“The Students Have Been Spoilt Previously”

A Case Study on the Professional Development of Chinese Language Teachers in Hamburg

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Abstract

The professional development of Chinese teachers of Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) in Europe is confronted with various complex educational challenges and problems. Traditional Chinese educational schemata and cultural values have great impact on these teachers' professional beliefs and their perceptions. My case studies of six CFL teachers show that their professional challenges are connected with the cultural differences of Chinese and German educational contexts. Open-ended questions, in-depth interviews and classroom observation were employed. And multiple data sources, such as the transcripts of teacher interviews, field notes were included. Cross-case analysis indicated that the CFL teachers have to deal with some conflicts of their previous biographies and new requirements of local educational context, such as teacher-centered didactics versus student-centered didactics, traditional Chinese language approaches versus intercultural communicative didactics; strict classroom discipline versus acknowledgement of students' individuality etc. I depict their professional development by employing a theoretic framework of developmental task theory, i.e. professional competence, mediation, acknowledgment and institution. My study may help to shed light on understanding the individual difficulties that CFL teachers face in overseas teaching environments. The study's findings and recommendations therefore are of significance for the future design of teacher training for CFL teachers in Germany and in other European countries.

Keywords

teachers' developmental tasks – professional development – Chinese language teachers

1 Introduction¹

At present time, according to incomplete statistics from the Chinese Embassy in Berlin, there are, in Germany, more than 300 elementary schools, comprehensive schools and Gymnasiums that offer Chinese language courses. Parallel to this development, the number of students learning the Chinese language at German universities has risen to more than 4000 (Hanban, 2015). This means there has been a considerable increase in the number of Germans who begin to learn the Chinese language; but an urgent problem is the lack of professional Chinese teachers with strong intercultural competences and professional skills. It means that CFL (Chinese as a foreign language) teachers are asked to improve their professional competence to better work in German school settings.

With regard to the actual instructional situation of CFL in Germany, one has to realize that although Hanban ("汉办", Chinese Abbreviation for Chinese National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language) has sent a large number of professional Chinese teachers to Germany, it is too limited to satisfy the abundant demand of the German schools. There is a more serious problem, however, namely the shortage of graduated CFL teachers from German universities on a local basis. Local teachers' shortage for CFL is a widespread world problem. Actually localization as an urgent developmental call is able to deal with the shortage of qualified teachers that also asks the development of local teaching materials and pedagogies, in the recognition of the challenging need for adaptation in CFL practice (Moloney & Xu, 2015). Most teachers of CFL in Germany did not receive professional teacher training at German universities and they lack professional teaching practice at German schools. Furthermore, these teachers in elementary schools, comprehensive schools and gymnasiums therefore work as contractual teachers without a permanent position. These present problems have greatly constrained their professional development at German schools.

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Because most of CFL teachers have been born in China and have been educated in Chinese tertiary institutions, whose professional identity and outlooks have been greatly influenced by the traditional Chinese culture. The teachers may experience new problems when they worked in German schools. In order to interpret my case group of six CFL teachers' professional development, I mainly focus on their challenges in their professional practice and significant factors possibly shaping their professional beliefs of language pedagogy in German educational context. Successful dealing with these challenges is crucial for their professional transition in German educational context. My case studies wish to investigate the possibility of applying the framework of individual management to developmental tasks to interpret teachers' professional development and to describe their individual didactics. My study wishes to avoid bringing stereotypes and assumptions for students and teachers with Chinese origins into my interpretation, but to focus on the influence of their previous biographies on the construction of their professional perceptions. Results presented in this paper are expected to broaden the empirical basis of Chinese teachers and provide pedagogical insights of their professional development.

2 Literature Review

The rapid development of Chinese teaching has raised new problems and challenges, which attracted more educational researchers' interest. Particularly, there are a large number of comparative studies on CFL teachers' professional development and their professional experiences in the intercultural context (Chiang, 2010; Orton, 2011; Gao, 2012). Some studies showed that CFL teachers remain influenced by a traditional Chinese approach to language pedagogy. This educational culture in China places great values on the authority and knowledge of the teacher, serious and diligent application by students and attention to success in written examination (Hui, 2005). A considerable amount of research is focused mainly on the so-called teaching heritage language and on heritage CFL teachers' professional development and their professional beliefs (Feuerverger, 1997; Curdt-Christiansen, 2006; Liu, 2006; Dervin, 2011; Wu, Palmer, & Field, 2011). The study of young native speaker Chinese teachers has found that teachers' professional difficulties with Western instructional values and tension between Western and Chinese pedagogic cultures. More related publications have begun to focus on effective language pedagogy and pedagogic innovation, including the use of new technology in language acquisition to improve students' learning efficiency (Henderson, Huang, Grant, &

Henderson, 2009; Windschitl & Sahl, 2002), the important influence of teachers' beliefs (Xu & Moloney, 2011).

