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A Comparative Review of the Professional Development of Novice and Experienced Chinese Language Teachers: Perspectives of Teaching Competence and Teaching Behavior

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Abstract

With the rapid expansion of international Chinese language education, the professional development of teachers has become a core concern in applied linguistics and teacher education. This paper conducts a comparative review of existing studies on novice and experienced Chinese language teachers from two complementary perspectives ─ teaching competence and teaching behavior. Drawing on representative empirical and theoretical research, it clarifies core concepts, compares stage-specific characteristics, and identifies gaps and emerging directions. Findings indicate that novice teachers often demonstrate innovation and enthusiasm yet lack systematic competence, whereas experienced teachers exhibit stable routines and adaptive expertise. To move beyond a descriptive juxtaposition, this review proposes a conceptual framework that links teaching competence to teaching behavior through teacher beliefs, emotions, and contextual constraints. Building on this framework, the paper translates the review into stage-sensitive, actionable recommendations for teacher preparation and in-service professional development.

Keywords: Novice Teachers; Experienced Teachers; International Chinese Language Education; Teaching Competence; Teaching Behavior

1. Introduction

Research on teacher development originated in educational psychology and, since the 1960s, has expanded steadily into education and applied linguistics. Alongside the rising number of international Chinese language teachers, a prominent line of inquiry has focused on improving teacher quality and supporting professional growth—especially the development of teachers at the novice and post-novice (experienced) stages. Teachers are lifelong learners. Across ongoing development, they should not only cultivate robust teaching competence grounded in inquiry but also enact teaching behaviors commensurate with that evolving competence. Empirical work on

teachers' linguistic-pedagogical competence and classroom behavior can deepen our understanding of novice teachers, inform conceptions and models of teacher education, and help novices become excellent classroom practitioners. Accordingly, this review examines previous studies from three angles—(a) conceptual clarification, (b) differences in teaching competence, and (c) differences in teaching behavior—with the aims of identifying stage-specific characteristics, offering references and directions for professional development, and supplying effective resources for the cultivation and training of teachers in International Chinese Language Education (ICLE).

2. Conceptual Clarifications

2.1. Novice and Experienced Teachers

Teacher professional development has been conceptualized from individual and collective perspectives. At the individual level, professional development has been defined as a systematic effort to change teachers' professional practice, beliefs, and understandings of the school and students—emphasizing the acquisition of individual capacity. At the collective level, professional development refers to the extent to which the occupational group of teachers meets professional standards—that is, the process of professionalization (Zhu & Zhou, 2007). From a sociological standpoint, development also entails becoming a member of the teaching profession and effectively fulfilling one's role, with concomitant changes in cognition, emotion, and behavior. Contemporary understandings, therefore, attend to both outcomes (possessing the competence required to perform teaching functions) and process (teachers' teaching behaviors).

There is no consensus on how many stages teacher development comprises. As early as the 1970s, James (1975) proposed three types of education: personal education, initial training, and lifelong education. Fessler (1992) advanced a non-linear model integrating social orientation into eight phases: pre-service preparation, induction, competence building, enthusiasm and growth, career frustration, stabilization and stagnation, career decline, and exit. Steffy (2012) proposed a career-cycle model comprising five stages—expert career, withdrawal career, renewal career, renewal life stage, and exit—arguing this model more fully and realistically describes teacher development. In Chinese scholarship, the Encyclopedia of International Education (ed. Hu Sen, 1990) distinguishes pre-service, initial employment, and in-service stages. Luo & Liao (2002), taking the professional development of the teacher group as premise and professional maturity as criterion, divide development into adaptation, development, maturity, and sustained development. Fu (2003) proposes five stages—adaptation, exploration, establishment, maturity, and serenity. Synthesizing domestic and international studies, Luo (2006) suggests a three-stage scheme—adaptation/exploration, professional growth, and professional maturity—on the grounds that teacher development is dynamic and stage boundaries are fuzzy.

