. We expect that it can provide international school language planners, Chinese language teachers, and parents whose children attending international schools around the world with a broader perspective to understand the ecology of the Chinese language program in the Chinese-speaking regions.

**Keywords** Chinese program · The IBDP · International school · Acquisition planning · Language orientation

## 2.1 Research Background

In many studies of international schools, we rarely see the birth of a program depicted. In the past few years, the number of International Baccalaureate (IB) programs in Asian international schools has proliferated. Decades ago in Taiwan, the Taipei American School was the only international school offering the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) in 1981, followed by the Taipei European School in 2002. However, the I-Shou International School was the first IB school offering three IB programs,<sup>1</sup> including IBDP, MYP (Middle Years Programme), and PYP (Primary Years Programme), in 2010 in Taiwan. Later, the Taipei Kuei Shan School was established with its three IB programs in 2015. IB is no longer an unknown term; rather, it has established itself in Taiwan's education system and is gradually making an impact. However, as in the global research literature on IB, there is minimal research on how IB programs are developed. We believe that such research will help more educators and researchers understand the communication issues, curriculum challenges, and teacher dilemmas that schools may experience as they adopt the IB philosophy and practice.

Therefore, after a series of discussions, we received permission from an international school to include it as a case-study school and spent a year following the school's process of establishing an IBDP. We focused mainly on the establishment of a Chinese language teaching program. During this process, we applied ethnographic research, analyzed official school documents, and conducted one or more interviews with each administrator, teacher, and student. Through this research, we could depict a vivid and detailed picture of the conversations, preparations, and atmosphere on campus during the establishment of the IBDP. This research includes representations of the scenarios with a range of data (interviews, surveys, and school documents) to make the thinking of an IB school and its future version transparent.

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<sup>1</sup> International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) offers four programs International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) for ages 16–19, Middle Years Programme (MYP) for ages 11–16, Primary Years Programme (PYP) for ages 3–12, and Career-related Programme (IBCP). The programs are listed in the established time order (IBO, 2005–2022).

**Table 2.1** Background of AS

Item	Content
Location	City A, Taiwan
School system	PreK–Grade
Number of staff	53
Number of Chinese teachers	4
Number of students	505
Compulsory grades for Chinese learning	Grades 1–6
Choice of Chinese characters	Traditional Chinese
Choice of pinyin system	Zhuyin, Pinyin
Choice of pinyin system	Zhuyin, Pinyin

*Note* Collected and sorted by the researchers

## 2.2 Research Context

The school that we studied is henceforth referred to as AS. AS is a well-known international school in City A. It is relatively typical among the international school systems in Taiwan, where Chinese language teaching has been practiced since the 1980s and has a well-established teaching pattern. Regarding the academic structure, AS offers a PreK–12 education with a student population of around 505. In terms of management, in addition to the superintendent, there is a principal for the middle school, a principal for the elementary school, and a staff of over 50 teachers, assistants, and intern teachers, including four Chinese language teachers. Table 2.1 below provides background information on AS.

As shown in Table 2.1, regarding Chinese language acquisition planning, only half of the students in grades 1–6 at AS are required to take a mandatory Chinese language course. From the seventh grade and onward, the Chinese language course is an elective language subject. The IBDP Chinese language course was initiated in the second year after the IBDP was approved to be implemented in high school at AS. AS offers Language A (Studies in Language and Literature) at the standard level. In terms of selecting the characters and phonics, traditional characters are taught primarily in Zhuyin and supplemented by Hanyu Pinyin.

## 2.3 Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of the research is to examine the planning process of the IBDP Chinese language course at AS and investigate the phenomenon of Chinese language acquisition planning and its implementation at AS. Ultimately, we hope to understand the reasons for implementing the IBDP in international schools and the diversity within Chinese language teaching. Meanwhile, we would like to provide language

acquisition planning perspectives and recommendations for implementing the IBDP Chinese language course at an international school.

Based on the purpose mentioned above, we proposed the three research questions:

1. Based on the perspective of Chinese language acquisition planning, what variables impact the case-study school's implementation of the IBDP Chinese language model?
2. Based on Language Orientation Theory (Ruiz, 1984), what are the case-study school's orientation choices?
3. To meet its school-based Chinese language acquisition policy, what strategies does the case-study school apply to take care of high school Chinese language students' learning needs?

