

**“The students have been spoiled previously”**

**A Case Study on the Professionalization of Chinese Language Teachers in Hamburg**

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# **Certification**

I, Ping Ren, declare that this dissertation, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education, University of Hamburg, is wholly my original work unless other referenced or acknowledged. The work has not been submitted for qualification at any other university or academic institution.

Hamburg, 12 Oct. 2016

Signature:

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## Abstract:

At present, the professionalization of Chinese teachers of Chinese as a foreign language in Germany and in all of Europe is confronted with various complex educational challenges and problems. At the same time there is a steady increase of students learning the Chinese language at schools in Germany, and the number of Chinese language teachers has also been on a steady rise. But an urgent problem is lack of local Chinese language teachers who have professional instructional competence and are familiar with German educational schemata.

It can be seen that traditional Chinese educational schemata and cultural values have great impact on these teachers' professional beliefs and their professional behavior. Because of this, the educational situation these teachers are confronted with in Germany has created challenges and problems for their professional development. They should therefore become more competent to deal with intercultural conflicts and tensions in class.

In order to describe the Chinese teachers' professional development in the German educational environment, I have selected three Chinese language teachers at two Hamburg schools for case studies to depict the adaptations, transitions and transformations of their professional experience. Focusing on the influence of different educational schemata on these teachers' professional development, I chose two English language teachers at two schools in Wuhan, China, as a comparative group.

By describing the teachers' professional biographies and their management of various challenges in my case studies, I can investigate the relation of their prior biographies and their new professional practice concerning the intercultural contextual influences.

In particular, my study applies the framework of *Bildungsgang* research (research on learner development and educational experience) on Chinese language teaching, and this allows me to develop a new perspective for the study of these Chinese teachers' professional development. I focus on the teachers' *self-regulated development* and their *sense constructions* on the one hand and their *professional developmental tasks* as they can be related to their educational experience on the other hand. Generally speaking, my

case studies may help to shed light on understanding the individual difficulties and challenges that Chinese teachers are faced with in their overseas teaching environments. The study's findings and recommendations therefore are of significance for the future design of teacher training for Chinese language teachers in Germany and in other European countries.

## Deutsches Abstract:

Gegenwärtig steht die Professionalisierung chinesischer Lehrer des Chinesischen als Fremdsprache in Deutschland und insgesamt in Europa vor einer Reihe von unterschiedlichen und komplexen erzieherischen Herausforderungen und Problemen. Die Zahl der Schüler, die an deutschen Schulen die chinesische Sprache lernen, wächst beständig an, und die Zahl der Lehrer der chinesischen Sprache hat sich gleichfalls beständig nach oben entwickelt. Das gegenwärtig dringlichste Problem ist aber der Mangel an chinesischen Sprachenlehrern, die über professionelle Unterrichtskompetenz verfügen und die sich in der deutschen Schulsituation auskennen. Sie sollten kompetent werden, mit interkulturellen Konflikten und Spannungen in der Klasse umzugehen. Dabei lässt sich feststellen, dass die traditionellen Erziehungsmodelle und die kulturellen Werte großen Einfluss auf die professionellen Werte dieser Lehrer und auf ihr professionelles Verhalten haben. Deshalb hat die Erziehungslage, mit der sie in Deutschland konfrontiert werden, eine Reihe von Herausforderungen und Probleme für ihre professionelle Entwicklung mit sich gebracht.

Um die professionelle Entwicklung der chinesischen Lehrer in ihrem deutschen Erziehungsumfeld zu beschreiben, habe ich in meiner qualitativen empirischen Studie drei chinesische Sprachenlehrerinnen an zwei Hamburger Schulen für Fallstudien ausgewählt. Ich beschreibe die Anpassungen, Übergänge und Transformationen, die sie aufgrund ihrer professionellen Erfahrungen vornehmen.

Mit Fokus auf den Einfluss der verschiedenen Erziehungssysteme auf die professionelle Entwicklung dieser Lehrer habe ich zwei Lehrerinnen der englischen Sprache an zwei Schulen in Wuhan, China, als Vergleichsgruppe hinzugenommen. Indem ich in meinen Fallstudien die professionellen Biographien der Lehrerinnen aus Hamburg und Wuhan und die Art und Weise beschreibe, wie sie mit einer Reihe von Herausforderungen umgehen, kann ich den Zusammenhang ihrer früheren Biographien und ihrer neuen beruflichen Praxis im Hinblick auf die interkulturellen kontextuellen Einflüsse beschreiben.



Insbesondere beziehe ich in meiner Studie das Rahmenkonzept der ‚Bildungsgangforschung‘ (zu definieren als Forschung zu Lernerentwicklung und Erziehungserfahrung) auf das Erlernen und das Lehren des Chinesischen, was mir erlaubt, eine neue Perspektive für das Studium der professionellen Entwicklung meiner chinesischen Lehrer zu entwickeln. Dabei konzentriere ich mich auf die selbst-regulierte Entwicklung und auf die Sinnkonstruktionen dieser Lehrpersonen auf der einen Seite und auf ihre professionellen Entwicklungsaufgaben auf der anderen Seite, die auf ihre individuelle Erfahrung bezogen werden können. Allgemein formuliert sollte sich meine Fallstudie dafür eignen, Licht auf die individuellen Schwierigkeiten und Herausforderungen zu werfen, mit denen die chinesischen Lehrer in ihren überseeischen Lehrumwelten konfrontiert werden. Die Erkenntnisse und Empfehlungen der Studie sind deshalb von Bedeutung für die zukünftige Konzipierung der Lehrerausbildung für chinesische Sprachenlehrer in Deutschland und in anderen europäischen Ländern.



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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Personal background to this study

From my point of view, it makes sense to start the introduction by referring to my own biographical educational experience. I began to work as a Chinese language teacher for foreigners in the Intercultural Communication College (ICC) when I was a postgraduate student in Wuhan, Central China Normal University (CCNU). In the year 2013, I was lucky to be accepted as a volunteer teacher by Hanban (Confucius Institute Headquarters, ‘汉办’)<sup>1</sup>, and sent to work as a Chinese language teacher at Hamburg University. Even though I had worked for two years as a Chinese language teacher for foreign students in China, which already had made me gain some working experience and professional competence in respect to Chinese language teaching, I realized that the actual situation of Chinese instruction at elementary school, *gymnasium* and university in Germany is quite different from what I myself have experienced in China. Confronted with the distinctive pedagogical setting, I was confused as to how to adjust to the new educational atmosphere of Chinese language teaching in Germany, how to realize the individual transformation of professional perceptions in correspondence to the intercultural setting and how to implement my previous professional teaching experience into the real instructional practice. Because of this, I want to identify and study what the challenges are that other Chinese language teachers face in German schools, and their professional development.

In this thesis, I will present my initial research hypothesis on Chinese language teachers, and analyze a series of interviews with Chinese teachers of Chinese and of English as foreign languages and make classroom observations at German and Chinese schools. I thus want to describe these teachers’ individual professional development as

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<sup>1</sup> Hanban is the colloquial abbreviation for the Chinese National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language, a non-government and non-profit organization affiliated to the Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China.

they are confronted with intercultural challenges and conflicts. In addition, I want to identify developmental problems of these teachers in their intercultural professional experience and how they deal with them in relation to their instructional behavior. The result then will be shown on the basis of a series of case studies with some kind of generalizability.

I am familiar with most of the Chinese language teachers of my case studies. In addition, some of them are my private friends. They thus like to share their own reflections and their biographical experience with me, and this is helpful for identifying my research questions and perspectives on their professional development.

At the same time, I am a researcher who has worked as a Chinese teacher in different schools in Germany, which means that I experienced some similar problems and I underwent self-transformation similar to those made by my teachers in this study. For my research on Chinese language teaching in Germany, I have accumulated a large amount of teaching experience.

Subsequently, I was offered the opportunity to profit from the program of the Hamburg University Ph.D. Graduate School on Learner Development and Educational Experience (*Bildungsgangforschung*), which was funded by the German Research Association from 2003 to 2008. My doctoral supervisor Meinert A. Meyer was the speaker at the Graduate School, and he has been supervising my doctoral research program with his professional theories and his experience. Today, Meinert Meyer and his colleagues offer a colloquium on ‘Bildungsgangforschung’ twice a year that gives access to a large amount of empirical research thoughts and perspectives in terms of different professional subjects and fields.

There are fruitful research results (see the series ‘Studien zur Bildungsgangforschung’) made from the perspective of learner development and educational experience; however, there has been limited attention to Chinese language teachers’ professionalization. Therefore, my research examines Chinese teachers’ professional practice and competences within the frame of ‘Bildungsgangforschung’ and with focus on the transformation of their professional attitudes and beliefs in the new educational context.

## 1.2 The significance of this study

### 1.2.1 Chinese language teaching in Germany

According to incomplete statistics for the year 2013 from the Chinese Embassy in Berlin, there are at present more than 40 German universities which offer a major in Sinology, 14 Confucius Institutes run in Chinese-German cooperation and 92 adult community universities (*Volkshochschulen*) with Chinese courses. In particular, there are more than 300 elementary schools, comprehensive schools and *gymnasiums* that offer Chinese language courses. The number of students learning the Chinese language at school has risen to more than 15000 (Education Section of the Chinese Embassy in Germany, 2013). In addition, more than 60 comprehensive schools and *gymnasiums* have already settled a course sequence of Chinese as an important language subject for the ‘Abitur’ (*University Entrance Examination*). Parallel to this development the number of students learning Chinese at universities has risen to more than 4000 (Hanban., 2015). One can take Hamburg as an example: there are two *gymnasium* schools (from Grade 6) and a primary school plus *gymnasium* (from Grade 1) that offer Chinese language courses as second foreign language and another two *gymnasium* schools that offer Chinese as the third foreign language; in addition to that some other *gymnasiums* offer Chinese language courses as “hobby classes” (Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung, [*English: Administration of School and Vocational Education*, Hamburg, 2015]). There can be no doubt that in Germany learning Chinese has become much more popular than it had been in the 1980s and 1990s, therefore China plays an increasingly significant role in the educational city of Hamburg (Nehmzow, 2007).

One of the most significant changes in language learning and teaching over the past few decades has been the recognition of the cultural dimension of language learning as a key component. The objective of foreign language learning is no longer defined as acquisition of communicative competence in a foreign language but as a person’s individual ability to act in a foreign language in linguistically, social-linguistically and

pragmatically appropriate ways (Council of Europe, 2001, p.1-3). In this thesis, I follow Meinert Meyer who defined intercultural competence as “the ability of a person to behave adequately in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures” (M. Meyer, 1991, p. 138).

### **1.2.2 The urgent problem of Chinese language teachers’ professional development**

The most important authority for the organization of Chinese teaching in Germany is the Association of Chinese Language Teaching (*Fachverband Chinesisch e.V.*). It assumes that the urgent problem today is a lack of professional Chinese language teachers. In addition, a second problem is a short supply of suitable teaching material for the different competence levels of the German learners parallel to the stages of the German school system (Guder, 2011a, p.195).

With regard to the actual situation of Chinese language teaching in Germany, one has to realize that although China has sent a large number of professional Chinese teachers to Germany; it is too limited to satisfy the abundant demand of the German schools. Most of the Chinese teachers work in special areas, such as Sinology faculties, Confucius institutes at universities and some German *gymnasiums*. In addition, these short-term visiting teachers sponsored by the Chinese government or by the German State Ministries of Culture, do not have a high level of German language competence, or they are not familiar with German school settings and not able to deal with intercultural issues, etc. (Guder, 2011a, p. 196).

There is a more serious problem, however, namely the shortage of Chinese language teachers on a local basis. At present, a limited number of universities are able to offer the degree of Master of Education in Chinese language teaching (*Lehramt*), namely Göttingen University, Ruhr-University Bochum and Tübingen University offering tertiary education for the *Lehramt* with Chinese language teaching (*Fachverband*

*Chinesisch e.V.*, 2015). Most of Chinese language teachers at elementary schools, comprehensive schools and *gymnasiums* therefore work as contractual teachers without a permanent position. This situation greatly constrains the development of Chinese language teaching at German schools. As a result, most of the German schools have begun to employ Chinese overseas students and other Chinese persons, for example, they hire Chinese persons as Chinese language teachers who have lived in Germany for several years. Even though these teachers did not study teaching Chinese as a foreign language when they lived in China, they have high German language competence and they are familiar with the intercultural situation in Germany. However, they are not properly trained in *teaching Chinese as a foreign language*, since they did not receive professional teacher training at university and they lack professional practice at school. In general, one has to accept that at present their professional competence has to improve.

Secondly, there are a large number of Chinese teachers who have been working as teachers in China and now are working at schools in Germany. They have been educated in Chinese tertiary institutions, and their professional identity has been influenced by the traditional Chinese educational schemata. Their professional beliefs and attitudes concerning Chinese educational ideologies therefore directly affect their language approaches and professional behavior. At the same time, they are confronted with different tensions and conflicts in language mediation. The problems that arise concerning these Chinese language teachers' professional development relate to cultural differences in foreign language teaching. A professional teacher who is expected to mediate language and culture to learners should be able to support his learners' individual cultural constructions. In particular, the Chinese language teachers should help students thus to experience transformation processes and they should accept the need for self-reflection with respect to their prior professional experience and to their personal backgrounds. It is therefore widely accepted that these teachers' biographies play a significant role in their professional attitudes and beliefs.

I intend with my thesis to make an in-depth analysis of the Chinese teachers' biographical experience. For the realization of this objective, one has to accept that there are different categories that constitute Chinese language teachers as one can see in the following list: There are German Chinese language teachers, German Chinese Sinolo-

gists, Chinese people with German nationality, employed Chinese teachers for cultural cooperation and Chinese overseas students.

With the help of a questionnaire in search of the ideal Chinese teachers for different categories of German learners, most of German learners prefer to learn Chinese with a professional Chinese teacher of strong language competence and professional instructional skills (Xu, 2010, p. 34). Xu's study shows that the different categories of German learners, the German students at elementary schools (78.5%), gymnasiums (87.5%), universities (90.5%), they all think that professional Chinese teachers with strong German language competence are regarded to be the ideal Chinese language teachers. As professional teachers of Chinese with fluency in German, they have been long acquainted with the German language. Furthermore, they are familiar with German culture, in particular with the usual teaching methods in foreign language instruction. Thus, they are able to choose some effective and appropriate teaching methods for their German learners.

With the huge increase in the demand of Chinese language teachers in Germany, teachers' professional competence has become a crucial question for Chinese instruction. At present, in their professional practice, Chinese language teachers are confronted with various complex educational challenges and problems. The Chinese teachers are therefore asked to adapt their prior educational experience to the local pedagogical system, so that their professional competence improves and develops.

### **1.2.3 Globalization and the Chinese teachers' professional development**

The development of social globalization brings a number of changes and reforms in teaching and teacher education. In order to compete in a global arena, a nation needs its workforce to develop new ideas and to solve problems successfully, collaborate and communicate with other people effectively, and to adapt and function flexibly in different contexts and environments (Stromquist, 2002). The teacher students are therefore



asked to develop certain types of specialized knowledge, skills, and values for their future individual development. In the field of foreign language teaching, the teacher students are asked to be successful intercultural speakers and mediators with multilingual oral, reading, and communication competences, and willingness and ability to understand different cultures and to use such understanding to work with different individuals (Longview, 2008). In particular, the linguistic, the cultural, the literacy, and the occupation, the four dimensions of foreign language teaching and learning should be paid much more attention in the context of globalization (M. Meyer, 1999, p. 201).

At the same time, the development of globalization also influences the needs and problems of teaching and teacher education. The influence of globalization on teaching and teacher education is still emerging, and the data necessary for verifying assumptions concerning globalization in a particular country are often insufficient (Hiebert, 1999). The teachers' professional development therefore has to cope with different contextual requirements in relation to different social and political requirements. There are quite a few reforms of teaching and teacher education that try to standardize what students have to learn, how their learning is assessed, how teachers are held accountable for student performance, and how teachers need to be prepared for instruction (Wang, Lin, Spalding, 2011, p.116). However, these different reforms face new challenges that relate to the teachers' individual professional beliefs, attitudes, teaching norms, professional competence and external influence from local school system curriculum planning and other political and social contexts. Teaching Chinese as a foreign language in schools in Germany is therefore completely different from teaching English in China. In general, it is a difficult though necessary task to develop a thorough understanding of the influence of globalization as they pertain to teaching and teacher education in Germany.

#### **1.2.4 The intercultural dimension of Chinese teachers' professional development**

Foreign language teaching plays an important role in the development of the learner's identity and his/her world beliefs, rather than only focusing on the utility of language learning. It needs effective cross-cultural communication based on the acquisition of a key set of competences as suggested by Michael Byram's classic model of intercultural communicative competence. This model identifies five different factors: knowledge, attitudes and skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction and political skills including critical awareness (Byram, 1997, p. 42). What is more, teachers are expected not only to teach the foreign linguistic code but also to contextualize that code against the social-cultural background associated with the foreign language, and to promote the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence (Castro, Sercu and Garcia, 2004, p. 92). The teachers have to foster young people's self-regulation by themselves. Teaching for intercultural competence is a clear starting point to be focused on. And that is why I draw upon the transformation of the Chinese teachers' professional attitudes and beliefs in the intercultural context.

The intercultural dimension in language teaching aims to develop learners as intercultural speakers or mediators who are able to cope with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid the stereotypes, which accompany someone through his/her, single identity development (Byram, Grickova and Starkey, 2002, p. 9). Good teaching should help learners see the relationships between their own and other cultures; it should help them acquire interest and curiosity concerning the 'otherness' of people belonging to other cultures and develop an awareness of themselves and their own cultures seen from other peoples' perspectives. Thus, the professionalization of Chinese teachers not only needs a focus on how to develop students' linguistic language competence, but also a focus on students' understanding and accepting people from other cultures as individuals with other distinctive perspectives, values and behavior. In particular, it is crucial that the Chinese language teachers are able to realize various challenges with respect to the intercultural dimensions in foreign language teaching, develop their

professional biographies, construct their professional identity and avoid the stereotypes of traditional Chinese educational philosophies.

### **1.2.5 Literature reviews and a brief introduction to the research field**

As already stated above, Chinese language teaching is an emerging research area that has increasingly attracted more and more educational researchers to focus on its developmental situation and on different challenges.

Don Starr (2009) gives a general introduction to Chinese language education in Europe, focusing on the development of the Confucius Institutes in Europe. He mentioned that, in Germany, the number of pupils taking Chinese at different levels of secondary schools is currently around 5,000, which is double the 2000 figure but only a quarter of the French number, and this with a much larger population. Adding up to the curriculum issue, problems include finding qualified Chinese teachers and the provision of textbooks in German (Starr, 2009, p. 76).

In Germany, there is a considerable number of research results on Chinese language teaching, such as the research on constructing the European benchmarks for Chinese language teaching (Guder, 2015), students' reading competence and graphemic competence (Guder, 2014), language competence and intercultural competence (Jandok, 2007, Liang, 2005), cultural learning in teaching and learning (Vötter, 2007) and a summary of Chinese textbooks (Guder, 2012). Christina Neder (2009) has presented a general introduction of the present situation of Chinese instruction at primary and secondary schools in Germany. Some of these studies have their focus on the teachers' instructional strategies (Diao, 2013) and on their didactics (Blume, 2011), Chinese vocabulary, language evaluation standards and so on. Again, there are a large number of comparative studies by Chinese researchers on the professional development of these teachers and on their professional experience in the intercultural context (Cheng, Ren, Wang, 2003; Chiang, 2010; Orton, 2011; Gao, 2012). Among these studies, there are research reports on the so-called heritage languages and on the teachers' professional

beliefs and their professionalization from an intercultural perspective (Wu, Palmer, Field, 2011; Curdt-Christiansen, 2006). Some of these studies have their focus on teachers' methods and on their didactics (Milans, 2008).

Additionally, there are Chinese publications in China that are used to identify a holistic developmental situation of Chinese language teaching in Germany, including a general summary of Chinese teaching at primary and secondary schools in Germany (Xu, 2010; Zhu, 2012). Wenzhuo Shen (2013) made a study on the present state of Chinese teaching in high schools in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. In order to introduce the present situation of Chinese teaching in Germany to Chinese readers, I produced a general introduction to and a brief review on the developmental status of Chinese language teaching in Hamburg (Ren, 2012). Xiangping Li (2004) gave a general summary on the development of Chinese language teaching and sinology studies at German universities (Li, X. P., 2004, p. 159). While naturally there are quite a few Chinese publications on teaching Chinese as a foreign language, the number of German publications on Chinese as a foreign language in Germany is very limited (see Guder, 2011b). For example, I could not find information on this topic in '*Zeitschrift für Fremdsprachenforschung*'. However, there are some papers on intercultural competence and foreign language teaching in '*Zeitschrift für Fremdsprachenforschung*' (see for example, Knapp and Knapp-Potthoff, 1990; Edmondson and House, 1998; Bach and Wendt, 2008). There are only few publications on professionalization of teachers of English as a foreign language (Zydati, 1998; Dirks, 2003) and none of these deals with Chinese teachers of Chinese as a foreign language. But there is a paper on Japanese in German schools. All in all, there is no communication (with few exceptions) between educational professionalization research and foreign language didactics.<sup>2</sup> However, relatively limited attention has been paid to exploring transitions and transformations of Chinese teachers' professional beliefs and attitudes. That is why in this thesis I focus on educational professionalization research.

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<sup>2</sup> Take Raphaela Porsch as an example, she had a number of publications in *Zeitschrift für Fremdsprachenforschung* (2010, etc.), but in her edited publications in general didactics (2016) foreign language didactics has no room.

Most of the research presented now focuses on a general summary of and an introduction to the historical development of Chinese teaching in Germany, with different language standards and syllabuses in different federal states. However, there is only very limited research on Chinese language teachers' professional development in schools. My intercultural study based on different case studies is the first comprehensive study on Chinese teachers' professional development including the intercultural contexts.

With respect to the Common European Framework, the intercultural dimension in language teaching aims to develop learners as intercultural communicators and mediators who are able to cope with complexity and develop multiple identities in the different multiple situations. Professional Chinese teachers are therefore expected to help learners to develop intercultural competence and to cultivate cultural identity within foreign language settings (cf. Council of Europe, 2001). English as a foreign language in China itself stands for Western culture and its educational philosophies, which also require English language teachers to transmit Western ideology, humanity, cultural attitudes and identity to Chinese students. But Chinese is a new subject in foreign language education in Germany, and there are considerable numbers of professional requirements for the foreign language teachers' professionalization from the intercultural perspective for which research is still lacking.

Even though, Chinese language teaching has been established as a third foreign language or as hobby classes in most German schools that offer Chinese language courses. The two *gymnasiums* in my study have been setting Chinese teaching as a second foreign language. However, Chinese educational system has been attaching great value on English language teaching as first foreign language, which is designed as compulsory courses in most of Chinese schools. There are actually some huge differences regarding the position of Chinese language and English language to foreign language teaching in the two countries. However, my intercultural study tried to explore the contextual influence on different foreign language teachers' professional attitudes and beliefs regarding the different educational schemata. I focused on different teachers' individual professional development and their biographies. In order to better describe their instructional situation and their professional competence, my study also selects two

English language teachers in China to compare with the Chinese language teachers in Germany concerning their biographic experiences. Through making cross-case studies on professional development of Chinese teachers and English teachers in my research, I can provide some new information to shed light on Chinese teachers' professionalization in China and in Germany. I depend on the hypothesis that these teachers' reflective learning and self-evident development allows them to enrich their own professional experience and to form their individual didactics in the new educational context.

In order to test and evaluate my hypothesis, my study is an ethnographical research on Chinese teachers' biographies and on their professional practice. By describing their professional biographies and their management of various challenges in four case studies, I investigate on the relation of their prior biographies and their new professional practice.

## **1.3 Introduction to the chapters of this thesis**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

In this chapter, I have briefly identified why I chose Chinese language teachers' professionalization with regard to their developmental tasks and their educational experience as my research project.

I started with a brief description of my own biographical experience as a Chinese language teacher in China and in Germany. When I began to work as a language teacher in Germany, I had to encounter a very different instructional situation in comparison to my previous experience in China. I realized that there were intercultural challenges and conflicts that Chinese teachers in Germany are confronted with. Through statistical information and data collected on the present situation of Chinese teaching in Germany, it can be seen that there is a contradiction in the increasing number of Chinese language learners on the one hand and the present lack of professional Chinese language teachers

on the other hand. Chinese teachers' professional competence therefore has to be taken care of in the German educational environment. However, there is very little research that has been undertaken with regard to transitions and transformations of Chinese teachers' professional beliefs and attitudes; and limited attention has been paid to the influence of teachers' prior biographies on their teaching practice. That is why I explore the relation of the Chinese teachers' prior biographies and their new professional practice concerning the intercultural influences of different educational schemata in China and in Germany.

## **Chapter 2: The theoretical framework of the learners' development and their educational experience**

Chapter 2 identifies the theoretical framework of my intercultural study and concerns learners' development and their educational experience. In particular, I explain the origin and development of *Bildungsgangforschung* and *Bildungsgangdidaktik*.

*Bildungsgangforschung* is a German compound, which can be transcribed in English. It means research on the learners' development and their educational experience. *Bildungsgangdidaktik* then is a concrete application of *Bildungsgangforschung* to the practice of teaching and learning.

In order to understand the theoretical framework, I present a general interpretation of four core concepts of *Bildungsgang* research, namely (1) *educational biographical experience*, (2) *developmental tasks*, (3) *individual didactics*, and (4) *sense construction*. Through making a series of literature reviews on *Bildungsgang* research, I can better understand the interaction of the four core concepts in different subject matter instruction and in teacher education. The theoretical framework of learners' development and their educational experience can offer new insights and perspectives for the intercultural study on Chinese teachers' professional development in Germany.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The third chapter describes the methodology of my empirical research and identifies the open questions which I answer in my study. The objective of my study is to give a description of an on-going process of Chinese language teachers' professional development based on different case studies. I make use of the methodology of ethnography for my empirical educational research, by moving general ethnographic research into classroom ethnography. I can thus find out how the biographical educational experience of Chinese teachers influences their instructional practice and the formation of their individual didactics here in Germany.

I use the observer-as-participant method and produce field notes in order to collect first-hand classroom observation data. In particular, I highlight critical incidents and critical phases in the teachers' biographic and professional experience that can be linked to changes of their professional behavior and of the professional conception of their development.

### **Chapter 4: Teachers' professional developmental tasks**

In Chapter 4, I rely on a framework developed by the German educational researcher Uwe Hericks (2006) who has adapted the developmental task concept of Robert J. Havighurst to teacher professionalization. Teachers' professional developmental tasks can be described using the following four basic categories: (1) *competence development*, in particular in the subjects the teachers teach or want to teach and concerning instructional activities; (2) *transfer or mediation* of the acquired knowledge in the instructional process, i.e. application of the teachers' didactic competence; (3) willingness and capacity to *acknowledge the 'otherness'* of the students, i.e. their rights to be different; and (4)



*institutional competence*, i.e. development of interactional competence with respect to students, colleagues, principals etc. in the school as an institution.

## **Chapter 5: Professionalization of Chinese language teachers as development of individual didactics from an intercultural perspective**

In this chapter, I start with an identification of the different cultural settings for instruction in China and in Germany, and this means that I give a comparative study on the teachers' professional attitudes and views in the different educational settings in China and in Germany. I describe some characteristics of the Chinese teachers' professional views and perceptions in Germany. Then I relate these professional attitudes to the traditional educational philosophies in the East and in the West.

Chinese language teachers in Germany are confronted with a number of intercultural challenges and this establishes professional standards and principles in relation to their professional attitudes, views and behavior. Confronted with different professional developmental tasks, it is necessary for the Chinese teachers to transform their own professional attitudes and beliefs.

Afterwards, I highlight their sense-making in relation to their professionalization. In general, my study explores the professionalization of Chinese teachers of Chinese as a foreign language as the development of an individual professional didactic biography, gradually leading to a transformation of their professional beliefs and views.

## **Chapter 6: Developed methods, empirical analysis, data collection and findings**

Making various empirical analyses on the data collected in my research, this part identifies the Chinese teachers' professional development based on three case studies of Chinese language teachers in Germany and two case studies of English language teachers in China. In the first section of Chapter 6, I analyze the transformation of self-concepts and of professional beliefs of these Chinese teachers in Germany and in China. In the second section, I describe my collection of data from teachers' interviews, classroom observation and field notes, I describe the teachers' professional practice and examine their management of various challenges they are confronted with. In the third section, I investigate how they develop their language pedagogies and then describe their individual didactics with respect to their professional developmental competence in the intercultural context. My study shows that the traditional Chinese educational schemata have a great impact on the Chinese language teachers' professional beliefs and their perceptions which may produce a variety of intercultural tensions and conflicts in the new German educational setting.

On the basis of my case studies, I find the following four results concerning the developmental barriers and tasks of these teachers. The teachers have to realize that there is a conflict of (1) *Competence*: teacher-centered didactics versus student-centered didactics, (2) *Mediation*: traditional Chinese teaching strategies versus intercultural communicative didactics, (3) *Acknowledgment*: strict classroom discipline versus acknowledgement of the 'otherness' of the students and (4) *Institution*: regular collegial communication versus insufficient professional training and inefficient collegial cooperation within the institution. I attempt to explore the Chinese teachers' professional development and identify their professional developmental competence in terms of their own individual didactics.

## **Chapter 7: Comparative research on the Chinese and the German classroom**

At first, through making a general summary on the developmental tasks of the two groups of foreign language teachers, the Chinese teachers in Germany and the English

teachers in China, I describe their developmental barriers and the tasks in their professional practice. I use a cross-case analysis to identify similarities and differences of the teachers' professional development and their individual didactics on the basis of the different case studies of the teachers in China and in Germany. Second, with respect to the framework of the teachers' individual didactics as I show them in chapter 6, in chapter 7 I depict their competence to deal with their professional developmental tasks. The interpretation of their professional development allows suggestions how to improve the professionalization process of these teachers. I assume that my findings and recommendations are of significance for the design of the future professional training of Chinese teachers in Germany.

## **Chapter 8: Conclusion**

On the basis of the case studies, my study shows that the teachers' educational biographies have great impact on the development of their professional beliefs and their professional practice. In the light of the intercultural tensions between the Chinese and the German educational schemata, Chinese language teachers are confronted with a number of developmental barriers producing constraints in their professional development. Furthermore, in making a comparative study of Chinese teachers of English as a foreign language in China, my study examines the influence of the Chinese and the German educational schemata on the teachers' professional transformation and development with respect to individual didactics.

The way in which the teachers deal with their professional developmental tasks in their professional practice provides a new perspective on Chinese teachers' professionalization. Even though my research is limited in its sample and in its scope, as a case study, its findings may be generalizable. My research allows a deductive analysis on the basis of the case studies. The analysis of the case studies shows these teachers' individual self-reflection and self-transformation within their professional development. With respect to these teachers' professional challenges and difficulties in their professional

experience, my study may be helpful to design a new instructional plan for the Chinese teachers of Chinese as a foreign language. For this objective, I depict the professional development in the intercultural contexts, in order to help the teachers to become more effective and adaptive to the expectations of their educational environment. The findings of my research demonstrate that it is possible to integrate the Chinese teachers' prior professional beliefs concerning traditional Chinese didactics into German '*Bildung*-oriented' didactics. From my point of view, future empirical research can provide much more support for the Chinese teachers' management of their developmental tasks and for the improvement of their individual didactics.

## **1.4 Chapter summary**

The part of introduction briefly shows my personal background to this study, and focuses on Chinese language teaching and teachers' professional development in Germany. It can be found that Chinese teachers abroad are confronted with new instructional problems very different from what they have experienced in China. In my study, I would like to study their professional challenges and troubles in their professional development.

# Chapter 2: Theoretical framework of learner development and educational experience

## 2.1 Introduction to *Bildungsgangforschung*

### 2.1.1 Education, *Bildung* and *Bildungsgang* in intercultural settings

In this section, I give first of all an overview of the cultural schemata of education depending on the different educational philosophies in China and in Germany. In schools in ancient China, students were instructed via reading and memorizing classical literature. This means that the students had to learn the Confucian thoughts as they were edited by his students in the Analects (《论语》 Lúnyǔ). This tradition of teaching has not disappeared in contemporary didactics.

Present-day Chinese civilization depends on Confucian philosophy as described in the Analects. The core content of Confucianism lies in the five virtues that Confucius believed fundamental for harmonious hierarchical societies. The five virtues are ren (仁—Benevolence), yi (义—Righteousness), li (礼—Propriety), zhi (智—Intelligence), and xin (信—Honesty). Most important are the two moral concepts, De (德) and Li (礼). De refers to the highest moral and virtual level that people can reach by cultivating themselves, and Li refers to ritual and goodness. It teaches people how to practice correct behavior. The persistence and prevalence of Confucianism reinforces a cultural understanding that moral virtues are the prerequisite for social harmony (Wang, Y. H., 2014, p. 119).

Most Chinese language teachers in Germany are influenced by a traditional Chinese approach to language pedagogy, based on Confucian principles. These teachers' professional beliefs and perceptions are therefore grounded in an educational schema

directly affecting their professional practice. Therefore, in order to interpret their professional development, it is crucial to understand the differences between the Chinese and German educational situations and their related cultural schemata.

My second point identifies the meaning of the word ‘education’ in Chinese, English and German, which helps me understand different educational contexts in different countries. The English word “education” is ‘Jiāo yù (教育)’ in Chinese, which means ‘teaching and cultivating’. It means a constant interplay of the social need for harmony, Confucianism and political utilitarianism in Chinese education, so the Chinese cultural scheme of education has come to be described as ‘Jiāo shū yù rén (教书育人)’ in Chinese which literally means “teaching the books and cultivating the person”. The Chinese educational schema is instantiated in the doctrine of ‘Shīzhě, chuándào, shòu yè, jiě huò yě (师者, 传道, 授业, 解惑也)’—teachers are responsible for transmitting ‘Dào’ (道 i.e. Confucian morals), for imparting knowledge and for resolving doubt (Hui, 2005, p.17). Chinese education does not only concern the transmission of knowledge, but also the cultivation of students’ moral qualities. Teachers therefore are responsible for students’ moral formation, i.e. the development of moral virtues for the maintenance of social harmony.

Educational theory in Germany and didactics in particular are different. In the German educational context, there are many branches of didactics, such as *Bildung-centered Didaktik (Bildungstheoretische Didaktik)*, *Berliner Didaktik* and *Psychological Didaktik* (Meyer, 2013; also see Arnold and Linder-Müller 2012). In particular, *Bildung-centered Didaktik*, also identified as the German *Didaktik* tradition, is the main one that has had an enduring impact on classroom practice and teacher education in Continental Europe (Gundem, 2000).

In the German *Didaktik* tradition, *Bildung* means more than the English word ‘education’. It is education in a humanistic sense, meaning the cultivation of the learners’ ability to regulate their learning by themselves and to take responsibility for themselves and for others. The notion of *Bildung* relates to ‘a responsible and socially aware person contributing to his or her own destiny and capable of knowing, feeling, and acting’ (Gundem, 2000, p. 242).

*Bildungsgang* is a German compound, as one can see, composed of two words ‘*Bildung*’ and ‘*Gang*’. ‘*Gang*’, the second part of the compound, means movement, walking, process, direction et cetera (cf. M. Meyer, 2009). I translate *Bildungsgang* as the learners’ development and their educational experience within the interactional process of the teacher and the learners. *Bildungsgang* can therefore be regarded as the mediating concept between education and *Bildung*. *Bildungsgang* defines a socializing process in which the learners acquire educational experience in interaction and communication with others and with their teachers. Because of this, I use the *Bildungsgangforschung* framework to explore teaching and learning of the Chinese language in Germany.

As I have noted above, on the one hand, Confucian philosophy attaches great importance to education and to its social meaning concerning the strengthening a nation. On the other hand, it assumes that individual development depends on self-reflection. There are therefore some similarities between Confucianism and *Bildungsgang* that can be showed in the following saying of Confucius. It gives an idea of what can be meant by *Bildungsgang* within the Chinese educational framework.

子曰：“吾十有五而志于学，三十而立，四十而不惑，五十而知天命，六十而耳顺，七十而从心所欲，不逾矩。”《论语·为政》

Zǐ yuē: “Wú shí yǒu wǔ ér zhì yú xué, sānshí ér lì, sishí ér bù huò, wǔshí ér zhī tiānmìng, liùshí ér ěrshùn, qīshí ér cóngxīnsuǒyù, bù yú jǔ” 《Lúnyǔ. Wéi zhèng》

“The master said: At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning. At thirty, I stood firm. At forty, I had no doubts. At fifty, I knew the decrees of heaven. At sixty, my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth. At seventy, I could follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right.” (Confucius, *Analects*. Wéi zhèng, 1893, p. 162, Book 2, 4)<sup>3</sup>.

According to the words of Confucius, the whole of human life can be regarded as a gradual long-term self-cultivation process. It begins in the teens and extends well into

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<sup>3</sup> Confucius extends the meaning of the term to include exercising oneself to the fullest extent in all relationships, including relationships with those below oneself as well as with one's betters. "Self-reflection" (shu) is explained by Confucius as a negatively-phrased version of the “Golden Rule”: “What you do not desire for yourself, do not do to others.” Online text: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/confuciu/#H6> (last accessed on 20 July 2015).

old age; it proceeds incrementally from intention (zhì 志) to learning (xué 学), from knowing the mandate of heaven (tiānmìng 天命) to doing both what is desired (yù 欲) and what is right (jǔ 矩).

As one can see, Confucius here describes his developmental tasks and his success in solving them, rising from the learning phase to the establishment of his own knowledge system and to his life objective (M. Meyer, H. Meyer and Ren, 2017, p. 23). Individual development is understood as a self-cultivation process in the form of inner satisfaction and of full personal competence. From this perspective, Confucian education has quite similar principles to those of *Bildungsgang* education, focusing on the developmental tasks of the students in relation to their biography and future socialized development.

Parallel to Confucian philosophy, ‘Daoism’ (also known as *Taoism*) is a philosophical, ethnical and religious tradition of Chinese origin that emphasizes living in harmony with Dao. The term *Tao* (道, *the process*) has a broad meaning, namely ‘way’, ‘path’ or ‘principle’, emphasizing naturalness, spontaneity, simplicity, detachment from desires; and most importantly of all, ‘Wúwéi (无为)’. The ambiguous term ‘Wúwéi’ simply means ‘non-action’ ‘effortless action’ or ‘action without intent’. The foremost ethical doctrine of Daoism implies that the universe works harmoniously in its own way, and simultaneously, human beings are able to learn to be truly human without intentional or deliberated action (Van, 2005, p.170). One can find a similar concept in a core principle of *Bildungsgang* didactics, namely the cultivation of liberty and human dignity. For this objective, the students have to build up their own worldviews and develop their self-identity without external intended the teachers’ instruction.

In particular, ‘Dao’ refers to the second part of the German compound, meaning movement, walking, process, direction etc., and is comparable to the German word *Gang* in the concept of *Bildungsgang* (M. Meyer, 2009).

Regarding the different concepts of education and *Bildung* within different cultural schemata and comparing them with ‘Jiāo yù’ (教育, teaching and cultivating), one



sees that there is common ground for Confucian philosophy and *Bildungsgang* research. This common ground can provide enlightenment concerning the integration of the two cultural schemata and their educational theories. My study therefore is able to provide a new attempt to help them to integrate the two educational philosophies, theories and achieve teachers' professional transformation in the new environment.

### **2.1.2 *Bildungsgang* and intercultural *Bildung***

As I have already mentioned, the purposes of teaching in the German didactics tradition are centered on *Bildung*, which focuses on a process of formation. In addition, one can see that, '*Bildung*-centered' didactics has been influencing learning and teaching in the development of German didactics. In summary, *Bildung* is the typical concept in German didactics.

Helmut Peukert (1998; 2000; 2015), a retired professor at Hamburg University in philosophy of education, transforms the definition of *Bildung* within the new social context, which is functionally differentiated and culturally pluralized. He assumes that society has to work with a heterogeneous diversity of beliefs, life experiences and lifestyles. Peukert (1998) writes:

“The generation growing up now is faced with tasks for a new organization of a global society in a degree not known to former generations. In a similar way the construction of their inner world, the acquisition of an individual self-concept has got new dimensions. What counts is the existence as a self that does not crumble down in the light of radical experience of contingency and contradictions. Instead, this self has to become competent not to push away the pressures by global problems reaching into everyday world. Instead it has to suffer, endure and indeed, search for solutions in a productive way and together with others.” (Peukert, 1998, p. 22, quoted by M. Meyer)

Children and youth have to be given the chance to transform the worldviews and self-concepts offered by the growth-ups and by the teachers. Confronted with new intercultural

tural contexts and globalized educational tendency, students are demanded to construct their own inner world and individual intercultural identity associated to different cultures on the basis of self-regulated learning. Because of it, there are some new developmental requirements and challenges for teachers under the general educational context of *Bildung* in Germany. Fostering *Bildung* in schools needs a school culture which can integrate *Bildung* and culture into a term of intercultural *Bildung*. Peukert, in his outstanding paper, describes the new daily phenomenon with respect to educational contexts and explains how *Bildung* can be considered today. He notes:

“The task becomes even more difficult due to tendencies mutually increasing one another. If successful socializing processes only become possible on a surplus of structural pre-conditions for a way of life based in language and culture, then the experience creates uncertainty if this form of life is only one of many by that losing its quality to be taken for granted, and if it loses its quality of being taken for granted by contact with other forms of life. Experiencing the particularity, and indeed the contingency and arbitrariness of one’s own cultural background however is by now an everyday phenomenon.” (Peukert, 2015, p. 37-38)

At present, we are teaching different knowledge in a multicultural setting and teaching different students from different cultures with special individual needs. This state of affairs asks general educational research to pay much more attention on the plurality and intercultural *Bildung*, by way of integrating *Bildung* theories into other educational contexts (cf. Gogolin, Krüger-Potratz, Meyer, 1998)<sup>4</sup>. M. Meyer assumes that intercultural *Bildung* can be integrated into the concept of general education. Combing general education into intercultural *Bildung*, it thus can provide a new perspective on understanding Chinese language teaching in the present complex intercultural educational context.

Frist of all, I want to introduce the concept of intercultural pedagogy. Intercultural pedagogy deals with different special problems with respect to language, cultural, ethnic

and national heterogeneity in all the fields of education and *Bildung* (Gogolin and Krüger-Potratz, 2006, p. 107). It simultaneously allows reflection on the production of strangeness and in consequence allows the analysis of inequality and its elimination (Gogolin and Krüger-Potratz, 2006, p. 134).

What is the learning objective of intercultural pedagogy? What is its difference in comparison with the objective of general education (*Allgemeinbildung*)? What is the purposes of foreign language teaching with respect to the dimension of intercultural pedagogy? In Germany today, after the PISA shock of 2001, curriculum innovation and didactics are dominated by research on competence development and competence-oriented instruction. Because of this, one can likely come to the conclusion that foreign language teaching has to focus on students' development of intercultural competence. Meyer defines intercultural competence as follows:

Intercultural competence is the ability to realize the differences between one's own and foreign cultures and ways of life, it assesses the expectations of communication partners from other cultures critically and reject them or complies to them in the exchange process between cultures on the basis of a transcultural values system. Therefore, communication partners with intercultural competence can remain identical with themselves and their cultural origin. (M. Meyer, 2010a, p. 111)

General education (*Allgemeinbildung*) has a new meaning in the age of globalization that demands to integrate different intercultural educational contexts. To this point, M. Meyer has summarized the four topics concerning the domains of intercultural *Bildung*:

- Education is the sum of responses of a society with respect to humankind's learning. General education (*Bildung/Allgemeinbildung*) is more. It is based on freedom and self-determination. The promotion of general educa-

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<sup>4</sup> Wolfgang Klafki suggests integrating intercultural *Bildung* into his key theoretic model without changing the status of the other key issues (cf. Klafki, 1996). That is why I do not present his model of intercultural teaching and learning at this place.

tion therefore needs a culture that not only ensures society's reproduction, but also allows societal transformation.

- A critical-communicative theory of general education (*Allgemeinbildung*) must take the power structure of school education into account and at the same time accept differences, heterogeneity and plurality.
- General education does not have to be constructed in such a way that all adolescents acquire the same subject matter. It is more important that they acquire elementary skills of cooperation and communication with respect to these fields in which they are not asked to be knowledgeable in the strict sense. A person with general education is a competent layman on the one hand and is a communicative expert on the other.
- Educational researchers are asked to deal with the question how you can communicate with other people in spite of cultural and other differences from other cultures. (M. Meyer, 2010a, p. 113)

One can see that, compared to the concept of education, *Bildung* is not only a reproduction of society, but is also to be understood as a social transformation with respect to an individual interpretation and construction of the world and the self. Fostering *Bildung* in schools needs a school culture which secures the reproduction of society but which at the same time allows societal transformation. Intercultural *Bildung* thus depends on a subjective interpretation and construction of the world by that creating a new kind of culture. Wilhelm von Humboldt formulates it in this way:

“In the center of all the different activities you find man (in the sense of ‘humankind’, P.R.) who—without any further intention but focusing on something single—only wants to increase and to raise his natural powers and give value and duration to his personality (‘sein Wesen’).” (Humboldt, 1794/1960, Werke, Vol. I, p. 235)

Humboldt assumes that learning a foreign language is to construct a new way of grasping the meaning of the world. At the same time, everybody is able to develop his/her individuality. Through learning a foreign language, learners are able to conduct reason-

able self-determination and finally to construct their own understanding of the new culture.

As I have interpreted above, general *Bildung* and intercultural *Bildung* are closely related and overlapped. We can therefore ask now, in Chinese language teaching, how a teacher can improve his students' intercultural competence and help them to construct their own intercultural attitudes and views in the intercultural context? We can ask how to implement the concept of general *Bildung* into Chinese language teaching and learning. I will further discuss them in chapter 5 and chapter 6.

When one integrates the concept of *Bildung* into foreign language teaching, the aim of this is not only to help students to learn various general literary meanings and improve their intercultural communicative competence, but also to help them conduct individual formation, help them to construct their own understanding of the new foreign language. Students are therefore able to develop individual intercultural awareness and to develop a reflective attitude in respect to the culture and civilization of their own countries.

In summary, the *Bildungsgang* framework can provide a new perspective on Chinese language teaching to interpret the influence of students' and teachers' individual biographies. In order to better understand *Bildungsgang*, I next introduce the origin and the development of *Bildungsgangforschung* and *Bildungsgangdidaktik*.

## **2.2 The origin and development of *Bildungsgang* and *Bildungsgangdidaktik***

*Bildungsgang* theory can be traced back to an important research topic of the college school experiment in North Rhine-Westphalia in the 1970s. It was developed by Herwig Blankertz from 1972 to 1983. Research has focused on how to construct the *Bildungsgang* in such a way that students can subjectively develop compatibility to general

forms and professional elements, in order to maintain sustainable learning (cf. M. Meyer, 1986, Lechte, 2008). What is still missing is research on how the individual formation produced by students lead to societal change from generation to generation.

Research in the Blankertz tradition worked with the following categories (cf. Gruschka, 1985, p. 21):

- the objective and subjective *Bildungsgang*,
- the development of competence,
- the development of identity and developmental tasks.

Within the *Bildungsgang* framework, an increasing amount of educational research was done, that explores the possibility of using the didactics of learner development and educational experience in many educational fields. In particular, educational scientists in Hamburg working together in the Ph.D. Graduate School on *Bildungsgangforschung* have successfully tried to further develop Blankertz's model of *Bildung*-centered didactics<sup>5</sup>. The Ph.D. Graduate School of *Bildungsgangforschung* at the University of Hamburg (2002-2008)<sup>6</sup> lays great emphasis on learners' perspective by focusing on the educational course and the school curriculum. In general, *Bildungsgang* research is concerned with juveniles' and young adults' behavior in teaching-learning situations, how they interpret their learning tasks, and what can be done in order to advance their educational processes. (Text of application, Bastian et al., 2001, p. 3, Homepage of the Faculty of Educational Science, University of Hamburg, 2002, 2004).

*Bildungsgangforschung* focuses on the investigation of *Bildung* as a socializing process. In this process, the learners regulate learning by themselves within the framework of institutional instruction; including sense constructions and developmental tasks of adolescents and their capacity for self-determination and responsible behavior (cf. M. Meyer, 2009). In particular, its related research tries to identify the relationship between developmental tasks and school requirements (Hericks and Spörlein 2001, Spörlein 2003). The objects of *Bildungsgang* research is to explain under what circumstances

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<sup>5</sup> *Bildungsgangforschung* can be transcribed in English as research on learner development and educational experience and its didactics.

<sup>6</sup> The Ph.D. Graduate School was financed by the German Research Association (DFG, *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*).

children adolescents, and young adults can develop their subjective meanings to learning content (Trautmann, 2004, p. 39). Traditional general didactics is therefore able to develop a new perspective: namely the didactics of *Bildungsgang* (*Bildungsgangdidaktik*). It deals with the questions of how one has to react to both school and classroom, and what the juveniles' construction of the subjective process of *Bildung* is.

Using the theoretical framework of *Bildungsgang* for different teaching subjects, the research group, including Ph.D. students of the Graduate School of Hamburg, has published a large number of specialized studies with respect to individual professional interest and to different subject matter domains. These papers and books concern the specific subject contents, such as sense experience and sense-making in science instruction (Lechte, 2008; Gedaschko, 2013), in chemistry (Spörlein, 2003), learning with daily fantasy in biology teaching (Born, 2007), the didactics of *Bildungsgang* in history teaching (Borries and Meyer-Hamme, etc., 2005), and bilingual chemistry teaching (Bonnet, 2004). Research in the field of foreign language teaching, Decke-Cornill, H., Hu, A. and Meyer, M. A. (2007) produced a series of studies on how to better apply the didactics of *Bildungsgang* to foreign language teaching. It examines the challenges of young language learners in foreign language learning in pluralistic societies and how they as subjects construct their language *Bildungsgang* to deal with these challenges.

In my intercultural study, the theoretical framework of *Bildungsgang* is firstly used to study Chinese language teaching and Chinese teachers' development in the German educational context. I can now focus on the definition of *Bildungsgang*. The German compound *Bildungsgang* cannot be easily translated into English. It means more than 'educational process' and combines education with teaching (cf. M. Meyer, 2009). *Bildung* is a central educational term in Germany. *Bildung* cannot be taught, but it can only be fostered. Wolfgang Klafki<sup>7</sup> gives the following definition of *Bildung*:

“*Bildung* is that phenomenon through which we realize directly—in our own experience or in understanding other men and women—the unity of a subjective (formal) and an objective (material) moment. The attempt to ex-

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<sup>7</sup> Herwig Blankertz and Wolfgang Klafki were both Ph.D. students of Erich Weniger (1894-1961), the leading representative of “*geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik*” in the first and second half of the 20th century.

press the experienced unity of *Bildung* can only be realized with formulas that have combining power: *Bildung* is opening a reality of things and ideas for somebody (this being the objective aspect), but this means at the same time the opening of this person for this reality which becomes his or her own reality (subjective aspect).” (Klafki 1959/1964, p. 297; translated by M. Meyer)

Here Klafki constructs an opposition of subjective or formal and objective or material perspectives on *Bildung* in order to synthesize the two perspectives. In order to explain the didactical relation, his concept of *Bildung* means “cultivating students’ capacity for reasonable self-determination”. He notes that:

“*Bildung* is understood as a qualification for reasonable self-determination, which presupposes and includes emancipation from determination by others. It is a qualification for autonomy, for freedom for individual thought and for individual moral decisions. Precisely because of this, creative self-activity is the central form in which the process of *Bildung* is carried out.” (Klafki, 2000a, p. 87, quoted by Westbury, Hopmann and Riquarts, 2000)

The purpose of teaching is *Bildung*, i.e. the formation of the mind, the cultivation of liberty and human dignity, and the development of individuality (cf. Hopmann, 2000)<sup>8</sup>. Klafki (1996, p. 52) describes three competences, which are central for a modern concept of *Bildung*: self-determination, co-determination and solidarity. *Bildung* focuses not only on students’ individualization, but also simultaneously relates to their social duties and the objective of living in the community. Education is therefore understood as a process of socialization during which the self develops, with crises, regressions, ruptures, developmental leaps and interruptions (Bastian et al., 2001, p. 3.). As explained above, *Bildung* should be regarded as a transformative process. It refers to intergenerational communication and by that to the emancipation of the young generation, a process which in principle allows joint construction and joint transformation of

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<sup>8</sup> *Bildung* has been variously translated as “formation”, “education” and “erudition”. The latter derives from the Latin “*erudition*” as used by Comenius and is the translation suggested by Hopmann and Künzli (1992). However, Westbury (2000) believes that “formation” is the best English translation. I think the real meaning of *Bildung* is much more “formation” in the educational field, which is why in my study I insist on using the term *Bildung* (cf. M. Meyer, 2010).



worldviews and self-concepts in which the teacher represents the adult generation and the students as the members of the rising generation (M. Meyer, 2015, p.20). Because of this, fostering *Bildung* in schools needs a school culture which secures the reproduction of society and which at the same time allow societal transformation. It demands interaction concerning intergenerational communication in the classroom. The intergenerational communication allows students as the next generation to construct their own world- and self-concepts.

In Germany, *Bildung* is the central concept in educational research in all its sub-fields, and *Bildungsgangdidaktik* can profit from this privileged position. The compound *Bildungsgang* relates the process of *Bildung* to any theory of learning and teaching.

## **2.3 The core concepts of *Bildungsgang* research**

The *Bildungsgang* is an important research field since it allows to analyze the changes of world views and self-concepts in one's biography over time. In particular, it focuses on four central research concepts, namely *educational experience*, *developmental tasks*, *sense construction* and *individual didactics*.

### **2.3.1 Biographical educational experience**

As I have mentioned the term *Bildungsgang* framework above, I focus on the dialectical process of students' self-regulated development and sense construction on the hand and teachers' professional development concerning their educational experience on the other hand. Within the framework, an important core principle of *Bildungsgang* research focuses on teachers' and students' biographical experience. For this reason, I now interpret the significance of individual biographies.

Within the interaction of teachers and students, both sides are at the same time able to bring their biographical experience and their expectations with respect to their future development into the teaching process (M. Meyer, 2014, p.12). It therefore implies that the individual biographies of teachers and students have to be the starting point for classroom interaction and lesson planning. The teacher's instruction has to help the students to combine their own biographies with learning content and to help them to develop their individuality. This negotiation in the classroom needs the teachers' and students' mutual acknowledgement of a common educational task. Accepting the students' biographical experience therefore is the key concept for sense making.

In the meantime, considerable attention has been paid to educational research on how teachers generate retrospective understanding of their work in relation to their biographical history and life experience (Hargreaves, 1996, p. 234). It is widely accepted that teachers' biographies indeed play a particularly significant role in constructing their professional identity and perceptions, which have a great impact on their professional behavior. But similar educational research concerning the relation between teachers' biographical experience and their professional development is rare. The complex ways in which educators' biographies shape their taken-for-granted understanding of the meaning of "being a professional teacher" are likely to remain unrecognized and unacknowledged (Hatton, 1997, p. 231). Looking at the biographical experience of teachers, there is some biographical research on teachers' living experience. The *life story* is now an established tradition in sociologic and educational research (Ball and Goodson, 1985; Connolly and Clandinin, 1990)<sup>9</sup>. My analysis examines critical issues and critical experience that are able to pinpoint individual reflection that identifies some turning points in the teachers' life histories. However, for their biographical experience in their life histories, the researchers have not been content simply to recount life history as a documentary process from the outside. The intent rather is to provide 'insider' ac-

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<sup>9</sup> Following Paul Thompson's (1978) view, interpretative biographical material may be presented in three different ways. Firstly, a researcher may present individual personal experience in narratives and connect them to the life story of a given person. Secondly, a researcher may collect a number of self-stories and personal experience stories grouped around a common theme. Thirdly, a researcher may offer a cross-case analysis of the material he or she has collected, paying more attention to the process being studied than to the persons whose lives are embedded in those processes.

counts (Butt and Raymond, 1992). I focus on the Chinese teachers' individual biographies and their professional attitudes from a biographical perspective.

### 2.3.2 Developmental tasks

Within the framework of *Bildungsgang*, there are two perspectives of tasks that refer to *individual development* and *social development* in teaching and learning. Dealing with the two dimensions of developmental tasks is crucial to the instructional process. It is sensible to differentiate an objective educational career with its societal demands (*objektiver Bildungsgang*) from a subjective career and the student's individual needs (*subjektiver Bildungsgang*) (M. Meyer, 2010b, p. 82). Students' educational careers are objectively shaped by the system, i.e. by institutions and organizational measures. For the subjective career, however, the students construct individual development regarding the necessary objective societal requirements (M. Meyer, 2010b, p. 83). *Bildungsgang* didactics concerns students' learning and teachers' teaching within the interaction of objective demands and subjective sense-making construction, in which they deal with different developmental tasks (Trautmann, 2004, p. 254). I therefore have to bring the concept "*developmental tasks in education*" of the American sociologist and educationist Robert J. Havighurst (1900-1991) into my study.

As early as in 1948, he proposed the concept of developmental stages and developmental tasks from infancy to old age (Havighurst, 1972, p.vi). He identifies that:

"The developmental-task concept occupies middle ground between the two opposed theories of education: the theory of freedom—that the child will develop best if left as free as possible, and the theory of constraint – that the child must learn to become a worthy, responsible adult through restraints imposed by his society. A developmental task is thought to be in the midway between an individual need and a societal task. It assumes an active learner interacting with an active social environment. (Havighurst, 1948/1972, p. vi) "

Havighurst combines this concept with the typically American idea of success in life:

“The tasks the individual must learn — the developmental tasks of life—are those things that constitute healthy and satisfactory growth in our society. They are the things a person must learn if he is to be judged and to judge himself to be a reasonably happy and successful person. A developmental task is a task which arises at or about a certain period in the life of the individual, successful achievement of which leads to his happiness and to success with later tasks, while failure leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval by the society and difficulty with later tasks. (Havighurst, 1972, p. 2)”

Havighurst’s theory made a significant contribution to define a range of indispensable goals in any subject’s development in relation to the specific requirements of society. He understood himself as an experimental educationist. However, in German-speaking countries, he has been read mostly as an educational psychologist. At the early 1980s, there has been a lot of studies that understand developmental requirements and their tasks from the perspective of psychology, for example, by Rolf Oerter and Leo Montada (2008) and by Eva Dreher and Michael Dreher (1985).

In particular, Eva Dreher and Michael Dreher (1985) used the term of the developmental tasks to interpret individual development in the period of adolescence in Germany. They assumed that each person should deal with the following professional tasks during the period of adolescence, such as profession, health, body, future, future, relationship, self, peer, relief, value, role and partner/family. Helmut Fend (2000), further explored the term and made a series of studies on the developmental processes from a childhood to adolescence. He defines developmental tasks in individual life, concerning the development of identity, self-exploration and self-management, dealing with students, dealing with parents and friends in the period of adolescence etc.

In applying Havighurst’s model to the present-day German education, Uwe Hericks and Eva Spörlein (2001) identify the following developmental tasks for adolescents and young adults (age group 16-20) in Germany:

- relation to age mates,
- gender role,
- body acceptance,
- independence from parents,
- sexual relationships,
- occupational perspectives,
- future orientation,
- system of values / sharing responsibilities,
- self-concept.

As shown above, Havighurst (1948) identified two opposed theories with regard to school education: the theory of freedom and the theory of constraint. This construction means that on the one hand, there are objective constraints from socially prescribed requirements for everybody. On the other hand, learners intend their own emancipation to deal with different objective requirements. But there are some “sensitive periods” or “critical periods” when the human organism is especially able to learn quickly through certain kinds of experience. Havighurst assumes that:

“When the body is ripe, and society requires, and the self is ready to achieve a certain task, the teachable moment has come.” (Havighurst, 1972, p. 7)

Due to that, how to deal with developmental tasks demands paying much attention to different “teachable moments” in the students’ lives.

