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CHINESE LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS, CURRENT LANDSCAPE, AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

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Abstract

In recent years, learning Chinese language has become a global trend, with millions around the world embracing the language. Pakistan has also experienced a remarkable increase in interest, as more students, professionals, and language enthusiasts has started learning Mandarin. This study explores the trajectory of Chinese language education in Pakistan first by placing it within the global rise of Chinese language learning environment. It then outlines the historical background and key milestones that have shaped how Chinese language is taught and learned in Pakistan, emphasizing both government-driven programs and initiatives taken by private institutions. The study further explores the current state of Chinese education in the Pakistan, highlighting the increasing popularity of Chinese language courses/programs, the unique features of Pakistan's Chinese education system, and the professional background and distribution of Chinese language teachers. Despite growing interest and institutional support, Chinese language education in Pakistan faces several challenges, including resource limitations, inconsistent teaching standards, and a shortage of trained local instructors. This paper identifies these pressing issues and proposes actionable strategies to overcome these challenges. In particular, it emphasizes the need for localized teacher training programs, curriculum development according to learners' needs, and developing stronger collaborations between educational institutions in both countries.

The final section of the paper emphasis on the future prospects, with a special focus on the Department of Chinese at the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) and its pivotal role in shaping the next phase of Chinese language education in Pakistan. By combining institutional insights with a practical understanding of on-the-ground realities, this study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the past, present, and potential future of Chinese language education in Pakistan.

Key Words:

Chinese Language Education, Pakistan, Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) Teacher Development, Educational Institutions, Curriculum development.

1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, Chinese language education has grown significantly around the world, and Pakistan is no exception. With deepening ties between China and Pakistan—particularly under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the China—Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)—learning Chinese has moved beyond academic interest to become a practical necessity in various fields such as trade, infrastructure, education, and cultural exchange.

In Pakistan, the rise of Chinese language education reflects both the growing strategic importance of the China-Pakistan relationship and the increasing opportunities for Pakistanis to engage with Chinese-speaking partners in business, science & technology, education, research and diplomacy etc. Chinese courses are now offered not only at major universities like the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) and



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Confucius Institutes, but also in schools, private centers, and vocational training programs across the country.

However, alongside this expansion there are a number of challenges Pakistan is facing such as the country still faces a shortage of trained Chinese language teachers, gaps in localized teaching materials, and uneven quality across educational institutions. These challenges point to the need for a clearer understanding of how Chinese language education has developed in Pakistan, what the current landscape looks like, and where it might be headed in the future.

This paper seeks to provide an overview of Chinese language education in Pakistan, starting with a brief overview of global context. It then traces the history of Chinese education in Pakistan, explores its current situation and key characteristics of these institutions, and examines the roles played by Chinese language teachers and institutions in Pakistan. The study also discusses some of the major difficulties this field is facing, and proposes key areas for improvement. Finally, it highlights the significant role played by NUML's Chinese Department in shaping the future of Chinese education in the country.

2. Overview of Chinese Education Around the World

The rapid expansion of Chinese education around the world reflects China's growing influence in the economic, political and cultural fields. As the importance of Chinese in international trade, diplomacy and global business continues to rise, the demand for Chinese education has also increased dramatically. Schools, universities and private language institutions around the world have started more Chinese language courses to meet the needs of learners of different ages and backgrounds. In particular, in some countries in Asia, Africa and Europe, Chinese has been included in the national curriculum system or offered as an elective subject. In addition, the rise of digital platforms and online learning has made Chinese education more popular, allowing learners around the world to learn Chinese remotely. China's "Belt and Road" initiative has also further promoted the spread of Chinese education programs, and Confucius Institutes have played a key role in the promotion of Chinese language education around the world. As the international influence of China continues to expand, the demand for learning Chinese has also increased, which in turn has led to a sharp increase in the demand for highly qualified international Chinese language teachers. Since China began sending Chinese language teachers to teach Chinese overseas in 1952, the number of Chinese teachers has significantly increased which has further promoted the development of Chinese education around the world (Liu Yao & Misbah Rashid, 2016)¹. In recent years, many countries have conducted a number of studies on overseas Chinese teaching and its challenges. For example, H. Xu (2012)² conducted a study on the challenges faced by native Chinese teachers teaching Chinese as a foreign language to non-native Chinese students in American classrooms. She found that in American

¹刘飖 & 米斯巴赫·拉希德. (2016). 巴基斯坦本土中文教师概述. 黄冈职业技术学院学报, 18(02), 02.

² Xu, H. (2012). Challenges native Chinese teachers face in teaching Chinese as a foreign language to non-native Chinese students in US classrooms.



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classrooms, Chinese teachers face obstacles in taking more responsibilities in classroom management, inclusion of students with disabilities and communication with parents, and need to master the knowledge and skills of American teaching methods, classroom management and special education. Similarly, Z. Chen (2015)³ studied the teaching of Chinese language teachers in Australian classrooms. He analyzed and concluded that there are several challenges that native Chinese teachers encounter in Australian classrooms, namely different educational culture, behavior management, low learning motivation, insufficient understanding of students, low English proficiency, time constraints and lack of supportive school environment. Chen further found that in Australian schools, Chinese language teaching by native Chinese teachers is considered to be of low quality and unable to meet the needs of people from non-Chinese backgrounds. She believes this happens because of low teacher quality and low teacher competence, and recommends improving the competence of Chinese language teachers to meet the needs of people from non-Chinese backgrounds and ensure their effective teaching in Australian classrooms.