## 2.4 Literature Review

### 2.4.1 *Language-In-Education Planning*

There are three critical components of language planning: corpus planning, status planning, and acquisition planning. Haugen (1966) initially described the corpus planning process of standardization as involving a 4-stage model. Kloss (1969) then defined language status planning vis-a-vis corpus planning. Corpus planning refers to the form of a language, such as normative orthography, grammar, and dictionary, in a speech community. Status planning refers to a deliberate effort to allocate the function of languages; for example, in 2008, the US Department of Education listed Chinese as one of the critical-need foreign languages (US Department of Education, 2008). Cooper (1989) then brought forth the third part of language-in-education planning, called acquisition planning, which focuses on teaching and learning languages that can be national, second, or foreign languages. The focus is on language users. Primarily, language planning is developed by the government and policy makers instead of educators. However, Kaplan and Baldauf Jr. (1997) re-developed the language planning components mentioned above. Based on previous theories, they asserted that language-in-education planning should result from corpus and status planning and should be interweaved with language teaching and learning. Due to internationalization and globalization, providing language resources suitable for immigrant students has become crucial. Bilingual education has also shown many examples of using instruction to promote different languages, suggesting that language planning can be done from either a macro or a micro level by all kinds of participants. Ingram (1989) mentioned that language-in-education planning should be between language policy-making and the classroom and its curriculum. In this study, we applied Baldauf Jr.'s (2004) language-in-education planning (acquisition planning) framework, looking at the IBDP curriculum, methods and material policy, community policy, and evaluation policy of the case-study school.

### 2.4.2 *Language Planning Orientation Theory*

Before a language policy can be planned, the policy makers usually have an assumption or idea of how the language should be managed, developed, promoted, or conserved. The decision might lead to the formation of a language disposition of a nation, an organization, or an institution. Ruiz (1984) proposed three orientations to language policy planning based on previous language planning results and numerous theories, including the ones mentioned above before 1984. The three orientations are language-as-problem, language-as-right, and language-as-resource.

In the language-as-problem orientation, linguistic diversity threatens assimilation or national unity, so the language policy might be better implemented by having one common language. In a monolingual nation or society, bilingual children might be viewed as having low academic achievement because they cannot utilize the dominant language, as well as monolingual children can. As a result, the policy makers in this situation think that these bilingual children should be exposed to the dominant language environment.

The language-as-right orientation is more of an inverse problem, looking for ways to address language inequalities by applying legal mechanisms. In comparison, Ruiz's language-as-rights examples are mainly from a US context (which involves civil rights legislation and leads to problems such as which minority language to choose under what circumstances and whose language should be taught in class). It is essential to think from the standpoint of the language-as-right orientation to address the language planning needs. The language-as-resource orientation seeks ways to view linguistic diversity as a resource, as planners can and should be aware that languages can be resources even before language planning. As Ruiz (1984, p. 18) wrote, "Orientation, as it is used here, refers to a complex of dispositions toward languages and their role in society." Therefore, orientations are crucial because policy makers make language plans according to how they view the language. Here in our study, we would like to investigate how an IBDP Chinese program has developed and what the policy makers' philosophy is based on Ruiz's language orientation theory.

### 2.4.3 *International Schools*

Our research was carried out at an international school located in Taiwan. The number of international schools has increased, with many revisions in curriculum and admissions among the schools (Bunnell et al., 2016; Hayden & Thompson, 1995, 2013). Therefore, it is essential to update our current understanding of the research field to understand the educational background of the case-study school and the philosophy of its curriculum.

