TEACHER VOICE FROM CHINA  
THE IMPACT OF CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIENCES ON TERTIARY EFL TEACHERS’ MOTIVATION FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Feng Yan  
University of Northampton, UK  
Yu Liping  
Shaoguan University

Abstract  
Based on the researchers' assumption that teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in China with cross-cultural experiences have better cultural awareness than their peers, the research was conducted to investigate the impact of the experiences on tertiary EFL teachers' motivation for professional development. Narrative accounts from in-depth interviews with a case were triangulated with the data from a questionnaire survey N = 39, and participant observations in two Chinese universities. Meaning and knowledge were socially constructed with the researchers' own career identity and reflexivity as Chinese tertiary EFL teachers studying in English-speaking countries. The findings support the existing literature on the positive impact of cross-cultural experiences on tertiary EFL teaching. The study also reveals that teachers with the experiences have better motivation in seeking professional development than those who have not. Multiple-dimensional factors on the diverse teacher motivation indicate that tertiary EFL teachers are encountering dilemmas in their professional development terms of finance, time and other resources at their disposal. This implies that better support is needed to encourage teachers for their active involvement and investment in professional development whilst teaching qualification and effectiveness should be further assessed as well.

Keywords  
teacher motivation, cross-cultural experience, EFL teacher professional development, teacher voice, China

1. Research background  
1.1. EFL teaching and cross-cultural awareness  
In China, the perceived role of English in the modernization drive has made it a compulsory subject in curriculum at all three educational levels. Hu (2005) Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has witnessed a rapid advancement in theory and research and practice in the past two decades. In particular, the mid 1990s had brought forth a series of reform in the curriculum of English from primary and secondary levels to the tertiary level (Wu, 2005). Radical reforms emphasise the importance of teaching methodology. Ministry of Education (2001). Consequently, communicative approaches were perceived as a forward move in language teaching. Recent study begins to attach importance of teacher learning (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Wu (2004) in the EFL teaching process.

Meanwhile, the increasing recognition of the importance of culture in language learning has raised the queries of the appropriateness of various teaching approaches for Chinese learners in a Chinese
culture of learning context” with essential Chinese characteristics” Cortazzi Jin 1996 [55] 2001 [In Cortazzi 2002] Studies [6] [12] Tang [Absalom 1998] also identify some communication difficulties which arise when Eastern and Western cultures meet in the context of language teaching and learning. Despite the increased interaction between Chinese and Western academics it is evident that misunderstandings and even antagonism are regular features of cross-cultural discourses Therefore language teaching is no longer seen as just the teaching of linguistics and communicative competences Brown 1994] but also the teaching of the culture by raising learners' cross-cultural awareness Uchida 1997] Accordingly teaching methodology has been reoriented aiming to foster learners' critical thinking and autonomous learning skills Text books have been revised prioritising communicative competence as well as culture learning Pre and in service EFL teacher training Paine 1991 Yang Wu 1999 [Zhu 2003] has also been facilitated with better resources and higher quality Above all tertiary EFL teacher professional development has been given much prominence Gu 2007]

1. Professional development in EFL teacher education

Chinese government documents and regulations with regards to teacher education contribute to the unprecedented development in teachers' professionalism since the 1980s Zhou Reed 2005 Wang 2004] In particular EFL teacher professional development has been influenced by the government priorities For a long time teacher professionalism in China used to emphasise teachers' academic qualification The” Teacher Act” National People's Congress of China 1993] Substantial efforts have been made to improve the quality of existing EFL teachers in some local or provincial level institutions who started teaching with bachelor degrees of English Language Many teachers were financially supported by the government or their institutions to take part in different forms of continuing studies For example the Sin-British cooperation in EFL Teacher Education Programmes was formalised in 1976 by the Department for International Development DFID This has created chances for tertiary EFL teachers from across the country to 20 years to enhance their culture knowledge and language teaching skills through their Western tutors Gu 2007] Another programme of Post-Graduate Diploma in English Language Teaching PGDELT jointly run by Chinese and Singaporean governments provided opportunities of cross-cultural learning for at least 700 tertiary EFL teachers in the similar period Chen Lim Gopinathan 2003] However the increased demand for the “change in the nature of purpose and the mode of delivery” of professional development in teacher education Garner 2006] 7 is particularly challenging given the growing disparities in wealth within the country and the unevenness of teaching force Paine Fang 2006 2007] In the recent few years teachers are no longer automatically respected for their knowledge and are also expected to undertake more higher education themselves Potts 2000] 310 In addition the increased demand for EFL teaching as profession Johnston 1997] Nunan 2001] from educational authorities to key stakeholders has called for new professional development programmes Teachers are currently encouraged to seek professional development to provide quality teaching and to get professional promotion Richards Nunan 1990] But instead of getting financial support and being allocated study time for professional development from their institutions or the government teachers are expected to manage themselves Paine Fang 2007] with little resources at their disposal