Following Luo Xiaojie and Hu Sen, this review adopts a three-stage framework: pre-service, novice (early-career), and experienced (post-novice). The latter two stages have drawn the most research attention. Novice teachers generally include those with little or no experience, including student teachers who have engaged in practicum teaching. Yu & Liao (1999) set the novice period

at one to two years; Pan Xianquan regards it as zero to four years of service. In ICLE, definitions range from less than one year (Zhang, 2012; Ma, 2013; Xu, 2013) and one to two years (Liu, 2009) to within five years (Liu, 2012). Clearly, there is no consensus on the temporal boundary of the novice stage; the transition from novice to experienced is gradual, marked by progressive enrichment of knowledge structures, iterative renewal of teaching competence, and increasing fluency in teaching routines (Wang, 2015). Some scholars (Zhong, 2012) further divide experienced teachers into exploration (around year 10), maturity (around year 15), and expertise (around year 20), each with distinct challenges, needs, and competencies. Selection criteria vary: more than five years (Wang, 2014) or seven years (Cheng, 2007). Wang (2015) recommends aligning with established frameworks such as Katz's periods (survival, consolidation, renewal, maturity) and local standards (expert evaluation, peer nomination, student achievement, years of service).

2.2. Differences in Teaching Competence Between Novice and Experienced Teachers

Teaching competence is a composite construct comprising the ability to design and organize instruction; to mobilize and exploit teaching resources (e.g., emergent non-planned events, multimedia, the medium of instruction); to manage classrooms; and to enact cognition and non-verbal behaviors (e.g., beliefs and emotions). The following four domains are discussed in turn.

2.2.1. Instructional Design and Organization

Li (2017) distinguishes operational instructional design from technical instructional design, with the latter subdivided into lecture, conversation, demonstration, field visit, experiment, practice, discussion, guided reading, and practicum assignment. Novice and experienced teachers share commonalities (e.g., lecture, practice, practicum assignments), yet novices employ relatively more demonstrations, visits, and conversations—approaches less used by experienced teachers. In terms of innovative methods, novices often exceed experienced teachers; by contrast, experienced teachers emphasize skill training and explication, devote more attention to exercises and answer analysis, and are more effective at fostering learner autonomy during instruction.

Regarding organizational formats, pre-service teachers more often lead in with the text, whereas experienced teachers tend to begin with the topic. Both groups lecture to the whole class, but experienced teachers place greater emphasis on small-group work and peer learning, deploying a richer repertoire of organizational forms.

2.2.2. Ability to Utilize Teaching Resources

Teaching resources include materials and conditions that support instructional effectiveness—textbooks, films, images, courseware—as well as human resources, teaching aids, and infrastructure. More broadly, resources encompass all elements mobilized during instruction—people, objects, and information that support and serve teaching (Wu, 2015). The ability to utilize resources chiefly involves leveraging emergent, non-planned events, using multimedia, and using a support language as medium of instruction.

(1) Use of multimedia. Zhang (2017), drawing on classroom observations of four mainstream media, found that both novice and experienced teachers use the chalkboard. Novices, however, rely more on new media such as computers, televisions, and projectors; experienced teachers are less reliant on new media, privileging traditional chalkboard writing supplemented by multimedia. Research is scarce on how multimedia is synchronized with talk—e.g., whether slides proceed in lockstep with or lag behind explanation.

(2) Handling non-planned events. Such events appear accidental, random, and unpredictable with respect to timing, agents, and forms. In practice, novices and experienced teachers diverge in handling and stance. Chen (2012) reports that novices often feel caught off guard and struggle to respond, and, once class ends, tend to ignore the episode. Yet non-planned events remain within the ambit of classroom factors and are, to a degree, anticipatable, as they can arise from teachers' instructional designs or actions. Experienced teachers respond positively (Zhang, 2012) and treat such events as teachable resources for situated interaction. After addressing a question or challenge, they quickly guide the lesson back to the planned trajectory, whereas novices often expend more time than anticipated and may fail to re-establish the initial plan, risking the lesson as a whole (Wu & Shi, 2011).

(3) Use of the medium of instruction. In target-language classrooms, cultivating proficiency requires a supportive linguistic environment. Chinese language teachers may judiciously use a support language to scaffold comprehension. Based on observations at the Confucius Institute in Barcelona, Lei(2017) found that experienced teachers overall use the support language less frequently, conducting most discourse in the target language but with high quality. Interviews with four experienced teachers indicated advocacy for maximizing target-language use while tolerating support language for lexical/grammatical explanations and classroom management. Novices reported a greater need for support language in non-immersion settings but stressed appropriate frequency. Liu (2016) observed that novices, in accommodating comprehension, tend to overuse complex support language and sometimes use it inaccurately. Ma (2017) further noted that experienced teachers' use of a support language surpasses novices in effectiveness and modeling.

