

DOCTORAL THESIS

A Narrative Inquiry of Teachers' Identity Experiences in a Cross-Cultural School Context

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ABSTRACT

Glocalisation, which combines the essence of global and local resources, has grown as a new concept in education. In Hong Kong, some schools have implemented a “glocalised” curriculum which combines the advantages of the international curricula (e.g. International Baccalaureate curriculum) and local government-prescribed curricula to meet the diversified learning needs of different students, and these schools have recruited teachers from different cultural backgrounds to enhance students’ language proficiency and multicultural competence. The whole situation creates new challenges for teachers: they should be equipped with a different mindset (e.g. “Think globally, act locally”) and be able to cope with cultural conflicts within these school contexts. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to explore how teachers from diverse cultural backgrounds negotiate and construct their professional and cultural identities in relation to their pedagogical practices in a cross-cultural school context which involves “glocalised curriculum” in Hong Kong.

Guided by Morgan’s (2004) idea of “identity-as-pedagogy”, the study used a narrative inquiry approach to understand five teacher participants’ experiences through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, their reflective journals, the researcher’s field notes, and teaching documents. Data were analysed in four main phases: 1) transcribing analysis; 2) coding; 3) reconstructing the narratives and restorying the participants’ stories; and 4) sharing the stories with the participants.

Research findings demonstrate the teacher informants' ongoing shifts in their professional and cultural identity experiences and have highlighted the importance of the link between identity and pedagogy, as well as the awareness of students' diverse needs. The research further extends Morgan's (2004) conceptual framework of "identity-as-pedagogy" and emphasises teachers' flexibility of manipulating their multiple identities as pedagogical resources to diverse teaching contexts. This study shows that teachers can either explicitly manipulate their multiple identities or implicitly use their multilingual identities to achieve their intended goals. Both methods are considered as powerful pedagogical resource to cater for different students' learning needs.

The study concludes with implications for language teachers, language teacher educators, school administration, and teacher training programmes. Directions for future research on teacher identities are also proposed.

Keywords: glocalisation, teachers' professional identity and cultural identity, identity-as-pedagogy, narrative inquiry