

ALIGNING WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS: THE IMPACT OF THAILAND'S CHINESE CURRICULUM REFORM ON CHINESE LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study investigates Thailand's recent efforts to institutionalize Chinese language education through the 2024 *Guide to Opening Special Chinese Classrooms*, issued by the Office of the Basic Education Commission. Using qualitative document analysis and policy evaluation, the study examines how the *Guide* establishes national curriculum standards, aligns learning benchmarks with international frameworks such as HSK, HSKK, and CTC SOL, and introduces governance mechanisms intended to enhance program quality. The findings show that while the *Guide* represents a significant advancement toward structured and standards-based bilingual education, its long-term effectiveness will depend on addressing several systemic challenges, including gaps in teacher qualifications, disparities in regional resources, and variations in school-level implementation capacity. This research provides timely insights for policymakers, educators, and curriculum designers engaged in Chinese language education reform in Thailand and across the broader ASEAN region.

Keywords: Chinese education in Thailand; curriculum policy; language standards; HSK; CTC SOL; bilingual education

Introduction

Over the past three decades, Chinese language education in Thailand has undergone rapid and wide-ranging development. Beginning in the early 2000s, Chinese gradually shifted from an elective foreign language to a subject of national strategic importance within the Thai basic education system, driven by curriculum reform, labor-market demands, and increasing regional integration. This shift is most clearly reflected in the 2024 release of the *Guide to Opening Special Chinese Classrooms* issued by the Basic Education Commission (BEC), which constitutes the first comprehensive national framework for standardizing Chinese instruction from kindergarten through upper secondary school. As a landmark policy document, the *Guide* signifies Thailand's intention to establish a structured, quality-assured, and internationally aligned Chinese language education system.

Despite notable progress, several systemic challenges continue to constrain the development of Chinese language education in Thailand. These include the absence of a unified national curriculum, disparities in teacher qualifications, pronounced regional differences in resource allocation, and inconsistent progression across educational stages. Learner-related factors—such as variations in motivation, parental expectations, and access to supplementary learning opportunities—further exacerbate these inequalities. In response, the 2024 *Guide* introduces a dual-track model comprising General Chinese Classrooms (GCC) and Special Chinese Programs (CP). Each model specifies instructional hours, proficiency benchmarks, teacher qualification standards, and assessment mechanisms designed to address long-standing structural gaps.

Building on these developments, this study investigates the broader implications of the *Guide* for the development of Chinese language education in Thailand, with attention to both policy design and practical feasibility. The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. In what ways does the *Guide* establish a coherent national standard for Chinese language instruction across basic education?
2. How does it align with international benchmarks—including HSK, HSKK, CTCSOL, and the International Chinese Language Education Standards (ICLE)—to support systemwide standardization?
3. What implementation challenges and contextual constraints may arise across Thailand's diverse school settings, particularly in relation to teacher supply, resource disparities, and program sustainability?

By analyzing the *Guide's* structure, core indicators, and policy mechanisms, this paper contributes to ongoing discussions on curriculum reform in multilingual and multicultural education systems. It also offers practical insights for policymakers, educators, and researchers engaged in international language education planning.

Literature Review

Existing policy literature increasingly underscores the need for structured, standards-based Chinese language instruction within Thailand's basic education system. Recent policy

documents issued by the Basic Education Commission (BEC)—including the 2024 *Guide to Opening Special Chinese Classrooms*—reflect a broader shift toward formalizing Chinese language curricula, defining proficiency expectations, and standardizing instructional models across diverse school settings. These developments align with earlier national policy directives calling for clearer curriculum articulation, strengthened teacher qualification standards, and the integration of internationally recognized benchmarks into local instructional practice.

Scholarly research consistently highlights the rapid expansion of Chinese language education in Thailand since the early 2000s, alongside persistent challenges related to curriculum fragmentation, inconsistent instructional quality, and the lack of unified national standards (Dong & Tian, 2024; Fei, 2022). Several studies note that although Chinese has become one of the most widely taught foreign languages in Thailand, its development has remained uneven across regions and school types, with marked disparities in teacher qualifications, instructional time, and access to learning resources (Xiao & Tian, 2024). Other researchers further argue that the system lacks coherent policy coordination and standardized proficiency expectations, emphasizing the need for stronger institutional frameworks governing curriculum design, assessment, and teacher development (Fei, 2022; Zhang, 2024).