In addition, solving the developmental tasks is related to individual competence, identity and developmental stages. Meinert Meyer interprets that as follows:

“Regarding the concept of developmental task, I relate...the goals that build the learners’ subjective interpretation of social requirements to their current skills, their identity and their developmental needs. I therefore assume that these developmental tasks are simultaneously constructed socially and individually. ” (M. Meyer, 2000, p. 245)

Meyer’s interpretation identifies the goals of learning and teaching. Learners are able to construct their own developmental process on the basis of their individual competence and identity. Confronted with different social objective requirements, the developmental tasks must be addressed, dealt with and solved. And individual subject can achieve

skill-development and identity-construction in this process (cf. Kordes, 1989, p. 46). Because of the different identity of each individual, these developmental tasks are perceived, interpreted and processed with respect to individual developmental needs and developmental competence (cf. Hericks, 1998, p.142). The students should therefore be instructed concerning their biographical background knowledge and their educational experience. Successful management of the developmental tasks is regarded as the inner motor that motivates the students to go on acquiring knowledge and competence (cf. Schenk, 2001, p.263). They are developmental objectives which learners ('subjects') construct by interpreting societal ('objective') demands.

Havighurst's concept can also provide a new perspective to explore professional teacher development. On this line, Uwe Hericks (2006, p. 92-138) generalizes different professional tasks on the basis of a large amount of empirical studies on German teacher education. He identified four developmental tasks which pre-service and young in-service teachers are confronted with. He assumes that, if they are not successful with respect to these tasks, this will produce unhappiness and disapproval by the colleagues, school heads, students and parents. I will explicate the four professional tasks of Hericks, namely *the developmental task of competence*, *the developmental task of meditation*, *the developmental task of acknowledgment* and *the developmental task of institution* in Chapter 4.

Regarding Chinese language teachers' professional development, there are also some objective requirements for them. In my study, I can assume that these developmental tasks can be used to reconstruct developmental courses meant to foster the teachers' competence for instruction and organization of their work. Let me add two points here: (1) the concept for positive development can also be used for the teachers' loss of professionalism in the long-term perspective (cf. Keller-Schneider and Hericks 2011). (2) How the teachers cope with their professional tasks relates to their professional competence, beliefs and developmental anticipation.

I can sum up: *Bildungsgang* framework focuses on the interplay of individual biographical experience and the teachers' developmental tasks. In my study, the Chinese

language teachers have to deal with objective intercultural requirements on the basis of subjective professional identity.

### **2.3.3 Individual didactics**

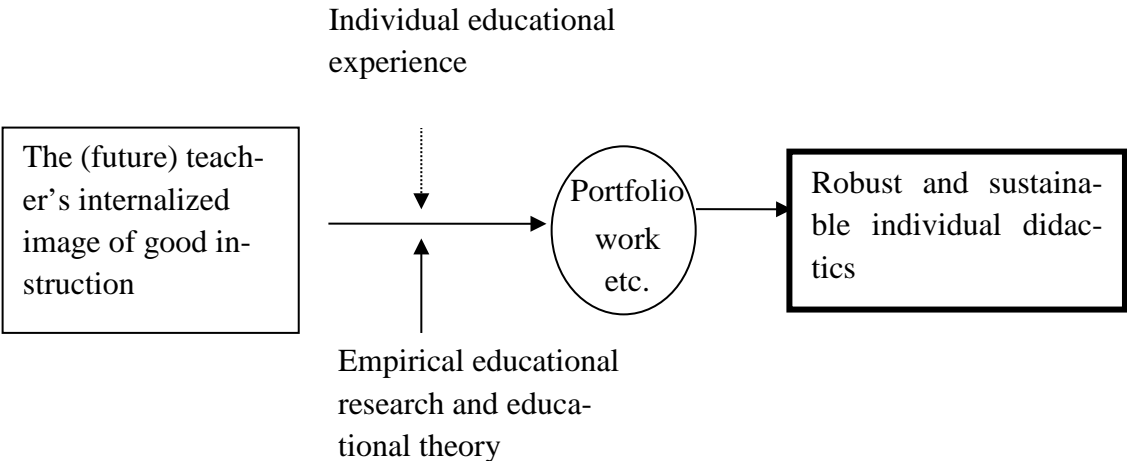
For the concrete definition of *individual didactics*, it is very difficult to find some related concepts and interpretation in educational research. However, there are some similar theories and concepts about teachers' individual instruction, their instructional behavior, for example, *individualized instruction*, *individualized teaching* and *individual instruction* etc. Maurice Gibbons notes that, problems of definition, usage and shifting points of view contribute to the increasingly indiscriminate use of the term (Gibbons, 1998). However, the term 'individualized instructional program' is used to describe and design curricula to each person. Following his concept, I see the following research fields with respect to individualization: (1) tutoring, (2) correspondence courses, (3) self-paced unit plans, (4) programmed and computerized instruction, (5) independent study programs, (6) grouping for individualization, (7) administrative plans, (8) personal programs, (9) remediation and teaching exceptional children, (10) miscellaneous individualized programs and suggestions (cf. Gibbons, 1998).

The basic assumption of *Bildungsgangdidaktik* refers to students and young adults in class having to deal with the objectively predetermined developmental tasks of instructional planning and the school curriculum. It therefore demands that teachers' instruction in school must support students' working with their developmental tasks. Even though more-or-less standardized courses are offered by school education, the concrete educational experience of each student is always very individual (cf. Terhart, 2008, p. 24). Each student will bring his/her biography and individual background into work at their developmental tasks. In order to help students interpret their developmental tasks, the teacher is asked to accept each student as a 'subjective' learner having their own individual requirements and expectations of the teaching content. As explained above, these developmental tasks are objectives which learners ('subjects') construct by interpreting societal ('objective') demands and become the inner motor for learning (Schenk,

ed. 2005; Trautmann, 2004, p. 31-34). In other words, it implies that there are two kinds of developmental tasks in the process of individualized instruction: one deals with pre-determined social tasks; the other deals with subjective developmental tasks.

In order to illustrate the professional development and formation of individual didactics in teacher education, M. Meyer (2010b) uses a portfolio work of young teachers as a central instrument in the development of teachers’ professional individual didactics. A professional portfolio refers to a structured and thoughtfully organized collection of artifacts which can illustrate skills and abilities, substantiated by the samples of students’ work and realized through reflective writing, deliberation and conversation with peers, teachers and faculty (Shulman, 1998). Indeed, a professional portfolio is helpful for a teacher’s development. It will help each teacher to engage in self-assessment and evaluation to ensure their own professional development. Particularly, it can be helpful for teacher-trainees (pre-service and probationary teachers) to develop and cultivate their individual didactics for a fruitful confrontation with their own educational experience, empirical educational research and educational theory (M. Meyer, 2011).

M. Meyer (2010b) identifies a reflective process that shows how a teacher may/can shape the sustainable individual didactics from the perspective of research on learners’ development and their educational experience (see Figure 1):



**Figure 1: The teacher role from the perspective of research on learner development and educational experience (adapted from M. Meyer, 2010b, p. 85)**



This diagram can also be used to illustrate the professional development of the Chinese teachers in my study. Each Chinese teacher as an individual subject has different professional perceptions and beliefs on the nature of good instruction. Each teacher has formed his/her own internalized image of good instruction. As they have experienced school education in China, the traditional Chinese education schema largely affect their internalized image of good instruction and their professional practice. For instance, a traditional, internalized image of a good teacher in China is one in which he or she is able to select points of knowledge from authoritative sources, to interpret, analyze and elaborate on these points for the students, help them connect the new items of knowledge with knowledge previously gained and to deliver a carefully sequenced and optimally mediated dose of knowledge for the students to memorize, repeat and understand (Hu, 2002, p. 98).

As I have noted previously, once they begin to work in Germany, Chinese language teachers are confronted with different challenges and difficulties that require their prior professional experience to adjust to the new educational context. In particular, their prior teaching experience, teaching methods and professional beliefs have to undergo transformations and changes that can influence the dynamic process of their professional development.

#### **2.3.4 Sense construction**

Research on learner development and educational experience assumes that sense construction plays a significant role in understanding the ‘dialectical’ interaction between students and teachers in that it is able to fill the gap between the social ‘objective’ requirement and their individual ‘subjective’ interpretation. In the following, I analyze the definition of sense construction more clearly.

Firstly, looking at the meaning of sense, sense is neither given nor sent by someone but produced and established by human beings acting in a process<sup>10</sup>. Thus, it is widely accepted that sense construction is an implementing process that is individually generated and constructed by individual practice. I can conclude in general that it is impossible that objective sense exists independently without an acting process. Gebhard (2003) interprets the meaning of sense this way:

“Wissen oder Lernstoff hat [...] nicht eine Bedeutung an sich, sondern der Lernende konstruiert eine Bedeutung, gewissermaßen eine Interpretation der Wirklichkeit, die es gestattet, diese (konstruktiv- und theoriegeleitet) zu verstehen und sich in ihr zurechtzufinden.”

“Knowledge or learning material [...] has in itself no significance, but rather the learner constructs a significance, to a certain extent an interpretation of reality, which allows it (constructively managed guided by theory) to be understood and negotiated.” (Gebhard, 2003, p. 211)

I take a second, deeper rooted definition of ‘sense’ from Martin Heidegger in his epochal work “*Being and Time*” (1927/1963) on the basis of an unpublished paper of M. Meyer. Heidegger assumes that:

“Human existence is unlike any other existence on earth in that it has but one direction, namely that man’s existence is determined by anticipatory anxiety” (Heidegger, 1927/1963, the quotation from M. Meyer, 2015).

Generally speaking, Heidegger’s philosophical thoughts never strayed from the thing itself (*die Sache selbst*). He formulates the astonishing thesis that with human existence sense ‘erupts’ into an otherwise meaningless universe. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger declares that the hermeneutics of the concept of existence (*Dasein*) is the indispensable basis for the doctrine of meaning. The center of that doctrine is being-in-the-world (*Dasein*). But the essence of the world is meaningfulness (*lack of Bedeutsamkeit*). We

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<sup>10</sup> The reader has to know that, ‘sense’ and ‘meaning’ are often used having one and the same meaning. Other authors make a difference. As I see it, individual words and sentences have meaning, and situations make sense or become absurd.

may therefore interpret being-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-sein*) as man's projected engagement-with-meaning (Sheehan, 2014, p. 252).

The existential framework of Heidegger's theory is able to provide a new perspective to understand the meanings of sense:

„Wenn innerweltlich Seiendes mit dem Sein des Daseins entdeckt, das heißt zu Verständnis gekommen ist, sagen wir, es hat Sinn. Verstanden aber ist, streng genommen, nicht der Sinn, sondern das Seiende, bzw. das Sein. Sinn ist das, worin sich die Verständlichkeit von etwas hält. Was im verstehenden Erschließen artikulierbar ist, nennen wir Sinn. Der Begriff des Sinnes umfaßt das formale Gerüst dessen, was notwendig zu dem gehört, was verstehende Auslegung artikuliert. Sinn ist das [...] Woraufhin des Entwurfs, aus dem heraus etwas als etwas verständlich wird.“ (Heidegger, 1927/1963, p. 151, the quotation from M. Meyer, 2015)

“If one's inner-world is discovered with being of existence, that means that it comes to understanding. We can say it has sense. But what is understood, strictly speaking, is not the sense, but the being, or it means being. Sense is that which holds the intelligibility of something. What is articulated in terms of understanding new things, we call it sense. The concept of sense comprises the formal framework as the scaffolding of what necessarily belongs to what interpretive understanding articulates. Sense is the objective of the draft out of which something becomes understandable as something [...]”

The world is the environment that we are able to fill, to experience, and it allows to construct different meanings, so that we can do something with the objects in the world; simultaneously, other people in the world also mean something to us. The world thus becomes a meaningful environment but can be individually interpreted and understood from different perspectives.

The relation of being-in-the-world to the world of objects can be applied to interpret the process of learning and teaching in regular instruction as well. Teachers' instruction for students is understood as a meaningful environment, which is able to be

interpreted and understood by students on the basis of their individual orientations and expectations.

As I noted above, *Bildungsgang* focuses on how learners deal with different meanings within the process of teaching and learning and what kinds of sense-making learners conduct in class. Here I can go on, one can see that Wolfgang Klafki's didactics assumes that students are the 'objects' of teachers' instruction while we all know that, at the same time, they are able to self-regulate, act and learn knowledge by means of their subjective individuality. This means that each student is subjectively able to do individual sense-making.

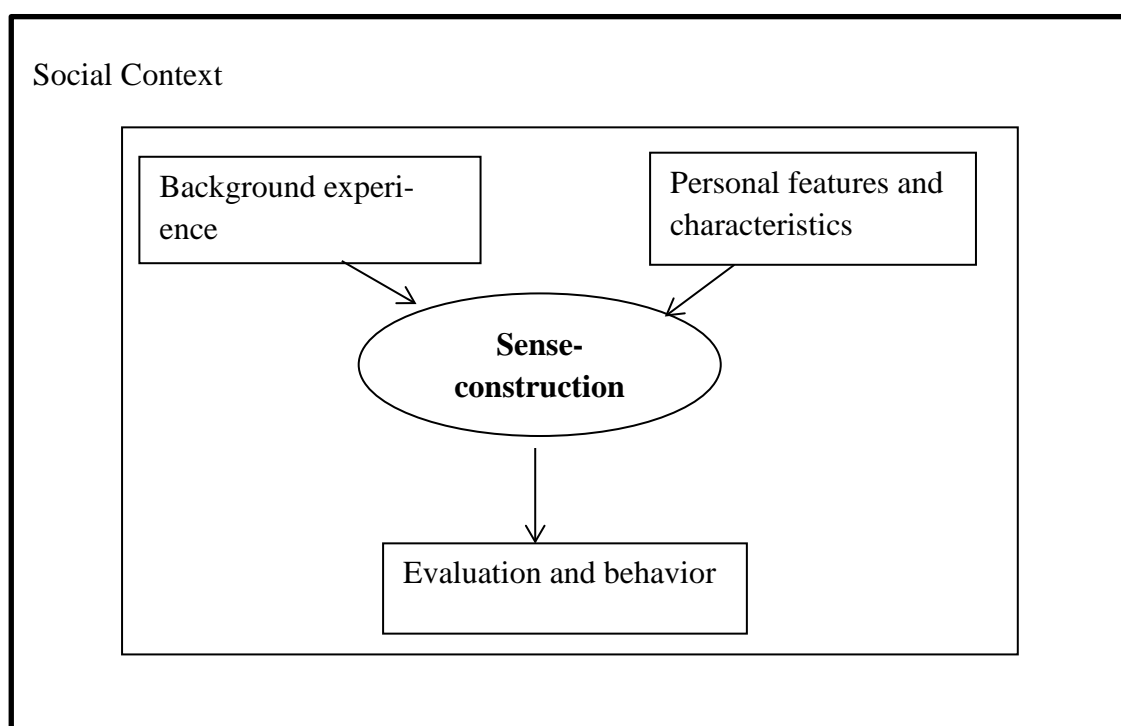
Searching for meaning and sense is a basic need for all human beings; and this is also articulated in the classroom. If there is something with little sense in instruction, instruction is experienced as meaningless or even as absurd instructional behavior (cf. M. Meyer, 2005, p.16). Meaning as it exists in the teaching content is a necessary prerequisite for teachers' teaching and students' learning. In particular, students are able to realize meaningful interrelations between their biographies and the mediation of the teachers in advance. As Hericks illustrates,

“[...] the learners can feel sense and subsequently they will want to learn and work with teaching contents, once they are able to construct subjective meaningful interrelations between their experience and the content in their previous school life.” (Hericks, 1993, p.132, translation by P. R.)

We therefore have to accept that teachers' mediation cannot ignore learners' previous biographic experience and this means that sense construction demands combining instructional contents into individual experience (cf. Gedaschko and Lechte, 2008, p. 140).

Sense construction plays an important role in teacher-student interaction. In order to conduct successful sense-construction, teachers have to integrate their own professional biography into the students' individual learning and at the same time, the students have to have the right to bring their own biographies into the teacher's instruction. Normally, people cannot verbalize the process of sense construction. Because sense construction is subjective and intuitive, very often the people who practice sense construction are unaware that they are doing it.

As I have written above, sense-making processes are related to different parts of instruction. It involves learners' and teachers' biographies, their educational experience, their personal characteristics and the external social context. *Bildungsgang* didactics requires teachers and students to 'see' teacher-student interaction and communication as a communicative process fostering mutual understanding. In order to describe sense-making within the classroom interaction, I now present Maïke Vollstedt and Katrin Vorhölter's sense-making diagram to study the teacher-student interaction in Chinese language teaching (see Figure 2 below). In this diagram, the two authors visualize notes that individual background experience, personal features and characteristics are related to sense-making process.



**Figure 2: The framework of sense-making construction (Vollstedt and Vorhölter, 2008, p. 35)**

Within the teacher-student interaction, on the one hand, teachers want to teach required necessary content and knowledge to their students. On the other hand, the students bring their own biographies to the instructional process and try to find sense in their leaning on the basis of their own individual background experience and personal characteristics.

However, students are willing to learn only when they realize that a teacher's teaching is meaningful to them. Learning makes sense for the students. We have to accept that meaning can function for their instructional practice only if it is related to their own individual and regulated competence. In Dewey's term, sense construction is a basic requirement for the negotiation of meaning (cf. Dewey, 1938/1991, also quoted by M. Meyer, 2011, p. 87). Sense construction is the framework needed for the evaluation of teacher-student interaction that is able to evaluate the level of teacher-student communication and mutual understanding.

Educational sense-making establishes a level of teachers' and students' mutual acceptance of a joint educational task. What is more, successful sense construction will arouse students' self-reflection and influence their concrete behavior in class.

Moreover, Andreas Gedaschko in his Ph.D. thesis (2013) extended the function of sense construction. He shows that sense construction is regarded as the prerequisite for the development of motivation and interest in teaching (cf. Lechte, 2008, p. 254; Gebhard, 2003, p.205 and p.209). Students' motivation and interest can only be aroused by a successfully functioning sense construction and it also depends on individual developmental purposes. Once the students and the teachers find sense within the interaction, they are willing to actively take part in the instructional process. It implies a motivation-oriented framework, embedding previous educational experience gained in past periods and delineates the outline of individual future (Gedaschko, 2013, p. 35). Sense construction is therefore understood as an individual construction with respect to individual previous experience and expectation at the same time. In class, teachers are able to disclose and illustrate particular learning contents and knowledge for students, but sense construction is individually constructed by each student. (cf. Hennings and Mielke, 2005, p. 240).

I can now study in foreign language instruction, how to construct an instructional situation in which the teachers and the students find sense from themselves and conduct sense construction in class.

Firstly, Chinese language teachers have to accept different students' backgrounds and personal characteristics through combining the learning content with the

students' educational experience. Secondly, due to huge differences between the Chinese and German educational schemata, a professional Chinese teacher needs to some characteristics in terms of German learners' sense construction. Regarding Wilhelm von Humboldt's view on foreign language teaching, one can see that he emphasizes the construction of learners' worldviews and attitudes on the new language and its culture, rather than on learning the new language within the framework of the mother tongue (cf. Humboldt, 1830-35/1963, p.433-434).

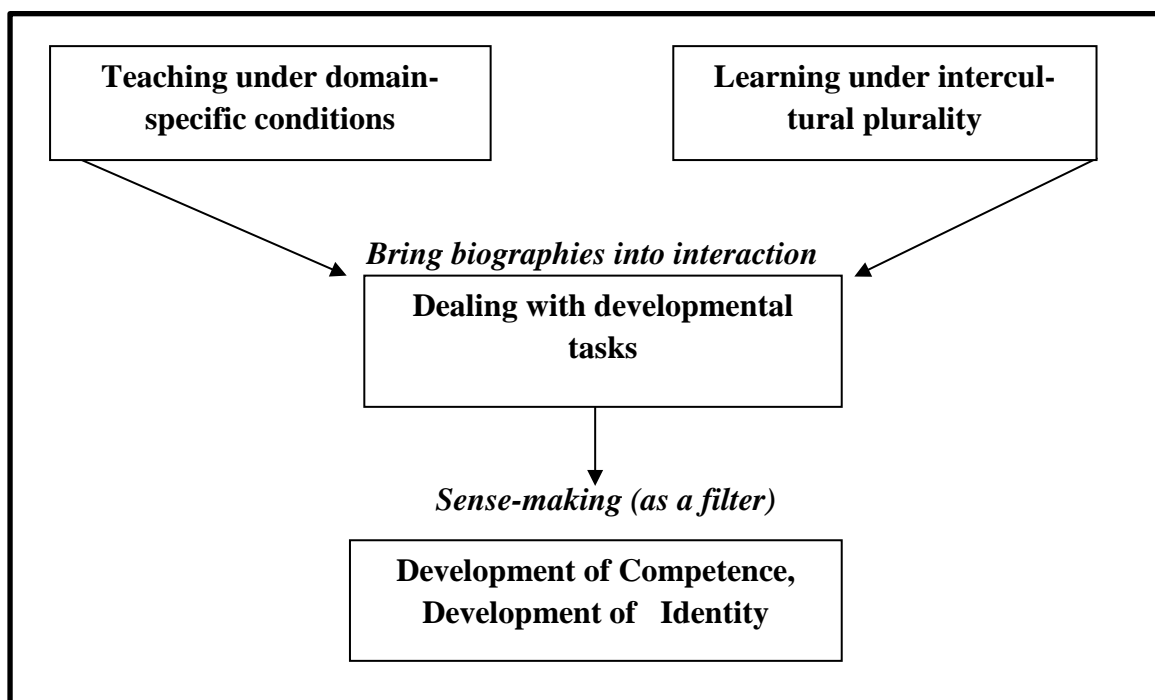
“Also when one looks at what is generated by language one does not find support for a concept following which language does nothing more than naming the objects which have already been identified before. One would never come into a position in which one would find a comprehensive evaluation of the deep and comprehensive content of language. In the same way in which it is not possible to have a concept without language, there cannot be an object for the soul without it [i.e. that what is produced by language] since even each and any outer object can reach completed nature (*vollendete Wesenheit*) for the soul only by the concept. However, the full spectrum of the subjective realisation of the objects is transposed into the generation and the use of language.

Since each and any objective apperception necessarily contains subjectivity, you can conceive each and any human individuality as an individual world view position. But the contribution of language to individuality is even greater, because the word once more makes itself for the soul to be an object with an addition of self-meaning (*Selbstbedeutung*) by that adding a further specific individuality (*Eigentümlichkeit*) (Humboldt, Werke, Vol. III, pp. 433-434; translation P.R.).

The sense of foreign language learning is understood as the individual soul's interaction with a new objective world. The learners are able to combine their own individuality into learning the new language and culture. The sense of foreign language learning is to construct individual worldviews and concepts of the new culture. However, one's own previous attitude to language is not experienced in a pure way nor is it fully aligned to

the new process of language learning. A successful sense construction in Chinese instruction enables students to construct their own cultural attitudes and views on the Chinese language and culture.

Generally speaking, *Bildungsgangforschung* involves the following core concepts: *sense construction*, *educational experience* and *developmental tasks* of the teachers and the students. I therefore use the diagram below to illustrate how these three concepts interact within the instructional process (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3: Sense construction, competence development and development of identity within the instructional process (on the basis of M. Meyer's figure, 2010b, p. 87)**

Within the instructional process, teacher instruction thrives under domain-specific conditions; at the same time student learning takes place under the conditions of social and intercultural plurality. As I have mentioned above, there are different 'objective' developmental requirements for the learner's individual development. In order to provide a communicative and effective teacher-student interaction, the teachers should accept each student's individual biography and help them to deal with different developmental tasks of their students. Once teacher-teaching takes students' biographies into consideration, it means it can help the students to find sense to their learning. I can therefore



assume that *sense construction* functions as a filter with respect to the interaction of teachers and students. Sense construction thus decides the students' development of competence and identity (M. Meyer, 2015, p.18).

## 2.4 Chapter summary

The educational settings are closely related to successful sense construction, which requires a fruitful environment for the development of joint action between teachers and students. What is more, students and teachers participate as individual subjects with their own 'biographical packages'; their heterogeneity and plurality of world views and self-concepts have to be accepted in the instructional process (M. Meyer, 2010b, p.87).

In Chinese language teaching, professional Chinese teachers have on the one hand, to deal with the objective requirements of the intercultural social setting and, on the other should help their students to bring their own biographies into the interaction by accepting each student's individual background and their personal characteristics. Only when learners' biographies, educational experience and developmental tasks are dealt with in harmony, does instructional interaction have the opportunity to produce sense for both sides in class.

The diagram of sense construction depicted above implies that sense construction can advance learning only if the four elements, *teaching*, *learning*, *biographical background* and *developmental tasks* are in harmony. Harmony is bound by the dialectical relationship between teacher-learner interaction and the past and future direction of learners' biographical and developmental perspectives. Learning and teaching in intercultural settings are closely-connected social and cultural settings, which means that there are different demands on knowledge, skills, attitudes and values for both teachers and students. Furthermore, it means that there are different developmental tasks for different learners with their individual biographies. Sense-making construction acts within the interaction of learners' biographies and their developmental tasks, and is greatly influenced by the instructional process.



# Chapter 3: Methodology

## 3.1 Introduction to intercultural and ethnographic research

My project is a qualitative intercultural study with three Chinese language teachers in Germany and two English language teachers in China. I aim to describe (1) the influence on their professional development in terms of their biographies, (2) processes of self-transformation in the intercultural setting and (3) their individual didactics. At first, I will introduce the historic development in the research on intercultural *Bildung*. Intercultural activities and problems in educational science have been discussed since the late 1960s. In the 1980s, intercultural educational research began to be established. There is an increase in educational studies on linguist-cultural diversity within national borders. Thus intercultural educational researchers are starting to focus on the cultural background and cultural characteristics of international migrations. As a German intercultural educational researcher, Ingrid Gogolin (2002, p. 298-299) mentions that the development of intercultural education and *Bildungsgangforschung* are a result of self-critical reflection concerning a cross-cultural research perspective.

In general, the interest of intercultural *Bildung* research is not in contrast to the isolated relation of ‘cultural’ or ‘ethnic identifiable target groups and the determination of group-constituted characteristics. Rather, it deals with the cultural consequences of growing international social, cultural, ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity in education (Gogolin, 2002, p. 299). My intercultural study on the professional development of the Chinese language teachers should therefore focus on different social, cultural, and ethnic influences on their professional beliefs and their concrete professional behavior in class. I will examine these teachers’ professional practice and their developmental process by employing an approach of ethnography, focusing on their professional transformation and the construction of their individual didactics.

## 3.2 Introduction to the research context

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

Ms. Wee, Ms. Baum and Ms. X teach at a new private school including an elementary school and a *Gymnasium*. The other three teachers, Ms. Ta, Ms. C and Ms. Li teach at another *Gymnasium* in Hamburg. The two schools have different institutional settings. In addition to that, as I have mentioned above, I have chosen two Chinese English teachers in China as participants in my comparative research, Ms. Yellow and Ms. Hao. Of course, all names are anonymous in my study. In my book, I present three Chinese language teachers in Hamburg as case studies, namely Ms. Wee, Ms. Baum and Ms. Ta, concerning their professional biographies and professional practice in order to explore their transitions and professional transformations under the German context.<sup>11</sup>

The two schools have been chosen for convenience. On the one hand, the two famous Hamburg schools have been offering Chinese language teaching as second foreign language 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. The school mentioned first (*called Gymnasium A* in my study) is an emerging private school in Hamburg that opened in 2010 and has a distinguished feature: trilingual teaching (German, English and Chinese). The second Hamburg school (*called Gymnasium B*), has been offering Chinese since 2003. Chinese has for a long time been accepted as a second foreign language and is included in the *Abitur*, the final examination.

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<sup>11</sup> In summary, my study has collected a larger amount of data from different Chinese teachers, including three Chinese language teachers in *Gymnasium A* and from the other three Chinese language teachers in *Gymnasium B*. However, in my Ph.D. thesis I only analyzed three Chinese language teachers' professional development as case studies (Ms. Wee, Ms. Baum and Ms. Ta). Other related research interpretation and research results on Ms. Wang, Ms. C. and Ms. Li are integrated into the final conclusion of my study, see Chapter 7. The original research data of Ms. Wang, Ms. C. and Ms. Lin can be found in my attached CD.

The two schools in China have also been chosen for the sake of convenience. One is an elementary school and the other is a senior middle school. When I studied for my master's degree in Wuhan, China, I visited them and made a series of educational research activities concerning English language teaching. As a researcher, I am familiar with the basic institutional contexts of the two schools. My prior research experience has been able to provide some complement to my present educational study.

As I have already noted, my study focuses on Chinese language teaching in Germany involving six Chinese language teachers from the two schools in Hamburg. But in my empirical study, I selected three Chinese teachers as case studies and focused on their professional experience, their developmental competence and their individual instruction in class. All three teachers are female, but the sampling was not purposely selective. It merely reflects that female Chinese teachers predominate in German schools. To better identify the individual backgrounds and professional biographies of the six teachers, see the following table (Table 1):

<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Working experience</b>	<b>Tertiary Education received</b>	<b>Workplace</b>	<b>Teaching context</b>
Ms. Wee	48	Music teacher for 15 years in Taiwan	Taiwan and get her Ph.D. degree in Germany	Gymnasium A	Primary and Secondary
Ms. Baum	47	Computer teacher for 7 years in China	China	Gymnasium A	Primary and Secondary
Ms. Wang	40	Sports and mathematics teacher for 8 years in China	China	Gymnasium A	Primary and Secondary
Ms. Ta	28	Chinese language teacher for 3 years in China	China	Gymnasium B	Secondary II
Ms. C.	32	Chinese language teacher for 3 years in Germany	Germany	Gymnasium B	Secondary I and II
Ms. Lin	29	Chinese language teacher for 2 years in Germany	Germany	Gymnasium B	Secondary I and II

**Table 1 Demographic information of participants**

In order to identify the framework for the teachers' professional developmental process, I mainly investigate the relation of their biographies, professional attitudes and beliefs to their individual didactics. I believe that this investigation sheds light on teachers' difficulties and challenges in their overseas teaching environments. My study uses a series of mixed research methods in order to identify these teachers' professional experience and to track the changes to their professional beliefs and attitudes towards teaching Chinese (cf. Creswell, 2014).

### **3.3 Research questions**

#### **3.3.1 Research on the Chinese teachers' professionalization from the perspective of *Bildungsgang* research and their professional developmental tasks**

Even though Chinese language learning is increasingly popular in Germany, related research and literature in the field of Chinese language teachers' professionalization both within and outside China is recent and limited (Wang and Kirkpatrick, 2012).

As I have mentioned in the theoretical part, *Bildungsgang* research is an important aspect of teaching and learning developed and improved in the field of General Didactics (*Allgemeine Didaktik*). It focuses on the personal development of students and teachers with respect to the institutional and the social context (Trautmann, 2004, p. 40). *Bildungsgang* research can thus be regarded as research on the process of individual *Bildungsgang* (individual self-formation). A professional teacher of a foreign language has to realize the individual development of the following three parts of his/her personality: (1) *individual biography*; (2) *external institutional or social requirements*; and (3) *individual competence*. The approach aims at identifying how best to deal with external social requirements and internal self-expectations, and how to support each learner to develop his/her own language outlook and cultural view concerning the target language.

The *Bildungsgang* framework can thus provide a new perspective for the study of Chinese teachers' biographies and their professional development in relation to the interpretation of student-teacher interaction.

As I have shown above, Chinese educational schemata and cultural values have been shown to affect Chinese teachers' beliefs and their ability to adapt to overseas teaching environments. With respect to their professional adaptations to the German situation and their transformation produced by it, my intercultural study aims to clarify three principal research questions:

### **3.3.2 The three research questions of my study**

- (1) Focusing on the intercultural differences between the peoples of the two countries, I will ask how the Chinese language teachers in my study adapt to their new educational situation in Germany and what kind of transformation their professional beliefs and world-views undergo.
- (2) In particular, I will ask how to identify the professional developmental tasks of the Chinese teachers in the intercultural setting. Further, I will describe the Chinese teachers' individual developmental tasks and how they cope with them.
- (3) Last but not least, I will describe the Chinese teachers' individual didactics in order to find out what may improve their educational practice and what their future professional training may look like.

In the following three sections of this chapter, I will further analyze my three research questions and give further comments to some extent in the following:

- (1) In my first research, I focus on the Chinese teachers' educational experience in China/Taiwan and try to describe the influence of their previous biography on their individual didactics.

Most Chinese language teachers were born in China and have been educated in Chinese tertiary institutions, their professional identity and attitudes have been greatly influenced by the traditional Chinese educational framework. Their classroom behavior therefore will reflect their underlying professional beliefs and attitudes towards students, teaching content and themselves. From the perspective of their professional development, the biographic experience of these teachers will determine their present instructional behavior and practice, thus constructing each teacher's individual identity.

Referring to a research into personal experience, Ingrid Kunze (2002) discovered that German language teachers did not depend on related educational research results and theories. However, what they did was to remember the experience they gained during their own school days and the professional experience gained during their working lives. Kunze therefore identified three main categories in her teachers' biographical experience as the raw material for their individual didactics: (1) school time experience (2) working life experience and (3) educational and subject matter research knowledge acquired during their university studies (Kunze, 2002, p. 408). Parallel to Kunze's research, I can show that for the Chinese language teachers, their previous biography and work experience have a great influence on their professional beliefs and attitudes and this implies that they cling to traditional Chinese language pedagogy.

(2) My second research involves the theoretical framework of teachers' professional developmental tasks. I will describe how the teachers of my study dealt with their professional developmental tasks when they began to work in Germany.

This makes it necessary to transform Robert J. Havigurst's all-encompassing concept of developmental tasks (1948/1972, p.vi) into the professional development of my Chinese teachers. As I have noted in Section 2.3.2, developmental tasks can be used to reconstruct developmental training courses meant to foster teachers' competence in the instruction and organization of their work.

My research led to a series of interview transcriptions with Chinese teachers of Chinese and English and I can identify a number of developmental barriers producing constraints in their professional and intercultural settings. The use of ethnographic classroom observations and of in-depth interviews allows me to produce a complete picture



of the teachers' daily practice and of self-transformation and provides a large number of references on how they deal with the tasks of professional development. Furthermore, my interpretation focuses on the discrepancies and differences arising between what the teachers say in the interviews and what they do in real instructional practice.

Confronted with different developmental barriers and challenges, the Chinese language teachers attempt to deal with these difficulties in their professional experience and to work with them. Using four categories of professional developmental tasks, I try to describe and interpret how they deal with different developmental tasks in their professional practice (Hericks, 2006, pp. 92-138). I use the framework of *Bildungsgang* to examine their professional competence in terms of competence, mediation, acknowledgement and action in the institution.

(3) By providing interpretation and analysis of the teachers' professional beliefs and practice, my fourth research question deals with these Chinese language teachers' individual didactics with respect to the management of their professional developmental tasks. As I have mentioned (see Section 2.3.3), each teacher has his/her own internalized image of good instruction that forms individual professional beliefs and attitudes. Confronted with the new educational context, the Chinese teachers are able to construct their individual didactics in a sustainable and continued process of professional development.

## **3.4 Methodology in practice**

### **3.4.1 Introduction to and change of methodology**

In this section, I want to introduce the methodology of my study and to identify my reasons for choosing it. In order to study Chinese teachers' professional development in the new educational context, the ethnographic approach is a satisfactory method that allows me to describe their professional adaptation and working with different challenges in their biographical experience.

The ethnographic approach in my educational study is able to capture the dynamics of the Chinese teachers' self-transformation and self-reflection in their individual biographies, which also provides a large amount of research data on how they deal with their professional developmental tasks. However, a limitation of my ethnographic approach is due to my having had only twelve months for data collection, which restricted my research and thus constrains what would otherwise have been a comprehensive description and interpretation of these Chinese teachers' professional experience. Data analysis therefore focuses on data that relate to my research questions and perspectives (see Section 3.3.2). This may lead to some weaknesses and limitations with respect to a comprehensive interpretation of the teachers' professional development. In order to reduce these limitations, I have integrated teachers' interviews and some additional field work concerning classroom observations into my analysis and interpretation.

My Chinese language teachers constitute a specific cultural group with different professional experience confronted with a new intercultural instructional situation. Regarding their professional experience, there are some critical incidents and critical phases that can be linked to reveal some changes in their professional behavior. In addition, the critical incident approach is used to inquire into the process of self-reflection and self-transformation with respect to the teachers' educational experience (Tripp, 1994, p. 69).

For the analysis and interpretation of the teachers' interviews, I first tried to use the documentary method (cf. Nohl, 2006, Bohnsack, 2007), summarizing the topics and identifying their framework of the professional orientation of the teachers through formative interpretation and reflective interpretation. However, using this method turned out to be inadequate.

The documentary method requires a formative interpretation with respect to the subjective opinion of the narrator, which produces a first level analysis as 'intentionally expressive meaning' (cf. Nohl, 2009). However, when all my teacher interviews were transcribed in Chinese, I found that the challenges for the analysis and interpretation of the interview transcriptions within the original framework of the documentary method were too great (cf. Nohl, 2006; Bohnsack, 2007). Because my own translation of the

Chinese transcriptions of teachers' interviews into English reduces the precision needed for the documentary method. The lack of accurate understanding and interpretation will increase the problems involved in exploring the teachers' internal orientation-frameworks and their professional identity.

I had therefore to think of new ways to interpret Chinese teachers' professional perceptions and their professional orientation. Teachers' interviews are interpreted according to different research perspectives, for instance, teacher biographies, teacher professional beliefs, teacher professional competence, teacher developmental tasks, etc. *Bildungsgang* theories allow the study of Chinese language teachers' professionalization from a biographical perspective in a way which focuses on their individual work with different developmental tasks. In working with case studies on these teachers' individual development, it is crucial to give a deductive description of the cultural development of the group of Chinese teachers in Germany.

### **3.4.2 Ethnography**

Ethnography is an approach for qualitative research that originated in the discipline of anthropology around the turn of the 20th century. Ethnography is in association with the structural-functional theoretical perspective (Kaplan and Manners, 1972). It literally means "writing about people". Lecompte, Preissle and Tesch (1993) suggest that ethnography research is a process involving methods of enquiry, an outcome and a resultant record of enquiry. The intention of the research is to create as vivid a reconstruction as possible of the culture or groups being studied.

The Greek *ethnos* means 'people, race or culture group' and *graphia* means 'writing or representing' (Lecompte, Preissle and Tesch, 1993, p. 120). Although the definitions of ethnography vary, the essence is to discover and understand the patterns of thoughts and behavior of a particular cultural group through the long-term direct involvement of the researcher (Marcus, 1998; Walford, 2003). It emphasizes the production of concepts and theories based on cross-cultural field data, seeks patterns of cultural regularities (cf. Clifton, 1968) and their interpretation (Hymes, 1980). Ethnography rec-

reates for the reader the shared beliefs, practice, artifacts, folk knowledge and behavior of a group of people (Goetz and Lecompte, 1984)<sup>12</sup>.

I have chosen the ethnographical approach in my study because of its advantage in studying people in naturally occurring settings with methods able to capture their social meanings and ordinary activities. It allows the collection of data in a systematic manner without meanings being externally imposed on the group (Brewer, 2000; Fetterman, 1998; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). The participant role, the observation of the field and the famous '*field stay*' identify a methodological requirement to comprehend "the perspective of the native", which is also the methodological core for all ethnographic research (cf. Geertz, 1983/2000; Breidenstein et al., 2013).

Developing ethnography into a systematic process, the German educational researcher, Georg Breidenstein (2013) generalizes the four trademarks in terms of ethnography (1) *Subject matter: social practice*, (2) *Field research: continuing direct experience*, (3) *Methods opportunism: an integrated research approach*, (4) *Writing and the social verbalization* (Breidenstein et al., 2013, p. 36).

In order to better analyze Chinese language teachers' professional practice and their professional transformation, the ethnographical method is used to collect various empirical research data *in their instructional field*, i.e. in the practice of teaching Chinese as a foreign language. Data is gathered from a range of sources, including different documentary evidence, such as classroom observation, protocols and different interviews and informal conversations. Moreover, the ethnographic method is also able to record teachers' methods, their professional behavior and professional practice in regular classroom practice.

However, educational ethnographers also focus on cultural descriptions as they are practiced in classical ethnography. The main difference of this approach to what I do is that anthropologists usually describe small cultures across the world (especially in

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<sup>12</sup> 'Shared beliefs' refers to the specific cultural conventions or statements that people who share a culture hold to be true or false. 'Shared values' means the culturally defined standard of what is good or bad or desirable or undesirable. 'Norms': The written and unwritten rules that specify appropriate group behavior.

less developed nations), while educational ethnographers usually study the cultural characteristics of small groups of people or other cultural scenes as they relate to educational issues (Burke and Larry, 2010, p. 389).

The term 'educational ethnography' includes both ethnography and ethnology, although much of the interpretive literature in fact is ethnology, which intends a comparative analysis of multiple entities (cf. Goetz and Lecompte, 1984).

I use the approach of educational ethnography to explore the professional development of my case studies, namely the three Chinese language teachers in order to obtain some cultural characteristics of their professional development from the intercultural perspective. In particular, my research tries to examine different challenges in their biographies in natural settings and how my Chinese language teachers worked with these challenges in real-life settings. Compared to regular application of ethnographical approaches, I only tried to describe and interpret the relation between their prior biographies and their present professional practice, not to make a comprehensive description of the culture of the group of Chinese teachers in Germany. It means that my approach has limitations to describe all the cultural characteristics of the Chinese language teachers in their professional development.

In particular, there are some published research articles that apply the ethnographic approach to educational studies on the influence of teachers' development in different contexts. For example, Deering (1996) studies the influence of culture in a middle school was known to be supportive of inclusion. By making an ethnographic research approach for teachers, administrators, students, parents and other community members over a two-year period, he described the school culture, the peer culture and parent and community involvement.

Intercultural ethnography can thus become an important and popular methodology for intercultural research. Today, the methodological foundation as presented by Breidenstein can be considered crucial to present-day sociological ethnographic research at present. The foundation implies a systematic distance of the researcher with respect to the familiarities, confines and strangeness of the participants' own culture (Amann and Hirschauer, 1999). What is more, combining *Bildungsgang* research into an intercultural

educational setting, Meyer, Kunze and Trautmann (2007) used an ethnographic method to explore students' participation in foreign language classrooms in the upper-secondary stage. The research approach focuses on how participation can be empirically described, what actually happens in the classroom with regard to participation and how students' and teachers' attitudes concerning participation can be reconstructed (cf. Meyer, Kunze and Trautmann, 2007).

Moreover, there are some educational articles in China about applying ethnographical methods to study teachers' professional development that also aid my study. Yan and He (2012) made an ethnographical study on the professional development of three senior secondary English language teachers with respect to the new curriculum reform in China and pinpointed a considerable implementation gap which emerged as a major obstacle to the development of the teachers' practice.

As I have noted above, ethnology focuses on the comparative study of cultural groups, which involves conducting or comparing a series of separate ethnographic studies of the same or different cultural groups in order to explore general patterns and rules of social behavior. It has to be added that related research has shown greater interest in general patterns than in particular ones; thus producing greater external validity than a single ethnography in study (Burke and Larry, 2010, p. 391).

Focusing on different cultural groups, my study undertakes a comparative research on Chinese teachers in Germany and in China concerning their present professional competence in working with their developmental tasks. It attempts to produce comparative research on the different teachers' professional beliefs and attitudes in Germany and China on second foreign language teaching and to record their professional transformation and adaptation in Germany. Using ethnographic approaches allows the recording of the teachers' concrete practice, students' reaction in the classroom and capturing the dynamics of the situations at that moment. Through using case studies on the Chinese language teachers in my study, my intention is not to overgeneralize. My empirical data is only used to structure my analysis of the case studies themselves.

I will better illustrate the ethnographical approach to describing Chinese teachers' professional development in Chapter 6.

## 3.5 Research methods for my study

### 3.5.1 The critical educational incidents approach

In Chinese language teachers' biographies, one will find some special, critical incidents and issues that can be used to mark some significant changes and transformation with respect to their professional beliefs and attitudes.

Additionally, some critical incidents and experience in the set of informal and unstructured teacher biographical interviews are used for probing self-transformation and changes in educational experience. I therefore want to apply the *critical educational incidents approach* to interpret my teachers' professional development and, in particular, to describe how they adapt to the German educational context.

Several empirical educational studies in this field show that Chinese language teachers have tried to identify different patterns of phases in their careers (cf. Hirsch et al. 1990; Huberman, 1989; Sikes et al. 1985). These studies assume that the professional transition is partly gradual and smooth, but perhaps also partly discontinuous and fragmental. Critical incidents in the discontinuous mode refer to key events in an individual's life (Kelchtermans and Vandenberghe, 1994, p. 51). Some critical incidents and critical phases in teachers' biographies are especially significant in that they can be linked to changes in professional behavior. (Tripp, 1993, p. 24-25). These critical incidents can indicate particular critical moments when the teacher begins to change a habitual approach to cope with new challenges (Kelchtermans and Vandenberghe, 1994, p. 51).

The term 'critical incident' seems to have come originally from biography research where it refers to some events or situations that mark a significant turning point or change in the life of the subject (cf. Miles and Huberman, 1994). In addition, Tripp (1994) defines 'critical incident' as also including the commonplace events that occur in the everyday life of a classroom. Such incidents are rendered critical by the author in that they are seen as indicative of underlying trends, motives, and structures, and are

often presented to teachers in the form of a dilemma in which they have a choice of at least two mutually exclusive courses of action (cf. Berlak, A. and Berlak, H.,1981).

Applying the critical incidents approach to biographical research means that working on past practice is not just to record and narrative, but to establish new perspectives for the changes both in the present and the future personal experience of the teachers.

Critical incidents can be advantageous in examining and gaining control over the behavior and habits presented, in order to reveal what could be changed and transferred into the acquisition of different outcomes and effects (cf. Tripp, 1994, p.69). Referring to the views of Richards and Farrell (2005, p.113), critical incidents in teaching situations are “unplanned and unanticipated” occurrences and are used to aim at initiating self-reflection.

A German educational researcher, Alexander Thomas, brought ‘critical incidents’ into use in intercultural research of German-speaking countries, localizing the term as “Kritische Interaktionssituationen”, in 1993. Like others, he initially used it as a ‘tool’ to create culture assimilators (Layes, 2007, p. 385), but then he applied this method to the analysis of intercultural interaction, asking e.g. “which kinds of different, unexpected, implausible reactions do students often have when they experienced with their foreign partners” and asking “how the students were reflecting on the unfamiliar and unexpected behavior” (Thomas, 2005, p. 29). The approach of critical incidents in intercultural research may therefore help to shed light on the understanding of the intercultural interaction of Chinese language teachers in Germany as well.

Even though the critical incident has been accounted a versatile tool, it is dependent on the ‘memories of participants and their ability to recollect specific examples of the concepts in question’ (Care, 1996, p. 27-30). This can be viewed as a limitation whereby it is dependent on the participants’ ability to accurately provide a detailed account of an event. Furthermore, the critical incidents approach is inadequately equipped to explore those situations in which there was no decision made or action taken, where the subject was unaware of the information needed or where he/she suppressed (consciously or unconsciously) the perception of the information needed as a solvable prob-



lem (Urquhart et al., 2003). That means that it may be difficult for researchers to separate the story of one incident when there is a choice of multiple stories or experience attributed to the same event (Urquhart et al., 2003).

In my study, there is a large amount of research data from teachers' interviews, but how to find suitable critical incidents from teachers' biographical experience and how to integrate them into the teachers' biographies is difficult to identify in my study. Furthermore, it is not easy for the Chinese teachers to define critical incidents and find them in their biographies in the limited time available. In addition, whether the critical incidents mentioned in the Chinese teachers' interviews are really suitable in that they mark some turning points in their biographies is hard to say.

Thus, critical incidents, from the teachers' point of view, truly imply deep-rooted reasons that are integrated in their own educational experience. For example, by constructing semi-interviews with more than twenty Chinese teachers and then analyzing their interviews, Su (2011) generalized some characteristics of critical incidents from the perspective of professionalization as follows:

- (1) The empirical research result implies that all these critical incidents have significant impact on their professional work.
- (2) Comparatively speaking, most of these incidents occur in the preparatory period of the teachers' vocation, and then in the first two to four years after they have begun to teach.
- (3) The critical incidents have been deeply reflected through teachers' self-consideration.
- (4) The critical incidents have stimulated and transferred the teachers' professional cognition and behavior.
- (5) The critical incidents in teaching situations can be conscious or unconscious (Su, 2011, p. 68).

In Su's study, her research results identifies that some critical incidents in the teachers' lives did not perhaps take place in daily instruction at school, nor even in the field of

education, but nevertheless had significant impact on their professional development and their professional transformation.

In my study, I selected critical incidents from the teachers' individual biographies and their working experience as I could find them in their interviews. In order to help each teacher to find some appropriate critical incidents in their biographies, I firstly explained the definition and the characteristics of a critical incident to my interviewees and only afterwards, were they asked to look for them.

For instance, in the teacher interview with Ms. Wee, she described a critical incident that referred to a classroom conflict with two German students. She was engaged by the two students and even started to quarrel with them. She identified that her prior professional beliefs and understanding of the German educational context had experienced new changes by this critical incident. Other Chinese language teachers in my study also expressed that they had encountered new challenges and particular incidents concerning the intercultural differences between the Chinese and German educational schemata.

It can be found that critical incidents usually took place in the period when the Chinese teachers began to work in Germany. In general, the critical incidents in the Chinese teachers' biographies can produce individual self-reflection with respect to their prior professional attitudes concerning Chinese traditional didactics, which often marks some significant turning points.

### **3.5.2 Case studies**

A case study is a research design that entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case (cf. Bryman, A., 2008). The case study method is applicable to my study because it represents an intensive analysis of a single 'unit' across a large set of 'units' (cf. Gerring, 2004). Even though there are a large number of differences in each teacher's biography, the approach of case studies is able to describe and interpret the dynam-

ic situation of teachers' development in great depth along with the changes and transformation of their professional perceptions.

A case study is a specific instance that is frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle (Nisbet and Watt, 1984, p.72), it is 'the study of an instance in action' (Adelman et al. 1980). Indeed, case studies can help the reader to understand the concrete situation that is able to better show the effects and results of abstract principles in practice. As Robson (2002, p.183) remarks, case studies opt for analytical rather than statistical generalization—that is they develop a theory which can help researchers to understand other similar cases, phenomena or situations. Case studies strive to portray 'what it is like' to be in a particular situation, to catch the close up reality and 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) of participants' lived experience of thoughts about and feelings for a situation.

I use case studies to identify what the Chinese language teachers' professional developmental process is like and how they deal with various challenges and tasks in their professional practice. The case studies approach can be used to investigate and report on the complex dynamics and to unfold the individual biography, the educational context, the individual professional competence and other factors concerning teachers' professional development.

As case studies, I have selected three Chinese teachers and two English language teachers in my project to explore their developmental processes. From May 2012 to May 2013, I conducted an ethnographical research project to collect data on my Chinese language teachers' professional development in Hamburg. In particular, these selected case studies describe the process of their professional transition, their present instruction, their instructional problems and challenges and their management of different developmental tasks in their professional experience. But the strength of a case study may also suggest a corresponding weakness. As these case studies on the Chinese teachers are closely related to individual educational situations, constrained some particular situations.

### **3.5.3 The observer-as-participant method**

In my study, participant observation and ethnographic interviews have been selected as important tools to collect first-hand data.

Within the framework of the ethnographic approach, at the early stage, classroom observation was focused on ‘what is happening in the Chinese class’, trying to show the actual lived experience with respect to Chinese teaching and learning. Cohen et al. (2007, p. 396) argue that observation is distinct from other research processes because it offers the researchers many chances to gather ‘live’ data.

At first, my class observation focused on recurrent instructional routines and student-teacher interaction in order to interpret the teachers’ professional perceptions. Afterwards, my observation concentrated on some interesting situations and phenomena regarding their practice in class that differed from what the teachers had asserted in the interviews.

In fact, there are three categories with regard to the observer’s degree of participation: the ‘complete participant’ is a researcher who takes on an insider’s role in the group being studied and this may not even require the researcher to declare her or his role; the ‘participant as observer’ declares her or his role as an observer, but still involves herself/himself as part of the social life of the other participants. Moreover, the ‘observer as researcher’ is known as a researcher, but does not participate in any activities. In fact, the observer-as-participant attempts to take on the role of an observer much more than that of a participant. In other words, the observer-as-participant spends a limited amount of time observing the group members and he tells them that they are being observed (Burke and Larry, 2010, p. 209).

However, in contrast to complete-participant and complete-observer roles, a disadvantage of the observer-as-participant role lies in its being more difficult for a researcher to obtain an insider’s view. On the other hand, it is easier to maintain objectivity and neutrality (Burke and Larry, 2010, p. 209). The participant has to be accepted in the field: the famous ‘field access’ which is very important for success in ethnographic research (cf. Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p. 54).

In my study, the observer-as-participant was my primary method to collect research data. However, for the different schools in Germany and in China, there are some alterations to the observer-as-participant role that are adopted in the different instructional situations. I give a brief introduction in the following table:

<b>Observation Method</b>	<b>Observation techniques</b>	<b>Research's position</b>	<b>Description</b>	
<b>Different Schools</b>				
Gymnasium A in Hamburg	Ms. Wee Ms. Baum	Observed classroom while taking field notes, classroom observation videos,	Observer-as-participant	As a researcher I helped my professor to collect data for Two Years' Annual Report 2012, 2013
Gymnasium B in Hamburg	Ms. Ta	Observed classroom while taking field notes	Observer-as-participant	As a researcher, observing classroom and conducting the teachers' interview
Elementary school in Wuhan, China	Ms. Yellow	Observed classroom while sitting at the back of the room, taking field notes, classroom videos	Complete observer	Teacher and students know that I am a researcher
Senior secondary school in Wuhan, China	Ms. Hao	Observed classroom while sitting at the back of the room,	Complete observer	Teacher and students know that I am a researcher

**Table 2: Summary of how observation was conducted in the four different school situations in China and in Germany**

For classroom observations in the two *Gymnasiums* in Germany, the class teachers sometimes asked me to take part in the classroom activities and exercises, assisting them to conduct instruction during the lessons, but, most of the time, I sat at the back of the class to observe and record different classroom activities. In Wuhan, China, I made classroom observation as a complete observer, aiming to provide rich descriptions of the

whole class, such as teachers' and learners' activities, conversations in class and other interesting phenomena. In particular, as a complete observer, the employed observational methods helped me to gain an open mind when observing and recording interesting phenomena in class. In order to better describe the teachers' professional practice in class; I have also made some complementary field notes. In summary, I have described all the data, analyzed and interpreted them with respect to my research perspectives.

### **3.5.4 Writing down field notes**

The purpose of participant observation is to develop an understanding of complex social settings and complex social relationships by seeing them holistically (Mackey, 2005, p. 175). While the researcher has been recognized as a key characteristic of a participant observation (Robson, 2002, p. 314), he must also be seen as an observer who should try to provide rich descriptions of the research field.

In order to cope with the complexity of classroom events, my observations were unstructured and full field notes were taken (Bryman, A., 2001, p. 305). What is more, the researchers including me record what they believe is important in their field notes, i.e. notes written down by the observer during and after making observations. Writing field notes is good to describe specific classroom circumstances taking place at that moment in order to show momentary interaction between the students and the teacher, and to record the reflection of the students and the teachers in the classroom or in the interviews (Lu, 2013, p. 84).

I wrote a large number of field notes associated with class protocols and teachers' in-depth interviews, attempting to record and reconstitute all detailed information as it occurred at that time. These field notes illustrate the actual process of teaching and interview situations, which are helpful in analyzing the teachers' professional beliefs and their instructional orientation.

In addition, at the end of classroom observation and teachers' interviews, all field notes were integrated into research interpretation, to be further refined and categorized

with regard to different school contexts in Germany and in China. In particular, I have recorded some interesting incidents and significant moments during classroom teaching and in the teachers' interviews in my field notes, which provide much helpful information and evidence for my research on the Chinese teacher's individual teaching methods, didactics, teaching behavior and their professional development. Some data I collected from classroom teaching and teachers' interviews are associated with audio taping and video taping as an important complement.

### **3.5.5 Teachers' interviews**

Using the ethnographical method as I described above, I have tried to collect different data to capture the teachers' individual, "lived" experience build up in their instructional practice. The ethnographical teachers' interviews can generally provide a periodical procedure that records the self-transformation and the self-reflection of these teachers.

In my study, there are two types of teachers' interviews: in-depth interviews on instructional behavior and individual instructional practice, and semi-structured interviews on the teachers' attitudes and beliefs concerning their biographies. However, in order to better understand teachers' professional competence, I combined the two types of teachers' interview and conducted a mixed approach to interpret their interviews.

The in-depth interview, as its name suggests, is conducted to explore issues, personal biographies, and what is meaningful to, or valued by the participants, how they feel about particular issues, how they look at particular issues and what their attitudes, opinions and emotions are (cf. Newby, 2010, p. 243, 244).

Firstly, the follow-up 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 (such as *teacher perceptions* and *teacher past experience*) (Cohen et al. 2007). Using the approach of in-depth teachers' interviews to investigate teachers' self-transformation and their self-reflection, I wanted to find out how their biographical experience influenced their professional behavior and practice in class.

Parallel to a series of these interviews, classroom observations and classroom protocols were used to complement the interpretation of the teachers' professional beliefs and their individual identity.

In particular, different kinds of classroom materials, such as handouts, quizzes, classroom exercises, etc. were collected and fed into my analysis. On the basis of classroom observations of their instruction, I afterwards conducted in-depth teachers' interviews. I could therefore focus on teachers' behavior, teachers' teaching methods, teachers' professional orientation and student reaction within the student-teacher interaction in order to explore my teachers' professional beliefs and attitudes. In addition, I could concentrate on some interesting phenomena in class practice and identify whether there is harmony between what the teachers say in their interviews and what they do in class.

The second type of interview is the semi-structured interview. It comprises various predetermined questions that I designed to collect research data in association with my research questions. The questions referred to the teachers' biographies, their working experience in Germany, critical incidents and individual teaching methods (see the questions of the semi-structured interview in Appendix 5). However, the order of my questions is flexible could be changed by the interviewer depending on the situation during the interview (Robson, 2002, p. 270). In the semi-structured interviews of my study, I therefore did not completely follow the sequence of my questions and made some changes depending on my interviewees' interest and responses. The conversation thus becomes open-ended, so that the interviews can become completely informal and the interviewees can air their views and ideas as they wish.

In order to avoid definitive statements from a single respondent (Frey and Fontana, 1991), group interviewing is conducted to further understand the teachers' professional experience and their self-reflection concerning particular professional challenges from a wider perspective. Compared with the individual interviews, the group interview can generate a wider range of responses in limited time. Bogdan and Blicklen (1992, p.100) add that the group interview may be useful for gaining an insight into what might be pursued in subsequent individual interviews. In this thesis, there are two group inter-



views: three female Chinese teachers on 24 April, 2012 and four female Chinese teachers on 3 July, 2012 were analyzed and discussed.

What is more, I made some unstructured interviews in informal ways, to collect much more useful data about the Chinese teachers' themselves. I collected some data from dialogues in daily communication with my interviewees and reproduced them as complementary information to my interpretations. However, my conversation with these teachers was very open and the participants could contribute to the conversation in whichever way they wanted (Robson, 2002, p. 270). The informal communication was very helpful to me to become acquainted with the teachers' real attitudes and their self-reflection concerning Chinese language teaching.

