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Yufei Guo
Jiamusi University

Wenjing Wang
Cleveland MC2 STEM High School

Huiwen Li
Cleveland State University

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Chinese Language Teacher Professional Growth: A Case Study

Yufei Guo

Jiamusi University, China

Wenjing Wang

Cleveland MC2 STEM High School, USA

Huiwen Li

Cleveland State University, USA

ABSTRACT

Chinese language teachers grow with certain characteristics in their professional development. Knowing these characteristics can reveal a teacher's developmental needs which can inform the teachers and the teacher development facilitators. This case study examines the professional development of one Chinese language teacher that works in a high school in the United States. The Five-Stage Theory is employed to direct the examination of the teacher's growing path. Findings cover the challenges, efforts to cope with the changes, successes, and failures.

Keywords: Five-stage model, professional development, Chinese language teacher, development characteristics

1 Introduction

In the United States, Chinese has been a top-ten world language in terms of the learner population size. The results of a survey from American Council on the teaching of foreign languages (American Councils for International Education, 2017) indicate that Chinese language instruction is widespread within school systems in 49 states (except South Dakota) and the District of Columbia. Identified were approximately 1,145 schools and school districts offering Chinese classes, with a reported enrollment of over 46,735 students. With the large number of Chinese language enrollment in K-16 schools in America, it is critical and indispensable to have competent teachers to teach the language (Li, Pang, & Hu, 2018). The more competent a teacher is, the better students' achievement will be (Johansson, Myrberg, & Rosen, 2015). In light of this, teachers must have (and be able to exercise) a broad range of competence array every day in an especially complex environment. This is so that students can realize their full academic potential with the help of teachers (Jackson, 1990).

Evidence shows that novice teachers tend to experience big challenges. These challenges include new environmental adaptations, cultural shock, classroom management (Guo, Li, & Pang, 2019), and the teacher-student relationship (Han & Han, 2019). In addition, they often do not have sufficient knowledge of general pedagogy, skills on cross-cultural communication, Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) teaching, and resource obtaining (Liu, Kline, Li, & Ding, 2019). Obviously, they have certain needs for their early-stage professional development—learning for faster and better adaptation to the brand-new environment.

In fact, not only novice teachers have needs for the professional betterment. Researchers (e.g., Freeman, 1989; Li & Ding 2019; Li & Pang, 2019; Li, Li, & Zhang, 2005; Richard & Nunan, 1990; Schulz, 2000; Liu, Kline, & Davidova, 2019) have agreed that teachers at different

developmental stages all need to become well-skilled and perform competently in their profession. These researchers have attempted to identify areas in which teachers need help. For example, Li, Li, and Zhang (2005) investigated the construct model of K-12 teacher competence in China and claimed that teachers need to be trained on four factors—emotion and ethics, educative competence, motivation and regulation, and management competence. Freeman (1989) viewed teaching as a decision-making process and claimed that language teachers must be assisted through training and development to obtain certain categories of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness. Schulz (2000) proposed foreign language teachers should be trained through extended study-abroad programs, teacher behavior and skill research, and collaboration. Liu, Kline, Li, and Ding (2019) studied the K-12 CFL teacher's expected competence and identified two areas in need of training which are classroom management and pedagogy. However, these efforts were too general or too specific to reveal that competence of Chinese language teachers in the United States.

This case study records an interview with one Chinese language teacher in an American K-12 school. The aim of the study is to reveal the characteristics of the teacher's professional growth at different professional stages. Addressed for each specific stage are three research questions:

Question 1: What needs exist in different stages of the teacher's professional development?

Question 2: What challenges has the teacher experienced?

Question 3: How has the teacher dealt with the challenges in the self-development?

Through answering these three questions, we expect to look into the teacher's professional success in-depth and reveal what she has done to successfully address the needs to become successful in her career.

2 Theories: Five Stages of Chinese Language Teacher Professional Development

This research is designed under the Five-stage theory of Chinese language teacher professional development by Li and Pang (2018). According to the authors, Chinese language teachers typically go through five stages in their professional career: Aligning Stage, Beginning Stage, Changing Stage, Developing Stage, and Expertizing Stage (ABCDE stages). The ABCDE stages go in sequence and each stage has its special characteristics.

The aligning stage is the first stage. In this stage, novice teachers need to prepare their brain for the new environment, culture, system, responsibilities, and requirements. A good understanding of these parts will help new teachers to familiarize themselves with the new job and set up self-expectations.