Many studies typically have presented the urgent need of professional qualified Chinese teachers and of suitable language approach for the development of CFL in Germany (Starr, 2009; Guder, 2015). As for Chinese teachers' challenges in German schools, CFL teachers' identity is still primarily dominated by a traditional pedagogic approach (Li, 2003; Wang, Moloney & Li, 2013; Li & Du, 2014). The traditional approach to teach language is characterized as mainly grammar-translation, memorization of structural patterns and vocabulary, rote learning and systematic study of grammatical patterns (Hu, 2002). Influenced by the traditional language pedagogy, CFL teachers in Germany face various intercultural challenges that they never encountered in their usual working context. An exploration of these teachers' assumptions showed the significance of cultural scripts in shaping teachers' thinking and identified the differences between Chinese and Western educational schema (Chan & Rao, 2010; Sun, 2011; Wang, 2009). In the German text, similarly, CFL teachers' professional perceptions remained dominated by traditional textbook pedagogy rather than communicative pedagogy approaches (Blume, 2011). The cultural differences of western and eastern school education and students' learning habits also produce new challenges to CFL teaching and learning in new educational context (cf. Jin & Cortazzi, 1998; Singh & Jinghe, 2014). However, only a limited number of studies have examined CFL teachers' professional development in Germany (Xu, 2010; Guder, 2013; Zhu, 2012). However, there is relatively limited attention has been paid to explore their individual biographical experience, their professional challenges and their professional competence, especially lacking necessary concern to the relation of their individual biographies and present professional competence. In my paper, I have applied a new theoretical framework concerning CFL teachers' developmental tasks to examine the influence of their professional biographies and to address their management to various challenges.

3 Studies of Educational Traditions in China and in Germany

A large amount of research on foreign language teaching in China (Clark & Gieve, 2006; Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Shi, 2006; Tsui, 2007) and cross-culture educational research in general education (Chan & Rao, 2010; Watkins, 2000; Watkins & Biggs, 1996, 2001) have investigated the huge differences between cultures of learning and teaching in China and in the Western countries. CFL teachers' professional conceptions and beliefs constructed through traditional Chinese

education are confronted by new problems in the new Western educational environment. China and Germany differ radically with regard to their educational traditions and cultural contexts, therefore my study firstly overview some differences in educational traditions.

CFL teachers educated through traditional teaching pedagogies may experience new challenges. Because most of Chinese teachers' conceptions of education have been influenced by Confucian thinking (Biggs, 1996; Lee, 1996; Scollon & Hinkel, 1999) with its emphasis on moral education and the cultivation of benevolence as the ultimate goals of education (Niu, 2007). There are many researches show that most of CFL teachers educated in China are still influenced by the traditional Chinese educational conceptions concerning teachers' authority and students' diligence, endeavor. Hu (2002) assumes that the Chinese educational schema can be characterized by five mainly features: (1) a deep reverence for education, (2) the cultivation of moral qualities, (3) the significance of knowledge accumulation, (4) the maintenance of a hierarchical but harmonious relationship between teacher and student and finally, (5) perseverance of students in learning. In order to ensure effective instruction, repetitive rote-learning and memorization are always employed in language teaching.