The semi-structured interviews of the participating teachers were audio-taped, focusing on their biographical experience and self-transformation to individual professional attitudes and individual didactics. The interviews were conducted in two school meeting rooms and in a teacher's office and lasted from forty-five minutes up to one hour. I made six informal and eight semi-structured interviews with the three Chinese language teachers. I thereby produced a large amount of research data which can be used for probing their professional development and showing how they dealt with different intercultural challenges in the new educational context.

In order to ensure accuracy and validity of my interpretation, all teachers' interviews were conducted in Chinese, transcribed verbatim and then translated into English for my study. It was convenient for the Chinese teachers to narrate their biographies and express their individual self-reflection on professional experience using their mother tongue.

I show concrete extracts from these teachers' interviews identifying:

- various challenges in their professional development,
- their self-reflection on different educational schemata,
- individual teaching methods,
- their developmental tasks as described in the next chapter.

The Chinese teachers in my interviews were invited to narrate their own personal biographies in China and their professional work experience in Germany to help me expand some new questions and topics.

I shall now provide a concrete example, in order to show how I interpreted the teachers' professional experience and their professional beliefs. For instance, I asked my first interview partner, Ms. Baum, about her first impression of German classroom instruction when she began to work in Germany:

Extract: Teacher Interview with Ms. Baum 24 October 2012 <sup>13</sup>

Ms. Baum: “首先，举例子说，在中国，每个班级大约都有 50 个学生，所有的孩子都被要求去学到知识。他们学得真得很辛苦。相反，在德国同龄的孩子，整个班级的孩子都在玩游戏，没有学到东西 [...]”

Ms. Baum: “Firstly, for example, in China, there are almost 50 students in a class, all of them are asked to learn knowledge. They really learn something hard. On the contrary, German students of the same age, they have been playing games instead of learning real knowledge in class [...]”

The extract shows that Ms. Baum's professional understanding of German school education is still influenced by traditional educational schemata.

Influenced by her previous professional experience in China, Ms. Baum had a superficial understanding of the German educational situation. Compared with the subsequent interviews, one can see that her professional perception has been changed and has been transformed in association with the new educational context. The interviews therefore have helped me depict the transformations and the changes of Chinese teachers' professional beliefs that provide a large amount of evidence for my interpretation. The ethnographic method thus allows the researcher to depict the general framework of the teacher's professional beliefs in the new educational context.

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<sup>13</sup> My further interpretation on the Chinese teachers' interviews will be shown in Chapter 6.

### **3.6 Chapter summary**

My study employs the ethnographic approach which allows exploring the influence of the traditional Chinese education schemata on teachers' professional beliefs and instructional practice. Critical incidents from ethnographical surveys are mainly related to self-transformation and other changes regarding teachers' beliefs. In addition, making classroom observation, writing classroom protocol and writing down field notes were used as research tools intended to collect first-hand data. As a participant in the class, the ethnographical research can observe the teachers' and students' performance and interaction while taking field notes and talking to the students informally.

In my study, I use an ethnographic approach but have only had twelve months to collect my research data from different Chinese language teachers. Thus, there are limitations to my study which do not allow me to present a general description of Chinese teachers' individual didactics. However, the incidents and their particular professional experience shown in my study can record some significant self-transformations concerning my teachers' professional development. In the following chapter, I will therefore discuss the model of developmental tasks Chinese language teachers are confronted with in relation to Uwe Herick's four categories of professional developmental tasks.



# Chapter 4: Professional developmental tasks of teachers

## 4.1 Introduction

Within the *Bildungsgang* framework, my thesis focuses on learners' (students' and teachers') development and their educational experience, which also allows reconstructing teachers' professional competences and their professional identity so that they can deal with individual professional developmental tasks (Kunze and Hericks, 2002). This chapter shows the theoretical framework of teachers' developmental tasks and identifies their professional competence in terms of professional development.

Whether the teachers can successfully deal with their different developmental tasks is crucial for their professional development in relation to happiness, approval of colleagues, school heads, students and parents (cf. Hericks, 2006, pp. 92-138). This means that the developmental tasks can be used to reconstruct developmental courses meant to foster the teachers' competence for instruction and organization of their work.

In the professional experience of Chinese teachers in China, there are different developmental tasks that need to be dealt with during the different stages of their lives. Each teacher is asked to work with different professional requirements. Through making an empirical study on on-service teachers and young in-service teachers in Germany, Uwe Hericks shows some crucial professional requirements for the teachers' behavior concerning the following developmental tasks:

Developmental task	Central professional requirement
Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• balancing role behavior and a whole person behavior, taking one's own possibilities and limitations into account,</li> <li>• near and different, diffuse and specific proportions of the teacher-student-relation allowing individual style to deal with students,</li> <li>• having the competence of reconstruction particularly in the field of instruction</li> </ul>
Mediation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• individual competence as a mediator of subject contents,</li> <li>• competence of dealing with the selection of subject contents and learning material;</li> </ul>
Acknowledgement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teachers' perception that accepts learners as subjects;</li> <li>• acceptance of the fact that the learners have their own concepts of significance and the relativity to the function of school evaluation,</li> </ul>
Institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognition of their own actions as being embedded in institutional structures, and</li> <li>• exploration of possibility and limitation of creative action within the institution.</li> </ul>

**Table 3: Central professional requirements concerning the teachers' behavior (Hericks, 2006, p. 92)<sup>14</sup>**

The concept produced by Hericks can provide a holistic framework to study on teachers' professional development concerning how they deal with their professional tasks for teaching and learning. This means that the developmental tasks can be used to reconstruct developmental courses that can foster teachers' competence for instruction and organization of their work.

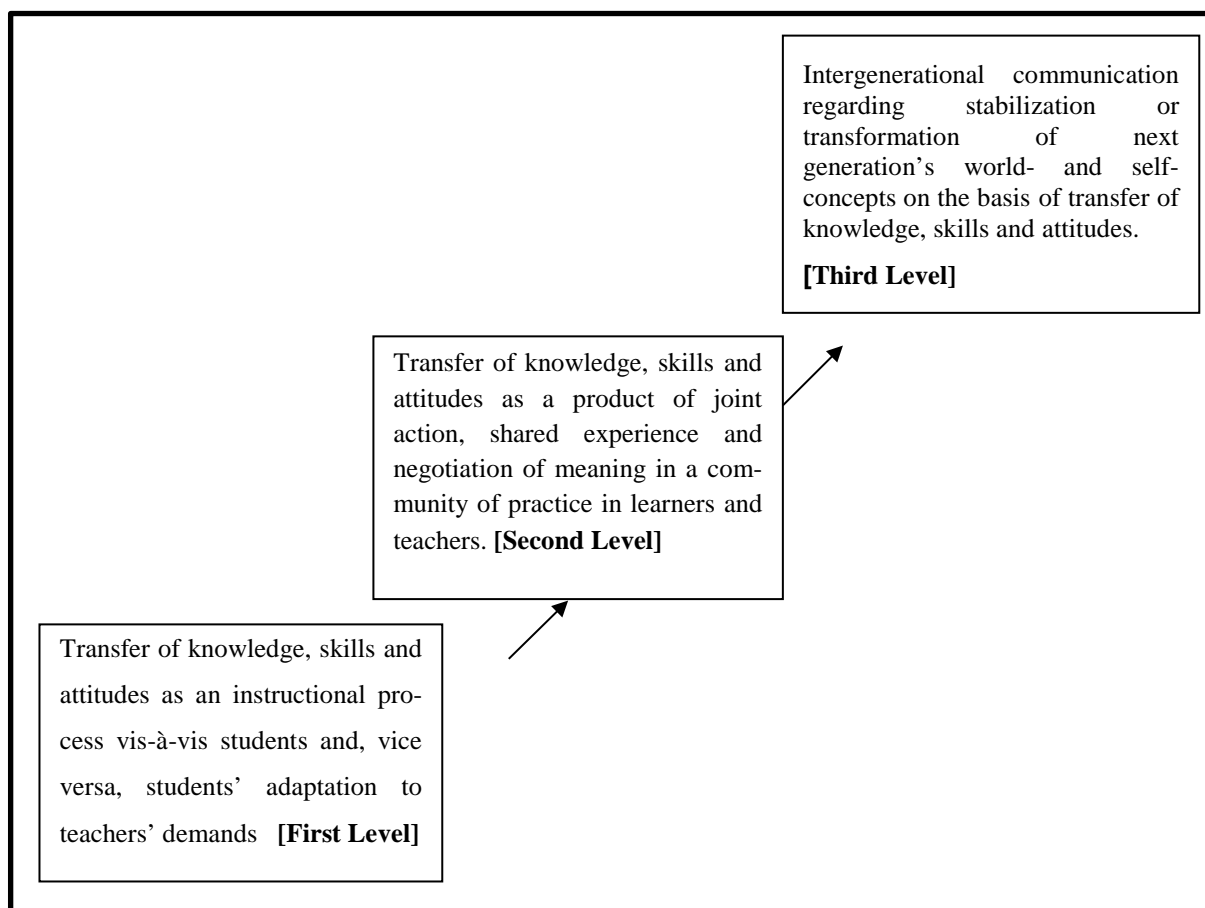
### **A model of teacher-student interaction**

As I have mentioned concerning Klingberg's didactical model (Klingberg, 1987, p.10-33) above, it defines and describes the dialectical relation of the teacher's and the

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<sup>14</sup> Uwe Hericks generalizes the central professional requirements in terms of teacher behavior, referring to some other educational research results on teachers' professionalism (in particular, Oevermann, 1996; Helsper 1996; 2003).

students' positions in the classroom. In order to better describe the dialectical interaction of teachers and students in foreign language teaching, I have borrowed M. Meyer's construct of three levels of teacher-student interaction to study sense-making in the classroom that also enables me to identify Chinese language teachers' professional development. The following figure shows three levels concerning the competence of teachers and students alike (M. Meyer, 2005b)<sup>15</sup>.



**Figure 4: Three levels of didactic instruction and cooperation (M. Meyer, 2005 b, p. 34)**

The three didactic levels of teacher-student interaction can be interpreted as follows: the first level explicates that the teacher teaches his subject matter and leads the class, and the students listen and do what the teacher wants them to do. Traditional Chinese education emphasizes teacher authority and teacher responsibility for students' learning, so that the teacher sees himself as a transmitter of knowledge, competence and values, i.e.

<sup>15</sup> We leave out a zero level on which learning does not take place.

holding the core authority position for the students, and seeing the students the objects of his instructional activities. It identifies the kind of teacher-centered didactics that is sub-optimal; it neglects the fact that the students are at the same time objects and subjects within the interaction; they remain, so to speak, on the surface of activities.

However, the first level can be transformed into a second, communicative level at which instruction implies production and hence negotiation and the growth of meaning. Teachers at this level 'see' instruction as shared experience, joint action, negotiation and growth of meaning. The transfer of knowledge, skills and attitudes is understood as the product of negotiation in a community. At this time, teacher-student interaction and communication can be understood as a communicative process.

After surface description (the first level) and communication theory (the second level), teacher-student interaction can be improved in such a way that it reaches the process of *Bildung* (the third level), allowing intergenerational communication, negotiation of teaching and learning objectives and the mutual acceptance of 'otherness', even though there is a fundamental difference of the teachers' and the students' self-concepts and world views (M. Meyer, 2011, p. 405-406).

In order to achieve a third level process of teacher-student interaction in the Chinese classroom, Chinese teachers should firstly get rid of their traditional perception of teacher-centered didactics and understand the students' subjective roles. They should accept the students' biographies and accept their individuality, trying to establish a situation of mutual acceptance of a joint educational objective between teachers and students. At this level, the interaction can conduct a growth of meaning and be successful concerning the product of negotiation. It means that communication has reached a higher level than a merely communicative one. A good professional teacher should accept students' biographical background and their learning history, which means that they manage to take student's developmental tasks into consideration.

The third level of teacher-student interaction relates to Peukert's formation theory which implies that:

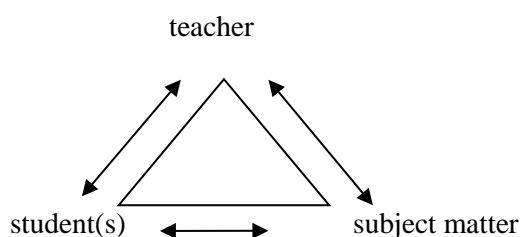
"in order to make use of children's and adolescents' educational potential, it asks teachers to build potential freedom for the children. [...] In particular,



teachers as educators are able to create liberal access for children and adolescents to form their own world and themselves.” (Peukert, 2000, p. 520)

Regarding the idea of *Bildung* for student-teacher interaction, therefore, students should be cultivated to construct their own world-views and cultural identity to Chinese culture. In general, the different levels of didactic interaction provide a significant framework to explore sense-making in Chinese language teaching. They help to identify teachers’ competences concerning their management of their and the students’ developmental tasks as well. I will integrate the three levels into the interpretation of the Chinese teachers’ professional development in Chapter 6. The teachers’ teaching and the students’ learning are seen as a dialectical process. A good interaction allows teachers and students to bring their own biographies and their own anticipation into the instructional process. Despite differences on both sides, teachers’ guidance and the learners’ self-regulation secure the progress of instruction. A professional teacher must therefore create instructional situations in which the students can become responsible for their learning and thus for the teaching-learning process. In this way, the teacher-student interaction can successfully achieve sense-making, so that students are able to develop their own didactic competence and then develop their identity.

In order to better interpret different core parts of teachers’ professional developmental tasks, Uwe Hericks and Ingrid Kunze (2002, p. 405) started with the well-known framework of the didactic triangle (teacher-student-content).



**Figure 5: The didactic triangle**

In Germany, the didactic triangle can be seen as basic in didactics. As the most simple of didactical means it is able to describe the interplay of three parts: didactics deals with

teacher, student (s), and subject matter (“stuff”). This triangle can be simply interpreted: The teachers teach students, and at the same time, students learn subject matter. I will make use of the didactic triangle for the didactics of *Bildungsgang*.

To some extent, Hericks describes the research on *Bildungsgang* didactics and identifies the sense of research. He states that *Bildungsgangforschung* depends on the concept of the developmental task:

“From a systematic point of view it [the developmental task concept, explained by P.R.] can be used to guarantee that the *Bildungsgang* research program does not come to its end in the face of a multitude of idiographic individual cases. Instead it can be used for didactical problems. A first rough idea of the concept can be found once one realizes that *Bildung* biographies are singular, but in no way at random. Instead, they develop in a frame that is delineated by societal demand which is more or less obligatory for all people who are in similar life situations. However, the frame concept is too strict. In reality, everybody must interpret the external demands as individual demands for himself/herself and transform them into tasks of his/her own development so that they can become effective with respect to their biographies.” (Hericks, 2006, p. 60, translated by P.R.)

On the basis of his previous study on the central professional requirements of teachers, Hericks summarizes the four hypothetic categories as determined by objective pedagogical requirements on pre-service and in-service teachers’ professional behavior. In his study, he identifies four categories of developmental tasks for pre-service and young in-service teachers are confronted with in Germany. The four professional tasks are:

- the development of competence and skills and their controlled, effective handling, including dealing with the deficits, which any competence profile naturally involves
- the development of the ability to transfer/mediate acquired knowledge and competence, to impart it to others<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> The German equivalent of ‘transfer’, *Vermittlung*, is not a unidirectional concept, thus both teachers and students produce transfer.

- the development of the ability to accept/acknowledge the students' 'otherness' instead of constructing a stereotyped image of the good student, and
- the development of the ability to interact within the school system -not only with the heads of training, mentors and principals, but in particular with one's own direct colleagues within a community of practice (Hericks and Kunze, 2004; Hericks, 2006, pp. 92-138)

Hericks assumes that the developmental tasks in teachers' professional practice have no concrete sequence in their development. And the developmental tasks are not dealt in a certain sequence. Teachers have different individual biographies and personal working styles to deal with different developmental tasks within the interaction with their students and thus demonstrate their different individual professional competence.

There are many empirical studies that have applied the theoretical framework of developmental tasks in order to examine the teachers' professional development. However, the theoretic framework of professional developmental tasks is one of the approaches employed to study teachers' professional practice. Whether our framework can function in other educational fields and educational contexts is difficult to say. The traditional concept of teacher education becomes more complex, more demanding and more problematic due to the following interrelated problems:

- The first problem is that the teachers' professionalization demands the development of didactics of subject matters. To what extent can the general developmental tasks interpret the subject teacher's professional development concerning their professional practice and objective requirements?
- The second problem relates to the new educational trend of globalization. It is introducing increasingly complex situations into school education. Increasingly, teachers from other countries are beginning to work in new educational contexts and are confronted with different circumstances in comparison with the conditions of their own professional biographies.

As a result, we have to question how we can apply the theoretical framework and related research experience in Germany to these teachers' professionalization. In the next four sections of this chapter, I introduce a model of the four developmental tasks concerning my teachers' professional competence.

## 4.2 The developmental task of competence

Confronted with different teaching circumstances and educational schemata, Chinese language teachers should have professional competence to cope with professional requirements and prospects. They should be able to cultivate a personal teaching style and a personal way of dealing with their students (cf. Hericks and Kunze, 2002, p. 405).

Of course, one has to see that teachers' professional competence is related to teachers' professional knowledge. Wee S. Shulman (1986, 1987) developed a theoretical framework for teachers' professional knowledge with respect to domains and categories of content knowledge. He distinguishes three categories of content knowledge: *subject matter content knowledge*, *pedagogical content knowledge* and *curriculum knowledge*. Within Shulman's content knowledge taxonomy, subject matter knowledge refers to the knowledge, understanding, skill and disposition that are to be learned by children at school (Shulman, 1987, pp. 8-9).

We can ask what the concrete standards are for being a professional teacher. The American National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS, 1989) establishes the following core principles concerning teacher professional development:

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- Teachers are members of learning communities.

**Table 4: The five core propositions of the American National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS, 1989)**

In order to better understand the requirements concerning Chinese teachers' professional competence; I introduce the following standards generalized by Jürgen Baumert and Mareike Kunter (2006):

- Specific, experience-saturated, declarative and procedural knowledge (skills in the narrow sense; knowledge and skills);
- Professional values, beliefs, subjective theories, normative preferences and objectives;
- Motivational orientation and Metacognitive abilities and skills of professional self-regulation (Baumert and Kunter, 2006, p. 481).

The framework also clearly identifies some necessary professional requirements for Chinese teachers' professional development. As I have noted above, the major challenge in teaching Chinese as a foreign language is lack of related educational research on the didactics of the Chinese language compared with major European languages. What is more, there are some other specific challenges and issues to be identified with respect to curriculum, classroom instruction, instructional evaluation etc. For instance, as Schrier, L. L. (1993) stated, the challenges require a much wider array of competences for the future foreign language teachers, who are expected to be proficient in foreign language and its culture, proficient in the instructional language and the culture of the school's community, expert in curricular design and implementation (Schrier, L. L., 1993, p. 244).

Chinese teachers' professional competence should include specific professional knowledge of the subject matter and various instructional ways of representing and formulating the subject matter in order to make it comprehensible to the students. Referring to the Hanban official professional standards for Chinese teachers, professional competence mainly involves subject-matter competence, linguistic knowledge and skills, intercultural communicative competence, theory of second language acquisition and study strategy, and overall quality (Hanban, 2007).

After the PISA crisis in Germany, didacticians tried to explore and construct theories of general education (*Allgemeinbildungstheorien*) by focusing, for example, on

reading competence, mathematic competence, scientific literacy, and cross-curricular competences, self-regulated learning and familiarity with computers on one hand, learning skills and cooperation and communication skills on the other hand. Meinert Meyer evaluates the development as follows:

“With regard to layers of the basic skills, we need to be able to develop a general educational curriculum, which integrates the cultural level into the national level. I note that such a model of course strongly decides from the national educational standards.” (M. Meyer, 2013, p. 174-175)

As he noted, a new national curriculum for general education should focus on the students’ communicative competence and intercultural competence in class. Intercultural communicative competence can be described as follows (see Edmondson and House, 1998):

Intercultural competence is the ability to act adequately and flexible with communicative partners from other cultures, to become aware of the cultural differences and of foreign life-styles [...] (M. Meyer, 2010a, p. 102)

The development of intercultural communicative competence is assumed to be the most significant professional competence in the teachers’ professionalization process. The most important point therefore is that the teachers should get acquainted with the diversity of word cultures and they should know how to differentiate between the Chinese culture and other cultures. The Chinese teachers understand the rules and practices characteristics of those who are learning Chinese as second or third language. They should be familiar with the theory of second-language acquisition and with learning strategies; they should understand learning habits in order to help the students to develop their own learning strategies regarding the Chinese language.

Most of the Chinese language teachers have grown up and been educated in Chinese tertiary institutions; their professional identity and attitudes have been greatly influenced by traditional Chinese educational schemata. They assume that the Chinese language teachers’ primary responsibility is to focus on drilling, grammar and syntax, translation, exercises and students’ accuracy. However, in the Western educational schemata, the communicative approach is regarded as the mainstream theory for for-

eign-language teaching. The professional beliefs and attitudes of Chinese teachers have therefore to be changed and transformed in the new educational context.

In order to better to understand intercultural communicative competence, I give the following references as an illustration. William Baker (2011) sees the development of intercultural competence as:

“One approach to systematically conceptualize and investigate knowledge, attitudes and behavior associated with successful intercultural communication.” (Baker, 2011, p. 200)

When Chinese language teachers begin to work in Germany, they have to develop intercultural communicative competence so that they can help learners to construct their own understanding of the Chinese culture. In addition, through making a comparison between the learners’ own country and the foreign-language country, the teachers should be able to help the learners to develop a reflective attitude with respect to the culture and civilization of their own countries. Educating students to use a foreign language means accustoming them to being intercultural sensitive, by supporting them to build the ability to act as cultural mediators (cf. Sen Gupta, 2002, p.132).

In general, Chinese language teachers should master abundant teaching methods, have professional knowledge of Chinese, intercultural communicative competence, adequate intercultural attitudes and cultural awareness of the intercultural setting.

### **4.3 The developmental task of transferring /mediation<sup>17</sup>**

This developmental task relates to the teachers’ ability to transfer/mediate acquired knowledge and competences and to impart them to others. It means that teachers can manage the transmission and transformation of knowledge, ability and attitudes to students through various teaching strategies to students.

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<sup>17</sup> I refer to an essay of M. Meyer here. He noted that the German equivalent of “transfer”, “Vermittlung”, is not a unidirectional concept. Teachers and students produce transfer. (M. Meyer, 2011, p.410).

In Hericks' words concerning teachers' professional tasks, developmental tasks of transferring/ mediation can be divided into the following three sub-skills. Teachers should be able to:

- differentiate between the process of learners' acquisition and teachers' mediation in the implementation of action
- construct an instruction that he/she can observe students' running process of learning
- select mediated content for the students' learning and think about the question of what content means for the students' subjectively biographical development (Hericks, 2006, p.118.)

It is important that teachers are asked to deal with professional developmental tasks in the teacher-student interaction. On one hand, the developmental task of teachers' mediation focuses on the role of the teachers as experts on their instructional content, methods, and styles of thought. On the other hand, the task emphasizes the influence of the students' capability on the instructional process. Taking the two aspects of influence into account, it requires a teacher not only a professional scholar, but also an expert on instruction as well as an expert on individual professional study (cf. Combe, 2005).

Unlike in Chinese didactics, where content is held as a body of knowledge and skills for students' acquisition and mastery, in the German *Didaktik* tradition, content is constructed as an important resources for *Bildung* (Klafki, 2000a). Knowledge mediation of *Bildung*-centered didactics focuses on the formation of mind, the cultivation of liberty and human dignity and the development of individuality (cf. Hopmann, 2007). The content by virtue of its educational substance has "formative potential" or possible value-laden impact on the mind of the adult-to-be (Klafki, 1996, p. 52). In other words, it can lead to 'fundamental experience' (Krüger, 2008)<sup>18</sup>. Within the German didactic traditions, the teacher is centrally concerned with interpreting and actualizing the educational potential embedded in the teaching content (Klafki, 2000b; also see Deng, 2012, p.116). In particular, the content becomes educative only when interpreted by teachers

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<sup>18</sup> I should add this position is in a conflict with M. Meyer's position in one of his paper (M. Meyer, 2013).



who are directed in their work by the aim of *Bildung* (Klafki, 2000b, quoted by Deng, 2016, p. 88).

Confronted with a new educational context in Germany, Chinese teachers firstly have to realize that the content is not only understood as knowledge to be mediated. Meaning and values are not already prescribed in teaching materials and texts. Teachers are asked to focus on the educative potential of the content to be learned and disclose the educational potential contained in the content through conducting didactics analysis from the perspective of *Bildung* (cf. Deng, 2012, p. 121).

Furthermore, following Lothar Klingberg, professional requirement demands the teachers develop the ability to deal with the contradiction of teachers' guidance and learners' self-regulation.

Against this, we have to see that the traditional Chinese teaching process is teacher-dominated which means that the Chinese language teachers select different items of knowledge, interpret them and explain the knowledge to the students. In contrast, German students educated in a *Bildung*-oriented way are used to practicing constructive and are willing to learn knowledge and engage to instructional activities on the basis of their own interest and self-reflection. The reader will accept that this leads many challenges for Chinese teachers.

In my empirical research, for example, some Chinese teachers expressed that their main concerns was with respect to the new intercultural contrast. Used to the typical Chinese classroom, these teachers felt frustrated by the large amount of disruptive students behavior such as "talking when I am teaching" "frequently asking for permission to go to the restroom" "I think, German students have been spoiled..." "they are not obedient as my Chinese students" "the class is too active", etc. The Chinese teachers expect their students to be obedient to them and follow their instruction, but the German students are used to learning in a much freer environment. On account of this, the Chinese teachers have to deal with the tensions that traditional teacher-dominated didactics and student-centered didactics have produced in the intercultural setting.

Last but not least, the developmental task concept requires Chinese language teachers to focus on the significance of cultural knowledge. Within the influence of cul-

ture-theory didactics (*Kulturtheoretische Didaktik*) in Germany, the foremost task of foreign language teaching is culture instruction, introducing the culture to the students and cultivating their participation in intercultural communication (Künzli, 2012, p. 40). The evolution of German culture-theory didactics is able to offer some enlightenment for Chinese teachers' instruction.

In general, I want to introduce a concrete requirement for this aspect of the Chinese teachers' professional developmental tasks of mediation. Chinese language teachers are required to develop their individual didactical competence to mediate acquired knowledge and competence to help students to combine their biographies with the learning content.

#### **4.4 The developmental task of acknowledgment**

The professional developmental task of acknowledgement refers to the development of the teachers' ability to accept/acknowledge the students' 'otherness' (Hericks, 2006, p. 118; M. Meyer, 2010, p. 410). The students are thus seen as individual subjects with individual developmental requirements. The teachers would have to respond to each student's individual development as it differs from the teachers' instructional purposes and expectations. It includes the requirements for the teachers to develop the concept of 'pedagogical foreign perception' and assumes a mutual recognition of the students by the teacher and of the teacher by the students, thus allowing individual participation (cf. Hericks, 2006, p.122, p.129).

The philosopher Axel Honneth (2003) identifies three forms of reciprocal recognition: *love*, *justice* and *solidarity*, which can be applied to the teacher-student relation (Honneth, 2003, p. 23; quoted by Keller-Schneider, 2012, p.106). *Love* means that the teacher develops a caring, emotional attitude for acknowledgments that refers to more than the diffuse relationship between teacher and student. In addition, he knows when to give empathic caring or restraints with respect to their mutual relationship (cf. Helsper, 1996, p. 530). The developmental task of acknowledgment should focus on the im-

portance of each student's guidance; but the same is valid for the construction of the whole teaching situation (cf. Keller-Schneider, 2010, p.112). In general, we have to see that the German educational tradition emphasizes the students' liberation for self-regulated learning in class.

Compared with the concept of education, *Bildung* is not understood as knowledge and competence development, but as the students' self-formation and self-construction on the basis of self-regulated competence. The students have to learn to deal with different developmental tasks on the basis of self-formation and self-construction. However, I can find common ground concerning the purpose of *Bildung* between Chinese and German educational schemata. In particular, education in China does not only concern intellectual development but also the cultivation of moral qualities (Guo, 2011, p. 97).

The educational purpose in Confucian pedagogy is to be seen in the cultivation of the mind but Confucius has a conception of the mind-body which is very different from the European conception. The central Confucian concepts in this respect refer to the development of the powers of 'thinking', including 'construction' and 'self-reflection' of the individual mind (cf. Hall and Ames, 1987, p. 21).

Confucian pedagogy conceives knowledge as a situated intuitive insight, learning as a modification of the self and teaching as a heart-to-heart encounter. However, it has long been misunderstood by Western and other educational researchers. Knowledge is not taught alone by telling, informing or indoctrinating. Confucius therefore attaches greater importance to students' self-cultivation and introspection and to the teachers' function as a moral model and facilitator in the real worlds the students encounter and live in (Xiao, 2009, p. 55).

In contrast, from the perspective of *Bildung*, instruction becomes dynamic joint action, allowing to accept students as subjective in interaction. The Hamburg university professor of philosophy of education, Helmut Peukert, therefore conceives *Bildung* as an instructional process through which each child is cultivated into a capable, valuable and responsible social member, able to have a meaningful effect on society. Peukert defines the learning objective of *Bildung* as the next generation's emancipation:

“Especially where adults act as representatives of a historically developed language and culture, they have to assume a subjective potential of the capacity to act, the faculty of creative reconstruction and new construction—all of which cannot be eliminated—towards the child. A transcendental analysis of the assumed liberty potential becomes meaningful: making use of children’s and juveniles’ educational potential does not imply that they are clay in the educator’s hand, but describes a potential liberty structure of the juveniles.” (Peukert, 2000, p. 520, cf. Peukert, 1998, Peukert, 2015)

In Peukert’s words, *Bildung* is therefore understood as the capability of dealing with uncertainty.

In addition, he develops the concept of transformative *Bildung*. He writes:

„*Bildung* dürfte nicht nur als Aneignung der Wissensbestände, Interpretationen und Regeln einer gegenwärtig bestehenden kulturellen Lebensform bestimmt werden, sondern auch als die Fähigkeit, diese Lebensform, wenn sie sich selbst gefährdet, in ihren Strukturen und ihren herrschenden Regeln zu transformieren. „ (Peukert, 2000, p. 509)

“*Bildung* should be determined not only of acquisition of the knowledge, interpretation and rules of present cultural life, but also as the ability to transform the structures and prevailing rules when this present cultural life endangers itself.”

Because of this, Chinese teachers should develop their professional competence and individual awareness to accept the uncertainty of each learner’s development. Each student is able to bring his/her personal characteristics and diversity into the teachers’ instruction, so that the teachers have to accept their different motivation and demands in terms of learning. In general, focus on the achievement of ‘otherness’ requires the teacher to take students’ individual background and biographies into consideration. Besides, the teachers cannot know the students’ future lives, and what kinds of knowledge and skills teaching contents and subject materials will be needed in the new era (Hericks, 2006, p.119). Chinese teachers should not only focus on the subject matter and on the

objective requirements of the curriculum, but emphasize students' self-formation and self-construction for language.

Acknowledgement in teaching requires the reciprocal acceptance of teachers and students; this will bring different challenges to teachers' mediation and students' learning. Reciprocal acceptance asks teachers to show respect for each student's biography, for individual self-concepts and world views on language and culture, accepting fundamental differences between the teachers' and students' biographical experience.

In order to better understand the Chinese teachers' professional tasks concerning acknowledgment; I would like to describe some possible challenges that will perhaps take place in their professional practice.

- Firstly, the most significant challenge for Chinese language teachers is the fact that their professional perception focuses on teacher-centered didactics, which makes them used to teaching in a 'peaceful' and 'harmonious' interaction with passive, obedient, quiet students. They therefore should transform their professional attitudes to students, in order to accept the heterogeneity of each one.
- Secondly, having respect for the students' individual development and 'otherness' does not mean that instruction is totally dependent on the students' requirements and wishes. Even though German didactics emphasizes students' liberty, free development, and individual formation, teachers have to select the subject matter and conduct their instruction associated with a syllabus, a local pedagogical curriculum requirement.
- Thirdly, in comparison with the German educational context, Chinese pedagogy has often been criticised concerning the crucial role of standard examinations for study assessment. In particular, social selection for tertiary education relies only on examination notes and personal academic achievements. Thus, new educational contexts require Chinese teachers to make a self-transformation in order to be able to suit their students' individual formation. In particular, they have to abandon the traditional Chinese stereotype of 'good students'.

Professional identity is related to the teachers' perception of themselves and their self-understanding (Tickle, 1999), and teaching context, teaching experience and teachers'

biographies also influence their professional identity (Beijaard et al., 2000). However, Chinese teachers' identity and role perception today still retain traditional Chinese didactics, namely teacher-centered didactics, examination-oriented didactics, rote-learning, etc. They should avoid producing assessments of the students' language capability solely on the basis of their academic achievements.

To summarize: acknowledgment is regarded as the basic structure for the interaction of teachers and students, as it is very significant for the mutual understanding of the teachers' and the students' developmental requirement. The teachers' ability of acknowledging the students' individuality can reflect professional identity.

#### 4.5 The developmental task of acting in an institution

I have noted above that learner(s), teacher(s) and content(s) constitute the three parts of the didactical triangle. The didactical triangle can offer a clear framework to understand the interrelation of the categories of developmental tasks. In particular, it can show that the developmental tasks of competence, mediation, and acknowledgment don't interplay in a free room, but are integrated into the framework of the institution, i.e. the school as a societal subsystem (cf. Hericks, 2006, p. 130). This section deals with the understanding and evaluation of the institutional requirements and conditions:

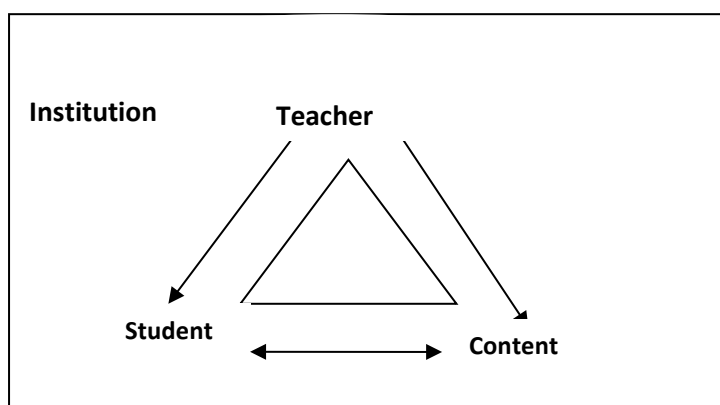


Figure 6: The didactic triangle within the framework of the institution

Teachers' developmental tasks of competence, mediation, acknowledgment and collegial cooperation together as a whole interact within the school context and the educational cultural context. Looking at Figure 6, it can be seen that the framework of the school as an institution creates a particular situation in which teacher, students and content act within given limits. How teachers deal with the four categories of professional developmental tasks is related to the classroom situation, to the collegial culture, to the school context, to the social educational context etc.

In order to understand specific instructional actions in class, some given social, cultural, contextual constraints to instructional actions can be seen as the core principles in relation to the developmental task of acting in school as an institution (Hericks, 2006, p. 132). What is more, it means that the institution of school is a place, where different constraints and principles can reduce the free room for individual behaviour and individual subjective development (cf. Hericks, 2006, p.131). That is why the students' and teachers' individual behaviour and their routine styles are influenced by the social cultural context and by the school context.

In order to better explore the teachers' development of the ability to interact within the school system, on the one hand, my study emphasizes the influence of social contexts and, on the other, it focuses on the concrete teaching practice within the school system. The developmental tasks of acting within the institution will be divided into two perspectives, *the macroscopic perspective* and *the microscopic perspective*.

From the *macroscopic perspective*, as shown above in Section 4.2, different cultural settings lead to educational philosophies that have a great impact on the different aspects within the instructional framework. The different educational philosophies of China and Germany have influenced school education and produced different educational systems in the two countries.<sup>19</sup>

From the *microscopic perspective*, the developmental task of acting within the school system documents that teachers should strengthen their own ability and willingness to cooperate with different colleagues, not only with the heads of training, with

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<sup>19</sup> I will make a further explanation in Chapter 5 concerning different educational contexts in China and in Germany.

mentors and principals but in particular with one's own colleagues within a community (Hericks and Kunze, 2004; Hericks, 2006, p. 92-138). In spite of limitations due to the institutional framework, the teachers can develop a sustainable concept for acting in school in cooperation with their colleagues (Hericks and Kunze, 2002, p. 405).

Teachers are already expected to develop their cooperative capability of learning and their active competence in collegial cooperation within the educational institution in their preparation professional period (*Referendariat*) (Keller-Schneider and Hericks, 2011, p. 23).

From the *macroscopic* perspective, Chinese language teachers are confronted with a very different instructional situation in comparison to what they have experienced in China. In addition, from the *microscopic* perspective, they encounter some new problems and challenges concerning school colleagues, school management and other colleagues.

Teachers' professional competence of acting in the institution requires Chinese teachers to develop various professional capabilities, including individual cooperative working capabilities, communicative capability, the ability of resolve collective conflicts and so on. They therefore have to develop various professional competences to act and interact within the school system.

- First of all, the Chinese teachers have to develop their competence to take part in collegial communication and collaboration in school.
- Secondly, Chinese teachers have to construct their own social networks in their peer groups and be willing to consult with other professional stuffs inside and outside school.
- Thirdly, even though there are different professional perception and attitudes of German colleagues and Chinese colleagues in the institution, Chinese teachers have to improve their competence for collegial collaboration to deal with intercultural tensions.
- Furthermore, the teachers are required to cultivate an individual strong sense of community belonging and to share their own real feelings and instructional experience with other colleagues.



- Last but not least, the Chinese teachers should realize the significance of teacher training and in-service teacher education. In this way, they can develop their collaborative competence to seek communication and support from other colleagues.

## **4.6 Chapter summary**

On the basis of my case studies, I will analyse my Chinese language teachers' professional competence using the four categories of developmental tasks suggested by Uwe Hericks and now by me: (1) competence development, (2) transfer of the acquired knowledge in the instructional process, (3) willingness and capacity to acknowledge the 'otherness' of the students, and (4) development of interactional competence in the institution with respect to colleagues, principles etc. I use the framework to explore and describe the Chinese teachers' professional development.



## **Chapter 5: Professionalization as the development of individual didactics from an intercultural perspective**

As I have noted before, there are more and more studies with a focus on interactional conflicts in Chinese language teaching and on cultural issues involved in these conflicts. Most of the Chinese language teachers were born in China and have been educated in Chinese tertiary institutions whose professional identity and attitudes have been greatly influenced by the traditional Chinese norms of teaching. The educational situation in Germany has therefore created for them new challenges and problems for their professional development.

My study understands Chinese teachers' professional development as a continuous process of individual biographies. We have to ask how they develop their own individual didactics in the intercultural context. As I have explained in Chapter 4, the professionalization of Chinese language teachers can be understood as the continuation of their biographies and professional experience in the new educational context.

In order to better understand the interaction among the Chinese teachers and their students in class, I think it is important to provide an overview concerning the differences between Chinese and German culture with respect to teaching and learning. In my thesis I have chosen cultural differences in order to understand the tensions and conflicts as they arise in terms of their professional development and professional practice in the intercultural settings. Subsequently, my study introduces the development of teacher professionalization in Germany, which allows me to better analyze the professional developmental requirements for Chinese language teachers. Last but not least, my study reveals professional developmental requirements for Chinese language teachers regarding intercultural norms in Germany.

The *Bildungsgang* framework is able to provide a new perspective in the study of teachers' professionalization in relation to their professional biographies concerning learning and teaching. Confronted with new intercultural developmental requirements, Chinese teachers experience new changes and transformations, then gradually form their individual didactics in a new classroom context.

## **5.1 Chinese language teachers' professional perceptions in the intercultural settings**

As explained in Chapter 2, there are huge differences between the Western educational schemata and traditional Chinese educational schemata, one of them being, for example, Western education emphasizes active and self-regulated learning, student centeredness, meaningful learning, creativity, compliment-giving and democratic teacher-student relationships. My comparative research on Chinese teachers in China and in Germany shows that teachers' professional identity and perceptions are shaped and influenced to a large extent by the different cultural settings and pedagogic philosophies. Even though Chinese language teachers work in German schools, their classroom behavior and practice have been influenced by the traditional Chinese educational schemata and cultural values.

I firstly want to overview the characteristics of the Chinese educational schemata.

### **5.1.1 Confucianism is the cornerstone of Chinese tradition**

Traditional Chinese civilization has developed mainly under the influence of Confucius (551-479 BC) and Confucianism. Confucianism has affected the whole ideology of Eastern social culture. Deng Zongyi, an educational researcher from Singapore has analyzed the historical development of Chinese didactics and identified Confucianism as

the cornerstone of traditional Chinese culture that has influenced and shaped Chinese educational thought and practice since 200 BCE (Deng, 2011b, p.562).

Confucian philosophy can be found in the Analects<sup>20</sup>, (Lúnyǔ 《论语》). Confucianism in China is not a religion, but it is practiced as a kind of social code (Wang Y. H. 2006, p. 89). Teaching is to establish the social order and to place society under the sage's control (Wang, Y. H., 2006, p. 93). Confucius' philosophical thoughts and his teaching have been influencing instructional culture in China for more than thousands years. To some extent, contemporary Chinese pedagogy can be regard as just a re-discovery of Confucian pedagogy.

According to Don Starr, the former president of the British Association of Chinese studies, I can realize that education in the Confucian heritage cultures finds its foundation in three main sense constructions, namely *humanism*, *harmony* and *hierarchy* (Starr, 2012, p. 8).

*Humanism* means developing virtuous conduct through education. It requires acceptance of the dignity of all humankind. The core teachings of Confucianism consist of 'Three Guidelines' and 'Five Constant Laws', both of which have to be understood on the basis of two moral concepts: De (德) and Li (礼). De (德) refers to the highest moral and virtuous level that people can reach through self-cultivation, and Li (礼) refers to ritual and goodness that teaches people how to follow correct behavior (Wang Y. H., 2014). 'Five Constant Laws' refers to (1) 'ren (仁)', (2) 'yi (义)', (3) 'li (礼)', (4) 'zhi (智)' and (5) 'xin (信)', whose meanings are (1) benevolence, (2) righteousness, (3) manners, (4) wisdom and (5) credit.

What holds for the methods of teaching also holds for the 'Five Constant Laws', which can be related to Johann Friedrich Herbart's theories (cf. Cheng, K. M., 2011, p. 596; Starr, 2012, p. 8; Zhou, 2006, p. 31). The famous German educator and philosopher, Herbart (1808-1964) replaced Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative by his five moral ideas.

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<sup>20</sup> A series of teachings of Confucius, not written by him but by his students after his death; the analects were, for almost the whole duration of the Chinese feudal system (140 BC-1911), advocated as the "Bible" to guide people's beliefs, attitudes and behaviors.

(1) The first one, inner freedom (*innere Freiheit*), defines the relation of the individual's will to his judgment, this being the equivalent of the Confucian 'loyalty' (信 *xin*), which assumes the trustworthiness of gained knowledge from a combination of subjective feelings and objective observation.

(2) 'Perfection' (*Vollkommenheit*) is the second of Herbart's moral idea which includes man's volition with respect to intensity, variety and concentration. Perfection corresponds to Confucius' 'wisdom', (*zhi* 智), which also emphasizes the variety and the intensity of knowledge, combining it with individual courage.

(3) (*Ren* 仁), 'benevolence' (*Wohll wollen*), the central moral concept of Confucius, is a person's own will in relation to other people, showing empathy with and sympathy for them before taking any action.

(4) (*Li* 礼), 'right or law' (*Recht*), refers to the mutual dependence of the will of a person on the will of others, so that they do not conflict, thus also relating to correct behavior on the basis of social ritual and manners.

(5) (*Yi* 义), 'retribution or equity' (*Billigkeit*) finally relates to equality for intended good or evil, and to righteousness in identifying the proper share one should receive from a just distribution of rights and benefits, duties and privileges (Zhou and Ye, 2006, p. 32).

It can be seen that there are some similarities between the 'Five Constant Laws' of Confucian philosophy and Herbart's educational theories.

*Hierarchy* also reflects the quest for harmony: people should know their place in society and behave accordingly. *Li* stands for the central position of Confucianism. It implies that all people should obey the ritual practice, the social orders of goodness, and follow the established and correct social rules. The five constant relationships in Confucian thought cover five kinds of human relationships including the child showing full respect and absolute obedience to the parents, the wife to the husband, the younger brother to the elder brother, the younger in general to the older, and the subject to the ruler. (cf. Wang, Y. H., 2005. p. 88). It also emphasizes students' full respect and abso-

lute obedience to their teacher. The teacher's dignity is deeply embedded in Chinese classroom instruction and in didactics (Wang, C. S., 1985, p. 221). Thus, traditional school education focuses on the teachers' dignity and the students' diligence, requiring students to obey the teachers' arrangement and to accept different kinds of class discipline. Teachers have to be honored and respected by students. In addition, students are expected to be quiet and self-disciplined; they should refrain from challenging the teachers' transmitted knowledge.

The reverence with which a Chinese teacher is treated is reflected in many popular sayings, one of which runs, 'Yī rì wéi shī, zhōngshēng wéi fù (一日为师, 终生为父)',<sup>21</sup>, meaning that 'he who teaches me for one day is my father for life.' This quotation implies that the students are asked to demonstrate great respect for the teacher and comply with his/her teaching (cf. Wang, C. S., 1985, p. 221). Under this principle, teachers share the same norms (eg. strict discipline) as childrearing in their teaching, which shapes the perceptions of teaching, the learning process, and expectations of what a good teacher is (Li and Pu, 2010, p. 130).

The Confucian concept of '*harmony*' (和谐) has deeply influenced Chinese culture and the ways in which Chinese ideas about morality and education are constructed. Confucianism teaches self-cultivation to achieve harmony with oneself, as a prerequisite for harmony within one's family, with others, with nature and the whole world. At a practical level, the value placed on harmony can be interpreted as a preference for compromise over conflict, reform over revolution and eclecticism over dogma. In China, this can be seen as a direct legacy of the Confucian tradition in which social harmony is seen as the highest moral ideal and, therefore, a personal goal as well as a symbol of Chinese culture (Li, Z. G., 2011). It means avoiding strife, avoiding extremism, being willing to compromise and aiming for the middle way.

Thus, it can be found that the principle of *harmony* is embedded into the Chinese teachers' professional perceptions, which is in relation to teachers' authority, conformity and professional roles. Chinese students are brought up to show great respect for their

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<sup>21</sup> The old saying is selected from the book 《鸣沙石室佚书——太公家教》, míng shā shí shì yì shū compiled by Luo Z.Y., 1913.

teachers' instruction, rather than produce challenges for them (Crozet and Liddicoat, 1999). Therefore, teachers and students sustain and maintain a 'peaceful' situation in the classroom in China.

Today, Confucian philosophy has a profound impact on Chinese teachers' professional beliefs and their professional perceptions. I therefore shall now describe some characteristics of the Chinese educational schemata: (1) a teacher-centered classroom atmosphere (2) education as a process of accumulating knowledge via repetition and memorization (3) over-emphasis of discipline in classrooms and (4) obsession with examinations.

### **5.1.2 A general description of characteristics of teachers' professional beliefs concerning Chinese educational schemata**

#### **(1) In China, teachers depend on a teacher-centered classroom atmosphere**

It is well known that the average number of Chinese students in a class is much higher than in Germany. There are fifty students in a classroom, almost two-and-a-half times as many as the average number in Germany. As a result, Chinese language teachers aim to teach in the limited time available rather than design a series of mutual, communicative and co-operative activities in the classroom.

Teachers often maintain control over students by directly teaching the whole class. Direct teaching helps teachers control the lesson-flow while engaging students in the learning activities (Huang and Leung, 2004). What is more, the teachers address the whole class most of the time, and if any interaction occurs, this is generally between the teacher and one student. Yu-Jing Ni, Ming Ming Chiu and Zi-Juan Cheng have shown that Chinese teachers orient 90% of their time on direct classroom instruction (Ni, Chiu and Cheng, 2010, p. 146). Frontal instruction establishes the teacher-centered classroom: the students are dependent and compliant; they have to memorize and learn the teaching contents in correspondence with the teachers' requirements. However, Western student-



centered didactics understands children as “assertive, independent and curious and to explore the world on their own terms” (Hess and Azuma, quoted by Watkins, D.A. and Biggs, J. B., 1996, p. 58). By contrast, the Chinese teachers are fully responsible for class effectiveness, teaching plans, subject material and their students’ learning achievement.

In order to make sure that knowledge can be transmitted correctly and appropriately, the teachers must have already mastered a profound body of knowledge and effective skills in order to impart their knowledge in the most accessible way possible (Brick, 1991, p.155).

Teaching methodology is basically realized by the teachers reading directly and the students being discouraged from asking irrelevant or problematic questions. There are students with doubts and critical arguments in China as there are everywhere else on earth, but in China they are confronted with the traditional Confucian belief in harmony, and this reduces the possibility and frequency of their critique and independent argumentation. In general, teachers and students in China are used to living in a ‘peaceful’ instructional environment that produces an atmosphere of dignity for both teachers and students alike.

## **(2) In China, education is a process of accumulating knowledge via repetition and memorization**

Confucian thinking assumes that education is a process of accumulating knowledge and not a practical process of constructing and using knowledge for immediate purposes (Hu, 2002, p. 97). In order to ensure effective instruction, students with a Chinese background accept repetitive rote-learning and memorization (e.g. Ballard and Clanchy, 1991, p. 67, 70). Repetition in China is one of the main learning methods, and the same holds for memorization.

The two methods, repetition and memorization, are regarded as superficial approaches contrary to the Western approaches of problem exploration and problem solv-

ing (cf. Biggs and Watkins, 1996). However, it is wrong to assert that this stereotypical view of Chinese pedagogy is derived from the Chinese Confucian pedagogical tradition. Because, authentic Confucian pedagogy assumes that the teacher's role is to deliver to the students not knowledge but an opportunity to enter into a discourse in which teachers and students share the experience of learning (Curran, 2014, p. 306). Regarding Confucianism, teacher-student interaction is therefore to be seen as a mutual understanding between the teacher and the students on the basis of a shared experience or joint action.

However, there is a paradox in the Chinese learner's behavior that is difficult to explain (Biggs and Watkins, 1996, p. 56). Even though Chinese students are assumed to demonstrate poor learning motivation because of rote-learning and passive learning, they flourish academically and demonstrate considerably higher achievements in international student assessment than their Western counterparts, especially in mathematics and the sciences (Mehdizadeh and Scott, 2005, p. 30). Many Chinese students combine the processes of memorizing and understanding in a way that Western students seldom do (Marton et al., 1996; Marton et al., 1997). That is why I am thinking about a new hypothesis by asking whether students' academic achievements will improve more when the students are given more liberty to develop their individuality to practise constructive learning. Perhaps the students themselves are excellent in learning these subjects, which would mean that they are able to obtain better academic achievements than other students. At present, Chinese educational researchers are not able to provide any reasonable evidence to support this kind of hypothesis, but it makes sense to attempt to find some.

Meanwhile, these researchers assume that the Chinese practice of activating students is often misunderstood by Westerners to be a drill of algorithms, as memorization in the negative sense (Biggs, 1996, p. 32). I hold to the contrary that repetition does not mean mechanical memorization, because memorization in the Chinese educational system means memorizing with understanding.

In order to distinguish between the two aspects, Dahlin and Watkins write that:

“[...] the traditional Asian practice of repetition or memorization can have different purposes. On the one hand, repetition can be associated with mechanical rote learning; on the other hand, memorization can be used to deepen and develop understanding of the knowledge” (Dahlin and Watkins, 2000, p. 36).

Because of this, memorization should not be equated with rote learning (Crozet, 1999; Lee, 1996). Memorization is an active mental process, and not mindless rote-learning. Memorization, in Chinese didactics, is meant to foster the students' individual silent cognitive processing of the data memorized. Students are encouraged to memorize with understanding; that is, to memorize what is understood and to understand through memorization (Lee, 1996; Marton et al., 1996). Because of this emphasis on memorization with understanding, mental activity rather than verbal activity is valued (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996).

In fact, there is a large amount of empirical research showing memorizing with understanding is effective for knowledge acquisition. Chinese teachers always use the methods of intensive repetition and rote memorization. Memorization is regarded as the most valuable learning strategy for Chinese students. Many Chinese teachers claim that the importance of recitation exercises in childhood may be that young children are not considered to have enough cognitive ability to understand what they memorize, but at least rote-memorizing leaves an impression on the mind that can be of use later in life.

This allows me to refer to a famous Chinese proverb saying, ‘If you read a text a hundred times, you can understand the meaning automatically’ (读书百遍，其意自见, *dú shū bǎi biàn, qí yì zì xiàn*). The conviction that ‘practice makes perfect’ is associated with other convictions which identify the fundamental roles of diligence, endeavor and hard work for learning: “Diligence can remedy mediocrity (勤能补拙 *Qín néng bǔ zhuō*)” and “familiarity breeds sophistication (熟能生巧 *Shú néng shēng qiǎo*)” (two famous Chinese proverb saying quoted by Wong, 2002, p. 224). From my point of view, foreign language teaching requires a large amount of practice based on intensive reading

and repetition, but also has to focus on students' individual understanding of the knowledge.

### **(3) From a Western point of view, Chinese education cultivates an overemphasis on discipline in the classroom**

As already mentioned above, and in contrast to the class scale in Western countries, there are always large numbers of students (up to 65) in Chinese classes being instructed simultaneously by one teacher in a concentrated, dense classroom situation. That is why classrooms in China appear relatively calm in comparison to those active, lively teaching situations in Germany.

Under the influence of Confucian philosophy, Chinese teachers always set up strict classroom rules to ensure an effective instructional environment in order to avoid chaotic situations and students' rudeness. At the same time, they think that the students are expected to be obedient to show great respect for their teachers. Traditional Chinese education emphasizes a hierarchical yet harmonious relationship between teachers and students.

There is a famous saying that identifies the significance of discipline in the Chinese educational schemata: "Nothing can be accomplished without norms or standards" (无规矩不成方圆, wú guījǔ bùchéng fāngyuán). In particular, Confucian thought requires good, educated students to passively follow and obey established principles and the rules of the community.

Setting up strict classroom rules is accepted by most of the Chinese language teachers in Germany I have met. In Confucian heritage cultures, the deference that Chinese students show to their teacher is often attributed to Confucian ethnics, wherein the hierarchical relationship between teacher and student is the basic relationship that constitute the basis of society (cf. Bricks, 1991, p. 138). In accordance with what I have just explained now, my intercultural study reveals great differences in classroom organiza-

tion and management between the two countries, China and Germany. Confucian philosophy emphasizes teachers' absolute authority, while students are obliged to comply with teachers' requirements and classroom principles.

All the Chinese language teachers in my study assume that Chinese students are more disciplined than German students in that they have a higher morality in the Confucian sense and an inclination to conform to the classroom rules. What is more, students are expected to respect and not to challenge transmitted knowledge. In particular, most of the Chinese teachers in my case studies believe that a teaching situation with mutually recognized strict discipline is a precondition for effective instruction.

#### **(4) Chinese teachers and students are obsessed with examinations**

As explained above, Confucianism has dominated and greatly influenced the ideology of teaching and learning since the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The ideology was based on prescribed classics and handwriting that followed pre-determined styles and ideas that would meet the Emperor's favor. All the time, examination has been regarded as the most significant tool to classify and rank human beings for thousands of years in China. Confucius attached great importance to education and saw it as a means of turning an ordinary person into a superior one and a weak nation into a strong one (Guo, 2001, p. 7; Zhu, 1992, p. 9). Thus the Chinese educational system is greatly influenced and dominated by various examinations.

I can now introduce the Chinese current educational system of examinations, but I firstly start with the Chinese school system. It is one of voluntary kindergarten, followed by nine years of compulsory education: six of primary education from 6 to 12 years of age and three of junior high school from 12 to 15 years of age, followed by three years of senior high school from 15 to 18 years of age, which culminates in the '*national university entrance examination*' (*gaokao*)<sup>22</sup>, and followed by a four year un-

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<sup>22</sup> *Gaokao* is the abbreviation for "National Higher Education Entrance Examination". It was introduced in 1977 and is held annually throughout China (MOE., 2013). The examination consists of three compul-

dergraduate degree course. In brief, the Chinese education system is dominated by various examinations.

The high frequency of tests is another obvious characteristic of the Chinese way of teaching. School-based tests and official tests administered by the district education bureau are the main methods used to evaluate the level of the students' capabilities.

In particular, the most important examination for Chinese students is *gaokao*. It determines their fate. The students of senior middle school who strive to attend the best universities in China and select ideal majors for their university careers, must score high in *gaokao*. The scores of *gaokao* are therefore of significance for all students, leading to some non-exam-related elements being omitted in the classroom.

Moreover, the teacher selects items of knowledge, analyzes and elaborates on them for the students; helps them connect the new items of knowledge with old knowledge already acquired and delivers a carefully sequenced and optimally mediated dose of knowledge for students to memorize, repeat and understand (Hu, 2002, p.98).

Most Chinese language teachers, as a rule, are educated in China and have experienced their school days, *gaokao* and university studies there. An exam-oriented education schema therefore has shaped their professional beliefs and attitudes. The individual professional beliefs of Chinese teachers have to undergo a process of modification, adaptation and transformation in a particular intercultural context. In the next section, I will reveal Chinese teachers' professionalization from an intercultural perspective.

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sory subjects and a fourth connected to the students' particular interest or abilities, drawn from either the humanities or the sciences. In most provinces *gaokao* takes the form of '3+X', with '3' standing for the three compulsory subjects Chinese, mathematics and one foreign language, this language being either English, French, Spanish etc., with English being preferred by the majority of the students. The compulsory subjects each score 150 points. The 'X' in the 3+x formula refers to a large number of disciplines from the arts and the humanities – comprising politics, history and geography – or from science disciplines including physics, chemistry and biology, each of which scores 300 points (Han, 2013).

## 5.2 Chinese teachers' professionalization in an intercultural perspective

### 5.2.1 The study of Chinese teachers' professionalization from an educational perspective

Teacher education has been an agent in the professionalization of teaching. Subject matter-knowledge alone cannot professionalize teaching; however, pedagogical knowledge helps to professionalize the teaching of subject knowledge (Darling-Hammond and Youngs, 2002, p. 241). The professionalization of teacher education therefore means exercising and improving their professional competence, i.e., training how to teach subject knowledge without neglect of *external (institutional)* and *internal (personal)* conditions.

*External*, i.e. the institutional conditions of teaching are factors in the environment that may constrain the teachers' decisions and actions in a unique manner if they perceive and accept these conditions as guidelines in their work. Confronted with proclaimed educational standards and curriculum requirements, teachers have to deal with the discrepancies in their own professional goal-oriented actions and the German instructional practice. Pedagogical content knowledge for teaching gives teachers ample scope to define their own goals in the instructional practice (Shulman, 1986, p. 14).

In addition to the external conditions, there are some *internal conditions* for teachers' professional development, including individual personal characteristics and individual professional biographies, professional knowledge, professional beliefs, etc. Regarding the term of professional knowledge, as I have shown above in Chapter 4, Lee. S. Shulman (1986) differentiates the following categories in accordance to the topology of professional knowledge domains: *general pedagogical knowledge*, *subject-matter content knowledge*, *pedagogical content knowledge* and *curriculum knowledge* (cf. Schulman, 1986, p. 10-11). He then enlarges these domains concerning psychological areas, such as *the knowledge area of learners*, *the knowledge of the educational context*

and educational philosophy, the educational theoretical knowledge and educational historical knowledge (cf. Schulman, 1987, p.8-9). In general, we can understand the meanings of different concepts, such as general pedagogical knowledge (i.e., knowledge about learning and teaching in general), subject-matter content knowledge (i.e., knowledge of the subject matter to be taught) and pedagogical content knowledge (i.e., knowledge about how to teach the subject matter) (cf. Schulman, 1987).

