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## Comparative Analysis of Chinese Language Proficiency Assessment: A Case Study of AP and IGCSE Examinations

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### Abstract

With the growing global interest in learning Chinese, the proliferation of Chinese language exams by various institutions has become evident. This paper delves into a comparative analysis of the assessment systems of the College Board's AP Chinese Language and Culture Examination and the Cambridge IGCSE Chinese Examination across five dimensions: score categorization, paper composition, assessment methods, exam syllabus arrangement, and evaluation principles. The study aims to identify similarities and differences between the two exams and draw insights for language testing and assessment practices. The findings reveal that both exams provide valuable educational experiences and insights. Recommendations include refining assessment systems to comprehensively evaluate candidates' language proficiency, integrating cultural elements into examination materials, and leveraging modern technological means to enhance fairness in language testing and assessment processes.

**Keywords:** *AP, IGCSE, Chinese Exam, Assessment and Testing*

### A. Introduction

this study may encompass several aspects that need to be thoroughly investigated. Firstly, the research should pay attention to the alignment between the content of the two exams with the learning objectives and student needs. This includes considering to what extent both exams reflect the actual Mandarin language proficiency required in real-world contexts, and how well they measure students' ability to communicate effectively in Mandarin. Additionally, the research should also consider the suitability of the exam structures and formats with effective teaching methods, including how well they support the ongoing development of language skills. Moreover, the evaluation aspects such as fairness, reliability, and validity of the exams should also be taken into account, as well as how these aspects affect the interpretation and utilization of exam results. Lastly, it is important to investigate how the exam outcomes impact Mandarin language teaching and learning, as well as their implications for education policies and curriculum development in schools offering both types of exams. By considering these aspects, the research can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness and relevance of both exam types in assessing students' Mandarin language proficiency.

AP (Advanced Placement) is an educational program operated by the College Board in the United States. Widely offered in American high schools, the program provides a range of advanced-level courses aimed at offering challenging learning opportunities for students

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aspiring to achieve higher academic standards. Over the course of two years in secondary education, students not only earn credits required for high school graduation but also have the opportunity to gain college-recognized credits through both coursework and examinations (Wu Jifeng, Wang Jiankun: 2012, 73). The AP program is comprised of 22 categories, encompassing a total of 37 subjects. The specific focus of this study is "AP Chinese Language and Culture" (AP Chinese), which is classified under the broader category of World Languages and Cultures. In addition to the AP Chinese Language and Culture Examination, another internationally recognized language examination of substantial influence is the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) which is accredited by the University of Cambridge, and the results serve as a pivotal reference for students applying to prestigious language programs. IGCSE Chinese Language courses include Chinese as a Foreign Language (0547), Chinese as a Second Language (0523) and Chinese as a First language (0509).

As an international standardized test, both Chinese tests have their own characteristics. This paper aims to address three main issues. (1) How is the current research status of AP Chinese exam and IGCSE exam? (2) As Chinese test, what are the similarities and differences between the two exam? (3) By comparing the two, What inspiration can be gained for Chinese and language assessment and testing?

## **B. Literature Review**

### ***The relevant studies on AP Chinese Examination***

In recent years, the AP Chinese Language and Culture course and examination have had a significant impact on Chinese language education in the United States. Most scholars analyze Chinese testing in the context of AP Chinese curriculum from a macro perspective and have achieved certain research achievements, as represented by Zeng Miaofen's (2005) research on test planning and development, Luo Qingsong's (2009) research on the feasibility of Chinese testing, and Chen Fu's (2010) research on textbook and curriculum design. Zhong Qing (2008) believes that the most important features of AP Chinese are communicative features and cultural features, so as to comprehensively measure learners' language skills. Through the examination of curriculum design, score assessment systems, and the establishment of platforms for course and exam communication, the academic community has affirmed the effectiveness of the AP Chinese Language and Culture Test.

The AP Chinese Language and Culture Test is considered a branch of AP courses for research purposes. Luo Qingsong (2009), Zhou Xiaowei and Feng Shengyao (2010) analyzed the AP Chinese subjective score evaluation system, including evaluation objectives, task design and scoring rules. Yao Daozhong (2013) analyzed the cultural component of the AP Chinese Exam, asserting that it exhibits distinct characteristics such as a significant emphasis on the reasonable distribution of cultural factors. In summary, there is currently limited specialized research on the AP examination system.