Hayden and Thompson (2013, p. 5) have categorized international schools into three types: Type A "traditional," Type B "ideological," and Type C "non-traditional." Type A "traditional" international schools were established initially to cater to the

mobile expatriate families in which the parents work outside of their countries, and the educational system might be considered a poor fit for their offspring. Initially, most of these schools offered education and curriculum based on western countries, so when the children returned to their home nations, their education could align with their national curriculum. After World War I, the term “international school” emerged when the International School of Geneva (1924) was founded for the children whose parents worked for the International Labor Office and League of Nations in Geneva. The Yokohama International School was also established a few weeks later (Hill, 2007, 2012; Sylvester, 2002). What was unique about the international school in Geneva was that the parents tried to promote world peace by educating the children via intercultural understanding. After World War II, the United Nations replaced the League of Nations, and later the International School Association (ISA) was created in 1951 to support other international schools around the globe and provide teaching pedagogy and curriculum (Hill, 2012). In the late twentieth century, the growth of the global economy led many parents to work in different countries, thus necessitating even more international schools to be built.

Type B “ideological” international schools were created to gather young people from different parts of the globe to learn the differences between diversified cultures with the hopes of eliminating the ignorance and prejudice that cause war. Hill (2012) described Sylvester’s research (2002) regarding the concept of international mindedness for world unity and peace proposed by John Amos Comenius in the seventeenth century. As a result, the United World Colleges was developed to offer comprehensive scholarships and opportunities to bring young people from around the world to study in different countries. While Type A and B schools share to some extent characteristics such as promoting international or intercultural understanding, Type B schools are characterized as ideology-driven.

Type C “non-traditional” international schools were profit-oriented and created to cater to the offspring of the socio-economic elites in the host country. These elites seek a better education that is different from the national education system and makes it easier for their children to attend a western university. This type of school has contributed to the vast increase in international schools since 2000 (Brummitt & Keeling, 2013).

All three categories of international schools mentioned offer a different curriculum from that of country in which they are located, and English is usually the medium language of instruction (Carder, 2013; Hayden & Thompson, 2013). For example, the curriculum might be a national education curriculum program, such as British international schools offering the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and A Levels, or US international schools offering Advanced Placement International Diploma or the IBDP, which have been developed since the 1960s. In this study, the case-study school is a Type A school that initially adopted its own national curriculum. However, at the time of our case study, the school had implemented the IBDP curriculum for a year.

### 2.4.4 *The IBDP Curriculum*

IB was originated by a group of teachers at the International School of Geneva in 1962 to meet the educational needs of internationally mobile students and to break down the barriers of national education systems to create a diploma system that would be widely accepted by universities around the world (Hill, 2012). The IBO was then established officially in 1968. The IBDP is a two-year program taught to students ages 16–19 and is well-recognized by the world’s leading universities. The IBDP aims to provide students with critical thinking skills, intercultural understanding, and an international perspective (IBO, 2005–2022).

The IBDP curriculum includes first, the DP core which consists of the Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course, completing the Creativity, Action, and Service (CAS) course, and writing a 4,000-word Extended Essay. The IBDP consists of six subject groups: “Studies in Language and Literature”, also called Language A; “Language Acquisition” also called Language B; “Individuals and Societies”; “Sciences”; “Mathematics”; and “The Arts.” Each subject has different courses and offers both a higher and a standard-level class. To graduate, students are required to take the compulsory core courses, write the 4000-word Extended Essay, and study three of these subjects at the higher level and three at the standard level. However, Language B has an extra Ab Initio option for students with limited target language ability (IBO, 2005–2022). In our study, we observed the Language A Standard Level Chinese course.

## 2.5 Research Method

Our research focuses on the initial thinking involved in implementing the IBDP Chinese language course at AS. At the same time, we seek to observe the phenomenon of Chinese language acquisition planning that implementation brings about. We adopted the comparative perspective of multi-sited ethnography to collect and analyze data qualitatively and quantitatively (Heller & Pujolar, 2009; Marcus, 1995).

The data were collected through school background documents, a survey, and semi-structured interviews to examine the issues and decisions that emerged during the IBDP Chinese language acquisition planning process at AS. Regarding administrative and teacher participation, two language planners and one IBDP Chinese language teacher were interviewed, each of whom was interviewed between one and three times in Chinese, English, or both. The interviews lasted between 10 and 30 min, and the venue was chosen according to the respondent’s preference. The interviews focused on the following three points:

1. Describe the interviewee’s personal IB Chinese language acquisition planning and teaching experience.
2. Examine respondents’ reflections on and examinations of their past and current IBDP Chinese language acquisition planning and teaching experiences were

examined. We explored the phenomenon of the transformation of Chinese language roles, curriculum, teaching objectives, and planning guidelines under this implementation.