From a non-verbal communication perspective, Liu (2012) compared novice and experienced teachers and found both employ non-verbal means to interact, but novices' command is significantly weaker. In nodding, gesture, and speech rate, experienced teachers demonstrate greater communicativeness, appropriateness, supportiveness, and encouragement, while maintaining an authentic classroom pace. Correspondingly, their students exhibit more proactive participation, classrooms are livelier, and reliance on a support language is lower than in novices' classes. Judicious use of a support language can help beginners grasp content more effectively, but its use should follow principles of suitability, necessity, and moderation. In ICLE, the support language need not be confined to learners' L1; any language comprehensible to learners may serve; if no single language is widely understood, the target language may be optimal.

2.2.3. Classroom Management

Good & Carter V. (1973) characterize classroom management as a set of teacher actions fostering collaborative participation, productive order, response to problem behaviors, and active learning. Glasser (1998) views management as advance organizational and procedural strategies shaping the classroom into an effective learning environment. Despite definitional differences, two commonalities emerge: (1) management is a process of co-participation between teachers and students; and (2) its purpose is to establish an effective environment, sustain interaction, and promote classroom growth.

Chen (2017) found that many novice problems stem from failing to set ground rules in the first lesson, leaving behavior unconstrained; weak coherence in activity design fosters loss of control. Yao (2014), analyzing novices' logs and classroom recordings in China and abroad, reported that, domestically, issues arise from poor activity organization, suboptimal questioning, and limited competence; abroad, from overly difficult content and ineffective explanations. Novices are more susceptible to student moods and, unlike experienced teachers, less able to recalibrate relations to revive a sluggish atmosphere. Thus, competence in content planning and activity organization constitutes the primary management differential.

Regarding pacing, Zhang (2016) reports that novices' timing issues have subjective and objective facets: loose sequencing, lack of pre-class allocation, susceptibility to tangents, and difficulties addressing problematic students—sometimes resulting in no feedback or direct confrontation. Compared with experienced teachers' deft control of pacing, novices need more strategies for management.

2.2.4. Cognitive Capacity

With the advent of concepts such as pedagogical content and practical knowledge, "teacher cognition" has come to the fore. Borg (2006) argues that cognition research seeks to understand who teachers are; what they know; what they believe; how they learn to teach; how their personal pedagogical theories and representations of disciplinary knowledge form; and the improvisational skills teachers bring to problem solving. We should attend to teachers' self-development and inquiry and revisit four questions: Who am I? What am I doing? How do I/should I construct selfhood? How will I achieve self-development? Understanding the teaching self—beliefs and emotions—both manifests teaching competence and shapes teaching behavior and learning outcomes (Wu, 2015).

Teaching is not the straightforward application of acquired knowledge and skills but a complex, cognition-driven process influenced by multiple factors. Relative to novices, experienced teachers better tailor instruction to situational contingencies and more effectively regulate their behavior to meet contextual demands.

Research on teaching beliefs—an important facet of cognition—remains nascent. Content domains include beliefs about the essence, value, goals, process, and methods of teaching, and beliefs about teachers, students, knowledge, assessment, and self-development (Guo et al., 2004). Quantitative work includes Ding (2013) on experienced teachers' views of classroom activities (valuing communicative tasks alongside traditional techniques); Ji & Liu (2012) on novice beliefs

about grammar teaching (accepting communicative principles while acknowledging traditional grammar's value); and Jiang & Hao (2011) using stimulated recall to compare practical knowledge (finding that novices referenced intercultural, learner, and language-teaching knowledge less frequently). Qualitative studies include Sun (2008), a longitudinal case of an immigrant Chinese teacher's beliefs and practices, showing shaping effects of environment and personal experience. More recent work (e.g., Ji, 2010) indicates novice beliefs evolve through phases—disruption, partial loss, and re-acquisition with refinement. Overall, existing work targets narrow belief dimensions and small samples; comparative studies on novices vs. experienced teachers are limited, and case studies lack generalizability; further comparative work is warranted.