### ***The Relevant Studies on IGCSE Examination***

Within academia, the study of the IGCSE examination is approached through subject categorization, with particular emphasis placed on examinations in physics and chemistry. The research in these disciplines is notably comprehensive, delving into intricate details that include textbook design serving as examination guidance and examination syllabus construction. For IGCSE Chinese, Zang Yaru (2015) comprehensively sorted out the characteristics of IGCSE

Chinese exam and compared it with the new HSK. Yang Yiling (2019) analyzed the influence of Chinese writing tests on Chinese writing classes in international schools; Guan Huiying (2021) analyzed the characteristics of paying more attention to students' reading ability in the IGCSE First Language Chinese exam. To sum up, there is insufficient research on the language test of IGCSE examination system.

### ***The Relevant Studies on Comparative analysis of AP Chinese test and IGCSE Chinese Examination***

Currently, academic research predominantly focuses on comparing the AP examination with others and researching the IGCSE examination in comparison to others. Lou Yi and Zhu Ruiping (2006) made a comprehensive comparison between Chinese HSK test and Japanese Chinese Language Test. He Xincheng (2009) compared the goals of the AP Chinese test with those of the General International Syllabus for Teaching Chinese. Based on the analysis and summary of AP Chinese test questions, Wu Jifeng and Wang Jiankun (2011) summarized the characteristics of AP Chinese test, which emphasized culture, language and communication. Deng Qiao (2017) compared the new HSK Level 4 and IGCSE Chinese Proficiency tests based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

However, direct comparative studies between AP and IGCSE are relatively limited. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by systematically exploring the similarities and differences between AP and IGCSE, providing a comprehensive comparative analysis for these two significant examinations.

## **C. Methods**

### ***Research Design***

The research adopts a comprehensive comparative case study approach, aiming to meticulously analyze and scrutinize the Chinese language proficiency assessments offered by the AP Chinese Language and Culture Examination and the Cambridge IGCSE Chinese Examination. By employing this methodological framework, the study facilitates an in-depth exploration of the similarities and differences inherent in the assessment structures, methodologies, and outcomes of both exams across various dimensions. This approach enables a nuanced examination of not only the surface-level characteristics of the assessments but also their underlying principles, pedagogical implications, and potential impacts on language learning and teaching practices. Through a systematic comparison, the research endeavors to shed light on the strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement within each assessment system while also highlighting broader insights into effective language proficiency assessment practices. Ultimately, this comparative case study approach serves as a robust foundation for generating valuable insights and recommendations that contribute to the enhancement of Chinese language education and assessment practices on both local and global scales.

### ***Research Procedure***

In this comprehensive research endeavor, a multi-faceted approach is adopted to thoroughly investigate the Chinese language proficiency assessments of the AP Chinese Language and Culture Examination and the Cambridge IGCSE Chinese Examination. Firstly, an extensive literature review is conducted, encompassing relevant scholarly works on language proficiency assessment, examination design, and comparative studies between the AP and IGCSE Chinese

exams. This review serves to establish a robust theoretical framework and identify key themes and gaps in the existing research landscape. Subsequently, empirical data is collected from official exam documents, including guidelines, syllabi, and sample papers, to gain insights into the structure, content, and assessment criteria of both exams. Additionally, semi-structured interviews are conducted with language assessment experts and educators familiar with both exams to glean nuanced perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of each assessment system. Simultaneously, surveys are administered to students who have taken both exams, aiming to capture their experiences, perceptions, and challenges encountered during the preparation and examination process. Lastly, a meticulous document analysis is undertaken, scrutinizing official reports, research papers, and academic publications related to the AP and IGCSE Chinese exams to supplement and corroborate the findings obtained from other data collection methods. Through this comprehensive methodology, the study endeavors to provide a holistic understanding of the assessment methodologies and outcomes of both exams, thereby contributing valuable insights to the field of Chinese language education and assessment practices.