The demand for professional development has put teachers in the spotlight As professionals teachers find it very challenging to live up to the social expectations Most of the teachers are aware of the necessity of professional development especially in terms of cross-cultural learning and experiences However their motivation for professional development varied

1.3 Theoretical framework

The theory of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation applied to this research is largely based on the Self Determination Theory [SDT] Deci Ryan 1985 Ryan Deci 2000] developed from theories like Herzberg 1993] Deci and Ryan use the concepts of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation to differentiate the inherent satisfactions of doing an activity from the expectations of an outcome or instrumental value which can vary in the degree of self determination In other words human behaviour can be out of the innate needs for competence autonomy and relatedness recognizing that basic need satisfaction accrues in part from engaging in interesting activities or out of social or environmental
Research aims and questions

Tertiary EFL teachers' motivation for professional development from teachers’ own perspective has yet drawn enough attention in China. The void led to the initial idea of conducting a pilot study of this nature. As tertiary EFL teachers in China, the researchers began to develop some research questions and formulate a conceptual framework for the research. It was based on their long years of teaching experiences and their own cross-cultural learning experiences in English speaking countries. The more exposure in the target culture, the higher their awareness of the importance of cross-cultural knowledge and understanding in their teaching. However, they are highly mindful of the great disparities in EFL teaching in Chinese higher education in qualification requirement and teaching effectiveness assessment to be coupled with economic imbalance in teaching contexts.

In order to rationalise the multi-dimensional factors in the research contexts, the researchers focused mainly on investigating into the impact of tertiary EFL teachers’ cross-cultural experiences on their motivation for professional development. In particular, it tended to capture EFL teachers’ cross-cultural awareness and learning that contribute to their teaching effectiveness and further motivate them for professional development. In so doing, this study highlighted the efficacy of the cross-cultural experiences in relation to their professional identity construction and reconstruction. Therefore, it is not the purpose of this small scale research to provide a generalisable picture of EFL teacher education with regards to teacher professional development in cross-cultural contexts. Rather, it aims to provide an initial framework for future research into teachers’ professional path by linking it with their professional life.

Reviewing the literature and reflecting upon their own cross-cultural knowledge and experiences, the researchers developed assumptions that EFL teachers with cross-cultural experiences have better cultural awareness than their peers. This enables them to have more advantages in terms of language competence, teaching strategies and effectiveness, which further motivate them for professional development. The assumptions have a strong base on the researchers’ personal professional development. Of central concern of the study was to investigate two main questions: (a) How do tertiary EFL teachers with cross-cultural experiences evaluate the experiences in their career life? (b) What are the impacts of the experiences on teachers’ motivation for professional development?

Methodology

Based on the aforementioned assumptions, this pilot study was a flexible designed one using narrative inquiry approach to examine the in-depth teacher voice on their professional life with respect to cross-cultural experiences. It was built upon social constructivist framework in that knowledge is a human product socially and culturally constructed through interactions with the researchers and the researched and with the environment they live in. The researchers share the consensus that reality is constructed and invented through human activity. Kukla 2000 and culture and context play a vital role in understanding the knowledge and interpretation of the world.