Comparative research on language-in-education planning offers additional insights relevant to Thailand's ongoing reform. Studies on English-Medium Instruction (EMI) and bilingual education across Asia suggest that successful implementation requires clearly defined curriculum standards, coherent assessment frameworks, and robust teacher preparation systems (Baldauf, Kaplan, & Kamwangamalu, 2010). These findings provide a useful analytical lens for understanding the structural conditions necessary to implement Thailand's Chinese Program (CP). At the same time, scholars note that while cultural and educational compatibility between China and Thailand has facilitated cross-border collaboration, tensions may arise from differing pedagogical expectations, resource disparities, and localized instructional needs (Xiao & Tian, 2024).

Since the release of the International Chinese Language Education Standards (ICLE) in 2021, researchers have increasingly examined how national education systems integrate international benchmarks into local curriculum structures. While ICLE offers a comprehensive framework for Chinese language proficiency, studies show that countries vary substantially in their capacity to localize these standards—particularly in areas such as teacher training, assessment design, and resource development (CLEC, 2021). In the Thai context, scholarship acknowledges the potential value of aligning with ICLE, yet notes that concrete policy mechanisms—such as grade-specific benchmarks, teacher qualification requirements, and assessment pathways—remain insufficiently analyzed. This gap underscores the need for empirical examination of how the 2024 *Guide* operationalizes ICLE-based reforms within Thailand's basic education system.

In summary, Thailand's recent policy efforts represent a significant step toward aligning Chinese language education with international standards. Nonetheless, academic discourse cautions against overlooking systemic constraints that may hinder implementation. The following sections analyze how the 2024 *Guide* promotes standardization and explore the

practical challenges that may influence its effectiveness across different educational contexts.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative content analysis approach to examine the 2024 *Guide to Opening Special Chinese Classrooms*, issued by the Basic Education Commission (BEC) of the Thai Ministry of Education. The analysis focuses on four core dimensions of the policy—its structural organization, instructional models, curriculum objectives, and assessment indicators—and interprets these elements within the broader context of Chinese language education development in Thailand. This methodological approach enables a systematic investigation of how the *Guide* operationalizes national curriculum goals and aligns with international frameworks for Chinese language education.

To deepen the analysis, the *Guide* is compared with major national policy documents, including the 2008 *Basic Education Core Curriculum* and subsequent foreign language teaching policies issued by the Ministry of Education. International reference frameworks—such as the *International Chinese Language Education Standards* (ICLE), HSK/HSKK examination specifications, and CTC SOL professional standards—are likewise examined to evaluate the extent to which the *Guide* reflects global trends in curriculum and proficiency benchmarking. In addition, academic studies and governmental reports were reviewed to contextualize policy developments and enhance the validity of the analysis through triangulation of multiple data sources.

The analytical framework is informed by policy analysis theory and curriculum studies. Specifically, the study draws on Spolsky's (2004) model of language policy, which emphasizes the interaction among policy intentions, management mechanisms, and actual practices, as well as comparative education perspectives that highlight the importance of contextual factors in shaping policy adoption and localization. These theoretical lenses guide the interpretation of how the *Guide* constructs policy goals, operational procedures, and implementation pathways within Thailand's diverse educational landscape.

The analysis followed a three-step coding procedure. First, the policy document was examined line-by-line to identify recurring themes related to curriculum structure, instructional models, teacher qualifications, and assessment standards. Second, these themes were categorized according to macro-, meso-, and micro-level dimensions of policy analysis. Third, the findings were interpreted in relation to Thailand's education governance system and relevant international benchmarks. This analytic procedure allows for a systematic evaluation of both the policy's intended goals and its practical feasibility across different school contexts.

Findings / Analysis

1. The Gradual Integration of Chinese Language Education into National Policy

Chinese language education in Thailand has shifted from community-driven initiatives to an increasingly institutionalized component of national education policy. Early developments in the late 1990s and early 2000s—such as the inclusion of Chinese in university

entrance examinations (1998) and its incorporation into the 2001 Basic Education Curriculum—expanded access but did not establish a unified national framework. As a result, curriculum structures, instructional approaches, and learning pathways remained fragmented across regions and school types.