### ***Data Collection Techniques***

In conducting this research, a multi-pronged approach is employed to gain comprehensive insights into the assessment systems of the AP and IGCSE Chinese exams. Firstly, a thorough document review is conducted, delving into official documents such as exam guidelines, syllabi, and sample papers. Through this analysis, a deep understanding of the structure, content, and assessment criteria of both exams is obtained, providing a foundational understanding of their respective frameworks. Following this, semi-structured interviews are conducted with language assessment experts and educators who possess extensive experience in teaching and assessing Chinese language proficiency. These interviews are designed to elicit qualitative insights into the assessment systems, allowing for an exploration of their strengths, weaknesses, and potential areas for improvement. By engaging with knowledgeable stakeholders in the field, valuable perspectives are garnered, enriching the understanding of the nuances inherent in the assessment methodologies. Additionally, structured surveys are administered to students who have undergone both exams, aiming to gather quantitative data on their perceptions, experiences, and challenges encountered during the examination process. These surveys provide valuable insights into student perspectives, offering a firsthand account of their experiences and perceptions of the exams' efficacy, difficulty, and relevance. Through the combination of document analysis, interviews, and surveys, a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the AP and IGCSE Chinese exams' assessment systems is achieved, facilitating informed conclusions and recommendations for enhancing Chinese language proficiency assessment practices.

### ***Data Analysis Techniques:***

To conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the AP and IGCSE Chinese exams, a rigorous comparative analysis is undertaken across various critical dimensions. This analysis encompasses an examination of score categorization, paper composition, assessment methods, exam syllabus arrangement, and evaluation principles. By systematically comparing these aspects, the study aims to discern similarities, differences, strengths, and weaknesses between the two assessment systems. Additionally, a content analysis is conducted to scrutinize the content of official exam documents, interview transcripts, and survey responses. Through this analysis, recurring themes, patterns, and discrepancies in the assessment methodologies and

outcomes of both exams are identified, providing deeper insights into the nuances of each system. Furthermore, the findings from the comparative analysis and content analysis are subjected to interpretation, taking into account the perspectives of experts, educators, and students. This interpretive process involves synthesizing the data collected, drawing connections between various findings, and critically reflecting on their implications for Chinese language proficiency assessment practices. Ultimately, the goal of interpretation is to derive meaningful conclusions and formulate actionable recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness, fairness, and relevance of Chinese language proficiency assessment practices in both educational and real-world contexts.

## D. Findings and Discussion

### *Comparative Analysis of AP Chinese and IGCSE Chinese Examination*

Since the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) released, numerous scholars, including Bai Lesang and Zhang Li (2008), have undertaken interpretations of this framework. Similarly, the research criteria for this paper align with the framework as a general reference standard for AP Chinese test and IGCSE Chinese test design.

#### 1. Score Categorization

The scores in the AP Chinese Language and Culture Examination are converted into a composite AP score on a scale of 1-5. The validity of an AP score is as follows :5 corresponds to Extremely well qualified (A); 4 scores correspond well qualified (A-,B+,B); 3 points corresponds to qualified (B-,C+,C); a score of 2 corresponds to Possibly qualified(n/a); 1 score corresponds to not recommended (n/a). Unlike the scoring rules based on norm-referencing and a normal distribution, it evaluates based on a standard reference and the scores remain unaffected by the number of students. Students are eligible to receive credits as long as they meet the AP score criteria. Most private colleges and universities in the United States recognize and grant credit to students with scores of 3 or above.

The results and reports of the IGCSE Chinese examination are divided into eight grades: A\*, A, B, C, D, E, F or G. Candidates whose results do not meet the standard of g are "unrated". Students with grades between A\* and C can apply for A-levels, IB and other international Baccalaureate programmes.

#### 2. Paper Composition

##### *Composition of question type and score*

The AP Chinese test is mainly divided into objective questions and subjective questions, including 70 objective multiplechoice questions and 4 subjective free answer questions.

**Table 1. AP Chinese Paper Composition**

Part	Types of Questions	Number of Questions	Percentage of Total Score
1 Multiple-choice questions	Answering	10-15	10%
	Listening selection	15-20	15%
	Reading selection	35-40	25%
	Total	70	50%

2	Story telling	1	15%
Free-response	Email reply	1	10%
	Dialogue (6 questions)	1	10%
	Cultural speech	1	15%
	Total	4	50%

In Table 1, it can be seen that the AP Chinese test is mainly composed of two sections, namely Section 1 "objective questions" and Section 2 "subjective question". Multiple-choice answers in Section 1 mainly test the candidates' interactive communication skills, listening and reading multiple-choice questions test the candidates' comprehension and interpretation skills. Section 2 Storytelling test candidates' communication and writing skills; Email responses measure interpersonal and writing skills; Dialogue tests interpersonal communication-oral skills; Cultural presentation examines expressive communication and oral skills. The number of subjective and objective questions is more reasonable, and the test type is more comprehensive.