Ruan et al. (2015)⁴ believe that K-12 Chinese programs in the United States face several key infrastructure challenges that hinder the sustainability and further development of the programs, including a shortage of qualified Chinese teachers and a lack of teacher certification mechanisms, insufficient system coordination, poor curriculum alignment, language requirements, and inadequate early language education. In addition to recruiting qualified candidates to meet the growing demand for Chinese teaching in K-12 schools in the United States, it is equally important to build the capacity of Chinese language teachers through initial training and ongoing professional development (PD), as Chinese teacher education is a long-term endeavor (Orton, 2011)⁵. Ruan believes that the preparation and training of Chinese teachers is the biggest challenge currently facing the field. The lack of teacher education capacity and an effective teacher certification mechanism has put increasing pressure on K-12 schools that are struggling to maintain Chinese language programs. Li & Zhang (2016)⁶ also emphasized the importance of incorporating proficiency standards in Chinese language courses and assessments to ensure that students achieve consistent and high-quality learning outcomes. They discussed the difficulty of incorporating the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) proficiency guidelines into student learning assessments due to the high cost of the ACTFL and suggested that Chinese sign language programs should invest limited resources in certifying teachers as OPI examiners who can then conduct informal OPIs to assess students' oral proficiency. They also advocated that Chinese sign language teacher education programs should provide training in standards- and proficiency-based approaches to teaching Chinese language and culture.

³ Chen, Z. (2015). Challenges of teaching Chinese in Australian schools: Lesson from beginning teacher-researchers. Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 933–942.

⁴ Ruan, J., Zhang, J., & Leung, C. B. (2015a). Chinese language education in the United States (Vol. 14). Springer.

⁵ Orton, J. (2011). Educating Chinese language teachers–Some fundamentals. Teaching and Learning Chinese in Global Contexts: CFL Worldwide, 151–164.

⁶ Li, Y., & Zhang, Z. (2016). CFL education at the college level. Chinese Language Education in the United States, 141–166.



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3. History and Development of Chinese Education in Pakistan

The history of Chinese education in Pakistan dates back to the early 1960s, when some universities began to experiment with introducing Mandarin teaching. Over time, the establishment of Confucius Institutes in Pakistan provided an important impetus for the popularization of Chinese, while Sinology research programs in universities gradually developed. Institutional support from the Pakistani and Chinese governments played a key role in this process, which not only promoted the standardization of Chinese education, but also expanded its accessibility. This period marked the achievement of several important milestones, including the introduction of Chinese proficiency tests and the development of academic exchange programs, which together promoted the gradual increase in interest and enrollment in Chinese language programs/courses. In recent years, many scholars have conducted in-depth research on the current status of Chinese teaching and learning in Pakistan and the challenges it faces. For example, the research by Zhao Jiajia (2022)⁷, Wang Caixia and Xie Xiaoming (2022)⁸, Wang Xiaoming (2019)⁹, Feng Kaiyun (2025)¹⁰, Li Huoxiu (2019)¹¹, Cui Xiaofei (2007)¹², Zhang Lingyan and Zhao Xun (2022)¹³, and Wang Caixia (2022)¹⁴, systematically analyzed Chinese teaching in Pakistan from multiple perspectives, including policy support, textbook construction, teacher status, learner needs, and cross-cultural communication ability training, providing an important theoretical basis and practical reference for this study. Chinese education in Pakistan has experienced a rapid growth from nothing to something and from little to much. According to relevant data, Pakistan began to offer Chinese courses in the early 1960s, marking the beginning of Chinese language education in the country. In the 1970s, the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) in Islamabad was formally established, and its Chinese Department was one of the oldest and earliest teaching institute established in Pakistan. In 2005, the Confucius Institute in Islamabad was established, further promoting the development of language and cultural exchanges between China and Pakistan; around 2011, Chinese courses gradually entered the primary and secondary school stage, marking the expansion of Chinese education in the field of basic education. At present, Pakistan's Chinese education system has basically covered all levels of the country's education system, with Chinese courses from primary school to higher education. At the same time, the geographical coverage of Chinese education has also been expanding, covering major cities and regions from Islamabad in the north to Karachi in the south, from the Northwest Frontier Province to the Punjab Province in the east, showing a

⁷赵佳佳.(2022)."中巴经济走廊"建设背景下的巴基斯坦汉语国际教育现状及问题研究.国际公关,(23),149-151

⁸ 王彩霞.(2022).国际传播视角下的巴基斯坦汉语教学研究(博士学位论文,华中师范大学).

⁹ 王晓明.(2019).近五十年来巴基斯坦汉语国际教育研究述评.大理大学学报,4(11),108-112.

¹⁰ 冯凯云. (2025). 对外中文教学中词感培养的教学研究. 郑州师范教育, 14(01), 33-36.

¹¹ 李火秀.(2019)."一带一路"背景下巴基斯坦语言教育政策发展现状及前瞻.江西理工大学学报,40(06),104-107.

¹² 崔晓飞.(2007).巴基斯坦国立现代语言大学中文系的汉语教学.云南师范大学学报(对外汉语教学与研究版),(02),83-85.

¹³ 张玲艳, & 赵勋. (2022). 巴基斯坦中文教育发展的 SWOT 分析, 今传媒, 30(05), 148-152.

¹⁴ 王彩霞.(2022).国际传播视角下的巴基斯坦汉语教学研究(博士学位论文,华中师范大学).



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good development trend and broad prospects. (Zhang Haiwei & Zhang Tiejun, 2012)¹⁵. Since its establishment, the Confucius Institutes has played an active and far-reaching role in promoting Chinese language education and promoting cultural exchanges between China and Pakistan.