The beginning stage is the second stage in which new teachers begin to know more deeply about the school system, local cultures, and students' socioeconomic statuses. Teachers also need to gain survival work skills.

The changing stage is the third stage. During this period, teachers have already mastered certain skills in their teaching positions and are able to solve basic problems with or without external assistance. And they can demonstrate stable satisfactory teaching. When planning to change the current performance status, though, they will still experience many new difficulties and challenges.

The fourth stage is called the developing stage. At this professional growth point, teachers should be competent for the teaching and other educational tasks. In addition, they begin developing their maturity as an experienced teacher. They should have the advanced, comprehensive skills to produce effective teaching and learning. And they can share their experience with novice and unexperienced teachers.

At the end of the developing stage, teachers have the potential to go into the expertizing stage, which is the highest development stage. In this stage teachers will have established a certain teaching skill set and a typical teaching methodology. They are able to reach a stable, high-level teaching effectiveness. More importantly, teachers begin reflecting, modeling, theorizing, and researching their own and even others' teaching practice, which is the "label" of expertized teachers.

The five-stage model outlines the fundamental characteristics of teacher's professional development. In light of this theory, the research aims to sketch the teacher's professional growth in the five stages with the data collected in the interview approach.

3 Methodology

3.1 Instrument

The interview employs a self-developed questionnaire. In total, there are 15 open-ended questions by which the teacher's professional development is recorded. The focuses are on professional preparation, difficulties and challenges, problem solving and self-adaptation, continued improvement, and long-term professional planning.

3.2 Participant

The participant in this study is called Ms. L. She is a female Chinese language teacher from China. She came to the United States in 2009 to pursue her Master's Degree of Education. She majored in Teaching Chinese Language in K-12 Schools. She has been a full-time Chinese teacher since 2011. She previously taught in an affluent school district. She now she works in a STEM high school in an urban area of Northeast Ohio. She teaches juniors and seniors the Chinese language.

The school she is working at is one of the most economically challenged school districts in the country where the average high school graduation rate is around 60 percent. The school was created through a public-private partnership among a number of organizations with the intention of providing students with an integrated curriculum that is informed by real-world experiences. The school serves about 400 students, all of whom are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

3.3 Procedures

The interview was conducted both online and face to face. The participating teacher was emailed the questionnaire and she answered the questions with sufficient time and comfort. Next, the researchers interviewed the teacher to verify the data. In the face to face session, the researchers also collected information on classroom management and the teacher-student and the teacher-parent relationship building techniques she uses.

4 Findings

4.1 Aligning stage

Q1: What motivated you to come to the United States?

A: I was majoring in English Education for my bachelor's degree in China. However, speaking to a native English speaker in my college back then was challenging because there was only one teacher for over 80 students. I was very good at English reading and writing, but when it came to conversations, I always felt that I was not a qualified English major. Therefore, I had been thinking about going abroad in my junior year to better practice my English, especially speaking it.

With the rapid economic development in China, the Chinese language had become more popular and was being taught in the USA more frequently. Also, the Confucius Institute had been in the news often. After graduating in 2009, I decided to start doing some research on the Confucius Institute. I always wanted to be a teacher since my childhood. Finally, I made the decision to pursue my Master's Degree in Education after undergraduate school. I strongly believed that the Confucius Institute would be where my career in teaching Chinese language would start.

Q2: How did you prepare for the career of Chinese language teaching? What did you experience?

A: My major in undergraduate school in China was in English education. While there, I learned the basic philosophies of education and how to teach Chinese students the English language. I practiced my skills in the student-teaching school. I also had a part-time job teaching elementary school students English on weekends.

Shortly after graduating from undergraduate school in 2009, I went to the US to start my master's degree. I first started the TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) program. Shortly after, I switched to Chinese Language Teaching. While studying, I served many different roles, such as the teaching assistant for professors, office assistant in the Education department, and as a teacher at a Weekend Chinese School, etc.

Q3: Did you switch smoothly from the Chinese culture to the American Culture in this period?

A: No. Looking back, my transition from Chinese to American culture is very typical for most Chinese students who go to the US to study. My case might be a little easier because of my American husband.

Regarding the transition in personal life from one culture to the other, I needed to get used to a lot of things in a short period of time: Americans like cold drinks; it is bazaar to order hot water in American restaurants; Americans don't share plates when eating; Americans have to pay tips when dining in; they need to pay sales taxes, etc.; and Americans need more personal space.