3. Explain how the interviewees link their professional experiences with the school, the region, and the global language learning situation in the future planning of Chinese language acquisition in the IBDP. This helps us understand how they position the role, function and form, and content of IBDP Chinese language learning in international schools.

We also obtained 15 consent letters from the parents whose children were taking the IBDP Chinese course and then conducted an average of 10 to 15 min of interviews with these students individually. The interviews focused on the student's motivation for taking the IBDP Chinese course, the challenges that they encountered while taking the course, and their perceptions of the course. The interview data of the students were used as counterpoints in relation to the interview data of the teacher and the language planners.

The interview data were the primary source for data analysis, with secondary data coming from documentary files, essential background information questionnaires, and classroom notes. The transcriptions were organized into several parts: first, we transcribed the audio recordings of the interviews and the languages used in the transcript depending on the interview language. For example, if English were used during the interview, the transcript would be in English. If both Chinese and English were used during the interview, the transcript would be presented in Chinese and English. We then coded, defined, compared, categorized, and summarized the main issues that emerged from the transcript and corresponded to the three research questions. Finally, we compiled and analyzed various data to sort out the progress of AS in implementing the IBDP Chinese language courses. Table 2.2 below shows the coding system of the data presented in this study.

**Table 2.2** Research data encoding table

Type	Encoding	Explanation
1	Tim, Language Planner	This refers to an individual interview; "Tim", a language planner
2	Alo, Language Planner	This refers to an individual interview; "Alo", a language planner
3	Apple, IBDP Chinese Teacher	This refers to an individual interview; "Apple", a teacher
4	S1, IBDP Chinese Student	This refers to an individual interview; "S1", Student 1
5	School Document, AS	This refers to the school documents of AS; "AS", the school
6	R	This refers to the researchers

*Note* Edited by the researchers



## 2.6 Results and Discussions

To answer the three proposed research questions respectively, according to the data analysis, we will explain the phenomena of the IBDP Chinese language acquisition planning at AS and discuss how the development of the IBDP influences the overall Chinese acquisition planning at AS.

### 1. IBDP Chinese is Considered as a Norm for the Internationalization of an Educational Institute

As mentioned in the literature review, the IBDP was established in the late 1960s to meet the needs of internationally mobile students to break down the national educational system barriers and create a diploma system that would be widely accepted and recognized by universities around the world (Hill, 2002; Renaud, 1991).

The IBDP development at AS can be traced back four years to the arrival of the school principal (superintendent), Tim. Before Tim came to AS, he promoted the IB program at two schools in the United States. AP courses were provided for the high school division at AS. Tim thought that although AS was an American education polity, as an international school, it should have international education as its core goal. For this reason, the IBDP was chosen as the primary curriculum. Below is what Tim said about the school during the interview.

“We are an international school when it comes to our curriculum, International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. But we are truly an American school.”

(Tim, Language Planner)

Regarding educational ideals, Tim promoted the IBDP from an international perspective. In terms of further education, since the IBDP has been recognized by the world’s leading universities (IBO, 2005–2022), students who have the IB diploma or subject certificates can receive extra points on their GPA when applying for universities. Therefore, the IBDP is also considered a guarantee of admission to the top universities (Culross & Tarver, 2011; Kyburg et al., 2007). Tim, as a school principal as well as a superintendent in language planning, also stressed the above point by saying:

“IB is the most rigorous curriculum in the world. If you are going to be an IB lead school, you will have a better chance than in a not IB school.”

(Tim, Language Planner)

Language planner Alo has also mentioned that compared with the IBDP, AP is a single subject-oriented course design, so it is easier for students to study. However, the IBDP is a curriculum-oriented design with a well-described curriculum system that will be more effective for the students in terms of the overall learning plan:

“AP is one subject, right? So it is one subject individually, IB is a program, so, in that aspect, the IB is a way more complex and more.... beneficial, from my point of view...”