Teacher emotion is another crucial facet. Xu (2016), studying novices with less than one year of experience, identified factors—linguistic knowledge and skill, teaching competence, student heterogeneity, teaching conditions, and institutional pressure—that, mediated by classroom performance and teacher–student relations, affect outcomes, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, producing teaching anxiety; self-esteem plays a pivotal role. Yang (2015) likewise found novices' anxiety significantly higher than experienced teachers', undermining confidence but prompting greater attention to relationships. Gao (2017), surveying 41 novices, found that student evaluations, perceived effectiveness, and in-class questioning were principal anxiety sources. Comparative studies on anxiety and other affective constructs (e.g., burnout) remain scarce, as does prescriptive research on positive emotions.

2.3. Differences in Teaching Behavior Between Novice and Experienced Teachers

Research on teacher professional development focuses both on outcomes—acquiring the competence to fulfill teaching functions—and on the practical process of enactment—teaching behaviors. Teacher behavior refers to observable actions during instruction. Owing to inexperience, novices differ from experienced teachers in various behavioral respects. Documenting these differences can heighten novices' awareness of self-regulation and thereby optimize classroom teaching. Based on existing studies, we discuss four domains: questioning, classroom instructions, feedback, and teacher–student interaction.

2.3.1. Questioning

From classroom recordings, Guo (2013) identified a series of novice issues: unclear purposes, poor calibration of difficulty, lack of focus, and monotonous formats. Using coding and statistical analysis of collected materials, Zheng (2009) found that novices exceeded experienced teachers in total questioning time, frequency, and number, and they were more inclined to adopt display questions. Experienced teachers used a wider repertoire of strategies, favored referential questions, and exhibited lower rates of self-answering and unanswered questions, primarily deploying follow-up, deconstruction, and linking strategies, novices mainly repeated and pursued questions. Wang (2014) reported that novices asked twice as many questions as experienced teachers; they posed fewer cognitive (recognitional) questions and more response-eliciting questions. Within recognitional questions, novices heavily favored display types, whereas experienced teachers combined display and referential types. Experienced teachers distributed questions more evenly across students; novices tended to address the whole class. Novices also managed wait time less

effectively. Thus, despite greater quantity, novices' questions are less effective in type, strategy, and difficulty calibration; experienced teachers demonstrate superior orchestration and flexibility.

2.3.2. Classroom Instructions

Guo (2013) also reported problems with novice teachers' instructions and classroom language: unclear articulation, limited prosodic variation, non-standard directive language, and overly long explanations. Using classroom observation, Li (2012) found that experienced teachers used more imperative sentences, preferring direct, concise directive forms; novices used relatively complex declaratives and somewhat more interrogatives, reflecting a preference for polite tone and soliciting student input. Strategically, instructions were categorized as command-type, invitation-type, and guidance-type. Novices used more command- and guidance-type strategies than experienced teachers, who used more invitation-type strategies; moreover, novices exhibited more ineffective instructions.

2.3.3. Feedback

Teacher feedback refers to evaluative responses to students' language use in class (Yang, 2000). Following Carroll & Swain (1993), feedback can be divided into positive (acceptance) and negative (rejection) types. Shao (2011), based on classroom observations, found that novices' corrective-feedback rate exceeded that of experienced teachers, their feedback episodes were longer, and they favored recasts; compared with experienced teachers, they used more positive feedback, with limited use of metalanguage and elicitation (Zheng, 2009). In contrast, experienced teachers delivered higher rates of corrective feedback. Novices had difficulty discerning errors and were less familiar with common learner mistakes (Wang, 2014). Novices underused metalanguage cues and elicitation, whereas experienced teachers flexibly combined multiple methods, gave learners more opportunities to self-repair, and emphasized post-correction practice. Novices' greater concern for affect led to higher tolerance for error.

Ma (2017), in a study of 14 novices, found that while novices generally possessed feedback awareness, their feedback language tended to be monotonous, casual, overused, and lengthy without clear effect. They favored simple approval/praise and repetition, rarely employing follow-up, clarification requests, or guided prompts that effectively trigger interaction and learner output. Lyu (2007) reported that novices emphasized motivational strategies-positive feedback-which, combined with avoidance, raised error tolerance and could adversely affect learning; excessive positive feedback can foster lax attitudes. A few cases of criticism or even harshness were also observed (Ma, 2017).

