

## THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE EFL TEACHERS, FROM TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE, A LITERATURE BASED STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the characteristics of effective EFL teachers among EFL teachers in universities of China. A definition of effective EFL teaching was given upon the conceptualization of teaching process. Teaching process could be interpreted as a way of communication and a procedure of social construction, thus an effective teacher could be the one who delivers efficient communication and the one scaffolding knowledge in a constructive way. EFL teaching is different from teaching of other subjects and the distinguished characteristics of language teachers were summed up from several factors. In university setting of China, the characteristics of effective EFL teachers may comprise the facets of effective teaching, the challenge of teaching a foreign language, and the ability to develop professionalism in a Chinese University context. According to research literature, the profile of effective Chinese university EFL teachers' professionalism develops from four dimensions. A discussion on the common and unique characteristics of effective EFL teachers and was made, thus to provide a more genuine description of characteristics of effective EFL teachers in the social-cultural context of China.

**KEYWORDS:** effective EFL teaching, characteristics of EFL teachers, universities in China

### INTRODUCTION

Effective teachers, or rather quality teachers are the premise for success of a school system. Instructions from effective teachers generate learners' progress, also teachers gain confidence and a sense of achievement through learner's success. "Thus we propose a definition of teacher effectiveness as follows: the power to realize socially valued objectives agreed for teacher's work, especially, but not exclusively, the work concerned with enabling students to learn (Campbell et al., 2004)." An effective teacher works to fulfill his/her socially agreed objectives as being a teacher, what is more, to enable his/her students to learn. The general characteristics describing effective teachers may be summed up and altered according to specific context. There has been study, especially those conducted in countries where English is learned as a foreign language defining the characteristics of effective EFL teachers.

The study operated in a university of Cyprus by Kourieos and Evripideous (2013) described characteristics perceived by students and call for EFL teachers to adopt communicative approach.

"An effective EFL teacher should take into consideration his/her students' individual differences, language anxiety, abilities and interests and design learning environments accordingly. Language

teacher's skills in using technology and engaging students in meaningful classroom interactions by involving them in group tasks designed around real life topics and authentic language use has also been emphasized "(Kourieos & Evripideous, 2013, p.11).

"Rapport, delivery, fairness, knowledge and credibility, organization and preparation" (Barnes & Lock, 2010, p.148-149) are five attributes of effective teachers felt of EFL lecturers in Korean university context. Students feel that lecturer to student support is the most essential to build an atmosphere of respect and understanding in EFL class. Lecturers' enthusiasm and preparation are obvious to the students. Students put teacher being sensitive to student self-esteem and able to engage all students in class activities in the second place.

In Islamic Azad University, Iran, Ghasemi and Hashemi (2011) researched the perception of effective EFL teachers among 200 university students majoring in English language and literature. "They (the subjects) agreed that usually successful language teachers follow syllabus tightly, stick to administrative rules and regulations and teaching techniques, are well -dressed, are knowledgeable, and are more sociable" (P. 414). Most of the language learners agreed that teaching English in English classes was another characteristic of an effective English teacher. Also, effective English language teachers prepare meaningful tasks and activities so that learners have more opportunities to use English in a quasi-authentic language environment.

Another case study carried in a University of China by Huang (2011) summarized that "being a successful EFL teacher requires certain qualities, such as having a learner-centre attitude, being knowledgeable, responsible, patient, humorous and flexible. What is more, successful EFL teachers in China should work harder to keep up with pace of social change, give more space to students for them to develop their ways of learning English, and train students to acquire the skills rather than knowledge of English language only" (P. 24).

Here only a few empirical studies are cited across different countries from the perspectives of EFL learners, especially in university context. It seemed that there are common characteristics of effective EFL teachers arisen from the students' point of view:

- a. Care and sensitivity to individual differences and alleviate language anxiety in the classroom.
- b. Be able to motivate and get students involved in interactive activities, especially meaningful language activities
- c. Use English as a medium to generate effective communication.