In response to the growing demand for Chinese language learning, educational institutions in various provinces of Pakistan have started Chinese language courses, covering different duration and levels. By the end of 2016, more than 50 colleges and cultural centers in Pakistan offered short-term Chinese courses lasting from one to six months. This move reflects the increasing interest of local people in learning Chinese, and is also closely related to the expansion of China's influence in Pakistan, especially the implementation of major projects such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The CPEC project has promoted exchanges between the two countries in various fields such as business, trade, economics, culture and education, further promoting the demand for Chinese language education in Pakistan. As an important tool for communication between the two countries, Chinese language has been gaining increasing status in Pakistan's education system, especially in cross-cultural communication and promoting cooperation between the two countries. In addition, with the deepening of China-Pakistan cooperation, more and more Pakistani institutions and enterprises have realized the importance of Chinese language proficiency for international business and cultural understanding, and have increased their investment in Chinese education. Chinese education in Pakistan is being taught in various institutions such as public and private universities, primary and secondary schools, and private language centers. As of 2016, the Confucius Institute of the National Language University has supported 35 teaching institutes, covering universities, primary and secondary schools, and language training institutions, with a total of 8,700 registered students. The teaching staff includes native Chinese speakers and local Pakistani teachers. In 2016, there were more than 30 Chinese language teachers in Pakistani universities, and more than 50 local teachers. The teacher recruitment process emphasizes qualifications of language proficiency and teaching experience. However, challenges still exist, especially for local teachers, who have difficulty in obtaining continuous professional development opportunities, competitive salary structures, and clear career development paths. The employment status of Chinese teachers varies, including full-time and part-time. Foreign teachers are usually temporary and have native-level Chinese proficiency and bring different cultural insights, while local teachers provide continuity of teaching and understanding of the context. Balancing this dynamic is critical for maintaining and improving the quality of Chinese education in Pakistan (Hanif, 2023)¹⁶.

A detailed survey of the websites of 203 higher education institutions (HEIs) in Pakistan showed that 27 institutions offer Chinese courses, including 16 public institutions and 11 private institutions. Both types of institutions offer courses at different levels, including basic introductory courses lasting 1 to 6 months, functional courses lasting 2 weeks to 6 months, and diploma and certificate courses lasting 2 months, 1.5 years, and 1 year respectively. In addition, both public and private institutions offer Chinese

¹⁵ 张海威 & 张铁军. (2012). 巴基斯坦中文教育最新概况. 国际中文教育, 02.

¹⁶ Hanif, B. (2023). Current Scenario and Perspective of Teaching Chinese at Confucius Institutes in Pakistan. Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 11(2), 2315–2326.



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Proficiency Test (HSK) courses, covering HSK Level 1 to HSK Level 4, with a study cycle of six months for each level and two years to complete all four levels. In addition, the 11 private institutions identified also offer certificate, diploma and a four-year Bachelor of Science (BS) degree program in Chinese, as well as a two-year Master of Science (MS) degree program in Chinese language (Khan et al., 2022)¹⁷. In his doctoral dissertation, Wang Caixia provided a detailed overview of institutions offering Chinese courses in Pakistan as of April 2021. According to his findings, there are currently 90 institutions offering Chinese courses in Pakistan. The data is primarily sourced from the Pakistan Education website, one of the country's largest career counseling and educational guidance agencies. The website was established in 2001 to promote crossborder educational opportunities and provide consulting services to students and organizations. His analysis also highlights that some institutions may offer different types of Chinese courses, which in his study were treated as different teaching units, thereby excluding duplicate and irrelevant data and improving the accuracy of the study. The aggregated data provides a broad view of the distribution and diversity of Chinese education institutions in Pakistan. This comprehensive approach helps to understand the spread and scope of Chinese teaching in Pakistan, providing insights into the educational landscape and the growing demand for Chinese skills.

Azeem et al. (2022)¹⁸ revealed that the number of people learning Chinese in Pakistan has increased significantly, and the influence of Chinese education on the local Chinese community has continued to expand. According to statistics, in 2015, there were only 671 candidates who was registered for the Chinese proficiency test at the Confucius Institute in Islamabad, while in 2017, the number reached 3,659. Secondly, the number of institutions engaged in Chinese education in Pakistan has continued to increase, and new types of Chinese schools such as Chinese international schools, bilingual schools, trilingual schools, and online schools have continued to emerge. In addition, since the concept of the "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor" was proposed in 2013, the number of Confucius Institutes in Pakistan has increased from 1 (Confucius Institute in Islamabad) to 4, of which the three newly added ones are the Confucius Institute at the University of Karachi, the Confucius Institute at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad, and the Confucius Institute at the University of Punjab.

Table 1 Timeline of the evolution of Chinese Language Education in Pakistan

Year	Key Event/Development
1950s	Early Diplomatic Ties- Pakistan and China established diplomatic relations,
	laying the groundwork for cultural and educational exchanges ¹⁹ .
1960s	Introduction of Chinese language courses in Pakistan ²⁰ .
1970s	Establishment of the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at the
	National University of Modern Languages (NUML) ²¹ .
2000s	Expansion of Confucius Institutes

¹⁷ Khan, M. A., Zaki, S., & Memon, N. (2022). Chinese as a mandatory foreign language at a higher education institution in Pakistan. South Asia Research, 43(1), 49–67.

¹⁸ Azeem, A., Naveed, T., & Jabbar, S. (2022). Chinese Language Teaching in Pakistan Problems and Solutions. UW Journal of Social Sciences, 5(1), 55–80.

¹⁹ Hussain, Z. (2019). The Dynamics of Pakistan-China Strategic Relations: Challenges and Prospects in the Post 9/11 Era (Doctoral dissertation, National Defence University, Islamabad).

²⁰ 张海威 & 张铁军. (2012). 巴基斯坦中文教育最新概况. 国际中文教育, 02.

²¹ 刘飖 & 米斯巴赫·拉希德. (2016). 巴基斯坦本土中文教师概述. 黄冈职业技术学院学报, 18(02), 02.



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2005	Opening of the Confucius Institute in Islamabad ²² .
2011	Introduction of Chinese language courses in schools across Pakistan.
2013	Chinese Language in Schools- The Pakistani government introduced Chinese
	language as an optional subject in secondary schools ²³ .
2016	50+ institutions offering short-term Chinese language courses across
	Pakistan.
2018	Chinese Language Declared Mandatory in Sindh- The Sindh government made Chinese language compulsory in public schools, starting from grade 6 ²⁴ .
2020	COVID-19 Pandemic Impact- The pandemic accelerated the adoption of online Chinese language courses and virtual exchanges between Pakistani and Chinese institutions ²⁵ .
2023	Inclusion of Chinese in National Curriculum- The Pakistani government announced plans to include Chinese language in the national curriculum for higher education institutions.