In contrast, Western education emphasizes the development of personality, or the inner self, which is considered individualistic, self-motivated and non-utilitarian (Pritchard, 2004). Looking at educational schemata in Germany, one finds a long, contrastive tradition oriented towards the development of students' self-reflexivity. It focuses on *Bildung*, which in the words of Wolfgang Klafki, is "cultivating learners' capacity for reasonable self-determination" (Klafki & MacPherson, 2000; Westbury, Hopmann, & Riquarts, 2012). *Bildung* attaches great value to the formation of mind, the cultivation of liberty and human dignity and the development of learners' individuality, which is very different from those in Chinese educational thoughts (Humboldt, 1836; Westbury et al., 2012). *Bildung*-centered *Didaktik* also is called the German *Didaktik* tradition, is the main one has had an enduring impact on classroom practice and teacher education in Germany, and in other parts of Continental Europe (Gundem, 2000). The learner's autonomy is highly respected and ensured by the teacher's mediation. The current German education, as in many other Western countries, emphasizes students' knowledge-construction on the basis of individual development. There are obvious differences in the educational cultures between China and Germany; they can provide a general framework to analyze the CFL teachers' possible developmental challenges with local pedagogical requirements. In this study, I have applied a new theoretical

framework, namely CFL teachers "developmental tasks" to examine the influence of their professional biographies on their CFL teaching and to address their management of various challenges.

4 The Developmental Task and Teachers' Developmental Tasks

The concept of developmental tasks refers back to Robert J. Havighurst (1948, 1972) who proposed to use the concepts to understand the learners' individual interpretation with respect to social requirements. Thus, he defined that a developmental task is midway between an individual need and a societal demand. It assumes that an active person interacts with an active social environment (Havighurst, 1972).

There are a series professional tasks regarding social context that interact with teachers' individual biographies and subjective expectation. Successful management of these developmental tasks in their practices is able to help them to develop their professional competence then dynamically construct their professional identity. An investigation of teachers' working with their professional tasks perhaps can be used for examining teachers' professional competence and professionalization (Kunze & Herieks, 2002; Hericks, 2007). Uwe Hericks applied Havigurst's all-encompassing concepts to teacher education and generalized the four categories of developmental tasks concerning the professionalization of pre-service teachers and beginning teachers in Germany. The four professional tasks are: (1) competence development, in particular in the subjects the teachers teach or want to teach, (2) transfer of the acquired knowledge, i.e. the teachers' use of their didactical competence, (3) willingness and capacity to acknowledge the "otherness" of the students, and (4) development of interactional competence with respect to colleagues, principals etc. (Hericks, 2007).

5 The Study and Research Questions

In my research, I therefore examine the influence of the Chinese teachers' previous educational background to professional practice with a focus on their professional challenges regarding cultural differences. I transform the four categories of Hericks' developmental tasks into the interpretation of my CFL teachers' professional development. Working with western language pedagogy, there are also some objective professional requirements for them that ask

their improving to become professional, skilled teachers in Germany. Mean-time, the Chinese language teachers bring their own biographies and own professional expectation into acting with the objective societal requirements that can be used to identify their professional developmental tasks. Dealing with professional constraints closely relates to their new practice and continual professional development in the new environment. My study investigates their own professional competence of working with different challenges in Germany.

In general, my study aims to answer two principal questions:

- (1) What were the major challenges the Chinese teachers in my study had encountered with in their language teaching in German classrooms?
- (2) How can one identify Chinese teachers' professional competence within a framework of professional developmental tasks?

The framework of the developmental tasks is applied to reconstruct developmental courses meant to foster the CFL teachers' competence for constructing their professional beliefs. Let me add two points here. (1) Parallel to the use of the concept for positive development, it also can be used to identify the teachers' loss of professionalism in longitudinal perspective (Keller-Schneider & Hericks, 2011). (2) Successful dealing with these developmental tasks is able to improve their professional competence and help them to stabilize their professional identity.

6 Research Methodology

In this study, I investigated the professional development of the CFL teachers through case studies, concerning their professional challenges and specific ways in which they dealt with the challenges (i.e. developmental tasks). The case studies approach can be employed to investigate and report on the complex dynamics individual biographical development, educational context, individual professional competence and other factors concerning the CFL teachers' professional development. The data reported in this study was collected by means of an open-ended questionnaire and in-depth interviews. The questionnaire comprises various predetermined questions that I designed to collect data in association with my research questions.

In order to better interpret CFL teachers' professional practice; I have selected a number of Chinese teachers as participants in my case studies. Participants were six native speakers of CFL teachers, teaching Chinese in two schools in Hamburg, Germany. Their ages range from 22 to 50. Ms. J, Ms. B

and Ms. W teach at a new private school inducing an elementary school and a Gymnasium. The other three teachers, namely Ms. T, Ms. C and Ms. L teach at another Gymnasium in Hamburg. The two schools have been chosen for convenience. On the one hand, the two famous Hamburg schools have been offering Chinese language teaching for many years. On the other hand, since I am personally acquainted with these Chinese teachers, it was comparatively easy to carry out the interviews. All the CFL teachers' names of my case studies are anonymous. All six CFL teachers are female, but the sampling is not purposely selective. It merely reflects that female CFL teachers predominate in German schools. A first rough identification of the individual background of the six Chinese teachers can be found in Table 1.