Yet, students' prior learning experience, backgrounds are varied; therefore the conclusions should be interpreted with caution. On the other hand, how do EFL teachers perceive effectiveness of themselves? Teacher' belief, perceptions and assumptions about teaching and teacher efficacy affect the way they understand and organize instructions (Chacon, 2005, as cited in Moradi & Sabeti, 2014). Peer assistance turns out to be beneficial in English learning among students, which is

workable among teachers who could understand their peers better from the point of empathy. To make their teaching activities more effective and inspirational, teachers feel a need for discovering what their peers believe to be favorable features of their career. Therefore, this paper aims to summarize the characteristics of EFL teachers from teacher's perspective to offer pedagogical notion, especially for EFL teachers working in China in university setting.

## II CONCEPTUALIZING EFFECTIVE EFL TEACHING

### 1.1 Teaching as a communication process

The view upon what teaching and learning is conceptualizes the effectiveness of EFL teaching. Penner (1992) addressed that teaching is a continuous process of communication through which the teacher transmits message to students who respond to them. The key to effective teaching lies in the growth and improvement of classroom communication, namely the ability of the teacher to communicate to the students adequately and the students' ability and opportunity to respond and demonstrate their understanding and competence while they have learned the new knowledge and skills. Brosh (1996) concluded that the effective teacher is someone who knows and cares his/ her students, who is sensitive to the process of students receiving and processing information and who establishes a learning classroom environment and motivates students to learn. This type of teacher can be able to make his/her class interesting and capture students' attention and is able adapt his/her behavior or teaching to respond to the group dynamics of learning situation.

An empirical study to validate the relationship between communication and teaching effectiveness was conducted by Hezi Brosh (1996) in Israel. The study collected data from both groups of EFL language teachers and EFL learners in ninth-grade high school through questionnaire and interviews. The findings summed up desirable characteristics of effective EFL teacher:

- 1) Knowledge and command of the target language
- 2) Ability to organize, explain, and clarify, as well as to arouse and sustain interest and motivation among students.
- 3) Fairness to students by showing neither favoritism nor prejudice.
- 4) Availability to students" (Brosh, 1996, p.133).

Teacher's knowledge of the target language is given high priority by both the teachers and the students. Only those teachers who have profound knowledge of the subject matter can devote mental energy to organize the material in a way that students will not only understand it but also can be stimulated and motivated to continue studying it. Effective communication between teachers and students in classroom is stressed where teachers are available to students' needs and teachers treat students fair.

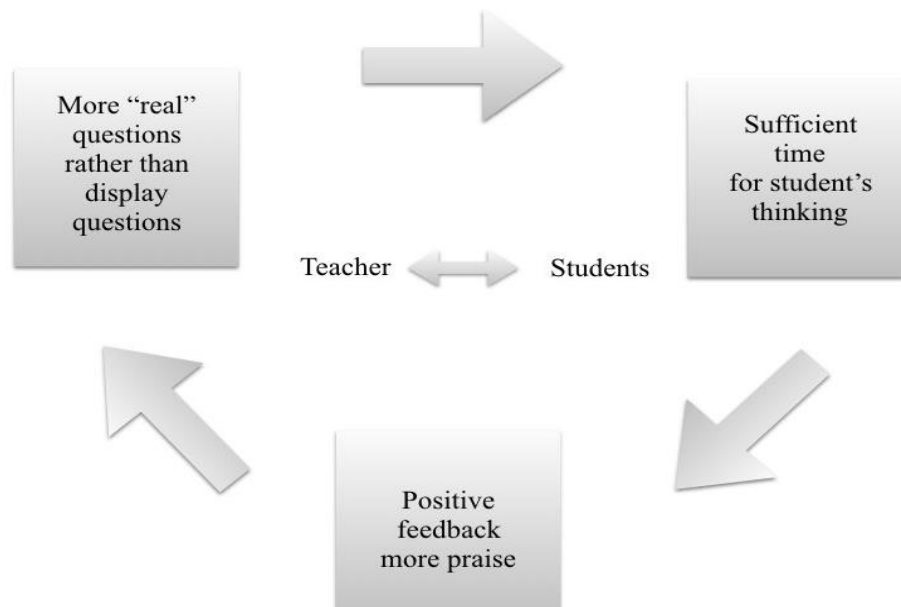
### 1.2 Teaching as a social-constructive scaffolding process