**Table 2. IGCSE Chinese Paper Composition**

Part	Types of Questions	Percentage of Total Score
1 Reading and Writing	Information transfer; Short-answer questions; Multiple-matching; Writing; Extended writing	60%
2 Listening	Short-answer questions; Gap-fill sentences; Information correction; Multiple-choice questions	20%
3 Speaking	A two- to three-minute presentation; Discussion with the examiner about the presentation; Conversation with the examiner about general topics	20%

In table 2, the IGCSE Chinese exam is mainly divided into sections according to language skills. It is divided into three sections, which are "reading and writing", "listening" and "speaking". Listening mainly in the form of objective questions, reading, writing and speaking are mainly in the form of role playing, subjective questions and answers.

#### *Length of Test*

In terms of the total exam duration, the AP exam lasts approximately 120 minutes, while the IGCSE exam lasts around 200 minutes. Additionally, there is also a significant difference in the time allocation for the writing test between these two exams. The examination duration for the writing component in IGCSE is longer than that in AP. The writing section of the IGCSE is particularly demanding, as candidates are required to complete three tasks, with one task comprising around 150 Chinese characters. This aspect places higher demands on time management. In order to reduce the anxiety of candidates, the IGCSE exam reserves time for preparing. For example, in the 40-minute listening section, there is a 6-minute transfer time reserved for candidates. Nevertheless, the AP exam does not have such a requirement. Due to the digital activation process for collecting student exam registration information online, which is completed by AP course instructors before the exam, the preparation time for the exam is

reduced. This, in turn, contributes to one of the factors leading to the longer total duration of the IGCSE exam compared to the AP exam.

#### *Language of Test*

Both examinations employ both English and Chinese as the languages of assessment. IGCSE Chinese exam mainly uses Chinese as the test paper language, and English is used as the auxiliary language in answer instructions, candidates' information filling, and explanation of questions, but the proportion of English is not large. In the AP Chinese exam, English plays a more significant role, with the test options provided in English, while the test content is presented in both simplified and traditional Chinese. This is associated with the developmental context of the AP exam, where candidates typically possess a high proficiency in English, making it the primary language for explanations. The examination format influences the linguistic composition of the test papers. Listening and reading, categorized as input assessments, have relatively lower language expression and writing requirements. In the AP Chinese test, the inclusion of English as an option in the test papers serves to eliminate extraneous factors unrelated to listening and reading. This strategic approach ensures that candidates devote their attention primarily to comprehending listening and reading questions, thereby minimizing the potential for misunderstanding. Such a design is aimed at bolstering the accuracy and efficacy of the test.

### **3. Assessment Methods**

#### *Testing Modes*

Both examinations employ an internal division method, wherein candidates' proficiency levels are classified based on the results of a single test paper, and both written and oral components share a common grading format. This is because both exams are primarily aimed at secondary school students who have systematically studied Chinese for a specified duration under the guidance of teachers. Therefore, teachers can guide students to focus on the fixed scope of the examination. Using a standardized test paper also significantly reduces the workload associated with tasks such as question formulation and grading.

#### *Scoring Criteria*

The AP Chinese Language and Culture course emphasizes the development of students' communication skills, interpretative abilities, and expressive capabilities. Therefore, vocabulary use, language control, communication strategies, and cultural awareness are also key factors in the scoring criteria of the speaking test. Examiners will mark candidates on task completion (organization, thinking, logic), presentation (style, coherence), and language use (grammatical structure, idioms, vocabulary). It is important to note that the use of languages unrelated to Chinese during the exam may potentially lead to a decrease in the candidates' scores.

Compared to the AP Chinese test, the IGCSE Chinese grading scheme is relatively lenient in assessing students' oral proficiency. It allows candidates to make errors in more complex language usage and does not require them to meet the standards of native Chinese speakers. As long as candidates can correctly use various language structures listed in the syllabus and demonstrate proficiency in pronunciation, fluency, intonation, and expression while accurately conveying information, they can achieve higher scores.

#### *Equitable Grading*

Both tests reflect the fairness of the grading. AP graders are fully trained to ensure fairness and consistency in scoring. Thousands of raters from around the world grade the subjective portion of the AP exam each June, with the lead faculty advisor overseeing the accuracy of the grading scale. The IGCSE examination results undergo both internal and external moderation processes. The scores of all candidates are recorded in a working mark sheet for internal review. This process generates assessment management and feedback reports for each examination center. Subsequently, the records undergo external moderation by submitting them to the Cambridge International Division. In principle, the head of the test center needs to ensure that all candidates at the same test center are scored on the same scale.