(Alo, Language Planner)

In addition to the opinions from the language planner Tim and Alo, student S8 also mentioned the following during the interview:

R: Do you know IB before you come to AS?

S8: Yes, my father would like me to take IB. And, he knows this school is going to have IB courses.

R: So he sends you here because of this?

S8: Yes. Plus, my academic performance back in Canada was not ideal.....

R: Then why does your father want you to take IB?

S8: He heard that it's more challenging and it could help you prepare for university, sort of things...

(S8, IBDP Chinese Student)

The above descriptions of the language planners and the student echo the IBDP Chinese teacher Apple's point of view: once the school becomes an IB school, there definitely will be parents who will send their children to the school:

"From a more utilitarian perspective, I think it's for future school enrollment. Parents would think, if the school has IB, then their children might get a smoother path and advantages toward university, as IB is now a trend..."

(以比較功利的講法，我覺得是升學率，因為家長的期許，他會覺得這個學校有IB，那他們把小孩送進來之後，那小孩走向大學之路會不會比較平穩，比較平順，因為IB是一個趨勢嘛.....)

(Apple, IBDP Chinese Teacher)

According to the Chinese teacher Apple, before AS became an IB school, AS's Chinese teachers used to design the Chinese curriculum or decide on the Chinese learning materials all on their own. During the process of AS becoming an IB school, as the IBDP became the core curriculum, it was only natural that the high school's Chinese curriculum must also meet the IBDP curriculum requirements. Of all the language courses at AS, besides English, the Chinese course had the most significant number of students, leading to the number of Chinese subject teachers being the highest. Therefore, during the implementation of the IBDP process, the Chinese course was inevitably included in the curriculum. Below is what the Chinese teacher Apple said during the interview:

"Now we are an IB school, and we have to be a real IB school, so we must have Chinese, and Chinese is a big department in school..... (R: yes) language..... one Spanish teacher, and then one Japanese teacher, but in Chinese, we have three teachers. The other two languages have already become IB courses, so there is no reason that Chinese is not. So, yes, we are an IB school now, so every subject should become an IB subject."

(現在我們是一個IB School，我們要我們是一個完整的IB School，所以我們必須要有中文，而且中文是一個這麼大的部門，(R: 嗯)，language.....Spanish 一個老師，然後hmmm Japanese一個老師，可是中文部有三個老師，他是一個很大的部門，如果其他兩個都已經開IB了，中文不開IB就是說不過去。對，就變成說，我們變成一個IB學校，應該每一科都要有IB.....)

(Apple, IBDP Chinese Teacher)

To summarize, in response to research question 1, although AS was initially aligned with the American education polity, the reason for AS to adopt the IBDP was to develop the school to fit the name of an international school. Moreover, the IBDP is widely recognized by universities worldwide for meeting school development and parents' expectations. Therefore, in this study, we observed that as AS became an IB school, the IBDP Chinese curriculum was gradually developed into an IB-compliant high school Chinese curriculum in the context of the overall internationalization of the school.

## 2. The IBDP Chinese Program is Developed Through School-Based Language Acquisition that Recognizes Diversity in Students' Learning Rights and Linguistic Resources

As AS was aligned with the American educational system, where language acquisition was planned with English as the primary medium of instruction. Therefore, Chinese was categorized as a second language option at AS, as were other world languages (Spanish and Japanese). The three languages share the same second language status. However, Table 2.3 shows that English was the primary language of instruction (except for in the Chinese classes) and the working language at school. Both planners ranked English and Chinese first and second in terms of the importance of student language learning, respectively, but Tim ranked Spanish and Japanese the same, while Alo, the Spanish teacher, listed Chinese as the top language with English. This was related to most students' Chinese cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Alo also made it clear that Chinese was the primary language spoken by the majority of the students in school and that the school hoped that the students would maintain their Chinese language ability as a bridge to their native culture:

".....we do want them to take Chinese.....Chinese is definitely something connects students to their heritage, and it is something that...hmmm...it is useful for them..."

