



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Second Language
Acquisition & Teaching

Graduate Interdisciplinary Program

SLAT COLLOQUIUM SERIES

January 21, 2025

2:00 pm - 3:00 pm AZ time

(please note special time for this event)

Chinese Language Teachers in American K-12 Schools

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Dr. Wenhao Diao

University of Arizona

Please register for this event at:

<https://arizona.zoom.us/j/8NNgzMSbTBi4aUMvxpjHsg>

The Zoom link will be sent to you after registration.

If you don't receive the Zoom information by the date of the event, email GIDP-SLAT@arizona.edu.

This mixed-methods study investigates the negotiation of their professional identity among Chinese language teachers in K-12 schools, and how it may intersect with their ethnic and racial positionings. Although the field of language teaching is paying increasing attention to how ethnicity and race may enter teachers' professional lives is an increasingly important topic in the field of language teaching, the published research continues to be dominated by the teaching/learning of English as a second language (Von Esch, Motha, & Kubota, 2020). Set mostly in 2021 when there was widespread surge of anti-Asian violence, this project directs our attention to the experience of Chinese language teachers in a particular moment. Here the focus is the interviews and journal data collected from 27 Chinese teachers, who were selected as a balanced representative sample from the 221 participants who completed our national survey. The themes that emerged in our data highlight the intersectionality between language, nation ethnicity, and race in Chinese language teachers' professional work. In particular, the teachers' discourse highlights three themes: 1) linguistic alienation of Chinese-ness, 2) culture-based exclusion, and 3) dealing with other forms of discrimination. Moreover, as the teachers described these challenges also as opportunities for inclusive language pedagogies, and they show examples of how to address justice in their own language classrooms, the findings here underscore anti-discrimination possibilities in and through language teaching.



Wenhao Diao is an Associate Professor and interim Head in the Department of East Asian Studies and an affiliated faculty member in the interdisciplinary doctoral program of Second Language Acquisition and Teaching at the University of Arizona. She founded and co-directs the Center for East Asian Studies, a Title VI National Resource Center supported by the U.S. Department of Education, at the University of Arizona. She received her Ph.D. from Carnegie Mellon University and her B.A. and M.A. from East China Normal University. As an applied linguist, she is interested in the identities and ideologies that Chinese language learning and teaching (re)produce and (re)distribute. Her research has primarily focused on Chinese language teachers in K-16 contexts, as well as the phenomenon of study abroad - particularly going to and from China. Her work has been funded by the U.S. Department of Education and the Chinese Language Teachers Association (USA). She was awarded a Fulbright-Hays grant in 2017 for her proposed project that connects educators in the U.S. with their peers in China. Her articles have appeared in journals such as *Applied Linguistics*, *Modern Language Journal*, *System*, and so on. With her colleagues in the field, she has published an edited book entitled *Language Learning in Study Abroad: The Multilingual Turn* (Multilingual Matters, 2021) and a guest-edited special issue themed *Study Abroad in the 21st Century* for the *L2 Journal* in 2016. Prior to joining the University of Arizona, she taught at Middlebury College, Carnegie Mellon University, the University of Virginia, and East China Normal University.