The process of learning is understood as one where students socialize and collaborate with others in school and institutions. (Cheng, 2011). From the point of social constructivism (Vygosky, 1962), language learners build relationships with people around them and learning is as an active process in

which learners construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through action and reflection. Through constant interactions with others, they learn to use language and make sense of the world (William & Burden, 2000). In this respect, EFL teachers shift their roles from authoritarian of knowledge to “scaffolder” of cognition while they are helping learners acquire comprehensive linguistic competence development through five aspects: language skills, language knowledge, attitudes, learning strategies, and cultural awareness (MOE, 2011, p.6-8). Classroom instruction is an effective process of knowledge construction under the circumstances of teacher-student and student-student interactions (Brown, 2011, cited by Cheng, 2011).

Thus, effective EFL teachers not only are responsible for interacting with students, also are accountable for facilitating student-student interactions in the class. Teacher-student interactions involve instructor offering learners linguistic input and output and help learners establish an active mental attitude for accepting the language and culture that they are learning (Brown, 2011).

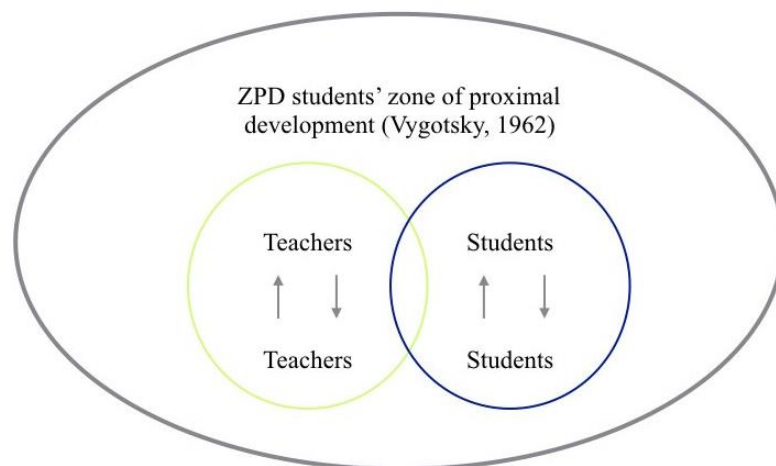
“Effective questioning may arouse students’ interest in study stimulating their active thought and participation, and guarantee smooth implementation of interactions for the ultimate target of language acquisition” (Cheng, 2011, p.189). An effective EFL teacher as main question-asker may note the following facets (see figure 1.1):



- a) In EFL classrooms, teachers often pose both questions: referential (real) questions and display questions. Referential questions come out spontaneously and answers are not ready made. Students utilize more complex usage of language responding to referential questions. So, teachers

may increase the application of referential questions to resembling authentic communication using target language.

- b) Students may respond more thoughtful answers if teachers increase the waiting time for students' thinking. They need adequate time to reflect on given questions, and perform better if they feel less nervous and more confident.
- c) Positive feedback raises students' interest and motivation in the learning procedure and most importantly strengthens their self- confidence. Negative feedback or too much criticism discourages students' enthusiasm and dampens or hurts their self-esteem (Schunk, 2000). Teachers might provide students more positive feedback but less criticism, especially when students make errors in responding the questions (Cheng, 2011).
- d) The task difficulty needs to be taken into consideration. Vygotsky's zone of proximal development ZPD implies that learner's achievements are mostly gained within the ZPD (Vygotsky,)



1962). Collaborative learning, group work as main interactive form from which students practice linguistic competence as well as cultivate the sense of responsibility and learning autonomy (Schunk, 2000). The teachers should restrict the extent of task difficulty within students' reach of the ZPD through the process of pre-task instruction, during task supervision and inspection, termination of task, and feedback provision (see figure 1.2). With the development of learner's competence, the teacher gradually withdraws scaffolding so that learners perform their own.