Methods of data collection

Qualitative data were primarily collected from teachers’ career stories from narrative interviews with an opportunity sample of a tertiary EFL teacher from China. The data were triangulated with a self-designed questionnaire survey coupled with through the researchers’ journals, informal conversation notes and participant observations in two universities in China. The researchers’ reflexivity, Schon 1983 as two EFL teachers from the two universities under research was constructed with the data from the questionnaire survey administrated to a purposive and selective sample N = 39 in the university where one of the researchers attached. Informal conversations between the researchers and participants on the topic were retrieved. Meaning and knowledge were thus socially constructed in the research process.
Justification of the methods of data collection

The major research instrument for this case study was a narrative inquiry of teachers' stories about their career life. Recent research by Connelly, Giannini, Elliot, and Webster convincingly demonstrates that narratives are not purely individual productions. They are powerfully shaped by social and cultural and historical conventions as well as by the relationship between the storyteller and the interlocutor. The data collection was followed by a period of reflection recorded in a research journal which allowed the researchers to examine the data from several angles.

Ethical issues

Ethical guidelines for scholarly and professional research activities in China are yet to be formulated and applied within the context for researching education. Given there is a growing awareness of ethically sensitive issues in research, most often, research practices are executed under general laws or common sense principles and are validated by certain conventions followed through by researchers. Therefore, in this research potential ethical problems and dilemmas regarding informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, and subjectivity and bias were identified and cleared with greatest efforts and caution.

The sample and the questionnaire

The questionnaire survey was conducted in two provincial level universities in China located in second tier cities in terms of educational and economic strength. The universities witnessed the expansion from late 1990s. Lin and Zhang (2006) from teachers' colleges to comprehensive universities in the recent decade. In one university among the 83 full time EFL teachers from the School of Foreign Language, 7 of teachers had overseas study or living experiences over a period of 3 months with full or partial funding from the university or other official sources. Another 20 of the teachers had about 23 weeks overseas study or travel experiences. In the other university among 97 full time EFL teachers 25 of the teachers have overseas study or living experiences. Those who joined the schools before the year 2000 are mostly bachelor degree holders but have furthered their degrees in the recent years through in-service professional development training.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The close part investigated participants' demographic information and general perceptions and perspectives on EFL teaching and professional development. It was in four Likert Scale rating from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". The open-ended part sought further data on teachers' motivation for professional development. The survey was administered by email to a convenient sample of 56 of whom the researchers had their email addresses, since during the research period both researchers were studying abroad. The valid return was 69 of 56.

Case study sample

The case study sample has over 30 years of tertiary teaching experience with a diploma of TESL and one year experience as an academic visiting scholar and 3 months placement all from overseas.

Data analysis

The data analysis approach was interpretative and descriptive in nature. This approach was based on the principle that theory and data collection and data analysis are closely related. It is supported by Miles and Huberman (1994) that theoretical underpinning of a social construction of reality plays a crucial part in data analysis. The data in transcript were quoted verbatim whereas the numeric data were analysed using simple percentage description to ascertain and to verify the values, beliefs, attitudes and perspectives of teachers through their narratives. The researchers were highly mindful of the issues related to the validity and reliability of the self-designed survey plus the interpretative and descriptive approach to data analysis. Therefore, instead of looking for illustrative examples within the transcripts of teacher accounts of their life stories, the researchers analysed the data with a more thorough process. That is by reading, categorising, testing and refining, which was repeated until all categories were compared against all the participants' responses and the analysis was validated across
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The validity and reliability of the methods was enhanced.

4. Findings

4.1 Survey findings

First of all, the survey revealed that all the participants strongly agreed that culture has a close association with language and that cross-cultural experiences can play an important role in EFL teaching. All of them with or without overseas study or living experiences tried to introduce culture-specific elements in their classroom teaching to raise interests from students. However, 97.4% of the participants found it challenging in explaining culture-specific issues in EFL teaching due to the lack of their personal cross-cultural experiences in English-speaking countries. This quote is from the questionnaire data of a teacher with over 15 years teaching who only recently got her MA degree through a part-time degree programme:

We know too little about the culture.

I am always feeling quite embarrassed because I just have the knowledge from books and Internet without any immediate experience.

Secondly, with regards to the impact of cross-cultural experiences on EFL teachers' professional development, the responses were mostly positive. In specific, all of the participants expressed their wish to have a chance to experience in person the cultures of the English speaking countries.

And all I have known is just from books and magazines that is why I have been dreaming of going abroad and enjoying a cultural experience.