Table 1 provides a chronological overview of significant evolution of Chinese language education in Pakistan. From the initial establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan in 1950s, introduction of Chinese language courses in the 1960s to the more recent expansions, such as the establishment of Confucius Institutes and the increasing number of institutions offering Chinese language programs. This timeline highlights the evolving importance of Chinese language education in Pakistan, particularly with the influence of China-Pakistan relations, economic partnerships like CPEC, and cultural exchange programs.

4 Current Landscape of Chinese Language Education in Pakistan

1. Major institutions offering Chinese language programs

The growing strategic and economic partnership between Pakistan and China, particularly under the framework of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), has significantly increased the demand for Chinese language education in Pakistan. To meet this demand, a wide range of institutions across the country have introduced Chinese language and cultural studies programs. These institutions can be broadly categorized into public and private universities, China Study Centers, Confucius Institutes, schools (both private and government), other organizations such as TEVTA and the Pak-China Institute, and private language institutes. All of these institutions plays a unique role in promoting Chinese language education, catering to diverse audiences ranging from school students to professionals and researchers. The following tables provide a detailed overview of these institutions, highlighting their locations, programs, and contributions to fostering Chinese language proficiency and cultural understanding in Pakistan.

²² 赵佳佳.(2022)."中巴经济走廊"建设背景下的巴基斯坦汉语国际教育现状及问题研究.国际公关,(23),149-151.

²³ https://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-14787216

²⁴Iftikhar, A., Li, C., Jiangyu, L., Xi, C., Tao, W., & Haider, A. A. (2024). Perceptions, challenges, and opportunities of Chinese language learning in Punjab and Sindh, Pakistan: Exploring the role of CPEC. New directions for child and adolescent development, 2024(1), 6662409.

²⁵ https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373717



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Table 2: Institutions offering Chinese language programs				
	. Public a	and l	Private	e Universities
Institution	Location		Progr	rams Offered
National University of	Islamal	bad		MA, Diploma in Chinese language and
Modern Languages	Modern Languages		litera	ture
(NUML)				
University of Punjab	Laho	re	Chine	ese language and cultural studies
			cours	
University of Karachi	Karac			ese language courses
Quaid-i-Azam University	Islamal	bad		ese language courses as part of regional
			studio	
COMSATS University	Islamal	bad		ese language courses and CPEC-related
Islamabad			studio	
University of Agriculture	Faisala	bad		ese language courses in collaboration
Faisalabad				Confucius Institutes
Karachi University	Karac	hi		ese language courses for business
Business School (KUBS)			stude	
Lahore University of	Laho	re		ese language courses for international
Management Sciences			relati	ons and business programs
(LUMS)	× 1 1		~1 ·	
Bahria University	Islamal	bad		ese language courses for students and
	2 (7)			ssionals
*	2. China Study Centers			
Institution			ear	Key Focus Areas
			ıblish	
			ed	D 1.1 ' ' ' ' ' ' 1
China Study Center, Univer	rsity of	20	016	Research, learning, institutional
Peshawar		2/	012	linkages
China Study Center, COMS	SAIS	20	013	Joint research, collaboration with Chinese institutions
University Islamabad	EMC	2/	021	
Quetta	China Study Center, BUITEMS,			Research on BRI & CPEC, Chinese language and cultural studies
	raity of	21	019	Academic and cultural cooperation
China Study Center, University of Balochistan, Quetta			019	between China and Pakistan
China Study Center, Institute of			021	Exchange programs, joint research,
Business Administration (IBA),			021	cultural events
Karachi				Cultural events
China-Pakistan Study Center,			_	Policy research, analyses, dialogue on
Institute of Strategic Studies				regional issues
_	Islamabad			
l Islamabad				
	_		Chine	ese language courses. China studies
Center of Excellence of	-		Chine	ese language courses, China studies
Center of Excellence of China Studies,	-		Chine	ese language courses, China studies
Center of Excellence of China Studies, Government College	-		Chine	ese language courses, China studies
Center of Excellence of China Studies,	2016	6		ese language courses, China studies ese language, culture, area studies



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University of Modern				
Languages (NUML),				
Islamabad				
	3. Con	fucius Institutes		
Name Year		Collaborating Institutions		
	Establishe	d		
Confucius Institute,	2005	Beijing Language and Cullture University		
Islamabad	(Opened in	n		
	2007)			
Muzaffargarh Shortwave	2008	Local educational institutions, Hanban		
Listening Club Radio				
Confucius Classroom				
Confucius Institute,	2013	Sichuan Normal University		
Karachi				
Confucius Institute at	2015	Xinjiang Agricultural University		
Faisalabad Agricultural				
University				
Confucius Institute,	2015	Jiangxi University of Science and		
Lahore		Technology		
Lahore Confucius	2018	Shanghai University, University of Punjab		
Institute				
Sargodha University	2019	Henan Normal University		
Peshawar Confucius	2021	Local universities, Hanban		
Classroom				
	Schools (Pri	ivate and Government)		
Institution	Location	Programs Offered		
Beaconhouse School	Nationwi	Chinese language classes in select branches		
System	de			
The City School	Nationwi	Chinese language courses in collaboration with		
	de	Confucius Institutes		
Roots Millennium	Nationw	Chinese language programs for students		
Schools	ide			
Government Schools	Nationw	Pilot programs for teaching Chinese as a		
	ide	secondary language		
Ace International	Islamaba	Chinese language programs for students		
	d			
5. Other Organizations/Institutions				
Organizations	Organizations Location Programs Offered			
Technical Education and	Punjab	Chinese language courses for technical and		
		vocational students		
Authority (TEVTA),				
Punjab				
Punjab Pak-China Institute	Islamabad	Workshops and seminars on Chinese language and culture		