With respect to Shulman's categories of professional knowledge domains, Jürgen Baumert and Mareiker Kunter examine the topology of professional knowledge domains in the teaching profession. Their model of professional behavior competence shows that teachers' professional knowledge consists of five parts, namely *pedagogic knowledge*, *subject knowledge*, *subject-matter didactics knowledge*, *organizational knowledge* (cf. Shulman, 1987; Fried, 2002), and *consulting knowledge* (cf. Rambow and Bromme, 2000). It also means that a professional teacher is required to have this professional knowledge and it can be seen that there are different developmental tasks in their professional practice. I will further explore the interaction of the Chinese teachers' professional knowledge and their working with professional tasks in Chapter 6 (developmental tasks in my paper, see also Chapter 4).

*Firstly*, a professional teacher should have professional subject-matter content knowledge, to cope with the developmental task of professional *competence*. *Secondly*, teachers' general pedagogic knowledge and subject-matter didactics knowledge are the core concepts with respect to the professional developmental task of *mediation*. In particular, only teachers equipped with professional pedagogic knowledge and the knowledge of subject-matter didactics able to transfer acquired knowledge and competence to their students. *Thirdly*, teachers should develop an individual instructional ability to accept or acknowledge students' individuality and their personal background, and this relates to the professional developmental task of *acknowledgement*. Last but not least, the quality of the teachers' engagement within an institution and their individual collaboration with colleagues is based on teachers' cooperative knowledge and consulting knowledge. This is parallel to the professional developmental task of *acting within an institution*. Generally speaking, teachers in their professional development should have great value in the construction of their professional knowledge.



## **5.2.2 The study of Chinese teachers' professionalization from a biographical perspective**

Increasingly, educational researchers have started to analyze teachers' professionalization with respect to their professional competence to solve action problems. The new requirement of professionalization presents a set of challenges for traditional teacher education. From the perspective of structure-oriented professional research, professions are independent of their external appearance and particularly determined by the typical methods used to solve or deal with 'action problems' (Oevermann, 1996, p.70). Because of this, I assume that the concept of 'professionalization' in teacher education focuses on how to improve individual professional competence to deal with different professional problems. Subsequently, it requires a core construction in their professional process so that teachers are able to ensure learners' engagement within the teacher-learner interaction (cf. Herick, Keller-Schneider and Bonnet, 2016, p. 4).

Traditional teacher education focuses only on how to transfer the academic subject knowledge ('science') to students, but the new trend of professionalization concerns teachers' subjective reflection on their practice. It requires teachers to develop their professional competences in such a way that they are not only able to deal with routine problems, but also with various, unplanned, unexpected, new problems. The ultimate aim is to develop teachers' professionalization in such a way that they become "teachers as reflective practitioners" and "teachers as professional researchers" (cf. Hopmann and Riquarts, 2000, p. 8).

For the present research on teacher education in terms of professionalization, Terhart identifies three important scientific approaches to determine the professional process: (1) structural theory, (2) competence theory, and (3) professional biography theory (Terhart, 2011, p. 206-207).

- (1) Educational researchers who engage in structural theory assume that teachers face a complex set of developmental tasks, and each element on their tasks list has autonomous contradictory structures.<sup>23</sup>
- (2) The second group of researchers refers to a competence theory in order to describe teachers' professionalization. The approach aims to generate structural and developmental models of what is necessary in order to describe the teachers' profession. It is defined with regard to different categories of competence and knowledge. Teachers' competence development follows different stages of increasing complexity, combining different fields of theoretical knowledge and types of practical knowledge (Bonnet and Hericks, 2014, p. 5). In particular, at the beginning, the professional competence of most teachers is related to concrete contextual and situational requirements<sup>24</sup>, thus reducing its application in new situations.
- (3) The third approach in terms of teachers' professional development is the focus professional biography. It understands teachers' professionalization firstly as a biographical developmental problem (cf. Terhart, 2011, p. 209).

These three approaches of professionalization are regarded as three main research perspectives to describe and study current teachers' professional development in Germany. In my study, I understand the Chinese language teachers' professionalization from a biographical perspective. But of course, there are determining factors, such as structural influence, professional influence and institutional arrangements in work organization with respect to structural, professional and institution arrangements plus the uncertainties and risks in life (Evetts, 2003, p. 397; Terhart, 2011, p. 142). In particular, more and more German researchers come to conclusion that the influence of teachers' professional biography is decisive for their further professional development and for the quality of their professionalism (Keller-Schneider and Hericks, 2011). A large number of research findings indicate that teachers' biographies and their instructional behavior routines can

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<sup>23</sup> The structure theoretical understanding of professional competence is greatly based on the work of Ulrich Oeverman (1996, 2002, 2008). We can also find some related publications on the structural theory see Helsper (2002, 2004, 2007). Literatures are shown in Ewald Terhart's paper.

<sup>24</sup> The theoretic perspective on professional competence is identified with empirical research into the taxonomy of relevant knowledge for the teaching profession forms of Schulman (2004). See the related publications of Baum and Kunter (2006).

determine their future professional development. In general, teachers' professional actions and routine behavior are greatly dependent on their professional biographies.

Considering the influence of professional biography on teachers' professional development, the biographical approach may provide a new biographical perspective to investigate the professionalization of Chinese teachers in Germany and my study tries to use this approach to investigate Chinese language teachers' professional development. A biographical perspective on teachers' profession focuses on each teacher's professional developmental process in a longitudinal perspective, in order to construct a developmental processes and reconstruct the loss of professionalization (Herzog, 2014; Keller-Schneider and Hericks, 2014).

With respect to teachers' professional biography, there are different requirements for each teacher, for example, professional competence in subject-matter, professional competence in knowledge transmission, individual professional perception and cooperative competence and so on. Chinese language teachers have to deal with the new developmental tasks based on the requirements of professional development in the intercultural setting. It is interesting to investigate how teachers manage to deal with professional developmental tasks in their professional practice. Working in the intercultural setting, there are typical developmental tasks to be worked at, such as *Bildung*-oriented didactics, intercultural instructional pedagogy, mutual acceptance of students' individuality and the transformation of teachers' professional perceptions and beliefs.

### **5.3 Chinese language teachers' professional developmental tasks**

In Chapter 4, I have developed the theoretical framework of teachers' developmental tasks and identified the relationship of these tasks to the teachers' professional development. In this section, I want to further discuss Chinese language teachers' professional developmental tasks in the new educational setting. Generally speaking, in recent

years there has been growing interest in the intercultural dimension of foreign language teachers' professional development. It is widely understood that their intercultural instructional competence plays a significant role in their professional development.

Some empirical research begins to concern itself with the influence of teachers' biographic experience in their professional development. Terhart's study on the professional development of German teachers shows that teachers are confronted with a new series of professional requirements and tasks their initial professional period. He finds that the previous period of the teachers' professional development plays a significant role the teachers' further professional learning (Terhart, 2000, p. 73). The professional requirements in this phase become biographically effective in the teachers' dynamics and in the complexity of the tasks (Keller-Schneider, 2009, p. 145). As explained above, one can see that the majority of Chinese teachers have experienced internship periods in China.

It is therefore no surprise that once Chinese teachers have begun to work in Germany, they deal with new professional challenges that are different from those they had previously experienced in China. In their professional experience, they encounter two aspects of developmental requirements: on the one hand, a requirement which relates to a process of professional development and, on the other, a reference to each individual developmental expectation (referring to individual skills, interest, goals, beliefs, motives). This is a dynamic developmental process which identifies teachers' professionalization as an interactive process of objective professional developmental requirements and a subjectively satisfying management of developmental tasks (cf. Hericks, 2006; Keller-Schneider, 2010; Hericks and Keller-Schneider, 2011).

Next, I analyze some possible professional developmental tasks of Chinese language teachers concerning the different tensions of the Chinese and German educational schemata. I firstly examine some characteristics of German traditional didactics concerning *Bildung*-oriented didactics.

### 5.3.1 German '*Bildung*-oriented' didactics

German didactic researchers have focused on individual self-construction and self-identity development, on professional beliefs and identity concepts. This focus allows a comparison with the Chinese conceptions of didactics. As Chinese teachers are under the influence of the traditional Confucian educational framework, they construct a traditional hierarchical relationship between teachers and students, as I have explained above.

As I said before (see Section 5.1.2), Chinese teachers' professional perceptions focus on teacher-centered didactics, rote-learning, teachers' dignity and students' diligence. The traditional Chinese didactic models of teaching is likened to filling an 'empty-vessel' or a 'pint pot' (Maley, 1982). Such models are essentially 'mimetic' or 'epistemic', in that they hope to transmit knowledge principally through an imitative and repetitive process (Paine, 1992; Tang and Absalom, 1998). Teaching methods in China are therefore largely expository and the teaching process is teacher-dominated (Biggs, 1996).

In contrast, *Bildung* is the core of the German *Didaktik* tradition, which focuses on the formation of the mind, the cultivation of liberty and human dignity, and the development of individuality (see Section 2.2.2). Foreign language teaching in Germany requires students to develop and construct their own intercultural identity, i.e. a person's ability to act in a foreign language in linguistically, socio-linguistically and pragmatically appropriate ways (Council of Europe, 2001).

*Bildung*-oriented German *Didaktik* provides more opportunity for teachers' interpretation and enactment of the instructional content. Thus, German teachers have a high level of professional autonomy regarding the curriculum. The central purpose of teaching encompasses a set of educational aims and values centered upon the formation of the mind, the development of powers or capabilities, sensitivity and the cultivation of liberty, dignity and freedom for the learner (cf. Hopmann, 2007; Humboldt, [1973] 2000).

I take Lothar Klingberg's dialectical didactics (see Klingberg, 1990, p. 78; p. 154) as an example. It assumes that teaching and learning are strategies that contradict each

other. The teacher leads the class, but the students are active of their own will. The learner's autonomy is respected and ensured by the teacher's mediation. Referring to Western language pedagogy, the students' roles are defined in such a way that the students have a right to understand new languages and cultures. In other word: students have the rights to take charge of their own learning. At the same time, teachers are required to play a significant role more as facilitators than knowledge producers for their students.

However, teachers in China are expected to play the role of mentor or parent, caring, helpful, and willing to pass on their experience to the students and ready to teach them about life (cf. Cortazzi and Jin, 1996; Jones, 1995; Rao, 1996). At the same time, Chinese students are required to receive the necessary knowledge from their teachers. In addition, Confucian heritage cultures emphasize the instructional situation of "harmony" within student-teacher interaction. A 'harmonious' instructional situation has largely influenced Chinese teachers' professional identity and this causes some tension in their work in the German educational setting, because German students are taught to be initiative, to be independent and responsible for their own learning process, to actively participate in class interaction and group discussion.

In general, the Chinese teachers in Germany have to cope with the decisive developmental task of how to deal with the contrasts between teacher-centered didactics and *Bildung*-centered didactics in the German educational context.

### **5.3.2 The intercultural dimension in foreign language teaching**

As Michael Byram, Bella Gribkova and Hugh Starkey (2002, p. 13) have mentioned, the role of a foreign language teacher is intended to develop students' intercultural competence, skills, attitudes and awareness of values not only as to develop the knowledge of a particular culture or country.

In order to describe what is meant with the concept of *intercultural competence*, I take Meinert Meyer's definition:

“Intercultural competence is the ability to realize the differences between one’s own and the foreign culture and way of life, to assess the expectations of the communicative partners from other cultures, and this in a critical mode so that they can comply to or reject, and in the exchange between cultures on the basis of a transcultural value system they can remain identical with themselves and their cultural origin.” (M. Meyer’s English translation, 2010a, p. 111)

Meyer’ definition is also acceptable from the point of view of the *Common European Framework of Reference* of the Council of Europe which emphasizes the importance of general competences (that is *declarative knowledge, skills and know-how, existential competence, ability to learn*) and communicative language competences (*linguistic competences, sociolinguistic competences, pragmatic competences*) in the field of foreign language teaching (Council of Europe, 2001).

More importantly, however, is the fact that the intercultural dimension of foreign language teaching emphasizes effective *cross-cultural communication*. Students are required to attain a set of competences as suggested by Byram’s theoretical model of intercultural communicative competence, which identifies five different factors: knowledge, attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction and political education, including critical cultural awareness (Byram and Zarate, 1997).

As stated by Byram (1997), a model of the intercultural competence is the prerequisite for successful intercultural action in terms of various areas of knowledge and attitudes. This includes an open, curious, caring, and understanding *attitude* with respect to the other culture, the *knowledge* of cultural differences, *knowledge* of one’s own and the other culture and a learning attitude that allows the acquisition of future knowledge (Byram, 1997, p. 342).

Byram’s position implies that the primary focus of foreign language teaching and learning is the intercultural dimension. It requires learners to develop knowledge and skills regarding new foreign language and culture and to expand their cultural awareness. The intercultural knowledge to be learnt has to be reflective and transferable among

different languages and cultures. The intercultural dimension in foreign language teaching thus aims to develop learners as intercultural speakers or mediators able to engage with complexity and multiple identities (Byram, Gribkova, Statkey, 2002, p. 9).

Chinese language teachers are therefore not only required to cultivate students' communicative competence with respect to linguistics, sociolinguistics and discourse analysis. The framework also emphasizes students' intercultural competence, to help them to understand and accept people from other cultures as individuals with other distinctive perspectives. I draw this section to a close by restating the objective of intercultural teaching and learning. The professional role of Chinese language teachers has to be seen in its intercultural dimension. This means that:

*Firstly*, they have to acquire professional subject matter knowledge concerning the subject taught, namely linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences.

*Secondly*, as I have indicated above, professional intercultural competence is seen as the core of foreign language teachers' professional development. The Chinese teachers of Chinese in Germany are required to develop a reflective attitude toward the German culture and the civilization of their own country, helping learners to perceive the relationships between German culture and Chinese culture.

*Thirdly*, the professional role of the Chinese teachers is to be defined as that of 'intercultural mediators' presenting different world-views and cultural contexts to promote intercultural communicative competence.

### **5.3.3 The mutual acceptance of 'otherness' of each student**

In Chinese culture, Confucian principles have a significant impact on family interactions and relationships, and in parallel with that, Confucian philosophy emphasizes the absolute authority of the teacher. Chinese students are asked to be obedient and to follow teachers' guidance and instruction. They are unwilling to express their own ideas and views concerning teachers' instruction in class. They are expected to respect teachers and to co-operate with them, not to challenge their authority or the knowledge they



transmit. Eastern culture emphasizes a conformity that enables the maintenance of a hierarchical yet harmonious relationship between teacher and student. A traditional hierarchical relationship is embedded in Chinese teachers' professional attitudes and beliefs in their students.

In contrast, students' individuality and their freedom are purposely encouraged in the Western educational process as I have often explained in preceding chapters. German students are given much freedom to express their individuality, they are not afraid to challenge the teacher's authority. Thus one can see that there are huge differences between conformity-oriented Chinese education and individuality-oriented German education. Chinese language teachers have to deal with a developmental task that transforms the harmony-model didactics into a German model concerning students' individual formation.

As I see it, Chinese teachers should deal with the paradox arising between their traditional pedagogy and the new requirements of the German educational background, which enables them to transform their previous instructional models. As I have mentioned concerning the three levels of teacher-student interaction in Chapter 4, the third level allows intergenerational communication that includes negotiation of teaching and learning objectives and the mutual acceptance of otherness. A professional Chinese teacher therefore has to realize that the students' sense-making is determined by mutually accepting the individual biographies of the teachers and the students. The mutual acceptance of 'otherness' within the teacher-student interaction is crucial for the students' learning and the teachers' teaching. It is another important developmental task for the Chinese teachers' competence of mediation.

#### **5.3.4 The influence of Chinese teachers' professional identity and beliefs on their instructional practice and behavior**

Teachers' professional identity and beliefs that are shaped largely by culturally shared experience may be difficult to change in such a way that they can guide instructional

practice in the classroom. In this section, I shall discuss possible influences of Chinese teachers' professional beliefs on their professional development.

Chinese language teachers' professional beliefs have to deal with a new professional development, replacing traditional or authoritative teacher-centered teaching and fostering dynamic or recursive student-centered learning (cf. Wu, Palmer, Field, 2010, p. 48). However, the professional identity and beliefs of Chinese teachers will have to undergo changes and transformation into the new environment. Thus, teachers' professional identity stands in relation to their perceptions of themselves (Tickle, 1999), their self-understanding (Kelchtermans and Vandenberghe, 1994), the teaching context, teaching experience and their biographies (Beijaard et al. 2000).

A growing number of researchers have started to explore heritage language teachers' beliefs (Wu, 2011; Feuerwerker, 1997; Liu, 2006). Related studies show that Chinese language teachers develop a weak sense of professional identity since they view teaching Chinese not as a profession but as a job that is able to help them to earn money and live in a foreign country. Chinese language teachers always express a weak recognition of themselves as 'legitimate' teachers (Wu, Palmer and Field, 2011, p. 49). Feuerwerker's (1997) study on Chinese language teachers in Toronto indicates that a lack of certification constrains their feeling of being professional teachers. Parallel to that, heritage language teachers believe that professional training fosters effective language instruction (Liu, P., 2006).

However, there are relatively few studies of the intercultural influence on the professional identity and beliefs of Chinese language teachers in relation to professional development. At present, research into the transformation and reconstruction of teachers' professional identity acts a special focus for the description of teachers' professional development. According to various research results, teachers' professional identity stands in relation to their biographies, to learning experience, teaching experience and the teaching context. In particular, there are some empirical studies that show teachers' professional identity is already shaped and constructed in the period of professional studies at university. Conscious of the socio-cultural influence of the new educational

setting, the Chinese teachers of Chinese should reconstruct their identity in order to cope with the new challenges in the workplace (Wenger, 1998, p. 231).

All Chinese language teachers in my study were born and educated in China, but have not experienced a tertiary teacher training program (i.e. Lehramtsstudium) such as is usual in Germany. They have not taken part in the professional training courses which involve school pedagogy, general didactics, Chinese language teaching didactics, psychology, sociology and other related subjects. Most of these teachers had worked for many years as teachers of other subjects in China before choosing to apply for positions in Germany. In their professional biographies, it can be that they have developed their own professional beliefs and attitudes greatly influenced by the traditional Chinese educational framework. Because of this, their professional beliefs and views on good instruction may differ from those maintained by the German educational context. I will explain this point in more detail in Chapter 6.

## **5.4 The relation of Chinese language teachers' professionalization to sense construction**

### **5.4.1 Sense construction**

The definition of sense in the context of learning and teaching varies as it depends on teaching situations, teaching processes, teaching objects and other related elements. In order to avoid confusion, I shall now begin to explore the specific meaning of sense and distinguish between the concepts of *meaning* and of *sense*.

Referring to Maike Vollstedt's study on the concept of sense construction, I assume that the students subjectively practise sense construction that requires them to find subjective relevance for a behavior or an object. *Meaning* in her study is understood as the cultural, social relevance of some kind of behavior or an object. But *sense* is acquired in terms of personal relevance (cf. Vollstedt, 2011, p. 32). Because of this, only

if students have interest with regard to subject matter; will they be willing to exhibit the emotional care with respect to the learning contents. Subject matter is interpreted by each student as it depends on his/her subjective understanding, which desires to produce a sense construction for each subject. In contrast, when students have no interest in the learning content, they are not willing to bring their experience into the process of learning. Just as Vollstedt writes (2011):

[...] in class, only when the subjective position and the roles of the students are fully understood, and the subjective relevance is identified, *meaning* can be transformed into *sense* in the instruction (Vollstedt, 2011, p. 32).

I agree to Maïke Vollstedt's position, the most crucial element in sense construction is the transformation of meaning into sense. Within the student-teacher interaction, the meaning of concrete subject matter can be transmitted and acquired following the teachers' instruction. However, the social, contextual meaning of subject matter is subjectively treated by each student on the basis of his/her biography, and this allows the students to use individual ways to solve developmental tasks with social and cultural requirements.

Let me focus on the process of sense-making from the perspective of learners' development and educational experience. The first question is in which way and in which situation are the students able to make their own individual sense-making within and through the teachers' instruction? One can then see that each kind of behavior and each activity of an individual has its own sense. That means only some actions and some kinds of behavior are valuable for people and therefore viewed as personally relevant (Gedaschko, 2013, p. 23). As Mari-Annikka Lechte (cf. Lechte, 2008, p. 140) writes, sense is subjectively experienced as meaningfulness and sense always combines with a positive emotion. Ulrich Gebhard, a professor for biology education at Hamburg University, also assumes that the meaning of the world is interpreted and understood by a person in an individual way. As he says:

Es ist eines der Grundbedürfnisse der Menschen, „die Welt mit Bedeutung und Sinn zu versehen, bzw. sie als eine sinnvolle zu interpretieren und sie so zu verstehen.“ (Gebhard, 2003, p. 206)

“It is a basic requirement for humankind that we invest the world with meaning and sense, or respectively, we have to interpret it as one that makes sense in order for us to understand it.”

In my study, I agree with Gebhard’s understanding of sense. Sense construction refers to an individual handling of certain developmental tasks that are also determined in the course of one’s socialized development. Within teacher-student interaction, sense-making is an individual affair from the point of view of the teacher and from that of the students. Sense-making from the perspective of teachers thus is quite different from the students. In order to foster sense-making within the interaction of teachers and students, the teachers should accept the students’ individual biography. As I have illustrated above, sense-making can be seen as the *filter* for mutual understanding. Educational sense-making establishes a level of mutual acceptance of a joint educational task—in spite of differences regarding the teachers and the students’ roles (M. Meyer, 2011, p. 407).

The study of Chinese language teaching within the framework of *Bildungsgang* didactics focuses on the combination of teachers’ biographies with their different developmental tasks. My study also concentrates on how each individual constructs his/her own world-view and develops his/her self-concept. Sense-making plays a significant role in the teacher-student interaction, which allows intergenerational communication, negotiation of teaching and learning objectives and mutual acceptance of the individual biographies of both sides. Meanwhile, handling professional developmental tasks is related to teachers’ professional competence in that it enables to help teachers’ instruction produce sense for students’ learning. It is possible that teacher-student interaction can allow intergenerational communication and the negotiation of teaching and learning to take place.

In order to better understand sense-making in Chinese language teaching, my study firstly depicts the general sense of foreign language teaching in Germany. In learning foreign languages, students are required to cultivate and develop their own intercultural competence. In particular, they should learn to behave adequately in a flexible manner, when they are confronted with the actions, attitudes and expectations of foreign cultures (M. Meyer, 1991, p.138). It means that a learner should study foreign languages with his/her previous world attitudes and attempts to reconstruct his/her own new cultural views and attitudes (Humboldt, Vol. 3, 1964, p.433). Thus, students should become capable of reconstructing their intercultural world views on the basis of self-regulated competence when they are learning one kind of foreign language. The sense of foreign language teaching is to be seen in the competence to conduct language teaching with respect to the students' biographies and their developmental tasks, to having students realize the differences between foreign cultures and their own culture, develop the ability to criticize, accept, analyze and reflect on different cultures, and finally, to construct their own intercultural identity (cf. M. Meyer, 2010a, p.111).

#### **5.4.2 Sense-making in Chinese language teaching**

In this section, I focus on sense making in Chinese language teaching in Germany concerning the interplay of the educational biographies of students and teachers, their developmental tasks and sense constructions.

Humboldt developed a concept of foreign language learning in which everyone is able to understand the particular relation of 'I' and 'world' by producing a new world-view in each and any language. He explains:

[...] Since each and any objective apperception necessarily contains subjectivity, you can conceive each and any human individuality as an individual world view position, but the contribution of language to individuality is even greater because the word once more turns itself into an object for the soul with the addition of self-meaning (*Selbstbedeutung*) by adding a further

specific individuality (*Eigentümlichkeit*). [...] Man lives with objects mainly—and since feeling and action depend on his appreciation—in that way in which nature presents them to him. In the same action with which he expresses himself in his own language, he also combines himself with it and each language draws a circle around its people out of which one can only withdraw in such a way that one transgresses into another language.

Learning a foreign language should therefore be winning a new world view and indeed, this is the case to a certain degree, since each language contains a whole web of concepts and types of awareness belonging to one part of mankind. But since one carries with oneself always—more or less—one's own world view and, indeed, one's own view of language, this success is not experienced purely and completely." (Humboldt, Werke Vol. III, pp. 433-434, translation by M. Meyer)

The quotation allows the conclusion that each learner is able to conceive human individuality when he/she is confronted with a new relation of the 'subjective' and 'objective world'. It means that learning a foreign language allows one to develop one's individuality and at the same time allows one to understand the new culture on the basis of new "self-meaning". (Humboldt, 1830, p. 35/1963, p. 228, translated by Meyer. 2008, p. 88-89).

According to Meyer's three levels of teacher-student interaction (see above Chapter 4), teachers at the second level see instruction as shared experience, joint action, negotiation and growth of meaning. In spite of the fundamental differences of Chinese teachers' and German students' educational biographies, interacting in a communicative process allows Chinese teachers to accept the students' individual personal background and to help them to combine their biographies with learning new content in class. But German students have a different learning experience and biographies that are different from those of Chinese students in China. Chinese teachers should therefore improve their students' intercultural awareness and arouse the students' interest to learning about Chinese culture.

I come to the end: foreign language teaching not only requires students to develop language literacy and intercultural communicative competence, but also to construct their new intercultural identities and attitudes. Foreign language teaching requires Chinese language learners to develop their language skills, attitudes and values, and to perceive relationships between their own country's culture and the culture of other countries.

## 5.5 Chapter summary

Student-teacher interaction should allow each learner to deal with the teachers' instructional planning with respect to their individual biographies and personal backgrounds. In spite of fundamental differences with respect to the teachers' and the students' biographies, educational sense-making establishes a level of teachers' and students' mutual acceptance of a joint educational task. In order to cope with such a task, the students and their teachers have to see instruction as shared experience and joint action. Once students' and teachers' developmental tasks have been coordinated, it is possible to construct a communicative interaction for both sides. My analysis and interpretation of sense-making in Chinese language teaching follows in Chapter 6.

The comparative study of the Chinese and Western learning schemata can demonstrate the differences between teachers' biographies and the professional perception of language teaching. The teacher-centered, knowledge-centered, rote-learning didactics in Chinese traditional education has a great influence on my Chinese teachers' professional beliefs and attitudes. When they started work in Germany, they had already formulated and constructed their professional beliefs with respect to their individual biographies in China. A second important point is that most of my Chinese teachers have not experienced a teacher training program (*Lehramtstudium*) as their German colleagues have done in German tertiary institutions. The Chinese teachers lack official and necessary teaching internships in German schools. They are therefore confronted with a number of barriers in their professional development concerning their professional teaching identi-



ty, professional competence, student attitudes, teacher attitudes, collegial collaboration and so on. Whether the teachers are able to successfully deal with these developmental tasks is one of the leading questions of my research.

I can assume that a good, successful Chinese language teacher has to establish a didactical situation with three perspectives, namely their biographical background, their developmental tasks, and their social and intercultural educational settings. Teachers have leading roles in the process of instruction. At the same time, students have their own emancipation to react to teachers' instruction base on self-regulation and individual interpretation. The teacher-student relationship should be understood as being of a dialectical nature. Sense-making is able to link the dialectical relationship of teacher-learner interaction, learners' and teachers' biographical experience and their developmental tasks. My study therefore concentrates on what kinds of sense-making take place in Chinese language teaching. I also ask how Chinese teachers cultivate and facilitate the sense-making construction of their students in class.



## **Chapter 6: Developed methods, empirical analysis, data collection and findings**

This chapter reveals the teaching experience and individual didactics of three Chinese language teachers in Germany and two English language teachers in China, primarily focusing on the transformation of their professional competence. I divide this chapter into two parts with different evaluative categories for the teachers: Chinese language teachers and English language teachers. In the first part, I examine the transformation of the Hamburg teachers' self-concepts and of their professional development. Then, my study discovers the process of the professional development of English teachers in China, in order to better understand how they develop their individual didactics within the Chinese educational context. Their individual biographies and professional practice in the intercultural setting are represented and analyzed with the help of ethnographic interviews. The collected data include classroom observation recordings, class video recordings, interview recordings and field notes. By describing the teachers' professional biographies and their management of various challenges in the intercultural context, I explore their individual didactics within the framework of developmental tasks. I believe that this study will help to shed light on the difficulties and challenges that Chinese language teachers face in Germany, and I assume that the findings of this study are of significance for the future professional training of Chinese teachers.

### **6.1 Introduction**

I now introduce the background of my research project. My project is a qualitative study with four Chinese language teachers in two different Gymnasiums in Hamburg as already explained in Chapter 1. Ms. Wee and Ms. Baum are teachers at a new private Gymnasium A; and the other Chinese teacher, Ms. Ta also works at *Gymnasium B* in

Hamburg. The two schools have different institutional structures. However, they both specialize in Chinese language teaching. *Gymnasium A* is an emerging private school that started in 2010, with trilingual teaching (German, English, Chinese) as its distinguishing feature. *Gymnasium B* has been offering Chinese language courses since 2003, thus being the first *Gymnasium* to offer Chinese language as a second foreign language in Hamburg. *Gymnasium A* has been chosen for the sake of convenience: my Ph.D. supervisor, Meinert Meyer, has been school counselor and quite familiar with the language instruction and curriculum design of the school. In particular, he offered me an opportunity for me to participate in collecting a research data summary for his reports for the years of 2012 and 2013 on the school. It also offers me direct access to different Chinese language teachers and students in their classes; in particular, I came close to language teaching in the intercultural context through making classroom observations and holding interviews with the teachers.

*Gymnasium B* is well known in Hamburg. The school has been taking Chinese language as a significant subject in the Abitur for a long time. In order to collect research data from language teaching, I did some similar research a year ago on *Gymnasium B*. I have good personal relations with the three Chinese language teachers in my research and am familiar with their personal background and professional experience.

Case studies on the different Chinese teachers' professional development can be done by using an ethnographic approach, because this method allows studying people in naturally occurring settings. I can thus capture the Chinese language teachers' individual, 'lived' experience in their instructional practice. From May 2012 to May 2013, data collection was conducted with an ethnographic approach in the two German schools. From May 2014 to June 2014, data collection was conducted in the two Chinese schools in Wuhan, China. Classroom observation and in-depth teachers' interviews were chosen in order to interpret the teachers' daily practice<sup>25</sup>. Moreover, the methods of participant observation and ethnographic interviews are selected as primary tools to collect first-

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<sup>25</sup> With respect to a large amount of research data on Chinese language teaching in *Gymnasium A*, Hamburg, we have finished a paper to describe the situation of Chinese teaching and teachers' professional development. Please refer to the paper of Ren Ping, Meyer Meinert (2017). Intercultural Research on Chinese Language Teaching in Germany In: *Gymnasium A*. In: *Wie Lehrer- und Schüler bei der Gründung einer privaten Schule zusammen kommen* (Arbeitstitel, In Vorbereitung). UTB/Verlag Barbara Budrich.

hand data. *Participant observation* was used to generate qualitative data which provide an “insider” view and prevent misinterpretation of the observed behavior. Next, *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 the classroom and at interviews. In my study, I write down different field notes to record some related information in a specific classroom situation of teaching Chinese to German students, including students’ and teachers’ behavior, occurring issues and some detailed information. In the following sections, all field notes will be integrated into the observation data to be further refined with respect to my research perspectives.

In addition, the following in-depth interviews were conducted in order to validate the understanding obtained from observations and to generate data in areas that were not observable (such as teacher perceptions and past experience) (Cohen et. al 2007). For my study, there were eight semi-structured interviews of the three Chinese language teachers and two interviews of the two English teachers. The purpose of these interviews was to probe the framework of their individual professional perception and to show their professional competence in dealing with different developmental tasks. All the interviews were conducted in Chinese and lasted 45-60 minutes. They were transcribed verbatim and then translated into English.

My study tries to especially integrate different methods into the ethnographical approach. As I have mentioned in Section 3.4.5, I combined the semi-structured interviews with the in-depth interviews. For teachers’ interviews, I prepared questions in order to motivate the teachers to narrate their biographies and to express their own views on their professional practice. In addition, combining my field notes and classroom observations on their instruction, I also asked them some questions about the interaction of teachers with students and their professional behavior to enable an exploration of their professional beliefs. In general, different types of teachers’ interviews are combined with classroom protocols and classroom observations that allow me to get a complete description.

In order to better understand the influence of their educational biographies on the Chinese teachers’ professional development, I try to analyze the self-reflection and

transformation in Chinese teachers' professional transitional phases and study their cross-cultural practice. Actually, my empirical research focuses on how the Chinese teachers deal with and handle their developmental tasks in the intercultural context. In the following sections, I only present some data from the original material in relation to my research perspectives. I have also collected and saved all the original teacher-interview recordings and class recordings in a CD as an attachment to my thesis.

## **6.2 Ms. Wee's case study: *“Children's interest and their happiness are very important for my individual instruction.”***

For the case studies in my research, I selected different Chinese teachers as teacher participants working in the two kinds of typical schools in Hamburg. My being familiar with the instructional contexts and knowing these teachers personally helped me better to collect and implement data. In the following sections, I will try to identify a general framework of their prior educational experience, instructional practice and individual professional development regarding a large number of class protocols, field notes, and transcripts of teachers' interviews.

The first teacher in my case study at the private school is Ms. Wee, aged 43 years, who had worked as a Chinese language teacher in Taiwan for nearly 10 years. Afterwards, accompanying her husband, she moved to Germany with her family. Subsequently, she started to study for her master's degree and received her Ph.D. degree in musical education at a university in Germany. From 2004, she taught music in a middle school in the federal state of Lower Saxony, and then in 2010 she began to work as a Chinese teacher at this private secondary school in Hamburg.

At first, I focus on the transformation of the self-concepts and professional attitudes with respect to Ms. Wee's biography where Chinese and Western educational schemata intersect. Then, the next section begins to detect and explore some critical incidents in her biography that are as noteworthy as experience concerning her profes-

sional attitudes and beliefs. Next, I focus on Ms. Wee's professional experience concerning how she deals with different professional developmental tasks with respect to the four categories competence, mediation, acknowledgement of students and acting in the institution. As I have mentioned above, in Section 2.3.2, the teachers should deal with different objective professional requirements with respect to their own biographies. I will therefore use the concept of developmental tasks to reconstruct developmental courses to foster the teachers' competence for instruction and activity in the institution. Finally, my interpretation describes their individual didactics within the framework of professional developmental tasks (see Chapter 4).

### 6.2.1 Teacher's self-transformation and self-reflection

In order to better understand Ms. Wee's individual biography, I asked her the question: "can you talk about your biography since you were in the Gymnasium?" In her interview, she mentioned that she had always dreamed of becoming a teacher when she was still at school.

Extract 1: Interview with Ms. Wee 24 August, 2012 Line 101-103

“/hm/事实上，当我还在高中的时候，我就想着去当老师。自己也想成为音乐老师[...] 然后，我选择进入台湾的一所师范大学。”

“/hm/ In fact, when I was a student in a senior middle school I had dreamed of being a teacher. And I wanted to be a music teacher [...] then I chose to study at a normal university in Taiwan.”

In her interview, I learn that she was born into a teaching family. Her father was a teacher and she had dreamed of becoming a teacher since she was young. She told me that she had studied musical education at a university in Taiwan, and then she was sent to teach Chinese language and music at a primary school in Taiwan. In fact, teaching is her dream occupation, and she had worked as a teacher in Taiwan for many years.

Next, I try to examine the transformations and self-changes in Ms. Wee's professional concepts when she began to work in Germany. In the following excerpt, she attaches great value to her pre-vocational training program in her professional practice before she began to work as a music teacher in Germany. And she considers the pre-vocational training program in Germany as a significant turning point in her transition of professional beliefs and attitudes concerning German school pedagogy.

Extract 2: Interview with Ms. Wee 24 August, 2012 Line 72-76

[...] 我**必须**在课程结束后参加考试。[...] 你**必须**通过考试，嗯，额，然后你**只有**通过考试才可以获得特别的证书。随后，你**才会**被分配到有空职的德国学校里面。我获得了证书以后，这样我才可以在尼德萨克森的一所学校工作。这期间我觉得我的**收获非常多**@\_@ [...]

[...] I **had to** take part in an examination after taking the training course. [...] You **must** pass the examination, /hm/, //Hhm//, **only** when you **pass** the examination **can** you get a specific certificate. Afterwards, you will be sent to different schools in Germany where they have a vacant teaching position. After I acquired the certificate, I was in a position to work in a school in Lower Saxony. During the period, I think that I **acquired a lot** @\_@ [...]

In the extract, Ms. Wee mentioned an important training program before she began to work in Germany. She takes pride in having acquired the special graduation certificate from this training program. During the period of her internships, her professional competence has improved and developed due to professional training. In my understanding, her professional attitudes were undergoing a further change, in order to adapt to the new contextual educational requirement as she clearly assumed that she had accumulated a great amount of instructional experience. Due to that, her professional training and the subsequent period of internships played a crucial role in her professional development.

In the next extract, I asked her about how she had adapted to the new educational environment when she began to work in Germany. And she described her individual professional transformation and self-reflection in the following interview:



P. Ren: [...] 你作为一个在德国的汉语老师，当你刚刚开始在这边工作的时候，你是如何适应德国的新的教育环境？

Ms. Wee: [...] 你必须参加一些教师的培训，在职的教师培训，因为你还不是完全熟悉这边的情况和环境。因为，这里(...), 你作为一个老师，**你应该和以前的自己做一个比较，去证实自己的，个人的教学法，是否（依然）有效。**就好像是入乡随俗[...] 我觉得我一个整年的培训是非常有效果的。从那以后，我想我可以在任何一所德国学校工作，没有问题，因为我已经学习，**接受了德国教育哲学**，最重要的一些部分，我都已学习过了[...]

Interviewer: [...] As a Chinese teacher in Germany, how did you adjust to the new educational situation here when you began to work here?

Ms. Wee: [...] You must take part in some teacher training, in-service training, because you are totally not familiar with the educational situation here. Because, here (...), you are as a teacher, **you should make a comparison with your former self, so that you can confirm that your own individual didactics** is still very effective. Just like, ‘**do in Rome as Rome does**’ [...] I think the whole year of my training was very effective. Since then, I think I have been able to work and teach in any German schools, without difficulty, because I have learned and **accepted different German educational philosophies**, the [most] essential elements, I have already learned them [...]

In the extract, Ms. Wee attaches the greatest value to teacher training and in-service teacher training for her professional development; through these she had learned a large number of German educational theories and read classical literatures. As she began to work in Germany, she realized that the new, foreign instructional situation was very different from what she had experienced in China. Confronted with new challenges and difficulties, she mentioned that one should make a comparison with one's prior educational experience in order to ensure and reconstruct one's own teaching didactics. It shows that, at that time, she tried to apply some teaching methods and approaches to the new educational situation in order to examine and test her instructional experience.

Through making a comparison between her present professional practice and previous experience, she is willing to make some changes to her individual strategies to suit the new context. As I have mentioned in Figure 1 (see Section 2.3.3), her prior professional outlook and beliefs have been influenced by individual educational experience and afterwards by professional learning in teacher training. From my point of view, her professional outlook has experienced a new transition and transformation.

As for professional training, she viewed it as “*a whole year of my training is very effective*”. She viewed the one-year professional training period as the remarkable turning point in her professional development. In particular, she claimed that she could even work and teach Chinese in any German school after her professional training. She thought that her professional attitudes had begun to accept German general educational philosophies and general didactics. However, I need perhaps much more evidence to confirm whether she is able to adhere to the Western educational schemata and is willing to adapt to the new context. Then I will explain this in the following sections.

### **6.2.2 “Students’ interest and their happiness are the core principles of my musical didactics.”**

The Chinese education schema has been influencing Ms. Wee’s professional beliefs and perceptions. Studying and participating in professional training in Germany have helped her to adapt her previous experience to the new educational context. In this section, I am going to show some extracts of her interviews concerning her professional beliefs and views on foreign language teaching that are able to help me to describe a holistic framework of Ms. Wee’s instructional didactics. Firstly, I will show an extract of Ms. Wee’s interpretation of her musical didactics:

Extract 4: Interview with Ms. Wee 11 May, 2012 Line 1-7
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Ms. Wee: “因为在我来德国之前, 我就是音乐教师, 所以我**特别愿意**去用音乐**调动**和鼓励孩子。[...] 我教学**最重要的核心**就是要让学生们追求兴趣和快乐。这在教学中, **是非常有效和有趣的**。//Hhm// [...]”

Ms. Wee: “Because I had been a musical teacher before I went to Germany, I am **particularly willing** to **motivate** and to inspire students by using music. [...] **the most significant core idea** is to make students seek interest and happiness. It is very **effective and interesting** in instruction. //Hhm// [...]”

In this extract, Ms. Wee mentions her previous professional experience as a music teacher in Taiwan. It shows that her present instruction is greatly influenced by her previous professional biography in Taiwan. She clearly assumed that attracting the students' attention and maintaining students' happiness are the most significant principles regarding her instruction.

In addition, my classroom observation on 13 October, 2012 also showed that she applied different musical strategies and organized interesting class activities to attract the students' attention and ensure their interest. For example, she asked the students to sing a Chinese children's song called '*pulling the radish*' (拔萝卜).

At that time, the students were happily singing the song with her, clapping and beating out the tune with their hands and feet. Afterwards, she asked the students to play a game called '*looking for friends*' (找朋友). The students sang the song and danced with their partners. In her class, she guided the students in singing Chinese songs, playing different games, and dancing to traditional Chinese children's songs, in order to attract students' interest and motivate their enthusiasm. Regarding their reaction, it was obvious that the students were very excited to take part in different class activities. In general, classroom observation also shows that her individual teaching method attaches great value to students' interest and happiness by ensuring their interest and enthusiasm. What is more, she also strives to attract students' interest through her exaggerated movements and facial expressions.

In her interview, she articulately expresses that “*students' interest and happiness are the core principles of my didactics*”. Furthermore, she also assumes that her musical

didactics is very effective and attractive for students' learning. In fact, it shows that her prior working experience as a music teacher in China has had a great impact on her professional beliefs and formulated her musical teaching methods. What she expressed and narrated in the interview is her self-reflection on her own professional perception. Afterwards my study will focus on some interviews with her and classroom observation in order to find whether there is harmony between what she says in her interviews and what she does in class.

Once I looked at my classroom protocols and field notes, it was obvious that she used different methods and instructional strategies to attract the students' interest and enthusiasm, such as in ways of singing Chinese songs, singing nursery rhymes, dancing to Chinese folk music, watching Chinese films and so on. In her previous professional experience, she had developed considerable capabilities and skills in applying different musical strategies in Chinese language teaching.

Next, let me take a look at the development and construction of her foreign language didactics. In her interview, she narrated the process of self-reflection in terms of her professional identity when she began to be confronted with a new educational situation in Germany. In the following, the extract refers to her individual self-reflection on traditional language pedagogy.

Extract 5: Interview with Ms. Wee 11 May, 2012 Line 18- 21

Ms. Wee: “在我刚刚开始在德国学校教学的时候，我是采用以往在台湾用的教学方式，关注以下的几个方面，拼音，汉语汉字，以及词语什么的...然而，汉语教学的效果是非常差。因此我开始意识到，我应该尝试做一些改变，然后我开始寻找或者采用一些更加合适的方法和策略[...]”

Ms. Wee: “When I first took over teaching at the school in Germany, I adopted my original Chinese teaching strategies in Taiwan, and focused on the following aspects, Pinyin<sup>26</sup>, Chinese characters, and words...however, the efficiency of Chinese learning was

<sup>26</sup> *Pinyin* refers to a basic phonetic symbol of Chinese characters in the Roman alphabet, representing the sounds of Chinese. The *pinyin* system and simplified characters are primarily used in the schools operated by community members from China.

rather poor. I began to realize that I should try to make some changes, so I began to look for or apply some more suitable methods and strategies [...]"

Through analyzing the words she said in her interview, she made a clear elaboration on her self-transformation concerning language teaching methods. When Ms. Wee began to teach Chinese in Germany, she applied her usual teaching methods and strategies in the new context, focusing on grammatical explanations and on students' linguistic accuracy, as she narrated in her interview. Ms. Wee found that traditional Chinese language didactics largely constrained her instruction during that period. Then she began to realize that her traditional methods of Chinese teaching could not arouse the students' enthusiasm, so she had to make some new changes in order to raise their interest and motivation.

To get a better understanding of the transformation of Ms. Wee' professional perception and beliefs, I would like to identify some critical experience in her biography regarding the following extracts.

### **6.2.3 Analysis of a critical incident in Ms. Wee's professional experience**

In her interview, I posed a question, "*with regard to your biographical experience, are there some special incidents or situations that have influenced your current professional identity and individual beliefs?* (11 May, 2012)" She then mentioned a critical incident that had taken place in the previous period when she began to work in Germany.

Extract 6: Interview with Ms. Wee 11 May, 2012 Line 30-58<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Signs for the transcription: &= small break; &&= longer break; @(. )@= short smile; @\_@= smile of the person speaking; hm= thinking; //Hhm//= confirmation; [...]= some sentences omitted; (...)=some ideas and views are not further explained. More signs can be found in the Appendix 3.

Once I first arrived in Germany, in the first year of pre-vocational training, in comparison with the Chinese situation, there was an entirely different situation [...] at that moment, I started to teach music to Grade 9. There were several students, or more exactly, just two students. In other words, the two students were not exactly willing to study knowledge in Chinese. They thought that I was a foreigner [...] at the beginning, from my point of view, in correspondence to my characteristics; I attempted to instruct them with calmness. Subsequently I realized that there was something wrong with my class, their unbridled behavior let them climb over my head. I thought that they deliberately placed obstacles in my way and made trouble in order to annoy me. How to describe this? There was once, I felt I had a bit of ..... (She silenced for a while) I flared up and flew into a [rage: *additional words by Ping Ren*] immediately so that I began to shout at him; then I immediately went in front of him, was so angry with him. [Unexpected, *added by P.R.*], [suddenly, *added by P.R.*] that he started to kick to me, [like] this [*she used her leg to imitate the students' action*]; fortunately he failed to do that. Perhaps he thought that I would do something to hurt him, so he kicked back. Afterwards, I talked with the head teacher of the class and he told me that actually this student always had the tendency to be violent, especially against other students.

This made me realize that if you are a teacher, your temper (...) if you always teach the students with anger, subsequently you will very soon be ill. At least, you should learn to keep it under control. If your students know you are in a rage, the situation is the same as the last time; the students must take precautions against your instructional behavior. That is a huge failure in instruction. Just at that moment, I should have admitted that I had totally lost myself that is to say I was truly wrong. I was not fully rational as my temper was beyond my control. As for this instructional case, I did not do well and was wrong. Of course, it is natural for a teacher. In term of feedback from students, I am such an easy-going teacher, they like my teaching; they like me so much...because they have freedom without much anxiety, or any other negative feeling. @.@ For the students, I insist on having great respect for them, each of them. Corresponding with the feedback from their parents, including not only the previous students, but also my present students... I would like to [share] my real feeling with you, because I really have learned so much from that. @\_@ now, that you have chosen to be an educational re-

searcher, or at least a teacher, I think that my experience has had a profound impact on your professional development (...)

//Hhm//. I think for some other teachers for you, that is [so helpful, *added by P.R.*]. In fact, every day, only by teaching students happily do I feel valuable and meaningful for today. Even though, I am so tired. //Hhm//. But the students have acquired knowledge; //Hhm//actually is my job. The gains, the mind of the gains, (??) @\_@ That is also responds for myself. //Hhm// however, sometimes is not. The result does not conform to my imagination, so I begin to analyze the reason, why [...] the students are tired of learning and reading, why they cannot learn well. For me, I am always involved into a dilemma//Hhm//. In a word, you should acquire something when you prepare for the one-day's teaching, you should get something, (...) @\_@<sup>28</sup>

From my point view, the special issue of Ms. Wee's experience is able to be understood as what Tripp and other researchers called 'a critical incident' (see Section 3.4.1). In fact, the incident she experienced took place in the first year when she worked as a music teacher in a German school. In her class, there were two students who usually liked making trouble instead of learning Chinese and intentionally attempted to disrupt her instruction. Consequently, she was enraged by the two students and even started to quarrel with them, which immediately led to a serious classroom conflict.

Through a series of classroom observations and interviews, it can be seen that Ms. Wee has a gentle, mild personality towards her students and her colleagues. However, German students are used to showing their individuality and to challenging their teachers' authority. In contrast to this behavior, the student-teacher interaction in the Chinese educational context is peaceful, including hierarchical but harmonious relations in class. Her professional perception was experiencing the great challenge of the new educational environment. In her biography, faced with the extreme cases of the two students, it is obvious that she failed to deal adequately with the unexpected situation.

The quote illustrates that she was at that time unfamiliar with German students' learning habits, not to mention their individual characters. Thus, she did not expect her

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<sup>28</sup> Here I did not show the Chinese original transcript of this extract, due to limited space of my PhD thesis. The original Chinese text from Ms. Wee's interview is saved in the attached CD.

students to deliberately challenge her authority in class. This also implies that her professional outlook largely depended on the traditional Chinese educational schema. The most important reason why the incident became critical was Ms. Wee's lack of experience in coping with sudden or unexpected incidents, even though they are 'normal' for German teachers.

Through her own reflection of the critical incident, Ms. Wee later realized that she should keep her temper under control no matter what the circumstances and she therefore had to make adequate and sufficient preparation to deal with students' different responses in class. In addition, she believed that it was imperative that the teacher should instruct students with a good temper and in a peaceful mood, even when the teacher is confronted with some complex circumstances and unexpected problems. Through sharing her own experience with me, Ms. Wee also advocated that other teachers should be self-controlled and self-regulated under all circumstances. This implies that her professional experience has been able to broaden and develop, which marks a significant turning point in her professional practice. At the same time, it implies that she is open to self-reflection and self-transformation in order to adapt to the requirements of Western language pedagogy.

Even though she had been a Chinese language teacher for many years in Taiwan, and she has experience in teaching different types of student, when confronted with some extreme students in her class, she failed to deal with them and thereby lost control of the class. Referring to her self-reflection on this critical incident, she assumed that she had a subconscious conviction about the German educational context when she began to work in Germany. In order to better understand her professional beliefs, I have selected one extract from her interview:

Extract 7: Teacher interview with Ms. Wee      11 May, 2012      Line 25-27

Ms. Wee: “一些有经验的老师在国内工作了很多年，//Hhm// 因此他们觉得他们能够成功处理在德国的教学问题。甚至他们认为德国学生会比中国学生听话。”

Ms. Wee: “Some experienced Chinese teachers have worked for many years in China, //Hhm// Thus, they think that they are able to cope successfully with new instructional



problems in Germany. In addition, they **even** think that German students are perhaps more obedient than Chinese students.”

Looking at the educational frameworks of China and Germany, there are a large number of intercultural differences regarding the holistic contexts. Under the influence of traditional Chinese schemata grounded in Confucian philosophies, Chinese students are expected not only to have great respect to teachers in class, but also to the material that teachers have taught them. In contrast, within the German educational framework of *Bildung*-oriented didactics, the students are encouraged to develop their own individuality and to construct their own understanding. In Ms. Wee’s case, the two students in her class attempted to challenge her boundaries by taking advantage of her peaceful, gentle temper. What is more, she did not expect that German students would dare to challenge her authority. From my point of view, this shows that she did not have a good understanding of the German educational schema. Additionally, she had misjudged the instructional complexity, and did not therefore successfully handle the contradiction at that time. It is also possible that she did not have a rich enough professional working experience to deal with instructional conflicts and lacked effective professional strategies. Perhaps I can assume that her professional competence at that time did not enable her to deal with intercultural tensions correctly.

In her interview, she also showed her professional views of and beliefs in Chinese language teaching in Germany. She said that:

Extract 8: Teacher interview with Ms. Wee 24 August, 2012, Line 174-177

Ms. Wee: “&& 事实上 (??) 每天只要学生开心，我就觉得有价值，也会有意义的。尽管有的时候我很累，//Hhm//但是学生有学到东西，实际上这个就是我的工作，他们有收获，有收获的感觉 (??) @\_@ 嗯，这个也是对我的奖励。//Hhm//”

Ms. Wee: “&& In fact (??) every day, when the students feel happy in class; I feel valuable and meaningful. Even though, sometimes I am so tired. //Hhm// But the students have the acquisition of knowledge actually is my job. The gains, the feeling of the gains, (??) @\_@ That is also a reward for me. //Hhm//”

On the one hand, her interpretation identifies the crucial principle of her professional outlook, concerning students' learning within a joyful and pleasant atmosphere. On the other, her professional outlook requires students to learn something and get something from her mediation. Traditional language didactics in China remain primarily focused on drilling, grammar and syntax, translation, exercises and on students' accuracy in language content. However, her professional perception attaches great value to students' interest in a joyful learning atmosphere that conforms to the requirement of Western language pedagogies. Having said that, she also emphasized the significance of students' effective language learning. In my understanding, her interpretation implies that there is a tension between interesting instruction and an effective learning process. In general, perhaps I am able to assume that her professional development is in a transitional stage between two sets of beliefs.

Via an analysis of the self-transformation and self-development in Ms. Wee's professional experience, in the following, I shall describe her professional development by means of interpreting and exploring some extracts from her ethnographic interviews and class protocols.

#### **6.2.4 Developmental task of competence-“I try to create a relaxed learning situation in class.”**

Focusing on Ms. Wee's professional competence in subject matter, she didn't mention anything about the subject matter of the Chinese language. Even though Ms. Wee was a music teacher before she worked as a Chinese teacher in Germany, she took for granted the fact that she could speak perfect and fluent Chinese. In China, her academic success in music allowed her to build a professional identity and the fact that she spoke Chinese was more or less irrelevant to her professional career. It seems that the subject-matter knowledge of Chinese is a not a developmental task for her.

In the extract of her interview below, she also mentions some characteristics of her Chinese language teaching that identifies some particular teaching methods, such as

playing games, singing Chinese songs and dancing in class. In order to prove the coherence between what she says and what she does in class, I have integrated my field notes of classroom observation into my interpretation:

Extract 9: Interview with Ms. Wee 11 May, 2012 Line 5-13

Ms. Wee: “[...] & 课堂就要**轻松**，我一般都是用**唱跳**的方式，都很有效果，因为这样可以很快导入内容 [...], /hm/ [...] **大家一起唱歌曲，儿歌**，/hm/ //Hhm//我都会去找一些歌曲让他们随口唱，用耳朵听，一二三，三二一，一二三四五六七，四五六七八九，大家一起拍皮球，都是一些有韵律的。而且一些儿歌，去找一些教材让孩子琅琅上口，这样学习中文的语调就出来了[...]”

Ms. Wee: “[...] & the class should be **relaxed**. I usually teach them by employing **dancing and singing** which is much more effective, because it is easy to lead into new contents[...], /hm/ [...] **singing and dancing with nursery rhymes**, /hm/ //Hhm//And I will look for some Chinese children’s songs, so that I get them to sing while following me. Such as “listening with ears, looking with eyes, speaking with mouths”, “one two three, three two one, one two three four five six seven, four five six seven eight nine, we bounce, bounce, bounce balls together” [...] All of them are full of musical rhythm. In addition to some nursery rhymes, through some contents I can make children sing and speak with a catchy chorus, so that they can learn Chinese tones naturally and easily [...]”

For foreign language teaching, the foreign students may have trouble understanding a given foreign language text, not only because of their language deficiency, but because of a missing link in terms of their cultural schema. Thus, this missing link might be a well-known target language nursery rhyme, historical event or just a geographical name (Krasner I., 1999, p. 82). Ms. Wee mentions that she always uses the following teaching methods, “**轻松的游戏**” (relaxed games), “**唱跳**” (singing and dancing), “**唱歌曲**” (singing Chinese children’s songs), “**唱儿歌**” (singing nursery rhyme) in the Chinese class. In order to better describe her teaching practice, I also use some field notes of classroom observation as a complement. The following field notes consist of different

parts: Ms. Wee's lesson planning, her teaching vocabulary, the students' reaction, teacher's professional behavior and my interpretation of her instruction in class.

NO  
2012年10月18日

跟从中学听课，10:00开始，问好。Hallo!  
问好，教几个儿歌。  
- 跟唱看，耳朵听，听电话  
对老师：谢谢 对不起 站起来 scabei auf.  
老师：不客气。 没关系。(皆可)

2. 儿歌 谁是老大。 Zwei Trep.  
3. 1, 2, 3, 4 找朋友，在长城在故宫。我的朋友在哪里  
4. 歌 Rike 拍不拍。我的奶奶：小花猫  
小花猫：小甲虫  
小花猫拍掌  
小甲虫 (帮他们)  
5. 1, 2, 3, 3, 2, 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. 大家一起拍皮球。  
6. (这是中文) 四... 三... 六... 七... 一... 五... 二... 八...  
(出汉字-按顺序)  
找不同同字同，一个人一个。有人出现时记。学生学不记得别人：一二三四  
从同字同改写提示。

7. 对老师说 konnst du... 写汉字。(六) Smart Board.  
大抱着学生。(跟他们学唱歌) a  
有人学错了。叫下本字到一人一起看学不会写

8. Berkefulpe. 写笔顺。都在书上。有笔划。印不出来了

9. 写汉字。男生 Jug

10:20. Warum? 时间排课。印不写字。教汉字。  
儿歌。一只小猫 = 只小猫。三只小猫。  
新词：九只小猫 九 neun (猜出来) 四  
(再次) 九。leiser  
身体

Field note 1: The class of Ms. Wee 13 October, 2012, the first part

书写的画. 九 Augenblick 是顶.  
 以后下面就是 → 九  
 九  
 九  
 九  
 0100 涂色时和押韵的树 自己描颜色涂抹.  
 1100

本 Klaus. nach dem das Ankerkloster fragen.  
 : 这就可以看书了, 写完就可以看书了. (中国用画书阅读)  
 隔壁的小朋友不喜欢别人把他的画. 是用笔把自己遮挡起来  
 zu keel machen 挡住了即自己的画自己的画来写画  
 一页一页的地上. (九 九 九 九 九, 今天九

1000 (部分) (部分)  
 听时请听公 听时请听公

1. 这上所有与和树 Froo Lin 下该离停的于多科的空去外向  
 2. 胡读 黑板上的阿那孩子. 请阿那阿那孩子 (1-20)  
 却不知来读

1	2	3	...	10

1. 七七 Mal. 20. Training  
 新的数字. 21. 22. ... 30. (自己会读的 > 有人公读.  
 把阿那阿那孩子 (伸开手 > 5. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30  
 2. 阿那阿那孩子. 6 个阿那阿那孩子.  
 大家一起来读. 21. 22. ... 30

个性的方法. 就是用心的方法. 然后教给孩子们.

Field note 2: The class of Ms. Wee 13 October, 2012, the second part

At the beginning of her class, Ms. Wee wanted to ask the students to pay great attention to her instruction, so she used her regular instructional language again, “耳朵听, 眼睛看, 嘴巴说” (*listening with ears, looking with eyes, speaking with mouths*). Then, she processed using the nursery rhyme, ‘two tigers’. All the students followed her words



and read this nursery rhyme loudly. Subsequently, the next nursery rhyme was 'looking for friends'. With the music of this rhyme, the students were dancing and looking for their friends with joy and happiness. Then, Ms. Wee asked them to sing another nursery rhyme, 'pulling the radish'.



Picture 1 Pulling the radish <sup>29</sup>

*Pull radish, pull radish.*<sup>30</sup>

拔萝卜、拔萝卜。 Pull radish, pull radish.

嗨吆嗨吆，拔萝卜，嗨吆嗨吆，拔不动， Hey Hey Yao Yao, pulling radishes, Hey Hey Yao Yao, pulling fixed,

老太婆，快快来，快来帮我们拔萝卜。 Old woman, quickly come, come and help us pull out turnip.

拔萝卜、拔萝卜。 Pull pull radish radish.