TABLE 1 Teacher Backgrounds

Teachers	Age	Working experience	Tertiary education received in	Workplace	Teaching context
Ms. J	48	Musical teacher for 15 years in Taiwan, China	Taiwan and get her PhD degree in Germany	Private Comprehensive school	Primary and Secondary
Ms. B	47	Computer teacher for 7 years in China	China	Private Comprehensive school	Primary and Secondary
Ms. W	40	Sports and Mathematics teacher for 8 year in China	China	Private Comprehensive school	Primary and Secondary
Ms. T	28	Chinese language teacher for 3 years in China	China	Gymnasium	Secondary
Ms. C	32	Chinese language teacher for 3 years in Germany	Germany	Gymnasium	Secondary
Ms. L	40	Chinese language teacher for 4 years in Germany	Germany	Gymnasium	Secondary

7 Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected and analyzed through open-ended questionnaire, in-depth teachers interviews (see Appendix 1 for interview questions), classroom observations in order to triangulate insights into teachers' attitudes and beliefs. In my study, I conducted two rounds of open-ended questionnaire and in-depth teachers' interviews with the teachers on their individual biographies and professional development. Classroom observations were video-recorded and carried out with six teachers, ranging from 5–9 hours each. In addition, writing field notes was used to describe some specific classroom situations taking place at that moment, to show momentary student-teacher interaction and to record their reflection in classroom and at interviews. These were transcribed and used to integrate into their interviews with respect to their professional perceptions. I will further explain them as follows:

All the CFL teacher participants are asked to complete an open-ended questionnaire so that they can introduce their previous experiences and better express their individual professional attitudes. At the beginning of the questionnaire, the teachers were required to provide the basic facts about themselves, i.e. ages, their individual educational backgrounds, teaching experience and their present situation of language teaching. The second part, the teachers were asked to answer three specific open-ended questions regarding their perceptions of CFL teaching in Germany. The questions were selected to explore their professional challenges, intercultural tensions between Western and Chinese education, their present teaching at schools. The data can help me to collect basic background on my participants for the subsequent in-depth interviews. The transcripts of the CFL teachers' interviews were analyzed and categorized in accordance to the four categories of developmental tasks. In order to better describe the teachers' mentioned professional challenges and difficulties, I use Table 2 to show the emergent themes and the incidence of those themes in teachers' interviews. The analysis of these code themes is able to help me to know these teachers' professional perceptions on language learning and their developmental problems. Even though the sample is small, the Table 2 also can show some similar developmental problems in the CFL teachers' professional experience.

In order to show the actual lived experience with respect to Chinese teaching and learning, I also did a larger number of classroom observations and wrote field notes. On the basis of open-ended questionnaire and classroom observation, I afterwards conducted in-depth teachers' interviews to study their professional challenges, their professional competence to deal with these challenges and tried to identify improvement that they had made in

TABLE 2 Numbers of the Chinese language teachers who mentioned coded theme within the framework of their developmental tasks

Core category (code themes)	Subcategory	Chinese teachers (n=6)	Percent (%)
Competence	lacking limited instructional competence	4	67
	teacher-dominated instruction	2	33
	asking students' acquisition of substantial knowledge	5	83
	teachers' responsibility for students' learning	5	83
	focusing students' motivation and individual engagement	4	67
	traditional the intensive repetition of words and memorization	2	33
	flash-card learning	6	100
Mediation	focusing on students' interests and their happiness	2	33
	using communicative language approaches	4	67
	integrating traditional Chinese culture	5	83
	complying to strict classroom discipline	3	50
	asking students' good learning habits	6	100
	students' hard-working	3	50
	allowing free expression and irrelevant questions	2	33
Acceptance	abandoning the stereotyped image of the "good student"	2	33
	accepting students' individuality	6	100
	limited collaboration within teachers' community	3	50
	not effective in dealing with instructional problems	6	100
	few opportunities to participate teacher training	3	50
	learning from German teachers of other subjects		