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NICON Group of Colleges 1984	Islamabad	Providing Chinese language training for professionals and students			
Obortunity 2016	Islamabad	Chinese courses from beginner to advanced			
AryanChinese, Language Learning Institute 2017	Islamabad	Providing Chinese language training for professionals and students			
Green Red Institute of	Lahore	HSK Test Preparation and Conversational			
Chinese Language 2019		Chinese			
5 Star Institute 2009	Islamabad	HSK Test Preparation and Conversational			
		Chinese			
The House of Knowledge	Islamabad	Providing Chinese language training for			
2017		individuals and corporate clients			
Eureka 2010	Karachi	Providing Chinese language training for			
		individuals and corporate clients			
Deligent Group 2017	Karachi	Providing Chinese language training for			
		individuals and corporate clients			

2. Main features of Chinese education in Pakistan

The Chinese education system in Pakistan has developed significantly in the past few years, presenting a diversified, flexible and increasingly improved pattern. This development is due to the sharp increase in the demand for Chinese proficiency under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. It also reflects the increasingly close cooperation between China and Pakistan in many fields such as academic, economic, science and technology and social sciences etc. In this context, Chinese education is no longer just part of the academic field, but has also become an important skill required for all professionals working in various fields. Especially in the fields of business, diplomacy, education, etc. Therefore, Pakistan's Chinese education is required to meet the needs of different professionals through different types of educational institutions and flexible and diverse course arrangements, covering all levels from basic Chinese to advanced academic studies.

1. Institutional Diversity

The providers of Chinese education are very diverse in Pakistan, from public universities to private universities, to specialized language schools and Confucius Institutes, and various institutions have jointly built a comprehensive Chinese education system. Public universities such as the National University of Languages (NUML), Punjab University, and Karachi University play a leading role in providing structured degree courses and academic education. These universities usually have relatively complete Chinese professional courses, including diploma, undergraduate and master's degree courses in Chinese language and literature. At the same time, private universities such as Bahriya University and Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) also offer Chinese courses. Although their scale and depth of these courses are not that developed as those of public universities, they still provide students with opportunities to learn Chinese. In addition, with the deepening of China-Pakistan relations, many Confucius Institutes have been established in major universities in Pakistan such as NUML in Islamabad, Punjab University in Lahore, and Karachi University, providing a dedicated Chinese and Chinese culture learning platform for learners. Confucius Institutes not only offer language courses, but also provide learners with rich Chinese



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learning resources and platforms by holding cultural exchange activities, seminars, and HSK test training.

In addition to higher education institutions, Chinese education in Pakistan has also penetrated into the fields of basic education and secondary education. Many public and private schools, such as Roots Millennium Schools and The City School, have introduced Chinese teaching in their curriculum, especially in large cities, where Chinese has become an increasingly popular second language choice. In addition, there are many private language centers in Pakistan, which not only provide Chinese learning, but also offer customized courses such as business Chinese and cultural exchange according to market demand. For example, institutions such as the Pakistan China Institute offer courses for learners who want to have a deeper understanding of Chinese and Chinese culture. These courses usually involve more professional content, such as Chinese language courses related to China-Pakistan economic cooperation, business Chinese, etc. Private language centers and Chinese research centers in universities provide students and scholars with more choices, further promoting the popularization of Chinese education.

2. Geographical Distribution

In terms of geographical distribution, Chinese education institutions in Pakistan are spread across major cities across the country, especially in major economic and cultural centers such as Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi. These places are not only gathering places for Chinese learners, but also the forefront of China-Pakistan cooperation. For example, Confucius Institutes are usually located in key universities such as NUML, Punjab University and Karachi University. These institutions ensure that learners can receive high-quality Chinese education by providing professional Chinese teaching. At the same time, many universities such as NUML have also established multiple campuses in other cities and regions, expanding the coverage of Chinese education, especially in small and medium-sized cities and regions, where Chinese education has gradually become an important tool for improving employment competitiveness. This wide geographical distribution has not only helped to increase the popularity of Chinese education, but also provided important support for the development of local economies and cultural exchanges between China and Pakistan.

3. Course Offerings and Program Structure

Chinese courses in Pakistan also show rich diversity in content and form. According to the needs of different learners, many institutions offer various courses from basic to advanced, covering language skills training in listening, speaking, reading and writing. For beginners, many institutions offer short-term courses and certificate courses, which generally range from one month to one year, focusing on cultivating students' basic communication skills, preparation for the Chinese Proficiency Test (HSK) and practical application skills such as business Chinese. Such courses are very suitable for learners who want to quickly master Chinese for academic, professional or travel purposes. For learners with higher language needs, universities such as NUML and Punjab University provide more systematic and comprehensive Chinese language and literature courses, covering literature, culture, linguistics and other fields, providing students with a higher-level academic research platform. In addition, many institutions have also opened courses related to Chinese culture, and enhanced students' crosscultural understanding and language application ability through cultural exchange programs, professional seminars and cultural activities. With the advancement of



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science and technology, some institutions have also opened online Chinese courses, which are convenient for learners who do not have the conditions to participate in face-to-face courses to study anytime and anywhere, greatly facilitating Chinese learners far away from big cities. In general, Pakistan's Chinese education shows a trend of multi-level and all-round development, which not only meets the needs of learners of different ages and backgrounds, but also with the deepening of China-Pakistan economic cooperation and cultural exchanges, Chinese education is playing an increasingly important role in Pakistan's social life.

Table 3 Main Features of Chinese education in Pakistan

Features	Key Insights		
Geographical	Institutions are spread across major cities (Islamabad, Lahore,		
Distribution	Karachi, Peshawar, Faisalabad) and regional hubs (Quetta,		
	Gilgit-Baltistan). NUML's multiple campuses ensure		
	nationwide access.		
Institutional	Includes public/private universities, Confucius Institutes,		
Diversity	schools, private language centers, China Study Centers, and		
	organizations like TEVTA and Pak-China Institute.		
Course	Ranges from short-term courses and diplomas to degree		
Offerings	programs, online learning, and specialized training for		
	professionals and researchers.		