Subsequent policy efforts, including the 2006–2010 Strategic Plan for Promoting Chinese Language Education, acknowledged the need for standardized curricula, improved teacher quality, and more coherent program management. However, many recommendations were only partially implemented, and schools—especially in rural areas—continued to design their own syllabi with varying indicators, resources, and assessment practices. The 2008 Basic Education Core Curriculum provided general foreign language guidelines but offered little specific direction for Chinese, reinforcing inconsistencies in instructional quality and progression.

The 2014 policy directives on standards-based instruction introduced the idea of aligning Chinese language education with international proficiency assessments, yet they lacked operational mechanisms to ensure consistent adoption. Against this historical backdrop, the **2024 Guide to Opening Special Chinese Classrooms** represents the first comprehensive attempt to consolidate these earlier fragmented initiatives. The Guide introduces unified benchmarks, standardized instructional-hour requirements, teacher qualification standards, and operational procedures, marking a decisive shift from broad policy aspirations to enforceable implementation guidelines. Its integration of the HSK proficiency framework further aligns Thailand’s Chinese language education with global standards and strengthens its position within international foreign language education systems.

2. Core Indicators of the Guide to Opening Special Chinese Classrooms

In 2024, the Basic Education Commission (BEC) of Thailand’s Ministry of Education issued the *Guide to Opening Special Chinese Classrooms* to encourage, support, and guide the systematic development of Chinese language education within the basic education system. The document presents a comprehensive policy framework and operational roadmap for implementing Chinese language curricula across various educational institutions. As the most detailed and updated policy directive on Chinese education in Thailand, the *Guide* functions as a national-level curriculum framework, offering strategic direction for improving the quality, consistency, and accountability of Chinese language instruction across the country.

2.1 Overview of the Guide

The *Guide to Opening Special Chinese Classrooms* is structured into four major sections that outline Thailand’s national strategy for standardizing Chinese language education. While the document provides a comprehensive operational blueprint—including program models, instructional expectations, management structures, and teacher qualification criteria—its significance extends beyond the articulation of procedural standards. The *Guide* represents an effort to reshape governance mechanisms, address long-standing disparities between urban and rural schools, and harmonize instructional expectations across diverse school types. It

functions simultaneously as a regulatory instrument and a capacity-building mechanism, signaling Thailand's first systematic attempt to consolidate previously fragmented policies into a coherent, nationally coordinated framework aligned with international benchmarks.

2.2 Core Indicators of the 2024 Guide

The Guide introduces four core sets of indicators—instructional hours, proficiency benchmarks, teacher qualifications, and assessment procedures—which collectively function as Thailand's first national attempt to standardize Chinese language education.

2.2.1 Instructional Hours and Credit Requirements

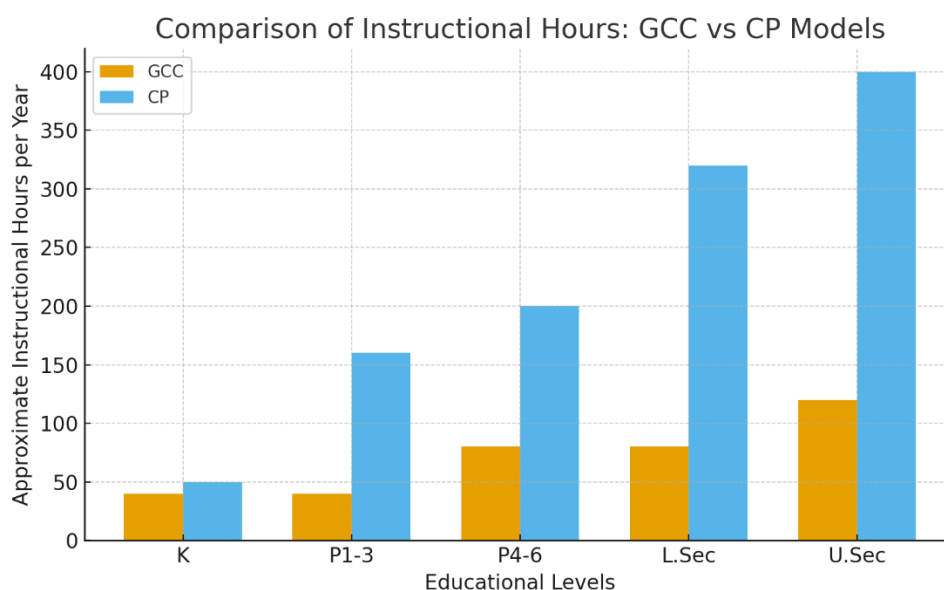
The *Guide to Opening Special Chinese Classrooms* provides detailed specifications regarding instructional hours and credit allocations for both General Chinese Classrooms (GCC) and Chinese Programs (CP). These requirements vary across educational stages and reflect differing expectations related to instructional intensity, learning progression, and targeted proficiency outcomes.