In the aspect of being a CFL teacher, it took me even longer to adjust to it physically and mentally. This was majorly caused by the different school and classroom settings, different languages, and different mindsets of the students. The American education system really took me a while to get used to. In the land of China, we listened to the lecturer, took notes, and would be good as long as we got a decent score on the exam. But in the US, teachers pay more attention

to classroom discussion and paper-writing. I felt challenged because of the language barrier and cultural differences.

Summary about Aligning Stage: Teachers start the Chinese language teaching career from various backgrounds. Due to insufficient CFL programs both in China and the United States, a large proportion of the CFL teachers graduated from an English or other foreign language undergraduate program. The good thing is these teachers could communicate with English speaking CFL learners; in addition, they learned how to teach a foreign language theoretically and technically. Thus, this made them somewhat easily switch to a CFL teaching profession. As all CFL teachers know, a native Chinese speaker will not necessarily be able to teach CFL since they need training on the language, teaching, and culture. Thus, after they have decided to teach CFL, they typically are required to get a relevant degree and receive the training. The teacher in this research followed the path from this perspective. Regarding the tasks for this step, in order to choose CFL teaching as a serious career, one must be self-motivated and do preliminary research to be prepared as much as possible.

4.2 Beginning Stage

Q4: Where did you start your Chinese language teaching job?

A: When I came to US in 2009, I started teaching Chinese language almost instantly by helping out in the Chinese club at CSU. I became the assistant in multiple college level classes and also privately tutored clients. I also joined Solon Weekend Chinese School to strengthen my teaching skills. My first full-time teaching job as a Chinese language teacher was in a school district in Northeast Ohio. I taught both high school and junior high school there. However, I had to leave the school after the first school year due to a budget cut. From 2012 until present, I have been teaching at a high school in an urban school district in Northeast Ohio.

Q5: How tough was the first period of your career? How did you deal with the challenges you encountered?

A: At my first full-time employer, I was hired as a substitute first. This was because I was still in the process of getting my teaching license. They gave me full-time benefits after my license was issued by the state during the last two months of the school year. In other words, I did not really experience the whole process of being a full-time teacher while there. Technically, I consider my current employer as my first full-time job position I have ever had since I started the school year full time. Because of my experience, I would love to share and help other teachers to better understand and prepare for their upcoming career.

I clearly remember walking into the building with no official welcome from anybody. The students were the first people to interact with me. They just started asking my name and who I was. I was actually happy about it because at least the students wanted to talk to me. I was told by the secretary that my classroom was on the second floor. She also gave me my schedule. After a brief preparation, students started to come in. I was pacing around and started to greet students. While I was in the middle of teaching, a girl suddenly shouted out “shut up b*tch!” and everybody got quiet in the classroom. My first reaction was to tell her to get out of the classroom and go to the administrator. The student was still saying something random continuously while she was walking out. She walked out after me to the office, too. I told the story and started to cry

out of my control just because nobody ever did that to me. Plus, I really did not do anything besides teach Chinese.

How did I deal with it? I did not deal with it well. I was not prepared for what happened. I did not have the protocol of how the school district and the school react for this kind of situation. I did not handle it calmly and professionally.

Summary about Beginning Stage: During the beginning stage, Novice teachers get the required degree and license and begin to face the real American class. At first, they are excited to enter the classroom with a high expectation from the students; then, they face the issues of “survive” the first semester. Those issues include how to deal with the student-teacher relationship, face the parents, cooperate with principals, find the suitable teaching materials, write academic curriculums, prepare every class, manage a good classroom, and to maintain a perfect teaching result. Every teacher wishes for smooth teaching until this dream is broken by the emergence of a variety of problems. For most native Chinese speakers, these incidents that happen in the classroom are totally out of their expectations. The shock is great because of the two different cultural thinking patterns. And the efficient communication is often blocked by the language barriers. In this stage, language proficiency improvement is the key element. Having a better understanding of the school district education status quo will help novice teachers to react promptly and accordingly. The teacher in this research also faced these challenges. She survived the first semester by perfecting her language proficiency, trying to understand different cultures and make use of every opportunity to improve himself/herself.

4.3 Changing Stage

Q6: What difficulties have you experienced in the changing stage?

A: In the changing stage, I definitely felt a lot more comfortable teaching in US. However, I still felt like I was lacking compared to a well-qualified Chinese teacher in America. Compared with other well accomplished local teachers, I still struggled in classroom management, teaching strategies, relationships with students & parents, and collaborating with my coworkers, etc.