嗨吆嗨吆，拔萝卜，嗨吆嗨吆，拔不动， Hey Hey Yao Yao, pulling radishes, Hey Hey Yao Yao, pulling fixed,

小姑娘，快快来，快来帮我们拔萝卜。 Girl, quickly come, come and help us pull out turnip.

拔萝卜、拔萝卜。 Pull pull radish radish.

<sup>29</sup> Online picture from: <http://www.wanglu88.cn/s.61baobao.com/common/flash/2011/dpic/baluobo.jpg>

<sup>30</sup> The class protocol made on 13 October, 2012 is recorded in the attached CD.

嗨吆嗨吆，拔萝卜，嗨吆嗨吆，拔不动， Hey Hey Yao Yao, pulling radishes, Hey  
Hey Yao Yao, pulling fixed,  
小黄狗，快快来，快来帮我们拔萝卜 Little yellow dog, quickly come, come and help  
us pull out turnip.  
....

With the help of my field notes to class instruction, I wrote down some Chinese words in the nursery rhyme, such as “老奶奶” (grandmother), “小姑娘” (a little girl), “小花猫” (a cat), “小黄狗” (a yellow dog), “小鸭儿” (a baby duck), “小男孩” (a little boy), “拔萝卜” (pulling the radish)”. The story says that the grandfather wants to pull radishes; and he calls different people in the family to come and help him. Finally, through the collective effort, they are able to pull them.

The next rhyme nursery is about bouncing a ball, “拍皮球”. “一二三四五，五四三二一，我们一起拍皮球 (one two three four five, five four three two one, let’s us bounce a ball.)” she asked the students to read the nursey rhyme. As a Chinese student, I am also familiar with all the four nursey rhymes that she taught to the students, because I learned and read them in my school time as well. When she began to sing the first rhyme nursery, ‘*two tigers*’, I was so surprised, because she even used the same nursery rhyme that I had learned in elementary school in China. However, German students do not live in the same cultural context as Chinese students, lack the related biographical experience, and how they are able bring their own biographies into learning a new language is not clear. However, it seems that the students are very happy and relaxed in different instructional activities.

In her interview, Ms. Wee firstly expresses that “轻松的氛围” (a relaxed teaching situation) is the most important principle for her instruction. Looking at my observation, she used different active instructional methods, such as, playing games, dancing and singing Chinese songs in order to arouse students’ interest and enthusiasm. It can be found that these methods are able to create a relaxed and interactive instructional context.

Secondly, through using the two classic and well-known Chinese nursery rhymes, “拔萝卜” (pulling the radish) “拍皮球” (bouncing a ball), in my understanding, her instructional method tries to create a Chinese language environment as in China to instruct German students, in order to have students understand and accept people from other cultures.

Compared to German, Chinese is distinctive with different tones in pronunciation; thus Ms. Wee used the two nursery rhymes to help students to practice Chinese pronunciation. She particularly emphasized retaining students’ interest and motivation within the teacher-student interaction. What is more, the students are able to gain the relevant cultural background regarding the Chinese language and Chinese civilization with respect to the nursery rhymes and Chinese songs or other cultural activities.

According to my class observations, there are some Chinese words in nursery rhymes that they had already learned, such as “numbers”, “eye”, “nose”, “mouth”, “face”. She asked the students to read loudly and revise these words, and then the students repeated these words. However, from my point of view, the students were passively reading these words as she asked them to, which accords with the traditional Chinese saying, “*read one hundred times, and the meaning will emerge* (读书百遍, 其义自现) (see Section 5.1.2)”. It shows that her professional attitude focuses on the significance of repetition and memorization. Perhaps I think it is difficult for the students to bring their own biographies into passive reading and repetition. Thus, I can assume that her instruction has yet to develop the students’ intercultural communicative competence, once the students are asked only to ensure their interest and joy without individual subjective self-regulated learning. To some degree, her future professional competence has to be developed and further improved.

Even though her professional outlook attempts to create a joyful and interesting learning situation, her mediation attaches great value to the students’ learning a lot in a limited time frame. Repetitive rote-learning and memorization in traditional Chinese didactics have influenced her instructional didactics so that a paradox has arisen in her professional development.



## 6.2.5 Developmental task of mediation- “Musical teaching is possible as a symbol of my instruction.”

As I have mentioned in the last section, Ms. Wee’s professional competence has to deal with different challenges due to tensions and conflicts in intercultural settings. Next, I shall explain her mediation and knowledge transmission regarding some extracts and field notes in her class.

Extract 10: Interview with Ms. Wee 11 May, 2012 Line 2-6

Ms. Wee: “就像你看见的那样，我们在每节课上课前总是去唱这首‘律动’，这个可能就是我在上课的一个标志。@(. )@ 所有的孩子不仅仅可以唱，还会拍手，扭腰，而且跺脚 [...], 就好像我以前说过的那样，汉语课比其他的课更加生动，有意思。 [...]”

Ms. Wee: “As you have seen, we always sing a Chinese song, “**Lü dong**” (“Rhythm”) at the beginning of each class. It is possible as a symbol of my instruction. @(. )@ All the children not only can sing, but they can also clap their hands, twist their bottoms and hip-hop with their feet [...], As I have said before, the Chinese class is more active and interesting than other classes in my school.[...]”

In her introduction, the pronoun “I” and the possessive pronoun “my” in frequent use make clear that Ms. Wee is proud of her unique individual teaching strategies. Especially, she mentions the song *Lüdong* (律动, *rhythm*) and regards it as an important characteristic of her individual teaching. As I have observed, all students were singing, shaking hands and twisting their bottoms when they were singing the song-‘*rhythm*’ together. With the help of the interesting song, the students were motivated to take part in the interaction that was able to help them to bring their biographical experience into the teacher’s mediation. There are many words in the song that the students had learned before. These words act as connections that help the students to combine their own learning biography with new content learning. For a general level of interactional competence, I can perhaps regard Ms. Wee’s mediation as the second level, i.e. the “com-

municative level”. The transfer of knowledge, skills and attitudes is understood as the products of negotiation in a community of practice between learners and teachers.

She also likes using varied exaggerated bodily actions and rich facial expressions to attract the students’ attention and to pass her enthusiasm to each student. Looking at her instructional practice, it can be seen that her mediation focuses on the significance of Chinese culture in language mediation. From my point of view, her musical strategies enable the creation of an interesting situation to attract the students’ interest.

With respect to her classroom instruction and mediation, in the next extract, she mentioned her intercultural language pedagogy and showed how to combine Chinese culture with language teaching.

Extract 11: Interview with Ms. Wee 24 August, 2012 Line 234-238

Ms. Wee: “&&我们的汉语教学，很多时候都是加入中国的传统文化；很多时候，孩子们对于文化背景知识更加感兴趣。[...] 比如，当开始学习中国的传统节日前，我们都会告诉他们很多的文化背景知识，[...]@.@而且也让他们感受节日。比如，在春节，(??) 我们学校会安排全校学生一起来包饺子，然后吃饺子；元宵节的时候，学生也会自己做各种各样的灯笼，挂在学校里。 @.@, [...]”

Ms. Wee: “&& For our Chinese language teaching, most of the time the teacher **integrates Chinese traditional culture** with the instruction; most of the time, the children are more interested in cultural background knowledge. [...] @.@ For example, we would like to tell them much about the cultural background of Chinese traditional festivals, additionally making them get a feeling for the different festivals. For instance, the Spring Festival: (??) we organize all the students to make dumplings and then eat them; on the Lantern Festival, the students make various lanterns by themselves and hang them in our school. @.@, [...]”

Culture is the ‘software of the mind’ (Hofstede, 1991). Breakdowns in communication arise not from linguistic, but from socio-linguistic differences. It assumes that intercultural competence is the crucial essence in foreign language teaching. In other words, linguistic competence is not sufficient for successful intercultural communication be-

casue culture demands to be integrated in any communicative activity (Krasner I., 1999, p.81).

In her extract, some words like “to integrate Chinese traditional culture”, “to add much knowledge of cultural background”, “to feel festivals” show the significance of cultural knowledge in her instruction. From my classroom observation, it also shows that when she began to teach some Chinese words for different traditional festivals in China, she always spent a long time explaining related cultural knowledge: the different ritual customs and how the Chinese people celebrate these festivals in China. And she also introduced other Chinese festivals to students, like the Spring Festival, the Mooncake Festival, the Lantern Festival, etc. In addition, Chinese language teachers at the school organize different activities and shows to celebrate these festivals with students at the school.

Integrating Chinese culture into language teaching is a very significant characteristic of Ms. Wee’s language mediation. Thus, learning Chinese cultural characteristics can be a help for intercultural communication. It makes the students familiar with the cultural background of the Chinese language. In the long run, this will stimulate the students to produce language-related sense constructions, thus combining their individual biographies with the new language. To some degree, the huge differences between Chinese and Western traditional culture are able to attract students’ interest and curiosity, which perhaps motivates them to learn the new language.

According to my observation and teachers’ interviews, it can be found that Ms. Wee’s mediation has some other characteristics which I shall go on to explain in the following text. As she said in her interview:

Extract 12 : Interview with Ms. Wee 24 August, 2012 Line 196-203

Ms. Wee: “上汉语课，我都会做字卡，就是闪卡，颜色和字和在一起。他们还没有写汉字，但是大概知道，“绿“是长这个样子，&& (?) /hm/ 3, 4 年级的孩子，可以学写字了 [...] 比如词汇学习，五官、颜色、家庭成员，我都做字卡，然后一定都要图片，//Hhm//[...]//Hhm//图片拿出来就要说出来，一定要出来，看见一个图像，就可以知道意思。 [...]”

Ms. Wee: “for Chinese lessons, I make word cards, flash cards with colors and words together. They cannot write Chinese characters, but probably know the character of "绿 green" in this way, && (??) /hm/ Children in Grade 3 and 4, can learn to write. For the Grade 1 and 2, they are asked to give elephants, and monkeys colors in association with Chinese characteristics [...] For vocabulary learning, for example, facial features, colors, family members: I make word cards for them and must have pictures, //Hhm// [...]//Hhm//Once the cards are showed, the students should pronounce them. It is sure that once the students see an image of a word, they can know its meaning. [...]"

In the extract, she clearly assumed that she likes using flash cards for vocabulary learning in class. *Using flashcards* has been the most significant strategy in Ms. Wee’s mediation since she taught Chinese language in China (see an example in Picture 2). As she clearly expressed in her interview, “*I have been using the approach of using flashcards since I began to work as a Chinese teacher*” (Ms. Wee, on 24. August, 2012). For her language transmission, the approach is regarded as the most effective method with respect to her biography and educational experience, because my classroom observation shows that most of her students are able to pronounce Chinese characters correctly once they see the picture on a flash card.



Picture 2 An example of a Chinese flashcard 鼻—Bízi—nose <sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Online picture from <http://images.google.de/flashcards>

Secondly, confronted with the present mixed-age teaching, her teaching method distributes different learning tasks to different grades of students respectively. The students of the lower grades (Grade 1, 2) are only required to play some language games and paint different colors with respect to Chinese in the exercises. But for the higher grade students (Grade 3, 4), her instruction arranges regular character exercises in order to train them to write down Chinese characters. My classroom observation shows that different grades of students are able to follow Ms. Wee's instruction and finish classroom exercises as well.

Thirdly, her mediation has different standards and requirements for the students of different grades. For the students of the lower grades, she asked the students to pronounce these Chinese characters and words correctly. In her class, once she shows the flashcard in front of the young students, it can be seen that they are able to read most of the Chinese characters correctly. As Ms. Wee said:

Extract 13: Interview with Ms. Wee 24 August, 2012 Line 207-212

低年级的学生，他们的听力理解很强，因此他们可以通过模仿我的读音，很好地去学习汉字。(…)//Hhm// 高年级的学生学习语音还是通过‘拼音’而不是去听我的发音，因此他们不能像低年级的孩子们一样，很快地去学习”

“young grades students' capability of listening comprehension is strong, therefore they can learn the characters very well through imitating my pronunciation.(…)//Hhm// High grade students learn pronunciation with “*pinyin*” instead of listening to my pronunciation, so they cannot read each character as quickly as the lower grade children.”

Ms. Wee largely trains young grade students' listening capability so that the students are able to read correctly and understand a lot of Chinese characters. However, her instruction requires that the higher grade students to write down different characters, in order to train them to recognize Chinese characters and to memorize their writing sequences.

She realizes that it is a problem that the higher grade students have low capability in reading Chinese characters with *pinyin*. But it seems that her mediation causes the problem, because she has been imposing different instructional requirements on different grades of students. At present, her mediation is not able to deal with the problem.

Generally speaking, it seems that traditional Chinese pedagogies greatly influence the construction of her professional beliefs and perception, focusing on memorization and repetition. She therefore emphasizes the significance of students' learning in class. What is more, her teaching method also emphasizes the role of culture in students' intercultural communicative competence. Confronted with the present mixed-age situation, her mediation is able to take care of different grades of the students' developmental requirements and set different standards for them. To some extent, her mediation therefore has developed in the higher grade level concerning intercultural interaction.

### 6.2.6 Developmental task of acknowledgment-“They, [the students] have been spoilt previously.”

Compared to the traditional “peaceful” teaching situation in China, Ms. Wee’s class context seems much more noisy and undisciplined. According to my observation, it can even be seen that the students are free to talk with each other, laugh, and act at will in her class. Thus in her interview, I raised a question about an interesting phenomenon that some students can freely get out of their seats to drink water or go to the toilet without asking for the teacher’s permission. In fact, this can seldom be seen in any daily instructional situation in China, nor in the compulsory school system in Germany<sup>32</sup>.

Extract 14: Interview with Ms. Wee 11 May, 2012 Line 58-61

Ms. Wee: “&& 他们 [学生们] 都是被先前宠坏了@\_@。一开始也许是我们没有制定严格的课堂纪律，这可能是造成今天这样情况的一个重要原因。 [...] @\_@”

Ms. Wee: “&& **They, [the students] have been spoilt previously** @\_@. In the beginning, perhaps we did not set classroom discipline strictly enough, which leads to this situation today. [...] @\_@ ”

<sup>32</sup> Normally the students are not so free to leave their seat to go to the toilet, especially in other classes with disciplines at Gymnasium A. The students should first raise a hand and ask for permission from the teacher, then they can leave. What I am talking about only refers to the real situation in Ms. Wee’s Chinese teaching class.

From the perspective of the speaker, the process of speaking is an ostensive process; while from the perspective of the listener, the process of understanding discourse is an inferential process. We could make two processes of interpretation, respectively the formative interpretation and the reflective interpretation. From the perspective of the narrator, what Ms. Wee said has the implied meaning that she certainly felt reluctant to accept that students are free to leave their seats. It is no doubt with an ostensive attitude. As I understand it, it perhaps shows that she expects an organized instructional situation. On the other hand, it implies that she loves children so deeply that she is not willing to set some new strict discipline to constrain the students' individual freedom.

However, as I have showed above (see Section 5.1.2), the traditional Chinese schema attaches great significance to strict discipline in an effective classroom with a good, organized instructional situation. In fact, strict discipline is regarded as a precondition for teacher's transmission and mediation in the limited time. Her professional belief attaches great value to strict discipline in order to achieve effective instruction. However, in the intercultural setting, she had accepted the students as they are, who have their own didactic competence to practise self-regulated learning and individual development. In my understanding, she had changed to a stereotyped traditional image of a good student who should obey the classroom rules and discipline, and show great respect for their teachers in class. But she is also looking forward to constructing an organizational situation with discipline by getting rid of much more students' rudeness. As she mentioned,

Extract 15: Interview with Ms. Wee, 11 May, 2012 Line 61-63

Ms. Wee: “我依然有这样的感觉，在我的印象中传统的教室更加的安静些，当我还是学校里面的学生时，[...] 对于我来说，一个有组织的课堂对于有效的教学更加重要。”

Ms. Wee: “I still have the feeling that the traditional classroom was much quieter when I was a student at school, [...] for me, an organized classroom is very significant for effective instruction.”

There is no doubt that traditional teacher-centered instruction with strict discipline retains its influence on Ms. Wee's professional beliefs in classroom management. In my study, as I made a general summary of Chinese teachers' professional perceptions, most of them expressed their frustration and expressed self-criticism if they could not have a good, organized instructional situation. Referring to their professional beliefs, they view strict classroom discipline is a precondition for effective instruction.

I have come to the conclusion that the educational experience of Chinese teachers in their own schools was embedded in their own biographical educational experience, especially when they themselves were students, then as student teachers and teacher trainees. Teachers' 'biographical baggage' concerning traditional experience has therefore a great influence upon their actual instructional practice and self-concepts within the context of intercultural circumstance. We can assume 'biographical baggage' refers as a starting point to making an analysis of one's educational experience, knowing that this kind of knowledge dominates one's knowledge of educational science: (1) it is deeply rooted, (2) holistic, (3) emotional, (4) affectively loaded and can be seen as saturated (M. Meyer, 2001, p.413).

Concerning a problem of classroom discipline whether students can leave freely without the teacher's permission in class, I try to interpret other teachers' views on the question in a group interview.

For the group interview with the three Chinese language teachers, Meinert Meyer mentioned the sentence "*the students have been spoiled previously*" again, Ms. Wee expected to get her interpretation and understanding across to the students. However, it is surprising that she did not admit she had spoken this sentence before and she expressed her surprise at this view. In the recording of the three teachers' group interview in Appendix 4, she said that:

Extract 16: Interview with Ms. Wee, Ms. Baum, and Ms. Wang 24 April, 2012

Ms. Wee: “/hm/ 不，不， && //Hhm//, 如果学生要去上厕所，他们必须做这样的手势。//Hhm//(?) (她立刻演示了学生的手势) @\_@”



Ms. Wee: “/hm/ no, no, && //Hhm// [*switching into German language again, to make Meinert Meyer understand her meanings*] When the students want to go to the toilet, they must make this kind of gesture.//Hhm//(?) (she imitates the students’ posture immediately) @\_@” (the full transcript of group interviewing see in Appendix 4)

At that time, it is obvious that she did not admit she had said the sentence before. At this moment she only wanted to show the presented teaching context with discipline in her classroom, “*the student who wants to go to the toilet must put a hand up and ask for my permission [...]*”. The reason that M. Meyer mentioned this sentence in the teachers’ group interview was to explore other Chinese teachers’ professional perceptions of classroom discipline. In addition, he would like to talk about the intercultural differences among teachers’ views on strict discipline with teachers. From Ms. Wee’s interview, it shows that her professional beliefs attach great value to classroom rules by the way the students are required to obey these established rules. It is not necessary to talk about whether she said the sentence or the reason why she did not admit this sentence in the group interview. It is understandable and reasonable that she would not like her colleagues to think that her instruction is without discipline.

### **6.2.7 Developmental task of institution-“Confronted with the mixed-age instruction, we often discuss this problem, but it is not effective.”<sup>33</sup>**

As I have mentioned in Section 4.5, teachers’ professional practice stands in close relation to different elements of the instructional institution that includes working with colleagues, the school management group at school and other colleagues beyond the boundary of the school. Teachers’ professional practice stands in relation to different institutional contexts and is influenced by the administrative level of the school system as well, so that, in regard to the professional development of acting within the school

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<sup>33</sup> I collected my research data and made teachers’ interviews three years ago when Chinese teachers confronted with the great problem of mixed-age instruction. However, with the number of students increasing per class since then, mixed-age classes and instruction have been declining in frequency at the school.

system, it requires that teachers should deal and interact within a school system-not only with the school principal but, in particular, with his/her own colleagues (cf. Hericks, 2006, p. 137).

A large amount of research shows that Chinese language teachers strongly emphasize the need for professional training and collegial collaboration to develop their professional competence. Thus, in order to clearly explain Ms. Wee's professional views on collegial collaboration and the institutional situation in her school, I will use some extracts from her interviews. She introduced her institutional context, including collegial collaboration, professional training program, peer-professional contact and in-service training and so on.

Extract 17: Interview with Ms. Wee 11 May, 2012 Line 83-88

Ms. Wee: “我们学校**所有的**汉语老师，我们组成了一个关于汉语教学的团队，（我们会）**常规地**碰面，hm //Hhm//一周三次。通过这样的交流，我们会**常常**制定未来几周内的教学课程，我们会针对课堂教学中出现的问题，**分享**我们个人教学的经验，**找到解决的方法**。[...]//Hhm//但是，针对目前的**混龄教学**，我们也**常常**讨论这个问题（可是）目前还没有什么有效的办法来提高教学效果。[...]”

Ms. Wee: “**All the** Chinese language teachers at our school have constituted an instructional team. And we will **regularly meet** and communicate with others, hm //Hhm//three times per week. Through mutual communication among teachers, we always set up a periodical instructional planning for the coming several weeks, and discuss various problems occurring in teaching and share our personal instructional experience among the colleagues in order to **find** some effective **instructional methods**. [...]//Hhm//However, in the light of **present mixed-age instruction**, we **often** discuss this problem and haven't found any effective methods to improve instructional results. [...]”

In this extract, she talked about institutional cooperation in her interview and clearly expressed the great significance of teamwork co-operation with her colleagues. Firstly, focusing on discourse contents in her interview, it can be easily seen that she mentions “we” five times concerning the community of Chinese teachers. For discourse analysis,

the pronouns “we” and “us” in frequent use in discursive construction instead of “I” and “me” make clear that the professional collegial community is shared by her as a collective collaboration in the school. Her expression identifies that she views herself as an entity of a collegial community with a strong sense of belonging.

Secondly, she admits that there are regular meetings and collegial communication within the teachers’ community at the school. On this point, Ms. Wee mentioned that she could learn from other teachers’ experience and solutions to deal with her problems and difficulties. In particular, she used words like “often” “share with” and “find effective methods” etc. It seems that it is a good community in harmony regarding collective collaboration and influenced by traditional Confucian ideology, as I have mentioned in section 4.5. Referring to Chinese tradition, Chinese people do not like to clearly identify individual problems and weakness in front of other people, in particular among peer teachers. In fact, in a competitive society, having a large number of individual problems and difficulties is understood as a sign of weak professional competence. In her understanding, each teacher would like to identify individual instructional problems and difficulties in front of their peers, which shows that they have a reliable work setting and situation. They are not afraid of losing face, namely ‘losing their reputation’. In my understanding, her professional outlook regards the present collegial community of her school as a reliable community.

However, she clearly identified that they are not able to find a good, effective solution to deal with present mixed-age instruction at school. What is more, Ms. Baum and other Chinese teachers at the school also mentioned that mixed-age instruction is the biggest challenge they encounter. However, in my understanding, problems arises from the length of time allotted to teaching students Chinese varies greatly because students’ language backgrounds and capabilities are not the same. At present, the number of students who have to learn Chinese with other students from different grades with similar Chinese language capability is very small. Indeed, the primary school had a very limited number of students at that time. However, due to the increasing number of students, the situation of mixed-age instruction at this school has changed now.

In fact, some efficient teaching methods in teachers' individual didactics are introduced to other teachers within collegial communication and collaboration. Referring to the class protocols of different teachers, it can be found that different teaching methods, such as flash card learning, classroom dictation and cultural instructional activities are often used by these teachers at school. It explicitly shows that collegial communication enables the support of each teacher's professional development.

Ms. Wee was willing to engage in different kinds of collegial collaboration and felt that professional communication helped her a lot. In other words, even though she had realized the importance of mutual cooperation and coordination, she found that the present level of collegial collaboration was not effective enough to deal with her own problems and challenges. As she said in her interview:

Extract 18: Teacher interview with Ms. Wee 11 May, 2012 Line 100-101

Ms. Wee: “每个人的课堂都有不一样的教学情境，教学问题，因此，实际上我们组织之间的交流，还不能完全解决每个人的问题...”

Ms. Wee: “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. Wee 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. For her professional developmental task, she presented collegial collaboration not being able to provide her with effective solutions to deal with problems. The shared educational experience within collegial collaboration cannot easily be applied to each teacher's instructional practice. Chinese language teachers cannot find an effective solution to deal with present mixed-grade instruction at school. It implicitly shows the limitations of collegial collaboration at present. Perhaps some teachers are not willing to share their own effective methods and strategies in collegial collaboration, or the teachers perhaps would like to deal with individual problems by mainly relying on their personal previous experience.

What is more, I begin to doubt whether there is a really reliable and trustworthy working situation among these Chinese language teachers at school. As I have explained above in Chapter 4 (see Section 4.5), the traditional Chinese ideologies concerning ‘harmony’ can still be seen in collegial collaboration within the intercultural setting that perhaps constrains the effects and results of teachers’ collaboration.

In addition, Ms. Wee did not mention anything about other kinds of collegial communication with other-subject teachers at her school or other Chinese colleagues beyond her school. Regarding the developmental task of acting within the collegial community, she has to perhaps further develop her collaborative competence. Additionally, more time for discussion, and effective communication concerning individual teaching experience are the urgent requirements.

The current level of collegial collaboration has not yet satisfied the needs of her professional development. Future development has to be based on two factors: on the one hand, the Chinese teachers’ community should further develop coordinated working competence; on the other, from the aspect of school management, the institutional management group should correspondingly offer more sustainable support.

### **6.2.8 Interpretation of Ms. Wee’s professional development**

In Ms. Wee’s case study, I have analyzed her professional competence development in association with four categories of teachers’ developmental tasks: competence, mediation and transformation, acknowledgement and institution as above. In order to better explain her individual didactics, I will generalize her professional developmental tasks within the four categories:

<p><b>Competence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• musical teaching method,</li> <li>• playing various games, singing songs (nursery rhymes) and dancing,</li> <li>• has not yet formulated students' intercultural views within student-teacher interaction,</li> <li>• focusing on repetitive rote-learning and memorization;</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mediation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• employing musical strategies and methods,</li> <li>• integrating traditional Chinese culture into language teaching,</li> <li>• using flash cards,</li> <li>• distributing different tasks and setting different requirements for different students;</li> </ul>
<p><b>Acknowledgment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accepting and acknowledging each student's individuality,</li> <li>• "students have been spoilt previously",</li> <li>• constructing an organizational situation with strict principles,</li> <li>• not yet able to change the present instructional situation;</li> </ul>	<p><b>Institution:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• having a sense of belonging,</li> <li>• attain regular meetings, enjoying interactive communication and cooperative teamwork,</li> <li>• not being satisfied with the results of collaboration,</li> <li>• limited communication with teachers of other subjects, other colleagues outside school;</li> </ul>

**Table 5 Ms. Wee's individual didactics from the categories of developmental tasks**

Looking at Ms. Wee's biography, I know that because she was a music teacher before she worked as a Chinese language teacher in Germany, she had already formulated her professional beliefs and views of musical instruction. Even though Ms. Wee expressed that she had accepted and understood German educational philosophies, her actual teaching behavior still often reflected the Chinese education schema and traditional Chinese didactics. Her previous professional experience concerning musical didactics influences her present instructional behavior. In order to adjust her new professional role correctly, Ms. Wee's professional framework should make some adjustment and transformation in association with the German educational framework.

Even though, Ms. Wee's teaching was confronted with different kinds of challenges and constraints due to huge differences between the Chinese and the German educational contexts, she tried to effectively deal with the conflicts by integrating Chinese cultural content with language teaching. Her professional beliefs began to shift to the Western language pedagogies, focusing on cultivating students' intercultural views

and communicative competence. Despite her attempt to improve her professional competence to implement intercultural language pedagogy, she has been experiencing different barriers to accommodating the requirements of the new educational context.

My next case study is Ms. Baum, who works in the same school with Ms. Wee. To better interpret the process of the two teachers' professional development, I will make a comparative study in the next section concerning two significant aspects: the teachers' instructional practice and their management of different professional tasks in their working experience.

### **6.3 Ms. Baum's case study: *"The most important principle of my didactics is a good learning atmosphere in my classroom."***

Another Chinese teacher is Ms. Baum, who was a university teacher of information technology after graduating in computer information at a university in northwestern China. Then she worked as a computer teacher for 12 years in her hometown. In 2002, she studied for her master's degree in Hamburg. At that time, she first worked as a Chinese teacher at a Chinese weekend school and then worked at different foreign language schools. She has been teaching Chinese as a foreign language for over ten years and has gained rich instructional experience.

#### **6.3.1 Analysis of the self-transformation of Ms. Baum's professional beliefs in the transitional period**

The previous period of Ms. Baum's career was concerned with traditional Chinese ways of language teaching which are deeply embedded in her professional beliefs and influence her instructional behavior. In the following extract, she interpreted her first impression of students' learning when she worked in Germany.

Exact 19: Teacher interview with Ms. Baum 24 August, 2012 Line 124-126

Ms. Baum: “首先，举例子说，在中国，每个班级大约都有 50 个学生，所有的孩子都希望学到知识，他们学得真得很辛苦。相反，在德国同龄的孩子，我感觉整个班级的孩子都在玩游戏，学习的效率不高。 [...]”

Ms. Baum: “Firstly, for example, in China, there are almost 50 students in a class, all the students are eager to learn and (they) really study **hard**. On the contrary, concerning German students of the same age, I feel that the whole class has been playing games in class and their learning is not efficient. [...]”

In this interview, Ms. Baum explained the cultural comparisons concerning the number of students in class in Germany and in China. There are more students in a class than in a German class. Actually, they are confronted with having to attain more serious competence and facing greater challenges.

It is very interesting that she felt that “*the whole class has been playing games, their learning is not efficient [...]*”, when she had just begun to work in Germany. In her biography, it is her first impression of German classroom instruction and school pedagogy, which is indeed a very superficial impression of the German educational schemata.

In Ms. Baum’s previous professional experience, she tried to use her professional attitudes concerning effective instruction to understand German students’ learning. It can be seen that her professional beliefs still reflect the Chinese educational philosophies. It seems to me that as a trainee teacher at that time, she did not really understand the core principles of the German education schemata. In particular, she was not satisfied with the effects and results of students’ learning in an “undisciplined” classroom. Confronted with the intercultural tensions between the Chinese and German education schemata, as I see it, she was not able to accept and understand German students’ learning habits. However, Ms. Baum even tried to apply some effective strategies from her prior professional experience to improve the learning ability of her students.

It implies that Ms. Baum’s professional competence cannot get access to the notion of the traditional German *Didaktik* concerning students’ self-formation and self-



transformation. To some degree, she is not yet able to make a suitable self-transformation of her individual professional identity, and has therefore not successfully dealt with the professional development requirements. Her beliefs in perseverance and hard work brought her some difficulties and problems in adapting her teaching methods.

In the following paragraphs, I explain my evaluation with the help of quotations and interpretations of what she said in her interview and what I have observed in class, as I have also done for Ms. Wee. In the following extract, she mentions her reflective learning when she taught the students of the third and fourth grades. There is an example that illustrates Ms. Baum's understanding of the content of the German syllabus.

Extract 20: Teacher interview with Ms. Baum      24 August, 2012    Line 103-108

Ms. Baum: “你知道，在中国，大部分的基础知识是在小学学习的，他们很早就开始学习了。我觉得这样很重要 [...] /hm/有一次我们要学习如何用汉语表达时间，我觉得特别惊奇 (...) //Hhm//因为四年级的学生他们甚至还不会认识表，竟然，[...] 所以这节课，我竟然需要先告诉他们如何认识表。 // @\_@ (...)”

Ms. Baum: “You know, in China, a large amount of basic knowledge is taught to children at primary school, **they begin to learn very early**. I think that is **significant**. Once we were going to learn how to tell the time in Chinese. I was so **amazed**, (...) //Hhm// that the students of Grade 4 **couldn't even** tell the time in German, unexpectedly, [...]Therefore, in the class, I first had to teach them how to tell time by the clock. // @\_@ (...)”

In the extract above, Ms. Baum assumed her first impression of the German curriculum arrangement. It implies that her professional outlook is influenced by the traditional Chinese educational schemata, as I have claimed above in Chapter 2. In her interview, it can be seen that she used different words to show her momentary feeling of surprise regarding the German educational syllabus, for example, “so amazed” (特别惊奇), “even” (甚至), “竟然” (unexpectedly).

Confronted with new educational situations and students' characteristics, she is not able to understand that a great deal of basic knowledge that ought to be taught and

learned at the elementary or junior middle school levels, however is postponed even to the university level in Germany. However, in German didactics, the content is characteristically defined by curriculum designers as the contents of education (*Bildungsinhalt*), and is the result of a special selection and organization of the wealth of conceivable knowledge, experience and wisdom for *Bildung* (Deng, 2011a, p. 544).

This incident in Ms. Baum's educational biography shows that her instruction has to deal with different intercultural tensions between the Chinese and German educational frameworks. Ms. Baum's educational experience show that Chinese language teachers have not lost contact with the wellsprings of their intercultural and educational traditions (Curran, 2014, p. 309). In general, Chinese language teachers' conceptions of new educational contexts are deeply rooted in their cultural tradition and can constitute serious constraints on adopting new ways of teaching (cf. Moloney and Xu, 2012, p. 472).

Comparing the biographies, we see that Ms. Baum did not take part in any professional teacher training programs as Ms. Wee did after gaining her Ph.D. degree in Germany. However, through various kinds of teaching practices and gaining professional experience in different German schools, she also developed her professional competence and was able to transform her previous professional perception of the different learning processes exhibited by German students. As she asserted:

Extract 21: Teacher interview with Ms. Baum 24 August, 2012 Line 15-32

Ms. Baum: “我来这边以后实际上就工作了 [...] 那个时候就是到处给学校上课，有的是私立学校，有的是职业学校，或者是一些周日学校，上了很多的课。[...] 当时就是自由职业者，当时**接触的人也是非常多，实际上，收获也是非常大。** [...] 教材也是**非常多**，中文学校，还有周末学校，各种学校的情况也是**不一样的** [...] 各种教材也会**换得非常快**，我们也就需要适应。因此，**我什么样的类型的孩子都可以教**，也可以应付。一般新手的老师，有的只能教一个层次。@(. )@”

Ms. Baum: “I started work soon after arriving here, in Germany [...] at that time I taught Chinese language at schools all around, for example, private school, vocational school or weekend Chinese school, gave students different courses. [...] At that time, I was self-employed, and **got along with different types of people. Indeed I acquired a**

**lot.** [...] In addition, there were different teaching materials in language schools and weekend schools. Schools are different from one another, [...] and they are **changing** textbooks **frequently**, so we need to adapt to them. **That is why I am able to teach different kinds of students** and I deal with them as well. However; some young Chinese teachers can only teach one category of students. @(.)@”

Unlike Ms. Wee, Ms. Baum was not a professional Chinese language teacher for foreigners when she worked in China. When she worked as a Chinese teacher in Germany, she did not have as much teaching experiences of Chinese language as Ms. Wee. Her working in various kinds of schools has helped her to accumulate a variety of teaching experience because she has had to work in different schools, such as Chinese language schools, private language schools, weekend schools, vocational schools, adult’s vocational schools, etc. Simultaneously she has had to effectively use different methods and instructional plans to meet the requirements of different categories of students.

As a result of this, I can now describe some distinctive characteristics of Ms. Baum’s professional biography regarding self-transformation. Firstly, it is obvious that the Chinese educational framework determines her professional beliefs and views. In her professional practice, when she began to teach Chinese in Germany, traditional Chinese language didactics seems to have influenced her professional beliefs and practice in the new educational setting. Secondly, even though Ms. Baum had not been a professional Chinese language teacher in China, her rich working experience at different schools has developed her professional competence and helped her quickly adapt to the new educational situation.

In order to better identify Ms. Baum’s professional competence, I now want to combine her assumption into her professional practice with focusing on her working with professional developmental tasks.

### **6.3.2 Developmental task of competence-“According to their own wishes, sometimes it works very well in my class.”**

As I said above (see Section 4.1), a professional teacher should have professional competence, including professional knowledge of the subject matter and the professional competence to deal with various problems and challenges in class. Subsequently, I would like to present my interpretation of Ms. Baum's professional competence.

In my semi-structured interview with Ms. Baum, I asked her to describe one regular class with which she is satisfied or she regards as having received effective instruction. As she mentioned afterwards:

Extract 22: Teacher interview with Ms. Baum 08 October, 2012 Line 101-111

Ms. Baum: “我们学习 Wochentag, 我就想着设计 Wochentag Salat。首先, 我把星期一到星期五都用中文写在一起, 然后把这些单词的德语意思写在另外一组, 然后让他们用鼠标连起来, 就是配对 [...]。接下来, 他们要给每一天选择不同的颜色, 我给他们都准备了各种颜色的卡。因为我们以前是学过颜色的, 我就会问, “你的星期一是什么颜色?”, 比如, 他会说“红色”, 然后就让他从我准备的字卡里面找到“红色”汉字。其他学生会回答, 对或者不对, 要是对了, 他就可以用电脑把颜色涂在星期一的框子里面, 然后涂星期二, 三 [...], 最后把这些不同颜色的一周七天, 都放在一个碗里面, 成为他们自己的一周。[...] 按照他们的想法, 选择不同的颜色, 拌在一起, 就像在厨房拌沙拉一样。”

Ms. Baum: We plan to learn the different Chinese words for “weekdays”. And I think about designing a class activity called “Weekdays Salad”. Firstly, I write down all the weekdays in Chinese characters in a group, then another one in German, then they should use the mouse to line up different words: it is a matching exercise [...] then, the students are asked to choose different colors, one for each day of the week as they wish, with the different color cards I have prepared for them. Because we have learned the Chinese characters with different colors, I then ask the students, “Which color do you want to choose for your Monday?” For example, he answers “红色 (Red)”. Then I give him some cards and ask him to find the Chinese character, “红色 (Red)” among these cards. Then I ask the other students whether he is right and they answer “correct or not correct”. If correct, he is allowed to use the mouse to paint the color red into the frame

of his Monday; then Tuesday and Wednesday [...]; finally he can put the different weekdays with different colors into a bowl and so gets his own individual week. [...] according to their own wishes, they choose different colors and mix them like making salad in the kitchen.

In her class, she first designed a classroom exercise to ask the students to match the Chinese words for weekdays with their German translation. In fact, her plan is to encourage the students to bring their previous language knowledge into new content learning. Two weeks ago I observed the students had learned these Chinese characters of colors and numbers-shared experience or joint content within the interaction.

Secondly, it seems that her professional beliefs have begun to conform to the German educational context, accepting each student's individuality concerning their individual development. For example, the students are able to choose their own favorite colors to represent the different weekdays as they wish. And Ms. Baum accepted each student's choices and respected different students' opinions, which perhaps shows her acknowledgement of her students' individual development. In fact, once the students' interest and individual requirements are ensured and supported by their teachers' instruction, they are able to produce the requisites necessary for sense construction by means of negotiation in teaching and learning.

Concerning her teaching methods, it shows that she has integrated traditional Western culture with Chinese language teaching. In fact, salad-making is a typical activity in Western culture well known to all the German students; in this way it is therefore easy to help the students to bring their own experience into learning new knowledge. It implies that her teaching method enables the students to understand and accept new language in their familiar daily experience.

Ms. Baum's intercultural competence helps her to find personal solutions to integrate cultural knowledge with Chinese language teaching. Her professional competence attaches great value to cultural knowledge content in foreign language teaching that is able to reflect Ms. Baum's professional behavior and practice. For example, in her instruction, she integrated the Western culture concerning salad-making with Chinese teaching, designing a learning task in which different Chinese words for weekdays are

mixed up in a student's bowl. To better to illustrate a daily process of salad mixing, the different Chinese words for the days of the week are designed as various kinds of vegetables regarding her power point. Then she asked the students to mix these words up in a big bowl.

My classroom observation was that all students were so active that they raised their hands in order to get a chance to use the computer mouse to paint their favorite colors and mix different words into a bowl. In my opinion, her instruction has recognized the significance of her students' individual experience and accepted their individual development. Once the students can bring their own biographies into foreign language learning, the first level of teacher-student interaction is able to be transformed into the second, communicative level that can further help the students to achieve sense-making. Once student-teacher interaction is able to enter the third level, the intercultural differences and cultural conflicts in foreign language teaching can be effectively lessened and weakened.

However, she did not mention her knowledge of Chinese or other related language knowledge. As a native Chinese speaker, she perhaps feels that her professional competence need not extend to her talking an interest in the knowledge of her own language and its communicative capability. Ms. Baum's intercultural instructional competence in Chinese will therefore have to be further developed.

### **6.3.3 Developmental task of mediation- "I use different ways to integrate Chinese culture into language teaching."**

In this section, I analyze Ms. Baum's professional competence of language mediation on the basis of classroom observations, protocols, field notes and teachers' interviews before making a comparative study with other Chinese language teachers' instruction.

Ms. Baum mentioned that her instructional methods focused on integrating traditional Chinese culture with language teaching. As she assumed in her interview:

Extract 23: Teacher interview with Ms. Baum 24 August, 2012 Line 52-59

Ms. Baum: “对于我的教学，我用不同的方法把汉语文化融合到语言教学中去， [...] 特别是用新的技术，比如多媒体设备，四大名著的动画片，还有一些经典的童话故事。 [...]”

Ms. Baum: “for my mediation, I use different ways to integrate Chinese culture into language teaching, [...] in particular by using new technologies, such as multi-media equipment, showing animated films about the Four Great Classical Novels of China<sup>34</sup>, some classical fable stories. [...]”

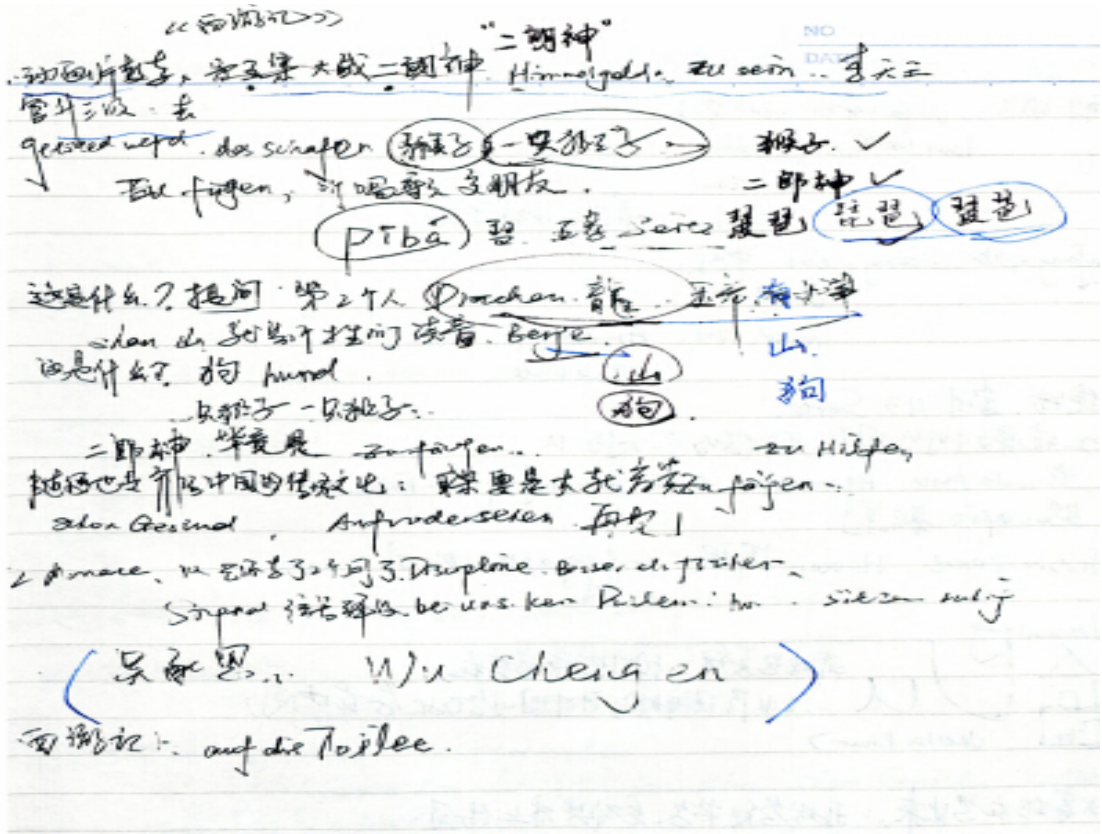
Regarding to my classroom observation (Field note 3 made on 13 October, 2012), it can be seen that she instructed Chinese language using a classic Chinese animated film, *The Journey to the West*.

It is interesting that, when the students were watching it, she asked them to read and learn some names of the characters and objects in the film, such as “二郎神” (Chinese god with three eyes), “李天王” (Li Tianwang), “猴王”(Monkey King), “琵琶”(Chinese lute), “龙” (Dragon), “玉帝” (Jade Emperor) and so on. I wrote these words in my field note at the same time. However, she showed these figures in the film to the students and only asked the students to read after her. Probably, these words being very complex, she did not want the students to learn them.

These particular figures in Chinese animated film are able to attract the students' interest and enable them to develop their own cultural awareness of the Chinese language. The other characteristic of Ms. Baum's instruction is that, once some dialogues in the film included some Chinese words or similar sentences that the students had learned before, she quickly stopped the film and began to ask the students to tell her their German meanings. Afterwards, she asked the students to read in chorus and repeat these words and phrases. Reading those traditional Chinese figures and things in the film and reading Chinese characters on flash cards, the students are trained to quickly combine Chinese pronunciation and meanings with different Chinese characters. In her

class, it can be found that most of the students can pronounce different Chinese characters correctly. It implies that her mediation helps the students to bring their learning experiences into new instructional contexts.

Teachers and parents believe that teaching about traditional festivals and classical folk stories related to these festivals, conceptualize and reify the teaching culture in the language classroom, because some essential traditional values and philosophies, such as obedience, obligations and family values are fundamental (Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor, 1991; Cortazzi and Jin, 1996; Creese, et al., 2009). On one hand, traditional Chinese cultural ideologies and values are embedded in Chinese cartoon films, and on the other, such films can provide students with a new, attractive intercultural perspective in that they can learn a new kind of culture and civilization.



Field note 3: The class of Ms. Baum 13 October, 2012

<sup>34</sup> The four Great Classical Novels of China refer to, “Water Margi”; “Romance of Three Kingdoms”; “Journey to the West”; and “Dream of the Red Chamber”.



My classroom observations and protocols show that Ms. Baum not only used these Chinese characters from the Chinese film, but also give the students supplementary knowledge of the related cultural content. However, I found that there were some defects in her knowledge transmission and cultural mediation may provide some enlightenment for her future professionalization.

The first problem is the high frequency of questions in class. In her interview, she mentioned that some students always liked asking random questions in order to get a chance to communicate with her. Her teaching plan was always interrupted and the consistency of her teaching was broken by the high frequency of questions. Furthermore, although there were some that were unrelated to the teaching content, she still tried to answer or respond in some way to them.

In contrast, a similar phenomenon seldom takes place in Ms. Wee's class. Although, there are some students who like asking questions in her class, she is able to deal with a high frequency of random questions very effectively. In particular, when students raised irrelevant questions, she mentioned her class principle "*please do not ask questions that are not related to my teaching*" (see classroom protocol of Ms. Wee, on 13 October, 2012), and then deliberately ignored them. To this point, I think Ms. Baum's professional mediation concerning class management needs to be further developed to deal with the problem of acceptance of students' individual interests and an effectively-implemented instructional plan.

German students are encouraged to ask questions and are used to doing so as well as expressing doubts or their own views in class. Looking at Ms. Baum's reaction, she is mostly willing to answer students' questions or listen to one's individual expression patiently. However, the normal process of teaching is interrupted by their free expression and random questions. Despite her awareness of the problem of random 'interruption', it looks as if she has accepted the situation. At present, she is not yet able to deal with the problem of how to develop students' individuality in a class with discipline.

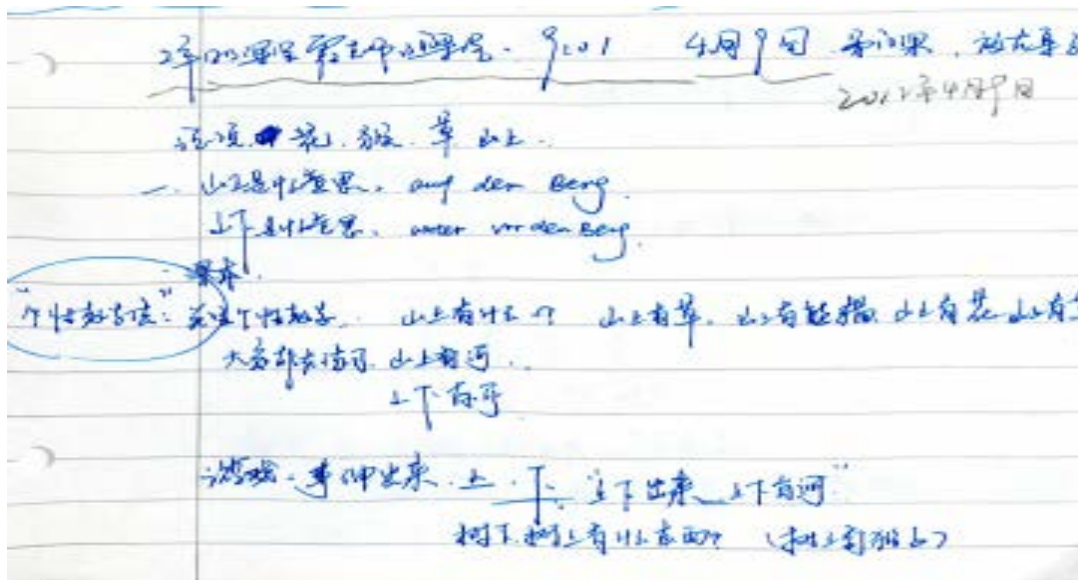
As to the second problem concerning her mediation: my class protocol shows that the students are always asked to passively read and mechanically repeat Chinese words. It is difficult for the students to bring their own learning experience into Ms. Baum's

mediation. And this restrains the students' sense construction within the interaction because passive reading and rote learning seem very boring to students who are used to learning by interest. Even though Ms. Baum exhibits strong intercultural awareness in her focus on cultural content in language teaching, the students are not able to construct their holistic cultural knowledge with respect to different isolated characters. However, the students realized that if they read quickly after Ms. Baum and followed her requirement, they could continue to watch the film. So they were willing to collaborate with her. I think her method of intensive repetition and mechanical memorization is perhaps not an effective way to cultivate her students' individual development.

Generally speaking, Ms. Baum's mediation is deeply influenced by traditional Chinese pedagogy, which still focuses on intensive reading and memorization. At the same time, although Ms. Baum views introducing and transmitting Chinese culture as the core values in her mediation, I assume that her professional development has to some degree experienced the different conflicts and tensions between traditional Chinese language pedagogy and intercultural language pedagogy.

Regarding the student-teacher interaction in Ms. Baum's class, I think the students were lacking in their own adaptation and transformation to new cultural knowledge as a result of her traditional Chinese pedagogy, and thus they failed to make intergenerational communication. With regard to Meyer's three levels of teacher-student interaction (see Section 4.1), from my point of view, her instruction is perhaps not yet able to help students successfully to construct sense-making and this restrains the students' self-regulated learning ability and their individual construction of cultural identity.

In order to better explore her professional capability of language mediation in class, I want to make a further analysis on the basis of my class protocol made on 9 April, 2013 (See Appendix 5). What Ms. Baum did is a typical vocabulary exercise. As one can see in the transcript in Appendix 5, the students have been trained to learn new Chinese words, such as “山” (mountain), “花” (flower), “草” (grass), “河” (river) etc., and the students had to use a sentence structure, “这是什么” (what is ...), in order to generate different questions in Chinese.



Field note 4: The class of Ms. Baum 9 April, 2013

By analyzing Ms. Baum’s class strategy, her instructional plan is to make a review of previous Chinese vocabulary, to correct the wrong pronunciation of words, to learn some new Chinese characters, to design an oral exercise and to write down some characters. However, one has to know that it is not easy for the students to learn to write Chinese characters in accordance with a specific stroke-order. Unlike German, Chinese combines different pictographic characters with strokes, which presents a special challenge for German learners. In this class, however, Ms. Baum did not spend very much time teaching students to write Chinese characters.

Regarding her class instruction, I have some questions about Ms. Baum’s mediation and her language didactics:

***Do all students understand the teacher’s instruction in Chinese?***

Most of the time, Ms. Baum instructs the students using only Chinese. As a result, there are many new words beyond the students’ capability. For example, “翻到” [fandao] (*turn to page*, see line 42), “关心书上面的名字” [guanxin shu shang de mingzi] (*care about the name of the book*, line 42), “打开书” [dakaishu] (*open the book*, line 47) etc. I have to ask whether all the students can fully understand the mean-

ings of the sentences produced by Ms. Baum, and our classroom observation show that the students are in a position to react and respond very quickly to some brief frequent commands, for example, “读一下[du yi xia] (*read it*)” “看一下 [kanyixia](*look at it*)” “跟我读 [gengwodu] (*follow me to read*)” “不要说话” [buyao shuo hua] (*do not speak*) etc. However, in these cases Ms. Baum says some words in Chinese and shows an action in front of the students, so that they understand her. For example, she says: “打开书, 翻到第十课” [dakai shu, fando di shi ke] (*Open the book, turn to Lesson 10, line 47*), opens the book simultaneously and turns to Lesson 10, showing the page of the textbook so that the students can immediately react to her words. Besides, she has given the students commands in Chinese for a long time using the so-called immersion technique. She comments on her procedure in one of two follow-up interviews concerning her concept of foreign language teaching and instructional behavior:

Extract 24: Teacher interview with Ms. Baum 10 April, 2013, Line 18-19

Ms. Baum: “以前, 这些学生都还不能清晰得理解, 但是后来, 他们渐渐开始理解了汉语的意思, 很快就可以做出反应。”

Ms. Baum: “Previously, the students could not understand clearly, but then gradually they began to understand Chinese instruction and to respond immediately.”

A note concerning the immersion style of teaching appears to be necessary. In theory, it implies that the learners are fully immersed in the target language for a certain period of time, both in and outside the class. It is a method of teaching a second language in which the learners are asked to learn and communicate in the second language in classroom instruction. Thus, Ms. Baum attempted to build an immersion environment by establishing a Chinese-only classroom and by insisting on all the communication with the students be in Chinese. Due to the students' limited Chinese language capability, however, I think that the majority of them could not understand everything she said. In addition, our class observation shows that they could respond only when Ms. Baum had practiced the correct expression first.

Besides, when she was giving some guidance about how to do an exercise with flash cards; some of the students did not pay sufficient attention to her words. They

simply did not understand what she was saying. Rather, they chatted with their partners or played with the cards by themselves. Only some students were competent enough to do the dialogue exercises following her instruction. As an alternative to what I have seen, I can imagine that the teacher selects a student as her partner and spends several minutes on the dialogue exercises. So that, the other students can more easily imitate it. This way of doing it however demands the thorough discipline on the part of the students.

***What are the teacher's expectations concerning discipline in the Chinese language classroom?***

Confronted with a loud and noisy classroom, Ms. Baum frequently attempted to remind the students to obey to the class principles and rules (see protocol, 09 April, 2013, line 14-15). At the beginning of the class, Ms. Baum reminded the students that those who broke the principles of her classroom instruction would get extra homework as punishment after class, and she wrote down on the blackboard; the names of undisciplined students (see protocol, 09 April, 2013, line 14-16). Without strict instructional rules and discipline in the classroom the students at this age cannot easily follow instruction. Thus, to avoid a chaotic situation, Ms. Baum reminded the students of the classroom rules in order to produce an effective teaching situation, which, however, was not sufficiently successful. I could see that the students talked loudly with each other so that she had to interrupt her teaching and ask them to keep quiet.

She explained in her interview that the students should firstly obey classroom principles; secondly they should prepare themselves to acquire knowledge. Teacher-centered didactics and strict discipline characterize Chinese pedagogy and this also holds for Ms. Baum's teaching. She tried to make sure that the students could learn and acquire knowledge in intensive teaching time, but actually she was not always successful. Difficulties with the German students' classroom performance and the tensions between German and Chinese pedagogic cultures were obvious.

*To what extent is the teaching situation influenced by traditional Chinese teacher-centered didactics?*

In China, the number of students in a class is much higher than in Germany. The average is 50, which is almost 2.5 times as many as the average number of students in a German classroom. Teacher-centered instruction and strict discipline of the students are therefore important characteristics of teaching and learning in China. Effective teaching the Chinese way requires rigid classroom management and the strict discipline of the students.<sup>35</sup>

Ms. Baum, for example, asked the students to read aloud and do repeated reading in accordance to her teaching plan and to comply with her instructional arrangements (see protocol, 09 April, 2013, Line 61-72). However, I observed that direct instruction led the students to be uninterested, and to passively memorize Chinese characters only by order of the teacher. The result of this kind of direct instruction is teacher-centeredness with comparatively low learning success.

Harmony is another core principle in the Confucian educational philosophy. It obliges one to avoid ‘extremism’, to be willing to compromise and aim for the middle way between the extremes. Teachers and students are used to a ‘peaceful’ instructional environment with strict discipline. In contrast, as I have explained above, the German traditional *Didaktik* emphasizes the concept of self-regulated *Bildung* as a mutual process engaging the teacher and the students. Regarding Klingberg’s dialectical didactics, good instruction means that students and teachers simultaneously hold ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ positions in the instructional process. I therefore hold that his dialectical didactics would better allow Chinese teachers to organize the interaction of the teacher and the students, rather than try to create harmony in the classroom following Confucian principles.

However, the traditional didactics of drilling, rote-learning and intensive repetition are so embedded in Ms. Baum’s professional perception and role identity that they have greatly influenced her professional beliefs and attitudes. Even though, she has al-

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<sup>35</sup> Meinert Meyer and I have both observed this kind of instructional practice and the disciplined behavior of the students in an upper secondary EFL class of more than 60 students in Wuhan.

ready started to integrate Chinese culture into language teaching, at present perhaps Ms. Baum's mediation is not yet able to deal with the contradiction existing between teacher-centered didactics and student-centered didactics.

#### **6.3.4 Developmental task of acknowledgment-“It is impossible to ask them to keep quiet all the time.”**

Regarding Ms. Baum's class (see class protocol, 09 April, 2013), it can be seen that there was a particular phenomenon that some students ask questions randomly in class, which means, in my opinion, that her regular instructional planning is randomly suspended. In my interview with Ms. Baum, I hoped to get a response to this question. She explained the reason in her interview:

Extract 25: Teacher interview with Ms. Baum 10 April, 2013, Line 43-46

Ms. Baum: “有一些的学生，他们就是想提问和其他人聊天，实际上他们不是我们传统意义上的“乖学生”，不可能让他们一直保持安静。因此，我还是给予他们一定的自由空间 [...]。对于我来说，他们可以学到一些东西是**最最重要的**。 [...]”

Ms. Baum: “Some students, would like to ask questions and chat with each other, in fact they are not **'obedient'** students in terms of our traditional understanding. It is impossible to ask them to keep quiet all the time. So I always give them some free space [...] for me, that **it is much more important** that they could learn something [...]”

German students are used to challenging the teachers' authority and teaching contents in class. Ms. Baum has realized that this is not suitable, a Chinese teacher teaches German students the same way as she/he teaches in China. Getting rid of the Chinese stereotyped image of a good, obedient, silent student, Ms. Baum's professional beliefs have already adapted and transformed to the German educational framework. She has begun to take respect students' personal characteristics and individuality and accept students' individual liberation in class.

Looking at my class protocol of Ms. Baum (see protocol, made on 09 April, 2013), it can be seen that there were some students in her class who always like posing random questions. Despite the fact that these students are not the traditional stereotype of good students who follow the teacher's instruction because they are eager to learn, it can be seen that Ms. Baum has begun to accept their individual learning out of interest, in order to constitute an instruction process with sense-making for them. It seems that Ms. Baum's professional perception greatly respects each student's subjective requirements. As she said in her interview:

Extract 26: Teacher interview with Ms. Baum April 10, 2013 Line 31-32

Ms. Baum: “我知道，这些学生他们想从我的教学中找到一些有趣的事情，所以他总是想提出一些的问题，去吸引其他人的注意力。”

Ms. Baum: “I know, these students like to find something interesting in my instruction, so they always pose questions to attract other students' attention.”