— Questionnaire data from a teacher

Thirdly, teachers hoped to be sponsored or supported financially if seeking their professional development overseas. Though 11 participants 28.2% would like to pay for their cultural learning overseas, 71.8% of them did not want to do so. They would like their university or their college to pay for their professional development. Through years of observation and informal conversations with teachers, the researchers find the following quote representing the complex feelings towards seeking opportunities for cross-cultural experiences:

How can I afford it? My years of saving will not be enough for a return ticket.

— Informal conversation with a teacher

In addition, the survey also collected data from the teachers who had some cross-cultural experiences overseas about their perspective on the impact of their experiences on their motivation for professional development. Evaluating their own teaching before or after the experiences, teachers with cross-cultural experiences overseas claimed that there was great improvement. Most of them who strongly agreed said that cross-cultural experiences became an incentive in their academic research and have a strong impact on their motivation for further professional development.

I guess so. The most impressive change on me is that I become keen on creating a leaning atmosphere for the students to learn rather than giving them the knowledge.

— Questionnaire data from a teacher

Yes. The reality experience in the English-speaking country provides me a better access to cultural specific elements which enable me to give my students a more vivid and clear description.

— Questionnaire data from a teacher

I have to admit that the program I receive in a UK university is a very professional one. And I do appreciate the teachers parts of the teaching in class. It includes arrangements of the classroom setting, time management, lesson proceeding, all the organizations of the course. I think this is mostly used in my future teaching. Having witnessed their teaching, I realize that the teaching in classroom can be so flexible and colourful. I found that the teacher is just one of the roles of the whole process. I can actually count so much in helping his/her students to adjust their states to learn.

— Questionnaire data from a teacher
4. Narrative accounts of the case

Below is a much detailed description by the case about her personal cross-cultural experiences and her professional development.

After 15 years of teaching, I often found myself get stuck whenever cultural things coming up. Then I had hard to prepare myself to sit for ELTS and got an overseas scholarship. It was my first time to be exposed to an English environment and all impressed me. I noticed a significant difference after my overseas study. Consciously or subconsciously, I drew my cultural experiences into my teaching. I made a lot of comparison on the differences. To my surprise, my students gave their full attention when I taught. I realized that it was the cultural elements that added spices into the routine language learning.

Besides, my idea about what is a responsible teacher is different from before. My teaching methodology has been changed with a mixture of both. My work has been recognized by the university authority and I have been promoted to higher position and given lot titles.

After some years, I found what I knew was far from enough. This prompted me to further my overseas study for the third time. This time, I partly funded myself. Some colleagues said that at my age I should stay at home and enjoy my comfortable life with my husband. They think what I know is enough. Yes, I have to spend 4 months of my salary to partly fund myself for a 3-month academic visit in UK. Besides, I have to leave my husband behind. You may ask what make me to make such a choice. My conscience and responsibility requires me to do so. Even if there are just a few years before I retire. I still feel a strong need to learn. The more you put time, money, energy into your study, the more productive your teaching will be. I benefited from my two previous studies abroad. That is a strong impact that has enabled me for my third study abroad. My students and my university, recognition of my work convinced me that my study abroad worth whatever the loss.

5. Discussion

The understanding of cross-cultural experiences on EFL teaching

Although some teachers in the research context still hold their self-conceptions of good teachers, namely teachers with sound pedagogical content knowledge, Zhang & Watkins 2007, teaching is no longer conceptualised as a “performance” entailing the effective utilisation and delivery of state prescribed texts; Cortazzi & Jin 2001. All the participants agreed that language is cultural bound. Culture is an essential part of language learning which requires meaningful interaction in the target language.

To me, language is like a tree trunk. Culture is like the leaves and flowers on it. Teaching language without elements of the culture must be tasteless and boring. Teaching language through culture is meaningful. Cross-cultural awareness can build learners’ positive attitude toward alien cultures.

Narrative accounts from the case teacher

Teachers with personal experiences in English speaking countries usually have a very positive attitude toward the cultures and people of those countries which help them in turn to promote their teaching and further explore the target language and culture; Lamie 2006.

Teaching with cross-cultural awareness can open the students’ eyes to a different world of culture and people and can nurture the student’s minds for critical thinking and hearts for global awareness.