(Alo, Language Planner)

Moreover, an inspection of the AS's language policy revealed that Chinese alone was depicted alone as a mother tongue. AS offered Chinese language courses sequentially from primary to middle school, while Spanish and Japanese were only offered as electives at the middle school level. Furthermore, the primary level required the students to take the Chinese language course from grades one to six. The above description echoes Ruiz's (1984) language-as-right orientation, where Chinese is the

**Table 2.3** Language status of Chinese

Item		Language Planner Tim	Language Planner Alo
Administrative language	English	V	V
Importance of languages to students	English>Chinese>Spanish=Japanese	V	
	English>Chinese		V

Note Edited by the researchers

**Table 2.4** Parents’ motivation for their children to study the IBDP Chinese

Item	Tim	Alo	Apple
Instrumental			V
Sentimental			V
Integrated	V	V	V

*Note* Edited by the researchers

native language of most students, and schools consider learning Chinese as a fundamental right and necessity for students. In addition, the description also matched the IBO language and learning policy (IBO, 2011). Not only is the local language viewed as a *fact*, which means it should be recognized and promoted, but also the students have rights maintaining and developing their mother tongues while learning other languages.

Based on the background data questionnaire, the language planners and the IBDP teachers’ perceptions of students’ motivation for taking the IBDP Chinese language course are shown in Table 2.4 below. It reveals that both language planners and the IBDP Chinese teachers felt that parents’ motivation for their children to take the IBDP Chinese language course was integrated.

In addition, Ding and Saunders (2006) indicated that the rising economy in Mainland China has gradually made Chinese language learning one of the most popular choices among world languages. For language planners, trends in the target language countries also influence the choices that schools make when implementing language programs. For example, Tim, a language planner who has led two IB schools in the US, said that compared to five years ago, when schools typically chose Spanish, Japanese, or French as their IBDP language courses, he now included Chinese as one of his choices in the IBDP language program, saying:

“Today I will. Five years ago, no.....we offered Spanish and Japanese.....we offered Spanish and French, but if it were today, if it comes to me, I will probably offer French and Mandarin.”

(Tim, Language Planner)

However, Chinese language acquisition planning was not only emphasized academically at AS, but also the Chinese language is the foundation of AS for communication and connection with its host community.

“There is an old saying that think globally, act locally. So that’s what we are trying to teach our students, the first commitment, is their community... outside of the academic curriculum, is to try to contribute to our community...”

(Tim, Language Planner)

In terms of the IBDP Chinese language acquisition planning, the IBDP curriculum rendered the education of AS more international than before, and the IBDP Chinese course can also be seen as the AS internationalization indicator of AS. It was also responding to the concept of not giving up the local resources and the heritage background of the students proposed by Chun (2015). It fully embodied the phenomenon

that Chun (2009) called “Chinese language glocalization” by implementing Chinese courses at AS. Regarding the language orientation, part of the Chinese language acquisition planning at AS focused on the instrumental value, which Ruiz referred to as language-as-resource.

3. To respond to mixed-level classes, and to help students integrate smoothly into the IBDP, the case-study school has planned to extend Chinese language acquisition planning down to the lower grades and provide more learning support

In the first year after receiving approval for the IBDP implementation, to provide students with an entire diploma program, AS needed to offer a curriculum that met the requirements of the IBDP while adhering to the IBO curriculum guidelines. As mentioned previously, all the courses offered a standard and a higher level for students. However, the number of the AS high school population was insufficient to support many classes. As a result, language planner Tim said, at first, the IBDP courses at AS were generally mixed level, and teachers had to assign different tasks to the students at two different levels in the same class:

The teachers find it (IB) very very hard. In fact, in classes, we have IB HL students, and IB SL students at the same time, so the teachers have to differentiate, they have to do different projects with different groups...

(Tim, Language Planner)

Additionally, there were situations where students who took the IBDP courses and those who did not were taught in the same class. Since the IBDP at AS was not mandatory, the students could take the full IBDP, take a single IBDP course, or take the course without receiving a certificate or diploma. However, Chinese teacher Apple said that AS could only open one class per grade level in high school due to the limited number of students. Therefore, the students who took the IBDP Chinese course in the 11th and 12th grades would be in the same class regardless of whether they were taking the full IBDP curriculum. However, this situation did not happen to them in the first year of the IBDP Chinese course, as all the students decided to take the IBDP Chinese course.