As summarized in Table 1, the GCC and CP models differ substantially in instructional hours, proficiency expectations, and teacher qualification requirements. The comparative framework in Table 1 illustrates how the dual-track structure is designed to accommodate varying school capacities while promoting a unified national standard for Chinese language education.

Table 1 Comparative Framework of GCC and CP Models in Thai Chinese Curriculum Standards

Category	GCC (General Chinese Classroom)				CP (Chinese Program)				
Grade Level	Kindergarten	Primary 1-3	Primary 4-6	Lower Sec. 1-3	Kindergarten	Primary 1-3	Primary 4-6	Lower Sec. 1-3	Upper Sec. 1-3
Chinese Language Time Allocation	≤ 50% of total time	—	—	—	≥ 40% of total time	—	—	—	—
Core Curriculum Instructional Time	—	≥ 40 hrs/year	≥ 80 hrs/year	≥ 2 credits/year	—	≥ 120 hrs/year	≥ 160 hrs/year	≥ 3 credits/year	≥ 3 credits (total over 3 yrs)
Supplementary Chinese Courses	—	—	—	—	—	≥ 40 hrs/year	≥ 40 hrs/year	≥ 5 credits/year	≥ 24 credits (total over 3 yrs)
Total Accumulated Credits	—	—	—	GCC: ≥ 6 credits	—	—	—	—	CP: ≥ 18 credits
Expected Chinese Proficiency	—	≥ YCT 1	≥ YCT 2 or HSK 1	≥ HSK 2 (GCC) / HSK 3 (CP)	—	≥ YCT 2 or HSK 1	≥ YCT 3 or HSK 2	≥ HSK 4 + HSKK Int.	≥ HSK 5 + HSKK Adv.
Teacher Qualifications	Thai: ≥ HSK 4 + HSKK Int.				Thai: ≥ HSK 5 + HSKK Adv.				
	Chinese Nationals: CTC SOL + PSC Level 2-A				Same as left				
	Foreigners: ≥ HSK 4 + HSKK Int.				≥ HSK 5 + HSKK Adv.				

Figure 2.1. Comparison of instructional hours between GCC and CP models across educational levels.



This figure illustrates differences in instructional intensity between General Chinese Classrooms (GCC) and Chinese Programs (CP) based on required annual instructional hours stipulated in the *2024 Guide to Opening Special Chinese Classrooms*. The comparison highlights the structural progression of CP programs and their significantly higher instructional load relative to GCC models.

While the instructional-hour framework offers clear guidance on program intensity, its actual impact varies widely across school contexts. The higher instructional load required for Chinese Programs (CP)—particularly at the primary and secondary levels—resembles immersion-style bilingual models used in Singapore and Malaysia, where strong institutional capacity supports extended exposure to the target language. In Thailand, however, the feasibility of implementing these requirements depends heavily on school resources, teacher availability, and parental support. Urban schools typically have access to qualified teachers, supplementary learning opportunities, and richer Chinese-language environments, enabling students to meet prescribed proficiency targets. In contrast, rural and small schools face limited instructional time, insufficient materials, and reduced access to enrichment, making it difficult for students to reach mandated benchmarks. These disparities highlight the need to interpret instructional-hour standards within the context of Thailand’s uneven educational landscape.