To sum up, different interpretations of the process of teaching and learning assigns different roles to EFL teachers in the language classroom. An effective teacher is the one who holds good command of language and be able to deliver that knowledge and skill to the students. An effective teacher is one who facilitates interaction in the class, teacher-student interaction and student-students interaction both. Meanwhile, teacher is supposed to scaffold students' learning within ZPD.

### **1.3 Effectiveness versus ineffectiveness: affective factors**

Emotional climate constitutes a strong construct associated with perception of effective teaching. Conceptions about teachers and teaching held by preservice teachers appear to focus more on affective than cognitive issues (Reeves & Kazelskis, 1985, cited in Walls et al., 2011).

Walls et al. (2002) investigated the conception of effectiveness as well as ineffectiveness of teachers among three groups, prospective, novice teachers, and experienced teachers. He used written descriptions of “describe your most effective (best) and ineffective (worst) teachers” as instrument. The belief about effective teaching and ineffective teaching among teachers of various continuums (prospective teachers, novice teachers and experienced teachers) are almost identical. In other words, teachers, green hand or veteran, have strong views about what constitutes good teachers versus bad teachers. Effectiveness and ineffectiveness are mirror images of each other.

The finding noted that the three groups tended to used similar proportions of responses in portraying their best teachers and devoted similar proportions of responses in portraying their worst teachers. According to the study, five themes emerge from participants’ statements about effectiveness and ineffectiveness of teachers and affective element was a domain in the descriptions:

#### **Emotional environment**

Emotional environment figured significantly in the descriptions of the participants. Effective teachers care about students. They are warm, friendly, caring. Conversely, ineffective teachers create tension in the classroom and they are described as cold, abusive, and uncaring.

#### **Teacher skill**

Effective teachers are able to create an effective learning environment. They are organized, prepared and clear. Ineffective teachers deliver boring lectures and the learning environment is unproductive.

#### **Teacher motivation**

Effective teachers were described as caring about the needs of students. They hold enthusiasm in the teaching profession. In contrast, worst teachers hate teaching. They went through routine or just complete the procedure.

#### **Student participation**

Best teachers get all students participated in class and design activities, interactive questioning and discussion for authentic learning. Worst teachers were characterized as requiring isolate behavior with little interaction, activity or discussion and intolerant of questions asked by students.

#### **Rules and grades**

Most effective teachers motivate their students and have little problem of classroom management. They care about students’ accomplishment and require and maintain high standards of conduct and

academic work. Ineffective teachers were faulted for unreasonable or unfair assignments, tests, and grades.

From the aspect of affective factors, expert teachers would appear to efficiently combine subject matter and teaching method. They are more effective lesson planners and implementers and yet to be more flexible and reflective in meeting students' needs and facilitating and motivating student toward social and academic growth (Walls et al, 2002).

### **III DISTINGUISHED CHARACTERISTICS OF EFL TEACHERS**

The teaching of language is not as the same of teaching other subjects, there are some characteristics which distinguish language teaching from teaching of other subjects. Thus, the characteristics of effective language teachers are unique.

#### 3.1 The distinguished characteristics of language teachers.

Borg (2006) summarized the five factors distinguishing foreign language teacher from that of other subjects. These factors are as follows:

- 1) The nature of subject matter itself. The distinguishing nature of EFL teaching is that teachers use a medium that students do not yet understand.
- 2) The interaction patterns are necessary to provide instruction. Effective interaction is required during the process of providing instruction, while in other subjects, effective interaction, such as group discussion is less required.
- 3) Increasing their knowledge of the subject is a challenge for foreign language teachers. To maintain and require knowledge and skills of foreign language, they are required to engage in foreign language communication, while real communication in target language rarely happened in the local school, classroom.
- 4) Isolation foreign language teachers may feel isolated resulting from the absence of colleagues teaching the same subject.
- 5) Outside support is necessary for learning the subject matter. To create natural foreign language environment in the class, foreign language teachers have to put a lot of time and effort on preparing extracurricular materials and activities, which are less of necessity in other subjects.