Interview data from the case teacher

Researchers found that exposure to Western methodological innovation and training was shown to enable Chinese teachers to make more rational decisions on approaches to language teaching and learning. Gu 2004. However, due to the lack of personal cross-cultural knowledge and experiences, teaching can be challenging whenever culture issues have to be addressed. This can create confusion, frustration and tensions that act as obstacles to language learning. Only by reflecting on their own level of cross-cultural awareness, can they hope to design and implement a culturally valid
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sylabus that will ease the transition of students to a western system of education. Otherwise, they tend to judge the elements from the perspective of Chinese culture.

Explaining some culture-specific phenomenon very clearly is very challenging because I have no experience in English-speaking countries. My lack of experience in overseas countries prevents me from explaining more the most challenging thing is that you make a laughingstock of explanation just because you learn something about it only from reading materials and judge or reason it subjectively in a wrong way.

— Questionnaire data from a teacher

On some occasions, teachers have to explain to their students culturally embedded concepts and norms they themselves are not clear. Misunderstanding is thus unavoidable if cultural settings and contexts are viewed from their own perspective. Those who have cross-cultural experiences have an advantage in that they have more authentic knowledge to share with students, thus their teaching is more effective and interesting.

There minds widen, horizon broaden and more importantly, their style of thinking, understanding and acting are also being better cultivated in a silent way.

—the researcher's journal

Thus, Aktuna (2005) argues that for teachers to make more socially culturally informed pedagogical decisions, awareness raising and scrutiny need to be incorporated into EFL teacher education.

If the teacher does not have the overseas experience, the students may not believe in the details fully.

— Questionnaire data from a teacher

5. Motivation for professional development

Given the general high awareness of the importance of cross-cultural experiences in EFL teaching, teachers' motivation for professional development varies. This can be influenced by a number of interpersonal, social and environmental factors of self-concept, life experiences, interests and abilities and have long-term consequences on people's professional life, well-being and their social situation. Creed & Wong (2006) Motivation of EFL teachers has been much researched (Johnson 1986; Hargreaves 1998; Ryan 2000; Deci 2000; Dormye 2001). The definition of teaching as a profession whose energy is supplied from intrinsic motives and states that there are some damaging elements which weaken and destroy the intrinsic character of teacher motivation. The four key factors influencing teacher motivation for professional development identified by Stout (1996) are gaining new knowledge and skills, salary enhancement, certificate maintenance and career mobility. These factors are considered in the interpretation of the data from this pilot study.

5.1 Financial support verse salary enhancement

Financial support for professional development is considered as crucial factor influencing motivation for professional development. This is understood in two ways: money invested in the professional development process and rewards in terms of money after the process. Opportunities for cross-cultural experiences are tempting but not easily available. In the research contexts administered by provincial governments, the chances for professional development sponsored or partially supported in finance by the universities or the host universities are reserved for a limited few. Often considered as backbone teachers, the tight budget from official level makes it not practical or feasible to support most of the teachers. For the majority of teachers, they have to either manage by themselves or simply regard it as a dream as quoted in the findings. The case teacher gave the following accounts on the existing reality of the barriers which caused tertiary EFL teachers' reluctance to pay for their professional development: given that they still had the motivation for it.

They have no money. They have to buy houses, raise the baby... The sad thing is that most teachers do not have the chance to experience cultures of English speaking countries but both the government and university do not provide enough funds. Only those teachers in key universities are under consideration. They think it is the government or the school responsibility to pay for their education.
They have strong emotion against the present administration. They are not happy about the uneven distribution of teaching facilities and funds, more exactly to say the government gives too much privilege to those key universities”.

Besides, according to Johnson (1986) merit pay indicates a bonus plan that supplements the standard pay scale and rewards teachers for special services, a multiple track pay scale that provides rapid salary advancement for outstanding teachers or conducting in-service training. In other words, in order to keep higher levels of pay and status, teachers carry on showing high performance. For high performance, economic rewards are important. Hawley (1985) agrees.

5.2.2 Certificate maintenance versus life priority

On the one hand, as identified in Li (1999) in the universities researched, a large number of teachers were recruited with the minimum required qualification for teaching. That is a bachelor degree. This is in contrast with some developed countries where individuals prequalify for entry into higher education conditional on a graduate degree. Besides, unlike the current highly competitive job market, graduates of English major in 1990s were in high demand whilst provincial level universities were not the first choice for those who did not have intrinsic motivation for teaching. Naturally, many graduates with master degree or above chose to go for professions with better financial rewards. Therefore, those who joined teaching with limited qualification and experiences are now encountering dilemmas which they find very difficult to cope with. To some, however, their career priority gives way to their life priority.