Table 3 shows the comprehensiveness and dynamism of Chinese language education in Pakistan, driven by strategic geographic distribution, institutional diversity, and a wide range of courses tailored to meet the needs of a growing audience.

3. Overview of Chinese language teachers in Pakistan

With the advancement of the Belt and Road Initiative and the increasingly close China-Pakistan relations under the framework of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Chinese language education has developed rapidly in Pakistan. With the growing demand for Chinese language proficiency in areas such as trade, infrastructure construction and diplomacy, the role of Chinese teachers has become increasingly important. As a key promoter of the development of Chinese language education, teachers play a core role in ensuring the quality, sustainability and effectiveness of teaching. In-depth analysis of the types, educational background and employment status of Chinese teachers will help to fully understand the current development status of Chinese language education in Pakistan.

1 Types of Chinese teachers in Pakistan

Chinese teachers in Pakistan are roughly divided into two categories: local teachers and foreign national teachers. Local teachers are Pakistani, most of whom graduated with Chinese major from China or Pakistan, and some went to China to study through government scholarships. They are familiar with Pakistani culture, educational policies and students' learning habits, so they can better help students learn Chinese language and culture in the local environment. Foreign teachers are mainly divided into two categories. The first category belongs to teachers sent by the Chinese government, such



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as teachers who come to Pakistan through the Confucius Institute project or the China-Pakistan intergovernmental education cooperation agreements. They usually have a background in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCSOL), speak standard Mandarin, and have rich cultural knowledge. They can bring real language and cultural experience to the classroom, and also serve as cultural ambassadors to create an immersive learning environment for Pakistani students. The second category belongs to Chinese teachers who lives in Pakistan for a long time, due to different reasons (such as embassy staff, multinational company employees, and Sino-Pakistani joint venture project staff). Although they are not sent through official channels, they have strong language skills and a strong interest in Chinese teaching, and gradually become parttime or full-time teachers in various language centers, primary and secondary schools, or online platforms. Long-term life in Pakistan has given them a deeper understanding of local social customs and language culture alongside their own culture, helping them better integrate into the teaching environment in Pakistan. In addition to local teachers and officially dispatched Chinese language teachers from China, the addition of this group brings more diversity and flexibility to Chinese language education in Pakistan.

2 Educational background and professional training

Chinese teachers in Pakistan have great variation in academic background and professional training. Many local teachers have received systematic training in Chinese and teaching Chinese as a foreign language at well-known universities in China, such as Beijing Language and Culture University, Sichuan University, and East China Normal University, and have strong language ability and teaching skills. However, some teachers have only participated in two to three years of language training and have no formal academic qualifications. In the context of teacher shortages and increased demand, these teachers play an important role in various institutions, but they generally hope to further improve their academic qualifications and professional abilities. In order to fill this gap, more and more local teachers are pursuing master's or doctoral degrees through Chinese government scholarships or cooperative projects, and some choose to continue their studies at the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) in Pakistan. NUML plays an important role in the training of Chinese teachers. It not only provides functional courses in Chinese language but also offer a 1 year diploma training program and a 4-years undergraduate program (Teaching Chinese as a foreign language) designed specifically for Chinese language teaching, covering teaching methods, classroom management, educational technology, and cross-cultural communication. Some foreign native teachers are pursuing postgraduate degrees in Pakistan, usually majoring in English, education, or humanities and social sciences. Although they are not graduates of the Chinese Language Teaching for Foreigners major, they are often hired as part-time teachers in colleges, Confucius Classrooms or private schools because they are native speakers and have cultural advantages. Some professional Chinese teachers sent to Pakistan by the Chinese government or educational institutions. These teachers usually have a degree in teaching Chinese as a foreign language and have received systematic training covering cross-cultural communication, curriculum design and classroom management. Their teaching philosophy meets international standards and is suitable for structured teaching tasks. Although all these Pakistani and Chinese teachers have different qualification backgrounds, the challenges they face in their career development are similar, especially in digital teaching, cross-cultural



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teaching and localized teaching material development. At present, Pakistan lacks a continuous on-the-job training mechanism, which limits Chinese teachers' mastery of new teaching tools and cultural adaptability. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a scientific and sustainable teacher training system to help Chinese teachers achieve professional growth at all stages of their careers, from the beginning of employment to career development, to ensure that both local and foreign teachers can continuously improve their teaching ability and teaching effectiveness in the Chinese language teaching environment.

3 Employment Status: Income, Job Type and Stability

The employment conditions of Chinese teachers in Pakistan directly affect their career motivation, teaching quality and long-term professional development. Pakistani teachers have three types of employment status: formal government teachers, contract teachers and visiting teachers. Different types of teachers have great differences in salary, benefits and career development, which has a great impact on their career satisfaction and development prospects. Most local Chinese teachers are formal government teachers or contract teachers. Formal government teachers are formally employed by the university and enjoy relatively stable jobs and better treatment, including high salaries, medical subsidies, paid study leave (one to five years), pensions and job security before the age of 60. According to the salary standards of government rules government teacher's monthly salary range is between 50,000 to 250,000 Pakistani rupees (about 40 rupees to 1 RMB) according to their position as instructor, senior instructor, lecturer or assistant professor. In contrast, most local Chinese teachers are contract teachers. Their work contracts are generally 6 months to 2 years. Whether to renew the contract depends on the university budget and project arrangements. There is a lack of long-term career security in contract jobs. Although contract teachers can enjoy winter and summer vacations, their annual leave is generally only one month. The monthly salary varies depending on academic qualifications, workload and school funding, ranging from about 80,000 to 200,000 rupees. Contract teachers usually do not have complete medical, retirement and promotion benefits, which limits their career development and due to this reason their work motivation is not high. Foreign teachers, especially Chinese teachers sent by Chinese government, are almost all hired on a contract basis, and the contract period is generally 2 to 3 years. Their salary is higher than that of local Chinese national teachers, and they are usually provided with free accommodation, transportation subsidies, insurance etc. However, they are mainly responsible for language teaching and cultural promotion in universities, and usually do not participate in administrative management or teaching reform decisions. In addition, some Chinese teachers who are studying for a master's degree in Pakistan participate in teaching on a part-time basis. With the advantage of their mother tongue and flexible working hours, they have become an important addition to various institutions. It should be noted that the employment stability of Chinese teachers is affected by external factors, such as political changes, visa policy adjustments, funding fluctuations, and the progress of China-Pakistan cooperation. Visa delays, project suspensions, reduced funds and other issues may lead to contract interruption or inability to renew the contract. Therefore, it is necessary to formulate a more systematic, sustainable and transparent employment policy, increase formal positions, improve the salary structure, and provide equal training and development opportunities for local and