Borg (2006) set up an empirical study among five groups of participants (TESOL students, language conference delegated, subject specialists, pre-service teachers and undergraduate students) among several European countries, using written notes and discussion to summarize the distinctive characteristics of language teachers. The research method is quite special, firstly the list of 8 characteristics of language teachers were raised by the first group participants and then discussed, added and commented by the experienced teachers and identified by the less experienced ones. Borg outlines the 11 key distinctive characteristics of language teachers,



“The nature of the subject, the content of teaching, methodology, teacher-learner relationships, non-native issues, teachers’ characteristics, training, status, errors, student body and commercialization” (Borg, 2006, P.24). Foreign language teachers might have to be more tolerant with students’ error since they are not yet competent with the medium. The subject content is beyond the language itself and it is related to learner’s study and life. Teacher-student relationship is closer in EFL class and students are often driven by instrumental motivation in foreign language learning. There are indeed characteristics that are distinctive to foreign language teachers and the distinctiveness makes them different from teachers of other subjects. However, the distinctive characteristics of EFL teachers are not invariable as it is pointed out by Borg himself, the distinctive characteristics are embedded in context.

“Language teachers’ distinctiveness is a socially constructed phenomenon that may be defined in various ways in different context” (Borg, 2006, p.26). An empirical study run in Japan validated the cross-context nature of EFL teacher’s characteristics.

### **3.2 An empirical study conducted in Japan**

Lee (2010) investigated among 163 college level students in Japan to identify the province of EFL teachers. The results of the study show that the participants agree that “English language teachers have a more difficult job because they have to explain things to learners in English” (p.33). “English teachers have more positive attitudes” (P.33). The results supported Borg’s finding that “In language teaching, teachers and learners operate through a language other than their mother tongue” (Borg, 2006, p.24). They also agreed that English teachers encourage more interaction in the classroom and teaching English involves developing learners’ communicative skill. Learning a foreign language is beyond learning the language itself and culture learning is also involved. The participants in the study perceived EFL teachers and EFL teaching to be unique along four central dimensions:

- 1) 1. The nature of the subject matter is complex in that the medium and content of instruction are the same.
- 2) 2. The content of EFL teaching includes developing not only students’ linguistic skills but also their communication and cultural knowledge and skills.
- 3) 3. A good approach to EFL teaching involves maximizing student involvement through encouragement and judicious error correction.
- 4) 4. Displaying positive attitudes toward and enthusiasm for learners and the subject is crucial” (Lee, 2010, P. 43-44).

The study of Borg (2006) and Lee (2010) indicate that there are unique characteristics for EFL teachers concerning content of teaching, interaction pattern, teaching approach and teachers’ personality. Moreover, they lay the consensus that although there are identifiable characteristics of EFL teaching and teachers that are suitable across different contexts, the construct of being an EFL teacher is social culturally embedded and dependent on particular educational milieus.

## **IV Characteristics of Effective EFL teachers In China from teacher's perspective**



In China, English is studied as foreign language at elementary school, secondary school and universities. Here in this paper we focus on university teacher's perspective on effective EFL teachers. The characteristics of effective Chinese EFL teachers consist of factors from three major aspects: effective teaching, the foreign language attribute and the university EFL teachers' perspective (noted in figure2).