their professional development. I tried to focus on how their biographical experience influenced their professional beliefs and instructional behavior in class and investigate their professional management to different developmental tasks, involving different perspectives i.e. competence, mediation, acknowledgment and institution. In the analysis, several developmental tasks of the teachers are categorized that need some specific explanation. The development task of teachers' professional competence refers to have specific knowledge of the subject matter and various instructional ways to representing and formulating the subject matter. The developmental tasks also ask them to have intercultural communicative competence, adequate intercultural attitudes and cultural awareness of the intercultural setting. The developmental task relates to the CFL teachers' ability to transfer/mediate acquired knowledge and competences and to impart them to others. It means that teachers are able to manage the transmission and transformation of knowledge, ability and attitudes to students through various teaching strategies to students. The task of acknowledgment refers to the development of the teachers' ability to accept/acknowledge the students' 'otherness' (Hericks, 2007; M. Meyer, 2010). The developmental task of acting in an institution refers to the teachers' professional competence to recognize their own actions as being embedded in institutional structures and do actions with respect to colleagues, principals etc.

As described in the in-depth teachers' interviews, they were asked to be as specific and explicit as possible in their answers and their explanations. With the help of the four categories of developmental tasks, I could therefore focus on teachers' behavior, teaching methods, their professional orientation and student reaction. In particular, different kinds of classroom materials, such as handouts, quizzes, classroom exercises, etc. were collected and fed into my subsequent analysis. In-depth teachers' interviews were conducted to validate the researcher's understanding obtained from observations and to generate some data in areas that were not observable (Cohen, Manion, Morrison & Bell, 2011). The in-depth interviews lasted about 30 to 40 minutes and were audio recorded and transcribed. All the interviews were conducted in Chinese as a convenience for these Chinese language teachers. The interview transcripts were read and interpreted for emergent themes, and these themes were coded and the incidence of those themes noted and analyzed (Ryan & Bernard, 2000).

8 Research Findings

My study could show that the CFL teachers' professional beliefs may come into conflict with demands and expectations of the local pedagogies.

They still stick to their professional beliefs and perceptions constructed in their previous educational biographies which lead to a number of developmental barriers producing constraints in the intercultural context. They have to realize then try to deal with their developmental barriers regarding the following four developmental tasks concepts as already introduced above: (a) Competence: teacher-centered didactics versus student-centered didactics, (b) Mediation: traditional Chinese language approaches versus intercultural communicative didactics (c) Acknowledgment: strict classroom discipline versus acknowledgement of the "otherness" of the students, (d) Institution: insufficient professional training and inefficient collegial cooperation. I will further explicate the CFL teachers' developmental barriers and conflicts.

8.1 *Teacher-Centered Didactics Versus Student-Centered Didactics*

Contrasting the German didactics which focus on individual self-identity development and self-determination, professional beliefs of Chinese teachers are under the influence of the traditional Confucian educational framework as assumed above, constructing hierarchical relationship between teachers and students. Many CFL teachers attached great value to teacher-centered didactics on the one hand and on the students' learning acquisition to acquire substantial language content knowledge on the other. For this reason, teaching methods are largely expository and the teaching process is teacher-dominated, I take Ms. J as an example. She indicated in her interview:

[...] Teacher-centered instruction is quite effective for language teaching within limited time. At present, they (the students) do not have too much time to learn Chinese, thus I think teacher-centered didactics is very useful and effective. [...] I feel very upset if they do not learn something in my class. (Ms. J, 24 August, 2014).

Parallel statements can be found for the other three Chinese teachers. Of course, they have realized that the German students are different from the Chinese students. The German students have been cultivated to be active, questioning, self-directed, creative, and innovative in Western educational framework. However, the teachers of my case studies retained and activated professional beliefs on teacher-centeredness, thus allowing the students to reflect Chinese traditional values and norms (Rao, Ng, & Pearson, 2010). Parallel to that, some of the CFL teachers expressed their frustration and self-critique when they failed to achieve substantial content knowledge of their students (Niu, 2007). As Ms. T assumed that:

In fact, German students are used to learning knowledge by their interests and motivation. I want my students to have fun, passion, motivation for learning. However, if the teacher only teaches by the students' interests, afterwards the students will continue to play games, talk with each other and learn very little in class. (Ms. T, 24 October 2014).