2.3.4. Teacher–Student Interaction

Teacher–student interaction encompasses the cognitive influence teachers and students exert on each other through verbal and non-verbal behavior. It is the most fundamental interpersonal form in classroom teaching. Interaction includes both static structures and dynamic collaboration, timing, verbal and non-verbal behaviors (Liao, 2002). Based on comparative analysis of two classes (novice and experienced), Shi (2018) found that experienced teachers used body language, emotional behaviors, and listening more frequently than novices; overall, experienced teachers engaged in more non-verbal behaviors during interaction. Using an observation scale

encompassing teacher language, content, non-verbal behavior, interaction modes, teacher influence, student response, and classroom atmosphere, Liang (2017) found that novices tended toward one-way whole-class interaction and used limited means for one-on-one interaction; they made lower-intensity use of classroom time and sometimes allowed long stretches without interaction.

In terms of time allocation, experienced teachers devoted a higher proportion to collaboration with students; nevertheless, both groups' collaboration remained largely mechanical (e.g., choral reading). Experienced teachers exerted tighter classroom control, were more adept at eliciting spontaneous questions and voluntary participation, and provided more timely responses to student utterances and behaviors; classroom stability differed little. In experienced teachers' classes, students occupied a larger share of total speaking time, and teachers intervened less in answers; learner discourse was more sustained. Novices relied more on questioning to organize lessons and exerted influence more indirectly. Experienced teachers were more adept at incorporating student contributions to extend interactive learning. Comparative research on collaboration remains limited.

2.4. Conceptual Framework Linking Teaching Competence to Teaching Behavior

To integrate the parallel discussions in Sections 2 and 3, this section proposes a concise framework that explicates how teaching competence-what teachers know and can do-shapes teaching behavior—what teachers actually do in class-through a set of mediating and moderating processes.

Core proposition

Teaching competence informs teachers' behavioral choices in lesson planning, classroom interaction, feedback provision, and classroom management. However, the translation from competence to behavior is not linear. It is mediated by teacher beliefs (e.g., conceptions of learning, approaches to error correction), teacher emotions (e.g., anxiety, efficacy, resilience), and contextual constraints (e.g., learner diversity, curricular pacing, institutional norms, and resource availability). These factors jointly determine whether and how competent knowledge is enacted as effective behavior.

Dynamic feedback

Classroom enactment, in turn, provides feedback to teaching competence through reflection, experiential learning, and adaptive adjustment, thereby fostering the continuous development of professional expertise.

This framework highlights the developmental mechanisms underlying teaching growth:

- Novice teachers often possess emerging and uneven competence that is easily attenuated by anxiety, unstable beliefs, and contextual pressures.
- Experienced teachers, by contrast, exhibit stabilized belief systems and emotional regulation, enabling competence to be consistently externalized as effective classroom behavior.

This dynamic and cyclical view also underpins the stage-sensitive professional development strategies proposed in Section 4.

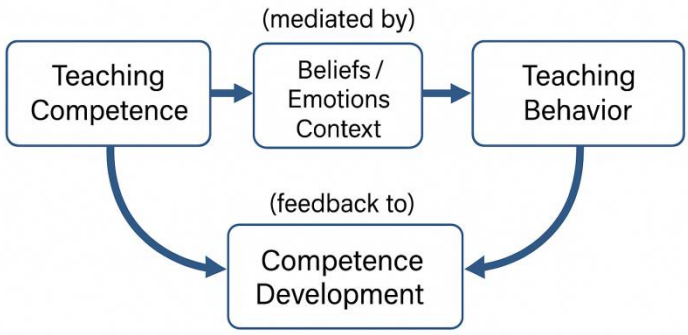

Figure 1. A competence-to-behavior pathway with mediating processes

A schematic model linking teaching competence to teaching behavior via mediating beliefs, emotions, and contextual constraints, with a feedback loop from enacted behavior to competence growth.

The above framework explains why competence-focused differences between novice and experienced teachers should co-vary with behavioral differences in classroom practice. We therefore turn to observable teaching behaviors—questioning, instructions, feedback, and teacher–student interaction—to examine how these are shaped and constrained by competence together with the mediating processes outlined above.

3. Problems and Prospects

3.1. Problems

Despite notable progress, current research exhibits several deficiencies. First, research subjects and perspectives are relatively homogeneous. International Chinese Language Education is highly contextual, complex, and dynamic. Because much of the existing work is produced by master's and doctoral students or novice teachers within the field, limited experience can lead to formulaic implications. Conversely, in social science research, contextual authenticity is the greatest source of variance and a key locus of significance. Some researchers explicitly note that their studies were conducted in artificial settings and should be validated in naturalistic classrooms (Tong, 2009). Overly singular perspectives can obscure the field for later researchers. There is a need for broader participation and more diversified angles to enhance research quality.