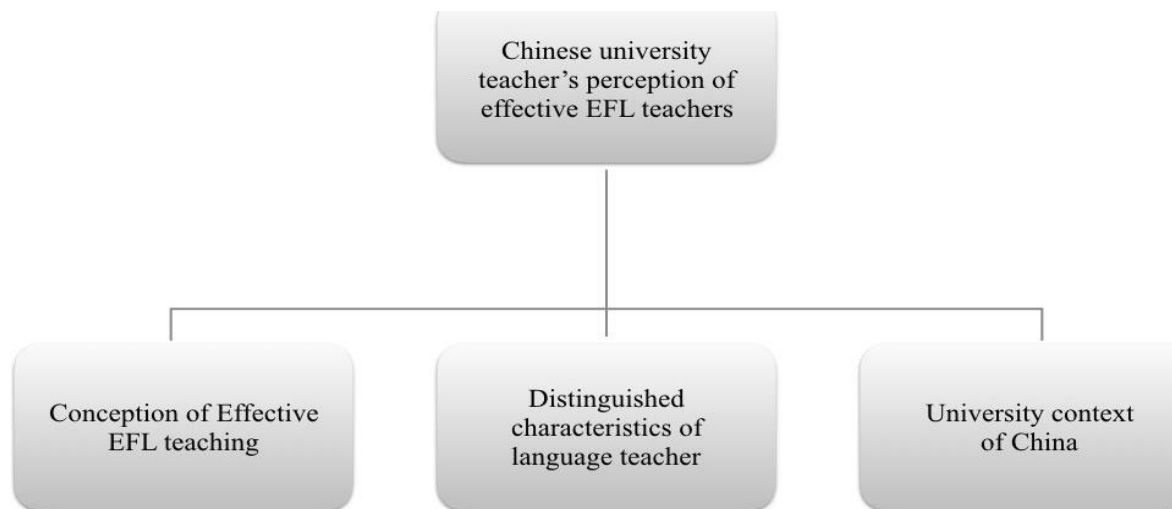


Figure 2 The three aspects of EFL teachers' perception of effectiveness

#### 4.1 A successful EFL teacher: A case study in China

In Huang's (2011) case study in Nanjing Chinese Medicine University, the successful English teacher being studied perceived herself that a successful EFL teacher is the one who can help students get a sense of achievement in developing skills to use the language through practice step by step.

"What successful teachers do is to think about the students and know what they need first. They then choose the appropriate materials for teaching and plan classroom activities that involve all the students' participation in the class. Since students in China do not have enough chances to use English language in their daily life, successful teachers in China need to prepare more appropriate materials and plan more proper activities in classroom teaching in order to help students use the language as much as possible" (Huang, 2011, p.23).

Know student's need and be able to help students to learn and engage all the learners are the key factors as addressed by Ms. H. Her understanding of effectiveness of EFL teaching corresponded with the literature previous found, which EFL teacher is an efficient communicator and "scaffolder".

#### 4.2 A proposed profile of effective EFL teachers

WU yian (2005) employed questionnaires and group interviews to investigate teachers' perception of EFL effectiveness among 213 English teachers from more than 30 universities in Mainland China. According to the investigation, a profile of effective FL teacher was proposed. The profile consists of four dimensions (see figure 3):



Figure 3 A proposed profile of EFL teacher's professionalism

## **a. Language pedagogical content competence.**

A competent foreign language teacher is supposed to have good command of the foreign language and linguistic knowledge; be able to create motivating environment; encourage students to learn; be flexible to adjust teaching content according to students' level; with clear teaching objective on fluent and correct English; to formulate a humane education; create learning moments for the students; guide students to develop learning method and learning ability; to help students have a structural understanding of the English language; have a clear idea of the position of the foreign language in the curriculum. The pedagogical content competence is mainly involved with two sub-dimensions: the disciplinary knowledge and teaching knowledge and skills. The two sub-dimensions are linked and combined, which created much better effect than one sub-dimension working solely.

## **b. View of the teaching profession and profession ethics**

In the survey, devotion and responsibility were highly mentioned by the teachers. They hold the belief that being a teacher is only teaching knowledge and skills but also educate student become a whole person. A teacher should set up ethical example for the students. The high ethical standard

pertained to Chinese teachers is the sparkling point of the profession, and a strong motivation driving teachers to develop.

### **c. View of language teaching and learning.**

The profile portrays that the teaching and learning model of English should contain three elements: students, teachers and the foreign language. Students are the center of the profile, English being the object and teachers help students to acquire the object. Caring for students' need and being flexible with arrangement of teaching according to learner' foreign language proficiency were mentioned by the teachers filling in the questionnaire. What distinguish effective teachers from less effective ones lies in the command of subject knowledge, language proficiency and the ability of classroom management.

### **d. View of teacher learning and development.**

Devotion to the foreign language and passion for the profession motivate teachers to learn and develop. 167 out of 213 teachers attribute their professional development to incessant acquiring knowledge and reflection while teaching. In the same time, professional development derives benefit from research, especially action research which solves the practical problems encountered in the classroom. Peer assistance in the department and senior guidance were also mentioned.