“We don’t have other choices in Chinese, as long as you are in Grade 10, you need to take Chinese, and no matter if you are taking IB or not, all students will be in my class..... and we found out that they all take IB after they get up to Grade 11.”

(我們不開其他的中文班,反正你只要是十年級的學生,你要學中文,不管你要不要拿IB,你全部到我的班.....那一旦他們十一年級進來我們中文課的時候,我們一問之下,他們沒有人不拿IB。)

(Apple, IBDP Chinese Teacher)

Due to the AS language policy, Chinese was required from grades one to six, and after the seventh grade, students could choose between Chinese and Spanish and Japanese. According to Chinese teacher Apple, most students chose to take another language course once Chinese was not required. However, during the last two years of high school, many students returned to Chinese because they could no longer cope with the increasing difficulty of other foreign language courses and because their

parents expected them to continue learning and maintaining their Chinese language skills. The following compares what Apple and the student said in their interviews.

“Once Chinese is no longer a compulsory subject, students will flow to Spanish and Japanese..... but when they move up to Grade 10, 11 or 12, they will graduate soon, and their parents would expect them to go back to Chinese again, because parents still wish students to learn Chinese properly as a priority.”

(他們只要中文一不必修之後,他們就一味的衝向那個Spanish跟Japanese這樣子...因為他們已經10年級...11年級、12年級,再兩年就要畢業了,父母不希望他們再修Spanish跟Japanese...父母還是希望他們先把中文先學好,不管你學得怎麼樣,就是繼續走中文的路...)

(Apple, IBDP Chinese Teacher)

S10: Japanese is too difficult.....

R: But you have taken Japanese before, still cannot cope with it?

S10: I cannot nail its grammar, I have learned it for two years, but the grammar is becoming more and more difficult.

(S10:日文太難了.....)

R:可是你過去是修過日文的,你還是覺得不行嗎?

S10:學不會他的文法,學了兩年Japanese,文法太難了,越來越難.....)

(S10, IBDP Chinese Student)

However, from the above transcripts, we found that AS only offered one IBDP Chinese course, and even though the students' primary language was Chinese, the number of years for which the students had been studying Chinese was inconsistent. Therefore, there was still a problem with students having different levels in the IBDP Chinese course. This was especially easy to spot in their writing ability. To ameliorate this situation, after implementing the IBDP Chinese course, AS began to make some adjustments to the IBDP Chinese language acquisition planning. According to Chinese teacher Apple, AS was planning to revise the requirements for seventh-grade students to make the transition to the IBDP Chinese course smoother. The requirement for taking Chinese courses from grades one to six would remain the same, and the seventh-grade students could continually choose to take elective Chinese or take Spanish and Japanese each for half a year. After that, they could continue taking Spanish or Japanese or return to their Chinese course. However, the eighth-grade students must decide on one language for their second language course through the 12th grade. Once the 8th graders decided on what language they would take through high school, they could not switch the language afterward. Under this plan, not only the students in the IBDP Chinese course but also the students in the Spanish or Japanese courses would be able to make decisions about their language learning at least a year earlier than they were able to then. As a result, the students would not be weaving in between different language courses:

“This year, for Spanish and Japanese, students are separated into half and half. If they take Spanish in the first semester, then they will take Japanese in the second semester. No matter what they choose at first, they will switch it in the second semester anyway, and they will settle their language choices in Grade 8.”

(今年在排課上,Spanish跟Japanese上.....七年級砍成一半,如果你是上學期修Spanish的,你下學期就是修Japanese,不管你一開始選什麼,你就是下學期要換,兩個就是對調就對了,然後到八年級的時候就是定下來去做一個選擇。)

(Apple, IBDP Chinese Teacher)

Thus, implementing the IBDP not only changed the Chinese language curriculum at AS but also allowed AS's Chinese language acquisition planning to be extended to the elementary school, making the Chinese language curriculum more coherent from elementary to high school.