Within the Chinese educational schemata, the students with good academic achievement or marks are able to get a lot of attention and care from Chinese teachers. Regarding to Ms. Baum's professional belief, it implies that she has abandoned a traditional notes-oriented assessment of students; by contrast, she tried to respect each student equally. The *Bildung*-oriented German framework has had a holistic impact upon her professional identity that has successfully produced a transformation of her professional beliefs in line with current pedagogies concerning different students' characteristics.

However, there are some problems that she has not yet successfully dealt with. As far as I know, students chatting with each other, making a noise to attract other students' attention and randomly breaking the rules are not able to follow Ms. Baum's instruction. Actually they have many difficulties in learning and reading Chinese. In other words, I may assume that learning Chinese at that moment makes such little senses to them that they are absent from her regular instruction. However, her mediation neither realizes students' difficulties nor pays much attention to these students. What is more, other students at this age are not able to follow the teacher's mediation and learn a language effectively in an undisciplined classroom. Last but not least, Ms. Baum indicated that she



strived to recognize each student as an independent person with individual subjectivity rather than treat him or her and all the others as ‘objects’. But she has no solution to the problem that the large majority of the students speak no Chinese in class.

I assert that, even though Ms. Baum has begun to change her professional views and attitudes concerning each student’s individuality and has abandoned the stereotyped image of the ‘good student’ of the Chinese educational schemata. Her instructional practice and mediation produce new conflicts and tensions in an active, communicative and innovative German class; which, in turn, creates new challenges.

### **6.3.5 Developmental task of institution-“There are two problems; insufficient professional training and limited collegial collaboration.”**

Interpreting a large amount of research data from the Chinese language teachers’ interviews and classroom observations in this private Gymnasium A, it can be seen that there were two important problems confronted by Ms. Baum and her colleagues. She referred the first problem was that how to deal with the contradiction between cultivating the students’ individuality and ensuring an effective classroom. And the other problem was mix-aged instruction.

In Ms. Baum’s class, some students can be found with learning difficulty who would like to express their ideas or raise unrelated questions and interrupt regular mediation in her class. A similar phenomenon can be also observed in other Chinese teachers’ classes. Ms. Baum and her colleagues have been looking for effective solutions and strategies to deal with the conflicts concerning students’ individuality and teachers’ effective instruction.

As Ms. Baum said, how to deal with the tensions between German education focusing on students’ emancipation and the Chinese educational context promoting discipline is the hot topic of their discussion:

Extract 27: Teacher interview with Ms. Baum    August 24, 2012    Line 139-143
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Ms. Baum: “[...] 在我们的汉语教师小组里面，我们总是讨论跨文化的问题，并且去需要一个合适的方法去处理这些问题 [...]. 是的，从我们中国同事当中，也许我们能够找到一个办法。但是我们缺乏和和其他科目老师的合作，而且也很少有机会去和其他学校的中文教师交流。 [...]”

Ms. Baum: “[...] in our teachers’ group of Chinese language, we always discuss the intercultural problems and to look for a suitable method to deal with them [...] Yes, from our Chinese colleagues, perhaps we are able to seek a solution. However, we lack effective collaboration with teachers of other subjects, and there are few opportunities to communicate with other Chinese teachers at other schools. [...]”

She used some words in her interview, such as “总是 (always)” “去寻找 (to look for)”, that reveal her individual views on collegial collaboration. She identified that their colleagues always discussed how to effectively deal with the problems of intercultural tensions. And she clearly expressed that they had limited collaboration with teachers of other subjects at her school. What is more, she felt that they also had few opportunities to communicate with other colleagues at other schools.

Ms. Baum strongly emphasized the urgent need for the professional collaboration with teachers with other teachers teaching different subjects at school or even with those outside the school community. Probably, she was not satisfied with the present collegial collaboration and peer communication. In addition, in my understanding, it seems that the present level of collegial discussion is not very efficient for each teacher’s professional development. For this reason, she hoped to develop her communicative competence and get more opportunities to attain effective support from other colleagues.

Ms. Baum is head of the Chinese teaching group at her school, and is responsible for designing and setting up a general Chinese language teaching syllabus. From her words in the interview, we can try to analyze their professional collaboration and communication. She noted that

Extract 28: Teacher interview with Ms. Baum April 10, 2013 Line 21-24

“我们不可能直接用官方的标准去评估我们学生的外语能力， 我们应该按照学生的情况， 设计我们自己的语言标准。 因此， 我们的小组一直都在参考汉堡教育局和其他学校的标准， 去关注教学和学生水平， 最终我们可以设计一个基本的大纲。”

“it is not possible to use the official standard to evaluate our students’ foreign language capability; we should design our own language standard in association with our students. Thus, our group has been focusing on instruction and students’ capability with reference to the foreign language outlines of the Hamburg Educational Bureau and of other schools, so that we can finally draw up a general syllabus.”

The group of Chinese language teachers was asked to set up a Chinese instructional curriculum for the whole school. She used the pronoun of “we” several times to express the significance of their collegial collaboration to design the curriculum. One can see that, without effective cooperation among colleagues, it is impossible for them to establish a new, suitable school curriculum in her school. In summary, she showed that she had understood the significance of acting in a trustful community.

However, compared to my transcripts from other Chinese teachers’ interviews, it is interesting to find that there are some Chinese language teachers who did not know and could not identify the concrete instructional requirements for students of different age-groups, which include linguistic knowledge, intercultural competence and communicative competence. Most of the time in their classes, they set different instructional objectives and plans based on their own professional experience. For example, as Ms. Wee claims that:

Extract 29: Teacher interview with Ms. Wee 9 September, 2012 Line 16-19

Ms. Wee: “我还不是很清楚学校课程对于学生能力的具体要求。 所以基本上说来， 对于学生的能力， 我设计教学计划是基于我自己的教学经验。”

Ms. Wee: “I don’t clearly know the concrete curriculum requirements for students’ language competence in our school. So basically, I design my own instructional project concerning students’ competence relying on my personal experience.”

The other Chinese language teachers did not fully understand the concrete instructional requirements of the school curriculum. Ms. Baum said that although the group of Chinese teachers had designed a suitable instructional syllabus to guide Chinese language teaching by means of mutual collegial communication, the other Chinese teachers seemed to have different views on curriculum requirements concerning the school syllabus.

For example, Ms. Wee here clearly showed that she did not know the concrete instructional requirements regarding the school curriculum. Because it seems that the achievement of collective cooperation has not been so effective for her individual professional practice. I have to ask myself whether there is a real ‘trustful’ communicative environment in the Chinese language teachers’ community.

### **6.3.6 Interpretation of Ms. Baum’s professional development**

In order to better explain Ms. Baum’s individual didactics, I now generalize her professional developmental tasks within the four categories, namely *competence*, *mediation*, *acknowledgment* and *institution*:

<p><b>Competence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focusing on the students' biographical experience,</li> <li>• emphasizing individual personal relevance to teaching contents,</li> <li>• beginning to conform to German educational context,</li> <li>• dealing unsuccessfully with the high frequency of random questions,</li> <li>• ineffective intergenerational communication;</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mediation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• combining traditional Chinese culture with Chinese language teaching ,</li> <li>• flash card learning,</li> <li>• using multi-media courses,</li> <li>• topic-based instruction,</li> <li>• instructing only in Chinese,</li> <li>• applying traditional language approaches, eg. mechanically repeat;</li> </ul>
<p><b>Acknowledgment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accepting/ acknowledging individuality of each student,</li> <li>• answering each student's questions,</li> <li>• abandoning the traditional stereotyped image of good students,</li> <li>• constructing an organizational situation with strict discipline,</li> <li>• not yet designed different learning objectives for the different students;</li> </ul>	<p><b>Institution:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• colleague discussion, regular collegial collaboration,</li> <li>• mixed-age instruction,</li> <li>• a strong need for professional training and further collegial collaboration,</li> <li>• ineffective communication with teachers of other subjects;</li> </ul>

**Table 6 Ms. Baum's individual didactics from the categories of developmental tasks**

***Professional competence:***

Firstly, I find that a significant feature of Ms. Baum's language pedagogy is topic-based instruction. My classroom observations and field notes show that she always select different topics to teach Chinese, for example: Chinese animal symbols, directions in Chinese, family members, Chinese traditional festivals, Chinese traditional foods and so on.

***Developmental task of mediation:***

On one hand, Ms. Baum's instruction emphasizes the significance of Chinese culture to language transmission by means of integrating Chinese cultural knowledge into lan-

guage learning, but on the other, her instructional approaches still reflect the characteristics of traditional Chinese pedagogy.

Even though, as a professional Chinese teacher, Ms. Baum has strong intercultural awareness and has already been able to cultivate the students' intercultural competence and communicative skills by different intercultural approaches, the challenge to her mediation is about how to deal with the tensions arising between traditional Chinese pedagogy and Western communicative pedagogy.

***Developmental task of acknowledgement:***

As Ms. Baum clearly illustrated that creating “*a good learning atmosphere in classroom*” is the most important principle for her individual instruction, it shows that her professional perception focuses on students' subjective interest, active participation. It conforms with the core principle of German educational philosophies. However, her concept of “*a good atmosphere*” also demands a good instructional situation with strict discipline. The two classroom protocols show that she instituted strict discipline to ensure an effective classroom situation. I can assume that, on one hand, even though she has accepted the significance of students' individuality and has abandoned the stereotyped image of ‘good students’, she cannot completely get rid of the Chinese traditional educational influence.

***Developmental task of institution:***

My Chinese language teachers in the private school all strongly emphasize the urgent need for professional training and collegial collaboration with regard to their professional competence. But Ms. Baum thinks that effective cooperation and communication among her colleagues at the school is limited. In order to better deal with her developmental task of collegial collaboration, she clearly assumes that she should try to further develop interactional skills and co-operative competence by getting suggestions and comments from other colleagues teaching different subjects in or out of school.

## **6.4 Ms. Ta's case study: *“I find that German children are very ‘restless’ or ‘very active’ in comparison with Chinese children.”***

Ms. Ta is a 29-year-old Chinese teacher. She was recruited by Hanban on a one year contract, teaching at *Gymnasium B* in Hamburg. Today she is a member of the Chinese language teaching community at the school. Before she came to work in Germany two years ago, she had just received her masters' degree for teaching Chinese as a foreign language in Beijing. After her graduation, she worked in an international school in Beijing, where she taught mostly students from South Korea. She is the youngest teacher in my intercultural study. She began to teach Chinese only six months ago. In order to explain her professional developmental process creates a typical case study on comprehensive understanding and on the self-reflection of Chinese teachers in the intercultural context. I once more use ethnography to interpret the self-transformation and reflection in relation to her professional beliefs and attitudes.

### **6.4.1 Analysis of Ms. Ta's biographical educational experience**

I ask how the deep-rooted biographical experience of teaching in China and in Germany can influence the reconstruction of the individual didactics of Chinese teachers. As explained above, Ms. Ta is different from other Chinese language teachers with long working experience. She is a young Chinese teacher who has been working in this school only six months. In order to better depict her professional development and self-reflection in her transitional period, I now analyze them from her interviews.

In order to further explore Ms. Ta's professional perception, I asked her: “what do you think the greatest difference is between the Chinese educational schemata and the German schemata?” She answered as follows:

Extract 30: Teacher interview with Ms. Ta 18 April, 2013 Line 14-25
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Ms. Ta: “德国中学这边需要处理的各种琐事更加多一些，@\_@ 每一个教师对于每一个孩子的关心和照顾也是更加多一些 [...] 学生的课外活动也都是多一些, 学习时间花得不够 & [...] 汉字对于他们还是一个很大的难点, [...] 德国孩子是很闹腾, @\_@[...], 时间长了, 对他们, 我发现越教就是越发有感情, 与此同时我自己也有了收获 @ (.)@ [...]”

Ms. Ta: “In the German secondary school, teachers have to deal with much more trivial affairs. @\_@ And each teacher needs to care much more for each child [...] Students have more extracurricular activities than Chinese students, they do not spend much time learning & [...] Learning Chinese characters is a very big problem, [...] German children are very ‘restless’ and ‘so active’ @\_@ [...] After a while I find that the longer I teach them, the closer our relation becomes. Simultaneously, I have acquired something new from them @ (.)@ [...]”

When she began to work in Germany, Ms. Ta felt that she had to deal with more trivial matters. It was different from her previous professional experience in China. As a Chinese teacher in China, her professional role largely focused on how to effectively mediate knowledge in class. By contrast, German pedagogic ideology emphasizes the importance of students’ freedom and individual formation, requiring teachers to provide students with more ethnic guidance and caring. She therefore thought that she had to deal with some new problems and trivial issues beyond the regular instruction.

As Ms. Ta mentioned above, German students have more extracurricular activities and more free time, thus she thought that they learn language without as much endeavor as Chinese students. One can see that Ms. Ta’s professional beliefs concerning students’ diligence and hard work still reflect traditional Chinese educational pedagogy. In her previous vocational period, she used her professional outlook influenced by Chinese educational setting to interpret the new educational situation and to understand the way German students’ learn.

It was very interesting that she used a Chinese word with negative meaning to express her impression of German students’ behavior in the classroom, “闹腾” (*restless or making a noise*). Compared with the “peaceful” teaching environment in China, the



German classroom is for her too active. She was not fully satisfied with the students' activity and their "restless" behavior in her class.

Above all, Ms. Ta's explanation shows that her mediation encountered many problems and challenges from the new educational context when she began to work in Germany. After a period of time, she gradually realized the intercultural differences concerning students' learning, educational context, classroom environment, learning content and so on. Afterwards, she was able to build a good relationship with her students due to her more affective caring and attention. It shows that her professional attitudes towards students' learning had begun to change.

In the following lines, Ms. Ta illustrated her reflective process concerning the first transformation in her professional practice.

Extract 31: Teacher interview with Ms. Ta, 18 April, 2013 Line 28-34

Ms. Ta: “由于课时（有限）的原因，导致的是（...）他们觉得，我的教学方法（对他们）有些吃力 [...] 虽然我的教学方法和以前还是差不多 [...] 国内的韩国学生本身就是属于亚洲国家，也是使用字体，大家的整体步奏比较快；但是因为这边的学生没有汉字基础，进度很慢，我就需要做适当的调整。”

Ms. Ta: “Because of (the limited) teaching hours for Chinese language teaching, leads to (...), they feel, my teaching methods are difficult for them [...] Even though my instruction methods are almost same as the usual ones [...] the students from South Korean come from Asia, whose language also uses the symbols of characters. The South Korean students are able to learn very fast. In contrast, German students do not have the background; they therefore learn Chinese characters very slowly. I should make some suitable adjustment accordingly. ”

Compared to her prior working experience in the foreign language school in China, Ms. Ta realized that there are two important factors hindering German students' learning Chinese. Firstly, due to the limited teaching hours in this German school, the students do not have enough time to practice Chinese characters. Secondly, most of the students in Ms. Ta's class in China come from South Korea. They can get a positive language

transfer from their mother tongue including phonetic symbols, language symbols and so on. However, this kind of language transfer is difficult for German students in her school.

Regarding her interpretation: at the beginning, she did not realize the problem caused by the different language background of the students' mother tongue until she thought about her language methods. Afterwards, she assumed that she was beginning to make some adjustment to her usual teaching methods and began to cater for the German students' learning habits and their own characteristics.

In the following section, let me present Ms. Ta's professional competence in dealing with her professional developmental tasks more explicitly.

#### **6.4.2 Developmental task of competence-“I would like to choose some practical, effective content as teaching materials.”**

In Ms. Ta professional biography, she mentioned a critical incident that took place when she began to work in this *Gymnasium* in Germany. As she said in her interview, the critical incident played a significant role in her professional development.

She said she once invited once one of her German colleagues to attend her class and afterwards the German teacher said: “[...] *in your class, I think you impacted too much information in one class that would cause many difficulties and problems for German students.*” Having consulted with other colleagues after class, she began to realize her regular mediation did not work well in her class and could even reduce students' interest in the language. Afterwards, Ms. Ta thought about her teaching method and found some problems. She mentions them in her interview:

Extract 32: Teacher interview with Ms. Ta    18 April, 2013    Line 53-56
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Ms. Ta: “教材应该就是结合学生的兴趣，让他们减少一些压力，让他们真正有收获。随后我就做了很多的调整，[...]而且放慢了自己的节奏，也还根据孩子的水平和兴趣做了很多的删减。我就会选择一些实用的，有效的内容。 [...]”

Ms. Ta: “[...] A textbook should capture the students’ interest; reduce the pressure on them and help them learn effectively. Afterwards, I adjusted a lot regarding their ability, [...] **slowed down my tempo**, cut and deleted some material with regard to **the ability and interests** of the students. I will choose some practical, effective material. [...]”

It shows that she did some critical thinking and began to realize her instructional problems. Subsequently, in her instruction she paid much more attention to the students’ capability and interest by slowing down her teaching tempo and reducing some complex and difficult material. It can be seen that she has been able to quickly cope with instructional problems with respect to a strong professional reflective competence. However, she did not clearly illustrate a concrete transformation regarding her instructional strategies and methods. It is interesting that she attached significance to the students’ learning in class. Both Ms. Baum and Ms. Wee also mentioned this.

My classroom observation can identify that her teaching does not strictly conform to traditional Chinese language approaches; however, she described instructional strategies with which mediate to material associated with the local syllabus and the instructional requirements, and she omitted material beyond the students’ capability.

Influenced by Chinese educational schemata, Ms. Ta mentioned that she had a lot of teaching experience to assist students’ preparing for examinations. As I have mentioned earlier, concerning teachers’ professional perception (see section 5.1.2), it can be seen that Ms. Ta’s professional attitude still emphasizes students’ academic achievement to pass examinations.

Extract 33: Teacher interview with Ms. Ta 18 April, 2013 Line 57-61

Ms. Ta: “一些学生选择汉语作为他们的第二外语去参加 Abitur, 因此, 对于他们, 我也要选择一些不一样的方法, 事实上, 我觉得, 我是很擅长做考试准备和考试辅导。 [...]”

Ms. Ta: “some students have chosen Chinese as the second language to participate in the *Abitur* (*University Entrance Examination*), so I will select different methods for them, in fact, I think, I am good at examination preparation and tutoring. [...]”

Because some students in her class had selected Chinese as the second foreign language for the *Abitur*, she changed her usual methods and approaches in order to meet these students’ requirements. It seems that she had accumulated a lot of experience in tutoring students.

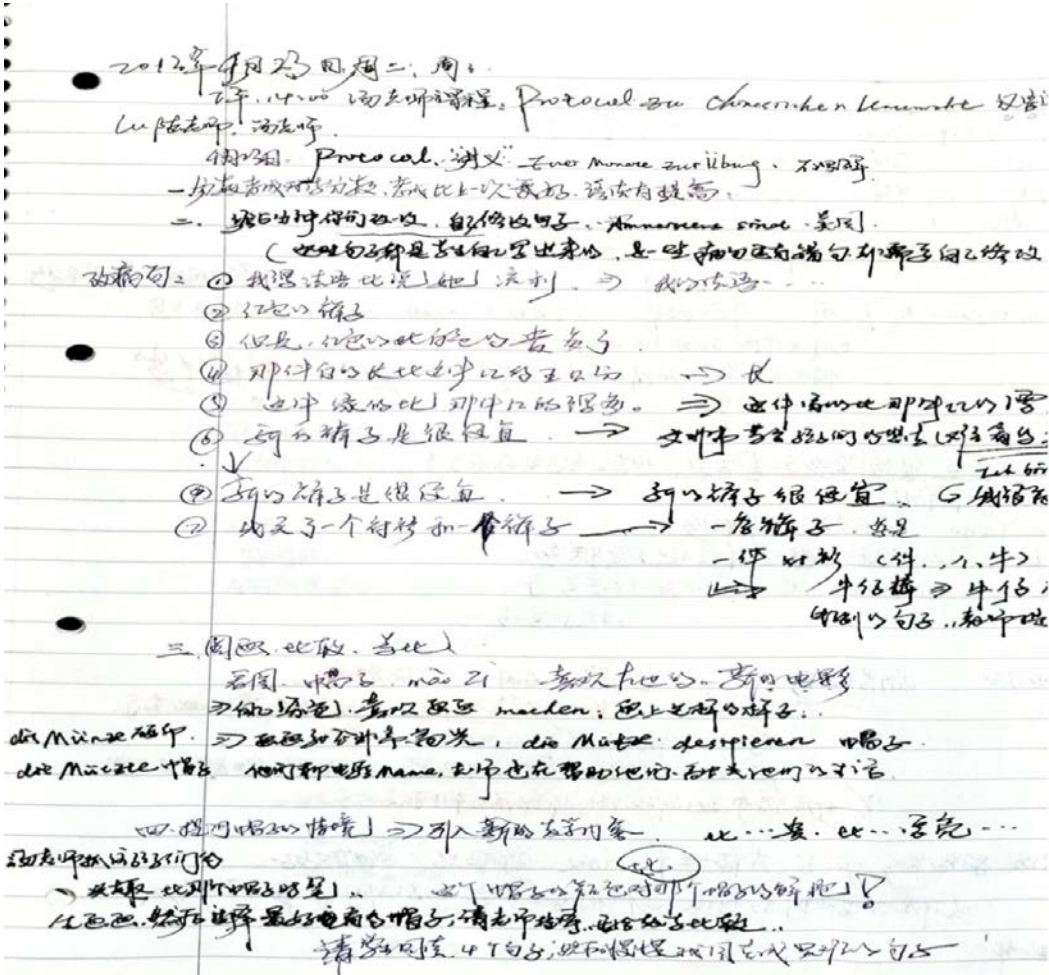
In order to better understand Ms. Ta’s tutorial classes, I also made some other class observations. She attached great importance to vocabulary, grammar, syntax and students’ language accuracy in the spoken language and demanded the students master the content already prescribed in the local curriculum. However, some intercultural knowledge not prescribed in the examination requirement was quickly abandoned in her instruction.

Ms. Ta’s professional beliefs and conceptions on the process of language teaching have changed and transformed in relation to students’ reactions and other colleagues’ suggested comments. Ms. Ta was not concerned much about her subject-matter competence, involving linguistic and pragmatic knowledge, but referred to her self-reflection and transformation. Her professional competence can establish suitable learning plans in relation to the individual characteristics and learning requirements of German students. As I have already noted, Ms. Ta’s individual professional beliefs regarding traditional Chinese language pedagogy are analyzed, transformed and reinvented by Western educational culture.

### **6.4.3 Developmental task of mediation-“It is necessary to take advantage of students’ creativity in Chinese language teaching.”**

In Ms. Ta’s class, my study examines a series of class observations and class field notes, in order to analyze her teaching methods. The following extract is a class protocol of students in the 8th grade on 23 April, 2013. They had been learning Chinese language

as a second foreign language for about four years. Compared to the students in Ms. Wee's and Ms. Baum's classes, Ms. Ta's students are older and have a higher language competence. My written field notes below can provide the first raw materials to analyze her language mediation and transmission. Next, I would like to show some typical characteristics with respect to her instruction.



Field note 5: The class of Ms. Ta 23 April, 2013

Firstly, she used different flash cards and multimedia courseware. Applying flash cards in Chinese vocabulary learning is the most significant method in her individual language approach.

Secondly, unlike other Chinese language teachers, she brings real objects to show her students the meaning of different Chinese words. During my class observations, she

always brought different kinds of fruit, traditional clothes and traditional food into class. As she explained in her interview:

Extract 34: Teacher interview with Ms. Ta 18 April, 2013 Line 90-91

Ms. Ta: “实际的物品可以使得语言教学变得更加具体，可以提高教学的效率和质量。 (...)”

Ms. Ta: “the real objects make language teaching much more concrete and are able to improve teaching efficiency and quality. (...)”

Thirdly, she is used to designing interactive activities in her class, in order to create students' interest and confidence in language learning. Looking at my field note for 04 March, 2013, it records that her class activity ‘*A Fashion Design Competition*’ required the students to select different clothes for different models, then to paint with different figures in different colors. Next, the students were asked to introduce their design in Chinese.

Instead of using traditional ‘spoon-feeding Chinese pedagogy’, she encouraged the students to use Chinese to express their own ideas within the teacher-student interaction. All the students actively took part in this, in which they are regarded as active subjects having a strong dialectical competence to bring their own biographies into class and achieve communicative interaction. The students are therefore able to develop their competence and individual identity within a process of sense-making.

She also likes designing various competitions between different groups. For example, in her interview, (on 18 April, 2013, Line 74-79), she mentioned a new competition about reading Chinese characters by using flash cards. The competition requires the students in different groups to read different words within time limit of three minutes: the students of a group who can correctly read the most words on the flash cards win.

Even though Ms. Ta does not have much experience as a Chinese language teacher in Germany, one can see that her professional beliefs and attitudes have been changing to adopt innovative ways to suit the Western educational context. Her professional competence allows students' sense-making in various student-teacher interactions in a

way that motivates and raises their interest and enthusiasm for the language. To some extent, I can assume that her professional competence is able to transfer acquired intercultural knowledge and competence to the students. But her mediation should find more effective solutions and strategies for dealing with the tensions of traditional Chinese didactics and Western language pedagogies in order to better help the students to construct their own cultural attitudes towards their cultures and accept other cultures with distinctly different perspectives.

#### **6.4.4 Developmental task of acknowledgement-“It is necessary to develop their creativity to assist my teaching process.”**

Some intercultural researches show that, even when Chinese teachers express the desire to have a more student-centered classroom, their actual teaching behavior still often reflects traditional Chinese values and norms (Rao, Ng and Pearson, 2010). In order to analyze Ms. Ta's professional conceptions of students, I combine her words from her interviews with instructional behavior in class based on my class observations and class protocols

As a class exercise, Ms. Ta often asked the students to make new sentences with some words in the textbook. It can be seen that the German students in her class prefer to make new sentences by using various words on the basis of their own creativity, rather than mechanically memorizing and repeating her words or similar sentences in the textbook.

For example, in my classroom recording of 10 September, 2012, she taught the students how to use the word ‘比’ (Bǐ: ‘compare with’) to compare one thing with another and asked them to use this sentence pattern “A 比 B ....” to describe two kinds of clothes in relation to two pictures in their textbooks. However, one of her students said that “我是觉得，我的衣服比图片上的衣服都要漂亮 [...] (I think that my clothes are better than the clothes in the pictures ...)”.

Even though, Ms. Ta had asked the students to compare the two kinds of clothes in the two pictures in the textbook, one of her students made a new sentence to compare her own clothes to the clothes of figures in the picture, and the other students also expressed their own ideas and opinions about the clothes. It seems that she was happy with the students' maverick answers and individual views, even though they did not do as she had expected.

She has already realized the significance of accepting students' individuality for her instruction. As she clearly stated :

Extract 35: Teacher interview with Ms. Ta, 18 April, 2013, Line 76-77.

Ms. Ta: “德国学生有很强的创造力, 所以我要去发展他们的创造力和个性, 服务于我的教学过程。”

Ms. Ta: “German students are very creative, so I want to develop their creativity and individuality to assist my teaching.”

In the Chinese educational tradition, the stereotyped image of good students is one in which they are to do what the teacher asks them to do. Confronted with a new educational circumstance in Germany, her professional identity and stereotyped image of good, effective instruction have been changed and transformed regarding students' individuality.

The students of Ms. Ta's *Gymnasium B* are different from those of Ms. Wee's and Ms. Baum's private *Gymnasium A*. There are different categories of students in the school. For example, second-generation Chinese immigrants from the mainland, students with an Asian background, students with Cantonese Chinese background, and so on. At present, some students with a Chinese immigrant background are put with other German students in one class. As I have observed in Ms. Ta's class, the students have widely-differing different language skills and capabilities.

Extract 36: Teacher interview with Ms. Ta 18 April, 2013 Line 56-58

Ms. Ta: “[...]这些学生有着不同的能力和语言背景, [...] 很难为每一个学生设置一样的学习目的, 因此我应该根据学生不同的要求作出相应的改变。 [...]”



Ms. Ta: “[...] the students have different capabilities and language backgrounds, [...] it is difficult to set the same learning goal for all the students, so I have to make some changes according to their different requirements. [...]”

Confronted with different levels of students with various language backgrounds, she has to acknowledge the diverse characteristics and capabilities of the students and that requires her to change her usual teaching plan, teaching objective, teaching goal and so on.

From my point of view, she tries to design different instructional goals and standards according to different students’ requirements, to each student’s language capability and individual developmental task for different levels of students with various capabilities, no matter whether for German students or for other immigrant students with different backgrounds. But my classroom observation and interviews also show that her professional practice retains some characteristics of traditional Chinese didactics concerning teacher-centered didactics. She said:

Extract 37: Teacher interview with Ms. Ta 24 August, 2012 Line 122-124

Ms. Ta: “我想要我的学生对学习有兴趣，热情，动机。但是如果教师只是按照学生的兴趣去教，随后他们就会继续玩游戏，和别人说话，在课堂上什么也学不到。”

Ms. Ta: “I want my students to have fun, passion, motivation for learning. However, if teachers teach only in accordance with students’ interest, they will afterwards continue to play games, talk with each other and not learn anything in class.”

Even though she is trying to attract students’ interest and attention by employing different teaching strategies in class, her professional attitude betrays a teacher-centered didactics that focuses on the students’ learning and accuracy. What is more, she is trying to deal with the tension arising between the traditional Chinese and the German educational context concerning the ‘good’ students in class. However, in Ms. Ta’s concrete instructional practice, perhaps the most difficult part of her professional developmental task is to accept the students’ ‘otherness’.

In order to suit the requirement of German didactics, therefore, teachers’ mediation should focus on students’ individual formation. In short, focusing on the individual

subjectivity of each student is the premise for constructing an authentic learning situation in class. Even though it is impossible to banish the influence of traditional Chinese ideologies in Chinese teachers' professional perception, they have to develop their professional competence to deal with the uncertainty of each learner's individual development in the intercultural setting. However, Ms. Ta's future professional development will have to deal with the conflicts arising between the school syllabus and the students' subjective developmental requirements.

#### **6.4.5 Developmental task of institution-“I like discussing with other colleagues and attending their classes to learn.”**

Ms. Ta is a young Chinese language teacher, who has just begun to work as a Chinese language teacher. This is the first time that she has worked in a foreign country. As I have mentioned above, she said that she had experienced many challenges and problems when she was working with German educational context.

Regarding collegial collaboration, regular collegial communication and discussion at school is the most common form. Furthermore, she prefers to ask other experienced Chinese language teachers for instructional strategies in daily communication, as she has clearly assumed that directly pursuing effective strategies and consulting with instructional experience is a very effective way to solve her own instructional problems.

Extract 38 : Teacher interview with Ms. Ta 18 April, 2013 Line 112-117

Ms. Ta: “我们汉语教师在课堂教学开始之前都会有相关的讨论，我喜欢聊聊我自己的问题，我想看看你是如何解决问题；或者交流听课后的意见。我觉得这样的相互帮助非常有效果, [...] 这就是听课的意义”

Ms. Ta: “Before each class, we Chinese language teachers always talk about class instruction. I like talking about my individual problems and I want to know how to deal with them; or we communicate with each other about individual views after attending

each other's classes. I think that kind of mutual discussion and communication is very effective, [...] it is the reason for attending other teachers' classes."

Compared with the regular form of collegial communication, she says that some random and daily dialogues in the office have proven very effective in her professional development. In particular, she is used to talking out her own problems and troubles concerning instruction with other colleagues.

As a young Chinese language teacher, she attempts to seek advice and support from the other more experienced Chinese teachers. It indicates that she has a strong internal motivation to improve her own professional competence.

From Ms. Ta's interview, it can be seen that she is willing to talk about her troubles and challenges in front of other teachers in order to seek their collegial support. Her pursuit of more effective professional experience from other colleagues also shows that she has realized the significance and importance of adapting to a new educational setting. However, Chinese people do not like to show own deficits and weakness in front of other strange people, because that means losing 'face' or 'Miàn zi (面子)' at the workplace, among family, personal friends and in society at large. What is more, Chinese culture indeed places a great deal of importance on a person's reputation and feelings of prestige in a social relationship. But for her, a young Chinese teacher in Germany, it is the most urgency to quickly adapt to a new educational context and improve her professional competence. Through daily random communication with her colleagues, she can get some valuable suggestions and practical instructional strategies directly from the other Chinese colleagues. However, she did not say much about regular teachers' meetings and communication. Perhaps compared to regular teachers' meetings, random dialogue and free discussion is much more effective for her.

She has already mentioned the other collaborative form with her colleagues: "*I always like attending the classes of my German colleagues, who teach other subjects.*" Moreover, she always likes inviting other German teachers to attend her class as well. Through mutual class-attendance, she can obtain various suggestions from other German colleagues, but not from Chinese colleagues. Actually, on the one hand, Ms. Ta knows that her German colleagues have been trained in German universities and worked

in German schools, and thus are much more familiar with the German educational framework, German students and foreign language approaches. They can offer her more instructional support, help her to adjust and modify her usual Chinese language pedagogy. On the other hand, she may have thought that because her Chinese colleagues' instruction still reflected traditional Chinese didactics. She would prefer to talk with her German colleagues. We can also find some evidence of this in her interview.

Extract 39: Teacher interview with Ms. Ta 18. April. 2013 Line 118-121

Ms. Ta: “我会去听我德国同事的课，我也邀请他们来我的班上，他们都很喜欢去听我的课，然后对我的教学方法表达他们的感觉和想法，特别是，他们也会对我的教学理念有很多尖锐的批评。但是，我觉得他们的批评可以很好帮我找到问题，做一些的改变。”

Ms. Ta: “I attend the classes of my German colleagues, and I invite them to come to my class as well. They all like attending my class then express their impressions and comments on my teaching methods; in particular, they are actually critical of my professional outlook. However, I think their criticisms help me to find my problems quickly and make some changes.”

She did not say very much about Chinese collegial communication and collaboration concerning how to act within the educational institution; however, she clearly stated that she liked attending the classes of her German colleagues as well as inviting them to attend her class. In addition, she clearly explained that she could get some comments and suggestions from them. She probably meant that her German colleagues' pointed criticism seemed to be very helpful and effective in her professional development unlike the harmonious atmosphere reigning within Chinese collegial communication. She noted:

Extract 40: Teacher interview with Ms. Ta 18 April, 2013 Line 46-51

Ms. Ta: “一些德国同事批评我，你的教学内容太多了，常规的教学太快，会给学生的学习带来很大的压力[...] 对于我来说，这些评论非常有用。 [...]”

Ms. Ta: “Some of my German colleagues criticize me, saying, ‘your teaching content is too large, your regular teaching is too fast-paced and that will put a lot of pressure on the students’ learning [...] for me, these comments are very useful. [...]”

Even though Chinese and German teachers hold different professional beliefs and perceptions concerning language teaching, she seems to begin to understand her German colleagues’ professional beliefs and attempt to make some changes regarding her prior teaching experience. By attending other colleagues’ classes at school, one can see that she has good personal relations with different German colleagues that help her quickly understand the new educational context and improve her competence.

Ms. Ta’s school has inaugurated a professional group of Chinese teachers, but she does not seem to be satisfied with the present quality of collegial communication. She prefers to seek solutions and support from other experienced Chinese teachers through various random dialogues and daily communication. However, it is interesting that, she thinks that learning from other German colleagues and studying their professional experience is much more effective for her professional transformation and adaptation.

Her professional competence has to deal with her problem that regular and formal Chinese collegial communication is not effective for individual professional development tasks. Ms. Ta has to develop her professional collaborative competence to communicate with other Chinese teachers. In particular, she should believe in and confirm the significance of Chinese collegial collaboration at school. Additionally, she has also to realize the significance of the influence of the social context from a macroscopic perspective concerning educational schemata and the institutional environment.

#### **6.4.6 Interpretation of Ms. Ta’s professional development**

Ms. Ta is a young Chinese teacher who has worked at the *Gymnasium* for one year and has experienced different challenges and problems in the new educational setting. Her professional experience shows that her beliefs and perceptions still reflect traditional Chinese language didactics, and the nature of the Chinese educational schemata or cultural beliefs about education exerts its influence on her professional behavior.

In the following table, the holistic framework of her professional development can be clearly identified:

<p><b>Competence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• having to deal with more trivial matter,</li> <li>• not being used to working noisy, active, “non-peaceful” teaching situation,</li> <li>• changing individual teaching strategies,</li> <li>• good at preparing examination;</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mediation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• flash-card learning,</li> <li>• multimedia courseware,</li> <li>• showing real objects for teaching,</li> <li>• cultivating students’ creativity</li> <li>• designing various competitive matches;</li> </ul>
<p><b>Acknowledgment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• acknowledging individuality of each student,</li> <li>• respecting individual views and expression beyond teaching curriculum,</li> <li>• establishing individual teaching plans and teaching standards for diverse students;</li> </ul>	<p><b>Institution:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• random and unofficial dialogues for sharing experience,</li> <li>• attending other colleagues’ classes,</li> <li>• following other colleagues’ suggestion and comments,</li> <li>• not being satisfied of the effects of collegial communication;</li> </ul>

**Table 7 Ms. Ta’s individual didactics from the categories of developmental tasks**

In summary, on the basis of my case studies of the three Chinese language teachers, it shows that they have encountered different challenges and experienced different developmental processes in their educational biographies. It can be seen that Chinese educational schemata and cultural values have exerted impressive influence on these the Chinese language teachers’ beliefs and their adaptability to overseas teaching environments.

Next, I want to switch to a study of the two English language teachers’ language teaching and their professional competence in China, focusing on their teachers’ professional conceptions of educational process. By making a comparative study of the Chinese teachers in Germany and the English teachers in China, my analysis focuses on the transformation of their professional attitudes and on their professional developmental tasks.

Before I begin to study English language teaching in China and the English teachers' professional development in Wuhan, I would like to introduce the influence of the New Curriculum Reform (NCR) on Chinese educational development. To deal with the challenges of globalization and the rapid development and changes in China's social, economic and political context, the Ministry of Education in China released the Basic Education Curriculum Reform Outline in June 2001. The basic education reform that is under way in China is one of the most ambitious, radical, far-reaching and complex in the world (Ryan et al. 2009).

The philosophy underpinning the new curriculum concerns individual student development (Zhong, Cui and Zhang, 2001, p.12). *Basic Education Curriculum Reform Outline* issued by Ministry of Education in China has called for transformative changes in all areas of the Chinese educational system, including educational philosophy, curricular structure and administration, curricular standards and content, pedagogy, the development and use of curriculum resources, curricular pedagogy, the development and use of instructional resources, curricula assessment and evaluation, and teacher education and development (Guo, 2010; Zhong, Cui and Zhang, 2001).

The ultimate aim of quality education is to help students achieve a balanced moral, intellectual, physical and aesthetic development (MOE, 2001, p.27). Within the implementation of the new curriculum reform, there is a dispute among Chinese didacticians about Quality Oriented Education (QOE) and Exam Oriented Education (EOE). Qiquan Zhong of the East China Normal University Shanghai, represents the change with the objective of a new quality of education. He stood and stands in conflict with Cesan Wang of the Beijing Normal University, who stresses the good quality of the traditional kind of classroom instruction. In addition, he criticizes that QOE puts too much emphasis on student-centered practice.

The new transformative changes, i.e. the New Curriculum Reform requires teachers to re-conceptualize their understanding of teaching and learning as well as their previous identities, which were formed in an examination-orientated environment. The reform focuses on a change to the teacher's role as the transmitter of knowledge to guider, organizer, helper, participant and partner in students' learning (MOE, 2001, p.

27). While many teachers appreciate the strong advocacy for student-centered practice, they feel that achieving the changes demanded poses great challenges because of the constraints of the current evaluation system, the lack of professional opportunities, resources, and the complexity in shifting from traditional professional identities and so on (Guo, 2013, p. 92).

The New Curriculum Reform, with its large-scale curriculum changes brought new professional developmental requirements to English language teachers in China. On the one hand, the teachers appeared to be receptive to the curriculum goals and different new innovative approaches in English language teaching. On the other hand, they felt these approaches to be unrealistic, given the various contextual constraints in their schools (Yan and He, 2012, p. 5). English language teachers have encountered various constraints and challenges in implementing the new curriculum requirements in their classroom practice.

As I had done with the Chinese language teachers in Germany, I collected different data through classroom observations and teachers' interviews with the two English language teachers as well. In the following sections, I selected different extracts from the two English teachers' interviews and combined them with classroom observations and field notes in order to describe their professional development. My analysis focuses on the transformation of their professional attitudes and their professional competence regarding their developmental tasks.

### **6.5 Ms. Yellow's case study: *"It is important that the students are able to acquire knowledge in class; therefore effective instruction is my focus."***

Ms. Yellow is an English language teacher who works at a top-class elementary school in Wuhan, China. She has been teaching English at this school for 10 years since she graduated from a key normal university in Wuhan, the capital city of Hubei Province.



As she noted in her interview, she wanted to become an English teacher when she was a student at junior middle school.

### **6.5.1 Developmental task of competence-“It is significant that the students are able to acquire knowledge in class; therefore effective instruction is my focus.”**

It is widely accepted that different foreign cultures play a significant role in foreign language learning. Each teacher and each learner should realize the significance of culture in foreign language teaching. In class, only when culture and language are both integrated and can they interact with each other. ‘Culture’ in language teaching and learning is usually defined pragmatically as ‘a/the culture associated with a language being learnt’ (Byram and Grundy, 2002, p.193).

Looking at my class video (recorded on 22 May 2014), here I firstly want to introduce Ms. Yellow’s lesson. The lesson ‘*A Story of Nicola’s holiday*’ describes how Nicola spent her winter holidays with her granddad and grandmother in the Arctic. At the beginning of her class, Ms. Yellow conducted a brief oral practice to review some words from the last lesson and asked the students to act them out. After this warm-up activity, she began the new lesson.

As I have noted, introducing and transmitting foreign culture has been viewed as the core value in the field of foreign language teaching, but, from my point of view, she did not introduce any intercultural knowledge concerning her teaching content. Chinese students from cultural backgrounds are different to those of the West and required to be fed the necessary cultural knowledge. Ms. Yellow’s mediation should pay a lot of attention to cultural knowledge to help the students to bring their own educational experience into instruction. She could perhaps introduce some content concerning cultural background. For example, what are the differences between winter holidays in China and America? What is the weather like in the Arctic in winter? What is an igloo? How is an igloo built? etc. Obviously, there are various cultural differences between the Western

culture and the Chinese context. “Culture is the software of the mind” (Hofstede, 1991), and all communication should be intercultural (Holliday, 1999; Piller, 2011). But most Chinese students are not familiar with the Western cultural context. Because of this, her teaching has to cultivate students’ intercultural awareness through introducing a large amount of related cultural knowledge, in order to help them to develop their own intercultural identity.

In the following interview, Ms. Yellow clearly stated the significance of students’ class learning. In particular, she has high expectations of her students in class. One can see that she is a supporter of traditional Chinese didactics. As she illustrated in the extract:

Extract 41: Teacher interview with Ms. Yellow      24 May, 2014    Line 03-05

Ms. Yellow: “作为一名中国的英语老师, 重要的是学生在课堂上可以学到东西, 因此有效的教学是我所关注的。中国的教学认为, 学习就是一个知识积累的过程。 [...]”

Ms. Yellow: “as an English teacher in China, it is important that the students are able to acquire knowledge in class; therefore effective instruction is my focus. Chinese instruction sees learning as a process of accumulating knowledge. [...]”

According to my classroom observation, the students are asked to learn and memorize what she teaches them. Referring to Meyer’s three levels of interaction in the instructional process, I assume that this kind of interaction is involved at the first level. In order to enter into a communicative level, her instruction therefore has to focus on the students’ interest and their biographies and respect the students’ individual characteristics and educational biographies. As I have noted above, only when teachers’ instruction can help students and teachers to share their experience within the interaction, are the students able to bring their own educational experience into learning.

Looking at Ms. Yellow’s instruction, introducing cultural knowledge was either taught briefly or totally omitted, because traditional foreign language teaching in China always overemphasizes linguistic language knowledge and literary language. In order to effectively achieve language transmission, English teachers in China are used to apply-

ing traditional instructional methods of drilling and rote-learning at the expense of intercultural teaching methods and communicative oral work.

Another characteristic of Ms. Yellow mediation is that she likes using multi-media facilities to conduct English language teaching, for example, using software, multi-media software, watching English videos, etc. To some degree, multi-media teaching is the most significant characteristic of her individual didactics.

With the implementation of China's new curriculum reform in 2001, multi-media teaching has become the most prevalent, popular teaching method in foreign language teaching. More and more schools have begun to use video, multimedia systems and internet in their English classes. She mentioned that she always makes some teaching courseware and prepares instructional material by herself, designs different power points clips and selects different audio and video teaching materials. As far as I can see, she has strong professional competence is using new technology in English teaching to attract the students' learning interest and motivation. As she said:

Extract 42: Teacher interview with Ms. Yellow 24 May, 2014 Line 27-28

Ms. Yellow: “在新课程的影响下，在课堂教学中大规模的使用多媒体，对于向学生传递知识是很有优势的。 [...]”

Ms. Yellow: “under the influence of the New Curriculum, the convergence on the use of multi-media in class has huge advantages in transmitting knowledge to students. [...]”

Comparing the above with my case studies of Chinese language teachers in Germany, it can be seen that the Chinese teachers also prefer to use multi-media equipment to assist their language teaching. However, it is interesting that their German colleagues seldom use it in their classes.

Ms. Yellow has the professional competence to apply multimedia in language instruction. However, it seems that her mediation ignores the significance of cultural knowledge, thus the students are reluctant to bring their biographies into her language teaching. In Ms. Yellow's class, the first level of the teacher-student interaction is able

to attain a high communicative level requiring teacher-student negotiation and mutual communication.

### **6.5.2 Developmental task of mediation-“Intensive teaching methods, and I should insist on my teaching plan.”**

As I have mentioned above, repetition and memorization are the main characteristics in traditional Chinese didactics. Ms. Yellow’s students are often required to repetitively read English words and phrases in chorus after her. Afterwards, they have to memorize them as soon as possible.

My observation shows that once some students read English words incorrectly, then Ms. Yellow asked them to read after her again and then corrected their pronunciation. Subsequently, she asked all the students to read in chorus again, to repeat. When I was analyzing Chinese language teachers’ methods in Germany, Ms. Baum, Ms. Wee, Ms. Ta always employed some similar teaching methods, like *reading repetitively*, *reading in chorus*, *memorization* and *immediate correction*. Because Chinese teachers believe that repetition and memorization are the most valued learning strategies concerning foreign language teaching given limited instructional time.

As an observer, I found that her teaching tempo was very fast-paced. She arranged different teaching activities, for instance, vocabulary learning, asking questions, grammar learning, class exercises etc. Her instruction seemed too fast-paced for her fifth-grade students. In particular, these students have only been learning English for four years. In addition, I doubt that whether all the students in this large class were able to follow her teaching tempo or understand her mediation. However, I find it astonishing that her students have been used to learning under their teacher’s intensive mediation. In class, she neither suspended the process of teaching, nor slowed down her tempo to take note of her students’ reaction. I, at least, felt it was not very easy to follow her teaching tempo.

In order to better understand her professional beliefs, I asked her to narrate her individual professional role as an English language teacher; she answered that:

Extract 43: Teacher interview with Ms. Yellow 24 May, 2014 Line 21-23

Ms. Yellow: “新课程改革要求教师作为一个的实施者或者是指导者，而不是一个主要的表演者，因此我们在教学中，努力强调学生的创造性和想象力，独立性 [...] 实施一个学生为中心的教学。”

Ms. Yellow: “New curriculum reform demands a teacher be a conductor or a director, rather than a main performer; so we are trying to emphasize students’ creativity, [...] imagination, independence in instruction, to conduct learner-centered didactics.”

Even though Ms. Yellow assumed the significance of learner-centered pedagogy and of students’ individual knowledge construction, her actual mediation showed that teacher-centered teaching still dominated her instruction. Her professional competence was not yet able to conduct student-centered teaching. Her professional attitude is not able to accept the ‘subjective’ roles of learners, and merely regards learners as ‘objective’ receivers.

In particular, she carried on strictly with her instructional plan without taking the students’ reactions into consideration. For example, when she arranged for the students to do class exercises, she did not even care whether all of them had already finished the exercises in the two minutes set. One could see that the class exercise time was obviously less than the time given, in particular for most of the students. The students were not able to finish the exercises in the limited time. To some degree, students were required to learn what the teacher taught them.

Looking at her classroom protocol, from my point of view, her transmission or mediation ignored the joint action between teaching content and the students’ educational experience. The English language as a representation of Western culture is different from Chinese students’ understanding of it with their own individual backgrounds and individual biographies, but her mediation could not help them to bring their biographies into language teaching. Cultural discontinuity causes some conflicts and tension in students’ learning. What is more, rote memorizing, intensive grammar instruction and

vocabulary explanations occupy a large part of class time, which restrains the students' individual construction of language knowledge and the educative potential of the learning content. Ms. Yellow's mediation has to deal with the connection between students' biographies and the teacher's mediation, helping each learner to develop intercultural competence and construct their own cultural identity.

### **6.5.3 Developmental task of acknowledgement-“In fact, I design teaching contents for students' learning.”**

In Ms. Yellow's class, I found an interesting phenomenon. She always liked accepting students' answers, even though some students did not follow her instructional requirement.

For example, she asked the students to make their own sentences with a sentence pattern, “*I like ...*”. Some students said “*I like my mother*”, “*I like dogs*”, “*I like computers*”; even though these words did not appear in this lesson, she accepted their answers with her compliments as well. Despite most students' answers not according with Ms. Yellow's previous design in her Power Point, she still accepted their views and ideas. I understand her to be showing respect for each student's biography, for an individual's self-concept of language and culture, to be encouraging them to express their own views.

Her lesson as a demonstration class for her colleagues and other guests, generally speaking, is overall well-designed and well-planned with a clear learning process. To instruct such a large class, in limited teaching time, a professional teacher always designs a particular curriculum plan, a strict teaching plan and coherent instruction with well-prepared lessons. Traditional Chinese teaching requires that the teachers have carefully prepared lessons and the students follow the teaching plan and arrive at expected answers. It also influences Ms. Yellow's instruction to some extent.

For example, in her class, she attempted to ‘encourage’ one of her students to intone exactly the standard answers she had designed in the next slide of the Power Point.

It shows that her professional beliefs still reflect the requirements of traditional Chinese didactics that focuses on definitive and accurate knowledge concerning instruction. As traditional Chinese didactics requires knowledge to be transmitted correctly and appropriately, the teacher always expects students to acquire this definitive and completely accurate knowledge (Cheng K. M., 2011, p. 597).

Regarding her instruction, she asked the students to find all the verbs in this lesson, and showed them in her Power Point in the subsequent lesson. The students found “welcome” “show” “go” “need”, but one female student said “fishing”. Ms. Yellow seemed to be not dissatisfied with the female student’s answer and repeated “fishing” again doubtfully. Afterwards, she did not accept the student’s answer, but required her to read the sentence in the textbook and find the exact right verb-phase “go fishing”. As she had designed a table of verbs with the verb-phrases “go fishing” in the next chip of the Power Point, she expected the students to say “go fishing” in order to conform to her designed teaching plan.

In Chinese educational schemata, in line with the transmission model of teaching, students should maintain a high level of receptiveness, wholeheartedly embracing the knowledge from their teacher or books. In particular, students are expected to respect and cooperate with their teachers and not to challenge transmitted knowledge. Ms. Yellow’s behavior shows her professional beliefs are affected by teacher-dominated didactics that emphasizes the accuracy of transmitted knowledge and the authority of the teacher’s mediation.

Under the influence of traditional Confucian education, students are always made to recite new vocabulary and answer standard questions in various examinations in order to get good marks in different examinations. English teachers in China have to focus on grammar instruction, vocabulary explanations and students’ linguistic accuracy, in order to get good achievements from different kinds of examinations, as students’ examination scores are also the key criteria for judging teachers’ performance.

In general, Ms. Yellow’s mediation is greatly influenced by the exam-oriented educational situation in China. Her professional competence has to attach more value to students’ individual knowledge construction and formulation and abandon the stereo-

type of good students with good academic marks. In particular, she has to accept the uncertainty of each student's development and take individual sense construction into account.

#### **6.5.4 Developmental task of institution-“There are no great changes, as long as there are no changes in *gaokao*.”**

Institutional environment, collegial collaboration, personal relations among teachers at school and school administration are related to the construction and development of teachers' individual didactics. In this section, I study Ms. Yellow's professional competence concerning the influence of the institution.

As Ms. Yellow mentioned in her interview, the 'demonstration lesson' (or '*public lesson*')<sup>36</sup> is viewed as the most significant part of her professional development. This is an important Chinese feature of English language teaching that teachers learn from and with each other. There are usually two regular types of demonstration class: experienced teachers demonstrating teaching to less experienced teachers and the peer teachers' demonstration lesson in the teachers' community. In order to better show the importance of the 'demonstration class' for her professional development, she shared a 'critical incident' in her biography with me.

Extract 44: Teacher interview with Ms. Yellow      24 May, 2014    Line 55-60

Ms. Yellow: “在公开展示课以后，其他的同事给予了我很高的评价。然后，我们就上课的内容做了相关的讨论，举个例子，就课程设计，教学方法，教学内容和师生之间的互动，等等。通过相互的交流和评估，我从其他的老师那里，也

<sup>36</sup> *Demonstration lessons* in primary and middle school are frequently planned in collaborative teacher groups, paying great attention to key points, predicting problems learners may face, and designing intensive activities which make best use of available time. A major aspect of teacher development is that teachers regularly observe each other's classes, not only to focus on the teachers but also to analyze learners' difficulties (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996).



获得了很多的赞扬和有价值的意见。这个时候，我突然（在我自己身上）找到了很多的自信，当时自我的感觉也是非常好。”

Ms. Yellow: “After the demonstration lesson, other colleagues gave me a high appraisal for the whole class. Subsequently, we had a discussion related to this lesson, for instance, about lesson design, teaching methods, teaching content and interaction between students and teachers, etc. Through mutual communication and assessment, I acquired so many appraisals and valuable suggestions from other teachers. At that time, I suddenly gained a lot of self-confidence as an English teacher, and at the moment, my own feeling was very good.”

Indeed, the demonstration class (or *public lesson*) is used as a model for other teachers to follow, which is simultaneously able to reflect the current professional attitudes and opinions on ‘good’ instruction in China. Good teaching means that teachers are able to use all kinds of ways to guide the students in a certain direction, creating ample opportunities for them to air their views, and eventually constructing a natural path for the students to arrive at expected conclusions (cf. Cheng K. M., 2011, p. 597). Good teaching in Chinese didactics demands good planning, students’ active interactions, open-ended questioning, effective guidance and correct conclusions, etc. (Cheng K. M., 2011, p. 597)

Through the demonstration class, Ms. Yellow suddenly began to realize the significance of colleague interaction and mutual communication. This kind of collegial interaction enables her to communicate with other peer colleagues on some concrete professional practice such as lesson design, teaching methods, etc. Besides, this kind of mutual collegial collaboration is able to motivate her to reflect on her individual instructional methods. One can see that this kind of collegial co-operation is very effective for her professional development.

In lesson study, teachers can see how a ‘good’ lesson is executed before they try to model it to their own professional practice. With the implementation of the New Curriculum Reform in China, shifting from ‘education for exams’ to ‘education for quality’ has brought a lot of challenges for English language teachers’ professional perceptions and beliefs. Through observing and reflecting on what is demonstrated in a ‘public les-

son', teachers can more concretely grasp what has changed, what has not, and why (Chen and Yang, 2013, p. 221). However, she did not mention regular collegial collaboration among teachers' groups of the same grade or of subject-matter groups at school. Maybe I can assume that learning and teaching in a 'demonstration class' is much more effective than other types of collegial communication.

In order to know Ms. Yellow's views on collegial collaboration at school, I asked for her thoughts on this subject and she said:

Extract 45: Teacher interview with Ms. Yellow 24 May, 2014 Line 44-49

Ms. Yellow: “我们都意识到同事之间交流的重要性, //Hhm///Hhm//但是常规的教师交际关注的是一段时期的课程安排和学习考试学习的成绩。//Hhm//我们一直在努力提高学生的学习 && [...] 除非高考有一些改变, 否则也不会改变目前的情况。 [...]”

Ms. Yellow: “we have all realized the significance of collegial communication, //Hhm///Hhm//but regular teachers' communication focuses on periodic curriculum planning and students' learning achievement through examinations. //Hhm//We have been trying to improve students' learning. && [...] No great change will be made in the present situation unless there are some changes in the national university entry examination. [...]”

Due to the heavy workload in professional practice, it is a general phenomenon that the English teachers at school do not have enough extra time and energy to communicate effectively individual instructional challenges and problems. In particular, traditional collective teachers' communication is not able to deal with each teacher's problems. It is advocated that the philosophical underpinning of the new Chinese curriculum is a program of engagement for each student's development, but few teachers really know how to effectively conduct student-centered didactics in class.

The program of the new curriculum focuses on a change in the teacher's role from transmitter of knowledge to facilitator, guide, organizer, helper, participant and partner in students' learning (MOE. 2001, p. 27). However, while many teachers appreciate the

strong advocacy for student-centered practice, they feel confronted by great challenges to achieving the changes demanded (Guo, 2012, p. 92). As Ms. Yellow clearly noted in her interview, the traditional exam-oriented instructional schema produces different restrictions to effectively implementing the new curriculum revolution at school.

In China, the University Entrance Examination (i.e. *the gaokao*) has long been regarded as almost the only ladder of social mobility, which is also why examination-oriented teaching is the most significant characteristic of the education system (cf. Cheng K. M., 2011, p. 595). Even though the Chinese education authorities have been working on a new phase of the curriculum revolution, examination-oriented instruction seriously influences the results and effects of teachers' co-operation and communication.

Ms. Yellow's professional development has to deal with the tensions arising from the new requirement of 'education for quality' and the high expectation of students' achievement of the *gaokao*. In addition, Ms. Yellow's professional competence is required to internalize other colleague professional practice and experience in public lessons in her own development of individual didactics. In addition, her professional competence concerning collective collaborative competence has to improve as well.

### **6.5.5 Interpretation of Ms. Yellow's professional development**

To better understand her professional development and interactions among Ms. Yellow and her students in class, I want to describe her individual didactics within the four categories of developmental tasks:

<p><b>Competence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teacher-centered instruction,</li> <li>• overemphasizing language knowledge,</li> <li>• ignoring cultural knowledge,</li> <li>• a low level of student-teacher interaction,</li> <li>• effectively applying multi-media in instruction;</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mediation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• designing interactive exercises,</li> <li>• reading in chorus and focusing on pronunciation,</li> <li>• fast-paced teaching tempo,</li> <li>• insisting on adhering to instructional plan,</li> <li>• ignoring students' reactions;</li> </ul>
<p><b>Acknowledgment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accepting various answers from students, acknowledging individuals' views,</li> <li>• hopes expected answers,</li> <li>• experiencing tension caused by intercultural contexts;</li> </ul>	<p><b>Institution:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• taking demonstration lessons with teacher peers, different colleagues at school and other schools,</li> <li>• regular meetings, close communication and co-operative teamwork among colleagues,</li> <li>• constrains arising from exam-oriented instructional context;</li> </ul>

**Table 8 Ms. Yellow's individual didactics from the categories of developmental tasks**

Ms. Yellow's individual didactics is greatly influenced by the traditional didactics of language teaching within the framework of Chinese education. Reading in chorus, using flash cards and applying multi-media equipment in English teaching are the main characteristics of her teaching methods.

In the above diagram, I have produced different phases to describe Ms. Yellow's individual didactics regarding her professional competence to deal with developmental tasks. Her professional beliefs reflect teacher-centered didactics, putting great value on intensive knowledge transmission. Furthermore, her individual didactics is influenced by her previous educational experience in association with the traditional Chinese schemata. Confronted with the tensions between the new curriculum requirement and the students' individual requirement, Ms. Yellow's professional competence does not seem to meet the requirements of the new curriculum reform.