Q7: What are the reasons for these difficulties?

A: There are various reasons for these difficulties including the shortcomings of myself as an individual. However, they were mostly caused by the following:

(1) Different education systems between China and the United States:

In China, as mentioned above, teaching is a career that receives a lot of respect from society. Students come to school prepared to learn and listen to the teachers. Therefore, teachers don't have to do too much to manage their classrooms. However, in America, teachers are the facilitators for students and can be challenged and questioned by students at any time. Therefore, it is more common to see incidents in the classroom, which can create classroom management more difficult.

(2) Difference between Chinese and American social statuses:

Students in China go to school with great intentions to score highly on their exams which will lead to a better career. However, in America with the well-developed social security system,

students don't feel as pressured as Chinese students to progress. Students receive free education from public schools which leads to more opportunities to get a decent job which leads to them living a comfortable life. The case is even worse when it comes to the most economically challenged inner cities such as the one I have been teaching at. Students don't always come to school ready to learn. Often times, they come because their situation at home is simply not good; no food to eat (free lunch at school), no heat, no A/C in the summer, etc.

(3) Difference between Chinese and American cultures:

A big reason why I did not feel like a well-respected teacher was that I was working in America in the Chinese way. In China, elders (teachers) command much more respect. We either don't get a chance to express our thoughts or we don't want to do it because of the fear of repercussions. It is not that common to challenge our elders. However, in America, the country where freedom of speech is valued highly, people talk directly and are not scared to voice their opinions. By communicating in the Chinese way, I did not let my voice be heard at all. Because of this, administrators thought I was the one that was not innovative or engaging.

(4) Language barriers

Even though I majored in English in college, most of the time I just learned from the textbook and lectures from the teachers whose native language was not English. We only had a one-hour weekly session to speak to the only native English-speaking teacher. The typical Chinese education totally differs from the American one: to apply the knowledge in reality. This being said, the English I learned in China did not prepare me well to teach in the US. The English I learned in college was not practical. I felt the most challenged the first year I started working at my current employer, an urban public school. My students often speak slang and they talk quickly. In the past, I often paused and looked confused when the students were asking me questions. That made my class management even more difficult because some students would just laugh at me not understand my English. This really upset and embarrassed me.

Q8: What have you done to overcome those difficulties?

A: For a long period of time, I was scared to go to work in the morning because I did not know what to expect. I hated that I did not know how to deal with some of the situations caused by cultural shock. I often felt that I was not professional or well qualified to be a teacher in the US. I didn't think I would last at this job for a long period of time. However, I knew realistically that I needed this job to support my family. I also was not going to stop pursuing my dream job because of the temporary challenges.

After reflecting on my classes every day and getting feedback from my administrators & colleagues, I made plans for myself to get better at classroom management. I requested to observe my colleague's classes during my planning periods. I took notes on how they handled specific situations. By saying that, I mean very specific situations: what to do when students are not engaged; what to do when students get out of their seats without permission; what to do when foul language is being used; and what to do when there is an argument or even a fight that occurs in the classroom, etc.

I began to try and overcome my fears by talking to my colleagues. I challenged myself to participate at each meeting, speak up when I did not feel I was treated fairly, and also ask for funding for my classroom activities, etc.

Regarding the English aspect, I made plans to have lunch with voluntary students to practice my English and also become more involved in the lives of the students. I overcame my English barrier very fast both in school and at home (my husband is American and doesn't know how to speak Chinese which forces me to speak English). Over time, I built my confidence up.

Summary about Changing Stage: Chinese and American education systems vary in many different aspects and the cultural shock becomes unavoidable. How to minimize the negative effect of the cultural shock and adapt to the new culture is the key element in the changing stage. Teachers have gone through the novice level but not totally integrated into the environment yet. The passive adaption status needs to be changed into the initiative one. They need to learn to accept and appreciate the beauty of other cultures for there is no right or wrong cultures. Classroom management is a cultural issue. Traditional Chinese education emphasizes obey & follow principle in the classroom while the American class emphasizes independence and personalization. Due to the two different concepts on classroom management, the conflicts become inevitable in the Chinese classroom for Chinese teachers.

To solve this, the teacher in this research changed her attitude towards classroom management from passive to initiative and improved her self-reflection abilities by writing teaching feedback after each class to shorten the distances with students. She tries to walk into the world of students by standing in their shoes while also communicating with peers and experts. These strategies will help teachers transform smoothly from the changing stage to developing stage.