Even though Ms. T realized the significance of the students' interests and their engagement for language learning, her attitudes still showed the impact of traditional teacher-centered didactics. And what holds for Ms. T also holds for the majority of my other teachers.

Most of the CFL teachers have identified their professional difficulty finding a balance between motivating students and ensuring learning achievements; having fun and learning with hard work; students' orientation and teachers' orientation; teachers' authority and students' individual emancipation. In order to achieve success via mutual interaction, the teachers should focus on the sense constructions of the students. They should attempt to find effective instructional situations in which the students can become responsible for the teaching-learning process; and this not only with respect to the students' own learning, but also with respect to the cooperative negotiation with their teachers.

8.2 *Traditional Chinese Language Approaches Versus Intercultural Communicative Didactics*

As I have already indicated above, studies have shown that the Chinese teachers' education in China is dominated by a traditional pedagogical approach (Scollon & Hinkel, 1999; Hu, 2002; Hui, 2005). Traditional language approaches to learning Chinese emphasize the importance of knowledge and skills by memorization and repetition. I can support this analysis. I have found in my case studies, traditional language approaches also greatly influence their teaching methods and instructional behavior. It has been observed that their language mediation focused on the students' memorization, repetition and linguistic accuracy, requiring them to know and memorize a large number of ideographic Chinese characters. But the Chinese language teachers also have realized the importance of motivating students' learning enthusiasm by means of intercultural communicative approaches. They had encountered the challenge that how to choose suitable language approaches in their teaching.

In my study, it is interesting to know all the six teachers like using flashcards for vocabulary learning and asked the student to read and do oral repetition. In class, they also showed colorful flashcards including pinyin (拼音, the official Romanization system for standard Chinese pronunciation) of the Chinese

characters and the pictures of meaningful situations at the same time, as a help for their students. As Ms. J noted in her interview:

I like using flashcards in class [...], because I think intensive repetition is able to help the students quickly and effectively memorize many words. [...] Only they keep following my methods, and then they can learn something quickly. [...] (Ms. J, 11 May 2014).

Intensive repetition of words is another common feature. My observation has shown that the teachers regularly asked the students to repeat the Chinese words in correct pronunciation. Particularly, they emphasized the wholeness of grammar system and accuracy of Chinese pronunciations.

However, my Chinese teachers widely accepted that the introduction of cultural content into language pedagogy is essential for the students' acquisition of intercultural competence. They attached great importance to mediation of the Chinese culture, for example, by offering an introduction to Chinese festivals, specific food, social habits and related social rituals. Some CFL teachers always emphasized combining cultural knowledge with language knowledge, for example, watching Chinese animated films, celebrating Chinese traditional festivals, explaining different ritual customs, singing traditional Chinese songs, and so on.

Foreign language teaching in the Western contexts demands cultivating students to become cultural "mediators" and to develop their intercultural communicative competence. However, there are recent studies with an interesting result. Although CFL teachers have a meta-awareness concerning the intercultural instructional language pedagogy, their teaching methods remain within the traditional Chinese framework. They tried to employ various language approaches centered on culture and on cultivating students' communicative competence, but their teaching methods still reflected the traditional instructional approaches focusing students' memorization, repetition and linguistic accuracy, etc. In order to help the teachers improve their professional competence, they have to learn to deal with their professional developmental tasks of language mediation, how to successfully integrate traditional language approaches regarding students' acquisition of language content knowledge into the students' individual construction of language competence.

8.3 *Strict Classroom Discipline Versus Acknowledgement of the "otherness" of the Students*

Confucian philosophy emphasizes the absolute authority of the teacher; while the students have to comply with the classroom principles. In contrast,

Bildung is understood as the students' subjective formation in a potential structure that requires teachers to accept their uncertain situation and individual developmental requirement. That is why the CFL teachers in my study met different challenges with respect to German students' disruptive behavior, such as "frequently challenging teachers' authority", "talking when the teacher and other students are talking", "asking irrelevant questions as they wish", "even freely leaving their seats to go to the toilet", and "eating food without the teacher's permission", etc. The CFL Chinese teachers always set up a series of strict measures of class discipline to produce and keep a quiet instructional situation, as Ms. B asserted concerning her instruction:

[...] I warn some students that those who break the rules of my classroom instruction would get some extra homework as punishment after class. In my class, if the names of undisciplined students are written down three times on the blackboard, these students must accept some punishment [...]. (Ms. B, 24 October 2014).