In the next section, I want to show another case study of an English language teacher, Ms. Hao, who works at a senior middle school in Wuhan, China. My analysis is

able to provide more new references for the comparative study of teachers' professional development concerning the different educational schemata of China and Germany.

## **6.6 Ms. Hao's case study: *"There have been two turning points in my professional experience."***

Ms. Hao works at one of the most famous key senior secondary schools in Wuhan. At present, she teaches English in two classes of the tenth grade and has been working as an English teacher for more than eight years. I made a series of classroom observations, wrote down field notes and conducted teachers' interviews over a two-week-long. Here I try to explore the influence of her previous educational experience in professional perception, and then describe her individual didactics in terms of her working on different professional developmental tasks.

Firstly, my study examines the transformation and formulation of Ms. Yellow's individual professional identity when she was a trainee teacher at the school.

### **6.6.1 Analysis of Ms. Hao's biographical educational experience**

I conducted a semi-structural interview to explore her biography and previous individual working experience. It indicates critical incidents that represent the turning points and changes in her professional development that were significant for her professional identity.

In the data collected from her interview, firstly she mentioned that, when she was a student at senior middle school, she had never thought that she could ever be an English teacher. In fact, during her school time, she lived in the countryside of Hubei province. The environment for learning English there is not as good as it is in some big cities.

In particular, when she took the *gaokao*<sup>37</sup>, she did not do very well, so she then had to choose to study her English major at a normal university rather than at a key university.

To study Ms. Hao's professional development, I asked her to briefly generalize her biography and professional experience. She claimed that there had been two changes in her professional beliefs and attitudes. She mentioned that the first self-transformation took place at university.

Extract 46: Teacher interview with Ms. Hao 08 June, 2014 Line 69-74

Ms. Hao: “很大程度上，我大学期间的发展，就是和自身一个的内驱力很有关系，我觉得环境还是很重要。是非常的重要，虽然那个时候我们大学的环境不是很好，但是我自己还是自己想给自己有一个提升。我自己有一个很强的提升的愿望，无论是口语还是其他的方面我觉得我都有提高。后来这些都有帮到我。 [...]”

Ms. Hao: “To a large extent, my development at university was related to an internal drive within me. I think that the learning environment is very important, very important. Even though my university environment was not very good, I wanted to improve because I have a strong desire to improve. I think my spoken language and other aspects improved during that period. Afterwards, all these aspects helped me a lot. [...]”

Ms. Hao mentioned that the second great transformation took place when she worked at the *New Oriental Language School* (新东方外语学校)<sup>38</sup>, the most popular foreign

<sup>37</sup> In most provinces the *gaokao* takes the form of ‘3+X’, with ‘3’ standing for the three compulsory subjects Chinese, mathematics and one foreign language, this language being either English, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Japanese or Arabic, with English being preferred by the majority of the students. Excellent marks in the *gaokao* allow students to study at one of the elite universities that in turn are considered to be the “first class ticket to professional life” (Weggel, 1997, p.108). Students, who strive to attend the best universities in China and to select ideal majors for their professional careers, must score high in the ‘*gaokao*’. If they score low and have to attend a lower-tier school they will have to accept whatever major the university has selected for them. In general, the *gaokao* plays a crucial role in the lives of the students and their families; it is widely regarded as the most important turning point in their lives.

<sup>38</sup> New Oriental Language Schools are an important group belonging to the New Oriental Education and Technology Group Inc. (Simplified Chinese 新东方教育科技集团), In fact, New Oriental (Simplified Chinese 新东方) is a more usually provider of private educational services in China. The headquarters of New Oriental is located in the Haidian district of Beijing. It is currently the largest comprehensive educational company in China. The business of New Oriental includes pre-school education, general courses

language training school in China. Compared with her teaching environment at a normal middle school, working in a new, advanced environment demanded that she adjust to the new instructional environment. In particular, there were two significant reasons that made her transform her previous professional beliefs: one was the high expectations of the other students; the other was the serious competition among her colleagues in the new school.

Extract 47: Teacher interview with Ms. Hao 8 June, 2014 Line 76-79

Ms. Hao: “学生在每一节课后都要给每一节课还有每一个老师打分，如果老师总是得到很少的分数，就会很快丢掉他的工作，因此我应该按照学生的发展要求去做不同的调整。[...]”

Ms. Hao: “Students must assess each class and each teacher after each lesson, if teachers keep getting low assessments, they will lose their positions at school very quickly, so I had to adjust to the changes associated with the students’ developmental requirement. [...]”

While working at the English language training school, she had to change her regular language teaching methods in order to attract the students’ interest. Only in this way could she get high scores in the students’ evaluation. She asserted that her working experience in the language school was her second self-transformation which has helped her to improve her professional competence. In particular, the students in the English language school expected their teachers’ teaching to be different from their regular English learning in class. Her teaching had to enhance the students’ learning motivation and she had to pay a lot of attention to their individual needs.

As Ms. Hao said in her interview, her working experience at this English language training school was very significant in that it has greatly helped her instruction at the key senior secondary schools:

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for students of various age-levels, online education, overseas-study consulting and textbook publishing.  
Online-text: <http://www.neworiental.org/english/>

Extract 48: Teacher interview with Ms. Hao 8 June, 2014 Line 101-103

Ms. Hao: “随后，我开始在这里工作，在这所中学。我觉得，我的教学没有经历太多的变化，因为我可以直接把新东方学校的教学方法拿到这里用。”

Ms. Hao: “Afterwards, I began to work here at the senior middle school. I don't think that there have been any great changes in my instruction, because I can directly employ the effective teaching methods here that I used at the *New Oriental Language School*.”

In her interview extract, she notes that she was not confronted with many challenges when she began to work at the key senior school. She mentioned that some instructional methods and strategies used in the *New Oriental Language School* were used in the new school. She realized that her working experience in that language school has enabled her to form an individual professional identity and construct individual didactics for English language teaching.

To sum up, there are two significant turning points in her biography that have allowed her to carry out changes and self-reflections concerning her professional views and attitudes. The first change took place during her university study; and the second change took place when she was working at the *New Oriental Language School*. As I have explained above, the internal motivation and the external contextual influences of the school context can be identified as the two significant reasons for the transformation of her professional beliefs and attitudes. It can be seen that internal subjective motivation has influenced Ms. Hao's professional development during her pre-service and in-service period. Her internal image of 'a good teacher' helps her subjectively improve her individual professional competence and construct her professional perception.

Regarding the second period of individual transformation, in order to 'survive' within the new competitive environment, she has to change her regular instructional models into new individually oriented instruction in association with different students' requirements.



## 6.6.2 Analysis of Ms. Hao's individual didactics

I have collected a series of research data from her regular teaching practice, including teachers' interviews, classroom observations and field notes, and I have tried to describe her individual didactics as I understand it. I then asked her the following question: “*Can you list some important characteristics of your individual teaching in English language teaching?*” She thought a little while and then said:

Extract 49: Teacher interview with Ms. Hao 08 June, 2014 Line 161-163

Ms. Hao: “我觉得我教学最大的特点就是，**创造性**，我对教学的创造性，我很愿意对教学论做很多的革新。这样的特点可以反映在两个方面，不仅仅是在教学资源的（创新），还有就是在课堂设计新的教学方法。”

Ms. Hao: “I think the most distinguishable characteristic of my didactics is creativity: my **creativity** in teaching. I like innovating in didactics. The characteristic is reflected not only in the teaching material, but also in the design of teaching methods in class.”

Firstly, compared with other English teachers at the school, Ms. Hao mentioned that the most distinguishable characteristic of her mediation is creativity. She likes innovating traditional teaching methods, including these two aspects: teaching material and designing new teaching methods. My classroom observations show that her teaching materials are not limited to school textbooks. They also include various newspapers, complementary contexts, and so on. In particular, some related texts in ‘*New Concept English*’, ‘*21 Century English Newspaper*’ and ‘*China Daily*’ were often directly used as teaching materials and contents in her class (see classroom observation, 8 June, 2014). Meanwhile, she is very confident in applying these kinds of methods in English language teaching. As she said:

Extract 50: Teacher interview with Ms. Hao 8 June, 2014 Line 166-167

Ms. Hao: “[...] 我觉得我可能是在我们学校，坚持用 21 世纪报纸指导教学，用得最好的。”

Ms. Hao: “[...] I think I am the best English teacher at our school that insists on using 21st Century newspapers as teaching content in English teaching.”

Using *21 Century English Newspaper* in class is the significant characteristic of Ms. Hao’s instruction. In this extract of her interview, her own evaluation also implies that she has accumulated a rich abundance of teaching experience. In addition, she also mentioned some other characteristics of her teaching methods:

Extract 51: Teacher interview with Ms. Hao, 8 June, 2014 Line 174-177

Ms. Hao: “一些我选择的的教学材料，就像是最近的社会事件，日常生活的事件，这些都可以吸引学生的兴趣，鼓励他们去参与到教学活动来，因此他们很愿意去用，去发表意见，渴望去知道细节。[...]”

Ms. Hao: “Some materials that I choose for teaching, such as recent social events, affairs in daily life that could easily attract students’ interest, encourage them to participate in my teaching. Thus, they would like to use them to make comments and are eager to know details. [...]”

She also likes combining different social events, popular topics from recent newspapers, or some hot topics and current affairs in student life with her own teaching material. On this point, I find some evidence in my own classroom observation that her teaching material includes various popular topics and recent events, such as terrorist attacks in Urumchi, popular scientific topics, popular South Korea TV-series and Hollywood fictional films and so on (see classroom observation, 23 May, 2014).

The third characteristic of Ms. Hao’s teaching method is designing *role-plays* (课本剧) in class. The students are required to role-play on a topic in the lesson, in order to demonstrate their own understanding of the lesson. For example, she asked the students to prepare for a role-play on ‘clone technology’, and they studied the related content, prepared for the role-play and rehearsed after class. They were excited about taking part in it and were willing to express their own opinions.

The fourth characteristic of her individual teaching method refers to *individual design for lesson exercises* and *self-checking* in combination with *group cooperative*

*learning*. The traditional instructional method is that the teacher directly corrects the students' exercises or discusses them in class. However, Ms. Hao's instructional method encourages the students to show their own understanding and then induce collective judgment on the basis of group discussion or co-operative learning.

Above all, Ms. Hao's individual teaching methods emphasize the significance of students' individual characteristics and individual self-regulated development. In the interaction between the students and the teachers, she sees the students as the subjects of her instructional activities. At the same time, the students are able to bring their biographies and interest into the teacher's teaching. The teacher-student interaction can be improved in the process of *Bildung*, which allows intergenerational communication, and the negotiation of teaching and learning objectives. It means that the students are freer to develop their intercultural competence, which leads me to an analysis of Ms. Hao's professional competence concerning her work with different professional tasks.

### **6.6.3 Developmental task of competence- “The new curriculum reform asks me to shift traditional teacher-centered didactics into student-centered didactics”**

The large-scale curriculum changes brought new opportunities as well as tremendous pressure and ambivalence into English language teachers' professional development. As Ms. Yellow clearly said, “*the new curriculum reform asks me to shift traditional teacher-centered didactics into student-centered didactics...*”. As I could see, her instruction attaches great value to students' self-autonomy and their subjective engagement in the learning process.

For example, the students are encouraged to design and role-play or make oral presentations of social events and current topics. Her professional beliefs emphasize students' individual development and subjective motivation and understand the students as subjects with self-regulated competence. In Ms. Hao's class, one can see that her students became more engaged in learning and demonstrated self-autonomy within the

interaction. In particular, they are able to show their strong communicative competence to identify their own views on different topics. Abandoning the traditional teacher-centered didactics, she fully supports the students' subjective engagement and ensures their individual emancipation in class. This kind of teacher-student interaction thus can be understood as an intergenerational communication concerning Meyer's three levels of student-teacher interaction.

However, there is a weakness, shortfalls in terms of her professional competence development as I see it. There are two aspects that should be further improved and developed in Ms. Hao's professional development as she has illustrated it in her interview. The first shortfall in her future professional development is that she has not yet found any corresponding pedagogical theories relating to her teaching methods. At present, she indicates that the greatest weakness and defect in her teaching method is *the lack of educational theoretical support*. Thus, for her future professional development, she wants to read more educational books, essays and related texts to compensate for her lack of educational theories and she would like to attend more professional development workshops and seminars on the implementation of the new Chinese curriculum.

#### **6.6.4 Developmental task of mediation- "I always like giving the students some exploratory questions."**

On the basis of the data collected from Ms. Hao's class observations and teachers' interviews, I have found there are some interesting distinguishing characteristics in her mediation in comparison with other English teachers at her school<sup>39</sup>. In order to understand Ms. Hao's self-reflection on individual teaching methods, I raised the following question: "*can you briefly introduce your own teaching methods?*" and she answered:

Extract 52: Teacher interview with Ms. Hao    08 June, 2014    Line 4-7
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<sup>39</sup> In order to better understand English language teaching at the school, I also did some classroom observations and teacher interviews with other English language teachers in my study.

Ms. Hao: “在我的班上，我总是喜欢给学生一些探索性的问题。这些问题可以帮助学生很好地去准备课程。[...] 然而，对于词汇的教学，我愿意通过阅读英文报纸，实际事件，或者各种领域的热门话题，[...] 组织演讲和设计课本剧也是我常用的教学方式 [...]”

Ms. Hao: “in my class, I always like giving students some exploratory questions. These questions can help the students to prepare for the lessons well. [...] And, for vocabulary teaching, I like to teach words in relation to English newspapers, social issues, or some other vital topics in different areas, [...] making presentations and designing role-plays in groups are the other usual instructional ways. [...]”

In her interview, she identifies her usual teaching methods, such as using exploratory questions, reading newspapers, discussing vital social topics, designing role-plays, making presentations, etc. I want to analyze her didactics further on the basis of my classroom observation of 23 May, 2014 to see whether she used these teaching methods effectively and how she applied them in class, The title of this lesson is “*the Return of the Dinosaurs*”.

*Class presentation:* Her instructional planning shows a female student as ‘a professional scientist’ making a brief presentation on the topic “why can’t we clone a dinosaurs at present?” Ms. Hao told me that she had already given the students some exploratory questions about clone technology for homework and the students were able to actively prepare some related content and make a presentation of the topic.

*Learning English vocabulary from the news:* Ms. Hao taught new English words using the daily news and social issues. For example, in her classroom observation on 23 May, when she began to teach the new words “initial” (see Picture 3) and “resist”, she used the English news on the incident of a bomb attack in Urumqi<sup>40</sup>, in order to interpret the usage of the two English words.

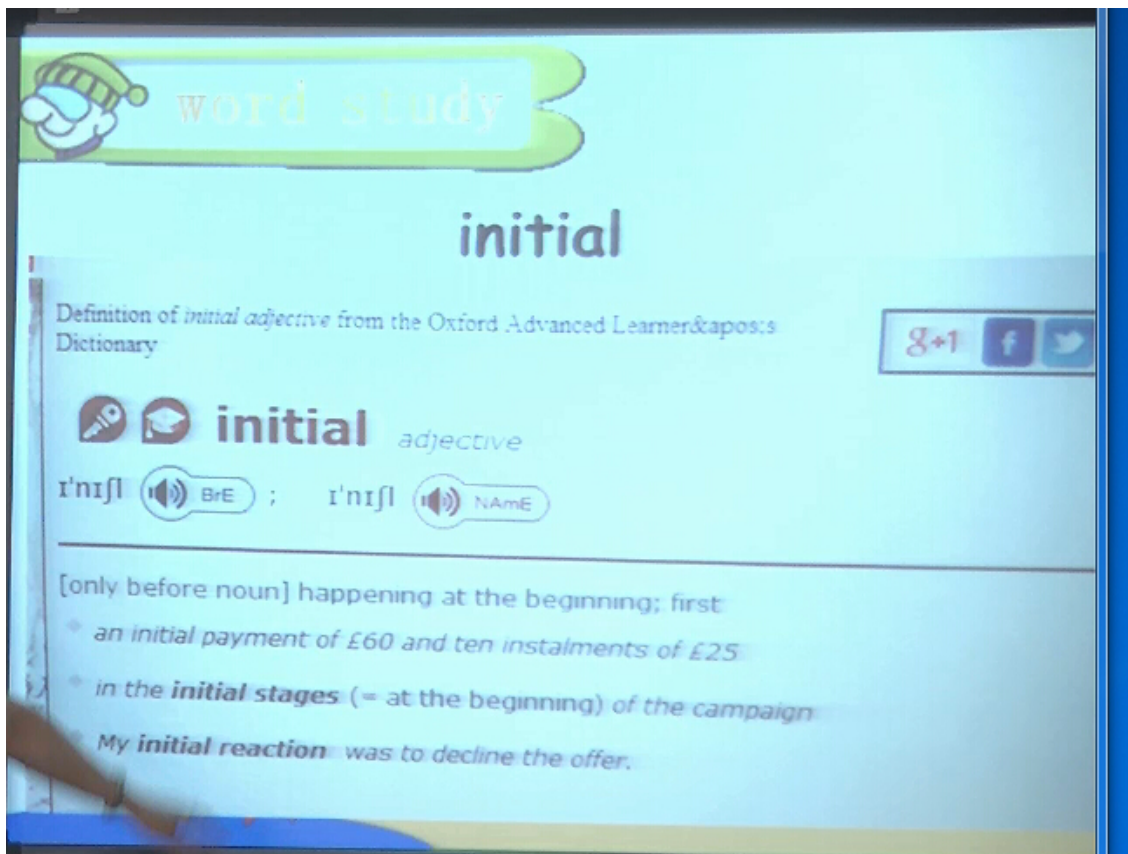
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<sup>40</sup> On 30 April 2014, a knife attack and bombing occurred in the Chinese city of Urumqi, Xinjiang. Attackers in China’s restive Xinjiang region crashed two cars into shoppers at a market, killing 31 people. And more than 90 people were injured. The Ministry of Public Security called it a “violating terrorist incident”. Online-text from BBC, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-27502652>:

In addition, Ms. Hao's mediation brought a large number of popular topics into her instruction, such as popular South Korea TV-series and Hollywood fictional films. In particular, she introduced these films or some popular topics, for instance, on the possibility of cloning fierce and extinct wild animals. One can see that traditional language pedagogy concerning intensive reading and rote learning in a foreign language class seems to have been abandoned in her instructional didactics.

What is more, in Ms. Hao's class on '*the Return of the Dinosaurs*', it can be seen that the students were asked to perform a role-play on "clones vs natural twins" in order to show their own understanding of a popular scientific topic on clone technology. The students designed a TV show about a scientific dispute on clones and natural twins. As I see it, they were 'enthusiastic' participators in different classroom activities.

Generally speaking, what Ms. Hao assumed about her teaching methods in her interview can be seen in her professional practice. Her mediation not only focuses on prescribed knowledge in textbooks, but also tries to attract the students' interest and to cultivate their intercultural communicative competence on the basis of an individual understanding of Western culture. In particular, '*Jurassic Park*' as a famous American science fiction film shows American culture and is also able to reflect Western social context. It also provides an opportunity for them to see the relationships between their own and other cultures, can help them acquire interest and curiosity about 'otherness' and their own understanding of other cultural perspectives.



Picture 3 The word “initial” is shown in Ms. Hao’s power point

In order to prepare for the scientific dispute about clone technology, the students collected various data from websites and newspapers to support their views. In particular, there are a pair of twins in class who showed some interesting common ground in their real lives concerning natural twins. It shows that the students as subjects are able to bring their individual thinking and self-reflection into language teaching and have strong intercultural competence in constructing their cultural understanding and individual identity.

The students are able to engage in classroom activities and interact with other students and the teacher in an emancipated instructional situation. They have become responsible for their own learning and thus, for the teaching-learning process, on the basis of sense-making. As a result, I can assume that this kind of teacher-student interaction attains the third level of M. Meyer’s interactional stages. In that it is able to ensure the

students' self-regulated learning and individual development regarding intergenerational communication.

Although Ms. Hao's mediation is able to help the students bring their own biographies and educational experience into the teacher's teaching, there are, however some challenges she has not yet successfully dealt with. She has to further develop her professional competence to deal with the gaps between the learning objectives of the New Curriculum Reform and each student's individual developmental requirements. What is more, even though the students became much more engaged in learning and could develop their language competence in these activities, they did not seem to get concrete and direct guidance from Ms. Hao. From my point of view, she did not give the students concrete instructional support and clear explanations about the textbook, so that effective instruction concerning grammar knowledge was lacking. Without the teacher's professional transfer of knowledge and skills, it is difficult for the students to gain the correct grammar knowledge prescribed in the curriculum requirements. What is more, the students' effective sense-making is limited within the interaction. For this reason, Ms. Hao's mediation has to focus on how to offer the students some effective guidance and support concerning their self-development and self-regulation.

#### **6.6.5 Developmental task of acknowledgement- “The students are free to choose topics, they are able to finish different class activities by themselves.”**

Throughout the interview, Ms. Hao appears willing to accept the ‘otherness’ of her students and her students are expected to acquire English literacy and to develop individual intercultural competence by themselves.

She introduces her teaching method concerning vocabulary learning in comparison with the traditional language approach, saying:



Extract 53: Teacher interview with Ms. Hao 08 June 2014 Line 21-25

Ms. Hao: “传统的词汇教学对于学生很无聊，因此我要求学生从课文里面找到一些关键词，他们就会在字典里面自己去找 [...] 然后，我们在课堂上学习这些单词。”

Ms. Hao: “Traditional vocabulary learning is boring for the students, so I ask them to find some key or core words from the text and they look them up in the dictionary by themselves. [...] Then, we learn these words in class.”

Ms. Hao changed the traditional way of vocabulary learning. The students are able to choose and find different words from the text and look them up by themselves. Students of different language backgrounds and capabilities have different learning objectives and expectations. Instead of designing a general learning standard for all the students, Ms. Hao assigns different learning tasks to different students. In class, it can be seen that the students marked different words and wrote down different meanings in their textbooks. She is able to provide suitable support associated with the students' individual developmental demands. Perhaps I can assume that her professional competence has begun to assimilate the significance of her students' individuality and she is prepared to accept this. In class, Ms. Hao listed and explained all the related vocabulary that her students had marked and mentioned, in order to meet their requirements. What is more, however, is that her actual professional behavior reflects her professional beliefs in acknowledging the students' individuality.

For example, when I asked Ms. Hao to talk about her usual teaching methods she also emphasized her professional beliefs in her students' subjective roles. And she mentioned:

Extract 54: Teacher Interview with Ms. Hao 08 June, 2014 Line 36-39

Ms. Hao: “在我们班上，我们有一个常规的活动，就是个人演讲。学生可以自由选择话题，包括社会话题，热点话题，以及一些相关的背景内容。”

Ms. Hao: “In our class, we have a regular activity-generating personal presentation. The students are free to choose topics, including social issues, current topics, or some background content related to the lesson, and so on.

At the beginning of her lesson, the students have to make an oral presentation. They can choose different topics and contents based on their interests. In particular, some students add some humorous content to their presentation in order to amuse the other students and the teacher. Regarding my observations, Ms. Hao was happy with all kinds of presentations and encouraged her students’ individual creation as well. It is a free platform on which the students are willing to show their creativity and individuality in English and they are also able to develop their intercultural competence. In particular, Ms. Yellow is willing to accept students’ different cultural views.

### 6.6.6 Developmental task of institution-“I hope to attend more professional training.”

I come to the concluding question: what kinds of challenges and problems does Ms. Hao encounters in the category of collegial collaboration? In the following text, I asked what she understands by this. She answered this question as follows:

Extract 55: Teacher Interview with Ms. Hao 08 June, 2014 Line 200-204

Ms. Hao: “目前，集体的备课，只是关注一个单元，或者一段时间的教学计划，比较表面，需要提高和发展。由于我们的日常教学任务很重、时间很紧，（所以）缺乏有效的、深入的交流是我们教师合作中最大的问题。”

Ms. Hao: “At present, collective instructional preparation only focuses on designing an instructional plan for one unit or a periodic arrangement, and this is relatively superficial and needs to improve and develop. For me, **because of the heavy daily load of instructional tasks and a tight schedule** produce a lack of effective, in-depth communication, which poses the greatest problem to collaboration.”

She expressed that present communication among colleagues just focuses on how to draw up instructional plans for a unit or a periodic teaching arrangement instead of tackling the concrete instructional problems of actual language instruction. She indicated that teacher collegial collaboration at present was not efficient and needed to be urgently improved and developed in the future. It is obvious that she is not satisfied with the present situation in her teaching community. Collegial communication at school seems unable to assist her professional practice. What is more, she also expressed her strong wish to attend more professional training.

As she clearly mentioned in this interview

Extract 56: Teacher Interview with Ms. Hao 8 June, 2014 Line 195-199

Ms. Hao: “我希望可以多参加一些专业培训，像工作坊、研讨会、专业化的课程等等。[...]但是我认为，我还没有把具体的教学实践和教育理论结合起来，所以我希望为自己的教学实践找到更多的教学理论做支持。”

Ms. Hao: “I hope to attend more professional training, such as workshops and seminar sessions, professional courses. [...] And I think, I’m not making a close relation between concrete instructional experience and educational theories, and I wish I could find more educational theories to provide theoretical support to my professional practice.”

She indicated that she would like to take part in more professional training in order to get more chances and opportunities to communicate with other colleagues and professional mentors. She had realized that the new curriculum meant higher professional standards of professionalism and that she needed to continuously enhance her professional competence to meet the new requirements of the new curriculum. In her interview, she expects to get more opportunities and professional resources to increase her individual professional competence, including attending different training workshops and seminar sessions on the new curriculum offered by the education bureau or universities. From her point of view, these opportunities and resources are very limited. In addition, she thinks that learning more educational theories is very crucial to her professional development. Last but not least, her professional development requires getting

other kinds of effective collegial collaboration and professional training beyond her own school.

### **6.6.7 Interpretation of Ms. Hao's professional development**

Now I shall try to describe Ms. Hao's professional competence with regard to her working with the four categories of the professional developmental task in the following Table. (See Table 9)

As Ms. Yellow assumed: there were two significant turning points that could mark her professional changes and transformations. She is the only one of my case who able to clearly identify her professional transformation in her professional biography. In particular, Ms. Yellow's creativity and internal motivation help her construct individual didactics so that she is able to place students at the center of the new curriculum and effectively shift to student-centered didactics. One can see that her mediation largely emphasizes the students' individual characteristics and their self-regulated didactic competence. However, she also encountered some challenges, such as how to deal with conflicts between the new curriculum and indigenous philosophical, educational traditions, how to translate the new curriculum into effective educational practice.

<p><b>Competence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• self-transformation and self-development,</li> <li>• creativity,</li> <li>• effective utilizing previous professional experience,</li> <li>• shift to student-centered didactics;</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mediation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• combining different social events, current topics and social issues with teaching,</li> <li>• class presentation,</li> <li>• vocabulary learning through social issues, current events and newspapers,</li> <li>• role-playing in class,</li> <li>• insisting on using English newspapers;</li> </ul>
<p><b>Acknowledgment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• individually selection to different words,</li> <li>• making class presentation,</li> <li>• encouraging various answers from students,</li> <li>• being constrained by the educational setting in China, “<i>gaokao</i>”,</li> <li>• being influenced by exam-oriented teaching and mark-obsessive instruction;</li> </ul>	<p><b>Institution:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• superficial collegial collaboration at school,</li> <li>• ineffective collaboration with peers, practical communication,</li> <li>• a strong need for professional training and further collegial collaboration,</li> <li>• the lack of sufficient educational theoretical support;</li> </ul>

**Table 9 Ms. Hao’s individual didactics from the categories of developmental tasks**

## **6.7 A comparative investigation into the Chinese teachers in Germany and the English teachers in China**

I have presented three case studies of Chinese teachers of Chinese as a foreign language and two case studies of Chinese teachers of English as a foreign language. Chinese language teachers in Germany are confronted with an instructional situation very different from the Chinese educational context in their previous professional biographies. New educational schemata have brought new challenges and problems into their language teaching. Working with different challenges, Chinese language teachers are required to improve their own professional competence to deal with various tasks of professional

development. I am able to describe their professional development concerning their competence to cope with developmental tasks in the intercultural setting. I have chosen a comparative group: two English language teachers in China in order to investigate the transformation of their professional beliefs and the formation of their individual didactics. They have encountered different challenges and problems in their instruction associated with Chinese educational schemata. In this section, I want to make a comparative study of the professional development of Chinese language teachers in Germany and English language teachers in China concerning their professional competence to deal with their developmental tasks. In summary, I could assume that the five cases in my study are relevant to teaching Chinese as a foreign language in Germany, Europe and worldwide.

Currently, China is undertaking the unprecedented nation-wide new curriculum reform for school education, which shifts dramatically from the traditional Chinese educational values and practice, and therefore creates new opportunities and tremendous challenges for teachers. This fundamental change means some dramatic shifts for Chinese teachers in Germany and for English language teachers in China as well, such as from primarily lecturing in the classroom to facilitating students' subjective learning; from tradition-dominated translating methods to interactive communicative teaching methods; from transmitting knowledge to helping to develop students' multiple abilities; from focusing on educational results to paying greater attention to the educational process (Guo, 2012, p.87- 96).

One glance at the two English teachers' professional practice and it can be seen that Ms. Yellow and Ms. Hao have tried to shift from traditional Chinese language approaches into student-centered teaching in such a way that they have been able to cultivate the students' engagement in communicative activities. Although, they both commented that students should be placed at the center of new curriculum. Their instructional behavior shows that their professional perceptions are greatly influenced by traditional Chinese language pedagogy. For example, Ms. Yellow's professional beliefs emphasize the significance of language knowledge but ignore the students' responses and reactions to her mediation. In particular, she expects the students to follow her instruction and learn what she teaches. Traditional ways of teaching and learning are still dom-

inate her real instructional practice in Chinese, even though she assumes that she has attempted to conduct student-centered instruction.

Ms. Hao had worked for many years in the private English language training school that was helping her to transform her professional attitudes and beliefs. In particular, she has attained a better understanding of student-centered teaching through her own self-reflection. My classroom observations and teacher interviews show that her mediation can better meet the students' individual requirements and create a free situation for their self-construction of the English language. On this point, Ms. Hao's professional competence in terms of students' individual development is stronger than Ms. Yellow's.

Nevertheless, there are similar challenges in their professional development. Firstly, it can be found that they have been confronted with the tremendous pressure of the current educational assessment system. Students are mostly expected to acquire good marks in the *gaokao*; thus teachers' instruction is simultaneously influenced by examination-oriented education. Even though the two English language teachers were willing to enhance their individual professional competence and improve their students' self-autonomy, they were under great pressure and a huge workload. Simultaneously, confronted with the requirements of the new curriculum, the teachers need many more opportunities for professional training and educational theoretical support. However, insufficient professional training opportunities and superficial collegial collaboration largely constrain their professional development.

Through my comparative study of the Chinese language teachers and the English language teachers, it can be seen that there are also some similarities in their professional developmental stages and their working with developmental tasks. Whether they are Chinese language teachers or English language teachers, their professional beliefs and attitudes have all experienced different transformations and different self-reflection in their educational contexts. Even though English language teaching in China and Chinese language teaching in Germany is foreign language teaching, they work within different intercultural settings in association with different educational contexts. Because of this, the two groups of Chinese teachers in Germany and of English teachers in China

have encountered different professional developmental requirements and have therefore had to deal with different professional tasks. However, there are some similar developmental tasks in their professional development, such as how to deal with the conflict between traditional Chinese language approaches and intercultural communicative didactics; the tensions of teacher-centered and student-centered classroom atmosphere; how to effectively transfer language knowledge and communicative skills. I will further interpret the developmental tasks of my Chinese language teachers in Chapter 7. I now demonstrate the major findings of my comparative study of their professional competence.

*Competence:* The Chinese language teachers in my study did not mention their professional competence and knowledge, i.e. the Chinese language. It seems that, being able to speak Chinese as their mother tongue, they do not think their language competence is a problem for them. However, most the Chinese teachers in Germany including the teachers of my three studies are not professional teachers for foreigners in China nor did they study for a degree in teaching Chinese as a foreign language in Germany. Because of this, the Chinese language teachers have to develop their own language competence and learn much more subject knowledge to meet the new professional requirements in their German schools, including Chinese linguistic and cultural knowledge, intercultural language knowledge and the didactics of subject matter.

In addition, Chinese language teachers in my study lack German language proficiency and this also poses great challenges for their professional practice. They always have a lot of difficulty communicating with their students, colleagues and the school administration. These problems largely restrict their professional development. Thirdly, the new educational context requires teachers' professional competence to adapt to the German students' individual developmental requirements and their learning habits.

The study mapped the instructional processes and behavior of different Chinese language teachers, who can identify their professional transition related to professional development. Their professional competence is closely related to the transition of professional beliefs and attitudes.



The two English teachers in China have encountered a set of challenges arising from the new curriculum reform. Their professional competence has had to cultivate the students' active engagement and respect for their students' individual construction. In particular, the two English language teachers have been asked to shift from traditional teacher-centered to student-centered didactics to meet the new educational requirements of the new curriculum reform.

*Mediation:* My research findings show that elements of traditional Chinese language pedagogy are often used by both Chinese and the English language teachers in my case studies, such as *intensive repetition of words*, *reading in chorus* and other traditional language methods. I could show that the conceptions of teaching and learning held by the Chinese teachers have been greatly influenced by their prior individual learning and working experience. However, some Chinese teachers in my study have begun to accept Western language educational pedagogy and applied innovative approaches to motivate German students to learn Chinese language.

What is more, the Chinese language teachers in my study have attached great importance to combining Chinese culture with language teaching and they have cultivated the students' individual intercultural competence, but are experiencing different challenges as to how to deal with the tensions of traditional Chinese didactics and intercultural communicative didactics.

Concerning the group of English language teachers in my study, one can see that their instructional methods remain focused on drilling, grammar explanations and syntax, grammar translation, a large number of class exercises and the accurate use of the language. It is interesting to find that the Chinese students are used to learning with teacher-oriented approaches and they expect to get much more accurate language knowledge from the teachers' mediation in the limited time available.

*Acknowledgement:* The German cultural context has a long tradition oriented towards the development of self-reflexivity in students. Individual freedom is regarded as the cornerstones of '*Bildung*-oriented' didactics. Even though, the Chinese language teachers assumed that they could accept the students' 'otherness' and respect their individual expectations in class, teacher-authority has thus dominated their professional

attitudes and beliefs. In particular, the Chinese language teachers prefer to set strict rules to secure their authority and avoid spending a large amount of time on dealing with unexpected problems. It is widely accepted by them that strict discipline in class is able to ensure effective instruction. They showed in their interviews that a teaching situation with mutually recognized discipline is a precondition for effective instruction.

Despite this, it seems that the two English teachers in China did not care much about classroom management and students' misbehavior in class. As I have noted above, traditional Confucian philosophy emphasizes the absolute authority of the teacher with students having to comply with the classroom principles. In addition, the students should maintain a high level of receptiveness, wholeheartedly embracing the knowledge from their teachers and books (Hu, G.W., 2002, p. 100). Influenced by traditional Confucian philosophy, Chinese cultural values maintain a hierarchical relation between students and teachers and the students are used to learning with harmonious interaction. In order to ensure a harmonious instructional situation, they are expected to respect and cooperate with their teachers instead of challenging their teachers' mediation in class. For this reason, the English language teachers did not encounter a large number of challenges concerning discipline and classroom management.

*Institution:* In Germany, Chinese language teaching is a new language subject at school that has brought new challenges for Chinese teachers' working in the institution. My case studies show that effective collegial collaboration is at present limited among Chinese colleagues at school. Additionally, they show a strong need to communicate with other teachers teaching different subjects at school or even with those outside the school community. Some Chinese teachers are not satisfied with current collegial collaboration in school, wish to have more opportunities of access to professional teachers' training and obtain professional support from experts in teaching Chinese. For the two English language teachers in China, insufficient professional training and inefficient collegial collaboration are also the two significant challenges in their professional development. In this respect, their situation is similar to that of the Chinese language teachers, but their professional development has to deal with new questions concerning the tensions arising between the new curriculum reform and traditional exam-oriented language didactics.

## 6.8 Chapter summary

Generally speaking, in this chapter, my case studies of different teachers make a cross-analysis of the self-transformation of professional beliefs and actual professional behavior by describing their professional biographies and their management of various challenges. My case studies indicate that the Hamburg Chinese teachers have experienced self-transformation and adaptive transition associated with the new educational context. There are different kinds of intercultural tensions and conflicts that are connected with the intercultural dimension of the Chinese and German educational contexts. Due to different individual biographies and the professional competence of the Chinese language teachers, they have had to perceive and interpret their individual professional developmental tasks on the basis of their individual needs and societal demands. This is why the teachers of both groups have experienced a different developmental process in dealing with their professional developmental tasks. This can thus be used to describe their professional individual didactics.

Because of the very limited scope of the case studies, my intercultural study is not intended to generalize on all the professional developmental tasks, professional experience and the individual didactics of Chinese and English teachers. However, my comparative study can offer a new perspective on how to explore their professional experience and the construction of their individual didactics with regard to the different cultural contexts.



# Chapter 7: Comparative research of Chinese and German classrooms

## 7.1 Introduction

In Chapter 6, my study indicates that Chinese language teachers face different challenges and problems in line with the intercultural contrast between the Chinese and the German educational schemata. Through presenting the interpretation of a series of data from an ethnographic approach using teachers' interviews and classroom observations, I explored the relation of professional biographies to the beliefs of Chinese language teachers in Hamburg and English language teachers in Wuhan.

In this section I shall give a final summary of my Ph.D. thesis. (1) I start with a comparative analysis of the challenges and developmental barriers facing my foreign language teachers in Germany and China, focusing on the intercultural influence on their professional beliefs and practice. I therefore now make a summary on their developmental tasks in their professional practice, focusing on the intercultural dimension of foreign language teaching and offer cross-case comparisons and interpretations concerning the similarities and differences between the different teachers' individual professional identities. (2) Within the framework of *Bildungsgang* research (learner development and educational experience), I shall then make a further study of teachers' professionalization regarding their biographies and their work with developmental tasks. This means that my intercultural study is a new attempt to describe Chinese teachers' professionalization, and this can be used to shed light on other related theoretical and empirical research. (3) I also offer suggestions for improving teachers' professionalization that allow light to be shed on designing new teacher training programs.

## **7.2 A brief summary of the developmental barriers and tasks of Chinese language teachers in the intercultural setting**

Chinese teachers stick to their professional beliefs and perceptions which leads to a number of developmental barriers producing constraints in the intercultural context. Regarding the different case studies presented in Chapter 6, I find the following four themes concerning developmental barriers and tasks. The Chinese language teachers in Germany have to realize that there is a conflict of (1) *Competence*: teacher-centered didactics versus student-centered didactics, (2) *Mediation*: traditional Chinese teaching strategies versus intercultural communicative didactics, (3) *Acknowledgment*: strict classroom discipline versus acknowledgement of the ‘otherness’ of the students and (4) *Institution*: insufficient professional training and collegial cooperation within the institution. The four developmental tasks relate to the didactic problems explained in the following four sub-sections.

### **7.2.1 Teacher-centered didactics versus student-centered didactics**

Contrasting the German didactical focus on individual self-construction and self-identity development, the professional beliefs of Chinese teachers are under the influence of the traditional Confucian educational framework in that they attempt to construct a hierarchical relationship between teachers and students as explained above. A great number of Chinese teachers attach great value to teacher-centered didactics on the one hand, and to students’ hard work to achieve substantial language knowledge on the other.

Teacher-dominated didactics is embedded in Chinese teachers’ professional beliefs, implicitly influencing their practical actions and behavior in class. The Chinese language teachers in my study express their frustration and self-critique when the students fail to learn and to follow their instructional plans. Their professional beliefs at-

tach much more value to a teaching content that expects students to gain sufficient knowledge from its mediation. In addition, teaching methods are largely expository and the teaching process is still teacher-dominated (cf. Biggs, 1996). For instance, Ms. Wee said:

“I think teacher-centered didactics is very useful and effective. In contrast, I feel very upset if they [the students, P.R.] do not learn something in my class” (see the interview with Ms. Wee, 24 August, 2012).

Of course, the Chinese teachers have realized that German students are much more active, creative and self-regulated than Chinese students, but their actual teaching behavior still often reflects Chinese traditional teacher-centered didactics and norms underlining the teacher’s strong professional responsibility to students’ learning. In particular, their professional beliefs expect the students to follow their instruction. For example, Ms. Ta said:

“However, if the teacher only teaches to conform to the students’ interest, afterwards they will continue to play games, talk with each other and not learn anything in class” (see the interview with Ms. Ta, 15 March, 2013)

In her interview, Ms. Ta clearly assumed that the teachers’ instruction could not completely comply with their students’ demands and wishes.

I can find similar methods in Ms. Baum’s class. Regarding my protocol, she persisted in teaching by using immersion-style teaching methods. She attempted to instruct the students by using Chinese only. However, my observation and the students’ interviews show that the majority of the students could not understand everything she said. Her professional beliefs and practice still reflect Chinese traditional teacher-centered didactics, but greatly ignore the students’ reaction and their language competence. What is more, her teaching behavior also reflects traditional Chinese educational schemata, which emphasize traditional language pedagogy, for instance: grammar-translation, literacy accuracy, intensive exercises etc.

My classroom observations and interviews with the Chinese language teachers show that they all expressed a strong desire to have a student-centered classroom, or they showed respect for students' individual requirements and development, but their actual teaching behavior still often reflected teacher-centered didactics. Their mediation highlights vocabulary, grammar and syntax by means of repetition and intensive reading in class. Even though the teachers in my study have recognized the tensions existing between the intercultural situation of the Chinese and German educational frameworks, traditional teacher-centered didactics dominates their professional beliefs and perceptions in that they require the students' compliance to their instruction.

However, this does not mean that teacher-centered didactics is a catastrophe for students' learning. In particular, traditional Chinese language pedagogy is effective in helping students to master a large amount of language knowledge in limited instructional time. Students are asked to memorize, repeat and understand teachers' instruction in a process of accumulating knowledge by themselves. To develop students' communicative competence, learners should be provided with a large number of opportunities to use the target language for communication. Chinese as a new, 'strange' foreign language, in comparison with the established Western languages, implies that German students have to make correspondingly greater effort to learn it.

### **7.2.2 Traditional Chinese language approaches versus intercultural communicative didactics**

As I have shown above, Chinese teachers' education in China is dominated by the traditional approach of language pedagogy, grounded in the Confucian educational principles. It has often been argued that Chinese teachers' perception relies heavily on repetitive rote-learning and memorization (cf. Ballard and Clanchy, 1991, p. 67, p.70) and this is also often the case with the Chinese teachers at the two German schools in my case studies.



I observed in the classes of Ms. Wee, Ms. Baum and Ms. Ta that they were using flashcards for Chinese-character teaching and vocabulary learning and asked the students to read and do oral repetition. In my interview with Ms. Ta, she mentions that she likes using the approach of flashcards in order to ask the students to recognize more Chinese characters and vocabulary. Using flashcards is considered an effective method to learn Chinese pronunciation, characters and meanings.

*The intensive repetition of words* is another common characteristic of the Chinese language teaching method. My classroom observations show that the teachers in my study regularly ask the students to repeat words with the correct pronunciation. Simultaneously, for English teaching in China, it can be seen that repetitive reading (Dahlin and Watkins, 2000, p. 70) is also widely applied by the two English teachers, Ms. Yellow and Ms. Hao. And they always ask the students to read and to repeat new words and new sentence patterns in order to get them to memorize the English words.

Traditional Chinese pedagogy has been criticized for its emphasis on drilling, rote-learning and intensive repetition to memorize a large amount of knowledge at the expense of communicative oral work. And my classroom observation has shown that transferring knowledge is principally through a repetitive process, namely the teacher's repetitive reading and the students' repetitive exercising. Chinese language teaching has remained dominated by textbook pedagogy at the expense of listening and speaking and has not adjusted to the self-formation required by German traditional didactics.

Even though my teachers stick to the traditional Chinese approaches in the classroom, they have realized that the introduction of a cultural content into language pedagogy is essential for the students' foreign language learning and intercultural competence development. They attach great value to the mediation of Chinese culture, for example, by offering an introduction to Chinese festivals, specific food, social habits and the related social rituals.

Ms. Baum and Ms. Wee always emphasize 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. In order to help students to learn the traditional Chinese literature and cultural knowledge, Ms. Ta arranged her instruction in such a way that the students had to enact Chinese classical and modern drama.

Within the German educational framework, foreign language teaching is considered to be of help for the students to become cultural '*mediators*' and to develop their own intercultural attitudes with a high level of intercultural competence. Although the Chinese teachers have a meta-awareness concerning the intercultural instructional language pedagogy, their teaching methods remain within the traditional framework of Chinese language pedagogy. Indeed, there are recent studies showing the following result: although Chinese teachers have a meta-awareness concerning intercultural instructional language pedagogy "the realization of the idea remains elusive" (Wong, 2010, p. v). Thus, one can identify the fundamental tensions which confront the Chinese teachers in their transitional process of dealing with the tensions of traditional Chinese didactics and intercultural communicative didactics. They assume that their teaching is responsible for the students' learning and individual development concerning intercultural competence. The teachers select, interpret and transmit the concrete teaching content to the students; and the students are asked to follow the teachers' teaching in order to achieve the learning objectives.

However, once we look at the classes of my English teachers in Wuhan, it seems that they are not keen on using flashcards in class. Being influenced by traditional language pedagogy, Chinese English language teachers attach much value to word repetition, grammar, syntax, meaning translation, intensive exercises and students' accuracy. Under the influence of the new curriculum revolution, however, Ms. Yellow and Ms. Hao have shifted traditional Chinese approaches into Western pedagogical approaches.

### **7.2.3 Chinese strict classroom discipline versus German students' learning habits and characteristics**

As explained above, Confucian philosophy emphasizes the absolute authority of the teacher; while the students have to comply with classroom discipline. That is why the Chinese teachers in my study felt frustrated by the unexpectedly large amount of disruptive behavior, “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. Confronted with a loud and noisy instructional situation, the Chinese language teachers always establish strict class discipline and rules to maintain a quiet instructional situation. This also holds for Ms. Wee, Ms. Baum and Ms. Ta.

Even though, Ms. Wee expressed her professional opinion on the significant role of strict classroom discipline, she did not ask the students to conform to a strict disciplinary regime in the same way that Chinese students do. For example, the students were allowed to freely express their opinions and to ask irrelevant questions in class. In particular, the students could go out and go to the toilet during the class without her permission.

What is more, Ms. Baum frequently had to stop teaching and remind her students to obey to class rules, but once she reminded them to conform to instructional rules and discipline or face some possible punishment as a warning, the class quickly became much more disciplined. She said in her interview that, “if the class is without strict instructional rules and discipline, students of this age will not readily follow my instruction (Ms. Baum, 24 October, 2012).”

Ms. Ta also referred to the significance of complying to strict teaching principles in class. In her interview, she mentioned that:

“If the instructional plan is interrupted by students’ undisciplined behavior, subsequently the wasted time has to be compensated for. Even I must postpone my break (Teacher interview with Ms. Ta, 18 April, 2013).”

Ms. Wee and Ms. Baum also talked about ways of dealing with extremely undisciplined situations. In particular, they assumed that some 'special' un-disciplined students should be temporarily isolated from other students in class because they always like attracting other students' attention.

The Hamburg Chinese teachers in my case studies expressed their frustration and demonstrated self-criticism when they had to admit that they could not produce a well-organized instructional situation. Regarding their professional attitudes to class management, they all clearly assumed that a teaching situation with mutually recognized discipline is a precondition for effective instruction.

That is why English classrooms in China are completely different from Chinese classrooms in Germany. It can be found that Chinese students are more disciplined, that they also have a strong sense of Confucian morality and an inclination to conform to classroom discipline. The two classes in my study were in a very organized situation that allowed ensuring an effective, well-prepared and coherent instruction. As a result, the two English teachers, Ms. Yellow and Ms. Hao, could afford to focus on the teaching content, on instructional methods and on the students' responses instead of spending precious instructional time maintaining a disciplined classroom.

They did not spend much time on reminding the students to obey and to stick to the rules in class. As I have explained above, the significant characteristic of traditional Chinese education is its maintaining a hierarchical instructional situation and through that a harmonious relationship between teacher and students.

From my point of view, instead of sticking to the Chinese stereotyped image of the good, obedient, silent student, the Chinese language teachers in my study should take German students' learning habits and characteristics into consideration and accept each student's individuality. In an organized class with recognized discipline, Chinese language teachers have to cultivate the students' individual development and ensure their creativity in language learning. A professional teacher is required to deal with the tensions of strict discipline on the one hand and the students' individuality on the other.

## 7.2.4 Acknowledgement of the ‘otherness’ of the students

As I have said above, 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 the students’ uncertain situation and uncertain developmental requirements. In the Chinese classroom in Germany, Chinese language teachers therefore have to change their traditional professional stereotypes concerning the students’ passive roles and to pay much more attention to the students’ subjective development.

Ms. Wee has studied at a German university and taken part in professional teacher training. Her professional attitudes thus have experienced a great number of changes associated with the German educational situation. On the one hand, her mediation highlights the significance of the students’ individual interest and their biographical experience by accepting the students’ individual developmental requirements and, on the other, she is expected to have a good, organized instructional situation with strict discipline and rules for the students. It can thus be seen that there was a conflict between ‘individuality’ and ‘strict discipline’ regarding her professional development.

However, Ms. Baum’s mediation also encountered a challenge to the conduct of her teaching plan in a well-organized classroom with strict discipline. As my observation shows, a high frequency of the students’ questions in class interrupted her instructional plan. Perhaps I can assume that her level of professional competence does not yet allow her to deal with the conflict between ‘emancipation’ and ‘hierarchy’ at present.

The Chinese teachers in my study encourage students to participate in discussion and express their individual views and understanding. Their instructional plans expect their students to cultivate their individuality and creativity on the basis of self-regulated learning. For example, my findings show that the German students like making their own sentences with new words and structures, instead of repeating the same sentences from textbooks. The students are willing to express their individual views through making new sentences, even though, due to their limited language competence, they are not

able to produce completely correct sentences. The teachers always like to accept their answers.

Instead of sticking to the Chinese stereotyped image of the good, obedient, silent student, my Chinese teachers in Hamburg have to accept each student's individuality in order to affect their adaptation to the new German educational context. They have to respond to each student's individual development as it differs from the original instructional purposes and expectations.

However, looking at the comparative group of the two English language teachers in Wuhan, it can be seen that their professional beliefs still reflect traditional Chinese teachers' perceptions of language accuracy and the students' mastery of a profound body of language knowledge. For example, Ms. Yellow expected the students to use the same words in the textbook and to produce correct sentences, although Ms. Hao had adapted traditional teacher-centered didactics to student-centered instruction by cultivating the students' individuality and accepting their different developmental requirements. In particular, she gave the students a lot of freedom to develop their interest in learning English and to develop their communicative competence, and one could see that the students were able to freely participate in discussions, presentations and group work in and after class. But, confronted with the present Chinese educational situation, the requirements of the new curriculum were felt to be idealistic in Ms. Yellow's and Ms. Hao's schools, which are deeply influenced by the prevailing exam-oriented education system and which still focus on students' learning achievements and knowledge acquisition. In summary, the prevailing exam-orientation brings heavy burdens and various challenges to the implementation of the new curriculum (see above Section 6.2.8).

### **7.2.5 Insufficient training and inefficient collegial collaboration**

Collecting data from the Chinese teachers' interviews, we can see that the Chinese teachers strongly emphasized the urgent need for professional training and collegial collaboration in order to develop their professional competence. I have shown that two

out of three Chinese language teachers in Germany had not studied at German universities and nor obtained teacher-training degrees in German tertiary institutions in order to teach Chinese as a foreign language (Hanban, 2008). Due to the lack of effective professional training and collegial communication, the Chinese language teachers in my study have been struggling to look for some appropriate instructional strategies to teach mixed-age students with differing language competences. As I have mentioned above, the three Chinese teachers have to be placed at different transitional stages with regard to their individual professional developmental tasks. However, they are willing to improve their professional competence through collegial collaboration and effective communication.

However, my case studies also show that, even though there have been regular teachers' meetings and collegial collaboration, my three Chinese language teachers in Hamburg feel that this communication is not effective to deal with the students' individual learning problems. In particular, because of limited collaboration within teachers' community, some teachers are not able to get valuable instructional experience from other Chinese colleagues and teachers of other subjects. Due to the different professional beliefs and perceptions existing between the Chinese teachers and their German colleagues on foreign language teaching, these differences may hinder mutual collegial collaboration in teachers' collaboration.

However, it is interesting that the headmaster of the private comprehensive school does not seem to have realized the problems concerning teachers' collaboration in his school. He claims "in our school, we have been constructing a good environment regarding mutual communication [...] (Interview with the headmaster, 07, November, 2012)". It shows that perhaps he has not yet realized its bad effects. It also implies that the headmaster and the Chinese teachers have different views on what collegial communication should be.

Generally speaking, there were few opportunities and only limited time for further communication with other colleagues teaching other subjects. The Chinese teachers thus view themselves as independent professionals who do not receive enough professional

support from other colleagues at school. Confronted with intercultural challenges and difficulties, they mainly rely on their personal experience.

Although the Chinese teachers are willing to participate in teacher training, conferences etc., they clearly state that these opportunities are hard to access due to their work arrangement and an intensive time consuming school curriculum. In addition, the teachers also mentioned that there were few workshops or seminars provided locally and the teachers showed less willingness to spend extra time traveling to other cities for training. In general, the Chinese language teachers are not satisfied with the professional training programs and projects offered to them. They feel that communication in their educational institutions is at present to be less efficient than they expect.

Analyzing the situation of English language teachers in China, it can be seen that Ms. Yellow regards giving demonstrative lessons to be a good approach for her professional development. However, the English language teachers in my study are not satisfied with the current quality of collegial collaboration at school. They would like to have more opportunities to take part in professional training and teacher education. Due to the Chinese educational schemata as described in Chapter 5, the heavy workload and the high expectations placed on students' learning achievement by society are huge challenges to their professional development. As they see it, these challenges restrain their professional collaboration.

In summary, my case study shows that insufficient professional training and the lack of effective collegial co-operation are the most urgent problems in their professionalization. Thus it has to be seen as a positive development when teachers complain that teachers' collaboration is not offered enough for further education. What is more, the Chinese teachers are convinced that they should try to further develop their interactional and co-operative competence to learn from each other and from teachers of other subjects.



## **7.2.6 Critical incidents mark the turning points in professional transformation and changes**

Foreign language teachers belong to a diverse group coming from multiple linguistic, cultural and educational backgrounds. In Germany, they have thus experienced a very different instructional situation and coped with a large number of intercultural challenges. In particular, their professional identities have been modified, adapted and transformed in a particular socio-cultural context in order to adjust to different educational requirements.

In my case studies of the three Chinese teachers in Hamburg, I show that they all experienced some comparable intercultural challenges and problems once they had begun to work in Germany. In the initial period of their work experience, there were some critical incidents or particular work experiences that led to critical thinking and self-reflection regarding their professional attitudes and self-concepts. This shows that they have made some adjustment and modification to as well as self-reflection on their teaching methods.

I start with the analysis of Ms. Wee's critical incidents in her professional biography. She had a serious conflict with two students which can be regarded as a critical incident in her own professional practice as defined by Tripp and others (see Section 3.4.1). Reflecting on the critical incidents in her own educational experience, her traditional professional attitudes and beliefs started to change and adapt to the German educational context.

Also, the critical incident in Ms. Baum's biography helped her to develop a new understanding of the arrangements of the German syllabus. After this critical incident, her professional attitudes started to concentrate on students' biographies and their learning experience.

There is also a critical incident in Ms. Ta's work experience. A class discussion with her German colleagues helped her to gain access to the German educational con-

text. The advice of other German colleagues made her start to reflect on her regular instructional tempo and teaching methods.

On the basis of the case studies, one can see that there are critical incidents in their professional work experience in Germany for all these teachers that mark turning points in their self-transformation, self-reflection, professional development and professional identity. These critical incidents include different aspects, such as *individual teaching practice, classroom practice, colleagues' cooperation, parents' suggestions, cultural differences* etc.

Looking at different case studies, these critical incidents relate to intercultural differences and tensions between the teachers' prior educational experience and the new educational context. Meanwhile, there are some critical incidents in their biographies that may have had a negative influence on their development. Even if, there are a large number of incidents in teachers' biographies, this does not mean that all these incidents automatically improve their professional competence and their professional development.

### **7.3 Suggestions and new perspectives for the future development of Chinese language teachers' professionalization**

Learning Chinese in Germany is a new subject in foreign language teaching and educational research. Chinese teachers as native speakers are a new group of teachers with different individual backgrounds, biographical experience, professional competence, and expectations, but confronted with external educational contexts, colleagues, school, society, etc. Due to the intercultural tensions of the German and the Chinese educational schemata as described above, they have to cope with a variety of different professional developmental problems and challenges. These professional developmental tasks cannot be avoided, but they need subjective answers regarding individual biographies. On the

basis of my interpretation of the case studies, it is possible to provide some suggestions for the future design of Chinese language teachers' pre-service and in-service training.

### **7.3.1 Developing the teachers' professional competence with respect to Chinese language**

As shown in the different case studies, the Chinese language teachers said little concerning their own professional knowledge of the Chinese language. Firstly, they should develop and improve their professional competence of Chinese language. Most of the Chinese teachers in Germany have been teachers in China and thus have confidence that they are competent to teach Chinese in an intercultural setting. However, even though they are native speakers, they have to develop their professional competence, to improve their linguistic knowledge, linguist skills and intercultural awareness as well. In general, the professional competence of Chinese teachers involves linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic competences and intercultural background knowledge of China and Germany, as well as other related knowledge. Chinese teachers should be proficient in intercultural instructional skills to transmit and mediate Chinese as a second language to students.

The data from my empirical research show that there are teachers of Chinese language who were not Chinese teachers when they worked in China. They lack professional training in intercultural language pedagogy. Thus, it is necessary to provide professional training concerning the didactics of Chinese as a foreign language, in order to help them to deal with intercultural differences and to implement intercultural language approaches.

Secondly, even though all the three Chinese teachers do not mention their own subject knowledge of Chinese, this does not mean that their competence is therefore very professional. It is a fact that speaking Chinese as their mother tongue does not mean that they are necessarily able to teach Chinese language to foreign students well. Chinese language teachers therefore need to develop their professional competence in

the subject matter, including professional linguistic and pragmatic knowledge etc. In addition, their German language capability is required to improve as well. A high level of German communicative competence is significant for Chinese language teaching in class that directly relates to the teachers' teaching and learners' learning within instructional interaction. This is important for teaching Chinese in elementary schools. Chinese language teachers with a strong foreign language competence are more able to communicate effectively with colleagues and students. What is more, Chinese teachers are required to clearly understand the objective of teaching and the local curriculum requirements.

### **7.3.2 Combining traditional Chinese language pedagogy with intercultural language pedagogy**

Traditional Chinese language pedagogy emphasizes the significance of repetition, memorization and intensive exercises. In particular, as I have showed, the teachers prefer to use classic teaching methods, such as flashcards, the intensive repetition of words, etc. to help students to learn Chinese pronunciation and to memorize a vast number of ideographical Chinese characters. In contrast, German students have been learning foreign languages including an intercultural approach that highlights the learners' intercultural competence as well as their linguistic competence through the introduction of a cultural content into language pedagogy. Chinese language teachers in Western contexts should cultivate learners' intercultural communicative competence by helping them to construct their own cultural attitudes and opinions about the foreign language.