According to Wu (2005), the four dimensions of effective teacher's profile are interconnected, permeated and dynamic. Teacher's professionalism which can only be observed from the classroom is the result of a teacher's competence on subject knowledge and teaching skills. Also, a teacher's professional competence which is the consequence from long-term teaching practice is influenced by his/her view on the profession, ethics and the process of teaching and learning. Conversely the professionalism asserts impact on the views on profession, ethics and teaching & learning.

## **4.3 Discussion: domesticate versus international**

Subject knowledge, language proficiency perceived at the first place

The proposed profile raised by Wu yian indicated that language pedagogical competence is perceived by Chinese EFL teachers as the first component of professionalism. It is reconciled with a research of Huang dong (2014), that Chinese ESL teachers who got the opportunities to study in English speaking countries (America, UK, Australia, New Zealand) as continued education found that it is rewarding to be able to use English in a practical setting and be able to give students deeper understanding of life in a country where English is the native language.

"Target language proficiency is a crucial aspect of non-native English speaker professional identity and self esteem for non-native English speaker teachers need to attain a certain threshold level of proficiency in English to be able to teach effectively in it. (Huang, 2014, p.75)"

Experiences of studying in English speaking countries appear to be an important factor in self-assessment of English proficiency. Teachers develop their language proficiency and self-confidence effectively through studying abroad and they could perceive language teaching in a more mature way. The same idea on language teacher's proficiency was addressed by Brosh's (1996) finding in Israel EFL teaching. "As the first priority, both groups perceive the ELT's (English language teachers' ) adequate command of the subject matter, i.e., his or her mastery of the four basic linguistic skills--reading, writing, speaking, and understanding" (P.129). Only those who have good command of the language can organize teaching material flexibly and have effective delivery to the students as Politzer and Weiss (1971) said:

"The most favorable attitudes changes toward foreign language study are produced by teachers who know the language; the most negative results are produced by teachers who teach from open books"( as cited in Brosh, 1996, P.129).

### **Strong ethical uniqueness in Chinese EFL teachers' profession**

Teacher's view of profession ethics ranks the second place in WU's (2005) profile, which indicates that Chinese EFL teachers pertains the belief of being an ethical example for students to the profession. The similar result emerged from a study carried on in Tian jin by Li (2013), where 74 language teachers in a university of Tianjin were investigated through likert scale questionnaire. As Li (2013) described,

"From university teacher' perspective, proficient university foreign language teachers should own such qualities that holding noble view of profession and profession ethics , having a dedicated heart and a sense of responsibility and mission for teaching and cultivating students" (p.33), noble view of the professional ethics distinguished the EFL profession from others.

The intense ethics in the EFL profession is unique in China, compared with those of other countries. Perhaps, the demand for ethical standard of being a teacher derives from the impact of Confucius which has been the basic values for people in this country for more than 2000 years.

Chen (2013) declaimed that the professional development of teachers comprises two aspects: professional competence and affective factors. Teacher's affective factors entail attitude towards teaching and sense of values, which embodies the central professional ethics of being a teacher (Chen, 2013, as cited in Li, 2015). Though affective factors of teachers was rated as first priority in an effective classroom teaching in Walls et al.'s study (2002), the affective factors focused on "enthusiasm" and teachers' ability motivating students to learn. While in China, affective factor is interpreted as dedicated heart and a sense of accountability, and that teachers are not only teaching a language but also nurturing a person.

The sense of morality is very unique in the concept of the teaching profession in Chinese context. Another study among three highly motivated young college English teachers in Beijing, China. In the study (Li, 2015), one of the teachers said,

“An EFL teacher may be considered as the one only teaching a language, a skill, but in fact, EFL teachers are modeling students’ personality. Language is the reflection of thinking and language learning shapes the values and thinking of students” (p. 86).