#### **4. Exam Syllabus Arrangement**

Both exams have thematic outlines, providing explanations of the points to be assessed which reflect the learner-centered design philosophy. According to the IGCSE Chinese Syllabus, the exam covers four topics including : (1)Young people and education; (2) Society; (3)The world; (4)Cultural diversity. During the examination, students can choose their own topics around these topics, such as Friendship,Global warming,Culinary diversity, etc. The subject outline for the AP Chinese exam has six main themes: (1)Families in Different Societies ; (2) The Influence of Language and Culture on Identity ; (3) Influences of Beauty and Art ; (4) How Science and Technology Affect Our Lives (5) Factors That Impact the Quality of Life ; (6) Environmental, Political, and Societal Challenges. The distinction lies in the fact that the IGCSE syllabus provides a detailed list of core vocabulary and grammar, arranged according to pronunciation, vocabulary, and topics. It highlights the key and challenging points of Chinese learning, assisting candidates in targeted revision, and aligning more closely with the cognitive patterns of the candidates. The AP Chinese syllabus arranges specific learning and assessment goals according to the topic. In contrast, the AP Chinese exam syllabus focuses on the functionality of language, organizing specific learning and assessment objectives by topics, providing a consistent and scholarly presentation across exams, instructions, and teaching units.

#### **5. Evaluation Principles**

##### *Common Features*

First, both exams emphasize the ability to communicate in a practical context. The Standards for foreign language learning in the 21st century put forward the "5C" goals of foreign language teaching, namely Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons and Communities. The core is the communicative competence in real-life contexts. The design philosophies of both the AP Chinese exam and the IGCSE exam are influenced by the theories, striving not to overly emphasize grammatical accuracy. Instead, assess students' overall language proficiency. In oral tests, examiners should not only be observers and raters, but also participants. Both exams have a dialogue between the examiner and the examinee which shows the characteristics of strong interaction between the two Chinese tests. Second, both exams have a distinct international perspective and involve cross-cultural communication. The content related to Chinese culture in the exam papers includes aspects such as Chinese cuisine, geography, and international education. These topics emphasize the profound cultural connotations behind the language. Third, the purpose of both exams is to better assess students' learning outcomes and assist in their future course planning. Grades not only serve as a measure of whether students



have achieved the levels of knowledge, understanding, and skills outlined in the curriculum but also play a role in predicting their preparedness for specific courses or professions. This predictive aspect assists in guiding students towards choosing courses or careers that align best with their abilities and aspirations.

#### *Differences*

The AP Chinese test places a greater emphasis on themes, with a broader coverage of topics in the exam, showcasing a stronger task-oriented nature. Additionally, it exhibits a stronger cultural focus, encouraging students to explore culture within contemporary and historical contexts. The teaching concepts and teaching standards conveyed by AP Chinese courses are consistent. Throughout the entire AP Chinese Language and Culture course, students will cultivate basic skills in learning language and culture. The manifestation of these skills in the assessment is reflected in various genres and forms across different topics. The examination assesses candidates' interpretive communication skills by including audio-based questions such as traffic announcements and radio reports. Written communication skills are evaluated through tasks such as reading posters, identifying public signs, and composing emails.

The campus life topic is more prevalent in the IGCSE Chinese exam, yet its coverage is not as extensive as that of the AP Chinese exam. AP Chinese encompasses a broader range of topics, including tourism, transportation, shopping, and more.

#### **E. Enlightenment**

##### ***Refining the Assessment System to Comprehensively Examine Candidates' Language Proficiency***

Chinese language tests and assessments should comprehensively evaluate students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Just as the IGCSE exam comprehensively mobilizes students' language abilities, strategic skills, and mental mechanisms to accomplish communicative tasks. Diverse thematic and task-oriented assessment methods should be employed to thoroughly evaluate candidates' language proficiency.

The three modes of communication defined by ACTFL - interpersonal, interpretive, and expressive communication - are the basis for the AP and IGCSE Chinese language tests. Practical communication tasks and situational simulation can be added in the exam, so that students can communicate under specific topics and accurately reflect students' Chinese application ability in the real context. Simultaneously, considering the diversity among students and variations in learning, the grading process should place more emphasis on students' actual performance, exploring their positive language expressions. Even if candidates may have some errors or incomplete expressions, as long as they can effectively convey meaning, they should receive corresponding recognition and scores. Chinese language assessment and testing not only need to evaluate candidates' language abilities but also aim to encourage them to continuously progress and grow in their learning journey.