Confronted with the tensions that arise between traditional Chinese language pedagogy and Western language pedagogy, it is not wise to completely abandon all the teaching methods or didactic models of one country in another country. Let me explain. Firstly, Chinese teachers should possess enough meta-awareness of Chinese culture in order to combine the different cultural content with language learning. Secondly, Chinese teachers should develop their intercultural awareness to connect Chinese cultural

knowledge with German cultural knowledge. Teachers have to be seen as culture mediators able to help students develop their intercultural communicative competence and cultural awareness. Thirdly, some effective learning strategies of traditional Chinese language pedagogy can be integrated into Western language pedagogies to provide giving more emphasis on effective language learning with cultural learning.

On the basis of my case studies, it can be seen that there are challenges and difficulties concerning the combination of the two kinds of language pedagogy. The findings of my study can therefore demonstrate that there are open questions for the future development of the teachers involved. We can ask what would happen if Chinese language teachers completely abandoned traditional Chinese didactics. Would German students like learning the Chinese language and culture in the German way? Would Chinese language teachers be in a position to integrate traditional Chinese language pedagogy into intercultural language pedagogy in class? It is hard to say, but much more empirical research needs to be carried out on this topic.

### **7.3.3 Students' educational biographies and their developmental tasks**

I have shown that teachers and learners both bring their individual biographies into instruction. If students are only asked to repeat and learn what the teacher teaches them, teacher-student interaction will be doomed to failure in the long run because it is a one-directional action (see the three levels of interaction of students and teachers, Section 4.1). As I have noted in Section 4.1, the first level of teacher-student interaction refers to students as objectives in the instructional process. My classroom observations and field notes show that this kind of teacher-student interaction is not helpful for the students' subjective engagement. Chinese language teachers should therefore take account of each student's individual biography and personal background. In this situation, teacher-student interaction is able to be transformed to a second, communitive level on the basis of shared experience, joint action, negotiation and growth of meaning. However, the third educational level allows intergenerational communication, negotiation of teaching objectives and learning objectives. This kind of interaction requires students to

subjectively bring their biographies into teachers' teaching to produce sense-making, in order to finally lead to conducting mutually intergenerational communication. The educational level of teacher-student interaction requires that learners' biographies, educational experience and their developmental tasks have to be brought into harmony.

My empirical study shows the significance of learners' biographies and their anticipation regarding sense-making in teacher-student interaction. Firstly, motivating students to learn is a teacher's chief priority for each teacher. Chinese teachers should know students' learning motivation and help them bring their biographies into language teaching. Individual interest and curiosity concerning Chinese culture are the basic inner motivations for students. Secondly, a teacher's mediation should be a continuation of a student's individual biography. Students are willing to bring their biographical experience into their teachers' mediation. Thirdly, a professional teacher is able to identify the learning objectives for his students and combine them with their mediation of their students' developmental tasks.

In summary, the *Bildungsgang* framework can provide a new perspective to analyze and study student-teacher interaction in foreign language teaching. The future professional development of Chinese language teachers should embrace students' educational biographies and their developmental tasks.

### **7.3.4 Further development of collegial collaboration and professional training**

The Hamburg Chinese language teachers of my case studies strongly emphasize the urgent need for professional training and collegial collaboration. But limited time for mutual communication on concrete individual problems, superficial collegial collaboration, few workshops, few professional training programs and insufficient teacher training largely restrain their professional development.

Firstly, in order to solve these problems, Chinese teachers' collaboration has to concern itself more with concrete instructional problems and challenges in association with instructional practice rather than simply focusing on Chinese language teaching and curriculum planning.

Secondly, the professionalization of Chinese language teachers urgently needs more opportunities for collegial collaboration with teachers of other school subjects outside school. At the same time, Chinese language teachers should improve their collaborative competence with teachers other than their Chinese peers. They would like to cultivate their professional competence in terms of collaboration with colleagues.

In general, my study shows that local professional training for in-service Chinese teachers is at present insufficient. Teachers look forward to getting more opportunities for more professional training programs and seminars. Although, there are some 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., these academic activities are hard for Chinese language teachers to access. Because of this, in order to meet their professional requirements, the opportunity for professional development should be increased. In particular, teachers usually have the feeling that they have been excluded from receiving regular professional primary and further teacher education. But they all show their interest in receiving more effective professional training, including educational theoretical training and their professional legitimacy has to be further developed in the future.

### **7.3.5 Chinese teachers as reflective practitioners**

The formation of individual didactics is an ongoing process, in which each teacher is able to practice reflective learning and determine their professional beliefs and attitudes in long-term professional practice themselves. In my case studies, I have used the framework of professional developmental task theory to describe their professional

competence. In this way I can also try to identify the individual didactics of each teacher in terms of the management of their developmental tasks. Future Chinese teacher education should cultivate professional competence concerning the practise of reflective learning.

Regarding the complexity of the sociocultural and institutional factors involved, Chinese teachers could develop a reflective perspective to analyze their professional practice and instructional behavior. To accelerate this process, the design of Chinese teacher education has to cultivate reflective competence, in order to evaluate educational experience in the new educational situation, for instance, by designing particular seminars and workshops about teachers' individual professional experience, preparing a portfolio for each teacher or asking Chinese teachers to generalize the framework of their own individual didactics on the basis of their educational experience, etc. They should develop their own professional roles as reflective practitioners who are able to find suitable solutions to deal with their professional developmental tasks for their future professional development. This means that dealing with developmental tasks can be used to construct developmental courses to foster Chinese language teachers' professional competence.

## **7.4 Discussion of teachers' professionalization in terms of *Bildungsgang***

As I have shown above, there are many professional requirements involved in the professionalization of foreign language teachers. Additionally, there is a large amount of research on teachers' professional behavior and practice. However, little attention has been paid to the transformation and individual development of Chinese language teachers' professional beliefs within the intercultural context. I have attempted to combine biographical approaches to depict and analyze how Chinese teachers work with their professional developmental tasks regarding their biographies and individual back-



grounds. Next my research makes a new exploration of Chinese language teachers' professionalization in terms of *Bildungsgang* research:

- Students with high didactical competence are able to develop their intercultural competence, attitudes, values and finally, the construction of cultural attitudes and beliefs regarding the Chinese language. However, their learning also depends on their professional behavior because students' didactic competence also allows them to reflect on their teachers' professional competence.
- A professional Chinese teacher should help students to subjectively bring their biographies and individual backgrounds into language teaching, create a communicative process of shared experience, joint action and then achieve the growth of meaning. Only in this situation is teacher-student interaction able to achieve sense-making within intergenerational communication in a way that can improve students' individual development and form their individuality.



## Chapter 8: Conclusion

It is time to present the results of my studies, to evaluate them and to sketch a broader outlook on the future development of German-Chinese intercultural didactics.

### 8.1 The results of my present study

Chinese language teachers in Europe, and particularly in Germany, are confronted with an instructional situation very different from what they have experienced in China. In my intercultural study, I have mainly studied the influence of the teachers' prior experience and personal professional perception of their professional practice in German classroom instruction. Through making case studies of five teachers, I have explored what kinds of challenges and problems Chinese language teachers are confronted with at present and whether their professional competence enables them to successfully deal with the different objective tasks involved in teacher-student interaction.

The study integrates a comparative study of the two English teachers' professional practice in the Chinese educational context. I was thus able to aim at studying the influence of different educational contexts on the development of teachers' professional competence and individual didactics.

I have thus collected a large number of empirical qualitative studies on the professional practice of five Chinese teachers', in order to describe their developmental situations and teacher-student interaction within the framework of *Bildungsgang* research. The results of my research outcomes and generalizations about teachers' professional development and their individual didactics are as follows:

- An analysis of my case studies reveals that the professional identity and attitudes of Chinese language teachers have been greatly influenced by the traditional Chinese educational schemata, which may produce a variety of intercultural tensions and con-

flicts in the German educational setting. In their professional experience in Germany, the teachers' professional beliefs have experienced a process of *self-transformation* and *self-adaptation* to the new educational requirements within the local pedagogical context. I have been able to show that their professional beliefs and attitudes are related to their own biographical experience and their own professional expectations.

- It is interesting to find that there have been *critical incidents* in their professional experience that are understood as turning points that initiate the changes and transformations in their professional development. For the Hamburg-based Chinese teachers of my study, these critical incidents have very impressively influenced their teachers' professional development, but it is not clear whether the teachers' reflective competence is effective enough to find and define critical incidents in their professional biographies, particularly at the initial stage of their work experience.
- My various case studies show that my Chinese teachers maintain their professional beliefs and perceptions which have led to a number of developmental barriers producing constraints where Chinese and Western educational schemata intersect. There are four major themes concerning their professional barriers and tasks, as I have shown in Chapter 7: They have to realize that there is a conflict between (1) teacher-centered didactics and student-centered didactics, (2) traditional Chinese teaching strategies and intercultural communicative didactics, (3) strict classroom discipline and acknowledgement of the 'otherness' of the students and (4) insufficient professional training and collegial cooperation within the institution.
- Confronted with the intercultural tensions and conflicts, the Chinese language teachers are required to deal successfully with professional developmental requirements and, by doing so, adapt to new educational contexts. They bring their own biographies and educational experience into the interaction in order to deal with these objective social requirements. Their management of the different professional requirements also demonstrates their individual characteristics.
- Within the framework of *Bildungsgang* research, it is possible to provide a new perspective on the Chinese teachers' *educational experience*, *developmental tasks* and *sense-making* within teacher-student interaction. My intercultural study shows that

the Chinese teachers bring with them their former biographical experience in China to work on individual developmental tasks. And the same holds for the students. Due to the differences of the students' and the teachers' prior biographical experience, teacher-student interaction demonstrates results that are also determined by the students' sense-making construction.

- In order to better study teacher-student interaction in Chinese language classes, I used M. Meyer's three levels of didactic interaction and cooperation to examine the Chinese teachers' professional competence in dealing with the students' individual formation. Traditional Chinese education ensures the teachers' authority and its subjective roles in the teacher-student interaction. *The first level* can be regarded as a surface description. Teaching Chinese to a German class requires that the Chinese teachers respect students' individual character and their educational experience. The first level of teacher-student interaction can attain a new *second communicative level* involving shared experience, joint action and negotiation between teachers and students. My Chinese language teachers try to create an instructional situation that enables their students to bring their own biographies and educational experience into language teaching. However, the communicative level is not able to conform to the requirements of *Bildung*-oriented didactics. Thus, a '*Bildung*-sensitive' level is the third level, which allows intergenerational communication and the mutual acceptance of 'otherness'. At this level, there is the dialectical contradiction of the teachers' guidance and the students' individual development allowing the progress of instruction. Consequently, the students will develop their own world views and self-concepts in a transformative process based on the teachers' transfer of knowledge, skills and attitudes. In brief, the findings of my case studies assume that it is difficult at present for Chinese language teachers to achieve the highest level (*Bildung level*) on the basis of intergenerational communication and transformation within the interaction.
- Chinese language teachers have to deal with developmental tasks in the overseas contexts which are different from the tasks they would have to cope with at home in China. If the Chinese teachers are not able to successfully deal with these professional developmental tasks, their professional practice will be confronted by more prob-

lems and even lead to failure. By using the framework of professional developmental tasks suggested by Uwe Hericks, my study has been able to describe the teachers' professional development concerning the four categories of developmental tasks: *competence, mediation, acknowledgment* and *institution*. I use this framework to explore and describe the Chinese teachers' professional transition and the development of their professional individual didactics.

- Last but not least, my study demonstrates that further professional advice should be provided for the Chinese language teachers' professional training to help them to become more effective and adaptive to the expectations of the new context, but also that this professional training needs to be based on a more research-based understanding of the intercultural conflicts and challenges to teachers' professional experience, as I have shown above. I therefore assume that the study can provide some enlightenment for the further development of Chinese teachers' professionalization in Germany.

## **8.2 Possible limitations of the present study**

In this section, I attempt to make a self-critique and examine the limitations in the research process, thus giving some reference and evidence for the need of further research in the field of Chinese language didactics and teachers' professionalization.

The first difficulty I face is the small number of my case studies. My study describes the professional practice and the development of three Hamburg-based Chinese teachers. It is limited in its sample and scope. I conducted the research at two different schools in Hamburg only, so that future educational researchers into the study of Chinese language teachers' professional development in Germany remains, given its at present scope, a difficult task. One of the two schools is a private elementary school plus *Gymnasium* that does not represent the present situation of Chinese language teaching and the context of other schools in Hamburg. My case studies of these teachers can demonstrate some developmental problems and difficulties in their intercultural profes-

sional experience simultaneously provide a possible indication of their own individual solutions. The research results will give some enlightenment to related research of Chinese teachers' professional development. It could also be of use in helping other researchers to expand the scope of their research based on future empirical study.

The second limitation refers to the short duration of my ethnographical approach. It is hard to describe the development of self-reflection and transformation of teachers' professional perceptions and attitudes. Another difficulty is that, in collecting data from the teachers' interviews and classroom observation, the protocols were limited. They cannot completely describe the Chinese language teachers' professional competence and their individual didactics.

The third limitation concerns the interpretation and analysis of teachers' professional attitudes and development from a large number of teachers' interviews. Although, in order to improve the accuracy of my transcription and translation of the data collected, I show two versions of the interview transcriptions: one in Chinese and the other in English. Due to my limited English language capability, it is difficult to find the exact and accurate words or expressions to convey in an English translation the meanings expressed in my interview partners' discourse.

Furthermore, my analysis of the teachers' professional competence does not account for the significant influence of the German students' parents. Compared with the situation in China, there are huge differences concerning how student parents' influence Chinese teachers' professional perception, including German parents standing by their children, and there being a loose relationship between teachers and parents and so on. For example, unlike Chinese parents, German parents always stand by their children's side in the hope of cultivating their children's individuality and interest in learning. However, it is clear that Chinese teachers need to cooperate with German parents and communicate with them concerning the students' individuality and personal background to foreign language teaching. That cultural differences and linguistic barriers pose challenges to Chinese teachers leads to new problems for the teachers' professionalization process. This needs much more attention.

The last difficulty for my study refers to the limited results of related empirical study and research literature on Chinese language teachers' professional development in Germany. There are few studies addressing the Chinese language teachers' professional development and practice in the German educational system. In particular, there are few intercultural studies on the relationship between teachers' biographies and their professional beliefs. My study is typically qualitative educational research, lacking a large amount of empirical quantitative data as a complement to my qualitative results. More and more quantitative educational research on Chinese teachers' professional development and their professional experience is required in the future. Furthermore, the findings of my study suggest an urgent need for further empirical research on how to help other foreign language teachers with different cultural and pedagogic backgrounds to become adaptive to and effective in the new educational environment.

### **8.3 Questions answered and perspectives**

Through a cross-case analysis of their professional biographies, my intercultural study maps different characteristics of the three Chinese language teachers' and two English language teachers' professional development and individual didactics. In particular, my research is able to show their instructional practice and their development within the tensions of individual professional biographies and the new objective educational requirement of Western language pedagogy. My study is a new attempt to combine *Bildungsgang*-related theories with Chinese teachers' professional development, which provides a new perspective to study their individual professional developmental process in the intercultural context. However, what would happen if I introduced a large amount of data to make a quantitative educational research to obtain similar research results to prove my hypothesis is difficult to decide.

My intercultural study allows a deductive, not an inductive generalization. I therefore have to ask whether my theoretical framework can support other cases and other educational contexts. The majority of Chinese teachers has been influenced by tradi-



tional Chinese educational schemata and should be confronted with a different educational context, namely the Western educational philosophies.

Uwe Herick's four categories of professional developmental tasks are proved with respect to a large amount empirical study data. They focus on the professional development of German pre-service and in-service teachers. My study is the first attempt to apply Hericks' theory and the *Bildungsgang* framework to Chinese language teaching and Chinese teachers' professional development, it can therefore also shed light on the individual difficulties and challenges of other foreign teachers with different educational biographies. However, two new questions arise: can the four professional developmental tasks be applied to other teachers' professional development in new intercultural contexts or do I have to improve the four professional developmental tasks and transform them into a new intercultural study? What will happen to their professional development if teachers are not able to successfully deal with their professional developmental tasks in a new educational situation?

Let me do some reflective thinking as well: the historical development of German didactics can also provide some new thoughts in terms of the professionalization of Chinese language teachers. Wolfgang Klafki's *Bildung*-centered didactics is understood to be the core tenet of German didactics and this can provide many helpful suggestions for future young Chinese language teachers in Germany. His critical-constructive didactics demands creating a 'democratic culture' in every classroom which suggests that future Chinese teachers abandon traditional teacher authority in China and adapt to a new democratic situation with their students.

Hilbert Meyer defines ten criteria of good instruction in the tradition of Wolfgang Klafki, Herwig Blankertz and Lothar Klingberg that could directly be used to design new teacher didactics for Chinese language teachers' professional development (cf. Meyer H., 2004). In general, the framework of developmental tasks and *Bildungsgang* didactics are not the only theories to support Chinese teachers' professional development that need more comparative didactical theoretical and empirical research in China and in Germany. In particular, it requires that future educational researcher takes account of different educational contexts to identify intercultural conflicts.

In general, there are more and more new questions and problems that will appear and need to be dealt with in Chinese language teachers' professional development in the future. The findings of my study demonstrate that it is imperative to improve Chinese language teaching in Germany and all over the world. My study also demonstrates that professional advice is needed for the future professional training of Chinese language teachers, in order to help them to become more effective and adaptive to the expectations articulated in the European and worldwide educational environments. This professional training needs to be grounded in more empirical research in other European countries and regions, thereby allowing future educational researchers to identify intercultural conflicts and challenges in foreign language teachers' professional development.

## **8.4 Final reflection**

Chinese language teachers teaching in German schools encounter a wide range of intercultural challenges. These challenges mostly stand in close relation to the differences between the Chinese and German educational contexts. The different educational philosophies in China and Germany produce different sense-constructions and educational systems and implicitly influence Chinese language teachers' professional practice in the new educational context. In Germany, they attempt to transform and adapt their own professional beliefs and identity in order to suit the requirements of the new educational context. Based on my research findings, I want to demonstrate the analysis of my research questions as follows (see my research questions in Section 3.2):

- (1) The majority of Chinese teachers received their secondary and tertiary education in China; their professional beliefs therefore still reflect different aspects of traditional Chinese schemata. In Germany, they have encountered different challenges and problems in the intercultural setting. On the basis of different cases in my study, it can be seen that different developmental barriers and intercultural challenges require them to change their professional views and self-concepts.

- (2) As I have noted, their biographical experience of teaching in China greatly influences their professional perceptions and individual instructional methods.
- (3) Confronted with different professional developmental tasks, the Chinese language teachers underwent various kinds of transformation and adaptations to comply with their new educational situation. In particular, I use the framework of *Bildungsgang* to examine their professional competence in dealing with developmental tasks in terms of competence, mediation, acknowledgement and action within the institution in the intercultural setting. My study shows that they have differing, professional competences in working on individual professional tasks that consequently allow them to construct new individual professional beliefs and develop their individual didactics.
- (4) My study can also provide some professional advice and enlightenment for the future professional training of Chinese language teachers in Europe in order to help them to become more effective and adaptive to the expectations in the educational environments of Europe.

It is imperative that further professional development be provided for Chinese teachers to support their effective professional transformation and development. But the fact that Chinese didactics and German didactics are different does not permit the conclusion that one is good and the other bad. Both Western and Eastern educational philosophies have advantages and disadvantages, have 'pros and cons'.

Because of that, with regard to teachers' professional practice, it would be unwise to implement the teaching methods of one country in another country. The professional development of Chinese teachers therefore depends on integrating both the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching and learning cultures of East and West. I can imagine that Germans accept Chinese didactics and objectives, namely humanity, harmony, and hierarchy including strict discipline in the classroom for teaching and evaluation, so what would happen if we taught German students by using Chinese instructional methods. Would the students achieve better learning results and acquire even more knowledge from their teachers' mediation? Conversely, what would happen to Chinese teachers and their students if they enjoyed much more liberation and freedom in the

classroom or if they were confronted with Wolfgang Klafki's conception of self-determination, co-operation and solidarity as the highest sense constructions and objectives?

We can go even further: there can be no doubt that class instruction will take place in a new environment once we try to integrate the two kinds of educational philosophies. Let me therefore come back to the didactical reasoning presented in Chapter 2, (see section 2.1.1) I see the urgent need for more comparative didactical research, including more critical thinking on intercultural theoretical integration in Germany and China. Perhaps I can return to the famous saying of Confucius because it provides a new idea on how to integrate *Bildungsgang* theories with Chinese educational philosophy.

子曰：“吾十有五而志于学，三十而立，四十而不惑，五十而知天命，六十而耳顺，七十而从心所欲，不逾矩。”《论语·为政》

Zǐ yuē:“Wú shí yǒu wǔ ér zhì yú xué, sānshí ér lì, sìshí ér bùhuò, wǔshí ér zhī tiānmìng, liùshí ér ěrshùn, qīshí ér cóngxīnsuǒyù, bù yú jǔ” 《Lúnyǔ. Wéi zhèng》

“The master said: At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning. At thirty I stood firm. At forty I had no doubts. At fifty, I knew the decrees of heaven. At sixty, my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth. At seventy I could follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right.” (Confucius, Analects. Wéi zhèng, 1893, p. 162, Book 2, 4).

Confucius describes his developmental tasks and his success in solving them, rising from the learning phase to the establishment of his own knowledge system and then to the objective for his whole life. One can see that the traditional Chinese educational philosophy also focuses on the principle of *humanism*, fostering learners' subjective emancipation during their formation. However, traditional Chinese didactics should ensure teachers' authority and its central position in students' learning.

Generally speaking, it is not wise for Chinese language teachers to teach German students using Chinese approaches. German didactic tradition understands that emancipation is the primary aim of education. On this point, Herwig Blankertz provides a far-reaching definition:

“Wer pädagogische Verantwortung übernimmt, steht im Kontext der jeweils gegebenen historischen Bedingungen unter dem Anspruch des unbedingten Zweckes menschlicher Mündigkeit – ob er das will, weiß, glaubt oder nicht, ist sekundär. Die Erziehungswissenschaft aber arbeitet eben dieses als das Primäre heraus: Sie rekonstruiert die Erziehung als den Prozess der Emanzipation, d.h. der Befreiung des Menschen zu sich selbst.“ (Blankertz, 1982, p. 307)

“He who accepts educational responsibility is confronted with the demand of the unconditional objective of humankind’s emancipation – and this in the context of the historically given conditions. It is of secondary importance whether he wants it, knows it, and believes it or not. Educational research, however, analyses exactly this as of primary importance. It reconstructs education as the process of emancipation, i.e. the liberation of humankind in which humankind comes to itself. ” (Blankertz, 1982, English translation by M. Meyer)

Herwig Blankertz’s definition can be combined with Lothar Klingberg’s dialectical didactics. Instruction should be understood as mutual cooperation and joint action within the teacher-student interaction. The combination of the object-position and subject-position of teacher and students in their joint instructional action has consequences for both parties. The new Chinese language teaching we need in Germany could therefore maintain the contradiction that Klingberg assumes in his dialectical didactics. The contradiction of the teacher’s guidance and the learners’ self-regulation allows students’ in their individual *Bildung process* to become themselves.

In parallel to this, we can also imagine what would happen if German education and the new didactics accepted the highest Chinese sense constructions and objectives of humanity, harmony and hierarchy, including disciplined instruction, teacher-centered didactics, traditional Chinese language approaches, etc. Could German students better achieve their individual *Bildung*? It is hard to say, but it does demonstrate that Chinese language teachers’ pedagogical development should work with a respectful understanding of sociocultural influences in the future. Finally, however, one thing is certain: we

need much more comparative study on how to provide a cultural bridge between the Chinese and the German kinds of educational schemata.

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## A list of some publications from my Ph.D. thesis

Meyer, M. A. in co-operation with Meyer, H. and Ren, P. (2017): The German Didaktik Tradition Revisited. In: Kerry Kennedy and Chi-Kin Wee (Eds.): *European Didactics and Chinese Curriculum: Curriculum thoughts*. London and New York: Routledge (in printing).

Ren, P., in co-operation with Meyer, M. A. (2016): An Intercultural Study on School Education in China and Germany. *Rhino didactics Zeitschrift für Bildungsgangforschung und Unterricht*.

Ren, P., in co-operation with Meyer, M. A. (2017): Intercultural Research on Chinese Language Teaching in Germany. In: Axel Beyer and Meinert A. Meyer, (Eds.): On Founding a Private School. The First Three Years of Moderne Schule Hamburg [*Über die Gründung einer privaten Schule. Die ersten drei Jahre der Modernen Schule Hamburg*] Opladen: Leske and Barbara Budrich Press (in preparation).

## Appendix 1: A summary of my different kinds research data<sup>41</sup>

Teacher	Teachers' interviews	Classroom Observation	Field Notes	Video
<b>Ms. Wee</b>	(1) 11 May, 2012;	13 October, 2012	Yes	No
	(2) 24 August, 2012;	24 October, 2012	Yes	No
	(3) 9 November, 2012;			
<b>Ms. Baum</b>	(1) 24 August, 2012;	13 October, 2012	Yes	No
	(2) 8 October, 2012;	09 April, 2013	Yes	Yes
	(3) 10 April, 2013;			
<b>Ms. Ta</b>	15 March, 2013	15 March, 2013	Yes	No
	18 April, 2013	23 April, 2013	Yes	Yes
<b>Ms. Yellow</b>	24 May, 2014	22 May, 2014	No	Yes
<b>Ms. Hao</b>	08 June, 2014	23 May, 2014	No	Yes

<sup>41</sup> From May 2012 to May 2013, I conducted an ethnographical research project to collect data on my Chinese language teachers' professional development in the two schools in Hamburg. In addition, as a researcher I helped my professor to collect data for the two years' Annual Reports 2012, 2013 in *Gymnasium A*. A large amount of research data includes classroom observation videos, field notes in class and audio recordings. Here, I only show the eight semi-structured interviews with the three Chinese language teachers (Ms. Wee, Ms. Baum, Ms. Ta) and some class protocols made in Germany and in China. I did not save the classroom observation videos (Chinese language class, English language class) in the attached CD for ethical reasons.

## **Appendix 2: Content of CD**

### **Chinese transcripts of teachers' interviews:**

1. The Interview with Ms. Wee (11 May, 2012)
2. The Interview with Ms. Wee (24 August, 2012)
3. The Interview with Ms. Wee (9 November, 2012)
4. The Interview with Ms. Baum (24 August, 2012)
5. The Interview with Ms. Baum (8 October, 2012)
6. The Interview with Ms. Baum (10 April, 2013)
7. The Interview with Ms. Ta (18 April, 2013)
8. The Interview with Ms. C (16 May, 2013)
9. The Interview with Ms. Yellow (24 May, 2014)
10. The Interview with Ms. Hao (08 June, 2014)
11. The Interview with Ms. Wee, Ms. Baum and Ms. Wang (24 April, 2012)

### **Audio Recording:**

1. Audio Recording of the Interview with Ms. Wee (24 August, 2012)
2. Audio Recording of the Interview with Ms. Wee (09 May, 2013)
3. Audio Recording of the Interview with Ms. Baum (24 October, 2012)
4. Audio Recording of the Interview with Ms. Wang (07 November, 2012)
5. Audio Recording of the Interview with Headmaster of Gymnasium A (07 November, 2012)
6. Audio Recording of the Interview with Ms. Wee, Ms. Baum and Ms. Wang (24 April, 2012)

7. Audio Recording of the Interview with Ms. Hao (08 June, 2014)
8. Audio Recording of the Interview with Ms. C (16 May, 2013)
9. Audio Recording of an English class of Ms. Yellow (22. May, 2014)
10. Audio Recording of an English class of Ms. Hao (23. May, 2014)

**Classroom protocol:**

1. Transcript of Chinese language class protocol (Ms. Wee, 13 October, 2012)
2. Transcript of Chinese language class protocol (Ms. Baum, 13 October, 2012)
3. Transcript of Chinese language class protocol (Ms. Baum, 09 April, 2013)

**Field Notes:**

1. Field Note made in the interview with Ms. Wee (10 September, 2012)
2. Field Note made in Ms. Wee's class (13 October, 2012) *4 Pages*
3. Field Note made in Ms. Baum's class (13 October, 2012)
4. Field Note made in Ms. Baum's class (9 April, 2013) *2 Pages plus Handout*
5. Field Note made in Ms. Ta's class (23 April, 2013) *3 Pages*



## Appendix 3: Signs for the transcription

, = comma, a punctuation mark;

. = full stop, a punctuation mark;

; = semicolon, a punctuation mark;

English or Chinese Characters in bold type= Stress; e.g.: **Yes, she told me** 是的, 她告诉我;

&= small break;

&& = longer break;

@(.)@ =short smile;

@\_@= smile of the person's speaking;

hm= thinking;

//Hhm//=confirmation;

(??) =not comprehensible;

[...] = some sentences omitted;

(...)= some ideas and views are not further explained;

## Appendix 4: The selected transcripts of the group interview with the Chinese language teachers

*Ms. Baum, Ms. Wee and Ms. Wang (24 April, 2012)*

Ms. Baum: 我不是特别得赞同一年级到四年级的混龄教育，

Mr. Zhang: 有的说很好，对学生未来发展能力非常有好处。大年纪的孩子还会去欺负小孩子，小孩子就会有一点点的茫然，不能保证大孩子就一定是对孩子有影响，有可能大孩子的不好的习惯也会对孩子产生很多不好的影响。对对，德国社会就是有很大的批评，有很多。

Ms. Baum: 我在那边的 XXXX，那边的中文学校教学了 8 年呢，都是在周日的中文学校。但是，不是在德国的中学里面。中文学校的中文孩子，就是在这边长大的，有中国背景的中国孩子。那时候到周六我就去给他们上课了。

Meinert Meyer: Sie haben Berufsbiographien, die gar nicht zu denen der deutschen Lehrer passen. Meine Frage ist deshalb, ab wann Sie eigentlich wussten, dass Sie etwas mit Schule und Unterricht zu tun haben wollten und wie ihre Berufsbiographie aussieht, vom Kindergarten an, wenn's den gab, bis jetzt hier, zur Arbeit hier an der XXX. Wie sah Ihre Berufslaufbahn aus?

Ms. Baum: Ich habe in China Informatik und Buchhaltung studiert. Aber dann habe ich nicht in dieser Richtung weiter gearbeitet, sondern ich habe an einer Universität in China eine Stelle gefunden, in XXXX in West, Nordwestchina. An der Uni [dort] habe ich zwölf Jahre in der Buchhaltung unterrichtet. Ich habe es immer mit Studenten zu tun [gehabt]. [...] Und dann bin ich vor neun Jahren nach Hamburg gekommen, weil meine Uni wollte, dass ich weiter Buchhaltung und Informatik studiere. Aber ich habe dann an der Chinesischen Schule (Sonntagsschule) Arbeit gefunden, vor acht Jahren, in Hamburg, in XXXXX, am Gymnasium XXXXX, Arbeit gefunden. Hier habe ich in dieser Chinesischen Schule acht Jahre gearbeitet. Außerdem habe ich an der Brechtschule, Grundschule und am Gymnasium Chinesischen-kurse gegeben. [...]. Nein, mit meiner

Universität hat das nichts zu tun, ich habe mir gedacht, jetzt habe ich Arbeit, Familie, ich muss nicht mehr zur Universität [...]

Meinert Meyer: Jetzt zum pädagogischen Thema. Mich interessiert eigentlich, was für eine individuelle Didaktik Sie haben. Und, en, en, wenn ich mich richtig erinnere, haben Sie einmal über die deutschen Schüler gesagt: „The children have been spoiled previously. ich weiß nicht, ob Sie sich daran noch erinnern können?

Ping: Ich glaube, dass dieser Satz von Ms. Wee kommt. [...]

Ms. Baum: Ich bin Frau XXX, ich unterrichte da oben, die zweite Klasse. [...]vielleicht von Frau Wang. [...]

Meinert Meyer entschuldigt sich für die Verwechslung, bleibt aber bei seiner Frage: Kann man das sagen, ‘German students have been spoilt previously’? Ich vermute, dass die Unterrichtssituation für Sie als Chinesinnen richtig schwierig ist.

Ms. Baum: in welcher Situation hat Frau W. das gesagt?

Ping: das, das hat Frau Wee gesagt.

Ping : Darf ich das auf Chinesisch sagen?

[Ping gibt einen längeren chinesischen Kommentar. Und Ms. Baum antwortet zunächst auf Chinesisch, um dann so fortzufahren]

Mit Ms. Wee zu reden.

就是上次我过来曾经问过您，学生就是没有经过您的允许就出去，去上厕所，不过我现在就已经发现现在的规矩已经改变了，就是当时我去问您的时候，您就是说了。您也是笑着对我说，‘他们都是被宠坏了’，然后现在就是 Meinert 想问问，为什么您当时说了这话来着？

Ms. Wee 老师：我有说是被宠坏了吗？

平：就是这个孩子被宠坏了，说就是这个规矩为什么之前没有定下来，那就是说。

Ms. Wee: Wenn sie auf die Toilette gehen wollen, müssen sie solch ein Zeichen machen [sie zeigt das „T“.], das müssen sie immer, das machen sie von Anfang an.

Ping: Ich glaube, dass [...]

Ms. Baum: das machen wir auch.

Meinert Meyer weist darauf hin, dass er den Zusammenhang nicht sehe, und bleibt bei seiner Eingangsfrage: „The children have been spoilt previously? Sie haben falsche Sachen gelernt, falsches Verhalten? “

Ms. Wee: Also in dieser Klasse [Die *Gymnasium* Klasse] ist es so, dass es manchmal geht und manchmal nicht geht. Die Stimmung ist sehr unstabil. Aber trotzdem, wenn sie zur Toilette gehen, müssen sie immer fragen.

Meinert Meyer: Ja, ja. Einverstanden, gut. Ich sagte, mich interessiert ihre Berufsbiographie, die bis zum XXX gekommen ist, wie können sie sich entwickeln? Von der Kindheit bis zum Beruf. Sie sind schon daran, was für?

Ich frage mich, was für ein pädagogischer Typ Sie sind. Ich suche die individuelle Didaktik, die für Sie passt, aber nicht für andere. Ich weiß, die Frage ist schwierig, aber trotzdem.

Ms. Baum: Das ist ein bisschen schwer.

# Appendix 5: The questions in a semi-structured interview for Chinese language teachers

(Interviewed in Chinese, transcribed into English by the author himself)

**Interviewer:** Ren, Ping

**Date:**           **Place:**           **Time:**

1. Please tell me a little about yourself and briefly introduce your biography from when you graduated from the Gymnasium until now.
2. 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?
3. How did you deal with these challenges in your professional development? How did you adapt to the new educational setting?
4. Can you briefly introduce your individual way of teaching Chinese?
5. What were your major challenges concerning your present professional practice? Please be as specific and detailed as possible.
6. In your professional practice, did you experience critical incidents or impressive issues that have changed your professional views or attitudes? Would you like to share them with me?
7. What do you think is good instruction in teaching Chinese as a foreign language? Or to be much more concrete: can you briefly describe a perfect Chinese class as you see it?
8. Were there any specific experiences which helped you to successfully work through the challenges you encountered while teaching Chinese to German learners in Germany?
9. What do you think are the major challenges or problems that you encounter with respect to collegial collaboration?

10. 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?
11. Do you have further suggestions and working experience that you would like to share with other Chinese teachers in Germany?

# Appendix 6: The transcripts of Ms. Baum's class protocol (9 April, 2013)

## 1 Begrüßung

- 1 L: Nimen Hao (Hallo)
- 2 S: Nihao, Frau Baum! (Hallo, Frau Baum)
- 3 L: Ni men hao, tongxuemen. (Hallo, Schüler!)
- 4 S: Laoshihao. (Hallo, Lehrerin!)
- 5 L: Zaoshang hao. (Guten Morgen!)
- 6 S: Zaoshanghao. (Guten Morgen!)
- 7 L: Heute ist ungewöhnlich, dass wir hier unterrichten. Wenn ihr hier das gut findet, dann  
8 machen wir hier guten Unterricht. Em, wie immer leise! Wenn du Fragen hast, was zu  
9 sagen hast, meldest du dich. Jetzt etwas lauter, aber versuchen wir unser Bestes. Gut, aber  
10 ich möchte sofort anfangen, die Zeit ist schon @@ zehn Minuten später.
- 11 S: Ich habe eine Frage, haben wir hier heute den ganzen Tag Unterricht?
- 12 L: Wir sind den ganzen Tag hier.
- 13 S: Wow, wow. Wow! @@ . . .and and
- 14 L: Em, em. Ich schreibe kurz einen Namen an die Tafel.
- 15 S: Ha..... and and
- [Die Lehrerin schreibt Namen auf den Whiteboard.]<sup>42</sup>*

## 2.2 Einstiegsphase des Unterrichts

- 16 T: Lernen wir heute, @@@, diese Lektion 10, weiter. Wir haben letztes  
17 Mal ein paar Wörter zusammen gelernt, wiederholen wir heute die Wörter,  
18 dann lernen wir neue Sätze.

---

<sup>42</sup> Students' names are written down to mean that they have to do some extra homework as punishment for undisciplined behavior.

*[Die Schüler sprechen mit lauter Stimme miteinander; die ganze Klasse wird laut. Die Lehrerin wechselt wieder ins Chinesische, ordnet gleichzeitig ihre Karteikarten und fängt an, das erste neue Wort an die Tafel zu schreiben]*

19 S: Niao, (ein Vogel)

20 L: Zhe shi shen me? (Was ist das?)

21 S: Zhe shi he. (Das ist ein Fluß.)

22 L: Zhe shi shen me? (Was ist das?)

23 S: Zhe shi shu. (Das ist ein Baum.)

24 L: Henhao, zheshi shu. Zheshi shen me? (Sehr gut, das ist ein Baum, was  
25 ist das?)

26 S: Zhe shi hua. (Das ist eine Blume.)

*[Die Lehrerin liest die Wörter zusammen mit den Schülern.]*

27 L: Zhe shi shen me? (Was ist das?)

28 S: Zhe shi cao. (Das ist Gras.)

29 L: Henhao, zhe shi shen me? (Sehr gut, was ist das?)

30 S: Zhe shi tuzi. (Das ist ein Hase.)

31 L: Henhao, zheshi tuzi. (Sehr gut, das ist ein Hase.)

*[Die Lehrerin fordert die Schüler auf, im Anschluss an sie zu lesen und die Worte zu wiederholen, so dass sie die ungenaue Aussprache der Schüler korrigieren kann.]*

32 L: Haode, zheshi tuzi. zheshi shenme? (Okay, das ist ein Hase. Was ist das?)

33 S: Houzi. (Ein Affe).

34 L: Haode, houzi. (Okay, ein Affe)

35 L: Zhe shi shen me? (Was ist das?)

36 S: Zhe shi shan. (Das ist ein Berg.)

37 L: Shan, haode, zhe shi shan. (Ein Berg. Okay. Das ist ein Berg.)

38 L: Zhe shi shenme? (Was ist das?)

39 S: Zhe shi xiongmao. Zhe shi shen me? (Das ist ein Panda. Was ist das?)

40 S: Fangzi, zheshi fangzi. (Haus, das ist ein Haus.)

### **2.3 Verteilung der Lehrbücher und Vorlesen von Wörtern**



- 41 L: Henhao, feichanghao, hao. Xianzai wo fa gei dajia keben, buyao  
 42 guanxin shu shang de mingzi. Zhiyao da kai shu, fandao dishike, mingbai  
 43 le ma? (Sehr gut, perfekt. Ok. Lasst mich eure Lehrbücher verteilen, achtet  
 44 nicht auf den Besitzer des Buches. Öffnet einfach die Lehrbücher, und  
 45 zwar bei Lektion 10, habt ihr verstanden?)  
 46 S: Haode, mingbaile. (Okay, verstanden.)  
 47 L: Dakaishu, fandao dishike. Tiana, zheshi nide. Shi nide. Ema, nide. Amai, nide. Joanna,  
 48 zheshi nide. Qing buyao shuohua, fan dao dishike.  
 49 (Öffnet bitte die Lehrbücher, schlägt Lektion 10 auf. Tina, das ist deins.  
 50 Das ist deines. Ema, deines. Amai, deines. Joanna, das ist deins. Bitte  
 51 sprichst du nicht! Schlägt bitte Lektion 10 auf)  
 52 L: Vincent, nide shu. Zipe, nide. Leo, zheshi nide. Henkuai fan dao dishike, buyao shuo-  
 53 hua. Leno, bani de shu fangdao zhuzishang. Windy,  
 54 ba ni de shu ye fangdao zhuzishang. (Vincent, dein Buch. Zipe, dein Buch. Leo, dein  
 55 Buch. Schnell findest du Lektion 10, kein Sprechen. Leno, leg dein Buch auf den Tisch.  
 56 Windy, leg du dein Buch auf den Tisch.)  
 57 L: Haode, nühaizi dou hao le. Vincent he Joanna hao le. Zhiyou, Leo meiyou hao. Wo  
 58 men yiqi shuoyishuo.  
 59 (Ok, alle Schülerinnen sind fertig. Vincent und Joanna sind fertig. Nur,

*[Die Lehrerin und die Schüler lesen gemeinsam.]*

- 60 L: Shan Shan, “山” ist das chinesische Schriftzeichen. (Der Berg, der Berg)  
 61 S: Shan Shan. (Der Berg, der Berg)  
 62 L: Eine Blume.  
 63 S: Hua hua (Blume, Blume)  
 64 L: Xiongmao, xiongmao (Panda, Panda)  
 65 S: Xiongmao, xiongmao (Panda, Panda)  
 66 L: He he (Fluß)  
 67 S: He he (Fluß)

68 L: Houzi houzi (Affe)

69 S: Houzi houzi (Affe)

70 L: Cao, cao (Gras)

71 S: Cao, cao! (Gras)

## 2.4 Neue Vokabeln

72 L: Haode. "Shanshang" "Shanshang" "Shanshang" shi shenme yisi? Ameli?

73 (Gut, "Shanshang" "Shanshang" "Shanshang", was ist die chinesische Bedeutung von  
74 "Shanshang" ? Ameli?)

75 Ameli: En, @@, zaishanshang. (Em, @@, auf dem Berg.)

76 L: Shenme zai shanshang? (Was ist auf dem Berg?)

77 Ameli: @@@ Shan shang you cao. (Auf dem Berg gibt es Gras.)

78 L: "Shanxia", "Shanxia" shi shenme yisi? Wendy.

79 ("Shanxia", "Shanxia", was ist die Bedeutung von "Shanxia"? Wendy.)

80 Wendy: Eh.@@@

81 L: "Shanxia" shi shenme yisi? (Was ist die chinesische Bedeutung von "Shanxia"?)

82 Wendy: Shan de xiamian? (Am Fuße des Berges?)

83 L: Haode, ni zuo de henhao. Shan de xiamian. "Xia", jiushi "xia mian". Shanxia, jiushi  
84 shan de xia mian. Haode, xianzai women shizhe, shuodian

85 shenme, shuo yidiandongxi, zai shanshang you shen me?

86 (Ja. Das hast du sehr gut gemacht. Am Fuße des Berges, "Xia" bedeutet "unter". Shanxia,  
87 ist am Fuße des Berges. Ok, jetzt versuchen wir, ein bisschen mehr zu sprechen, sagt  
88 etwas Neues, was ist auf dem Berg?)

89 S: Shanshang you shenme? (Was ist „auf dem Berg“?)

90 L: Zhe shi wo de wenti, shanshang you shenme? (Das ist meine Frage. Was ist auf dem  
91 Berg?)

92 S: Zai shanshang you shenme? (Was ist auf dem Berg?)

93 L: Zai shanshang shi shenme?? (Was bedeutet „auf dem Berg“??)

94 L: Qing jushou, Vincent, shanshang you shenme? (Bitte Hände hoch, Vincent, was gibt  
95 es auf dem Berg?)

96 Vincent: Em, @@@ shu. Shanshang you shu! (Em, @@@ der Baum.  
97 Es gibt Bäume auf dem Berg!)

98 L: Shide, shenme zai shanshang? Hua.  
99 (Ja. Was gibt es auf dem Berg? Die Blumen.)

100 S: Hua zai shanshang. (Auf dem Berg gibt es Blumen.)

101 L: Henhao, zaishanshang, (Auf dem Berg gibt es Blumen.)  
102 you henduo hua. Shanshang you shenme? Lina,nishuo,shanshang you shenme? (Sehr  
103 gut. Was ist auf dem Berg? Lina, sag einmal, was ist auf dem Berg?)

104 Lina: Shanshang you xiongmao. (Auf dem Berg gibt es einen Panda.)

105 L: Xiongmao, shenme zai shanshang ? (Panda, was ist auf dem Berg?)

106 S: Shanshang you cao. Henhao, Emma, shanshang you shenme? (Auf dem Berg ist Gras.  
107 Sehr gut, Emma, was ist auf dem Berg?)

108 Emma: Shanshang you houzi. (Auf dem Berg gibt es einen Affen.)

109 L: Henhao, shanshang you houzi. Leo, shanshang you shenme? (Sehr gut, es ist ein  
110 Affe auf dem Berg. Leo, was ist auf dem Berg?)

111 Leno: Shanshang you, en,en,en... @@@ Shanshang you... (auf dem Berg ist, en, en,  
112 en... @@@ auf dem Berg gibt es...)

113 L: Ni zai shanshang kandao shenme? (Was hast du auf dem Berg gesehen?)

114 Leo: Xiongmao. (Einen Panda.)

115 L: Shanshang you xiongmao. Haode, Wenzhi, shanshang you shenme? (Es gibt Pandas  
116 auf dem Berg. Sehr gut. Wenzhi, was gibt es auf dem Berg?)

117 Wenzhi: Shanshang you hua. (Es gibt Blumen auf dem Berg.)

118 L: Ameni. Shanshang you shenme? (Ameni, was gibt es auf dem Berg?)

119 Ameni: Shanshang you cao. (Es gibt Gras auf dem Berg.)

120 L: Wendy, you shenme! (Wendy, was gibt es?)

121 Wendy: Shanshang you he. (Es ist ein Fluss am Fuße des Berges.)

122 L: Shanxia you he. Shanxia (Am Fuße des Berges gibt es einen Fluss. Am Fuße des  
123 Berges)

124 Wendy: Shanxia you he. Shide. (Es ist ein Fluss, ja, es ist.)

## 2.5 Die neuen Vokabeln und eine Übung mit den Fingern

125 L: Ba shou dou shen chu lai, yong ni men de shou zhi. Shang shang, Emma, shen chu ni  
126 de shou, xiangzheyang, shou xiang shang, women yi qi zhi. Shou, shou, na chu ni de shou.  
127 Shang-xia, Shang-xia, Shang-xia. Kuai yidian, shang shang, xia, xia .....  
128 shangxia ,shangxia, shangxia, shangxia shangxia. Kuyidian@ @, ting .

129 (Klatschen wir unsere Hände zusammen, aber nur mit den Fingern. Auf, auf, Emma,  
130 nimmst du deine Hände, wie diese, Hände hoch, und wir weisen darauf hin. Hände, Hän-  
131 de, nimmst du deine Hände! Auf-unter, auf-unter, auf-unter, schnell, auf, auf, unter,  
132 unter....., auf-unter, auf-unter, auf-unter, auf-unter. Schnell @ @, stoppen.)

133 L: @@@ Auf dem Berg, shanshang, shanxia.

134 (@@@ Auf dem Berg, auf dem Berg, am Fuße des Berges)

135 L: Vincent gaosu women, shangxia you he.

136 (Vincent sagt, dass es einen Fluss am Fuße des Berges gibt.)

137 S: Shanxia. Em, shanxia you he.

138 (Am Fuße des Berges gibt es einen Fluss.)

139 L: Wo you lingwai yige wenti, shanxia you shenme? Amalie?

140 (Ich habe eine andere Frage, was ist am Fuße des Berges, Amalie?)

141 Amalie: Shanxia you cao. (Am Fuße des Berges gibt es Gras.)

142 L: Shanxia you shenme? (Was ist am Fuße des Berges?)

143 S: Shanxia you shitou.

144 (Am Fuße des Berges gibt es Steine.)

145 L: Henhao, henhao. Shanxia you shitou.

146 (Sehr, sehr gut. Es gibt Steine am Fuße des Berges.)

147 Amalie: Shanxia you hua. (Am Fuße des Berges gibt es Blumen.)

148 L: Henhao, Shanxia you hua. Shanxia you shenme?

149 (Sehr gut. Am Fuße des Berges gibt es Blumen. Was gibt es am Fuße des Berges?)

150 Leno: Shanxia you xiongmao. @@ (Am Fuße des Berges gibt es Pandas.)

151 L: Amalie, Shanxia you shenme? (Was gibt es am Fuße des Berges?)

152 Amalie: shanshang you shu. (Am Fuße des Berges gibt es Bäume.)

## 2.6 Neue Satzstrukturübung und Wiederholung

153 L: Nihaikeyi shuo shenme zai shushang ne? Yi ge xinde juzi. Xiang yi xiang, shushang  
154 you shenme? Wenzhi, shushang you shenme?

155 (Man kann auch sagen: Was ist auf dem Baum? Ein neuer Satz, darüber denkt einmal  
156 nach. Was ist auf dem Baum? Wenzhi, was ist auf dem Baum?)

157 Wenzhi: Shanshang you dashu. (Auf dem Berg gibt es große Bäume.)

158 L: Shanshang you dashu. Shide. (Auf dem Berg gibt es große Bäume. Ja.)

159 S: Shanxia you houzi. Oh. (Es ist ein Affe am Fuße des Berges. Oh.)

160 L: Women keyi shuo, shushang you houzi. (Wir können auch sagen, es ist ein Affe im  
161 Baum.)

162 S: Shushang you houzi. (Es ist ein Affe im Baum.)

163 L: Zaidu yibian. Shushang you houzi. (Lest noch einmal. Es ist ein Affe im Baum.)

164 S: Shanxia you fangfang. Shanshang you mingming. (Fangfang ist am Fuße des Berges.  
165 Mingming ist auf dem Berg.)

166 L: Haode, feichanghao. (Ok, sehr gut.)

167 S: Tashi Xiaolong. (Er ist Xiaolong)

168 L: Tashi Xiaolong, women yiqian zai kewen limian. xueguode. Bushi ma?

169 (Es ist Xiaolong, die wir bereits vorher gelernt haben. Nicht wahr?)

*[Fangfang ist ein Mädchen; Mingming ist ein Junge. Die Schüler kennen die beiden Figuren aus ihrem Lehrbuch.]*

170 Nimen keyi kankan ta, tashi xiaolongma? Bushi, tamen shi Fangfang he Mingming.  
171 Xianzai, wo gei nimen yizhang zhi, liang ge ren yi zu. Liang ge ren yong zhegeka zuoli-  
172 anxu, women keyi zhaodao tame shi shenme. Haode, women kan zhe xie yiqian xueguode  
173 kopian, zuo yi ge fuxi. Kankan zhaxie shi shenme?

174 (Ihr könnt das Bild ansehen, ist er Xiaolong? Nein, es sind Fangfang und Mingming. Nun  
175 gebe ich euch ein Stück Papier. Das ist eine Karte. Zwei von euch bilden eine Gruppe. Ihr  
176 macht zu zweit Übungen mit der Karte. Wir können so feststellen, was sie darstellen.

- 177 Lasst es uns herausfinden. Okay, schauen wir auf die alten Wörter, die wir bereits gelernt  
178 haben, und machen wir eine Wiederholung. Was ist das?)

## 2.7 Vokabelwiederholung mit den alten Karteikarten

*[Die Lehrerin zeigt den Schülerinnen und Schülern die alten Karteikarten]*

- 179 S: Ma (Pferd)  
180 L: Zhe shi shenme? Xiongmao, cao, houzi (Was ist das? Panda, Gras, Affe)  
181 Zheshi shenme? Tuzi (Was ist das? Ein Hase)

*[Die Lehrerin breitet ihre Arme aus, um das Adjektiv "groß" darzustellen.]*

- 182 S: Da, da tuzi. (Groß, großer Hase.)  
183 L: Shide, zheshi da tuzi. (Ja. Das ist ein großer Hase.)  
184 L: Zhe shi shenme? (Was ist das?)  
185 S: Zhe shi hua. (Das sind die Blumen.)  
186 L: Zheshi shenme? (Was ist das?)  
187 S: Zhe shi shu. (Das ist ein Baum.)

*[Weil die Schüler die Worte nicht genau aussprechen, verlangt die Lehrerin, dass sie noch einmal lesen. Dabei hebt sie die Töne der Worte hervor.]*

- 188 L: Zhe shi shenme? Zheshi he, shi diersheng, Hé,Hé. Hē shi diyisheng, shi heshui de yisi.  
189 Zhegeshi, Hé is river. (Was ist das? Das ist ein Fluss. "Hé" ist der zweite Ton, "hé", "hé".  
190 Hē bedeutet mit dem ersten Ton zu trinken, und Wasser zu trinken. Dies ist der zweite  
191 Ton, "Hé" ist Fluss. Was ist das? Dies ist ein Fluss.)

## 2.7 Eine Gruppe bilden und neue Unterrichtsinhalte üben

- 192 L: Jetzt üben wir "eine Frage stellen und die Frage beantworten," in Übereinstimmung  
193 mit den Bildern. Ihr könnt die Blumen, das Gras, den Baum, den Fluss und den Berg  
194 sehen. Später werde ich das chinesische Schriftzeichen "shan" schreiben, so dass ihr  
195 einen Blick auf das Schriftzeichen nehmen könnt. Jetzt könnt ihr Gruppen bilden und mit  
196 euren Nachbarn üben!

- 197 L: Xianzai ni wen Anna, zheshi shenme? Ta zhe yang hui da, zhe shi hua.  
198 (Nun fragst du jetzt Anna, was ist das? Ist das eine Blume? Was ist das?)

*[Während die Lehrerin die Zettel verteilt, wiederholt sie die Frage, „zheshi shenme“, "was ist das?"]*

*[Die Schüler üben für fünf Minuten]*

199 S 1: Zhe shi shenme? Zhe shi hua.

200 (Was ist das? Dies ist die Blume.)

201 S 2: zhe shi shenme? Zhe shi houzi.

202 (Was ist das? Dies ist ein Affe.)

203 S 3: Zhe shi shenme? Zhe shi cao.

204 (Was ist das? Dies ist Gras.)

## 2.8 Unterricht zu neuen Schriftzeichen

*[Alle Schüler beschäftigen sich jetzt mit ihren Übungsblättern.]*

205 S: Hua, cao, houzi, shu, xiongma, he, shan. (Die Blume, das Gras, der Affe, der  
206 Baum, der Panda, der Fluss, der Berg)

*[Jetzt klatscht die Lehrerin in die Hände und sagt "Eins, zwei, drei, ruhig sein!"]*

*Die Schüler klatschen genauso in die Hände wie die Lehrerin und beginnen zu zählen:*

eins,  zwei,  drei,  .<sup>43</sup>

L an alle: Schließt den Mund, und sitzt gut! Vincent, gehst du bitte zurück zu deinem Platz. Schnell! Hast du schon erkannt, dass dein Name auf der Tafel steht? Bitte ruhig sein!

207 L: Hao, xianzai wo xie shan de hanzi, nimen yao zixi kan, "山". Haode, wo xie xia zhege  
208 hanzi, "山", ranhou wo hua yizuo shan.zhe jiu shi shan. Xian zai wo kaishi xie, kaishi, yi,  
209 er, san. (Ok. Jetzt werde ich für euch das Schriftzeichen des Berges schreiben. Dabei sollt  
210 ihr genau hinschauen. "山". Ok, jetzt schreibe ich das Schriftzeichen und male einen Berg.

211 Das ist ein Berg. Jetzt fange ich an zu schreiben. Der Anfang ist eins,  zwei,  drei,

212  .)

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<sup>43</sup> A stroke is a movement of a writing instrument on a writing surface. Chinese characters are basically logograms constructed with strokes. These strokes are the classified sets of line pattern that may be arranged and combined to form Chinese language signs (known as Hanzi) and in use in China, Japan, Korea, and other countries in Asia. Each Chinese character has individual stroke order. Thus, stroke order refers to the order in which the strokes are written. Online-text: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stroke\\_order](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stroke_order).

213 L: Ein, zwei, drei. Wenn ihr das Zeichen schreibt, schließt ihr bitte eure Mäuler. Schreibt  
214 bitte die Zeichen in Übereinstimmung mit dieser Sequenz: Ihr schreibt zuerst den senk-  
215 rechten Strich, die erste Vertikale. Der zweite Strich ist der Vertikaldreh. Der dritte Strich  
216 ist denn wieder in der Vertikalen zu schreiben.

217 S1: Frau Baum, schaut mal her, ist das richtig?

218 L: Okay, schaut ihr dann auf die Tafel: Drei Striche, der erste ist dazu da, die Vertikale zu  
219 schreiben, dann die Vertikale nach rechts, und dann die dritte Vertikale wieder nach links.

*[Die Schüler beginnen auf ihrem Übungsblatt ihre eigenen Schriftzeichen zu schreiben.]*

220 S3: Hade, wo ye xie wan le. (Ok, ich werde fertig.)

221 L: Hao le ma? (Seid ihr fertig?)

222 S4: Bu, hao. (Nicht ok.)

223 L: Buhao. Buhao yi si shi huai. Nimen wan cheng le ma? huida shi "mei you hao", zhe ge  
224 shi mei you xiewan. (Nicht ok. Es bedeutet "schlecht". Seid ihr fertig? Die richtige Ant-  
225 wort ist "mei you hao", was bedeutet, dass die Arbeit noch nicht beendet ist.)

226 S4: Buhao le (Es ist nicht gut).

227 L: Bu, ni cuo le. Women ying gai shuo mei you hao. (Nein, das ist falsch. Wir sollten  
228 sagen, dass wir noch nicht fertig sind.)

L: Mei you hao. Kuai, Leo, haolema? Amali, haolema? Tina, yijing haole. (Schnell! Leo,  
bist du fertig? Amali, bist du fertig? Tina ist schon fertig!)

## **2.9 Aufgaben auf dem Arbeitspapier**

229 Schaut mir bei dieser Aufgabe genau auf die Lippen. Seht genau hin. Augen auf und hört  
230 mir zu, schließt den Mund!

231 L: Shan ist der Berg; He ist der Fluss; Shu ist der Baum; Hua ist die Blume. Cao ist das  
232 Grass. Ihr werdet ausfinden, dass alle chinesischen Schriftzeichen auf diesem Papier  
233 nicht ganz fertig geschrieben sind und überall etwas fehlt. Es fehlen einige Striche. So  
234 wird es eure Aufgabe sein richtig aufzuschreiben, um diese Zeichen zu vervollständigen.  
235 Versteht ihr? Bitte Hände hoch. Wenn ihr Fragen habt, bitte Hände hoch.

236 L: Luben, qing buyao shuohua le! (Luben, halt bitte deinen Mund.)

*[Einige Schüler schreiben die Zeichen auf das Papier, wobei sie miteinander sprechen.  
Die Lehrerin wiederholt: "Seid bitte ruhig!"]*

237 L: Nimen keyi jinli ba zi dou xiexialai, jin kuai. Haode, nimen dou zuo de henhao!



- 238 (Ihr könnt euer Bestes versuchen, um die Zeichen so schnell wie möglich aufzuschreiben.  
239 Ok, gut, ihr habt eure Aufgabe sehr gut gemacht!)
- 240 Luben: Ich bin fertig. Ok, wie sagt man “fertig” auf Chinesisch?
- 241 L: Xie wan le. (Ich habe fertig geschrieben.)
- 242 Luben: Ich habe meine Aufgabe beendet.
- 243 L: So haben wir heute diese Stunde beendet. Ihr könnt nun eure Arbeitsbögen abgeben.  
244 Ich werde das für euch berichtigen und die Arbeitsbögen wieder in die Klasse zurück-  
245 bringen. Bleistifte und Schulbücher, bitte nicht zu mir hinwerfen! Bringt sie mir! Vielen,  
246 vielen Dank! Wir haben diese Stunde beendet.
- 247 L: Zaijian. (Auf Wiedersehen.)
- 248 S. Zaijian. Laoshi! (Auf Wiedersehen, Lehrerin!)