Effective EFL teachers: beyond the classroom

The concept of “meta-professional” ability was first raised in Li’s qualitative study (2015), which defines EFL teacher’s professionalism into three aspects: teaching, management, and research and teaches have to make a decision on priority of the three aspects. The earlier a teacher develops his/her meta-professional ability, the more successful he/she could be in the EFL teaching profession. The three subjects being studied were EFL teachers who go through different stage of EFL teaching career respectively. Li believes that the variant development of three teachers is due to their meta-professional ability. As Wen (2013) claimed that teaching is the basic job of a teacher, academic research benefits effective teaching and administrative management actualizes one’s ideal thinking on teaching into a reality and make more people benefit from. It seems that effective EFL teaching is not only restricted to what happened in the classroom. An effective EFL teacher’s commission is much more than effectively teaching subject knowledge and language skills in classroom, and academic research and administrative job also counts, especially in university context of China where a teachers’ academic achievement counts the decisive importance.

“Promotion, titles of profession is largely connected with a teacher’s academic achievement and these young college teacher over 72.3% of which felt stressed” (Lian, 2012). In that circumstance, will teachers still put a lot of effort in classroom teaching? Since that doesn’t count for promotion. Teaching is the core of a teacher’s profession, while administrative position helps collect resources for professional development and academic research rewards effective teaching in the classroom. The balance between effective teaching, academic research and administrative work takes wisdom and depends on a teacher’s meta-professional ability (Li, 2015).

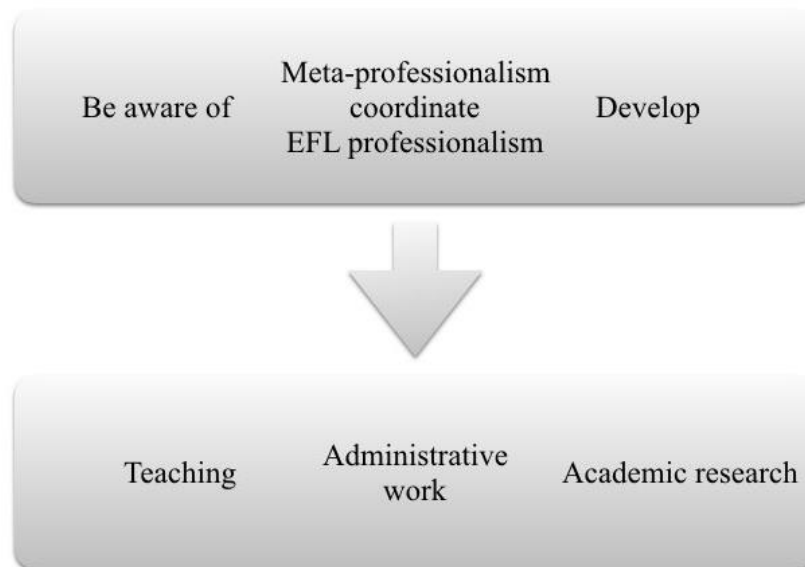


Figure 4. EFL teacher’s meta-professionalism and professional

“Meta-professional ability comprises a teacher’s awareness, cooperating and developing ability, namely a teacher’s cognition of the most essential part for his or her professionalism (teaching, administration, research), thus meta-professional ability generates an efficient, stable and sustainable professional development” (Li, 2015, P.17) . (see figure 4)

## V CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

The present study builds on previous literature from the point of communicative approach, social constructivism, and distinctiveness of EFL teachers to define effective EFL teaching and sum up the characteristics of effective EFL teachers. Effective EFL teachers share common characteristics such as competent language proficiency and teaching knowledge and skills, effective instructor and “scaffolder” in the classroom and caring students’ needs and being flexible and able to make the change in the class. The specific characteristics of effective EFL teachers are varied across contexts. In China, EFL teachers’ professionalism displays four dimensions: pedagogical content competence, values and ethics on the profession, perception of the process of teaching and learning professional development. Thus, an effective EFL teacher in university of China is supposed to be the one who are able to handle the three aspects of professionalism: teaching, administration and academic research.

However, as Walls et al. (2002) noted the present results of the code of effective teachers does not pave the avenue for becoming an expert teacher, or provide short cut to proficiency and excellence in teaching. For the educators who are committed to the profession, the challenge is to build a balance between formal knowledge of educational practice and the application of concepts of effective



teaching and then progressively move toward to expert thinking and action. Understanding how others of EFL profession define effective teaching and attempting to realistic actions (actualized, procedural knowledge) appear to be necessary components of teacher education.

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