She also showed that if the class was without strict instructional rules and discipline, the students at this age would not easily follow her instruction. My observations showed that the Chinese classroom of Ms. B was as a rule well organized in comparison to other classes at her school. Looking at my cases of Ms. J and Ms. W, they showed that once the students began to loudly talk and chat with their neighbors, producing a big noise, both of the two teachers reminded them to be disciplined. When the teachers gave them some warning, this was effective and then the class became much more disciplined. Ms. J also expressed her opinion that she felt responsible for the students' responsibility for disciplined learning:

I feel very upset if I find that they are always talking or extremely active, do not do their work and do not hear my words. For me, in this situation, they learn nothing [...] (Ms. J, 5 November 2014).

It is interesting to find that all Chinese teachers in my study showed their self-criticism if they could not produce a good organized instructional situation. Their professional beliefs clearly showed that a teaching situation with mutual recognized discipline is a precondition for effective instruction. Students should completely obey established principles and the rules of the instructional community. In contrast, German education has been highlighting students' subjective knowledge construction and individual emancipation. German students are used to learning language by their own interests and are given a large amount of time for language communication. As Ms. L noted that,

They like talking and they are 'obedient' students in terms of our traditional understanding. So I always give them some free space. They have interest to learn Chinese, it is much more important. (Ms. L, 10 April 2015).

In my study, the teachers' reflections, as reproduced above, allow reconstructing their professional beliefs and their perceptions of the developmental task for acknowledgment, i.e. accepting the students' otherness. This allows once more an advice for teacher education. Instead of sticking to the traditional stereotyped image of the good, obedient, silent student, the Chinese teachers have to attach much more significance to each student's individuality. Even though it is impossible to banish the influence of traditional Chinese ideologies in the CFL teachers' professional perception, they have to develop their professional competence to accept the uncertainty of each learner. The teachers would have to respond to each student's individual development as it differs from their original teaching purposes and expectations.

8.4 *Insufficient Training and Inefficient Collegial Collaboration*

My case studies show that the Chinese Language teachers strongly emphasize the need for professional training and collegial collaboration in order to develop their professional competence. There are already conferences and training programs in the field of Chinese teaching held periodically by different organizations, such as the Foreign Language Teachers' Association (FLTA), the Hanban, the Office of Educational Affairs of the Chinese Embassy in Germany etc., however, these academic activities are hard for CFL teachers to access. Ms. C indicated that:

There are some academic conferences and programs that are able to improve my teaching. I struggled to find an appropriate instructional strategy. But, I do not even know related information about professional training. (Ms. C, 20 June 2014).

Furthermore, there is only very limited time for collegial discussion on concrete instructional practices and strategies. In addition, there are only few local conferences and workshops and the teachers show only restricted willingness to spend extra time travelling for training. As Ms. J said:

Attending a conference or taking part in workshops enhances my professional competences; I would like to attend more related training programs. But indeed, there are only few related conferences and training programs here. I had to work at school; I do not have enough time for traveling.[...] (Ms. J, 10 November 2014).

Other Chinese teachers in my study also emphasized the importance of collegial collaboration and interactive communication. But some teachers reported that regular collegial collaboration at their schools was not effective. Ms. W noted that:

Each one has a different instructional situation and problems. Collegial communication within our community is therefore not able to solve each teacher's problem. (Ms. W, 11 May 2014).

Ms. W wanted to show that, Chinese language teachers teach different students of different grades who have different instructional situations and problems within the student-teacher interaction. My interviews further show that, even though there are regular teachers' meetings at school, some Chinese teachers are not able to get valuable contributions from teachers of other subjects at school, due to different professional beliefs and perceptions existing between the Chinese teachers and their German colleagues.