In addition, current research focuses predominantly on the teacher's perspective, whereas teaching is an interactive process among teacher, environment, and students. Work exclusively from the teacher's vantage point is therefore partial, particularly given that teacher–student interaction not only shapes teaching competence but also constitutes a principal pathway through which behavior is enacted. Future research should widen its scope and enrich its content.

Second, research themes lack depth. The ultimate purpose of teacher research is not merely to describe phenomena, but to address how to solve problems. As Li (2019) argues, descriptions of the knowledge, abilities, and qualities required of international Chinese language teachers are "spread too evenly," lacking stratification. Which competencies are the non-negotiable baseline for a qualified teacher? Which are aspirational goals for ongoing development? What distinguishes excellent teachers? What are realistic developmental goals and pathways for individuals? Addressing such questions requires focused study of excellent teachers at different stages. Future work should employ experimental, or action research approaches oriented toward sustainable professional development.

Third, theoretical frameworks and methodologies are overly uniform. Complex problems in teacher development cannot be resolved by any single theory. Methodologically, studies remain similar, relying heavily on interviews and observations—one-off events ill-suited to monitoring developmental variability. Purely qualitative work is vulnerable to concerns about subjectivity, sampling, breadth, and representativeness.

3.2. Prospects

To address these issues, future research should proceed along three lines. First, diversify research perspectives. There is a notable lack of work on the characteristics of excellent novice and experienced teachers—the target states of development. Starting from individual trajectories, we should propose differentiated cultivation goals, evaluation standards, and developmental pathways for teachers at different stages (novice, proficient, expert). Existing cultivation systems and standards show some layering but do not yet accommodate the complexity of international Chinese language teachers as a population. Given the evolving landscape of international Chinese education and the great heterogeneity in teacher identities, qualities, and career paths, breakthroughs should be sought in future research.

Second, deepen and broaden research themes. In recent years, more scholars have turned to teachers' career and professional development, focusing on affect, psychology, qualities, abilities, and pathways. Yet because learners, contexts, and influencing factors are complex, topics such as teaching motivation, occupational stress, instructional affect, and developmental goals warrant further inquiry.

Third, expand theoretical repertoires and enrich methods. Teacher development is an interdisciplinary area intersecting linguistics, education, educational psychology, and psycholinguistics. Theories should be selected in light of research questions and populations, and simultaneous use of multiple theories should be considered. Methodologically, combine theoretical analysis with empirical study; pair quantitative with qualitative approaches and employ mixed methods. Qualitative data collection can be diversified—interviews, teaching logs, writing, retrospective self-reports, autobiographical narratives, and classroom observation. Large-sample quantitative studies should also be conducted to improve objectivity and representativeness.

3.3. Methodological Reflection and Future Design Implications

A considerable proportion of existing evidence is derived from unpublished theses, single-site short-term observations, and locally specific contexts. These characteristics constrain the external validity of findings and may inflate or obscure effect sizes due to sampling and contextual idiosyncrasies. Moreover, one-off observational designs limit the ability to capture intra-teacher variability and developmental change over time.

To enhance methodological rigor and ensure the accumulation of more generalizable evidence, future research should consider the following directions:

(a) Adopt multi-site comparative designs (e.g., cross-institutional or cross-country sampling) to test the generalizabilityof competence–behavior relationships.

(b) Employ mixed-method approaches—such as systematic observation, interaction coding, and teacher/learner measures of beliefs, emotions, and efficacy—to more robustly connect teaching competence, mediating processes, and observable teaching behavior.

(c) Incorporate longitudinal components (e.g., term-length or year-long tracking) to model teacher growth trajectoriesand the competence–behavior feedback loop proposed in Section 2.4.

(d) Provide detailed contextual descriptors—including curriculum demands, class composition, language policy, and resource availability—to facilitate meaningful meta-analytic synthesis and context-sensitive interpretation.

4. Implications for Professional Development

Building on the preceding synthesis, this section outlines stage-sensitive and actionable strategies that align competence building with behavioral enactment, while systematically addressing the roles of beliefs, emotions, and contextual factors in teacher development.