2.2.2 Learning Objectives

Learning benchmarks are aligned with **ICLE, HSK/HSKK, and YCT**, with required examinations at Grades 3, 6, 9, and 12. CP students are expected to reach significantly higher proficiency levels (up to HSK 5 + HSKK Advanced), though feasibility varies across school contexts. These standardized pathways reduce fragmentation but also introduce concerns about

differential learner support across regions.

2.2.3 Teacher Qualifications

The requirement for HSK Level 5 and HSKK Advanced for CP instructors is among the most ambitious components of the Guide. However, discrepancies in teacher supply—particularly in rural provinces—pose substantial challenges. Competition from private schools, reliance on foreign volunteers, and the absence of a domestic teacher-training pipeline continue to undermine Thailand’s capacity to meet qualification standards.

2.3 Operational Mechanisms and Governance

The Guide outlines a multi-tier governance structure involving the BEC, regional education offices, and school administrators. While this structure aims to improve accountability and coherence, its effectiveness depends largely on administrative capacity, which remains uneven nationwide.

Schools in urban regions generally have stronger leadership, budgeting capacity, and experience managing language programs; rural schools often lack these foundational structures. As a result, the operational procedures—covering program approval, staffing, budgeting, and evaluation—risk reinforcing preexisting regional inequalities unless targeted support mechanisms are implemented.

2.4 Sino–Thai Collaboration

Sino–Thai collaboration remains a central pillar supporting curriculum development, teacher training, and assessment implementation. Joint initiatives—particularly under the 2022 cooperation framework—have helped mitigate teacher shortages and introduced ICLE-aligned instructional resources.

However, heavy reliance on foreign-trained teachers, short-term volunteer programs, and externally designed training raises concerns about sustainability, equity, and cultural localization. These dependencies disproportionately benefit well-connected urban schools while limiting access for rural regions. Long-term reform requires balancing external support with the development of domestic teacher-training capacity.

2.5 Teacher Qualification Challenges

A persistent shortage of qualified teachers remains the most significant barrier to implementation. Rural schools, and even many private ones, rely on locally trained teachers with limited proficiency or volunteer instructors from China. Without a stable national teacher-development system—integrating pre-service training, certification, and career pathways—meeting the Guide’s qualification requirements will remain difficult.

Comparisons with Singapore, Malaysia, and Vietnam further highlight Thailand’s structural disadvantages, as these countries maintain institutionalized teacher pipelines that Thailand has yet to establish.

2.6 Impacts on Student Learning

The Guide has the potential to improve coherence in learning pathways and raise proficiency outcomes nationwide. However, learning results depend heavily on:

- 1) student motivation
- 2) parental support
- 3) availability of enrichment activities
- 4) access to qualified teachers and resources
- 5) digital infrastructure

Urban schools tend to benefit from these conditions, while rural schools face significant constraints. Alignment with HSK/HSKK and ICLE enhances transparency and international comparability but may unintentionally widen learning disparities if differentiated support is not provided.

2.7 Program Management and Quality Assurance

The Guide strengthens program management by defining responsibilities and emphasizing data-driven evaluation. Nevertheless, disparities persist:

- 1) regional education offices vary widely in monitoring capacity
- 2) many schools lack digital systems to track learning progress
- 3) internal quality assurance mechanisms are unevenly implemented

Sustainable management requires investment in educational technology, regional governance capacity, and school-level internal quality assurance frameworks.

2.8 Summary of Findings

This section synthesizes the key findings of the study and highlights the structural tensions that shape the implementation of the 2024 *Guide to Opening Special Chinese Classrooms*. Overall, the analysis yields three major insights into Thailand's ongoing Chinese language education reform.

First, the *Guide* represents the most comprehensive attempt to date to standardize Chinese language education within Thailand's basic education system. It introduces coherent curriculum pathways, aligns proficiency benchmarks with international standards such as HSK, HSKK, YCT, and ICLE, and establishes clearer teacher qualification requirements. Collectively, these measures address long-standing issues of curricular fragmentation, inconsistent instructional expectations, and the absence of national coordination.