Culross and Tarver (2011) also indicated that the IB school administration must provide the students with as many learning resources as possible to facilitate student learning. This idea developed by Culross and Tarver corresponded to what Tim, the language planner, and the superintendent, said about his work. He was responsible for providing learning resources and access to help students develop and cultivate the skills that they needed to meet the IB curriculum designing. Tim hoped that he could help the students perform better with the greater resources and learning support offered.

"My job as a superintendent is to provide resources for people to become successful, so when I discovered our writing is weak here, then I think it's my responsibility to bring in some courses... that's why we have a summer writing program."

(Tim, Language Planner)

Figure 2.1 below shows an AS school document that promoted writing classes during the summer to encourage all students to strengthen their writing skills. The writing classes were offered to the elementary school, the middle school, and high school students. Particularly for high school students, good writing skills are essential to complete the 4,000-word Extended Essay required to graduate.

To summarize, AS had just completed its first year of implementing the IBDP Chinese course. Due to the limited student numbers, they could only offer one class per grade. To bridge the gap between different levels of Chinese writing skills and help the students transition to the IBDP more smoothly, AS Chinese language acquisition

**Summer Writing Institute**  
**Session 1**

**June 11-15 & June 18-22**

1. *Writing and the Arts for First Time Summer Institute Students* for grades 4 and 5.
2. *Emerging Writers Workshop* for students in grades 6-8.
3. *Emerging Writers' Workshop II* will be offered primarily to students entering grade 9&10. This course will introduce students to the college essay in addition to beginning to prepare students for college writing expectations.
4. *Personal Narrative Writing for University II* will be offered primarily to students going into grades 11&12 and beyond. The students will focus on their college essay and will discuss the extended IB essay.

**Fig. 2.1** School Document—Summer Writing Institute (Note Provided by AS)

planning was extended to the elementary level. Moreover, AS also provided learning resources to the students to empower them and help them academically.

## 2.7 Conclusion

Regarding this chapter's title, we examined how an IBDP Chinese program was born in an international school. AS revised its Chinese language acquisition planning to offer the IBDP Chinese language program because of its drive to be internationalized itself and its desire to become an IB school. In the process of creating and implementing the IBDP Chinese program, AS demonstrated that its language planning approach fully embodied Ruiz's (1984) language orientations of language-as-right and language-as-resource. This also echoes IBO's language concept shifted from Bilingualism to Multilingualism as a "fact, a right and a resource" (IBO, 2011, p. 9). As noted in the document, diversified languages are being seen as an integral part of learner's path as the act of teaching these languages can help connect learners to the host country as well as its culture. This makes a bond that benefits students as they continue their studies (IBO, 2011). Also, the approach confirms the concept that bilingual/multilingualism is a norm in international schools (Carder, 2006, 2007); therefore, mutual respect and recognition between/among languages are part of basic philosophy of international schools. A whole year was spent observing the IBDP Chinese language acquisition planning process at AS from genesis to implementation. Even now, all the IBDP courses are moving toward greater integrity and pragmatism. As language planner Alo said:

"This is an ongoing process."

(Alo, Language planner)

The Chinese language acquisition planning at AS must be aligned with the adjustment of other languages to allow the students to experience a positive language and knowledge transfer, and simultaneously assist the students' transition from elementary to high school. Thus, the next focus of the IBDP Chinese language acquisition planning will be integrating each subject as it becomes more complex with the students' progression from elementary to high school, supported by the teachers. This might also be an indicator of why IB now provides PYP, MYP, and CP to facilitate the interconnectivity that allows students to progress smoothly from elementary to high school. In addition, while English is the main medium of instruction language; however, it is the second language of most of the students. Therefore, language acquisition planning will be a continually challenging issue for language planners and policy makers. This can be an area rich in research possibility for the future.

This article has described the birth, development, and implementation of a Chinese language program in an international school. Through the data of interviews and materials we collected that allowed us to gather detailed insiders' perspectives, we hope that we can provide a broader perspective to any and all of the following: international school language planners; Chinese language teachers; and parents whose



children are attending international schools around the world. In this way they can understand the ecology and challenges that may face of the Chinese language program in the Chinese-speaking regions.

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