4.1. For Novice Teachers (0–3/5 years)

- Structured mentoring (weekly): Assign each novice teacher a trained mentor. Use targeted observation rubrics (e.g., questioning types, wait time, error-treatment choices) with two concrete behavioral goals per week.
- Micro-teaching with rapid feedback (bi-weekly): Conduct 8–12-minute micro-teaching sessions that are video-recorded. Provide single-focus feedback (e.g., shifting from display to referential questions) immediately afterward.
- Targeted classroom-language drills: Build a personal directive phrasebank (clear imperatives, concise invitations) and rehearse transitions, classroom routines, and time checks to increase fluency in instructional language.
- Anxiety-aware coaching: Incorporate short pre-class planning scripts (openings, pacing checkpoints, fallback moves) and post-class emotional debriefs to normalize arousal and protect self-efficacy.

- Progressive resource integration: Begin with low-load multimedia (board + minimal slides); add one new instructional tool each month; reflect on the synchrony between teacher talk and visual aids.

4.2. For Experienced Teachers (Post-Novice to Mature Stage)

- Collaborative lesson study (monthly): Co-plan a research lesson with an agreed-upon behavioral focus (e.g., eliciting extended learner turns), co-teach or observe, and jointly analyze student uptake and response data.
- Reflective inquiry projects (per term): Conduct small-N classroom investigations (e.g., varying wait time or feedback types) using simple AB or multiple-baseline designs. Share findings in internal colloquia or teacher-learning communities.
- Boundary-crossing and peer exchange: Arrange short peer visits to other programs (e.g., immersion vs. non-immersion settings) to surface tacit pedagogical beliefs and broaden contextual repertoires.
- Non-verbal repertoire enrichment: Participate in periodic workshops on gesture, gaze, posture, and positioning as tools for managing participation and interactional space.

4.3. Cross-Stage Supports

- Beliefs–behavior alignment: Combine beliefs inventories with stimulated recall on classroom video clips to make implicit pedagogical theories explicit and test them against empirical classroom evidence.
- Emotional regulation micro-skills: Introduce brief pre-performance routines (e.g., 90-second breath counting + verbal cue) and post-class cognitive reappraisal checklists to strengthen emotional resilience.
- Minimal evaluation dashboard: Track 4–6 indicators monthly to guide evidence-based reflection and decision-making. Examples: proportion of referential questions, average wait time, student–teacher talk ratio, elicitation vs. recast frequency, on-task time, and rate of student self-repair.

4.4. Implementation Notes

Institutions can adopt a 12-week professional development cycle that integrates mentoring, micro-teaching, and lesson study.Pre- and post-cycle collection of dashboard indicators can provide evidence of growth at both competence and behavioral enactment levels.

5. Conclusion

This review has traced the professional development of Chinese language teachers through a comparative lens, focusing on teaching competence and teaching behavior as two interdependent dimensions of growth. Synthesizing evidence from empirical and theoretical studies, it has clarified how competence—the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that teachers possess—interacts with behavior—their observable actions in the classroom—through mediating processes

involving beliefs, emotions, and contextual constraints. The proposed competence-to-behavior framework thus provides a dynamic model for understanding how teachers transform what they know into what they do, and how reflective practice in turn refines and deepens their competence.

By situating novice and experienced teachers within this developmental continuum, the review reveals both continuity and transformation: novices tend to demonstrate enthusiasm and innovation yet are more vulnerable to anxiety and contextual pressures, whereas experienced teachers display stability, emotional regulation, and adaptive expertise that allows competence to be enacted with consistency and precision. Bridging these stages requires not only the accumulation of experience but also structured support that aligns knowledge building, affective regulation, and contextual awareness.

Methodologically, future research should move beyond cross-sectional description to embrace longitudinal, multi-site, and mixed-method designs capable of capturing developmental variability across time and setting. Practically, stage-sensitive professional development programs—integrating mentoring, micro-teaching, collaborative lesson study, and reflective inquiry—can operationalize the competence-to-behavior pathway, enabling teachers to convert professional knowledge into effective pedagogical action.

Ultimately, teacher development lies at the heart of educational reform and the global enterprise of International Chinese Language Education. Understanding how competence evolves into behavior not only enriches the theoretical landscape of teacher cognition and practice, but also provides actionable insights for cultivating reflective, adaptive, and resilient teachers capable of navigating the diverse contexts of Chinese language teaching worldwide.

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