Second, despite the strength of its policy design, substantial gaps remain between national expectations and local implementation capacity. Disparities in teacher qualifications, administrative readiness, monitoring systems, and access to learning resources create uneven implementation conditions across schools. Urban and well-resourced schools are better positioned to adopt CP programs and meet required proficiency benchmarks, while rural and under-resourced schools face significant challenges related to teacher recruitment, instructional time, and digital infrastructure. These findings point to a persistent policy–practice gap that must be addressed through targeted support and differentiated implementation strategies.

Third, Sino–Thai collaboration plays a critical yet uneven role in supporting reform implementation. International partnerships, particularly those involving teacher training, curriculum development, and assessment alignment—provide essential support. However, the system’s heavy reliance on external personnel and resources raises concerns about long-term sustainability and equity. Schools with stronger institutional capacity or closer ties to external partners tend to benefit disproportionately, thereby widening regional disparities in program implementation and learning opportunities.

Taken together, these findings suggest that while the *Guide* provides a structurally sound and forward-looking policy framework, its long-term success will depend on strengthening sustainable domestic capacity—particularly in teacher preparation, resource distribution, and regional governance. Addressing these systemic challenges is essential to ensuring that the reform achieves its intended goals of improving instructional quality, promoting equity, and enhancing Thailand’s position within the landscape of international Chinese language education.

3. Discussion

3.1 Synthesis of key findings

The findings of this study demonstrate that the 2024 *Guide to Opening Special Chinese Classrooms* constitutes a pivotal policy intervention aimed at restructuring Chinese language education in Thailand. Rather than serving solely as an administrative or procedural document, the Guide functions as a systemwide reform mechanism that seeks to standardize curriculum expectations, institutionalize teacher qualification requirements, and strengthen program governance. At the same time, the analysis reveals substantial implementation challenges rooted in regional disparities, institutional capacity gaps, and Thailand’s structural reliance on international collaboration. These dual dynamics highlight the complex and multilayered nature of the reform, in which ambitious national policy goals intersect with diverse local conditions.

3.2 Relationship to existing literature

The findings align closely with existing scholarship that identifies fragmentation, uneven teacher quality, and inconsistent curriculum articulation as long-standing challenges within Thailand’s Chinese language education landscape (Dong & Tian, 2024; Xiao & Tian, 2024; Fei, 2022). This study extends the literature by demonstrating how the Guide attempts to systematically address these issues through an integrated policy framework linking curriculum pathways, proficiency benchmarks, teacher qualification standards, and governance mechanisms. This integrated approach mirrors broader regional trends across ASEAN—particularly in Singapore, Malaysia, and Vietnam—where coherence across curriculum, assessment, and teacher preparation is widely recognized as critical to achieving systemwide improvement (Baldauf et al., 2010).

3.3 Theoretical interpretation

Viewed through Spolsky’s (2004) model of language policy, the findings illuminate the interaction among policy intentions, management structures, and actual practices. The Guide

articulates clear intentions through explicit learning standards and teacher qualification requirements; however, management and practice dimensions remain constrained by uneven institutional capacity, disparities in regional resources, and the limited availability of sustained professional development. These constraints help explain why ambitious national policies rarely yield uniform implementation outcomes. Applying Spolsky's framework underscores the importance of aligning policy design with the socio-institutional realities of Thai schools in order to achieve meaningful and sustainable reform.

3.4 Policy and implementation implications

The analysis highlights several implementation implications. While standardized learning benchmarks have the potential to reduce instructional variability, they can only be realized when schools have adequate instructional time, qualified teachers, and appropriate resources. Urban and well-resourced schools are more likely to meet CP program requirements, whereas rural or under-resourced schools encounter significant obstacles, including limited teacher supply, insufficient digital infrastructure, and constrained administrative capacity. This divergence raises concerns regarding unequal learning opportunities and underscores the need for differentiated context-sensitive policy support. Without targeted investment and flexible implementation pathways, a uniform national standard risks reinforcing existing inequalities rather than reducing them.