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foreign teachers, which will help promote the long-term development of Chinese language education in Pakistan. Establishing a sound Chinese language teacher support system and institutional guarantees will help make "Chinese language teaching in Pakistan" a stable, respected and attractive profession.

5. Challenges faced by Chinese education institutions and teachers

Chinese language education in Pakistan faces many significant challenges, both institutional and related to teachers and students. The teaching staff of institutions offering Chinese language education in Pakistan is composed of native Chinese teachers and local teachers. Native teachers bring advanced language skills and different cultural perspectives, while local teachers provide educational continuity and a better understanding of the local context. However, challenges remain, especially for local teachers, who face a lack of professional development opportunities, competitive salaries, and clear career paths (Hanif, 2023). He Xiaolu and Liang Shusheng (2019)²⁶ after reviewing recent literature and news reports and conducting online interviews and surveys with Pakistani students at the Confucius Institute of Punjab University, found that Chinese language education in Pakistan faces four major challenges. These include insufficient Chinese language teachers, lack of local Chinese textbooks and learning materials, low student motivation, and security risks. Among them, the shortage of qualified Chinese language teachers is the most pressing issue.

The recruitment process for Chinese language teachers focuses on language proficiency and teaching experience. However, local teachers often face limited resources and career development opportunities, which are essential to improving teaching effectiveness and maintaining high-quality Chinese language education in Pakistan. The teaching environment in Pakistan varies between full-time and part-time, and the distinction between foreign and local teachers may pose a challenge to balancing the quality and continuity of Chinese education. Local teachers often face obstacles to continued career development and are sometimes limited by imperfect salary structures and unclear career development paths. Chinese education institutions in Pakistan face institutional challenges such as funding shortages, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient policy support; problems for teachers include limited professional development opportunities, insufficient qualifications, and heavy workload; and problems for students include low learning enthusiasm, lack of high-quality learning resources, and uneven levels of learning. These problems have jointly hindered the development and quality of Chinese language education in Pakistan.

Table 4 Challenges facing Chinese education in Pakistan

Category of	Explanation
Challenges	
Institutional	- Limited funding and infrastructure
Challenges	- Insufficient policy support
_	- Difficulty in attracting qualified faculty members

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²⁶ 何小陆 & 梁树升.(2019).巴基斯坦华文教育发展的现状、问题与对策.江西理工大学学报,40(06),108-110+121.



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Teacher-related	- Lack of Localized Teaching Materials
Challenges	- Lack of professional development opportunities
	- Limited qualifications and certifications
	- High workload and low job satisfaction
Student-related	- Low motivation due to perceived limited career opportunities
Challenges	- Lack of access to quality learning resources (e.g., textbooks,
_	digital tools)
	- Varying proficiency levels among students

Table 4 categorizes the challenges into institutional challenges, teacher-related challenges, and student-related challenges according to the type of stakeholders involved. Each challenge highlights different factors that hinder the effectiveness and expansion of Chinese language education in Pakistan. At the institutional level, the main issues include insufficient funding, lack of teaching resources, and lack of support from education policies, which directly affect the sustainable development and quality assurance of Chinese language education. At the teacher level, the challenges are mainly reflected as the lack of professional development of teachers, the single teaching method, and the lack of language proficiency and cross-cultural teaching ability, which makes it difficult for teachers to adapt to the ever-changing teaching needs. At the student level, the challenges include students' low interest in learning Chinese, limited learning resources, and lack of a suitable learning environment, all of which affect students' learning motivation and learning outcomes. The challenges faced by each stakeholder type are different, but the common issue is how to overcome these challenges to improve the overall level and development potential of Chinese language education.

6. Key measures to overcome challenges in Chinese education

To overcome the challenges faced by Chinese language teachers in Pakistan, a multilevel approach is needed, focusing on institutional support, teacher development, and student engagement. First, increasing government and institutional investment in Chinese language education is critical. Allocating more funds to improve infrastructure, improve classroom facilities, and ensure access to modern teaching resources can help create a more conducive learning environment for Chinese language teaching. This will not only equip Chinese language teachers with the tools they need to provide quality education, but will also improve student outcomes. In addition, it is critical to strengthen policy support by implementing long-term strategies to promote Chinese language education in Pakistan. This may include giving incentives to universities and schools to expand Chinese language courses, especially in less developed regions, and strengthening cooperation with Confucius Institutes and other international institutions to ensure access to more resources for implementing Chinese language programs. For teachers, it is critical to address the lack of professional development opportunities. Establishing structured, easy-to-understand training programs to improve Chinese language teaching skills and language proficiency will enable local teachers to improve their teaching methods and meet the needs of a changing educational environment. These programs should combine modern technology and teaching innovations to help Chinese language teachers keep up with global trends in Chinese language teaching. In



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addition, improving teacher salaries and providing clear career development paths can improve job satisfaction and retention. Research shows that improving teacher motivation and providing clear professional development are essential for long-term success. In addition, creating a more localized curriculum that incorporates Pakistani and Chinese cultures can increase student interest and motivation, help teachers better interact with students, and reduce challenges caused by different levels. By combining these strategies, Chinese language education in Pakistan can be made more sustainable and impactful, benefiting both teachers and students.