4.4 Developing Stage

Q9: Tell us three most critical things that you dealt with in the developing period?

A: I think that the 3 most critical issues to address for an experienced teacher are:

1) how to motivate students; 2) how to engage students; and 3) how to maintain good personal and professional relationships in school.

Q10: How did you motivate your students?

A: I strongly believe that the teacher-student relationship helps motivate students. I enjoy exchanging my experience, culture and knowledge with my students. At the beginning of each year, I always spend the whole day talking about my background, my teaching style, my focus in the class, and my expectations that I will intensively reinforce throughout the whole year. I also enjoy talking to students after class when it's requested. However, not every student likes to become close to teachers. I have had students before that did not want to share anything with me besides their work. That is OK and needs to be respected. If I cannot motivate my students, I first refer them to our school counselor to see if he/she can better motivate them. In the meantime, I contact the legal guardians of the students with my concerns about their low academic performance. Usually with the support of the other staff and communication with the guardians, the students should show a little difference but it's not always guaranteed. If this strategy doesn't work, I will bring up the names of the students in the staff meeting and get feedback from my colleagues about them. Soon after, a parent-teacher conference will be scheduled as needed and if approved by the administrators.

Most of my students are very interested in Chinese language and Chinese culture. But some of the them are just not motivated at all and always give me an indifferent look. With those students, I used to not know what to do and almost disliked them. They were not doing my work

or trying to participate in the class at all. However, with my years of experience, I now like to talk to them more often and accept them with open arms. Some of them are not focused in school for other reasons in which we are not aware. Being a Chinese teacher does not mean I should be only caring about their Chinese work. I care more about being a teacher!

Q11: How did you engage your students?

A: This is a great question and I believe no matter how many years you have been teaching, every teacher is still trying to find out different ways to engage students. As a new teacher years ago, I used to blame students for not participating in the class because they lacked motivation. I used to think that my job was to teach. As long as I delivered my lesson, I did my job. However, after years of real experience in the classroom, I did realize the fact that simply delivering your lesson is far from enough and an accomplished teacher. It is essential to plan our lessons in a fun and differentiated way to engage students with different needs and learning abilities.

First of all, getting to know each of your students is critical in the process of engaging your students. Before I get a new group of students, the first thing I do is to get familiar with their names and confirm with them the first time I meet them that I am pronouncing their names correctly. Imagine someone is pronouncing our name in the wrong way. We will feel uncomfortable and disrespected too. I also ask my student if there is a nickname for me to go with. Knowing their names not only shows our respect and professionalism to them, but also builds up our relationship with the students. In addition to the names, another thing I must do is to request the IEP (Individual Education Program) of some certain students from our school specialists. This is a must to know for me to design my lessons. But make sure you keep all of that information confidential - including not to label their names out, not to leave their IEP paperwork unlocked, or talk about their IEPs in public.

Secondly, because of my school's unique structure (STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), I have to make sure my lesson is somehow connected each quarter with the other subjects.

The last and most important one is to have a well-planned and interesting lesson. Make sure your lesson is full of structure, differentiates, has activities to collect learning outcomes, and corresponds to the previous and following lessons.

Q12: How did you maintain good relationships in school?

A: My advice regarding this question is always to be professional, honest, and direct. To be professional: come to work on time, attend required meetings on time, participate in school events, provide feedback, and work with colleagues cooperatively. To be honest: open to take constructive criticism, own up to any mistakes and refrain from showing favoritism. To be direct: do the right things as a professional and speak up when you feel you are not treated fairly. Remember that America is a country that was established on freedom of speech.

I always consider myself lucky to have all the people around to support me and/or to constructively criticize my strategy in order for me to get better. I always share the conversation between my former principal and me. We sat down for a long talk after he observed my class in my first year working in the CMSD (Cleveland Metropolitan School District). He came in towards the end of the class and the students were not on task and the noise level was high out of control. After the students left, he told me that he understood that I was a new teacher and needed time to get better. However, that if I didn't try to improve continuously and I might consider changing my career.

My mentor also significantly influenced me on how to become a good foreign language teacher. I went to her Spanish class so many times to observe and learn. She was my idol for a while before I established my teaching styles.

Summary about Developing Stage: Maintaining motivation is the key to success. Eggleton (1992) points out that gaining experience and using some of techniques will help teachers feel better about the quality of his or her teaching. As a professional educator, the teacher must realize that the quality of a learning experience lies in the teacher's ability to create that quality. In the developing stage, the ability to create a high-quality learning experience and engage the students in the classroom becomes more critical.