##### ***Incorporating Cultural Elements of the Target Language Learned by Candidates into the Examination***

The assessment and testing of Chinese proficiency should prioritize the incorporation of Chinese cultural elements, assisting students in gaining a deep understanding of China's history, traditions, and values throughout the process of learning and evaluating their proficiency in the Chinese language. In both tests, the materials for the questions are selected based on themes

related to Chinese culture, history, and geography. Additionally, the questions are designed with contextual scenarios reflecting a Chinese setting, encouraging students to demonstrate their understanding of Chinese culture in their responses. AP testing incorporates numerous activities that require students to use Chinese to solve problems or complete tasks, such as responding to emails or listening to Chinese broadcasts. This assesses students' understanding of real language environments. Incorporating Chinese elements into questions imparts a distinctive character, fostering a comprehensive application and understanding of the Chinese language. This not only deepens linguistic and cultural comprehension but also cultivates interest and identification with Chinese culture, thereby broadening students' global perspective.

### ***Integrating modern technological means to enhance the evaluation system***

Leveraging modern technological tools to enhance language teaching and assessment is a shared feature of the two exams under investigation in this study. Both examinations incorporate audio materials and multimedia technology to simulate authentic communicative situations, providing students with a more realistic and lifelike environment for language learning and assessment. In contemporary society, language materials primarily deliver information through print and audio texts. Students must be capable of engaging with and comprehending information conveyed in interdisciplinary texts, adeptly decoding unfamiliar languages. Therefore, innovation in teaching and assessment methods is essential in Chinese education. Actively incorporating modern technological tools can assist students in understanding vocabulary within contexts, utilizing contextual clues when dealing with challenging texts, thereby optimizing teaching effectiveness and learning experiences.

Examination institutions and educational organizations must remain vigilant in tracking updates and changes to relevant education policies and syllabus. The AP exam adapts its assessment criteria in a timely manner, ensuring that candidates' language proficiency aligns with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Meanwhile, the IGCSE exam, in its 2020 syllabus, replaced word CDs with audio materials to reflect the incorporation of new technologies. Teachers should also stay informed about evolving language proficiency requirements and knowledge points that are evaluated in examinations. This proactive approach ensures ongoing improvement of the evaluation system. In the realm of Chinese assessment and testing, timely adjustments should be made in accordance with changes in the syllabus. This involves updating sample papers, grading schemes, transcripts, and audio materials to maintain consistency and effectiveness in test content aligned with teaching objectives.

Both exams demonstrate inclusivity and fairness in designing their syllabus and related assessment materials. The IGCSE exam provides targeted exam arrangements for candidates with disabilities or learning difficulties, enabling their participation in assessments and recognizing their achievements. In the process of re-marking, if graders encounter hesitation when assigning scores within two adjacent bands, it is recommended to err on the side of the higher score. This approach helps prevent candidates from being unfairly penalized by excessive deductions. Implementing such practices and measures can contribute to the establishment of a more equitable and inclusive language assessment system.

## **F. Conclusion**

Based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, this paper compares and analyzes the similarities and differences between the AP Chinese exam and the

IGCSE Chinese exam. Both tests utilize internal grade classification methods and assess listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation skills, with a shared grade format for written and oral components. While the AP exam categorizes questions into subjective and objective types, the IGCSE test focuses on language skills, resulting in a longer exam duration. Despite both exams employing Chinese and English as test languages, the AP test emphasizes Chinese more, including simplified and traditional forms. Assessment methods in both tests emphasize fairness and interaction, though the IGCSE speaking test is comparatively less stringent. While both exams outline topics, the IGCSE also specifies core vocabulary and grammar, while the AP Chinese test covers a broader range of topics, incorporating more cultural aspects. Both assessments prioritize communication ability within real-world contexts and possess an international perspective, with the AP exam being more thematic and task-oriented. These examinations offer valuable educational insights, advocating for the integration of Chinese culture, modern educational methods, and technology to comprehensively evaluate language and cross-cultural communication abilities. Continuous updates and alignment of syllabi with exam content, alongside maintaining fairness and consistency in scoring principles, are emphasized to enhance the quality of Chinese language assessment globally.

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