They have younger kids to take care of. Their kids’ education and care is more important than anything else. They are waiting for their kids to grow up. By then, they may think they are ready to go. Or they think their kids’ education is more important than their own. They would rather save money to send their kids abroad, not they themselves. It is a fact. Life is expensive. The first thing in life is to eat and have a shelter. The next thing is to think about promoting one’s education — the case.

On the other hand, institutional policies are not consistent in the universities researched which sometimes discourage EFL teachers taking initiatives in professional development. A call for cross-cultural learning experiences to enhance classroom performance has been chronically ignored due to the universities’ tight budgets reserved for staff development. In some cases, EFL teachers, those who study for further degree within the home universities have more incentive in terms of the benefits and allowances during the study period. Moreover, there is no clear difference in the pay scale upon their return between those studied in or out of the country. Besides, once teachers reach a certain degree or title, teaching effectiveness is not evaluated to make the pay difference. This helps to explain why most of the teachers under research did not have the intrinsic motivation in paying for their professional development, especially programmes involving cross-cultural learning which could be more costly.

I know that it is especially important for EFL teachers to have some cross-cultural experiences, preferably from abroad. But if all they the university the researchers note want is a better degree to show the inspectors from the Ministry of Education for evaluation, the researchers note I can just get one for them by joining a part-time degree programme in China.

Informal conversation with a teacher

The motivation for development after degree upgrading relies on teachers’ priority. The barriers in their professional life could be the conflicts between their heavy teaching workload and their family responsibility and commitment. This left them little time or energy for studying. Forrester and Motteram (2006) Therefore there was a lack of motivation from some teachers for actively seeking further personal and professional development at their own cost, especially in a country where English is used as a native language.

5.2.3 Gaining knowledge and skill verses time

Professional development programmes enable teachers to gain knowledge and skill. However, it demands enormous efforts and time, which is likely to be constrained by heavy work and family related
commitment and responsibilities. Forrester et al. (2006) and Garner (2006) argue that there is a link between attitude and provision, both of which have contributed to the perception of a professional development experience. There has been growing unease and frustration noticeable amongst teachers at various stages about the way in which award-bearing professional development course have been structured and delivered. When teachers receive no support in respect of tuition fees, they become defensive about and resistant to any further demands on their time. Garner (2006) argues that the question raised by Garner (2006) that “Who benefits from teachers’ professional development activity?” bearing in mind that there are intrinsic as well as more pragmatic benefits and that these will relate to quite distinct audiences deserves attention.

Who benefits? Why bother? We do not want the pressure to further their study. What we have is enough. We want the time to enjoy life. We do realise the real needs for improve our cross-cultural awareness and understanding. But it is not so important. We can make do with what we have learned from books or internet.

— Informal conversation data with a teacher during observation

Given that one of the teachers commented that

I am afraid what I teach is out. Hate information from books are too old while information from the internet seems not to be real sometimes.

— Questionnaire data from a teacher

Another survey participant expressed different opinion.

Nothing particular generally speaking you can find this kind of knowledge in internet.

— Questionnaire data from a teacher

So how did teachers manage the challenges concerning cross-cultural issues when little support for further education was available in terms of time and/or finance?

They may ask someone who might know or explore on the internet or from books. If not they just let it go avoid the encounter. It seems with it or without does not make any differences.

—the researchers

6 Implications and limitations

In China constant reform in teacher education has witnessed vast and obvious improvement in the qualities and structural levels of tertiary EFL teachers. More importantly, the awareness for professional development has been raised at all levels. Yet by addressing some critical issues with a focus on the factors influencing teachers’ professional development motivation, this research demonstrates a contrast between the rhetoric of the positive perspective and the intrinsic motivation. That is the zest for professional development and the practical barriers which prevented them from doing so. This study has identified some specific Chinese cultural aspects impacting teachers’ motivation. The tension and conflicts expressed by teachers indicate teachers struggle within an increasingly demanding educational context.