3.5 Equity & regional disparity

Equity emerges as a central theme of this study. Although the Guide aspires to provide standardized learning opportunities nationwide, uneven resource distribution—including disparities in teacher availability, technological infrastructure, and school-level governance capacity—may exacerbate inequities under a high-stakes, standards-based system. Students in rural or economically disadvantaged regions face distinct barriers to accessing qualified teachers, supplementary learning opportunities, and effective monitoring. Addressing these inequities requires regionally responsive strategies, targeted allocation of resources, and long-term capacity-building initiatives that account for the heterogeneous conditions of Thai schools.

3.6 Higher-Level interpretation of Sino–Thai collaboration

Sino–Thai collaboration remains an essential yet complex dimension of the reform. Partnerships with CLEC, Chinese universities, and professional training centers provide critical support for teacher preparation, curriculum development, and assessment alignment. However, heavy reliance on external institutions creates structural dependencies that challenge long-term sustainability. Furthermore, schools with stronger institutional capacity or greater access to international networks disproportionately benefit from these collaborations, thereby widening regional disparities. A more balanced model—combining international cooperation with a robust domestic teacher-training pipeline—will be necessary to ensure continuity, equity, and systemic coherence.

3.7 Scholarly and policy contributions

This study contributes to the literature on Chinese language education in three important ways. First, it provides a multi-level analysis of Thailand's most comprehensive

reform to date, demonstrating how curriculum standards, teacher qualifications, and governance mechanisms are integrated within a unified framework. Second, it identifies structural gaps that shape policy implementation across diverse school contexts, offering insights into the persistent policy–practice divide. Third, it situates Thailand’s reform within broader regional and international trajectories in language-in-education policy. Together, these contributions provide valuable implications for policymakers, educators, and researchers seeking to enhance the design and implementation of foreign language education reforms in multilingual settings.

3.8 Forward-Looking reflection

Ultimately, the success of the Guide will depend on Thailand’s ability to translate policy design into sustainable practice. This will require long-term investment in teacher education, strengthened data-driven monitoring systems, and regionally responsive support mechanisms capable of addressing diverse school conditions. If these foundational elements are reinforced, the Guide has the potential not only to elevate the quality and equity of Chinese language education in Thailand but also to serve as a model of policy innovation within Southeast Asia’s multilingual education landscape.

4. Conclusion

This study examined the 2024 *Guide to Opening Special Chinese Classrooms* and demonstrated that it represents Thailand’s most comprehensive and structured effort to standardize Chinese language education across the basic education system. The Guide introduces a coherent and ambitious policy framework, including unified learning standards, clearly articulated teacher qualification requirements, and a multi-level governance structure. However, the findings indicate that successful implementation is limited by regionally uneven resources, varied institutional capacity, and a persistent shortage of qualified Chinese language teachers—constraints that shape both the pace and the equity of reform.

The analysis yields several important policy implications. First, achieving equitable implementation requires differentiated support that reflects the diverse realities of Thai schools, particularly those in rural and under-resourced regions where staffing shortages, limited digital infrastructure, and administrative constraints hinder policy uptake. Second, sustainable teacher development must be prioritized through the establishment of a domestic teacher-training pipeline, expanded opportunities for continuous professional development, and the creation of structured career pathways aligned with national qualification standards. Third, strengthening data-driven monitoring and evaluation systems is essential to enhance accountability and provide timely evidence to inform ongoing policy refinement. Finally, Sino–Thai collaboration should evolve from short-term personnel support toward long-term institutional partnerships that emphasize localized curriculum development, co-designed training programs, and shared capacity-building.

From an academic standpoint, this study contributes to the literature by offering an integrated analysis of curriculum policy, teacher qualification systems, and governance structures within Thailand’s evolving multilingual education context. By situating the Guide

within broader regional and international trends in language-in-education reform, the study underscores the importance of aligning policy intentions with structural realities and highlights the conditions necessary for achieving sustainable and equitable reform.

Future research should explore school-level implementation processes, learner outcomes, and the lived experiences of teachers and administrators working within both CP and GCC programs. Comparative studies across ASEAN countries may further illuminate how different policy models shape program sustainability, equity, and instructional quality. Such research will be essential for refining Thailand's Chinese language education reform and ensuring that the Guide continues to evolve in response to the diverse and changing needs of learners and schools nationwide.

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