Table 5 Kev measures to overcome challenges

	Table 5 Key m	easures to overcome challenges
	Measure	Description
1. Institutional Support	1.Increase Funding & Improve Infrastructure 2.Strengthen Policy Support & Long-term	Governments and institutions should allocate more funds to enhance infrastructure, classrooms, and teaching resources. This will enable teachers to provide better education and create a conducive learning environment. Implementing long-term strategies to promote Chinese language education through government policies, university incentives, and international
	Strategies	partnerships (e.g., Confucius Institutes) is essential for sustainable growth.
2. Teacher Development	3.Improve Teacher Salaries & Career Advancement 4.Multi-Channel Teacher Professional Development Programs 5.Development of Localized Teaching Materials	Offering competitive salaries and clear career progression paths will improve teacher motivation, retention, and overall job satisfaction, which is crucial for long-term success. Offering training through both in-house and external training to improve teaching quality. Providing teachers with structured training programs that focus on pedagogical skills, modern teaching technologies, and linguistic proficiency would enhance their teaching quality and professional growth. Collaborating to create Chinese language textbooks and resources suitable for Pakistani students. Creating a curriculum that incorporates local cultural elements and is tailored to Pakistani
	6.Enhancing International Cultural Exchange	students will make the content more relevant and engaging, improving motivation and proficiency. Expanding exchange programs and cultural activities to increase interest in Chinese learning.
3. Student Engagement	7.Enhance Student Motivation	Expanding career prospects for students by leveraging initiatives like the Belt and Road



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through Career	projects and cultural exchange programs will boost
Opportunities	student interest in Chinese language education.

Table 5 outlines the key measures to address the challenges of Chinese language education in Pakistan, emphasizing the need to improve the status quo of Chinese education through a series of comprehensive measures. First, increasing funding and policy support is the basis for promoting the development of Chinese education. Through government funding and policy support, sufficient educational resources can be ensured to improve educational facilities and teaching environment. Second, it is crucial to improve the professional development of teachers, including providing systematic training and continuous professional development opportunities for Chinese language teachers to help them improve their teaching standards and cross-cultural communication skills. Most importantly, the design and implementation of localized courses can better adapt to the cultural and social background of Pakistan, making Chinese education closer to students' actual needs and increasing their interest and participation in learning. Thirdly, expanding career prospects for students by leveraging initiatives like the Belt and Road projects and cultural exchange programs will boost student interest in Chinese language education. The successful implementation of all these measures requires not only sufficient funding and resource support, but also close collaboration among policymakers, educational institutions and industry stakeholders to ensure that the Chinese language education can develop steadily and provide students with better learning opportunities and future development prospects.

4. The role of the Chinese Department of the National University of Modern Languages in shaping Chinese language education in Pakistan

Since its establishment in 1969, the Chinese Department of the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) Islamabad has played a pivotal role in the historical development of Chinese education in Pakistan. As one of the earliest higher education institutions in Pakistan to offer Chinese courses, NUML has not only maintained an excellent academic reputation in Chinese language teaching, but also made important contributions in promoting cultural exchanges between China and Pakistan and promoting innovation and development of Chinese language education. The Chinese Department has cultivated a large number of high-quality Chinese professionals by providing multi-level and diversified Chinese courses, laying a solid foundation for Chinese language education in Pakistan. Its Chinese language courses at the bachelor's and master's levels enable students to fully understand the knowledge of Chinese language, culture, history, society and economic development, which not only enhances students' language skills, but also deepens their understanding and recognition of Chinese culture. In addition, the Chinese Department also focuses on teacher training and innovation in teaching methods. The teachers it trains not only have solid Chinese language skills, but are also able to apply modern educational concepts and technologies to Chinese teaching.

Looking into the future prospects, the Chinese Department will undoubtedly continue to play a leading role in Chinese language education and the professional development of Chinese language teachers in Pakistan. With the increasing importance of Chinese



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in the world, especially between China and Pakistan, the Chinese Department of NUML has the potential to become a national professional development center for Chinese language teachers, providing tailor-made courses, seminars, research opportunities and career development plans for Chinese language teachers in major educational institutions in Pakistan. By introducing advanced international Chinese teaching concepts, conducting teacher training programs, and providing educators with a continuous professional growth platform, NUML is expected to become the core driving force for innovation and development of Chinese language education. In addition, as Chinese language programs continue to expand in Pakistan, the Chinese Department will further strengthen cooperation with domestic and foreign universities and educational institutions to form a multi-level education network to promote the popularization and development of Chinese education in Pakistan. With its long-term accumulated professional experience, academic advantages and strong institutional support in the field of Chinese education, NUML will continue to lead the development direction of Chinese education in the future and make important contributions to the sustainable development of the entire Chinese education field in Pakistan.

5. Conclusion

The journey of Chinese language education in Pakistan reflects a dynamic interplay between historical ties, strategic cooperation, and growing mutual interests between China and Pakistan—particularly under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative and CPEC. From its humble beginnings to its current widespread presence in schools, universities, and vocational institutes, Chinese language instruction has gradually evolved into a key component of educational and cultural exchange. The current landscape, while promising, is also marked by notable challenges. These include a shortage of qualified local Chinese language teachers, uneven teaching quality, limited instructional resources, and gaps in pedagogical training. Additionally, institutions and educators often face systemic constraints, such as inadequate policy support and limited professional development opportunities.

Despite these difficulties, the overall trajectory remains optimistic. National institutions such as the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) have played a pivotal role in expanding access to Chinese language education and setting benchmarks for future growth. Their continued efforts in curriculum development, teacher training, and academic research are essential to ensuring sustainability and relevance in this field. Moving forward, the development of Chinese language education in Pakistan will require a multi-pronged approach. Strengthening institutional capacity, investing in teacher education, enhancing curriculum localization, and fostering greater cultural integration will be crucial steps. By addressing these needs and building on current achievements, Pakistan is well-positioned to not only meet the growing demand for Chinese proficiency but also to cultivate a generation of learners and educators who can actively contribute to deeper understanding and cooperation between China and Pakistan.

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