Despite of a high awareness of the importance of cross-cultural experiences in teaching and the intrinsic motivation in continuous professional development, this study suggests that extrinsic motivation tends to be prioritized in tertiary EFL teacher motivation for professional development. To improve teaching profession, public awareness of teachers’ academic and professional qualifications needs to be increased. Hargreaves (2007). The evidence suggests that China has to create a large number of teachers who are well-motivated individuals with skills and adaptability to match the development of science and technology. Yang & Wu (1999). Such findings may provide a useful basis for further exploration in this research area, which in turn may lead to more effective policy implementation from various levels to improve teachers’ motivation. Whilst many would argue about the feasibility of seeking cross-cultural experiences for tertiary EFL teachers the data here suggest that more could be done to support and encourage teachers in their active investment of time, finance and effort in professional development.

As the sample was small purposeful and selective as well the associated weaknesses and limitation is obvious in terms of the representativeness of the findings in the Chinese context. Therefore any
generalisation could be inadequate without further reaching for a full understanding of the research topic. However, the pilot study has strived to provide a useful basis for further exploration which may provide some guidance to enhance the accountability of teacher professional development. It is hoped that meaning and knowledge with regards to teachers' motivation for professional development could be socially constructed by investigating the multiple interpretations surrounding this complex issue. Overall, it is intended that the current study could develop the limited body of literature on the relationship between EFL teachers' motivation for knowledge and understanding of the target culture and their professional development. Additionally, the identification of the barriers and cultural frustrations experienced by the tertiary EFL teachers and the articulation of the issues in teachers' voices can illuminate policy research and practice in EFL teacher professional development. Above all, the researchers tend to encourage the hidden voices from tertiary EFL teachers in China hoping that better understanding can be achieved and that teachers can eventually be better motivated for professional development.

7 Conclusion

This case study examined Chinese tertiary EFL teachers' cross-cultural awareness and experiences with a specific focus on teachers' motivation for professional development. This paper attempts to make explicit some of the underlying assumptions held by the researchers that lack of cross-cultural awareness and knowledge may constitute barriers in EFL teachers' professional identity transformation. The issues identified from the researchers' long years of observation as participants and from this case study reflect the dilemmas tertiary EFL teachers are facing with regard to cross-cultural experiences and EFL teaching.

The findings are congruent with the existing literature. Pennington 1996, Kuang 2007. However, significant aspects of our findings are that the intricate relationship between foreign language teaching and culture Bryan 1988, Stern 1992 is generally well accepted by tertiary EFL teachers in China. Tertiary EFL teachers share some common understanding of the importance of cross-cultural experiences in their career life. Nevertheless, the motivation for professional development varies. The needs for tertiary EFL teachers to integrate the intercultural dimension into language teaching do not necessarily lead to teachers' intrinsic motivation in investing their own time, money and efforts in actively engaging the selves in professional development. The researchers tend to argue that social cultural and educational contexts of China are decisive components on their motivation coupled with the availability of time and finance.

The methodology is a mix one that inquires teachers' motivation for professional development. The researchers heard echoes as they came to make sense of their own professional experiences by critical analysing teachers' perspective and reflexivity of the questions in focus. Wu 2004. The researchers hope that the study could contribute to tertiary EFL teacher professional development in China in threefold.

First of all, specific issues identified in terms of teacher motivation for professional development are expected to be addressed to improve the effectiveness and relevance of the EFL teacher education system. Richards, Farrell 2005. In particular, the current development in EFL teaching has extended and challenged the traditional roles and responsibilities of language teachers. Garrido, lvarez 2006. For EFL teachers only by reflecting on their own level of cross-cultural awareness can they hope to design and implement a culturally valid syllabus for EFL learners.

Secondly, the narrative teacher accounts Xu Connelly 2008, Yang 2008 could highlight the need for EFL teacher preparation programmes to include and emphasise teacher professional development opportunities. The witness of the case teachers' constant searching for career development and experiences of professional growth will open possibilities for a change of perspective from other EFL teachers in their teaching profession.

Finally, insufficient pre-service training and in-service further education are the main causes for teachers' limited cross-cultural knowledge. This as surmised would lead to a high motivation for professional development. However, the motivation is impacted by factors which are multidimensional and contextual and individual. This allows for the research to provide academic and practical
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significance to the limited body of knowledge in research of this nature in China

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