In this stage, the teacher researched has established a stable relation with students, parents and principals, and she is no longer an “outsider” in the school. She becomes mature in both her teaching and culture mindset, and she is able to present her teaching products, mentor novice teachers, and train other disciplines teachers with the abundant experiences. She had formed her own methodology, idea and pedagogy.

5. Expertizing Stage

Q13: Looking back, what made you successful going through the previous stages?

A: I can say that I am very proud of my job. Over the last 10 years, I have been growing with Confucius Institute. I came to study because of the Confucius Institute and I used to be a student worker for the Confucius Institute. I was one of the first teachers who invited the teachers from China to teach in our schools. My classroom is also one of the first and few Confucius classrooms in the Cleveland area.

Also, I am proud of my students. They have been not only learning Chinese in the classroom, but also participating in a variety of events held by the Confucius Institute, such as HSK testing, Chinese New Year celebration, Chinese Bridge Summer Camp, etc. My students from the summer camp over years have been helping me a lot to promote the Chinese program in my school. I was so thankful and honored to be chosen as one of the chaperones for 2019 Chinese Bridge Summer Camp to witness my students' lifetime experience.

In addition, I am proud because my experience is valuable and helpful to the new teachers. I love to share my stories with them and help them better prepare for their upcoming new page of their life. People call me a teaching expert. I assume it is because I often make reflections on my teaching and provide training to novice teachers with my expertise. There may be a long way to go for me to become a well-established expert. I need to do more research to inform practice of both mine and others.

Q14: What do you plan to do to make yourself an expert in this profession?

A: In the near future, I plan to pursue my career more intensively. Specifically, I would like to advance my degree to the PhD to better reflect and research on Chinese teachers' teaching strategies. I would like to reflect on my teaching style, teaching methodology, and whether they are scientifically supported. I would also like to write out my strength and publish them to help not only the Chinese language teacher but also any other subject teachers.

In addition, I want to expand the Chinese program in my school to more different aspects and take my students out of the city and country yearly. Besides those, I am very interested in helping the new teachers for their careers with my real experience of getting degrees from both

China and USA and also having taught both in a suburban school and an urban school. I enjoy sharing my stories, especially about classroom management and working with the other professionals.

Q15: What advice would you give to new teachers?

A: I believe that it is a good idea to let pre-service teachers go do the student-teaching in both urban and suburban school settings. This way, they can see the difference and see which one is the better fit for their careers. This will help them avoid the struggling and unpreparedness that I experienced after getting the job. And here is a brief list I suggest new teachers to keep in mind: Mentally prepare for the new career and new culture; Lower expectations and be ready for the ongoing challenges; Improve the English proficiency - especially the conversational skills; Observe colleague's classes; Go to professional development workshops; Be humble & patient; and lastly and most importantly, be ready to improve every day.

Summary about Expertizing Stage: Expertizing Stage is a great leap. It builds on the first four stages. There are three keywords in this stage: reflection, research and professional plan. Reflection is the process to reflect and assess one's own teaching method to see if it is the best or reasonable, which part can be farther promoted and evolved; Research is built on the reflection, which is to summarize one's teaching experiences and form a series of featured teaching mode and pedagogy; professional planning is the step to expand one's experience to other disciplines and upgrade to a rational macro level. To fulfill this stage, one should have a long-term plan for the professional development instead of immovability, one needs to sublimate his practices with creativity to a theory level which can benefit more teachers in the future.

5 Conclusions

Based on the five-stage development mode, this case study observed a local Chinese female teacher's professional development. Due to the data collected from the 15 questions, the study sketched her professional development and revealed her characteristics of a teacher's professional growth at different professional stages from three aspects: needs, challenges and solutions. It concluded that:

- (1) Generally, her professional development is in compliance with the five-stage mode (ABCDE stages).
- (2) Each stage will face different needs and challenges and different solutions.
- (3) To be a qualified CFL teacher, one should be prepared on degree, license, language, classroom management skills, culture adaptations, teaching methodologies and be self-motivated and a life learner.

Limitations exist in this study. This is a single case study on one Chinese language teacher and the teacher may not be a good representative of the large CFL teacher population. To reveal the characteristics of the teachers in this profession, a large sample of the target population and both quantitative and qualitative studies should be conducted to depict a teachers' professional development.

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