9 Conclusion and Discussion

Chinese language teachers in Europe and particularly in Germany are confronted with an instructional situation very different from what they have experienced in China. I have studied their teaching experience of the six CFL teachers concerning different professional developmental tasks and I have shown their challenges regarding the intercultural tensions. Through analyzing case studies, I have explored what kinds of challenges and problems they are confronted with and try to identify their professional developmental tasks concerning their professional competence of dealing with these tasks. I have shown that these CFL teachers' professional beliefs and attitudes retain stronger alignment to traditional Chinese educational schemata, thus leading a number of barriers producing developmental tasks for teachers' professional development. (1) Firstly, my study shows that their professional perceptions have a conflict between teacher-centered didactics and student-centered didactics. A mismatch between teaching and learning style is another problem that constrains teachers' teaching and students' effective learning. The CFL teachers highlighted the importance of students' content knowledge learning, additionally their teaching focused on drilling, grammar and syntax, translation, exercises and the students' language accuracy. (2) Secondly, one can identify another significant challenge that the Chinese teachers had encountered of dealing with the tensions of traditional Chinese approaches and constructive language approaches. (3) Thirdly, the traditional

hierarchical relation of students and teachers comes into a conflict with emancipation-oriented Western schema. (4) Nevertheless, the lack of sufficient professional training and collegial collaboration makes these CFL teachers incompetent.

Next, my interpretation can also show that the teachers' difficulties in finding the balance between their previous biographies and new pedagogical requirements. Their professional challenges also can show that there were a number of developmental barriers producing some constraints in their professional transformation. By using the framework of professional developmental tasks, my study has been able to describe the teachers' professional development concerning the four categories of developmental tasks: competence, mediation, acknowledgment and institution. The teachers bring their professional biographical experience into the interpretation of local contextual educational demands, which could construct different tasks for their own professional development. But they have to realize that their teaching should try to deal with their developmental barriers and difficulties, then their professional competence will be developed and improved. Their management of the different professional requirements also can demonstrate their individual professional competence.

Finally, the findings in my study have certain implications for CFL teachers, teacher educators and Chinese teachers planning to work overseas. Most of CFL teachers as native speakers are new groups with different individual backgrounds, biographical experience, professional competence; they have to realize that their teaching will have various problems. Only successful dealing with these problems is able to help them to adjust to new educational context and to develop their language pedagogy. As for those who are in training CFL teachers to work overseas, teacher educators can focus on these intercultural conflicts in the construction of teachers' professional beliefs in local educational environment, and then design professional training courses to develop their professional competence. For those native Chinese speakers who are planning to teach Chinese in Germany, they should realize they could meet similar challenges as the CFL teachers in my cases. They should transform their own previous beliefs and cope with their unexpected developmental tasks in order to develop own professional competence.

However, the study has several limitations. Through a cross-case analysis of their professional beliefs and instructional practices, my intercultural study maps different challenges of the six CFL teachers' professional competence. The interpretation and do not necessarily apply to all the CFL teachers in Germany and should not be taken as stereotype. My research study in Hamburg as a case study was limited in its scope and sample. Secondly, other potential influences with other significant impacts on their professional

development that have not been discussed. I therefore have to ask whether my theoretical framework can support other cases and other educational contexts. Despite these limitations, my study is a new attempt to combine the categories of developmental tasks with CFL teachers' professional development, which tries to provide a new perspective to study their individual developmental process. By this their identities maybe fragmented at different times and gradually construct their own individual need to be dealt with in CFL teachers' professional development. The future professional training of these teachers needs to be grounded in more empirical research in other European countries thereby allowing other educational researchers to identify intercultural conflicts and challenges in teachers' professional development.

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Appendix 1: Open-Ended Questionnaire

Please tell me a little about yourself and briefly introduce your biography from when you graduated from the Gymnasium until now. Can you briefly introduce your individual way of teaching Chinese? What do you think is good instruction in teaching Chinese as a foreign language?

Appendix 2: Semi-Structured Interview Guideline

1. Did you encounter challenges in your professional experience when you began to work as a Chinese language teacher in Germany? If yes, can you briefly introduce what kinds of challenges you were faced with?

2. What were your major challenges concerning your present professional practice? Please be as specific and detailed as possible. How do you want to deal with these difficulties and problems?
3. Can you briefly describe a perfect Chinese class as you see it?
4. Were there any specific experiences which helped you to successfully work through the challenges you encountered while teaching Chinese to German learners in Germany? Can you explain it much more clearly?
5. What do you think are the major challenges or problems that you encounter with respect to collegial collaboration?
6. What do you think of the standards of required to be a professional teacher? For yourself, which aspects do you think need to be improved and developed in the near future?
7. Do you have further suggestions and working experience that you would like to share with other Chinese teachers in Germany?